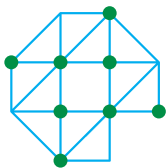


Blend your education

Developing a vision

Instruction



Acceleration plan
Educational innovation
with ICT



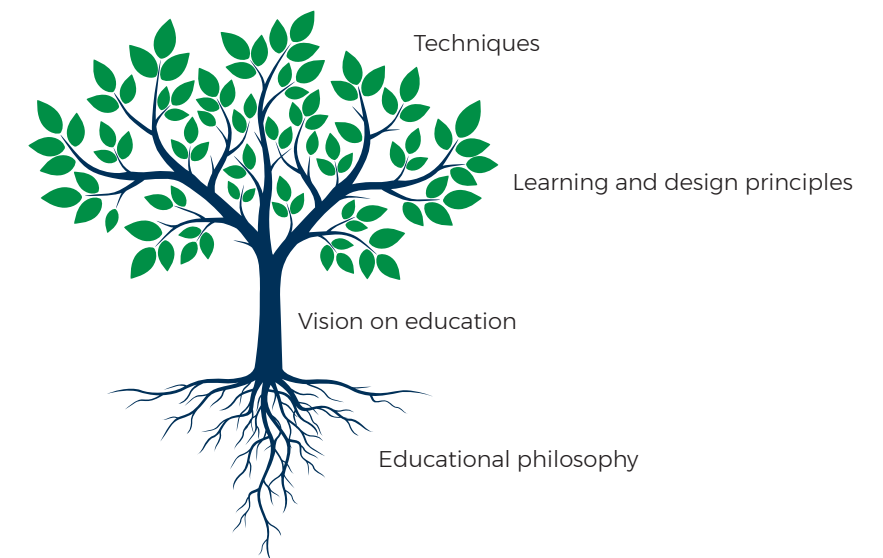
Facilitating professional
development of lecturers

Developing a vision

TARGET GROUP	Lecturers/teams, support services and managers
FORM	Working forms
TIME NEEDED	Variable
LEVEL	Programme and institution

Background

An educational design consists of several layers. Think of an educational design as a tree, the roots of which are an educational philosophy from which a solid vision of education sprouts as a trunk. Consider, for instance, social constructivism, which has been translated into core values in a vision. From this you have branches of learning and design principles, the leaves of which are techniques you can use, such as working forms and tools. The figure below illustrates this.



In practice, educational practitioners are most (and sometimes preferably) concerned with the leaves of the tree, or in other words, the techniques to be used. The discussion often revolves around working forms, strategies, facilities and useful tools for teaching. This is only logical; after all, it is the most practical side of education. However, this means the underlying



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vision sometimes remains implicit. This is a pity, because it leads to decisions being made or actions taken on the basis of gut feeling and entails the risk of lecturers having widely differing approaches within a programme or institution.

It is therefore important for teams to start the conversation about their vision of education with each other. What is our vision? What core values do we hold dear? And how do we translate this vision in practice? This product facilitates constructive discussions about the vision of education through several stand-alone working forms

Method

This product can be used by anyone involved in designing and implementing education. Ideally, the discussion group should consist of lecturers and managers as well as support departments. It requires a moderator who will provide guidance on the working forms. It is advisable to limit the group size to a maximum of 12 people, for example. These working forms are described in brief below. You can choose one that best suits the objective or combine several in a longer session.

Working form 1: Own learning situation

This working form is very suitable as an 'energiser'. It does not last long and focuses primarily on participants' own experiences. The group discusses its own learning situations and reflects on what makes those learning situations effective. The steps are as follows:

1. Form duos or trios.
2. Ask everyone to think back to a situation in which they learned something. Then ask the following questions: 'What made you learn something?' and 'What underlying principle can you formulate for that?'
3. In case of ambiguities, you can describe the example below:
Peter thinks back to a situation where he learned something. He says he was once taught by Miss Martine in Grade 7. At the beginning of each history lesson, Miss Martine told an exciting story. The entire class hung on her every word. After the story, she started a class discussion, and the children were asked to think about questions they wanted to ask. This always got Peter highly motivated in class. He said it was because the teacher made the learning content meaningful and exciting for him, which made him intrinsically motivated to learn it.
4. Now have the pairs or trios share notes with each other about their own learning experiences. Have participants write down what underlying principle they can distil from the situations discussed, if possible. That way, you can create an overview of positive aspects in learning situations.

5. Afterwards, ask some of the participants to reflect in plenary on what was discussed. Discuss how effective principles translate into practice. Optionally, you can put those principles alongside the institution's vision of education.

Working form 2: Core values

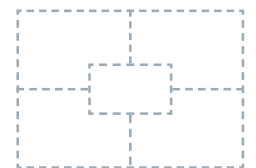
This working form is designed to identify core values at team level for an existing vision. The starting point is therefore an institution's or programme's current vision on education. Make sure all participants have familiarised themselves with the vision beforehand. Then proceed as follows:

1. Set up an online assignment, preferably in a tool that supports a Word Cloud, such as Mentimeter or Wooclap. But it can also be done in digital whiteboard tools, such as Mural or Miro, in which participants can stick digital post-its. This can of course also be done with physical post-its.
2. Ask the following question: What core values can we extract from the vision on teaching and learning?
3. Ask all participants to silently formulate the core values most significant to them and submit these through the online tool (or by sticking post-its). Optionally, describe some examples of core values, such as creativity, ownership and quality. Allow a maximum of 5 minutes for this activity.
4. Then reflect on the submitted core values. What stands out? What does a particular core value mean exactly, such as ownership? Are there any inconsistencies? Take 5-10 minutes for this.
5. Put together a top five of the most important core values and discuss how those core values translate into practice. For example, what does ownership look like in a course?

Working form 3: What is the value of the campus?

Why does a student come to an institution's physical location? What is the added value of this? Online emergency education during the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to think about these issues. Indeed, after the pandemic, many lecture halls remained half empty. Students had experienced en masse that it was just as effective to follow lectures online. This means that the value of the campus has changed. It has shifted from knowledge transfer to co-creation and from formal classes to informal sessions. It is therefore important to discuss, within the team, what the value of the campus is within your own programme. Proceed as follows for this working form:

1. Divide the group into teams of 2-4 people. Give them each a printed placemat divided into boxes, with a rectangle in the middle as the central box (see figure). The central box contains what everyone agrees on, and the four around it contain the individual contributions.



2. Now ask the following questions:
 - a. Why do students come to campus?
 - b. What do they come to do and why?
 - c. What is the added value of coming to a physical location rather than learning at home or online?
3. Have the participants discuss this for about 10 minutes. They use the placemat to first write down their own opinions in the individual boxes, and then work towards one concrete answer in the middle box.
4. The descriptions should be specific and observable: What are the students going to do? Where exactly are they going to do it? How can you observe that?
5. As workshop supervisor, you keep an eye on the process and the specificity of ideas, worked out in 'how' and 'what'. 'Socialising', for example, is too abstract. What does socialising look like in practice?
6. Then have one person from each group present, in plenary, what the shared answer is for them.

Working form 4: Translation of vision

Often, an institution has already published a vision on teaching and learning, which may or may not have been created in collaboration with lecturers. This vision is then published somewhere, without all lecturers taking note of it and reflecting on what it means in practice. With this working form, you encourage participants to translate the vision into practice. What does this premise from the vision look like in practice? What are the roles of lecturer and student in this? What is the underlying principle? Then proceed as follows:

1. Divide the group into teams of 2-4 people and print the worksheet in the annex for each team.
2. Have the teams analyse the institution's vision on education using the worksheet. Take plenty of time for this, e.g. 40 minutes. Two variants of this step are possible:
 - a. **Variant 1:** Make printouts of the vision on education and give each group a copy. The teams read the vision and select 4-8 phrases from the vision which they consider most important. Then have them fill in each phrase on the worksheet and elaborate these into underlying principles, student and lecturer roles and possible working forms.
 - b. **Variant 2:** As assignment supervisor, preselect the phrases from the vision of education you want the teams to think about in the assignment. Print these out and give them to the teams or present them digitally. Have the teams copy these sentences onto the worksheet, then elaborate them into underlying principles, student and lecturer roles and working forms.
3. After the analysis, ask each group to present one elaboration in plenary. Have the other participants respond to this and ask questions, such as:

- a. What do you think about this elaboration?
 - b. How feasible is it in practice?
 - c. Can we facilitate this in practice?
4. A possible additional step is to compile the formulated elaborations and develop them into an overview of vision components that are most relevant to the programme and how they can be translated into practice.

Explanation

Designing a lesson without first considering how students learn and what that means for the didactic choices made is a recipe for disjointed learning activities (Barry et al., 2015; Biggs, 1996; Zhao, 2016). To clarify this, Cianciolo and Regehr (2019) describe three levels at which you can analyse education. The first level encompasses the underlying philosophy of education, based on theories of learning. This is usually reflected in an institution's educational vision. From that vision, the second level distils theoretical learning and design principles that guide didactic choices in educational design. Those didactic choices relate to the third level: the use of techniques, such as working forms, resources, IT, learning activities, and so on. Which techniques you use, how often and when, and how much guidance is needed, varies according to the context. It is precisely because of this contextual influence that blended learning is not a one-size-fits-all solution but has to be aligned to the characteristics of the educational environment in which it is applied.

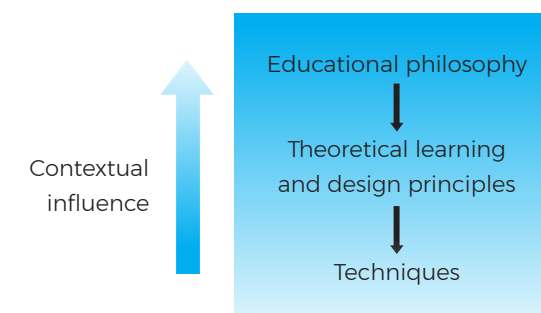


Figure Levels of education. Taken from Cianciolo & Regehr (2019) and translated.

Maastricht University (UM) serves as an excellent example to clarify this. UM employs the problem-based education model. This model is founded on ideas from social constructivist philosophy, which holds that knowledge is constructed in interaction with others (Level 1). Based on this theory of learning, UM has formulated four general theoretical learning and design principles (Level 2; Maastricht University, 2020). These are discussed below:

1. **Constructive learning:** students actively construct their own knowledge, building on prior knowledge.
2. **Collaborative learning:** students learn with and from each other.
3. **Contextual learning:** learning takes place in a relevant context.
4. **Self-directed learning:** students play an active role in planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning process.

These principles guide UM lecturers in making choices about techniques to be used in educational design (Level 3). The intended learning outcomes then form the starting point, out of which learning activities and assessment are further designed (also called Constructive Alignment, see Biggs, 1996).

Think of an educational design as a tree, as shown in the figure in the introduction, the roots of which are an educational philosophy from which a solid vision of education sprouts as a trunk. This then branches out into learning and design principles, the leaves of which are the didactic techniques. But if you only look at the leaves, you are skipping the fundamental levels of education. There are serious risks in doing so.

It is important to realise that an institution's vision on education does not always correspond to individual lecturers' personal vision on education. It is therefore important to compare these two visions, as prescribed in the working forms in this product.

Example of an application

VU Amsterdam has elaborated its vision at the central level and issued a publication on this. Drawing from the three core values of open, personal and responsible, this publication aims to provide a guideline for everyone who works, teaches and studies at VU. The publication is given to new students, lecturers and other staff as an introductory document which describes the role of the student, lecturer and organisation in each area. The aim is for the three roles – student, lecturer and organisation – to be aligned in such a way that the whole is balanced and that students and lecturers pursue the vision wherever possible and where appropriate within the contours of the programme.

[You can find the document here.](#)

If you want to read more, see the following (in Dutch).

- [Working form card to develop own vision as a team](#)
- [Article on the importance of a vision in blended learning](#)

Justification and sources

This product consists of several working forms for having an effective discussion about the vision on education of lecturers, teaching teams and/or institutions. The working forms have been developed based on experience and other inspiring working forms.

Barry, S., Murphy, K., & Drew, S. (2015). From deconstructive misalignment to constructive alignment: Exploring student uses of mobile technologies in university classrooms. *Computers and Education*, 81(C). doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.10.014

Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher Education*, 32(3), 347–364. doi.org/10.1007/BF00138871

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Universiteit Maastricht. (2020, 23 november). *UM's visie op onderwijs*. Consulted at maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/um's-visie-op-onderwijs#pgo

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Zhao, S. (2016). The Problem of Constructive Misalignment in International Business Education: A Three-Stage Integrated Approach to Enhancing Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 27(4), 179–196. doi.org/10.1080/08975930.2017.1301233



The Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with ICT is a four-year programme focused on bringing initiatives, knowledge, and experiences for digitalisation together. The programme is an initiative of SURF, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, and the Association of Universities, and is organised in eight acceleration zones. In the zone Facilitating professional development for lecturers, 16 institutions are working on improving the professional development of lecturers in Dutch higher education.



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