

Law & Method

Digital study session

Hybrid teaching and learning in law programmes

Date: 29 January
Time: 13.00-17.00 (with sufficient breaks)
Host: Utrecht, via MS Teams
Language: Dutch and English
Registration: Bald de Vries – u.devries@uu.nl

The approach of the study session is to exchange experiences about the content, structure and design of legal education in the times of Corona and which lessons we take with us in the post-corona era. These lessons relate to didactics and content. Compare this [ScienceGuide](#) article.

What to teach – substance

The corona crisis challenges us to relate to the tension between scientific knowledge on the one hand and cognitive bias, diversity and tolerance for ambiguity on the other. In our education it is therefore important that we teach students that there is an interaction between science and society. That science has an impact on society, but also that the cultural and social context influences scientific research. This tension creates uncertainty, which students have to learn to deal with. How do we shape this in legal education? For example, do the end terms of our programmes of study still meet?

How to teach – didactics

“Corona education” raises a number of interesting questions that are relevant to a programme of study that is characterized by a relatively low number of contact hours and a lot of self-study, under the heading of how to make studying meaningful for law students. How do we organize a course in such a way that students can study in a daily rhythm, within a clear structure? How do we utilize on-campus and online study activities in an effective and meaningful way? How do we shape assessment: do we assess to challenge students to study or do they study for the sake of assessment? What are suitable assessment formats? Should we put more emphasis on studying as a social process rather than an individual project?

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These are the questions that are at the centre during the Law & Method study session. The session takes place online with alternating plenary sessions, workshops and break-out sessions. The sessions and workshops are moderated by the editors of Law & Method and student assistants from the Department of Law, Utrecht University. The application we use is MS Teams.

A tentative programme

12.30: Welcome

Participants can meet and catch up in smaller groups in various channels.

13.00 – 14.00: Plenary session

Keynote: Barend Last

[Barend Last](#) (1986) works as an educational specialist at the University of Maastricht, where he mainly focuses on educational innovation and teacher support.

In this interactive plenary session Barend discusses a number of aspects, such as the function of education according to Gert Biesta, the lessons we learned during the “lockdown education” and the starting points for a good educational design.

14.15 – 15.15: Two parallel workshops

Workshop 1: new ways of teaching and assessment

Eefje Markus and Niké Groot (Learning Innovation Team, EUR)

During this workshop we will jointly reflect on the new forms of education: hybrid forms of education, online education and digital assessment methods. We will share the insights we have gained after our evaluation with our teachers, tutors and students. During corona, our education sessions were in the bachelor hybrid and online. At the beginning of the crisis, assessment was transformed into digital assessment with alternative assessment methods, and later we also added proctoring to limit fraud. We would like to discuss with you interactively which aspects of these new teaching and assessment methods we want to retain after the corona era. Then we will discuss how we do this and what options are available for this.

Workshop 2: A study continuum

Bald de Vries (UU)

During this workshop you will get started with your own course program. You will look at how blended learning can be applied in this and how you can keep students involved in a lesson program with few contact hours. "Blended learning" is a solution to keep students actively involved throughout the course and they can connect the scarce contact moments with each other, as a result of which they end up in a study continuum, as it were. This study continuum ensures that they are engaged in the course every day and are encouraged to visit each other.

15.30 – 16.30: Two parallel workshops

Workshop 3: Uncertainty and education: uncertainty *in* education

Hedwig van Rossum (VU)

Coping with uncertainty – in other words, negative capability- has become one of the most important skills in our contemporary global society. Legal professionals, too, see themselves confronted with uncertainty. Consequently, they need to develop fitting coping strategies. Academic Legal Education may function as a place where young lawyers start developing their negative capability.

Even before the pandemic, however, our students' craving for certainty was clear: all law teachers probably recognize their students asking for more information about exams, hoarding summaries written by other students, and joining exam preparation courses provided by external businesses that brazenly profit from our students' fear. Unfortunately, by searching desperately for certainty, students deny themselves a true academic education, which inevitably includes levels of uncertainty. The fear and stress that students experience may have severe consequences for their mental and physical wellbeing. The pandemic and its effect on higher education has further deteriorated this situation: students experience even more uncertainty, feel isolated, and long for security.

This workshop starts from the standpoint that providing certainty is not supportive of our students' academic development. Uncertainty is paramount in science, learning and part of societal (and professional) life. Therefore, the central question in this workshop is 'how can we teach young lawyers to cope with uncertainty?'. In answer, Van Rossum proposes to teach law students creative thinking (in addition to 'traditional' critical thinking). By practicing creative thinking, students practice situations of uncertainty and experience how uncertainty also involves opportunity. During the workshop we discuss how we can help our students to learn managing uncertainty; if teaching students creative thinking may be helpful and how this can be incorporated in legal education, and; if there are other ways in which we may be able to teach our students coping strategies for uncertainty.

Workshop 4: Legal Skills Quadrant

Bart van Klink (VU University Amsterdam)

How to train legal skills in the future? Should we transform legal students into 'T-shaped lawyers' who are not only experts in law, but also possess more general knowledge and skills? To stimulate the debate Van Klink will present his Legal Skills Quadrant, which offers various options for developing legal skills in law schools. In his view, legal skills training should focus on academic reflection and discussion rather than practical application. Subsequently, participants will discuss the question which legal skills should be trained and how, online or offline.

16.45 – 17.00: Plenary conclusion – ideas for publication and follow-up sessions

17.00 and onwards: Drinks at the Desk