The curriculum in higher education challenged

Educa-T
Zagreb, May 8, 2018

Dr. Cis Van Den Bogaert (University of Antwerp, Flanders-Belgium)
Chair of the Erasmus+ project’s Steering Group
Flemish Education Council (VLOR)
Flanders - Belgium

Flanders
- Population: 6.4 million
  (Belgium: 11.4 million)
- Area: 1/4 Croatia
- Students in HE: 230,000
- 5 universities (Academic HE)
- 12 university colleges
  (Professional HE & Fine Arts HE)
The Erasmus+ project

VLOR Working Group Curriculum Design Discussion paper

Experts
- Ben Brabon
- Liz Thomas
- Bruce MacFarlane
- Michaela Horvathova
- Tine Prøitz
- Jakob Ravn
- Filip Dochy
- Paul Ashwin
- Paul Blackmore

Peer Learning Activities
- Ministry of Croatia
- University of Bristol
- Artevelde University College
- University of Grenoble
- University of Uppsala
- University of Amsterdam
- University of Iceland
- Faculty of Design, Slovenia
- University of Rome Tor Vergata
- Autonomous University of Madrid

Dissemination
- Report
  - European Higher Education Area
  - Learning outcomes
  - What is a curriculum?
  - Curriculum design in HEIs
- Good practices in the Flemish HEIs
- VLOR Recommendation
  - Student-centered curricula

www.vlor.be/curriculum-higher-education-challenged
How can HEIs deal with increasing societal demands placed on the curriculum?
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance
Universal design for learning
Interwoven competences
Interdisciplinarity
Joint programmes
Workplace learning

Bruce Macfarlane: focus and use the principle of student academic freedom
You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time. (John Lydgate, Poet)

Jacob Ravn
How can we cope with all these trends (and more) at the same time? My response: we cannot.
How can the curriculum be expanded and 21st century skills be added to the curriculum? My response: they cannot.
My approach: Re-think organisations and make them innovative.
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment

**Independent Learning & Support/guidance**

- Universal design for learning
- Interwoven competences
- Interdisciplinarity
- Joint programmes
- Workplace learning

Liz Thomas:

*Teaching people how to think, rather than about transmitting knowledge is a fundamental principle underpinning HE.*

*...*

*There is scope to develop the independent learning curriculum to meet many of the HE challenges in the 21st century.*

*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 were more engaged by ‘real-world’ and employment-relevant learning.*
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance

**Universal design for learning**

Interwoven competences
Interdisciplinarity
Joint programmes
Workplace learning

**Primary aim:** the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

*Students with full access to learning and teaching are more likely to engage with learning, and to reach their full potential*

*(From: Ben Brabon, HEA, UK)*
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance
Universal design for learning

**Interwoven competences**

Interdisciplinarity
Joint programmes
Workplace learning

From: Michaela Horvathova, CCR, OECD, France
Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance
Universal design for learning
Interwoven competences

**Interdisciplinarity**
Joint programmes
Workplace learning

Copenhagen Business School:
- No single department can offer a programme (at least two departments and usually more).
- *Interdisciplinary programmes* combine two or more academic disciplines into one activity (not a double curriculum!)
- *Interdisciplinary programmes* demand interdisciplinary research or at least platforms for close cooperation between researchers from different disciplines
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance
Universal design for learning
Interwoven competences
Interdisciplinarity

Joint programmes
Workplace learning

Amaya Mendikoetxea, UAMadrid:
Joint Programmes are at the core of UAM internationalization strategy and central to promote collaboration within the YERUN network

What do we look for in a partner institution?
Mutual Knowledge + Trust + Commitment + Quality

The demands on and functions of universities in society have become highly diverse and complex, making it increasingly difficult for any single academic institution to discharge these varied roles successfully and efficiently.”
[from Doctoral Studies in Europe: Excellence in Researcher Training, LERU, May 2007]
Recommended approaches

Focus and Alignment
Independent Learning & Support/guidance
Universal design for learning
Interwoven competences
Interdisciplinarity
Joint programmes

**Workplace learning**

**Different forms** of workplace learning: an observation or orientation internship, a working internship, a business project, etc.

- competences from the programme are broadened and deepened
- competences from different aspects of the programme are put together
- competences are interwoven in the curriculum

(From: Corrado Cerruti, U. of Rome Tor Vergata)
Organisational context

**Shared vision on teaching and learning**

- Collaboration and Co-creation
- Autonomous HEIs - Supportive governments
- Platforms for curriculum development

- Academic leadership
- Institutional profile
- Decentralisation and autonomous implementation
- Staff training
Organisational context

Shared vision on teaching and learning

**Collaboration and Co-creation**

Autonomous HEIs - Supportive governments

Platforms for curriculum development

Bristol Students Union – why we like it...

Bristol Futures sets out a political vision of what Bristol graduates should look like. It prioritises values like sustainability, ability to work across disciplines, creativity and conscientiousness, and we believe these priorities are exactly appropriate for the world today.

Most importantly, it allows students the chance to move outside of the classroom, meet people from across the University and beyond, and become reflective and self-aware learners through the use of PDP.
Organisational context

Shared vision on teaching and learning

Collaboration and Co-creation

**Autonomous HEIs - Supportive governments**

Platforms for curriculum development

*In order to change learning, you need to plan for sustainability and win hearts and minds.*

(John Gardner – from Filip Dochy)

- Quality Assurance
- Joint programmes / degrees
- …
Organisational context

Shared vision on teaching and learning
Collaboration and Co-creation
Autonomous HEIs - Supportive governments

Platforms for curriculum development

Croatian example: International projects as a new driving force in curriculum development.