

Npuls

Centers for
Teaching &
Learning

Case study

It starts with the lecturer



Article

We can no longer
expect innovation
to be driven by
lecturers alone

Approachable
and critical
friend

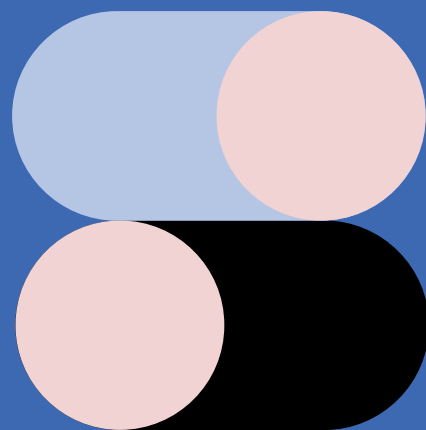
Evelyn Tempel

NOT A PROJECT
BUT A PERMANENT
ENTITY IN THE
INSTITUTION

Ellen Bastiaens

Moving education.

‘What we once
put down on paper
has become reality:
we have landed
in the future.’



Editorial

by Manon Geven,
Npuls liaison on behalf of the Council
for Secondary Vocational Education
and Training Schools in the
Netherlands (MBO Raad)

“The danger of looking back is that you can fall into the future.” When asked to write this column, I found myself thinking of this anonymous “Loesje” quote. Now that the Centers for Teaching & Learning (CTLs) have made meaningful inroads in vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities, I felt it opportune to look back on what we have achieved. To reflect on all the hard work that went into the CTLs. It was a busy period that gave me a few more grey hairs, but it was also a lot of fun.

The beginning: October 2021. SURF, the council for Secondary Vocational Education and Training Schools in the Netherlands (MBO Raad), the Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen), Universities of The Netherlands (Universiteiten van Nederland) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) apply to the Dutch National Growth Fund (Nationaal Groeifonds) for “Boosting Digitalisation of Education” (Digitaliseringsimpuls Onderwijs). The application sets out a number of splendid plans, including the creation of CTLs. “Centers for Teaching & Learning ensure implementation of results in educational institutions,” it reads.

August 2022. With the approved application in hand, a small team of trailblazers sets to work on the plans. We’re not entirely happy with the description of CTLs in the application. If we want lecturers to engage meaningfully with the CTLs, top-down implementation is not going to work, we decide. So we propose the concept of “key teams” that will be in charge of coordinating the digital transformation in their institution. This opens up the way for CTLs to focus more on fostering a culture of learning.

September 2022. We enter talks with OCW. According to the schedule in the application, the grant scheme should open as early as the first quarter of the pro-

gramme. But it turns out that the lead time for DUS-I (Dutch Implementing Agency for Grants to Institutions) is about a year. I don’t know why it takes so long to put a scheme together. But I do know that we just have to get started!

March 2023. By now, the team of trailblazers has identified the institutions’ needs and wishes. The scheme is now mostly ready and we assess, in a number of meetings, if it is fit for purpose. It is gratifying to see that the meetings instantly lead to collaborations between institutions.

August 2023. Npuls is officially up and running and we have finished elaborating the proposal. Now it’s the turn of OCW and DUS-I to look at it. It has to be reviewed by legal experts and be subjected to a number of tests, including the state aid test. Now I understand why the lead time is so long. We will be spending a big chunk of public money, so the process has to be meticulously prepared and executed. Our peers at DUS-I and OCW work on the proposal throughout the summer and by mid-August, we have the Minister’s signature. We’ve made the deadline in our schedule! The next step is to assemble a review committee ... and get people to sign up, of course!

Autumn 2024. Now the real work begins. The first 14 institutions have been awarded a grant and the Npuls development program has started. New applications for round two have been submitted. There is overwhelming enthusiasm for a future in which every institution has a CTL! What we once put down on paper has become reality: we have landed in the future. We have CTLs that are appropriate to institutions’ local contexts, but with intensive collaboration between institutions of tertiary education nationwide. I’m immensely proud of what we’ve put in place and very curious about what’s to come next.

Centers for Teaching and Learning in figures



The first plans for “boosting digitalisation of education”, which set out the formation of CTLs, were submitted as early as 2021.

8 regional CTL meetings between 2023 and 2024 brought together education professionals from 38 institutions.

16 CTL WEBINARS AND 16 WORKSHOPS WERE ORGANISED IN THE 2023 - 2024 PERIOD.

80% of educational institutions participated in the various CTL activities.

10 regional CTL networks are active with a total of 69 affiliated institutions.

14 INSTITUTIONS RECEIVED A CTL GRANT IN THE FIRST ROUND; TOGETHER WITH 5 MORE INSTITUTIONS, THEY FORMED THE FIRST CTL COHORT UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF NPULS.

50 institutions submitted an application in the second grant round.

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Trial and error: no success without a learning process

‘The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.’

This quote from futurologist and author Alvin Toffler illustrates that lifelong learning is crucial in this time of rapid successive changes and societal challenges.

Column

Learning and unlearning – neither a simple nor a linear process. A period of “reorganisation” is often needed to move from one phase to another. This made me think of a parallel learning experience we see in children growing up. A child who can already walk may revert to crawling for a while. This is called regression. Going forward then falling back for a while before being able to move forward again, with all the frustration and doubt this entails. Learning is a fascinating process that continues throughout our lives. From taking our first steps to understanding complex technologies – there can be no success without a learning process.


This is not only true for young children. Learning requires an open attitude, we tell our students, and the same applies to our own learning. Learning requires us to be willing to listen and to give and receive feedback. It also means that we must revise our beliefs in the light of new information.

What does that mean in the light of digital transformation? Societal challenges and rapid digitalisation demand a lot of our problem-solving capabilities. It is clear that developing digital skills and competencies can help us accomplish this.

What makes it complicated is that learning and “unlearning” are intertwined. This is because some of the things we have learnt about education over the past decades are useful for the tasks we face today. But part of what we have learnt, such as certain processes or beliefs, can get in our way. To change the things that are holding back progress, we need to go through a collective learning process with the right guidance and support. And that’s where CTLs play a pivotal role.

We give this type of learning a place in every educational institution at CTLs. In the period ahead, we will work hard to set up and advance these CTLs properly. And that will involve trial and error. Learning is an energy-intensive process, so paying attention to and helping each other is crucial.



I hope CTLs will be a space and a network where we not only learn things but also unlearn things – sometimes with a smile and sometimes with a grimace. May we embrace the discomfort of learning new skills and grant ourselves and each other the opportunity to learn with grace and understanding. A measure of regression here and there is part and parcel of the process and will prepare us for the next step. The first 19 institutions have begun their collective learning process on CTLs and the next round is already in preparation. They’ve made a great start. Are you ready to join in? 

Gerdinand Bosch,
Npuls programme director



Innovating together beyond institutional boundaries

by Maureen van Althuis



Nynke Kruiderink

CTL project leader and
advisor at Npuls



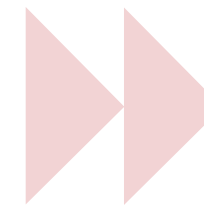
Aukje Leufkens

Captain of innovation
at Npuls and member
of the CTL Innovation
Team at Tilburg
University



Irene Wannet

Captain of innovation
at Npuls and educationalist
at ROC Nijmegen



A CTL IS A HUB WHERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXPERTISE ON EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION ARE GATHERED AND SHARED. THIS EMPOWERS LECTURERS IN INNOVATING THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE. ALTHOUGH NOT ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE SET UP A CTL YET, THE RELEVANT TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE INCREASINGLY COMING TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE. AND RECOGNITION FOR THIS IS GROWING – EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS IN DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS ARE DISCOVERING THEY ARE DOING THE SAME THING.

‘Introduction of the term CTL has already made practitioners who are involved in educational innovation much more conscious about their work,’ says Irene Wannet. Irene is a captain of transformation at Npuls and an educationalist at ROC Nijmegen. ‘But also more aware of the work of peers in other institutions! It’s easier for them to find each other and collaborate on common challenges.’ A CTL is an umbrella for all kinds of activities related to educational innovation.

‘Whether you’re conducting research into educational innovation, knowledge-sharing or support for lecturers, these are all activities that belong to a CTL,’ says Nynke Kruiderink. As an adviser and CTL project leader at Npuls, Nynke works on relevant connections in this area on a daily basis. ‘The emergence of CTLs is not just something you see in the Netherlands. There is intense pressure worldwide for educational institutions to respond rapidly to challenges brought on by innovations. People and institutions are starting to organise themselves around this issue. We emphasised this development in the Dutch National Growth Fund application that preceded the launch of Npuls and positioned it as the driver for change in Dutch educational institutions.’

Faster innovation

Nynke continues: ‘Innovation has always been needed in education, but it has to happen faster now.’ Digitalisation and technology have opened up many possibilities and developments in this field are moving at a tremendous pace. ‘We can no longer expect lecturers alone to drive innovation. They need help with this.’

Aukje Leufkens: ‘As we move forward with the national transition of educational innovation, we want everyone to think and operate differently and CTLs are the means to get there.’ Aukje is also a captain of transformation at Npuls as well as a member of the CTL Innovation Team at Tilburg University.

All in one place

Providing support for innovation in education is by no means new. ‘But whereas before it was a matter of finding out where to ask your questions or present your ideas in the organisation, the institutions will soon be making it easier for lecturers to find activities related to educational innovation and support through greater collaboration within the institution.’ Aukje continues. Nynke: ‘This is precisely what the CTLs will do. There have always been CTL-like activities in educational institutions, but they were scattered throughout the organisation. Now they are being consolidated in one place.’

In her extensive experience as an educationalist, Irene has coached many educational teams in educational innovation. This is also where she has seen things go wrong many times, either through lack of integrality or lessons learned from other institutions. ‘An issue would only be looked at from an educational perspective and lacked an IT or logistics analysis. I think it helps a lot when innovation is approached in a much more integral way in a CTL. Moreover, in this movement we connect to a national network and can therefore draw on knowledge and experiences from other institutions more easily.’

Collaboration between vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities

What is new and exceptional according to Nynke, are the knowledge networks emerging across multiple educational sectors. Npuls aims to create the right structure for this by providing a financial incentive. ‘We want to strengthen existing knowledge networks,’ she continues. ‘With the advent of Npuls, you also see new networks emerging, such as regional groups of practitioners seeking to connect across sectors.’ Which is precisely the intention, as cross educational sector collaboration is a key focus of Npuls.

Examples of regional collaborations that transcend institutions, and sometimes even sectors, are the Amsterdam Network of Educational Innovators and the Gelderland Professional Development Agenda (Gelderse ProfessionaliseringsAgenda, GPA). ‘ROC Nijmegen is part of this collaboration in Gelderland province,’ says Irene. ‘Here, we see many exchanges on themes now covered under CTLs, even though they are not yet called a CTL at the member institution.’ And maybe it will stay that way, because what

really matters are the activities – whether they come together in a Community of Learning, a Teaching & Learning Network or simply the department of educational innovation.

‘Within the university network, heads of departments already organised informal meetings you could classify as CTLs.’ Aukje has been involved in this for four years through her role at Tilburg University. ‘They came together to exchange experiences: “How do you do it?” or “What issues are you running into?” It’s extremely helpful that these issues also become visible in other sectors. We’re finding out that we all face the same challenges and are working on the same thing. Now that the approach is becoming more standardised and we know the goals, we can learn from each other and share experiences more effectively.’

Empowering lecturers is the main focus of the CTL

‘CTLs must maintain their diversity to remain relevant for an institution – not only in terms of form but also focus. This way, it can continue to be a good fit in the context of that institution,’ Nynke points out. She cites two examples: Yuverta, a vocational education

and training institution with around fifty locations between Amsterdam and Heerlen, and VU University Amsterdam, which has 32,000 students at one location. The student population also differs and has divergent challenges. These institutions will therefore design their CTLs in very different ways.

In other words, what a CTL will focus on varies by institution but, in essence, CTLs are aimed at empowering lecturers. ‘At ROC Nijmegen, we already spend a lot of time on educational innovation, such as professional development for lecturers and supporting them with curriculum innovation. What is missing, however, is integrality and informal encounters. We also want to encourage lecturers to engage in cross-team learning, and we want to create a place for that. This is what the CTL will help to facilitate,’ says Irene.

An entirely different example of what a CTL might focus on is fostering contact between education (staff) and IT services. ‘This type of contact is lacking in some institutions,’ says Nynke. Here, too, a CTL can play a facilitating role. ‘How do we work together to ensure that lecturers have the right digital tools at their disposal? How is the decision-making process regarding these tools arranged and is it adequate? And how can we work together on this?’

Knowledge broker

It is clear that CTLs need to be up to speed on the latest educational innovations in the sector. But they also need to foster a deep connection with their teachers, teaching teams and their challenges, so that they can provide possible solutions. Due (in part) to this approach, added value is quickly created and recognised.

‘A CTL is a knowledge broker and driver of change,’

says Nynke. ‘At Npuls, we support CTLs through a reflective guidance process. As these are learning components in learning organisations, you have to continually reflect on and monitor the process. Initially, you know where you want to go but are not exactly sure how to get there; at this stage you don’t have all the pertinent facts yet. But by adopting an evidence-informed approach and sharing experiences – both in terms of teaching competencies and research results – you can make the best possible decisions to move in the right direction.’

A CTL is a gathering place, if you will, to look at challenges and possible solutions in the area of educational innovation. A place where lecturers can ask questions and share ideas and where management can obtain advice. And, within the entire movement of CTLs, having mutual connections that transcend sectoral boundaries. That is precisely what a CTL aims to achieve.

Building communities

Suppose you want to contribute to the success of a CTL in your institution; where do you start? ‘You have to engage with stakeholders. Activating people who know how things are now and how they could be in the future is also extremely helpful.’ Aukje sees on a daily basis that a lot is already happening and that collectively, everyone already knows so much. The strength lies in bringing all these elements together.

To get the CTL ball rolling, start by taking stock of what is already being done in terms of CTL goals. ‘There’s not a single institution doing nothing at all in this area,’ says Irene. ‘Engage with the stakeholders and try to identify areas where a CTL could add value.’

A true community builder, Nynke encourages growth and empowerment of these groups of people. ‘Empower networks or communities in your institution on issues that have your attention and on which you want to work together. By facilitating them across domains – both for your lecturers and support staff – you foster a learning culture in your institution. This makes a CTL even more effective.’

The Npuls CTL-team is in awe of the determination at vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities to work together on this. Nynke: ‘On top of increased collaboration, we see – because CTLs are now part of a nationwide programme – accelerated development of and greater commitment to CTLs.’

Although the movement is well underway, the captains of transformation still have a lot of work to do. But, according to Aukje, it is absolutely viable. ‘We help to visualise the added value of a CTL by facilitating structural alignment with current needs.’ The ultimate goal is for experts and users themselves to be the driving force in the CTL movement, thus advancing the national transformation. 🌑

Five key objectives of a CTL

1. Professionalisation



How? Facilitate formal and informal learning.
Impact: Lecturers get adequate support for their professionalisation development.

2. Knowledge sharing



How? Making knowledge on educational innovation accessible and sharing it proactively.
Impact: Lecturers and management have up-to-date knowledge on educational innovation.

3. Innovation



How? Encouraging and driving educational innovation.
Impact: Lecturers and management actively work on improving education.

4. Support



How? Providing advice to management and direct support to lecturers.
Impact: Management and lecturers feel supported in the educational innovation.

5. Research



How? Facilitating research on educational innovation and linking this back to the institution.
Impact: Institution works on educational innovation in an evidence-informed way.

‘Teaching people new skills does not automatically lead to cultural change.’



► **By Nicole Bakker**
Interview with Dr Andrea Kottmann
 Researcher at the Department of Knowledge, Transformation and Society (KiTeS), University of Twente

The **impact** of CTLs on educational innovation

Dr Andrea Kottmann is a researcher at the Department of Knowledge, Transformation and Society (KiTeS) at the University of Twente. She focuses on educational innovations and the structures that support learning and teaching in higher education. A major focus of her research is on CTLs. Andrea studies how CTLs contribute to improving education and how they impact broader organisational change.

Andrea is involved in Npuls as a CTL expert. We asked her about the impact of CTLs on educational institutions and about her new research on networks of lecturers.

Two types of CTLs

Andrea distinguishes between two types of CTLs in her research.

- **Central-Unit CTL:** This type of CTL is centrally managed and usually adopts a top-down approach. Its aim is to promote educational innovation and professional development for lecturers, in line with the institution's strategic goals. The emphasis is on developing lecturers' individual skills. This involves training and support for pro-

fessional growth, including workshops, courses and qualifications such as the Basic Teaching Qualification in the Netherlands (BKO).

- **Network CTL:** This type of CTL is less centralised and is based on a network structure. These tend to be bottom-up initiatives in which education professionals collaborate on educational improvement. The focus is on knowledge-sharing and exchanging best practices.

The impact of CTLs on educational innovation

These two types of CTLs impact educational innovation in different ways. In her research, Andrea divides this into three levels:

- The individual level focuses on changes in knowledge and skills of individual lecturers.
- The group level includes departments or teams of lecturers, where educational innovations are shared and applied within that specific organisational culture.
- Major structural changes are taking place at organisational level, such as embedding educational innovations in the institution's wider educational culture.

Andrea explains: ‘Let me start with a network CTL. This bottom-up approach has an impact at all levels but is often limited to participants in the network. While this type of CTL fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing, its success largely depends on participation and integration within the wider organisation. For those who are not part of the network, the impact is usually limited.’

With Central-Unit CTLs, Andrea mainly sees an impact at the individual level. Lecturers develop greater awareness of effective teaching methods and their role in the learning process. Andrea explains:

‘Although these training programmes help lecturers develop skills such as constructive alignment, in the long run there is less visible impact on cultural changes related to teaching and learning at an organisational level. This runs counter to the assumption that training everyone in new skills will automatically lead to cultural change. In complex institutions like vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities, there are many different cultures, for instance those related to a subject or a discipline, each with their own views on teaching and learning. There are often clashes between these different cultures, which limits the scope for broad innovation in teaching methods.’

This is why Andrea advocates a hybrid form. ‘A CTL should combine bottom-up initiatives and strategic top-down support so that innovative ideas originating on the shop floor merge with the institution’s goals.’

Lecturer networks: networks for change

Lecturer networks are a valuable tool for educational innovation, but as Andrea points out above, their impact often remains limited to the network. As a means of further research into this type of network, Andrea set up a meta-study. She presented the first findings of this meta-study at the [EAIR-conferentie](#) (European Association for Institutional Research) held in August 2024.

‘I wanted answers to three simple questions: What types of networks have been studied before? What results did these studies yield? And what factors contributed to those results? Using AI, I ran this analysis on 21 articles. This proved extremely useful, as the study revealed three types of networks for educational change.’

Three types of networks

- Support networks are informal, small-scale networks aimed at supporting lecturers in their teaching practice. This entails horizontal knowledge sharing between lecturers, students and external organisations.
- Innovation networks are larger networks dedicated to promoting and disseminating new teaching methods and innovations.
- Strategic networks are networks that start as a strategic initiative to achieve specific educational goals, such as innovating curricula.

‘We currently have many examples of innovation networks in the Netherlands. What results do these and other types of networks achieve? That was the next question I sought to answer.’

Andrea identified five result and impact areas in which a clear progression can be seen from increased knowledge (support networks) to achieving structural change (strategic networks).

‘Networks support the improvement of teaching practices, increase preparedness for educational innovations, facilitate knowledge sharing within the organisation and can influence both structural and power relations within institutions.’

Factors that contribute to these results can again be divided into several categories:


- ▶ **Structural factors:** Consider size, density and diversity of the network. A network is more effective when there are central players who actively disseminate knowledge and build bridges between different groups or faculties.
- ▶ **Social factors:** Trust, collaboration, active participation and community building are critical to the success of a network. These factors ensure not only that people can participate in the network but that they are actively encouraged to contribute to it.
- ▶ **Functional factors:** These determine how people interact in the network and whether there is room for a diversity of perspectives. ‘This influences the network’s culture and determines the extent to which people feel comfortable developing and sharing new ideas.’

Positioning CTLs in an educational institution

During guidance by Npuls, CTLs are encouraged to collaborate with knowledge networks and lecturer networks in the institution to foster internal innovation and strengthen the learning organisation. CTLs are also strengthened in their role as knowledge brokers, for example in the CTL webinars planned for this year. This ties in with Andrea’s perspective:

‘You can think of CTLs as “interfaces” between Npuls and the individual institutions, allowing them to effectively manage all the developments and changes they encounter. Npuls facilitates horizontal knowledge flows between institutions, thus fostering knowledge exchange between the institutions. It is also important to channel knowledge within the institutions themselves through vertical knowledge flows; this ensures that knowledge is integrated into the organisation at different levels. CTLs act as a connector between these horizontal and vertical knowledge flows.’

A key consideration here is **developing the competencies of people participating in the CTLs so that they can effectively assume their role as knowledge brokers.**

These competencies include, for example, providing guidance to networks of lecturers so that they can develop innovations in a culture that fosters innovation but also disseminate these innovations outside their network. 



Would you like to know more about Andrea’s work?

Visit research.utwente.nl/en/persons/andrea-kottmann



It starts with the lecturer: educational innovation at Utrecht University

by Nicole Bakker



Sebastiaan Steenman
Utrecht University



Mabelle Hernández
Utrecht University

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION IS ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF A CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING (CTL). WHERE DO YOU START, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER AND WHOM SHOULD YOU INVOLVE? UTRECHT UNIVERSITY FACED THE SAME QUESTIONS AND IN 2014, LAUNCHED EDUCATE-IT, AN EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION PROGRAMME AIMED AT PROMOTING BLENDED LEARNING IN EDUCATION. EDUCATE-IT IS NOW AN INTEGRAL PART OF UTRECHT UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR ACADEMIC TEACHING AND LEARNING (CAT).

Case study

What can we learn from the team at Utrecht University? We interviewed Mabelle Hernández, director of innovation at the CAT (Center for Academic Teaching and Learning), and Sebastiaan Steenman, who is Senior Fellow of the CAT and education director for bachelor programmes as well as board member of the Department of Management and Organisational Science (Bestuurs en Organisatiewetenschap, USBO). They shared their experiences on the launch of Educate-it and the CAT, explained why a culture change within Utrecht University was necessary and offer inspiring insights for anyone working on educational innovation.

'My colleague Jan Haarhuis and I set up the educational innovation programme known as Educate-it in 2013', says Mabelle. 'This initiative stemmed from a Utrecht University vision quest focused on using technology in education. We were lagging behind in that area and Utrecht University wanted to be a frontrunner. Educate-it, the programme set up to implement that vision, was in fact already functioning as a small Center for Teaching & Learning. It focused on research into education, professional development for lecturers and stimulating and supporting educational innovation as well as its organisation. All this with a strong focus on blended learning. We now have a CAT at Utrecht University. The entire Educate-it programme - including the team and the programme goals - is now integrated into the CAT. I am responsible for the educational innovation pillar within the CAT.'

The idea for the Educate-it working method came from Jan, who soon realised that this programme required a different approach at Utrecht University. Although the official goal of Educate-it was to promote blended learning in education, in practice, it revolved around questions such as:

- How can we motivate lecturers to innovate their teaching and what do they need to be able to do that?
- What aspects should we appeal to for them to engage with and achieve these goals and what should we arrange for them in the programme?

Cultural change

It soon became clear from this broad line of enquiry that it was not only about educational change but also about cultural change – namely towards an organisational culture focused on educational innovation. We therefore took a bottom-up approach and asked the following question:

'What is the best way to change a culture without imposing that change?'

From the outset, we looked for expertise within our own organisation to help us address these issues.'

Sebastiaan: 'I have therefore, alongside my colleague Marie-Jeanne Schiffelers, been involved in this endeavour from USBO. Educate-it asked us for advice:

'We have ambitious plans to introduce educational innovations in our education system through technology; how do we achieve this in a complex, professional organisation with a diverse group of professionals?'

Mabelle: 'To bring about the desired culture change, we had to connect with the lecturers and align with their wishes and the obstacles they experienced in innovating and changing their teaching practice. We supported them and encouraged them to make changes in education, while discovering what they needed and what obstacles we could remove. We started on a small scale and carefully monitored the lecturer's needs through surveys. As a result, our expertise as a team grew and we were able to continuously improve our support.'

Educate-it's development was iterative and flexible. The programme itself also became a research object for which we adjusted our approach, team composition and method based on the results. This meant we were in constant flux and had to regularly adjust and switch gears. It truly was a new way of working, including having to abandon target figures for the programme. The focus was on lecturers' needs and fostering their willingness to change. We collected their feedback, expanded on it and each year presented the results achieved in the organisation. In this way, we focused on motivating the lecturers.'

Approach and findings

Sebastiaan: 'From the outset, we contributed to this process by drawing on our knowledge and expertise in policy change, implementation and the operation of complex professional organisations. We initially took a theoretical approach, which we continuously monitored over the years through surveys and qualitative research. In the early years, we regularly involved students in the surveys and research; they carried out a substantial part of the work. We organised several sessions with the Educate-it team and reflected on effective communication and the principles of effective communication.'

In parallel with these efforts, we continuously evaluated the approach on the basis of the survey we conducted on lecturers' willingness to change. This allowed us to explore how the implementation strategy worked in practice and whether certain assumptions were correct. For instance, is it the case that lecturers who experience more autonomy also innovate more in practice? We continuously explored these kinds of questions.'

Hybrid approach

Sebastian continues: 'At the time, we recommended a hybrid approach for implementing the new approach. So not entirely top-down or bottom-up. At the administrative level, especially in the early years, there were targets for blended learning and the use of knowledge clips in teaching. Utrecht University wanted to emphasise educational innovation and renewal as core values for quality throughout the organisation, and this had to be embedded in Educate-it. This required ownership at the local level; in other words, with the lecturers. For if you impose the use of knowledge clips in all courses in a top-down manner, nothing will happen. You want it to fit in the local context

of the course and for lecturers to experience the benefits of using it.

With the hybrid approach, you assume that the initiative should always come from the lecturer but that as an organisation, you consciously choose what you facilitate and value.

This means you facilitate some aspects of what lecturers want thoroughly, professionally and in a low-threshold manner, such as knowledge clips. You intentionally communicate best-practices from lecturers who have created impactful knowledge clips. In this way, you decide top-down what to focus on, while the initiative and ownership for innovation remains with the lecturer. This combination worked extremely well and is still a key principle of the CAT's approach.'

'Exactly,' Mabel adds, 'We never said "no" in those early years. If a lecturer came up with a good idea, we would figure out how to facilitate it. We looked into what the lecturer needed, following a three-pronged approach to supporting lecturers.'

Didactics, implementation and support

First, we considered the didactic aspects – what exactly do you want to achieve with your teaching? Why do you want to innovate with educational technology, e.g. a knowledge clip? What is the aim? And what would your teaching look like? Could we help you design this teaching?

Second, the practical realisation – what do we need to make a knowledge clip? This meant working in parallel to set up a studio, find the right software and organise it in a secure and appropriate way in our university, in collaboration with our IT department.

And third, practical support – we had (and still have) a front-line "Teaching Support" desk where students help lecturers deploy educational technology and refer them to the educational advisers or other partners of the CAT, for example.'

Team composition

'The first employee we hired for the Educate-it team was a communications officer, whose main role was to publicise the fact that lecturers could come to us if they had a good idea for transforming their teaching practice,' says Mabelle.

Soon we needed educational advisers too – pragmatic professionals who could brainstorm with lecturers on educational design but also understood their needs. The educational experts at Educate-it and now also those at the CAT are fundamentally more focused on using educational technology and can draw on that expertise to help lecturers design their teaching modules. For more theoretical educational support, referrals are – where necessary – made to Education Consultancy and Training (Onderwijsadvies en training), a partner in the CAT network.

We needed more tech-savvy staff in our team to be able to collaborate with the IT department. They were able to translate the needs of lecturers (teaching perspective) for our IT department. This new approach, where we jointly discussed what was needed for lecturers (and education), resulted in valuable internal processes as well as mutual understanding and cooperation.

Much is possible, but you often have to figure out how. This is where bridge-builders, who understand the language of both sides, come into play.

This is how we expanded our team with people who could work together across horizontal lines. Such a process requires years of careful preparation.

Quality of the chain

We have already mentioned knowledge clips, but we also took this approach for digital assessment and innovation tools. For assessment, for example, this starts with the educational specialist interviewing the lecturer.

Then a system and a room have to be set up so that assessment can take place safely, after which the quality of assessment is analysed. This chain extends throughout the university and requires different people and expertise. It starts with education, with the Center for Academic Teaching and Learning being responsible for managing that chain and ensuring its quality. This way, an increasing number of colleagues and processes joined the process on different themes. Throughout the process you constantly ask yourself "are we doing the right thing?" and you have to dare to abandon things that don't work. The survey into lecturer's willingness to change and the results of this survey supported us in this approach.'



Curious about Utrecht University's research on lecturers' willingness to change? Find out more on edu.nl/ruecq

About Mabelle

As Director of Innovation, Mabelle Hernández is responsible for the Education Innovation pillar at the Center for Academic Teaching (CAT) at Utrecht University. She also runs her own business, Cambio Company, where she coaches people and organisations in a systemic way and supervises change assignments.

About Sebastiaan

Sebastiaan Steenman is Senior Fellow of the Centre for Academic Teaching and Learning (CAT) at Utrecht University as well as Associate Professor and Director of Education at the Department of Administrative and Organisational Science at Utrecht University. He teaches methods and statistics, political philosophy, policy and organisational science and conducts research into education policy, skills development and (selective) access to universities of applied sciences and research universities.

Hopeful and full of inspiration

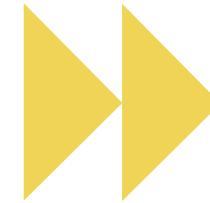
by Maureen van Althuis



Noah Rookmaaker
Education and research
assistant at VU CTL



Nadine Timans
Student employee
VU CTL



THE CTL AT VU UNIVERSITY HAS STUDENT EMPLOYEES. THEIR PERSPECTIVE GIVES A SUBSTANTIVE INTERPRETATION TO HOW PROJECTS ARE IMPLEMENTED. THEY ALSO PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS.

‘You can immediately see if a knowledge clip (a video with tutorial, ed.) was made with or without the CTLs support. Some people may not yet know that a knowledge clip is not a lecture on video,’ says Nadine Timans. Nadine is pursuing a research master’s in Child Development and Education at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and is a student employee at VU University Amsterdam (VU). Noah Rookmaaker also works at VU CTL, as education and research assistant. She studies Educational Sciences at Utrecht University and had the following to say about student engagement in CTLs: ‘As students, we enhance the perceptiveness of CTLs: what do students engage in and what do they find difficult? In a two-hour lecture, they really do lose focus halfway through.’

Nadine applied for a vacancy at CTL that was a perfect fit for her media and pedagogy study programmes. Noah joined the CTL through the Student Qualification in Education project (Student Kwalificatie Onderwijs, StuKO) which she is working on and in which VU CTL is also involved.

Noah: ‘The idea behind the StuKO project is that students aren’t just consumers of education but that they are also active participants in various roles. They may work for the university as employees, supervise practicals or contribute to curriculum innovation. The StuKO project designs the guidance of as well as recognition and appreciation for these students. It’s a strongly rising trend. The CTL helps with issues such as how to engage students and what is needed to get them involved.’

Nadine: ‘CTLs support comes in many forms. We develop training courses, are available for one-on-one discussions and organise events for students. Take the VU Education Day, for instance. It’s about didactics, but also about educational innovation, what tools you can use

and best practices for lecturers. As it takes place at the heart of VU Amsterdam, it garners attention and gets the ball rolling.’

Noah: ‘The CTL has a lot of educational knowledge within VU University Amsterdam. It understands what is going on in education and educational innovation; the CTL has theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience.’

Nadine: ‘As I see it, the CTL also fulfils a network role. We are a hub between faculties – lecturers, other employees and support staff come together in a CTL. We serve, inadvertently, as an example for others. People visit us to see how we collaborate with a team of student assistants.’

Together, we achieve much more

Besides enjoying a solid position within the institution, the VU CTL also maintains close contacts with other CTLs. A lot of knowledge exchange takes place and educational offerings are also shared between the CTLs.

Nadine: ‘I’m currently working on how to use knowledge clips effectively in education. We develop e-learning’s but also a toolkit for lecturers. We then share these with other CTLs at a joint event. It’s very satisfying!’

Noah: ‘The student-as-partner project at VU has been running for more than eighteen months and is garnering a lot of attention from other institutions, even internationally. For the national StuKo project, participants from universities of applied sciences and research universities come together in project groups across the country and also attend symposiums. One of our brainstorming sessions resulted in the design of a training course for students. We did this in one day! I participated in that from VU CTL.’

Nadine: ‘VU CTL also collaborates directly with other CTLs, for example with the CTL at University of Amsterdam on the Visible Learning Lines project. That’s a method University of Amsterdam designed to evaluate courses and subjects based on the curriculum. VU University Amsterdam has now also started to apply this method. This project got off the ground through collaboration of the two institutions’ CTLs.

‘We serve, inadvertently, as an example for others. People visit us to see how we collaborate with a team of student assistants.’

Nadine Timans

Less daunting

We already know that CTLs are a place for sharing knowledge and experience; the fact that they also inspire hope and allay fears is all the more encouraging. Thanks in part to encouragement and upselling, the network is growing and the number of lecturers and educators with an affinity for educational innovation is increasing.

Nadine: ‘Lecturers have their own teaching methods, but they are not always sure if those methods are the best. Now they have the opportunity to learn about this from and with each other, and perhaps also to academically substantiate their approaches. It’s inspiring.’

Noah: ‘I think a CTL also brings hope to the institution, because you can look to the future together and work on improving and innovating education together.’

Nadine: ‘I think the CTL also helps by making new technology less daunting for lecturers. For example, we started AI support. We encourage lecturers to learn how to use AI in their teaching rather than merely observing it from a distance. That’s how we remove the fear of technology.’

Noah: ‘That’s a great example! Removing fear can be about much more. For example, how to deal with tensions or different perspectives in the classroom or create a safe learning environment. These are important aspects of education that you might not immediately think of, but they do come into play in a classroom.’

Nadine: ‘Broadening perspectives is a strength of CTLs. As students, we add to the student perspective and are highly motivated to make everything the CTL does more widely known. Many people at the institution are still not aware of everything the CTL does. When lecturers come to our pop-up studio to record knowledge clips, we always tell them that the CTL also organises training courses and events.’

Approachable and critical friend

by Maureen van Althuis

At Saxion, lecturers and educational innovators have made great strides thanks to cooperation with the CTL, or TLC as it is called at this institution. The School of Finance and International Business makes full use of solicited and unsolicited advice.



As curriculum design project leader at Saxion University of Applied Sciences, **Evelyn Tempel** works intensively with colleagues from the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). She does so at one of the university’s 12 academies, the School of Finance and International Business (SFIB). She has also worked as a lecturer at SFIB and supervised projects in which students worked on business issues.

Evelyn is co-responsible for renewing international business education and is in contact with the TLC almost every week. ‘As a project team, we call ourselves the cutting-edge curriculum crafters, with the TLC as a critical friend always ready to help us.’ She also works at the Data Driven Innovation research group on research around digital issues of SMEs.

In this interview, she shares inspiring success stories of collaboration with the TLC.

Low threshold

‘We want to reflect multiple value creation in all of our programme modules. This is a specific way of looking at a company, where we value not only its financial performance but also its meaning for society – the social aspect, the impact on people’s wellbeing and sustainability. We think it’s important to educate students about these aspects, and the TLC helps us do this.

The TLC provides advice on how to build such a module and incorporate the desired multiple value creation. They share insights from other academies that have done the same and provide ideas on how to assess this. Their advice, whether solicited or unsolicited, is always extremely valuable. What’s more, the low-threshold contact with the TLC makes them feel like part of our academy.

I am very happy with our collaboration with the TLC. Without them, it would require much more effort from us to implement innovations. The TLC brings a lot of valuable knowledge and experience to the table. If new educational technologies or digital techniques are applied, they support us in doing so. But they also provide support with pedagogical strategies related to how students learn and help with the design of digital learning environments or ways to implement blended learning.’

Hands-on and practical

'We are in the process of renewing the curriculum at our academy. We do this with development teams in which two or more lecturers are responsible for each module. The TLC literally sits beside the lecturers. Alongside colleagues from International Marketing & Sales (in this case), they look at what's in the module. Then they explore what learning styles are suitable for this, what assessment methods are applicable and what tools are available. Their contribution is very practical and hands-on.'

Another example is integrated assessment. This is another innovation we are working on and in which the TLC is heavily involved. Every quarter, we focus on a specific issue in our programme – a business challenge – presented by a company. We integrate different learning lines in this programme component, such as business research, business communication and personal and professional development. When you do this, you also have to have an integrated assessment of all the different lines. That can be quite a puzzle.

The TLC helps us solve this by joining us at sessions but also helping us write our documents. They give us handy tips and ideas. They look at how we can best build and describe our rubrics and whether quality criteria are properly included in the assessment. They also help us set up the 'back end' of the learning environment properly, for instance by writing the weighting formulas for the business challenges and internships. In short, everything we need to perform the integrated assessment as effectively as possible.'

Fortnightly meeting

'Thanks to our fortnightly meetings with the TLC as a project team, the TLC knows exactly where we stand. We make an overview of things we have encountered in practice in advance, and we also look ahead. Innovation is not always a straightforward endeavour; it is also about change management. We therefore take small steps so that it does not become too overwhelming for lecturers and students, who also have their own daily activities, and it remains manageable.'

The TLC also creates broad support for the changes by making innovation very practical. They come up with concrete examples that lecturers can immediately apply in their modules. Such as, for instance, an alternative to 45 minutes of speaking: watch a video and interact with the material, or speak for 15 minutes and then have students work on the material in a particular working form.'

At times frustrating

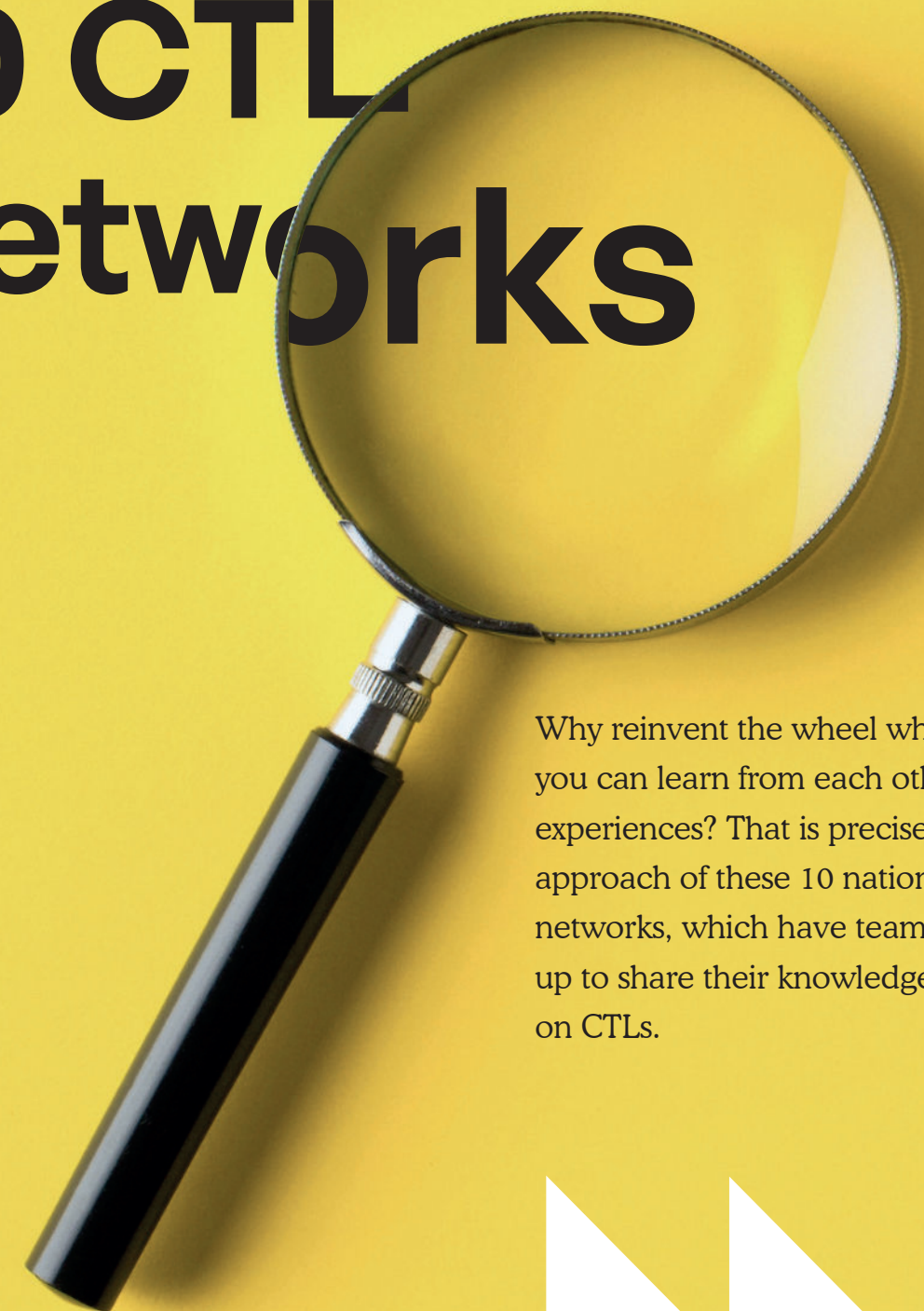
'This year, we started working with a new learning environment for students. This can be quite demanding in addition to the work involved in developing the curriculum. It entails a fast learning curve and can at times be quite frustrating. The TLC supports us in using the new system.'

'The TLC removes obstacles for people who find innovation challenging. It is in these situations where TLC colleagues sit beside the lecturer at the table.'

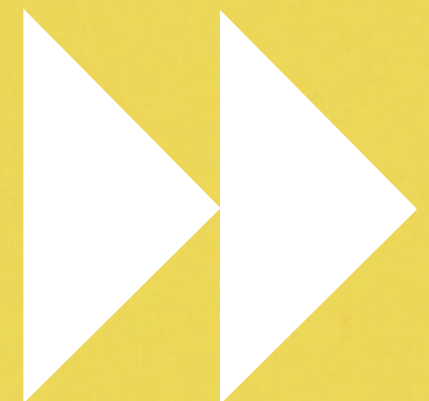
Lecturers receive a lot of personal attention and guidance in addition access to the many courses TLC offers through the Saxion Academy.

The TLC supports all academies within Saxion, which creates even more sharing of knowledge and experience. 'We also seek that exchange with other academies ourselves. Because the TLC has the bigger picture, however, they can sometimes steer us in a direction we had not yet explored ourselves and where many gains can be made.'

10 CTL networks



Why reinvent the wheel when you can learn from each other's experiences? That is precisely the approach of these 10 national networks, which have teamed up to share their knowledge on CTLs.



● LAUNCELOT

LAUNCELOT (Dutch acronym for the National University Network of Centers for Learning and Teaching) has grown steadily since its first Zoom brainstorming session on 11 October 2021. In addition to online meetings, the network also visits the different institutions, one day in spring and one in autumn. It is now a self-managing organisation with rotating leadership. Participants agree that Launcelot works so well because they keep running into each other. This creates a bond and a “community of practice” develops. The formula for success? Inspiration comes before fulfilment. Don’t try to convince everyone of the need to do it but focus on people who are motivated to do it. This way, others will naturally join in.

● R6

How do you set up an effective CTL? R6, the CTL network of the six universities of applied sciences in the Dutch conurbation (Randstad), was set up as a learning network to address this question. The idea originated with Leiden University and Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The initiative was then joined by Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Inholland University of Applied Sciences and The Hague University of Applied Sciences. R6 meets three to four times a year, each time at a different institution. The hosting institution collects the main themes for the meeting and puts together a programme. These meetings and contacts lead to collaborations in which the participants express the desire to collaborate on future activities and products. Tip by R6: it is a good idea to explicitly determine the kind of network you want to be with each other early on in the process.

● CTL of the North

Intensive forms of cooperation between vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities already exist in the “University of the North” in the Northern Netherlands. What is new is that support for the educational organisation is now also central to a network, namely in the CTL of the North. Bringing together CTLs in the making is at the heart of this network. The network shares experiences on designing the mission within its own organisation and establishing connections around shared challenges.

There is a digital platform on which the participants can share documents, e-learning materials and other materials. Once every two months, participants meet at one of the member institutions.

● GPA

The Gelderland Professional Development Agenda (Gelderse ProfessionaliseringsAgenda, GPA) is a network of vocational education and training schools, the second-degree lecturer training programme and two research groups of HAN University of Applied Sciences. They work together in an organised way on objectives formulated along two learning lines: (1) learning and teaching with IT and (2) responsive vocational education. This happens online and on-campus through working groups and knowledge tables, with GPA-Connect as the crowning glory of all meetings! Four times a year, the entire network comes together during this festive event. What makes this network so successful? All participants experience that in practice, you may seem to go faster when you work alone, but when you work together you truly do get further. The take-away is to invest in smart, cross-boundary collaboration.

● The Amsterdam network of Educational Innovators

‘Although we would not call ourselves a CTL network, collaborating through CTLs is one of the themes we focus on in addition to AI and Npuls themes.’ The Amsterdam network of Educational Innovators consists of employees at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, ROC van Amsterdam and Inholland University of Applied Sciences. Often, they also work in the institution’s CTL. The network meets several times a year, in many cases in the form of a field trip. There’s a lot of mutual recognition in the network: large institutions have specific dynamics, metropolitan environments have specific challenges and the institutions’ activities tend to focus on the same themes along the same kinds of process. One tip we can give you is that even if it’s not yet clear what you’re looking for or how or where ideas might reinforce each other, just get started. Priorities and focus will come naturally.

● CTL Limburg

‘By joining forces, you can enhance the deployment of experts.’ This is one of the principles of the CTL Limburg (CTLL). CTLL is a network comprised of Gilde Opleidingen, Vista College and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, which in 2024 was still in its infancy. The network collaborated on a grant application for CTL development and is exploring collaborations with other institutions in the region. The member institutions also share facilities, including labs and practice rooms. CTLL has ambitious plans, with an annual kick-off meeting in which the network looks back, discusses annual plans and jointly aligns goals and activities. CTLL also organises smaller on-campus meetings. Another unique characteristic of the CTLL is the scheme under which the institutions can make use of each other’s experts through secondment agreements and deploy students across institutions through internships and graduation theses.

● CTL networks in the East

Educational institutions in Eastern Netherlands had already been collaborating in the area of CTLs. With the advent of Npuls, this collaboration has taken on a new dimension, as they were explicitly tasked to take a cross-sectoral approach. University of Twente, Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Aventus, Graafschap College, ROC of Twente, Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, Artez University of Applied Sciences and the Police Academy actively approached each other and are now coordinating their activities. Every two months, the network meets on-campus or online. How to structure their collaboration is a recurring agenda item: who organises something and how; in what way can others benefit and where can we share knowledge and educational resources? Participants discover shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration rapidly emerge.

● Arnhem-Nijmegen CTL Network

Many institutions in the Nijmegen and Arnhem region are already located close to each other, sometimes even on the same campus. The advent of Npuls has strengthened mutual contacts and collaborations between the institutions have been expanded. Knowledge exchange around Npuls and the CTL grant application were the immediate impetus for the network, which is now seen as an opportunity to collaborate more on educational innovation with technology. Members of the CTL network include colleagues from Radboud University, HAN University of Applied Sciences, Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, ROC Nijmegen, Yuverta and ROC Rijn IJssel. The network meets on-campus but also collaborates and shares experiences through a Teams channel.



● CTL for the Rotterdam and Delft Region

Erasmus University Rotterdam, Delft University of Technology, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Zadkine (Vocational Education and Training school), the Maritime and Transport College, Albeda (Vocational Education and Training school), the Rotterdam Graphic Lyceum and IT Campus Rotterdam meet every two months to discuss the creation of CTLs. This generates new insights, inspiration and contacts, and working methods become more efficient through sharing information and practices rather than developing them from scratch each time. There is a strong focus on the region: by collaborating more intensively on professional development for lecturers, educational innovation and educational research, the network aims to contribute to accessibility and equity in the Rotterdam Rijnmond region. One tip is to just get started; if there is enough energy in the network, others will follow. Another tip is to divide the tasks and give each other a glimpse behind the scenes.

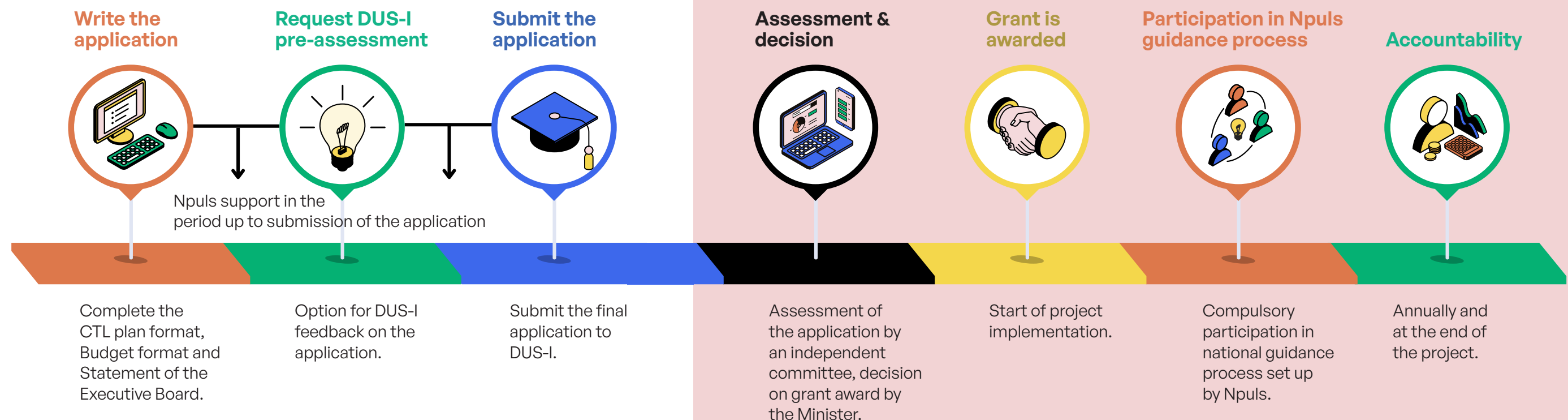
● CTL Friends

In scouting for a CTL suited to Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) – a medium-sized institution with a vibrant community – BUAs contacted The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Onderwijsgroep Tilburg (Yonder) and VU University Amsterdam. Things clicked so well between the institutions that they rapidly set up CTL Friends. While Npuls takes care of connections at the national level and formal collaborations emerge regionally, this network mainly focuses on a very direct relationship between CTL stakeholders. Members of CTL Friends exchange issues and challenges and engage in in-depth discussions. After a phase of getting to know each other and an inspiration session from an expert behind an international CTL success, the participants now organise peer reviews. The perceived added value is mainly in keeping each other focused and being able to look beyond their own organisational bubble, which gives an enormous boost. 🌟

The CTL scheme Accelerator for a high-calibre, sustainable CTL network by 2030

by Kristel Glazer

Procedure for a CTL grant



By 2030, every vocational education and training school, university of applied sciences and research university in the Netherlands will have a Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL). Together, these CTLs are the foundation for the knowledge infrastructure needed to safely and effectively implement the digital transition in education. Educational institutions and Npuls have been working diligently to achieve these goals. The Npuls CTL grant scheme – or the CTL scheme in short – which the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Dutch Implementing Agency for Grants to Institutions (DUS-I) drew up together with Npuls, offers institutions valuable support in this process.

Comprehensive plan of action

The grant amounts to a minimum of EUR 250,000 and a maximum of EUR 500,000 per institution. One requirement is that the institution must supplement the grant amount with a compulsory own contribution of at least 70% of the requested amount. To qualify for a grant, institutions must prepare a plan of action and a budget according to the DUS-I format. These are assessed by an independent review committee that is appointed by the Minister for Education, Culture and Science.

Discussing the draft plan during a pre-assessment meeting

DUS-I offers institutions the opportunity to submit a draft of their plan to a DUS-I adviser in a pre-assessment meeting. The adviser checks the design of the plan to see if it is correct and whether all the conditions have been met. Using this feedback, the institution can submit a well-prepared and complete CTL plan with the grant application.

Four grant rounds

The grant is awarded in four rounds. An amount of EUR 20 million has been made available for the first two rounds. Over EUR 6.5 million has now been awarded in the first round and over EUR 13 million is available for the

second round, for which grant applications were submitted in October 2024. The next rounds will take place in Phase 2 of Npuls and will be scheduled definitively once the programme's plans are approved. Since defining a strategy for setting up or further developing a CTL takes a long time, institutions are advised to start working on it in good time.

Inspirational and informative CTL webinars

Npuls provides information and inspiration on topics that touch on CTLs in numerous CTL webinars. These are themes and challenges that exist within a CTL but that also cover the grant scheme itself. OCW and DUS-I joined one of the webinars to share experiences gained in the first round of grants. In this way, Npuls supports institutions to make informed choices when charting a sound strategy for developing (or further developing) their CTL.

CTL guidance process: learning more together

Once the grant applications are approved, the institutions take part in the three-year CTL guidance process provided by Npuls. In this programme, they receive support in setting up or further developing their CTL. These institutions are expected to have at least one staff member participate actively in the guidance process for a half-day every month. The CTL guidance process, which consists of several webinars and theme days, is based on intensive cooperation and knowledge sharing between the participating institutions.

By exchanging knowledge and experiences, learning together and gaining new insights collaboratively, they strengthen their own CTL. In this way, the institutions and Npuls are jointly laying the foundations for a sustainable knowledge infrastructure that can cope with the digital transition in education. 🌱



You can find more information about the CTL scheme on: dus-i.nl/subsidies/npuls-center-for-teaching-and-learning-ctl



Co-developers Rosalinde Brouwer (left) and Lean van Daalen-Koo explain the CTL grant scheme.

A closer look at the CTL grant scheme

by Kristel Glazer

In the summer of 2023, there was a buzz of activity at the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Implementing Agency for Grants to Institutions (DUS-I) in The Hague. Within a relatively short time, a complete CTL grant scheme got off the ground in collaboration with Npuls.

Rosalinde Brouwer, process controller for the National Npuls Growth Fund at OCW and Lean van Daalen-Koo, CTL Implementation Coordinator at DUS-I, provide insight into this process and explain exactly how the grant scheme works.

New form of collaboration

Rosalinde: 'One of the Npuls goals is for vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities to have established or further

developed a Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) by 2030.

The original Npuls programme plan provided for setting up such a scheme to set up and develop CTLs in institutions. We opted to do this in the form of a grant scheme, which was designed in close collaboration between Npuls, DUS-I and OCW. Within this collaboration, DUS-I focuses on feasibility and practicability, Npuls brings content expertise and we as OCW manage and coordinate the grant scheme, linking the content to and reviewing it against policy and legislation. Working in a three-way collaboration is fairly new for us; OCW and DUS-I typically do this in a two-way partnership. We are therefore pleased that Npuls has joined our collaboration and is contributing experience from the field. This is now happening in several Growth Fund schemes, which gives us at OCW and DUS-I a good idea of the institutions' needs and for whom the scheme is designed.'

Lean: ‘Providing an opportunity for educational institutions to set up or develop a CTL is a fundamental pillar of Npuls’s strategy. When the Npuls implementation phase came into play, we set up this grant scheme in a fairly short period of time to ensure that institutions could quickly get started on their CTL. This made it possible for the first round of applications to open in October 2023 and for institutions to get started as soon as possible. However, there is a lot that has to be done before a scheme can be published in the Official Gazette, as this process has to be planned meticulously. Different experts have to assess the scheme, analyse the risks, determine the budget and review whether the scheme is feasible and practicable for the institutions. We had to clear our calendars for that, but are happy that it worked out so well and that we now have a solid scheme in place.’

One-off grant with co-financing

Rosalinde: ‘The grant is explicitly intended for the project costs associated with setting up a new CTL or transforming an existing knowledge center in the field of digitalisation, innovation and professional development for lecturers into a CTL. Institutions are given three years to do this. After that, the aim is for the CTL to be permanently embedded in the organisation and funded from its own resources.’

The grant amount that can be applied for is at least EUR 250,000 and at most EUR 500,000. This is a one-off grant, but because we want CTLs to be a permanent feature within institutions, it has a strong co-financing component. Institutions must still contribute at least 70% of the grant amount themselves. That way, we know for certain that they are serious about their CTL. Once the grant is awarded, Npuls provides substantive support to institutions in setting up their CTL.’

Lean: ‘In themselves, educational innovation and professional development for lecturers are regular tasks for education, for which institutions receive regular funding. But in the context of a society undergoing meteoric digitalisation and increasing demands for digital literacy and accessibility, it is imperative for education to be able to respond rapidly to societal needs. This requires additional efforts from institutions, which is where a CTL comes into play. Setting up a CTL is a separate project for which additional funding will be made available on top of regular funding. This is why the CTL scheme was established.’

The application process at DUS-I

Lean: ‘You apply for the grant from DUS-I. On our website, you download the format for the CTL plan and request the budget template. You complete these meticulously based on your plan of action for setting up or further developing your CTL.’

If desired, you can discuss the concepts for the plans and budgets with a DUS-I adviser during a pre-assessment meeting. You then submit the required documents via our digital portal. We review these against the assessment framework in the scheme and indicate which parts can be improved or supplemented. We also inform you if there is anything that has not been worded clearly enough. The feedback you receive is aimed at making the application more complete and clear – it is not about issuing an opinion on the content. After the interview, you adapt your plans and submit the documents to DUS-I during the application round.

We encourage institutions to start planning for the CTL application as early as possible, because the more preliminary work has been done and the better the plans are embraced in the organisation, the more successful the application is going to be. It is about submitting a solid, well-argued and substantively strong plan as an institution.’

Independent review committee

After the institutions have submitted their applications, these are put to an independent review committee. Rosalinde: ‘The plans are assessed by a review committee with considerable substantive expertise, appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. DUS-I supervises the committee. There is no substantive contact between OCW and Npuls with the committee members regarding the assessment; they really are completely independent.’

Lean: ‘Indeed, it’s crucial to ensure the independence of the review committee and avoid conflicts of interest. When assigning assessments to the committee members, we pay close attention to ensure that no one is conducting a self-assessment. The committee members assess the plans purely on content and have no role in advising institutions.’

A twenty-two week wait

Rosalinde: ‘It’s a twenty-two week wait before an institution hears whether it has been awarded the grant. We get that people find this extremely long. All the same, it is the time needed to go through the whole procedure carefully. This is an official deadline for grant schemes with an external review committee.’

Lean: ‘Committee members really do need the time to assess applications thoroughly. Each application file is assessed individually by two committee members; they assign a score to each assessment criterion. They then discuss the application together and determine the final score. This score is important for ranking the application against other applications. Ranking determines whether an institution is eligible for the grant. During a meeting with the plenary review committee, all applications and the provisional ranking are discussed and the final ranking is determined together. DUS-I supports the committee throughout the process.’

The final ranking serves as a recommendation to the Minister. A number of checks take place at OCW before the Minister sees the recommendation. The Minister then makes the final decision on which institutions are eligible for a grant. A considerable number of applications were received in the second round. You can imagine that we do need those twenty-two weeks to conduct the assessment of all applications in this careful manner.’

Scope for all institutions to apply for a grant

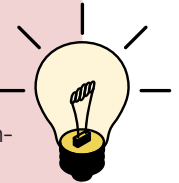
Rosalinde: ‘The first round of applications has been completed and the second is in full swing. In accordance with the Npuls plans, the intention is to allow all institutions to apply for a grant. We aim to do this in four rounds so that every institution has the opportunity to apply. If the grant is awarded, the idea is to get started quickly so that the CTL is up and running within three years. All CTLs together are part of a bigger picture. We want to make education in the Netherlands much more accessible to students and lecturers through digitalisation. It’s a highly challenging though satisfying process for us to work on.’

Lean and Rosalinde provide tips for successful grant application:



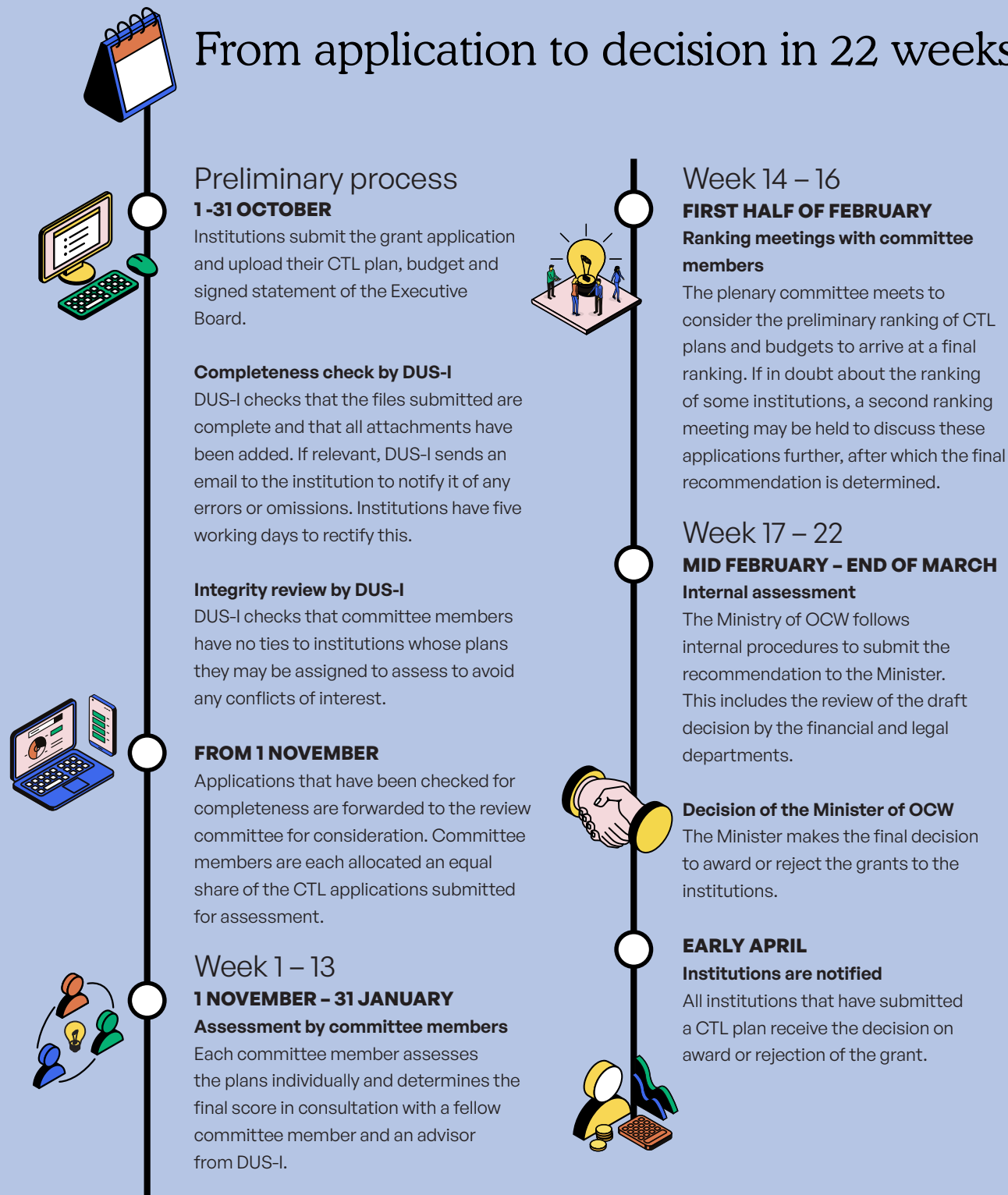
1. You can find comprehensive information on how to do this on the DUS-I website and learn more by watching a number of webinars on the Npuls YouTube channel (youtube.com/@NpulsOnderwijs).

2. Build your plan logically, starting from your vision and the goals you aim to achieve and outline how the CTL can contribute in practical terms to achieving those goals. Elaborate this in your plan of action and specifically describe the activities you want to carry out within that framework. Make sure your budget matches your activities. The CTL plan format serves as a guideline by identifying the critical points for preparing a sound application plan.
3. Make sure your descriptions are complete and include elements that may seem obvious. The committee members only assess what they see on paper; they do not make any assumptions.
4. Start making the plan and writing the application early so that you are in time for the pre-assessment meeting and you have sufficient time to properly process the recommendations.
5. Once your application is ready, read through the scheme again on the DUS-I website to make sure you have not forgotten anything.



CTL grant application: behind the scenes

From application to decision in 22 weeks



CTL guidance process

Building a strong knowledge infrastructure together

by Kristel Glazer



The CTL grant scheme supports institutions in setting up and developing their CTLs. After the grant is awarded, the educational institutions take part in the three-year CTL guidance program provided by Npuls, which focuses on connecting, sharing knowledge and learning from each other. The first cohort of institutions started the guidance program in September 2024. How did the program come about and what can participants expect from it? The CTL guidance team, consisting of project leader Nynke Kruidenink and cohort supervisors Mabelle Hernández and Sabine Uijl, explain how it works.

Setting up and connecting CTLs

The guidance program helps the institutions establish a solid foundation for a strong CTL so that the institutions become more agile and resilient to the challenges posed by our rapidly changing society. In doing so, institutions are encouraged to share knowledge and learn together. This creates a shared language and builds a solid foundation for the knowledge infrastructure needed to jointly work on the digitalisation of education – a CTL knowledge infrastructure that will continue to exist even when the Npuls programme comes to an end.

Sabine: ‘We need the CTLs and a good national knowledge infrastructure to effectively address the changes that impact our education environment. That is why we will, in the guidance program, also pay a lot of attention to building a community of all institutions.’

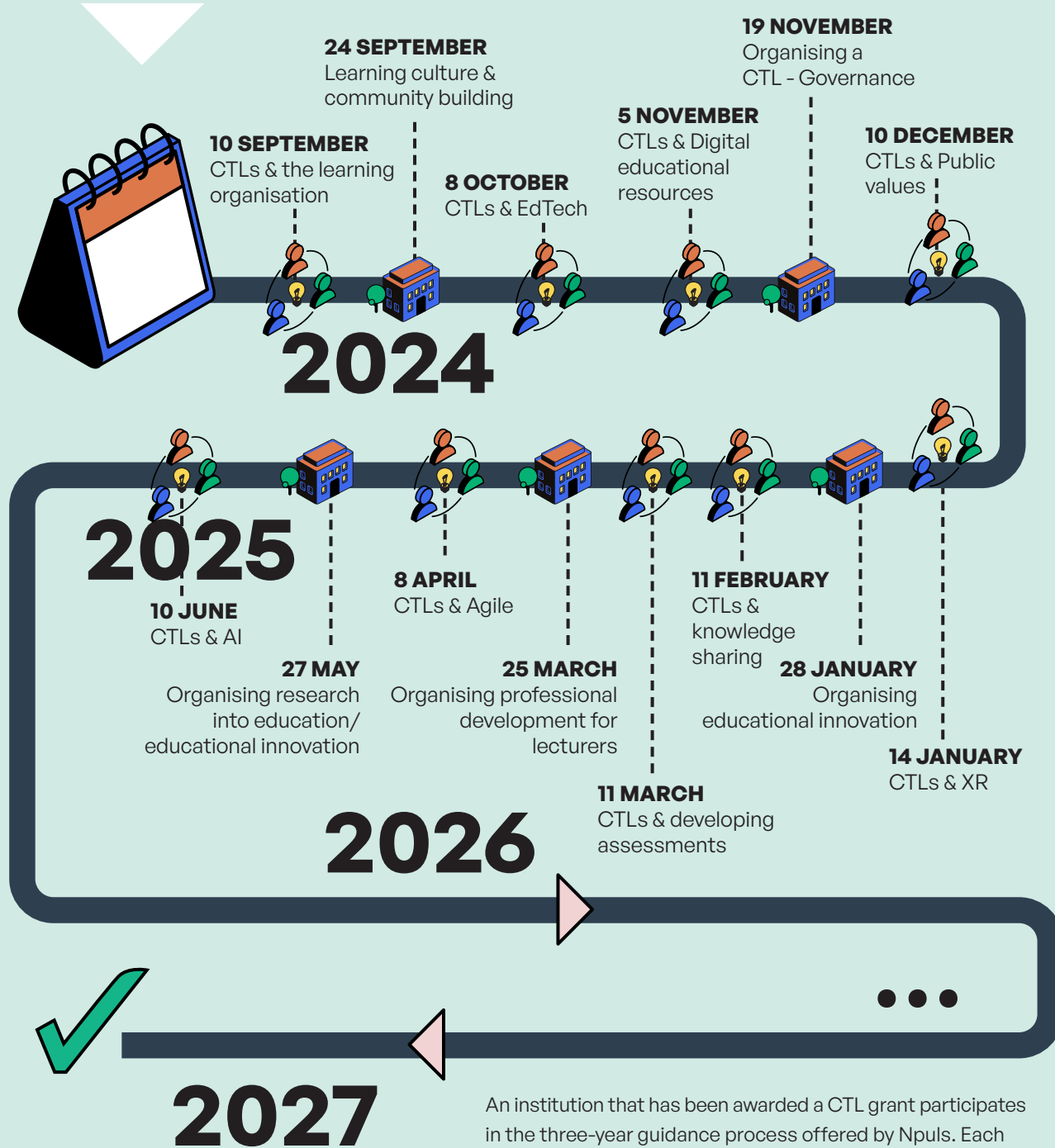
Demand-driven guidance process

The guidance team has chosen not to offer a rigid, set program, but to respond to the needs and development issues of the participants as the process unfolds. After all, each institution operates in a unique context.

During the guidance program, institutions with similar development issues are matched together. This creates solutions that transcend institutions and is beneficial to all participants, including those from subsequent cohorts. Ultimately, colleagues from all CTLs should be able to find each other, work together and learn from each other’s experiences.

Mabelle: ‘This journey is about what the institutions need. It’s essential that we, as a guidance team, are flexible and can respond to the situations that arise. This is only possible if we ourselves are also part of the learning community.’

Guidance process for CTLs



An institution that has been awarded a CTL grant participates in the three-year guidance process offered by Npuls. Each year, a new cohort of institutions starts this process. Besides attending monthly webinars, they also participate in on-campus meetings. The infographic illustrates the guidance process in first year of the first cohort.



CTL WEBINARS ARE OPEN TO EVERYONE. CHECK OUR CALENDAR AND SIGN UP.

In preparation for developing the guidance program, Mabelle and Sabine held intake interviews with participating institutions from the first cohort. From these valuable discussions, they learnt what the institutions are currently up against when setting up their CTL. The guidance program focuses, for instance, on themes such as cooperation between different departments and areas of expertise as well as commitment to the CTL and embedding it in the organisation. Business management topics such as the financial flows in an institution are also covered.

Mabelle: 'Elements of a CTL are already present in every institution. The key is to identify what else you need, who you need in the process and how to bring this together properly in an organisation.'

Inspiring meeting days

Participants in the CTL guidance program have committed to devoting at least one half-day per month to the programme. This includes the five annual themed days where cohort participants get together. The themes relate to building networks and understanding the requirements for a well-functioning CTL. In the first year, the focus is on organising a CTL and building the community. Participants discuss the following topics at the meetings:

DAY 1 – SEPTEMBER:

Learning culture & community building

DAY 2 – NOVEMBER:

Organising a CTL – Governance

DAY 3 – JANUARY:

Organising educational innovation

DAY 4 – MARCH:

Organising professional development for lecturers

DAY 5 – MAY:

Organising research into education/educational innovation

Each theme day is divided into a morning and afternoon programme. During the morning programme, experts hold interactive sessions on the topic, exploring it broadly. Ideally, participants bring different stakeholders from their organisation to exchange knowledge and foster integral collaboration in the organisation. During the afternoon programme, the institutions' needs and development wishes are addressed in a practical way.

Webinars and knowledge platform

The CTL team organises webinars as part of the guidance process. In 2024, the main focus of the sessions was the CTL's role as a knowledge broker. All webinars are made available on Npuls's YouTube account. This way, even institutions that are not (or not yet) participating in the guidance process can learn more about CTLs. After all, the digital transition currently underway is relevant to everyone.

Participants and supervisors continuously interact with each other throughout the process via a CTL Teams Channel, where they share knowledge, information, questions and suggestions. This input is also used to structure the guidance process while responding to the needs expressed by the institutions.

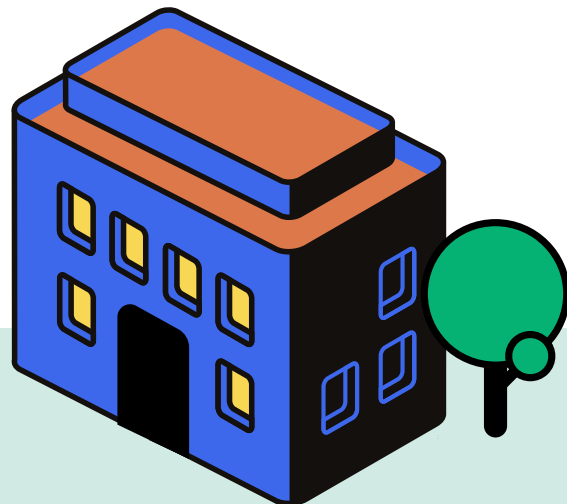
Four rounds, four cohorts

The CTL grant scheme is divided into four rounds. After each round, a new cohort of institutions starts the guidance process. A cohort consists of institutions that have received a grant as well as institutions that have not (or not yet) received a grant but are already so far advanced in their preparations that their participation is appropriate. In the first round, grants were awarded to 14 institutions. These institutions are now participating in the guidance process, along with five institutions without a grant. Together, they form the first cohort.

Nynke: The fact that institutions without grants are also participating in the guidance process for CTLs sends a strong message. The transition we are going through is of, for and by all of us. We have a major task to fulfil as an education sector, and together we are stronger. It's gratifying that institutions want to collaborate to facilitate this transition.'

The participants of the first cohort have started with great enthusiasm. When the second cohort starts the guidance process, those first participants will have a role in this so that knowledge acquired can be disseminated broadly and no one has to reinvent the wheel. At the end of the Npuls programme, all cohorts together will form the national knowledge network and contribute jointly to the digital transition in education. 🌱

MORE INFORMATION
CTL MEETINGS AND WEBINARS:
NPULS.NL/AGENDA



The cohort guidance team



Nynke Kruidenink – CTL project leader and adviser at Npuls

As a social scientist with technical work experience, Nynke sees herself as a bridge builder between two worlds that are converging in the knowledge infrastructure for the digital transition of education.



Mabelle Hernández – Cohort facilitator at Npuls

Mabelle was involved in the establishment of Utrecht University's CTL - the very first CTL in the Netherlands. She is an educationalist who specialises in systemic coaching and has extensive experience in change processes.



Sabine Uijl – Cohort facilitator at Npuls

As director at ComeniusNetwerk, the national network for innovative lecturers, Sabine is the right person to guide participants in building a strong community.

Not a project but a permanent entity in the institution

Ellen Bastiaens,
Maastricht University

By Maureen van Althuis
Photo: Joey Roberts



EDLAB is the CTL of Maastricht University. They participated in the first round of grant applications and were awarded the grant. Ellen Bastiaens, director of EDLAB, talks about intensive days of writing their application plans and reading the content written by other institutions but also about the importance of commitment.

You supervised the grant application for EDLAB. What experience can you share that others can benefit from?

‘In the grant application for our CTL, EDLAB included all stakeholders in the process from the get-go, as well as the schedules (including deadlines) and the substantive discussion. While that requires a considerable time investment, you more than make up for it later in terms of what you gain. I don’t have to send long e-mails with explanations and when I have a question, I immediately get an answer. Everyone knows what the intention is.’

What topics or themes do you emphasise in your CTL, and will the grant give these an extra boost?

‘At EDLAB, we identified three ambitions for the grant application. Digital literacy is one of them. We already do a lot in this area and the grant will allow us to accelerate and strengthen existing activities. Another ambition is to enrich and simplify our digital platform, our knowledge portal for lecturers where we want to bring everything together so that lecturers no longer have to look for information or support in many different places. There is another ambition that brings together the aforementioned ambitions: finding a model for each faculty to organise everything the faculty organises by way of faculty support more intelligently and effectively. This way, the lecturer has a first point of contact in the faculty. This is really new for us. In this respect, we learned a lot from our partner university, Radboud University in Nijmegen.’

So you work alongside other institutions to develop the CTL at Maastricht University. Could you tell us more?

‘We partnered with Radboud University and Open University in the application process. We read each other’s papers, from the first draft replete with notes to the final version. This collaboration was so successful that the three of us defined very concrete projects to work on together, such as figuring out what exactly the impact of a CTL looks like. We included the collaboration in our application. There are also lines to vocational education and training schools and universities of applied science, although these are still mainly on a personal basis. I firmly believe in cooperation across the country and the whole chain, but to make it feasible, practicable and doable in three years - because that is the duration of the grant - you should not make it too big. Because you want to keep it small, it makes sense to start with existing partners or those that are geographically relevant. In our region we have VISTA (vocational training school) and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences. At Zuyd, for example, I peer reviewed an application for the second round.’

You applied in the first round, was that a conscious decision?

‘I enjoy pioneering and you could say I’m an adventurous person. With EDLAB, we consciously decided to go for round one as I saw opportunities in doing so.’

We already had a number of dossiers I was keen to pursue further, like those three ambitions. But we do and did a lot more. In 2015, EDLAB started as an insti-

tute for educational innovation. One result we are incredibly proud of is that in 2018, we conducted a major study that reaffirmed that problem-based education (PBL) is still current, future-proof and works for our education model. Then we had the COVID pandemic and a hack at our university, which led to the ‘Technology Enhanced Education’ initiative. Apart from EDLAB, we also saw initiatives emerging in other places in the university, which are a very good fit for a CTL. In 2022, I was asked to combine various initiatives and we started to recalibrate and reposition EDLAB. When Npuls was just starting, there was already talk of CTLs. “Let’s seize the momentum” we said as a team.’

What were your first experiences after the application was granted?

‘We started the guidance process with 19 institutions in the first cohort. During the meetings organised by Npuls, we got to know each other and delved into concepts that help us achieve our goals, such as Theory of Change and governance.’

‘The goal is for us to form a learning community. I look forward to that immensely.’

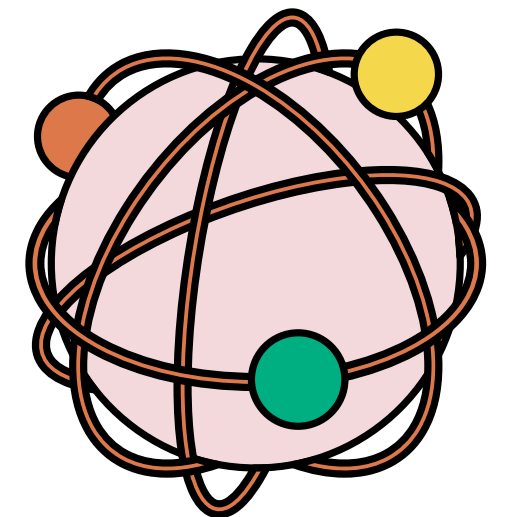
What do you think was critical to the success of your application?

‘Early 2023 saw the inception of the new structure for EDLAB, in which we are strongly committed to our teaching & learning community in addition to educational innovation. What proved crucial was the commitment of the Executive Board to our CTL activities. We had laid this down very clearly on paper, which allowed me to literally write in our

application that there were no issues in terms of sustainability, as the Executive Board of Maastricht University sees EDLAB as a permanent entity in its organisation.’

Finally, what would you like to say to institutions that are in the process of applying for grants?

‘Schedule time for drafting the application! You have to take your time for the grant application, which means you have to start defining your ambitions from the outset. You need time for the drafting process and the related thought processes. In a grant application, information is poured into a format that is limited in terms of word count and structure, so it’s helpful for you to get together with your team to focus intensively on drafting the application. Build in those moments and also moments of reflection. I have to say, it can be intense.’ 🌑



ROC Amsterdam and Flevoland submitted a grant application in the second round



‘With or without a grant – our CTL will get there anyway’

by Kristel Glazer

Sofie Heemskerk is i-Coach and CTL trailblazer at ROC Amsterdam and Flevoland. She submitted her CTL plan in October to qualify for the CTL grant scheme. We asked her about her experiences.

How did you get involved in the development of your CTL?

‘I have been one of the i-Coaches at ROC Amsterdam since 2020. We help lecturers enhance their digital skills and optimise the digital learning environment. Each i-Coach is attached to one of our colleges and we work together on common goals and projects. When Npuls started paying attention to CTLs, I saw huge opportunities and I shared this widely in the organisation. I wish all students – and especially those starting with a great disadvantage – the opportunity to receive the very best education. I truly believe that the quality of education stands or falls with the quality of lecturers. Moreover, some issues are simply too big for one board or one teaching team; we need to work together in a larger context to solve these issues. The CTL provides the opportunities and possibilities for this.’

How did you arrive at a concrete plan for setting up the CTL?

‘As a trailblazer, I started with a broad exploration in the organisation. ROC Amsterdam and Flevoland has 12 colleges, with 12 executive boards and just as many ideas about how the CTL should be set up.

That was quite a challenge, but I persevered and was able to get everyone on the same page. I explored a large range of options and talked to many people.

Npuls’s informative webinars also gave me a lot of useful insights. During the webinars, it was valuable to hear how other institutions approached this. It was a relief to see that others were facing the same problems as me – it makes you feel that you are not alone.

We also organised a regional meeting in association with Npuls. It was good to meet other institutions; this gave us the opportunity to explore partnerships and make agreements.

Finally, based on all the knowledge gained, I wrote an advisory report with a number of alternatives for the executive board. I asked board members to make choices about the interpretation of our CTL. We determined a clear direction together, which ensured broad support in the organisation. It took a lot of time and energy to get this done, so I’m glad we succeeded.’

How did you go about developing the CTL plan for the grant application?

‘I enlisted the help of a grant advisor, as they are familiar with the language and know what is expected. ‘The questions presented in the plan are very logical, it’s about showing how your CTL contributes to better education. It is challenging, though, to capture this in 5,100 words. There’s no room for hollow phrases; you have to get rid of all the fluff.’

Did you take advantage of DUS-I’s pre-assessment meeting?

‘Yes, that was extremely valuable. I can recommend it to everyone. They studied our draft plan and gave clear directions. It was a valuable meeting and we left in an upbeat mood. They indicated that we were already well on our way and that it was clearly not a ‘grant-driven’ application, which we found very motivating. And it’s true, because even if we don’t get a grant, we will continue to pursue our plans. We will have a CTL, no matter what.’

That’s a worthy pursuit. And how will you go about building the CTL?

‘We are starting small and building on the partnerships we already have with the different boards as i-Coaches. I-Coaches will be the representatives of the CTL at each location. In addition to digitalisation, we are also expanding the offerings to include supplementary topics on professional development for lecturers, research and innovation. Some boards are already working on that, but it has not yet been deployed organisation-wide. We want to link all these separate knowledge networks to the CTL in a structured manner. That way, we can broaden our scope and in due course involve more boards. In parallel, we will examine how wide the scope of the CTL will become and how we can embed it permanently in the organisation. How fast this will happen depends, among other things, on whether we will receive a grant; we will obviously have more leverage if we have more funding available.’

An important part of the CTL plan is collaboration with other institutions. Are there already relevant forms of cooperation that ROC Amsterdam and Flevoland are part of?

‘Yes, we do collaborate with other institutions from time to time. Together with the Wooden Furniture College (Houten Meubileringscollege), Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Inholland, VU University Amsterdam and University of Amsterdam, we form the Amsterdam Network for Educational Innovation. The great thing is that this collaboration is growing in strength because they are also in the process of setting up a CTL.

‘I recently had a conversation with Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences to discuss what areas we could collaborate on, how we could train lecturers

together and what opportunities were available. It was very encouraging. Wonderful connections are also emerging at the national level. I visited Firda in Leeuwarden. It was great to see their approach to developing a CTL; I would love it if we could do things together at the national level too.’

What is the impact of setting up a CTL in your institution?

‘What strikes me is that it makes an impact both inside and outside the organisation. I can see that people in our organisation are energised by it. They like the fact that we have a dedicated hub for sharing knowledge.’

One director told me she thinks it’s good that there will be a place where we can visualise the themes based on our long-term strategy. That way, the strategy becomes much more meaningful to the people in our organisation. And externally, I think it’s fantastic that we, as a vocational training school, are now talking to universities in a different way. It has become an equitable cooperation, which helps us get over our “Calimero Complex” (feeling under-appreciated because of one’s small size) as a vocational training school.’

Do you have any tips for institutions that intend to apply for the grant?

‘Do some thorough research, talk to a lot of people and try to garner support in the organisation from the very start. Be aware that it genuinely takes a lot of time and energy. It’s a fantastic process, though, to see your initial ideas becoming more defined and clearer during the year.’

What will your CTL look like in five years?

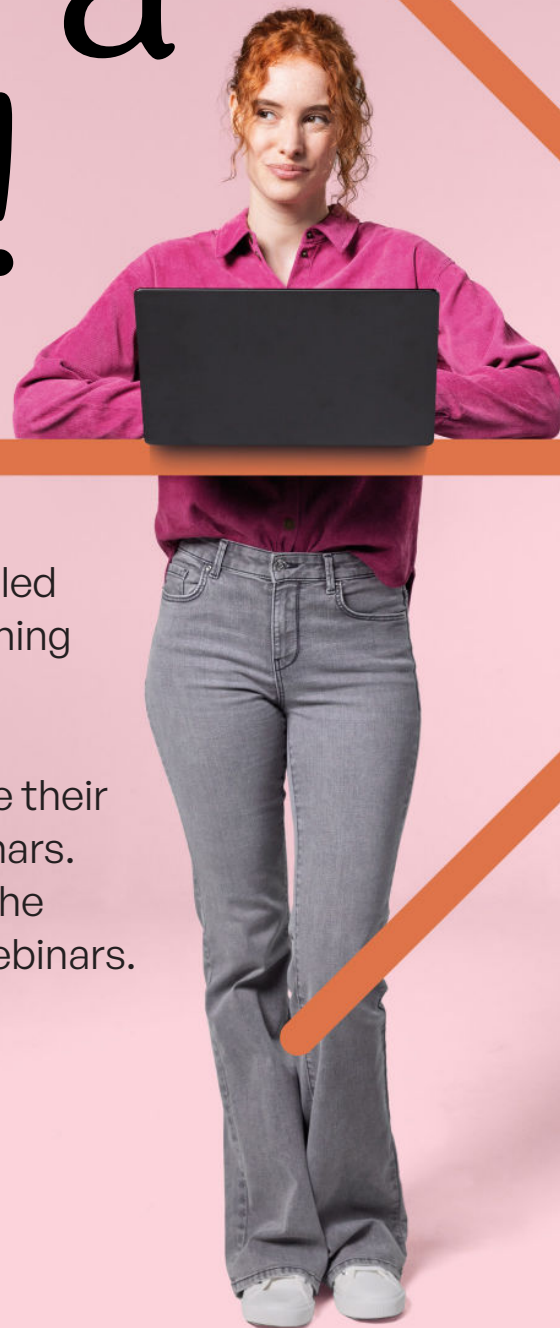
‘In five years, we will have a fabulous CTL, with a vibrant innovation workshop where lecturers and teaching teams conduct hands-on research on digital and non-digital topics. We will also have a well-structured portal where lecturers have insight into their digital development opportunities as well as their career development, thanks to the connection with HRM. And just as important: we have set up a great programme to provide our students with the best possible guidance on digital literacy, study skills and digital mental health. It might take a little longer if we don’t get the grant, but this is definitely our goal.’

Take a look!

How do you set up a well-oiled Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) in your educational institution? Several guest speakers and experts share their views during the CTL webinars. Here you will find some of the topics discussed in past webinars.



PLAYLIST
CTL WEBINARS



Webinars



WEBINAR 1 How to set up a CTL

Dr Mariska Min-Leliveld, University of Amsterdam,
Dr Sharon Klinkenberg, University of Amsterdam,
Maaïke van Kessel, Noorderpoort

University of Amsterdam shares its successful approach with the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) network, which promotes professional development for lecturers and educational innovation. Noorderpoort highlights how they set up their Center for Teaching & Learning, focusing on hybrid learning and technology integration. Find out how the two institutions are tackling challenges and finding solutions to transform their education.

“By putting in effort and brainstorming together, we give space to everyone who wants to take part from their own unique perspective. Our aim with this approach is to create connections through diversity.”
Mariska Min-Leliveld

WEBINAR 2 Building a dynamic educational community

Mirjam Koster, Utrecht University
Mirjam Bok, Utrecht University, Prof Manon Kluijtmans, Utrecht University, Mabelle Hernandez, Utrecht University

After a brief reflection on the importance of CTLs by Mirjam Koster, Chair of the Executive Board of Graafschap College, the representatives of Utrecht University shared their experiences with successfully integrating educational innovation, professional development for but also recognition and appreciation of lecturers. They discussed strategies for building a dynamic educational community where knowledge sharing is central. Learn more about the professional development of lecturers and successful projects that transform the learning environment, such as Future Learning Spaces.

“Look carefully at what is already happening within and beyond your institution and how to link existing and new activities in a CTL. That way, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.”
Dr Manon Kluijtmans

WEBINAR 3 Communities and knowledge sharing

Nynke Kruidenink, Npuls

Networks and communities play a crucial role in educational innovation. How and why? In this webinar, you'll hear how effective collaboration within and between educational institutions through knowledge networks can bring about sustainable change.

“In educational innovation, it's not just about sharing knowledge but also about bringing about change, and communities play a key role in this.”
Nynke Kruidenink

WEBINAR 4 Getting lecturers involved and mobilising them

Corleen Knieriem, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Sander Toby, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences

The Teaching & Learning Network (TLN) operates as a collaborative network at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (HU) and supports teaching teams with complex issues surrounding educational innovation and professional development. They talked about the advantages and challenges of a flat network structure within a larger institution.

“Everyone is part of the Teaching & Learning Network, and everyone can participate.”
Sander Toby

WEBINAR 5

CTL networks & collaborations

Dr Jeroen Jansz, Launcelot, Aart Schouten, R6, Lisette Gast, Perspectivity, Judith Vennix - R6, Camille van Katwijk - Gelderland Professional Development Agenda (Gelderse ProfessionaliseringsAgenda, GPA), Christel de Winter - GPA, Maaïke van Kessel - Northern Netherlands CTL Learning Network (Leernetwerk CTL's Noord NL)

Collaboration between educational institutions in the form of knowledge networks is a crucial part of our national knowledge infrastructure. Many CTL knowledge networks are already emerging nationwide. In this webinar, four knowledge networks – LAUNCELOT, R6, Northern Netherlands CTL Learning Network and GPA – present their insights and experiences.

'On the one hand, you gain a fresh perspective from someone else. And sometimes it's just encouraging to hear someone else say "yes, it's the same for me". Because then you realise "okay, I'm not alone in this".'

Judith Vennix

WEBINAR 6

Cooperation between public organisations

Dr Patrick Kenis, Tilburg University

What do successful public partnerships look like? Prof Patrick Kenis of Tilburg University explains that although collaboration can be complex, it is essential for innovation and efficiency. Various forms of collaboration come into play, such as learning networks, shared services and organisational networks.

'We know from research that organisations that collaborate with other organisations do so better, or are better able to do so if they themselves have a good idea what they are about.'

Dr Patrick Kenis



WEBINAR 7

Organising change in educational institutions

Dr Kristin Vanlommel, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences

Dr Kristin Vanlommel, lecturer in Organising Change in Education at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, talks about implementing a CTL from a change management perspective. How do you manage resistance and draw on the energy of change? She emphasises the importance of a clear vision supported by the entire organisation, prioritising goals, and aligning policy with practice.

'You want to capture the essence in a vision, in a strategic plan. And that's essential when it comes to sustainably embedding a CTL in the organisation.'

Dr Kristin Vanlommel



WEBINAR 8

Research into European CTLs

Dr Peter van Baalen, University of Amsterdam

LERU, the League of European Research Universities, has conducted research on European CTLs. Dr Peter van Baalen talks about relevant findings from this research: how do CTLs improve the quality of education by implementing innovative learning methods and best practices? He also discusses successful initiatives that have led to improved learning outcomes and strengthened academic communities.

'If you have a good team of educationalists, IT specialists, and other experts, I think that can be particularly valuable. Not only in assessments but also in designing assessments when using new tools.'

Dr Peter van Baalen



WEBINAR 9

Educational vision and innovation projects within CTLs

Monique Mulders, Het Graafschap College, Marald Rouwen, Saxion

What role does Saxion's Teaching and Learning Centre play in implementing their educational vision? Discover their approach to blended learning, professional development for lecturers and AI in education. Graafschap College discusses their experiences with professional development, innovation projects such as working with XR in education, and their unique collaboration with regional and national partners.

'Perhaps that's why I find this collaboration so satisfying - you just lay everything on the table and say "these are our experiences".'

Marald Rouwen

WEBINAR 10

Sharing knowledge about AI in education

Annalies Kootstra, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Patrick van Aalst, NHL Stenden

NHL Stenden and Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen share their experiences and expertise on applying AI in their educational practice. They discuss various models and methods for integrating AI as well as essential factors in implementing AI tools.

'When ChatGPT first came on the market, we were quite overwhelmed and thought we might have to close the school in six months.'

Patrick van Aalst

WEBINAR 11

The learning organisation

Lisette Gast, Perspectivity

Guest speaker Lisette Gast explains how to use the Theory of Change (ToC) to create a structured process in a complex context. This model helps to clearly identify goals and actions. The ToC is continuously adapted based on reflection and monitoring, allowing educational institutions to remain flexible in their approach.

'A Theory of Change helps you make assumptions in change paths explicit, because otherwise they remain very implicit.'

Lisette Gast



WEBINAR 12

CTLs & EdTech

Jelle van den Broek - Rijn IJssel, Esther van Popta - HAN University of Applied Sciences, Charlotte Meijer - VU University Amsterdam, Pieter de Bie - Npuls and Renske de Beijer - Npuls

The role of CTL as a knowledge broker is central to this webinar. Rijn IJssel, HAN University of Applied Sciences and VU University Amsterdam talk about how EdTech and educational innovation are handled within their institutions, both at policy level and in an educational workplace.

'Yes, sometimes being a bit of a maverick or being creative, whatever you want to call it, helps you to get things done.'

Jelle van den Broek

Visit [Npuls.nl/agenda](https://npuls.nl/agenda) for new CTL webinars in this series. You can watch all webinars on youtube.com/@NpulsOnderwijs.

Eighteen months of progress with CTLs

Positive energy, drive and enthusiasm – just some of what Nynke Kruidenink has experienced in collaborating with colleagues from various educational institutions after a year and a half as an advisor and project leader for CTLs at Npuls. What insights did Nynke gain over the past period? Time for a retrospective!



Personal conversations make an impact

'In the first national educational programme in which vocational education and training schools, universities of applied sciences, and research universities collaborate, we faced the challenge of introducing the new concept of CTL. How do you ensure that institutions embrace this initiative, which inherently implies change? In my experience, having the right conversations helps tremendously with this. We were able to create real impact by going out into the field in the spring of 2023 and organising four regional meetings. At these meetings – in coordination with the educational institutions and in their own environment – we made the first connections. Staying connected and maintaining a personal approach are central to how we work.

Adding something; removing something

'In times of educational budget cuts, there can be scepticism about "adding something". But a CTL is all about connecting what's already there to make it more effective. I see how a strong CTL helps an institution improve educational designs, for example. This can lead to fewer student dropping out, and thus to savings. Or how a CTL can work with the IT department to consolidate the number of platforms in an institution, thereby reducing costs. A CTL isn't just about adding something; sometimes it's also about removing something. That's also part of the transformation process.

The essence of CTLs

At its core, our work with Centers for Teaching & Learning is about empowering teaching staff and education professionals so they can shape the future of education themselves. By working together, inspiring each other, and consistently taking small steps forward, we contribute to a movement for better education and a strong national knowledge infrastructure. I'm grateful for the wonderful collaborations and proud of what we've already achieved. I look forward to further strengthening this movement together.

Tailored approaches create ownership

It would be much simpler if a CTL were just a standard model, applicable to every institution. But after all the conversations and meetings, it's clear how complex setting up and developing a CTL really is. The many diverse contexts call for customisation and careful alignment with existing activities. With the CTL objectives as a guide, institutions have the freedom to shape their CTL themselves and bring existing initiatives together within it. This way, it truly becomes part of the institution. I've noticed that that this creates a sense of ownership, which is critical to success when adopting a CTL.

CTL increases agility

I also hear valid critical questions, such as "What problem are we solving with this? What can a CTL add that we're not already doing?" A CTL consolidates activities that often already take place in an institution. By working together in a CTL, the institution becomes more agile and can better respond to what lecturers really need. Only then can you see where our efforts are bearing fruit and which areas require more attention.

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Henry Ford



Want to know more about CTLs?

- CTLs** on the Npuls website: npuls.nl/ctl
- CTL meetings and webinars:** npuls.nl/agenda
- Starterskit CTL** npuls.nl/kennisbank/starterskit-ctl
- CTL webinars online:** youtube.com/@NpulsOnderwijs
- CTL Network** on LinkedIn: linkedin.com/groups/12970209
- CTL grant scheme** on DUS-I website: dus-i.nl/subsidies/npuls-center-for-teaching-and-learning-ctl



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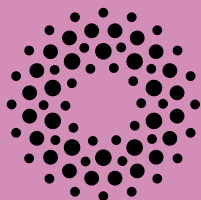
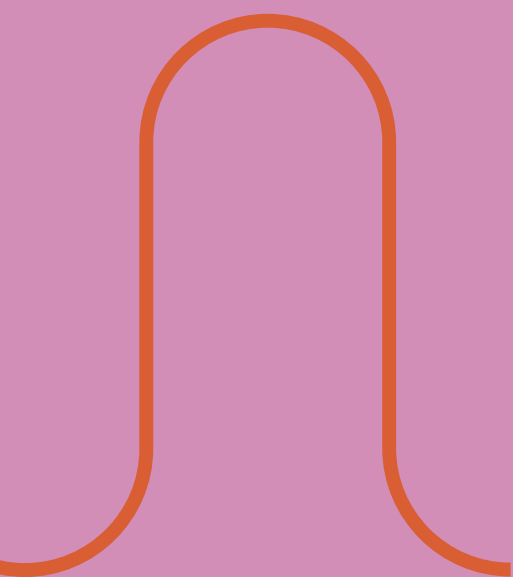
Credits

- Editor-in-chief** Jonne Houwing
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- Copywriters** Nicole Bakker, Maureen van Althuis, Kristel Glazer
- English translation** Paula Truyens and Christy de Back
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