ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR

(RE)DESIGNING FLEXIBLE EDUCATION
Dear lecturer,

This ROADMAP to flexible learning will help you on your route to a new, more flexible educational course or program. The ROADMAP is mostly meant as a guide with educational and didactical suggestions. There is less focus on technical issues and tools that can be implemented. For more information about these aspects please consult the teaching support website and the different tool and platform manuals provided at the end of this presentation.

The ROADMAP consists of three phases (preparation, delivery, assessment) and in total nine questions. Each question consists of main considerations, suggestions and additional readings or links.

Working through the three phases and eight questions should prepare you sufficiently for the 2020 – 2021 study year, and hopefully beyond that. If you wish additional support or individual feedback, please find help and support via this link or sign up for one of the summer courses in August.

Regards,
CFI & ICLON TEAM
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Meet the team

View Interactive ROADMAP here

This ROADMAP is made in a collaboration between ICLON & Centre for Innovation from Leiden University.
Tool & platform manuals

- Brightspace
- Microsoft Teams
- Kaltura Live Room
- Digital Assessment
- Video Toolkit

Tools Supported by Leiden University
In the preparation phase you focus on the redesign or new design of your course. Quite often, small changes to the existing course can move it towards a more flexible course. Although spending a lot of time on preparation might feel redundant, it will help you create a high-quality and sustainable course.

**Note:** After answering the 4 questions in the preparation phase, it’s highly recommended to familiarize yourself with the tools and technologies you plan to use, before moving to the delivery phase.
Q1

What should my students know and learn from my course?

Being explicit in what you expect students to be able to do with the skills and knowledge that are discussed, helps students to focus their attention to relevant aspects of the course and lessons.

Suggestions:

- Before you start, (re)define clear and measurable learning outcomes. With the options and limitations online learning give, you may need to reconsider if your learning outcomes are still realistic.
- Think about how academic development within your program, containing skills, attitudes and personal development goals, are represented and practiced. Although these outcomes might not always be explicitly trained, they are part of the graduate attributes of a study program.
- Before you start planning and preparing, consider which activities students should do to reach the goals that are set. Make sure to offer variety and complexity, ensuring the academic rigor Leiden University is known for.
- Clearly connect your lessons to the intended outcomes and discuss these explicitly. In this way the students are constantly aware of and practicing with reaching the learning outcomes which are assessed at the end of the course. If students are aware they are working on reaching the learning outcomes, it helps them to focus better during lessons.

- Imagine that after a lecture your students are by someone asked what they remember from your lesson, what would you like them to say? If you can pin down the 3 or 4 main topics you wish them to mention, then you have a good idea of what really matters in your lesson and what is additional and maybe redundant.

**Resources:**

- Learning objectives generator
- Learning goals & activities - Bloom’s digital taxonomy visual
- Blogpost on Lower and Higher order thinking skills of Bloom’s digital taxonomy
- How can I stimulate students’ independent learning by using ‘constructive friction’?
Q2

Which course elements can I re-use or adapt for flexible learning?

After mapping out what your students should learn, it’s time to create your flexible learning program. Redesigning or recombining your existing course elements is a very effective way: many elements can be reused and can be supplemented by additional educational resources.

Suggestions:

- It is not always necessary to create new content or media. You can probably use a lot of educational materials from previous editions of your course. Readings, assignments, recordings, case studies: these can be used again.
- Publicly available videos, such as TED talks, knowledge clips (from MOOCs) or conference recordings can help you tell your story. This reduces online lecture time and thus frees time for interaction.
- Let students create materials as part of the program, such as short knowledge clips, podcasts, wiki’s or case studies, for their peers to study or work with.
- Create new media for a limited number of key concepts: as these topics will probably not be subject to change, the created media can be used for a long time.
- Check with colleagues (from other faculties or universities) to share (open educational) resources or create new ones together to reduce the preparation time.

**Resources:**

🔗 Using Existing Open Educational Resources (OER)

🔗 Infographic - Chunk your content

🔗 Formats & activities for remote teaching
Q3

How do I efficiently and effectively structure an (online) lecture or tutorial?

Teaching in an online setting calls for (even) more activities and engagement to keep students’ attention and focus. There are a lot of factors that may distract students from focusing their attention in an online classroom.

Suggestions:

● Start with defining the structure and refer to this throughout the session (e.g. use a progress bar on your slides).

● Start with a case, a clear storyline, a question or an assignment and refer to this throughout your session. This will improve relevance, concentration and motivation for the students.

● Teaching online is experienced differently from an in-class lesson. Replicating the approach you might have for an in-class lesson to an online lesson might not work. For online lessons it is good to realize that students are (more) easily distracted. This means shortening your sessions and planning regular (group) activities (discussions, polls, assignments) is key.
● Reduce the amount of information on screen: if there is less to read, there is more to listen to. In any case be sure that your text is coherent with what you are saying. Otherwise students will get distracted and confused.
● Often lessons start with theoretical input, followed by assignments, discussions or other activities and then finish with a recap or quick check. It is interesting to play with the order of your lessons for example by starting with a case, issue or challenging question. Let students try and work on that first before you offer any (theoretical) information or guidance on how to work on the task. Students can often figure out much more on their own than you expect. Offering information while students are working will make them more eager to pay attention as they need your input to finish the task.

Resources:

🔗 Learning goals & activities - Bloom’s digital taxonomy visual
🔗 How do I keep students engaged in my blended learning set up?
🔗 The chronicle of higher education - Common misconceptions of online education
Q4

How will I assess my students during the course?

Keeping track of students’ progress is crucial to enable students to reach the learning outcomes of your course. Formative assessment (assessing to learn or assessment during the course) gives both lecturers and students insight in the development of their comprehension and skills. Giving students feedback on their progress during the course helps them to focus on what’s going well, what needs to be improved and how to work on those aspects.

Suggestions:

- The easiest form of formative assessment is asking clear questions which are (preferably) related to the learning outcomes of a lesson of the course. Questions like ‘is everything clear?’, ‘are there any questions?’ usually don’t result in much response. Asking specific and clear questions like ‘how does this compare to model a and b?’ or ‘what’s the difference between theory a and b?’ help students to focus on what is important, and which skills and knowledge to apply.

- Indicate where and how students should answer formative assessments questions. You can use a discussion forum or the chat in a live session to
gather the answers. Invite students to respond to each other's answers and provide feedback to their peers.

- In an online class, the principles of asking questions to your students work the same, except you can't always see your students or read their body language to judge whether they understand you. Planning regular questions or tasks to work on individually or in breakout rooms is recommended.

- When asking questions to the entire group, you can either call students by their name to respond or ask them to type in their answer in the chat. You can also make use of online tools to create polls and quizzes.

**Resources:**

🔗 * Webinar (sign in with Leiden account) ‘Online formative assessment’
🔗 * Webinar (sign in with Leiden account) ‘Online supervision of students’
🔗 * Manual digital assessment

* Need to sign in with Leiden account
Now you have thoroughly prepared your program and assessments, it is time to start teaching. As social dynamics are different in an online setting, you need to consider how you engage and communicate with your students. A safe, engaging and welcoming academic environment can be created online, using the suggestions below.
Q5
Do I need to change my way of teaching in a flexible setting?

In a flexible setting you can rethink your course and your role in it. During the scarce synchronous moments with your students, taking the role of a moderator or guide might be more appropriate than that of a content expert or presenter. You may need to find a new balance in delivering content and putting students to work together or individually.

Suggestions:

- Consider using a “flipped classroom” approach, in which students spend their individual time to study, make assignments and watch lectures or knowledge clips. The moments you and your students are online together can then be spent on interactive activities, such as group work, debate or peer presentations.

- As a guide on the side or supervisor of a learning process gives students the opportunity to engage with the content and to work on finding solutions together or individually. Your focus should be more on how students find the solution, instead of explaining to the students what the solution is.
• If you are used to a style of teaching which is more teacher focused, it is good to realize that in online classes students can easily lose their attention. Especially if students’ cameras are turned off and you don’t know what students are doing, chunking the content into small pieces and having several interactive elements are worthwhile considering.

• Working with new methods and technology always leaves room for improvement. When teaching remotely you can invite your students to provide feedback (through e.g. a short evaluation form) and think along about improvements during the course.

**Resources:**

🔗 * Webinar (sign in with Leiden account) ‘Online Instruction for Workgroups and Discussions’

🔗 * Webinar (sign in with Leiden account) ‘How to Prepare for Remote Teaching?’

🔗 Educause article -3 Types of interaction for online education

🔗 The chronicle of higher education - How to be a better online teacher?

🔗 Chunk your content

🔗 Check list: prepare for online teaching

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Q6

How can I create an (online) student community and sense of belonging?

During on campus teaching students have plenty of time to chat to the lecturer, each other and catch up on social activities. In online teaching these moments need to be planned and organized more deliberately.

Suggestions:

- In order to increase participation in discussions, at the beginning of your course, use questions that elicit participation. Examples are asking for personal opinions or experience, asking to respond to statements, asking for examples. Also having students to discuss questions in breakout rooms before plenary discussion lowers the barrier for participation.

- Ask students to share something personal, prior to the course or during the course. Students can perhaps upload an image of themselves or the setting they study in. Creating a shared music or video playlist on a platform or asking students to give a short demo of a skill or hobby during break time are fun and easy to organize.

- In online education there are less options for non-verbal communication. You can strengthen your story by thinking about which emotion fits your story and
let this emotion resonate in all aspects of your use of voice (height, intonation, emphasis, pace, pauses, etc.)

- With little to no eye contact, grab your students’ attention by keeping your students in mind and by remembering that you are really telling your story to them.

- Think of how in an in-class situation you normally build a relationship or community with your students. Often this is achieved with ‘little things’ like welcoming students at the door, using their names, linking to students’ life or sharing with them from your own professional or personal life and inviting them to do so as well. Many of these actions can be emulated in an online setting. Welcome students by their name; give them some time for social talk in a breakout room; call out student names for input; ask for (personal) reflections on a topic; etc. You can also briefly check-in with your students to ask how they are doing and experiencing following an online course. What is more motivating and personal for students new to a study program, then having a phone call or an online on-to-one session with their lecturer! So if enrolment numbers allow, divide the students among the staff and schedule short meetings.

- Students are not obliged to switch their camera and microphone on, or they might not want to add input in the chat section. So, at times it may feel like you’re talking to yourself. Be aware that students who do not appear to be present or active, might in fact still learn. There can be several reasons for students not to engage: other students might be quicker to type in an answer in the chat; students might not know how to phrase their thoughts; students might not understand the question or content entirely and think their answers are stupid or wrong. An easy trick for requesting input in the chat is to ask students to type their answer, but only press ‘enter’ once you tell them to do so. In this way students won’t be influenced by others. Of course, there should also be enough time to think about an answer and the question should be clear and relevant!
Resources:

🔗 Blog - ‘How to build an engaged online community?’
🔗 How do I create an inclusive classroom?
🔗 Tips and trick to connect with your students
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Onboarding your Students to Online Learning’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Building a sense of Community in Online Courses’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Accessibility for all students’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Inclusive (online) teaching practice and COVID-19’
🔗 Learning or Lurking? Tracking the ‘Invisible’ Online Student

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How do I deliver an engaging (online) lecture or tutorial?

Learning works best when students actively and timely engage with the content. Activities like questions, discussions and polls can be held both online and in class. Planning your lessons with sufficient time to engage with the content stimulates student motivation. Ask yourself: is it necessary that you explain the content or give examples, or can students do this prior to or during the lesson? And if the students have prepared, how will they notice there is an added benefit in doing so?

Suggestions:

- You can ask students to prepare the content you would ‘normally’ explain in a lecture in their own time prior to a lesson. There are many online resources that explain concepts, theories and practical applications. You can also choose to make a knowledge clip or podcast for students to watch and listen. The time you would usually spend on explaining in class, can now be used to discuss the preparation further. Again, you can choose to let students work in groups to discuss their preparation.
● Using knowledge clips is a great idea but they need to be short (6-8 minutes) and focus on one key issue or principle. Preferably the knowledge clip is accompanied with a clear task, assignment or activity that the students need to discuss later on in class.

● Focus on clarity and relevance: use a concrete example, assignment or case study, set expectations and use a clear lesson structure. Refer to these elements throughout your session.

● Variation is key! An online lesson of 45 minutes in itself is not a problem, but should certainly include plenty of variation, for example by interactive elements or by a change in your use of voice. So giving a 45 minute presentation or showing a pre-recorded lesson is not very effective or engaging. Students will be easily distracted and as a lecturer you have very little idea of what students are doing or learning.

● Request camera use: you can’t make it mandatory, but you can make it the norm. Explain during the first class why it is important to you and what the benefits are. Invite your students to use their webcam: it makes it easier for them to participate and for you to teach them.

Resources:

🔗 How do I persuade my students to prepare for class?
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Converting Small Scale Education to Kaltura Live Room’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Online Instruction for Workgroups and Discussions’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Flipping the Online Classroom’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Improving student engagement with synchronous and asynchronous teaching tools’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘How to prepare educational videos’
🔗 * Webinar - ‘Educational Podcasting’
🔗 Video toolkit to create educational videos

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Q8

How do I teach online and offline (Hybrid education) simultaneously?

When students cannot be together in class altogether, lecturers may have to decide to teach some students in class while the others join online. Staying in touch with the online students, making them feel part of the class and enabling cooperation requires lecturers to carefully plan their classes.

Suggestions:

- When combining online and offline participation, it is essential to let the online students collaborate with the on-campus group. E.g. if you have 60 students you create 15 groups of 4 students. At every session, 1 of the group members is attending on-campus class, while the others are attending online.
- Rotate the groups which are in class and online, so that every student has chance to meet peers and lecturers.
- Student presentations with some students online is not recommended. Instead ask teams of students to record a presentation and post this online. Randomly assign the other students to a presentation to ask questions and comments within 24 hours. The presenting team then has 24 hours to reply to the
questions and comments. The presenting students can make a relay run video in which every student records part of the presentation and then invites the next group member to take over the recording.

- Pre-record your lecture or educational videos so that all students can watch these online prior to the lesson. In this way all students have the same learning experience for receiving content and can the in-class time be spent on collaboration.
- Cold calling students to answer questions can cause delay with the online students. Making a list of students who can randomly be called out during a specific part of the class will help those students to be prepared.

Resources:

🔗 Learning and instruction in the hybrid virtual classroom - An investigation of students’ engagement and the effect of quizzes (gain access with your Leiden login credentials)
Phase 3

Final assessment

Once you’ve considered the goals and formats of your course, it’s time to think about the assessments. The suggestions below will help you to think of their purpose and formats.
Q9

How will I assess my students at the end of the course?

For this topic, we would like to refer you to Leiden University’s Manual for Digital assessment. This manual is accessible when signing in with your Leiden account. General information about composing valid and reliable assessments can also be found in the guide ‘Tips for Tests’.

Resources:

🔗 * Webinar - ‘Online Assessments’
🔗 * Manual digital assessment
🔗 * Guide Tips for Tests

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Meet the team

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