

Keynote by Prof. Jan Vermunt at the EARLI SIG4&17 Conference, Utrecht, September 25-27, 2024

Title: Innovating Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Summary

Universities aim to educate people to think independently, critically and deeply about problems in and around their discipline, and to keep on learning and developing throughout their professional lives. They also aim to enable graduates to work independently and collaboratively, to engage with society, to contribute to understanding and solving complex problems, and to communicate with people from other disciplines and practitioners. Traditional teaching-learning models that emphasize the transmission of knowledge from teachers to learners are increasingly considered inadequate to meet those aims. Project-based learning, personalized learning pathways, design-based learning, competency-based learning, work-based learning and challenge-based learning are just a few educational innovations that have been adopted to foster more active, deep, self-regulated, intrinsically motivated, collaborative, interdisciplinary, meaning-oriented and application-oriented student learning congruent with the above mentioned aims. Higher education is at the dawn of exciting innovations in teaching and learning, many of them aimed at improving the quality and experience of student learning.

Innovations like these require very different teacher roles than many are familiar with, such as tutor, skills assessor, problem designer, digital teacher, and coach of students' learning, problem solving and collaboration processes. Often teachers are struggling with these new roles. A variety of approaches to teacher professional learning and development are being used to help them. However, a solid knowledge base grounded in research evidence on if, how and why these approaches work in different contexts is only just beginning to appear. Moreover, research on teaching and teacher learning is often disconnected from research on student learning and instruction. This gap limits the impact of research on what goes on in daily practice. In this keynote Jan will share new research on two strands of inquiry: the design and effects of Challenge-based Learning and what that means for learners, teachers and curriculum design; and teacher professional learning and development in the context of educational innovations. Both strands are consortium-based in methodology, characterized by a close collaboration between researchers, teacher-researchers, visionaries and practitioners.

Bio:

With effect from December 2018 Jan Vermunt has been a Professor of Learning Sciences and Educational Innovation at Eindhoven University of Technology, Eindhoven School of Education. Before that, he has worked as a research assistant at the University of Amsterdam, an assistant professor at Tilburg University, associate professor at Leiden University, and full professor at the universities of Maastricht, Utrecht and Cambridge. His expertise area are the learning sciences, with a focus on teaching and student learning in higher education, and teachers' learning and professional development. Current research interests include effective ways to support personal learning pathways, developing innovative teachers, promoting deep and self-regulated learning, and new pedagogies for challenge-based learning. From 2014 to 2018 he served as Editor-in-Chief of Learning and Instruction, an EARLI flagship journal and one of the leading journals in the world in the field of Educational Research. In 2016 the University of Antwerp awarded him a honorary doctorate in Educational Sciences for his scientific work. Webpage: <https://www.tue.nl/en/research/researchers/jan-vermunt>