

# **Assessment as a learning strategy, feedback process and judgement process: how do you optimally integrate these in a curriculum?**

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Once upon a time, in the world of Higher Education, a focus on feedback and developing a feedback culture emerged to help students develop agency in their learning...

Suddenly, **assessment processes changed**, and we got

- Programmatic approaches
  - Portfolios
  - Rubrics
- Peer -learning, -feedback, -assessment...
  - ...

This can be **confusing and costs a lot of energy**

- Understanding **what is necessary when** in the learning process
  - **Create and implement** new designs and processes...
- ...new learning activities, assessments, scaffolds and support  
(like rubrics)

Students often experience ambiguity as well

- When to show what how?

We're looking at an **educational design** issue, aiming to **develop and activate** students toward professional independence

Creating **balance** to enhance motivation and the experience of success

It's not about measurement and instruments, but about

- What **information** is collected at
  - what **time**
  - by **whom** with
  - what **purpose?**

# Assessment purpose 1

As a learning strategy

- Help students accurately assess and regulate themselves



# Assessment purpose 2

As a feedback process to help students understand

- **Where** am I going? (goals?)
- **How** am I going? (progress toward goals?)
- Where to **next**? (how to improve progress?)

(Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>)

# Assessment purpose 3

As an evaluation process

- **Measure** if the level of knowledge and skills to warrant **credits or certification** is reached

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But **how to balance** the three purposes optimally?

# Balance principle 1

## Students' expertise development

- What needs do students have in different stages?  
(level of prior knowledge, motivator types, etc.)

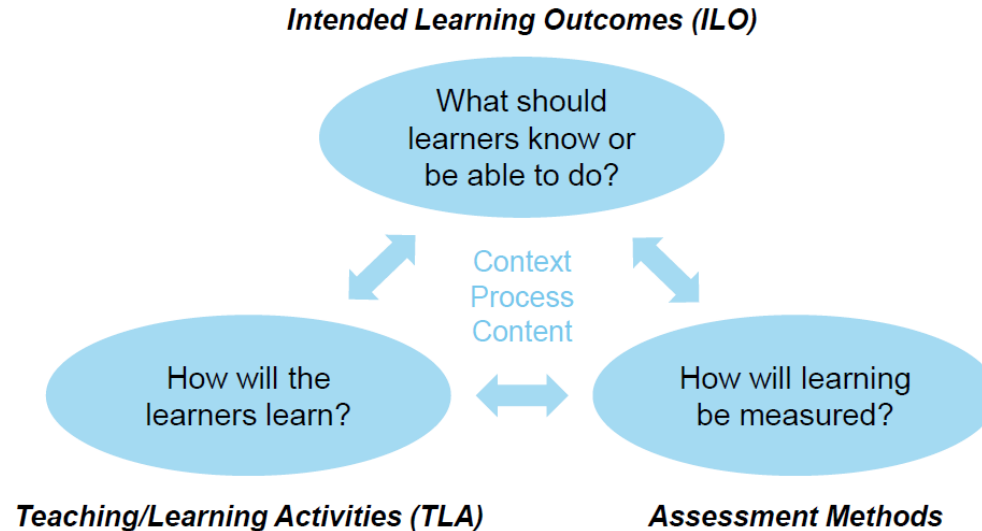
# Balance principle 2

## Backward design & constructive alignment

- Depart from learning objectives, define assessment and learning activities

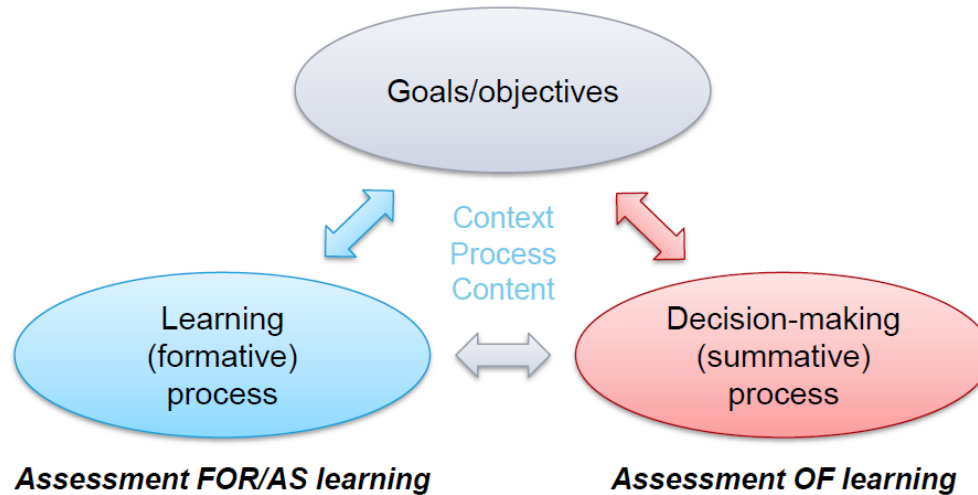
# Balance principle 2

## Backward design & constructive alignment



# Balance principle 2

## Backward design & constructive alignment





# Balance principle 3

**Feasibility** for students, teachers, and organization

- Achieve educational goals
- Teach within conditions and with pleasure
- Fit with organizational and legal frameworks

# Our approach



Agility as continuum

Within courses  
(e.g., assessment,  
learning activities, content)



Programme level  
(e.g., electives)



**Learning paths**  
(e.g., graduation profile)



Complete options / choices  
(e.g., projects)



# Our approach

## Graduate profile

- What are the competences (knowledge, skills, & attitudes) we'd like to see a graduate display?
- Looking at future education or career.

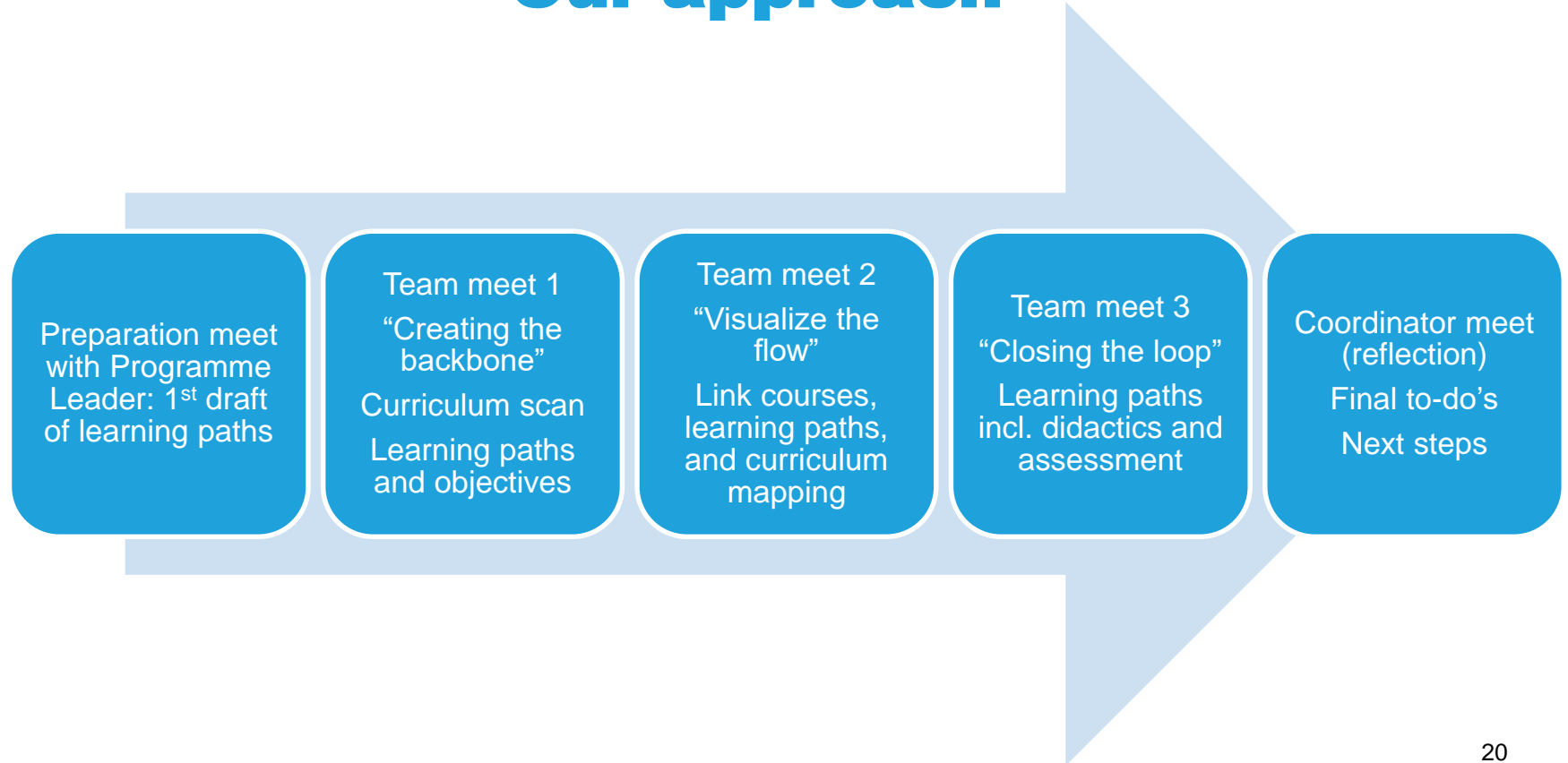
## Curriculum map

- Overview of the current curriculum

## Future

- What do we expect from a [L&D professional] in 10 years from now?
- Alumn inventory is advised

# Our approach



# Example 1

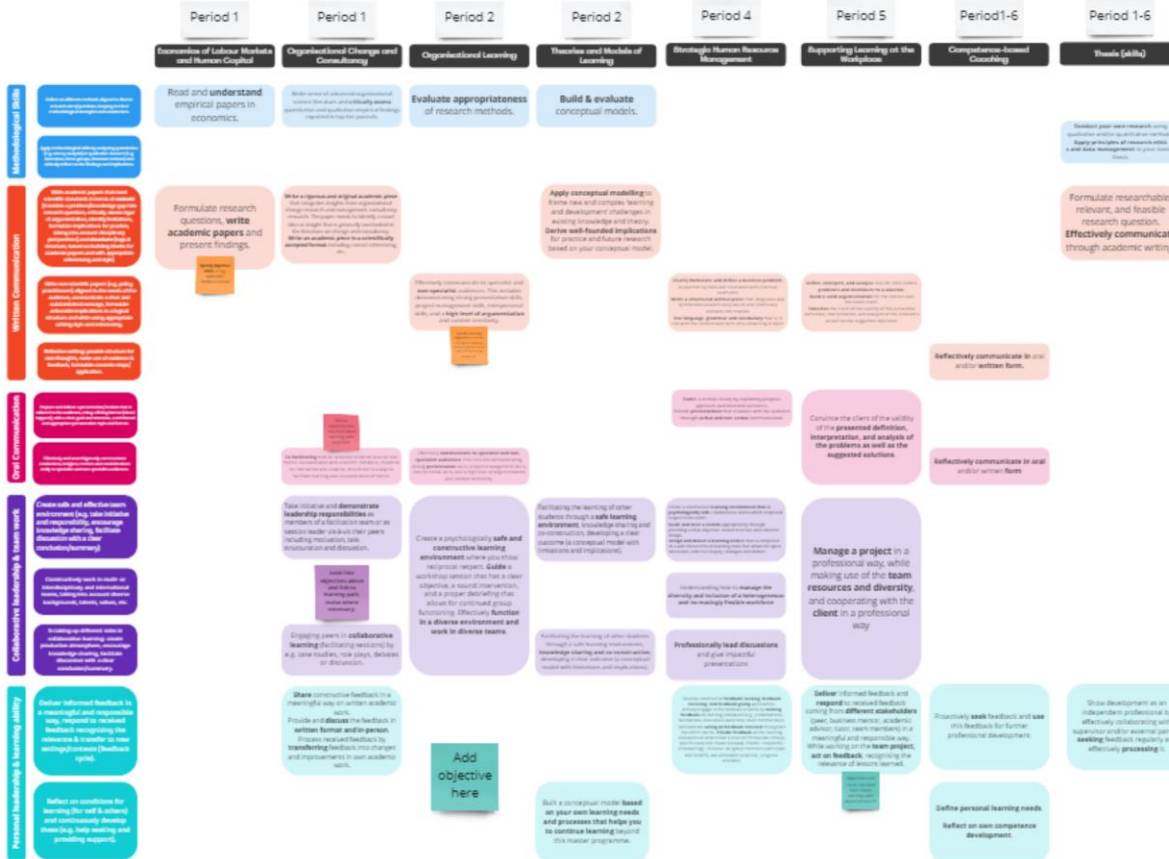
## MSc Learning & Development in Organizations (LDO)

- Principle 1: Student's expertise development ✓
- Principle 2: Constructive alignment ✓
- Principle 3: Feasibility ✗

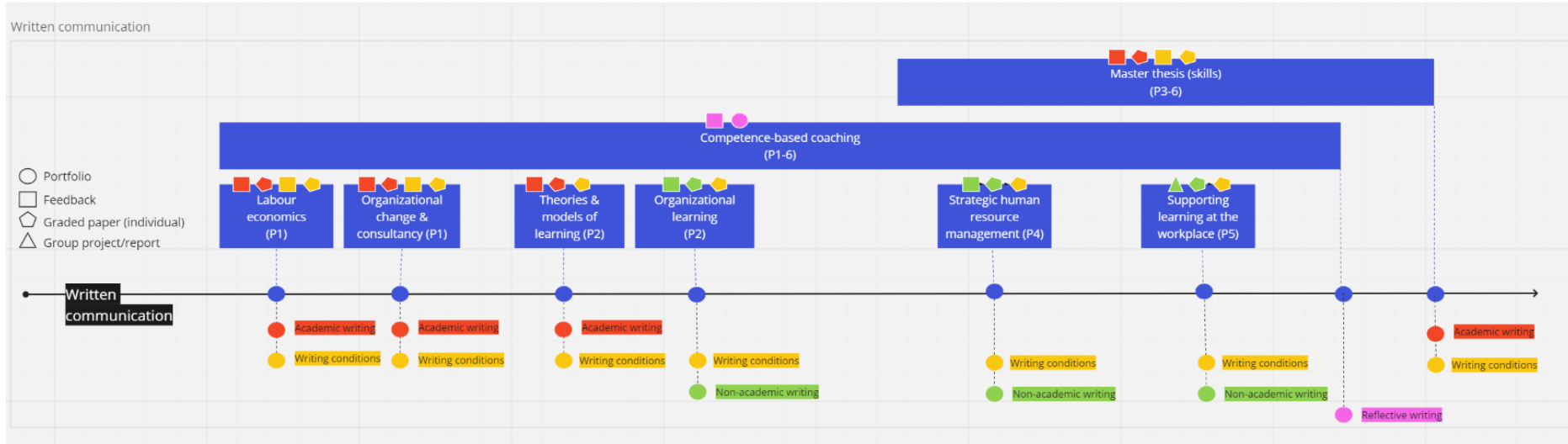
# Backbone – Learning paths

	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
Methodological skills	Apply different methods aligned to the research aim and question, keeping in mind methodological strengths and weaknesses.	Analyse quantitative (e.g. survey analysis) or qualitative datasets (e.g. interviews, focus groups, literature reviews) and critically reflect on their findings and implications.		
Written communication	Write <b>academic papers</b> that meet scientific standards (translate a problem/knowledge gap into research question, critically assess rigor of argumentation, identify limitations, formulate implications for practice, taking into account disciplinary perspectives).	Logically structure and relate building blocks in an <b>academic paper</b> including correct referencing and style guidelines.	Write <b>non-scientific papers</b> (e.g. policy, practitioners): understand the needs of the audience, communicate a clear and substantiated message, formulate actionable implications.	<b>reflective writing:</b> provide structure for own thoughts, make use of evidence & feedback, formulate concrete steps/ application.
Oral communication	Prepare a presentation/session that is tailored to the audience, using a fitting format (visual support), with a clear goal and structure.	Deliver a presentation/session that has a red thread, logical structure, presentation style & format (flexible, fitting to the audience), timing, clarity and achieves goals.	Effectively and unambiguously communicate conclusions, insights, motives and considerations orally to specialist and non-specialist audiences.	
Collaborative learning	Constructively work in multi- or interdisciplinary and international teams, taking into account diverse backgrounds, talents, values, etc.	In taking up different roles in collaborative learning: create productive atmosphere, encourage knowledge sharing, facilitate discussion with a clear conclusion/summary.	Deliver informed feedback and respond to received feedback in a meaningful and responsible way.	
Leadership skills	Take initiative and responsibility within multi/interdisciplinary and international teams.	Reflect on strengths and weaknesses and personal role in multi/interdisciplinary and international teams.	Adjust their leadership styles based on team needs in order to create safe and effective team environments.	Dealing with conflicts, without ignoring their own values and norms by respectfully voicing own opinions and setting boundaries.
Learning Ability	Reflect on conditions for learning (for self & others) and continuously develop these individually and in collaboration with others (e.g. help seeking and providing support).	Reflect on learning experiences and feedback, translate this into goals and effectively monitor these.	Act on feedback, recognising the relevance of lessons learned & transfer to new settings/ contexts.	

# Visualising the flow



# Visualising the flow





# Let's experience!

## Curriculumscan

### Introduction

This curriculum scan serves as a vehicle to get more insight into the curriculum of your programme and as a conversation starter on the curriculum. What is the current situation, how does it differ from the desired situation and what steps are necessary to resolve this difference?

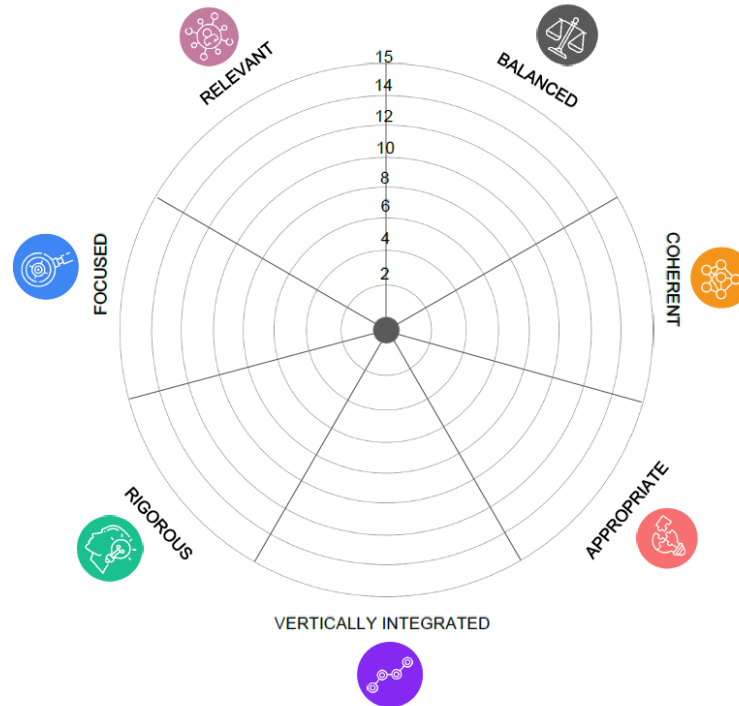
This curriculum scan is developed by Vernieuwendwars and based on seven principles for a powerful curriculum (William, 2013). The tool consists of statements for all principles, answered on a Likert scale. Based on the answers, the diagram on the right will provide a visualisation of the state of affairs in the curriculum of your programme.

### Please note

These principles are not meant to obtain a 'maximum score'. We apply these principles to the learning path level today. Some principles might be less applicable or even contradict each other. This tool is meant as a conversation starter about the design and potential of the curriculum on a programme level.

### Stepwise approach

1. In subgroups, discuss the statements on the next page and answer to what extent you agree to this statement in regard to the learning path you are discussing.
2. Based on the answers to the statement, fill out the diagram on the right.
3. Based on your diagram and those of the other subgroups, discuss what conclusions you can draw on the strengths and potential areas for improvement in the design of this learning path. Where do you want to move towards, what steps to take and what are your priorities?





### BALANCED

In addition to content knowledge, is there a focus on socialisation and professional development as well? A powerful curriculum is beyond mere subject knowledge and promotes intellectual, moral, creative and emotional development too.

All learning outcomes are addressed proportionally



Proportionate time is devoted to knowledge, personal development and socialisation



Relevant attention is paid to aspects such as morality, creativity and personal/emotional development



### COHERENT

Is there a noticeable cohesion between different subjects? A powerful curriculum forms a whole and makes explicit connections and links between different subjects/experiences encountered.

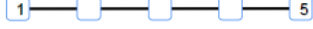
The content of different subjects is aligned



The structure of the different subjects is aligned and sufficiently diverse



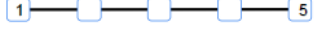
Students will recognize how the different subjects are connected



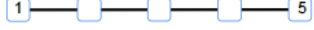
### APPROPRIATE

Does the content match the level of prior knowledge, skills and experiences? A powerful curriculum looks to avoid making unreasonable demands by matching the level of challenge to students' level of maturity and prior knowledge.

The prior knowledge required for a new subject is covered earlier in the curriculum



There is room to make choices in content, depth or way of learning based on prior knowledge/skills/experience



Curriculum content matches the maturity and level of professional development of students



### VERTICALLY INTEGRATED

Do different subjects follow one another, building on previously acquired knowledge/skills? A powerful curriculum focuses on progression by carefully sequencing knowledge, provides clarity about what 'getting better' at the subject means.

The same subject is spread over several periods of time



The curriculum is concentric: the same subject matter is covered in increasing depth



Students will recognize that there is a build-up in the curriculum



### RIGOROUS

Apart from content knowledge, do students develop in disciplinary thinking? A powerful curriculum seeks to develop intra-disciplinary habits of mind; the subject matter is taught in a way that is faithful to the discipline.

Students will engage in cause-effect, if-then or similar type of thinking within the discipline



Authentic, real-world cases are being used



Learning continues outside of the lecture hall/tutorial room



### FOCUSED

Is there a conscious choice in the topics students are working on? A powerful curriculum seeks to keep the curriculum manageable by teaching the most important knowledge through identifying big ideas or key concepts within a subject.

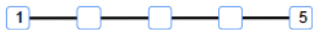
There is sufficient time to learn, repetition and feedback



The curriculum is structured on the basis of clear learning objectives or outcomes



A conscious choice has been made about what is and what is not covered in the curriculum



### RELEVANT

Is there a conscious connection to real-world practice? A powerful curriculum seeks to connect the valued outcomes of a curriculum to the students being taught it; provides opportunities for students to make informed choices.

The subject matter is linked wherever possible to students' current real-world environment and potential future real-world environment



There is room to make choices in learning material, content, activities, etc. based on interest



The usefulness of the learning is made explicitly clear



# Let's discuss!

- How do you balance the three assessment purposes in a course and curriculum?
  - learning purpose
  - Feedback purpose
  - Measurement purpose
- How do you take into account the three principles?
  - Principle 1: Student's expertise development
    - Principle 2: Constructive alignment
      - Principle 3: Feasibility



**Any Questions?**

# Want to know more?

- [Bas.Giesbers@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:Bas.Giesbers@maastrichtuniversity.nl)
- [Assessment to align teaching, learning and decision-making \(blogpost\)](#)
- UM-SBE Learning Academy: <https://sbelearningacademy.nl/>