Higher Education News - Newsletter for Higher Education

Contents

- Which factors do students consider important in cooperative learning?
- Blog Nathalie Veenendaal: Intercultural competencies
- Digital testing: experiences of students and lecturers
- Internationalisation speed dating during the Education Parade
- Study tips for students
- Highlights: course curriculum
- Educate-it: working on education innovation via e-modules and workshops

Course schedule

- 27/28 February - SKO writing retreat
- 7 March - Teaching in Higher Education in an International Classroom (THE-IC) (for HBO)
- 13 March - Analysing a Remindo test
- 14 March - Teaching in the International Classroom
- 27 March - Teaching in working groups and seminars
- 30 March - Writing more effective educational texts
- 6 April - Developing a Digital Rubric in Blackboard
- 11 April - Creating a knowledge video: the didactic side
- 18 April - Research planning and time management
- 11 May - Analysing a Remindo test
- 23 May - Blackboard peer feedback workshop
- 23 May - Teaching in Higher Education in an International Classroom (BKE-IC) (for University of Applied Sciences Lecturers)
- 13 June - Tutor workshop: Making Choices
- 15 June - Tutor workshop: Employability Skills
- 20 June - Tutor workshop: Motivation and Self-Management (for tutors)
- 3/4 July - STQ writing retreat
- 19 September - Supervising student research
- 28 November - Teaching in Higher Education (UTQ, in Dutch BKO) - in English

---------------

Research

Which factors do students consider important in cooperative learning?

What do students think is important in courses organised around the concept of cooperative learning? In order to answer that question, researchers from the Department of Biology and the COLUU/O&T selected five Life Sciences courses in which it was apparent that the cooperation between students was effective. They then drew up a list of factors that contribute to effective cooperation between the students based on interviews with individual students and groups of students. They found that students appreciate autonomy and self-regulating behaviour, combined
with a challenging, open and complex group task that required the students to create something new and original. The complete article is available [here](#). The Digital University Magazine [DUB](#) also featured an article about the study.

---

**Blog Nathalie Veenendaal**

**Intercultural competences**

Utrecht University has fully embraced the concept of internationalisation: not only to enhance employability skills and provide opportunities to develop global citizenship for students, but also to increase the diversity of the academic community. A quick calculation shows that the Strategic plan 2016-2020 mentions the word international / internationally 35 times, and the word diversity seems a golden thread throughout the different sections of the report. The Strategic plan 2016-2020 states that “In order to create a more diverse community, we will invest in intercultural skills for staff and students”. But what are intercultural skills, and how can they be developed?

---

**Education**

**Digital testing: experiences of students and lecturers**

Utrecht University constantly aims to improve the quality of its education by utilising innovation and technology. For example, in 2015 the university’s education innovation programme Educate-it completed a large-scale digital testing facility. Through this facility, students can take digital tests via a secure WiFi network on Chromebooks. Utrecht University researchers Gemma Corbalan, Renske de Kleijn and Margreet Manrique recently conducted an evaluation among 736 students and 75 lecturers regarding their experiences with digital testing. The study showed that students are enthusiastic about the technical aspects of the digital test site, but that lecturers are only slightly positive about this testing method.

Digital testing offers several benefits. For example, the computer is an ideal tool for processing answers to test questions, making it easier to grade tests and to evaluate closed questions. Answers to open questions are also easier to read, and students do not have to deal with writers’ cramp. Moreover, digital testing offers several new possibilities, such as the use of high-resolution images or videos. Digital testing software also offers the opportunity to link test questions to specific learning objectives or themes, making it possible to record their interrelations.

**Results of the study**

A total of 736 students from four different faculties and 75 lecturers evaluated the use of a digital test environment for summative tests. More than half of the students expressed a preference for digital tests compared to paper tests. Their reasons included: less time spent writing, the ease of changing answers and less likelihood of mistakes and inaccuracies. In general, lecturers noted that...
digital testing reduces their work load. However, lecturers still seem to make only limited use of the various test analysis options available. Lecturers are also of the opinion that the possibilities offered by digital testing do not help to relate the learning objectives to the tests.

**What is the next step?**

At the moment, approximately 10% of the tests administered at Utrecht University are in a digital format, and the number is rising: the number of digital tests scheduled and administered has already doubled compared to the previous academic year. In order to increase both the quality and the quantity of digital tests, Utrecht University is investing in lecturer professionalisation and coaching by means of workshops and a support site for lecturers. In so doing, the university hopes that lecturers will take advantage of the potential that digital testing offers to improve the quality of tests.

**More information**

The article can be downloaded [here](#) free of charge.

*Article: Gemma Corbalan, Renske de Kleijn, Margreet Manrique, Ervaringen van studenten en docenten met digitaal toetsen bij de Universiteit Utrecht, Vakblad Examens, 2016-04, November.*

Contact: Renske de Kleijn ([R.A.M.deKleijn@uu.nl](mailto:R.A.M.deKleijn@uu.nl), 030 253 1613)

----------------

**Internationalisation speed dating during the Education Parade**

Each year, Utrecht University organises the Education Parade: a teaching symposium for lecturers geared towards improving education. On 6 March 2017, the theme will be: Internationalisation - It Takes Two to Tango. The symposium will also feature an information market and parallel sessions. At the market, participants will have the opportunity to ‘speed date’ with the consultants/trainers from Educational Development & Training. If you have a question about Internationalisation, please do not hesitate to ask. To give some ideas: how can I facilitate interaction between Dutch students and students from abroad? What should I pay attention to when I give feedback to international students? What should I change about the exam now that my course is international?

[Read more about the Education Parade](#)

----------------

**Study tips for students**

Academic learning, oral presentations, research and writing, time management and studying with dyslexia: students who would like to develop or optimise their academic skills can come to Education Development & Training for courses, workshops and individual coaching. Three times per year, we send out a mail with the current course curriculum. And now the mail will also include study tips, such as [What works better: taking notes by hand or on a laptop?](#) [How can I get more from a lecture?](#)

For more information about the curriculum, click [here](#).
Highlights: course curriculum

Writing retreat Spend two days writing for your STQ portfolio (for university lecturers)

Have you begun writing for your STQ portfolio, but haven’t had a chance to finish it because of a lack of time? Or do you have problems translating your knowledge and experience as a senior into a reflective portfolio that meets the criteria? Lecturers who are experiencing these and other problems are invited to participate in the STQ Writing Retreat on 27 and 28 February: two days where you can completely focus on writing your portfolio.

Writing more effective educational texts (for higher education lecturers)

Lecturers occasionally produce educational texts that are more ‘writers’ texts’ than ‘readers’ texts’. As a result, the texts need another round of editing because the writer hadn’t put enough thought into the purpose of the text. Our last newsletter even published an article about that problem. For lecturers who would like to learn how to write good educational texts, we are offering the course Writing more effective educational texts on 30 March.

Teaching in Higher Education in an International Classroom (for teachers of Universities of Applied Sciences)

University of Applied Sciences lecturers who are working towards earning their Basic Didactic Skills qualification, and who would like to improve their educational skills in an international environment, are invited to participate in the Teaching in Higher Education in an International Classroom course. The next course begins on 7 March. This programme can be combined with the Basic Teaching Qualification course, which also deals with testing in an international environment.

Around the university

Educate-it: working on education innovation via e-modules and workshops

The education innovation programme Educate-it motivates and encourages lecturers at Utrecht University to examine and reinforce their own teaching techniques by offering a variety of e-modules and workshops. In order to facilitate knowledge and skills, some e-modules are now offered in both Dutch and English. In 2016, a total of 597 Dutch participants and 139 English speakers completed the five different e-modules.

Read more (in Dutch)

Colophon

HO Nieuws is a publication by Educational Development & Training (Centre for Education and Learning), Utrecht University.
Newsletter
This newsletter provides information about news, projects, activities, professionalisation courses and relevant developments.

Contact
T 030 253 2261
E-mail
Website
Twitter