
VLOR Workshop on Curriculum Design

The curriculum in higher education challenged

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Aim

Our 21st century society faces a large number of challenges in social, cultural, economic, demographic and technological fields. The VLOR wants to look at the implications for curriculum design in higher education with its project called 'The curriculum in higher education challenged'. This project is funded through the Erasmus+ programme, KA3-Support to Policy Reform, Support to the implementation of EHEA reforms 2016 - 2018.

This project has a threefold intention: 1. raising awareness of the critical role curriculum design and delivery plays in the changing higher education landscape; 2. obtaining modernised curricula designed and delivered in such a way that all graduates, upon completion, have acquired the abilities and capabilities for work and life in a complex and rapidly changing world; 3. developing more collaborative partnerships and exchanges of knowledge, experience and innovative practices at the national and international level with regard to curriculum design and delivery.

In order to develop a vision on the above-mentioned matter, the VLOR organises three activities. The first activity was a workshop on May 2nd with experts in the field of curriculum design and delivery. In the autumn of 2017, the VLOR will organise a peer learning activity (PLA) involving the target groups of the Flemish higher education system and international peers from ministries and HEIs. The aim of the PLA is to exchange knowledge, experience, practices and new approaches with regard to curriculum design and

delivery. Finally, the VLOR will organise a dissemination conference involving the whole Flemish higher education community.

Discussion paper

In order to give graduates the appropriate skills enabling them to participate actively and meaningfully while helping to shape a rapidly evolving society, increasing demands are being placed on the curriculum. Higher education is increasingly expected to strengthen internationalisation, innovation, employability, citizenship, democracy, sustainability, social commitment, interdisciplinarity... One way or another, these elements should be translated into the curriculum. How can institutions deal with this?

The key question above is the starting point of a discussion paper produced by a VLOR steering group in the Spring of 2017. The paper assesses the situation in Flanders, deals with what a curriculum is or can be and addresses the challenges of curriculum design in higher education.

Questions

The discussion paper leads to a non-exhaustive list of 10 questions to foster discussion in the workshop.

1. How can a curriculum respond to today's societal needs?
2. How can a curriculum stimulate student involvement?
3. How can a curriculum do the above in an integrated way?
4. Is the curriculum the only instrument for this?
5. What is the relationship between the learning outcomes and the curriculum, and is it sufficiently clear?
6. How do we know if the curriculum is doing what is intended?
7. How powerful is the curriculum?
8. Does an institution have sufficient space to devise the curriculum of a particular programme?
9. How can teachers and staff be professionalised?
10. What is the role of the stakeholders in curriculum (re)design? Who owns the curriculum?

Workshop presentations

Universal design for the Experience Economy

Ben Brabon is the head of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences of the Higher Education Academy. His presentation is about '*Universal design for the Experience Economy*'. Dr. Ben Brabon starts his presentation by questioning the role of higher education in the 21st century. 'Does it mean different things for different people?' He illustrates his point with two examples focusing on the role of higher Education and Universities. According to the 'UK National strategy for Access and Student Success in higher Education'¹ the stress in this governmental perspective is laid more on achievement and less on the learning process. Ben Brabon uses as a second example the 'Lords committee stage response to government defeat' to illustrate how the university is seen by them as an 'autonomous institution guaranteeing academic freedom and excellent teaching'. Dr. Brabon concludes that the role of a university and **the role of higher education is different for different stakeholders and even for different Higher Education Institutions (HEI)**. Subsequently, we have to determine who these stakeholders are: the students (as an heterogeneous group)? The academics? All of them? Brabon wonders

¹ BIS, *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education* (April 2014), p.7.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf

if we are currently inclusive enough for all students to cover (all) the needs of society? If that's not the case, what can someone do to fulfill these needs. Consequently, we have to determine who should take this role.

Brabon reflects in his presentation on the development path of a curriculum. Starting with the 'aim', subsequently the 'objectives' of a curriculum, thereafter the **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)** and finally the **attributes** of the curriculum. He argues that sometimes more emphasis is put on the attributes than on the ILOs, for instance by employers. But how can one measure somebody's behavior? How can one include the measurement of behavior in a LO?

Taking into account the above-mentioned questions, Brabon argues that the answer can be found in the role of **higher education as a driver for social mobility and change**. There is more to be done for our university system to fulfill its potential as an engine of social mobility.² The stated goals and their effects are determined by the eye of the beholder as well as by the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process. Brabon believes that the answers lie in the concept of '**inclusive curricula**' that **value student difference**. Many study programmes are still too inflexible these day, Brabon says. The benefits of an inclusive approach to teaching and learning are wide ranging and 'can facilitate the deliverability of the institutional mission by enabling all students to deliver to their full potential.'³ The **advantages of inclusive design** include enhanced brand reputation, greater staff and student satisfaction, enriched professional development, better recruitment and retention and improved teaching and learning. Strategic approaches to inclusive curriculum design also provide opportunities to work in partnership with employers to develop and enhance the employment outcomes for students.

Values such as equity and fairness underpin the concept of inclusive learning and teaching. This means taking account of and valuing students' differences within mainstream curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.⁴ 'The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design'⁵ is the primary aim of the so-called **Universal Design**. Brabon argues that Higher Education providers need to consider ways to embrace the following **principles of inclusive curriculum design**: 1. Learning is enriched by the varied experiences of students; 2. Accessible learning is relevant and approachable by all students; 3. The curriculum and the means of delivery are both part of this accessibility; 4. Students with full access to learning and teaching are more likely to engage with learning and to reach their full potential.⁶ If 'an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event', then higher education providers will have to do more to reimagine curricula that speak to the economic conditions that underpin the experience of student success. In order to achieve this, there are key elements such as **partnership, flexibility, inclusion** and their catalyst is the sense of **belonging**.

2 Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, BIS, Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice (May 2016), https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523546/bis-16-265-success-as-a-knowledge-economy-web.pdf

3 Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence (January 2017), p.14. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route-to-excellence.pdf

4 Hockings, C., Inclusive Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: a Synthesis of Research (April 2010), p.3. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resources/detail/evidencenet/Inclusive_learning_and_teaching_in_higher_education

5 See The Center for Universal Design, NC State University https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciples.htm

6 Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence (January 2017), p.32. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587221/Inclusive_Teaching_and_Learning_in_Higher_Education_as_a_route-to-excellence.pdf

Key points of the discussion

Ultimately, every programme should be inclusive. Sometimes, policy makers tend to be too seduced by making structures. In the presentation, the focus was laid strongly on the responsibility of policy makers. However HEI also have a big responsibility. That's how the power of collaboration can be very effective. However, collaboration between different stakeholders is not a global practice.

A programme's study time can be an interesting way to look at LO. How much time does someone need to achieve a learning outcome? By shortening programmes, on the one hand you get less reflection time for students. On the other hand, they will be on the market sooner and the cost of their studies will be lower for the student and for society. Different stakeholders will make different choices, based on their different goals.

LO such as 'morality' are very hard to measure. Does it mean that they should be included or not? There are certain ways to assess this, Brabon says. But should this be an LO on the programme level? Brabon believes this remains an open question.

Redesigning curricula takes a lot of time. Sometimes, it is hard to involve the 'right' group of stakeholders. It starts with defining who these stakeholders are. An essential but difficult stakeholder is the student. Every year, students and student representatives change and this change of students can be seen as an added value, in the sense that every year, you hear a new and fresh point of view.

Using independent learning to develop the higher education curriculum for the 21st century

Liz Thomas is an independent researcher and consultant for higher education. She is also Professor of Higher Education at Edge Hill University. Her presentation is entitled: '*Using independent learning to develop the higher education curriculum for the 21st century*'. In her presentation, she addresses 3 key questions: 1. how can a curriculum respond to the societal needs of today? 2. How can a curriculum stimulate student involvement? 3. What is the relationship between the learning outcomes and the curriculum and is it sufficiently clear? Her answer to these questions is that '**Independent learning (outside contact hours) could be better used to meet the demands.**'

Liz Thomas states that Higher education distinguishes itself from general and secondary education by its focus on independent learning. Independent learning is a core part of the Higher Education curriculum. It is about teaching people how to think, rather than about transmitting knowledge. This is a fundamental principle underpinning Higher Education. A curriculum is much more than the contact hours. It is about the whole learning experience. Based on two research studies Liz Thomas was involved in⁷, it seems that **students often do not understand what independent learning is** or how it contributes to their learning and development: e.g. deepening subject knowledge, developing graduate attributes and becoming lifelong learners. The research demonstrates that many students perceive 'independent learning' as 'more of the same' to get better results on the exam or as 'necessary to do due to insufficient hours' or 'preparation for the world of work'. Only a few saw it as an opportunity to further their learning.

It is clear to Thomas that students struggle with motivation and that they lack the skills to be effective independent learners, which results in a lack of engagement and concentration on low-level tasks.⁸ Prior to entering Higher Education, students expect to do more 'working on their own' - although they expect this to be more like homework. They are surprised that they have more responsibility for the contents of the learning. Students lack understanding about the purpose of IL and the skills to undertake it

7 'Students perspective and experiences of independent learning' QAA and 'Effective practice in the design of directed independent learning opportunities'.

8 Based on this research, students felt under-prepared for IL on entry to HE; They felt overwhelmed by the volume of work, and struggled to juggle their academic and other priorities; Students tended to rely on study skills from school, which were not always appropriate: Developing or using other techniques was viewed as risky; They developed their understanding of IL by trial and error, and some did not develop it; Many focused on narrow or directed tasks: reviewing lecture notes, organising time, memorising.

effectively. With greater guidance, students could achieve more in their independent learning time. Thomas detects a need for 'Directed Independent Learning'.

Directed Independent Learning (DIL) describes one of the processes by which Higher Education students engage with the curriculum - and academic staff - to achieve learning goals. It may also include interacting with peers, other HE staff, employers, communities, families and stakeholders. DIL places increased responsibility on students when compared to the forms of learning they are most likely to have undertaken prior to entering HE. But students should be engaged, enabled, facilitated and supported by staff through relevant and guided opportunities, suitable pedagogies and an appropriate learning environment. The staff should ensure that students have informal and formal opportunities for feedback, and monitor participation and understanding. DIL is integral to students' development as autonomous learners and their graduate attributes.

To achieve DIL, a **staged process** is needed to enable students to move from being dependent learners to becoming autonomous by the end of their undergraduate education.⁹ In the curricula, more attention has to be given to the **transparency of the purpose of independent learning**. This can be underpinned by pointing out the explicit relevance of specific independent learning tasks to students, and engaging in activities (real-world, employment-related, etc.). Independent Learning can only be achieved when the students are supported to develop as independent learners, moving to extending, applying and creating knowledge. A strategic approach to independent learning has to be developed at an institutional level. An amount of staff time and institutional support (and resources) to develop effective Independent learning curricula are a pre-requisite. Even so, a communication strategy about the role and purpose of Independent Learning to students, staff, families and employers is required.

As a **conclusion**, Liz Thomas states that nowadays the independent learning curriculum is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, this provides opportunities for more active engagement by students to contribute to new agendas that HE curricula is increasingly being asked to contribute to. This will require transparency about the relevance of the curriculum to students, a directed learning approach to support students to develop the skills required, and engaging contents: students will be more engaged by 'real-world' and employment-relevant learning.¹⁰

Integrating the curriculum based on the principle of academic freedom

Bruce Macfarlane is professor of higher Education at the University of Southampton, UK, and distinguished visiting professor at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His presentation focuses on 'Integrating the curriculum based on the principle of academic freedom'. Professor Macfarlane tries to bring an answer to all ten questions raised in the discussion paper. He spices up his presentation by stating that a curriculum can only respond to societal need by **not trying to satisfy everyone**. Macfarlane calls for being clear about the prime aim of a higher education curriculum. Otherwise we risk creating new dogmas which do not correspond to reality for 'everyone'. Without a clear aim, the curriculum will be fragmented and rudderless. In this, Macfarlane suggests as a target 'Critically-minded and **intellectually independent graduates** who will be able to adapt and **contribute the most to the development of society and the economy**'.

An essential attitude to stimulate student involvement is to reject notions of 'student engagement' as a form of coercion and surveillance. After all, students are able to define their own engagement. Real

⁹ This includes: A clear structure of what to do and explicit guidance about what is required; A safe space to learn how to learn; Support from staff and the opportunity for students to check that they are on the right lines, which can be enabled through technology as well as face-to-face; Opportunities for peer support; Guidance on how to be reflective and better understand the learning process; and support with specific skills required (e.g. ICT).

¹⁰ Setting high expectations about independent learning and how important it is; Building discipline-specific study skills into the core curriculum, including reflecting on the learning process through for example, learning diaries, or portfolios; Using applied approaches including problem-based and real-world learning, and research; Flipping the classroom to spend contact time working on using knowledge; Encouraging group learning and peer support, including across years through projects and by developing students skills to collaborate and teach each other; Providing feedback and support to students, e.g. through on-line questions of forums.

'student-centered Learning' doesn't force students to be present or actively participate in lectures. If students want to participate in class, let them talk, if not, they should not, Macfarlane states. We should **stimulate student involvement by embracing 'student engagement'** that allows students to define how they engage. This way of dealing with students protects their rights to be treated as adults, without indoctrination. Even so, it gives them the possibility to choose how to learn. That is why we also have to respect the students' reticence.

Responding to societal needs and stimulating student involvement needs to be done in an integrated way through a constructive alignment between aims, learning outcomes and assessments. Learning outcomes are not meaningful unless they are constructively aligned with aims and assessments. Macfarlane argues that we need more clarity about the aims of HE: A curriculum is built up by **knowledge** (knowing), **skills** (acting) and **attitudes and values** (being).¹¹ An institution can choose to stress more on one or two of the categories of aims. Macfarlane mentions that in the VLOR discussion paper, many so-called skills are rather attitudes and values. This imposition will force students to comply in an 'inauthentic way'. Students should 'own' the curriculum in the sense that the boundaries of their studies should be **shaped by their interests, intellect and passions**. The curriculum should open up, not close down access to knowledge. Macfarlane ends his presentation japing that only knowledge - or the truth - can set you free.

Key points of the discussion (Thomas / Macfarlane)

Independent learning should already be included in secondary education. This can help students learn how to study before entering higher education. Liz Thomas acknowledges that schools should be doing more to have a system where you can help students to become (gradually) more independent learners.

Is using 'independent learning' an answer to the key question of this workshop? Is changing something in the content of the curriculum a step forward to 'independent learning'? Liz Thomas agrees positively on both questions. There is nevertheless a danger that in a mass system, this will only support the elite, Macfarlane adds. 'Some intentions do not fit a too diverse group of students', he says. As an example, he mentions his experience with a high participation rate of students in his lecture in China. The teaching assistant was ticking every time a student asked a question. This system is not based on the students' own interest.

Every teacher in every programme has to be aware of how they want students to learn. Maybe the level of awareness of teachers has to be increased. The HEI plays a crucial role to give teachers the time and the possibility.

21st Century Competencies

Michaela Horvathova is as a consultant within the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division (IMEP) of the Education and Skills (EDU) Directorate of the OECD. She is working for the Center of Curriculum Redesign.

The World Economic Forum recently brought together experts in different domains and from business, academia, NGOs, and governments, to compile a list of the most pressing world trends and challenges. They graphed the interconnections between these various trends. It may not come as a surprise that they detected many challenges. One of those is that the education system is not fast enough in responding to the challenges. In collaboration with the OECD's Education 2030 project, Michaela Horvathova and her team tabulated, analyzed, and synthesized 35 frameworks from around the world. She found that there is a general agreement on the following **four dimensions for a 21st century education**.

The first dimension is **knowledge**. This is absolutely essential, but we must rethink what is relevant in each subject area and adapt the curriculum to reflect priorities of learning. There is also a growing consensus among employers that our current, knowledge-focused curriculum does not adequately prepare students for today's world and workforce, much less tomorrow's, and that students should practice

¹¹ Adapted from Barnett and Coate (2005)

Some examples: *Knowledge*: Interdisciplinarity; *Skills*: employability, innovation; *Attitudes and Values*: sustainability, citizenship, social commitment, democracy

applying their knowledge using **skills**. Despite what is traditionally conceived as progress (economic growth, material productivity, etc.), countries are now tracking other indicators of social progress and the level of their responses to local and global challenges (e.g., migration, inequality, corruption, sustainability). This highlights the need for students to develop and build positive **character** qualities in addition to the knowledge and skills most needed for success. In order to further and enhance the learning in these three dimensions - knowledge, skills and character qualities - there is an important fourth dimension needed for a fully comprehensive 21st century education: **meta-learning**.¹² Many of these competencies will not be offered as independent courses or modules in a school's curricular offerings, and must be intentionally interwoven into the relevant parts of existing learning activities. In fact, it is likely that they are generally best learned when grounded in the context of concrete knowledge domains. But competencies will also need **development outside the school**.

A successful implementation of modern education goals will hinge on **three critical factors** that address all these challenges. First of all at the **policy level**: we will need to strive toward a stable consensus among political factions, and a clearly articulated vision of the kind of education students now need. For example, concerning the university entrance requirements and assessments: Whatever we are trying to develop needs to correspond with what will be assessed. LO, teacher competencies etc. need to be aligned. Secondly at the level of **disciplinary experts**: there needs to be continuous involvement of real-world users of the disciplines, in addition to reform-minded academics. Thirdly, **Parents and teachers** will need to be included and empowered in the paradigm shift. A nuanced view of knowledge and science will need to be the foundation for a more accurate discussion of evidence.

Horvathova concludes that we will need to **carefully re-examine the relevance of what we teach**. She mentions that we have to **add relevant modern disciplines and interconnections**, and that we have to place emphasis on more **holistic learning**. This learning, besides acquiring knowledge, is also about skills, character, and meta-learning. Finally, we will need the courage to innovate, letting go of the comfort of an existing system and working under conditions of uncertainty toward a better one.

Governance, teaching and learning in HE – what are your learning outcomes for?

The last presenter in the workshop is Tine S. Prøitz. She is an associate professor at the department of Education at the University College of Southeast Norway and special advisor. As key statement, she explains that she is concerned about the purpose of the Learning Outcomes (LO). Curriculum developments tend to be framed around capacities, key competencies and broader learning outcomes. This renewed focus on LO in many countries is at the core of a broad initiative for international quality improvement. On the other hand, Prøitz detected that curriculum developments are paired with sometimes very strong economic arguments and motives.

Prøitz mentions that learning outcomes in higher education institutions are used on two levels: 1. governance, management and quality control and 2. course design, teaching and learning. In that way, the implementation of LO is a **central aspect of a policy initiative**, as well as a **pedagogical undertaking**. As such, LO address diverse agentive positions. The implementation of LO is attributed to multiple purposes and might be ascribed different meanings in the context of these diverse agentive positions.¹³

12 Meta-learning is often called learning to learn, the internal processes by which we reflect on and adapt our learning. As an example, Horvathova designed a matrix that shows the intersections of various knowledge areas, with the skills, character qualities, and meta-learning strategies that can be taught through them. The purpose is to organise the existing, overwhelmingly large landscape of educational goals, and create a clear and useful way of thinking about curriculum. By identifying the dimensions, they have set up a structure for further conversation. Using this as a guiding framework, we can begin to deeply re-examine curricula. Each knowledge discipline has a responsibility to include the learning of the skills, character qualities, and meta-learning strategies that are most aligned with it.

13 These variations of learning outcomes are: 1. outcomes of learning for the purpose of including all products of learning (Buss 2008:306); 2. Expressive outcomes, defined as: "outcomes of learning where purposes are formulated in the process of action itself as outcomes becomes emergent and clearer during the learning process" (Eisner 1979:103); 3. Using terms with a wider scope, such as intended outcomes specified at the beginning of learning; 4. holistic

In search of definitions, Tine S. Prøitz found two key people who had both used the LO in the 1970s and, independently of politics, theorized the concept in two very different ways. Gagné presented, at that time, ideas of teaching planning rooted in ideas of learning understood as a change in observed behavior after some form of influence.¹⁴ Eisner criticized this view and showed that learning outcomes are not only what can be observed in the form of changed behavior but what the learner ends up with after completing education.¹⁵ The two presented two different understandings of LO anchored in different views of learning. This was the first step in the development of a model where different understandings of LO can be placed along a continuum, and Gagné and Eisner's perspectives form the extremes at each end.

Learning outcome descriptions can be defined in several ways and is grounded in different perceptions on learning. **Gagné** and **Eisner** inspire the continuum as representatives of two different views of this matter. Gagné was concerned with questions concerning acquisition of skills identifiable in observed change in behaviour while Eisner challenged this view by introducing the concept of expressive outcomes. He focused on learning as more than what can be predefined in terms of definitive outcomes, not necessarily observable or measurable but as experiences of learning expressed by the learner. What distinguishes the description of outcomes from each other is the degree of predefinition of definitive solutions and endings.

Adopting a Learning Outcomes oriented approach takes learning outcomes as the main point of departure. This is in contrast to a more traditional European approach where the content, the syllabus or 'what the teacher would like to teach' often defined our focus. LO as a pedagogical tool puts the student's learning at the center and one way to start this work is to ask two questions: 1. **What do I want the students to achieve?** and 2. **How will I know that they have achieved it?**

Prøitz concludes that a curriculum is a two-sided phenomenon. It is a policy document for governing, management and quality control and it is a platform for pedagogy and teaching and learning. Adopting LO oriented approach requires taking the LO as the point of departure. Another conclusion is that different levels of the education system require different LO for various audiences and purposes. **Open LO on higher level** (national, HEI) are essential for **making LO on a lower level workable** (e.g. on programme level). Integration of various generic skills and competencies can be done by using various types of LO. LO has to choose its priorities to have a focused curriculum: focus has to be made.

Key points of the discussion (Horvathova / Prøitz)

Parents are stakeholders because they are important in helping students decide which programme they choose. They need to have the feeling that they are also consulted. Maybe the parents represent society as a whole.

Do we want to assess every LO? Can we even assess every LO? There is ongoing debate. It depends on the point of view. This point of view can depend on your work environment, nationality, culture.... Before talking about globally shared LO, we have to try to understand each other.

outcomes encompassing ways of thinking and practicing which may not be evident until the end of learning or even after it has been completed and 5. ancillary or emergent learning outcomes at a higher level than those specifically related to the main objectives—value-added learning resulting from the learners' 'own unique journey' (Buss 2008:307, Entwistle 2005).

14 "Distinguishing the types of human capabilities, considered as learning outcomes, makes possible a refined understanding of the learning process and thus permits a drawing of relatively precise implications for the design of instruction" (Gagné 1974:51)

15 "...essentially what one ends up with, intended or not, after some form of engagement." (Eisner 1979:101)

Comments by the observer

Patrick Van den Bosch from the Quality Assurance Unit of the Flemish Higher Education Council (VLUHR QA) acted as observer during this workshop. After the workshop, he organised a survey on both the organisation and the content of the workshop. This survey was filled in by a majority of the participants. These results are used as input for the evaluation below.

Organisational

The workshop was organised by the VLOR. It took place in the new offices of VLOR in Brussels. These are centrally located near Brussels North Station, which made the venue easily accessible for the participants. 21 Participants attended the workshop, amongst them 5 presenters. Besides the VLOR support staff and the observer, all the other participants are members of the VLOR steering group on curriculum design. The president of the steering group, professor Cis Van Den Bogaert (Antwerp University / Flemish Interuniversity Council), acted as chairman of the workshop. Based on the survey the participants were all positive about the composition of the group.

The workshop started at 9 am and ended at 3.30 pm. This day schedule made it possible for the international presenters to get home. The participants were satisfied with the day schedule as well as the lunch offered by the VLOR. Participants did not report any organisational recommendations.

Content

First of all, the participants experienced the presentations during the workshop as relevant and clear. The members of the steering group were enthusiastic about the presentations. The workshop covered the most important topics in curriculum design. There was a rich variety of presentations and insights about 21st century skills. It was an added value that the presenters approached the subject from different angles.

There were six scheduled presentations. Unfortunately, one of the presenters cancelled his attendance last minute. Given the time schedule, even with five presentations the day was well filled. Three presenters came from the UK. Although they have a lot of expertise, the discussion could have benefited from having more presenters from different countries as contextual variation is very important when talking about curriculum design.

Some of the presentations went a little over time and this time might have been spent on more discussion and involvement of all workshop participants. There was no room for drawing a number of conclusions. It would have been interesting to see which aspects all presenters agreed on. This absence of final conclusions is also reflected in this workshop report. However, this assignment will be done by the steering group on their next meeting. All in all, the above comments are small in the light of a very successful workshop. As a conclusion, it is clear that the participants are very positive about the content and organisation of this workshop.