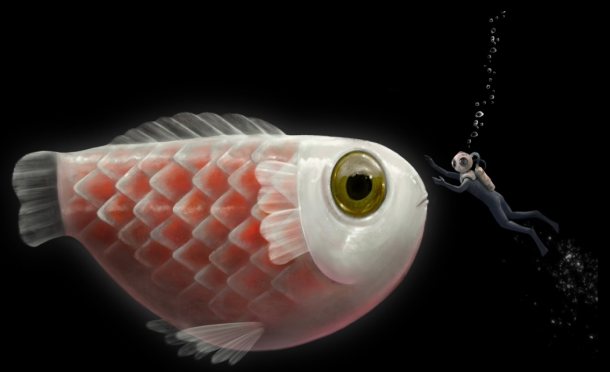
KTH SoTL keynote
Suzanne Brink

Designing Courses and Programmes from Learner Experience Perspectives

Designing Courses and Programmes from Learner Experience Perspectives

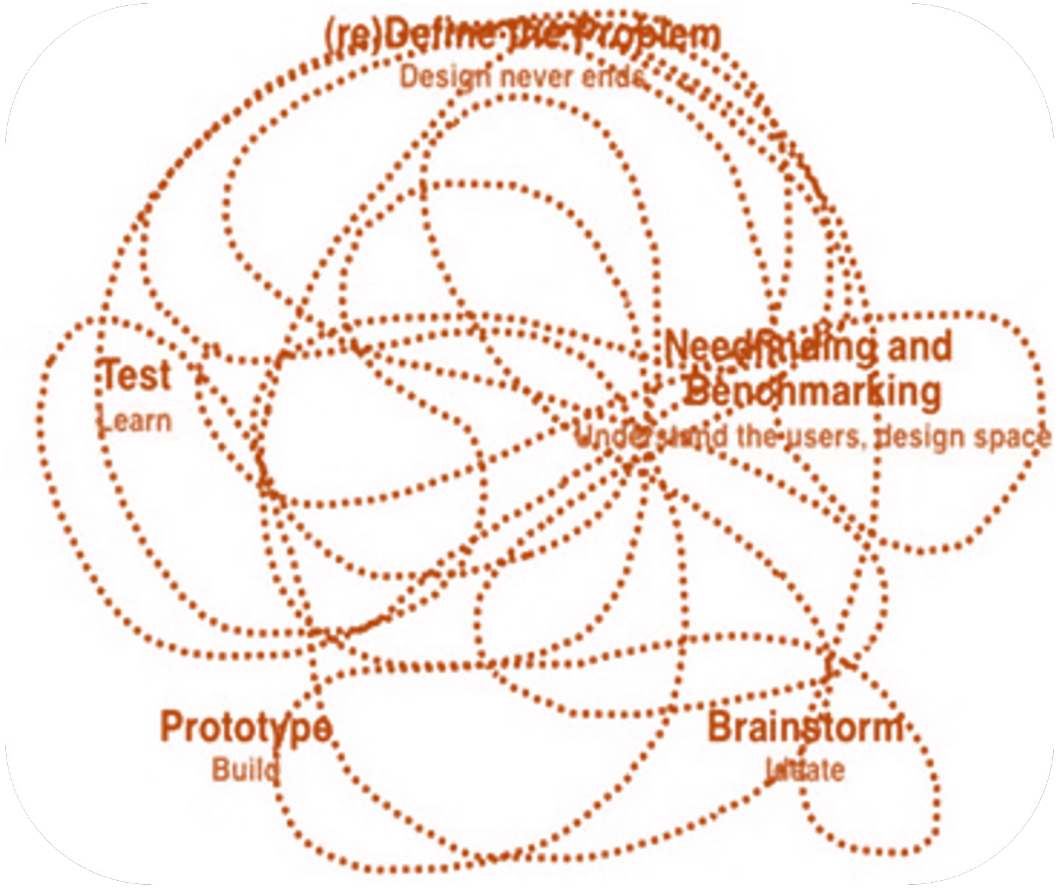


Suzanne Brink

Umeå University

May 2025

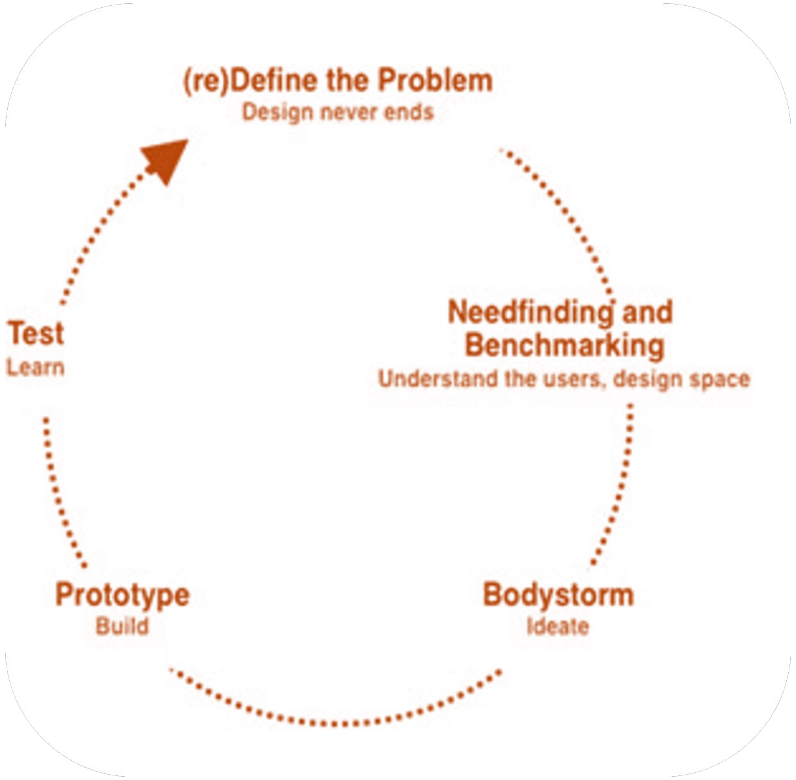
The Design Process



Heck, J. (2017). Creating Momentum and a positive long-term Impact on the Innovation Capability of Swiss SMEs. PhD Thesis, ETH Zurich

Iterative

The Design Process



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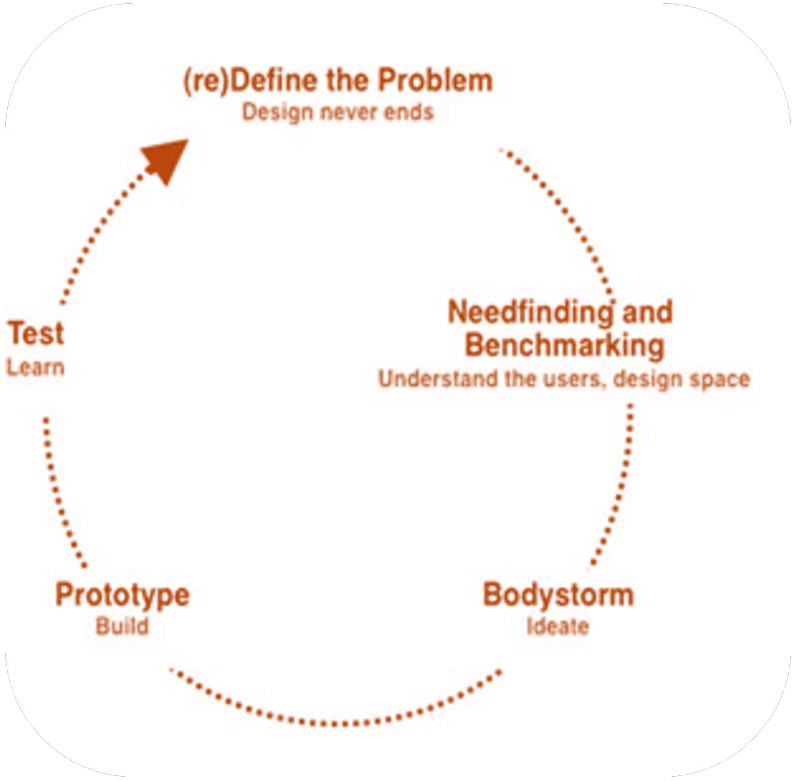
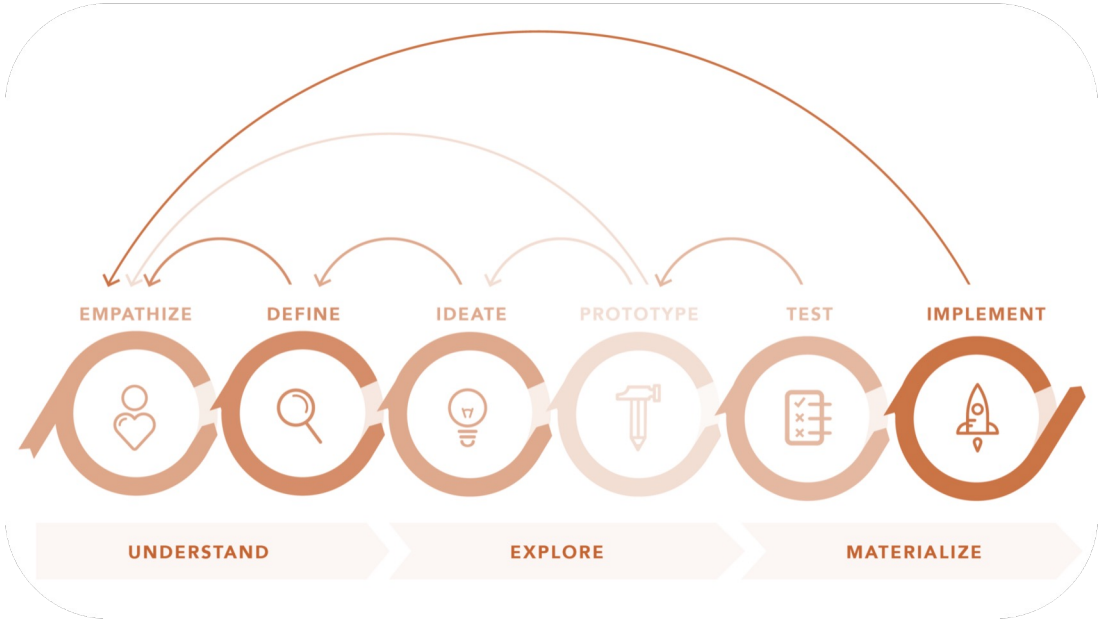


Design Thinking



IDEO (2018)

Heck, J. (2017). Creating Momentum and a positive long-term Impact on the Innovation Capability of Swiss SMEs. PhD Thesis, ETH Zurich

The Design Competencies

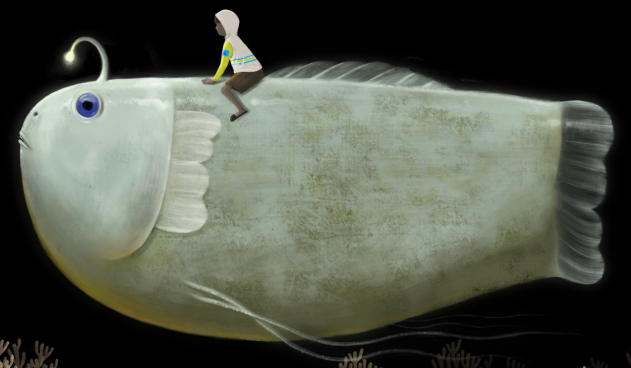
IDE Open innovator

imho

5 Challenges

worth working with from a SoTL point of view

and a Learner Experience Perspective



1

Empathy for the learner /student

Learner experience?

Learning Experience Design

“Empathy is about mentally walking in another person’s shoes to understand and feel what someone is going through on an emotional, cognitive, and experiential level.

Having empathy for the people you design for is vital for the creation of a personal and purposeful learning experience.”

Niels Floor, in Empathic Learning Experience Design (2023)

Learner Personas

Based on research by Suzanne Brink (UmU) & Åsa Wikberg-Nilsson (LTU), to be published

Learner Personas

Based on research by Suzanne Brink (UmU) & Åsa Wikberg-Nilsson (LTU), to be published

Background

Personality

Learning Behaviour

Motivation for Learning

Learning Needs

After the programme

Student persona: Yorkos

Perpetually Creative

Background	22-year-old male born in Göteborg, Greek parents who own a chain of restaurants. Loves to ski, and has a small circle of like-minded friends
Personality	Spontaneous, flexible, easy-going. Things don't have to perfect. Accepts flaws, last minute changes and surprises, imperfections easily, as he's not perfect either. To keep life interesting, things shouldn't be too fixed.
Learning Behaviour	Very (!) productive when in flow but easily distracted in the process of getting started. Has original ideas and lots of energy and enthusiasm for studying.. Has a hard time sticking to plannings
Motivation for Learning	Is always curious and has wide interests. Has the entrepreneurial mind of his parents. Is not afraid to get his hands dirty, volunteer, or speak up. Likes to associate, think big, experiment
Learning Needs	Needs a sense of belonging and flexibility to give room to ideas and explorations, as well as spells of productivity and procrastination. Likes to be involved and needs constructive feedback to be able to grow
After the programme	Wants to work in the outdoors tourism industry somewhere in Norrland, directed at international markets. UmU was his first choice of university

NPF Included

Good Pedagogy for All

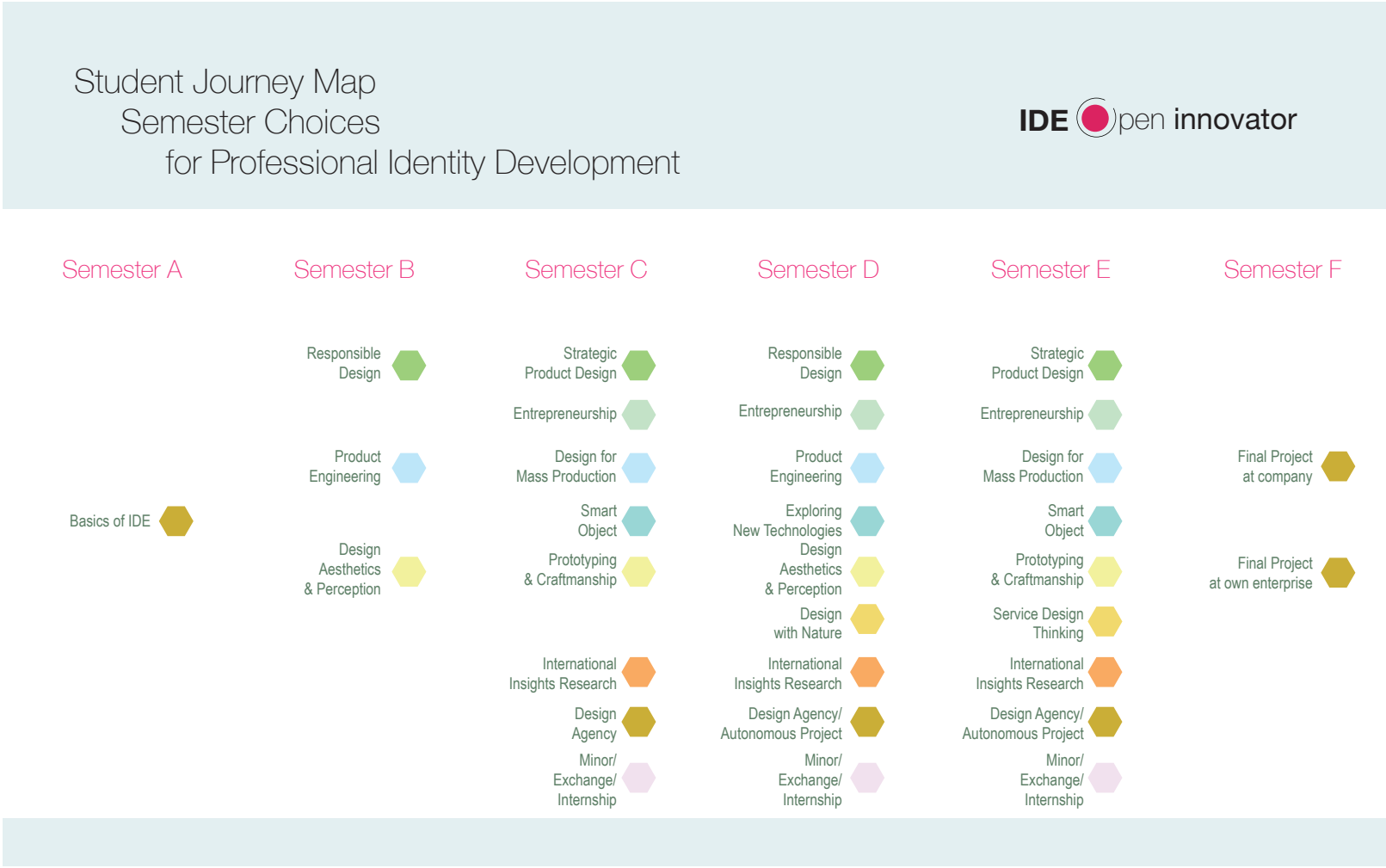
Workshop

KTH | SoTL 2025 | Suzanne Brink | UPL | Umeå University

Learner Journey Mapping

	Before education	During education	After education
HAVES The student comes to IDE and already has several competences	CREATIVITY EXPLORER DESIGN BACKGROUND STUDY ENGLISH	IDEAS FROM OTHER STUDENTS DESIGNS PROJECTS DEVELOP SKILLS	OCTOPUS; DOES WHAT NEEDED PORTFOLIO VISION NETWORK OPEN MINDED JOB SKILLED CRITICAL THINKER
FEELINGS ☺ ☹	CURIOUS AMBITIOUS WORRY MISSING HOME COLLABORATING CONFUSION ADAPT PLAN CHANGE PLANS SEEKING STABILITY PROUD CONQUER THE WORLD WORRY NOT AFRAID EAGER TO LEARN ENTREPRENEURIAL		
WANTS The student comes to IDE with goals and ambitions wanted.	INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE FUN BETTER ORIENTATION SHOW OWN SKILLS CHALLENGES DIPLOMA	INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE START-UP BUILD PORTFOLIIO DISCOVER SELF/OTHERS MONEY BRAND CHOOSE WHAT TO LEARN WORK ON PROJECTS YOU CARE	MASTERS RESEARCH RECOGNITION NETWORK JOB ABROAD

Learner Journey Mapping



Learner Journey Mapping

To improve the learning of students

Students' psychological and physical health

Motivation

Belonging

Mastery

Autonomy

Learning to Learn

Recovery

Learner Journey Mapping

To improve the learning of students

Students' psychological and physical health

Motivation

- **Belonging**
- **Mastery**
- **Autonomy**

Recovery

Learning to Learn

Assessment as learning

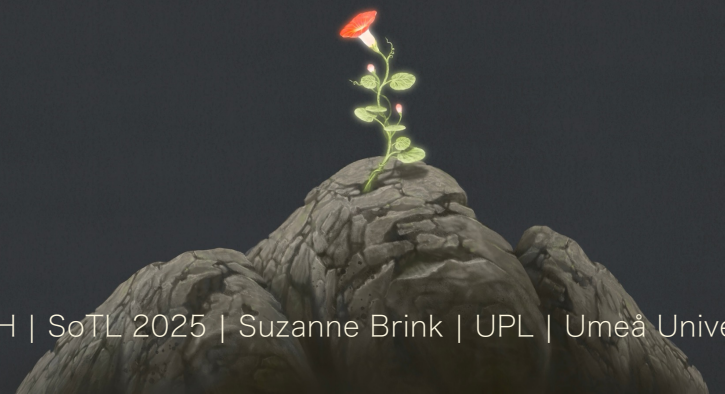
~~Boring or overwhelming~~

⇒ **Flow**

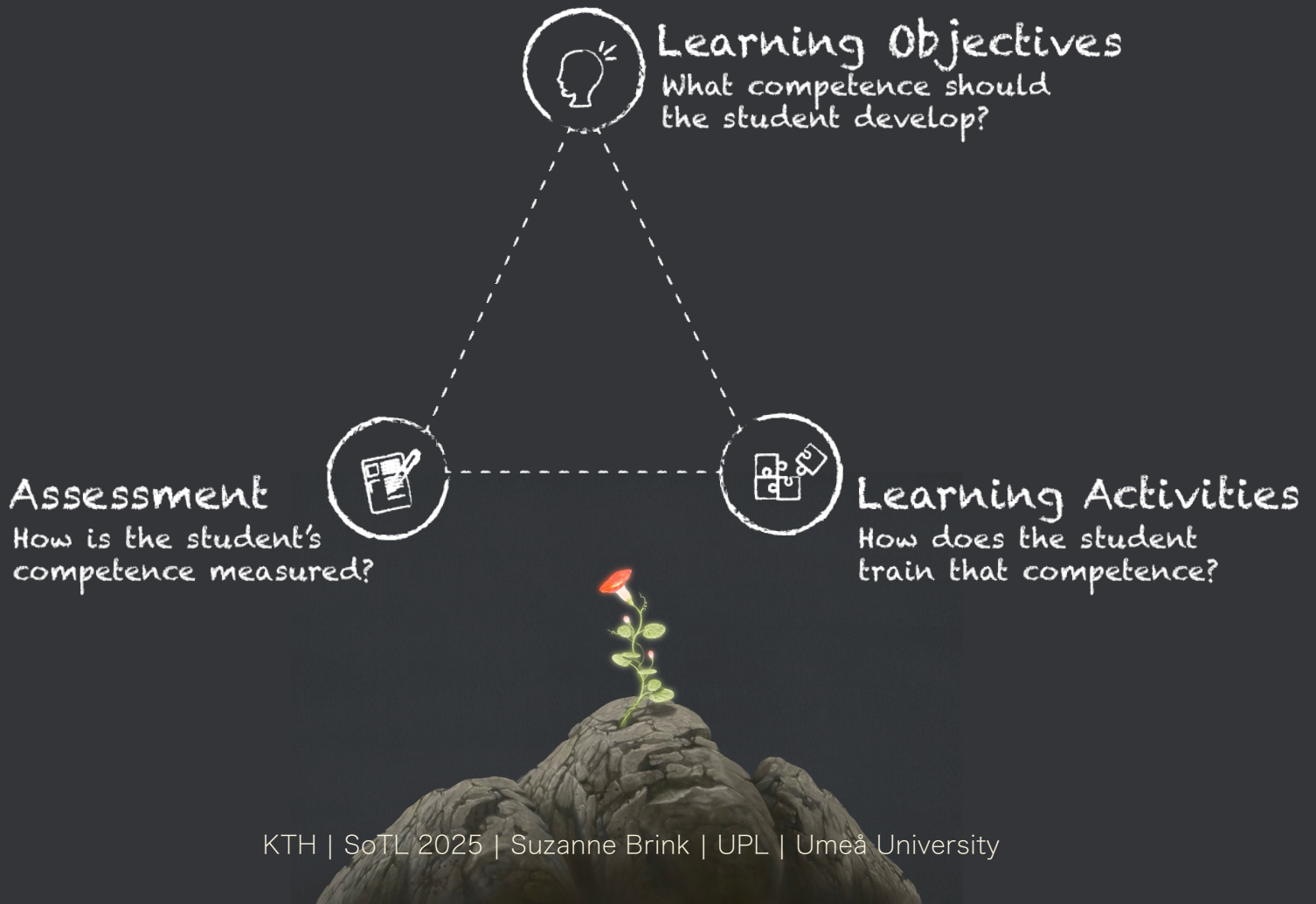
2

Student Agency

Who owns the learning, really?



Constructive Alignment

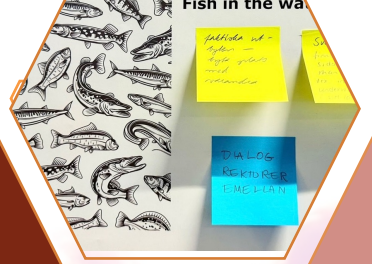


Constructive Alignment in Lifelong Learning

Source: S.C. Brink, To be published

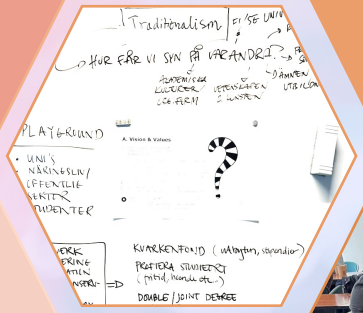
UPL
Universitetspedagogik och lärandestöd

KOM Workshops



De-stereotyping (they/their)

Bodies in the Classroom



Feedback on Demand

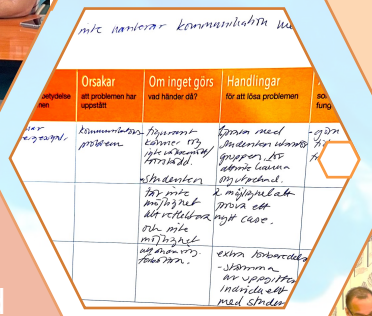
Curating Stories

Power to the Point

A Picture Says More than a Thousand Words

The Voice and Other Noises

I'm Only Human and an Academic



NPF Included

Camera! Lights! Learning Action!

Please? Now! Here...

Kommunikation för lärande

Communication for Learning

3

The non-linearity of learning

3

The non-linearity of learning

Learning is increasingly understood as a non-linear, dynamic process shaped by interactions, emotions, contradictions, and contexts. Rather than progressing step-by-step, learners loop back, jump forward, and reconfigure their understanding over time.

Recognizing this complexity encourages more flexible, student-responsive teaching approaches.

Curriculum M(odular)

Student Journey Map
Semester Choices
for Professional Identity Development

IDE Open innovator

Semester A	Semester B	Semester C	Semester D	Semester E	Semester F
Basics of IDE	Responsible Design	Strategic Product Design	Responsible Design	Strategic Product Design	Final Project at company
	Product Engineering	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	Final Project at own enterprise
	Design Aesthetics & Perception	Design for Mass Production	Product Engineering	Design for Mass Production	
		Smart Object	Exploring New Technologies	Smart Object	
		Prototyping & Craftmanship	Design Aesthetics & Perception	Prototyping & Craftmanship	
			Design with Nature	Service Design Thinking	
		International Insights Research	International Insights Research	International Insights Research	
		Design Agency	Design Agency/ Autonomous Project	Design Agency/ Autonomous Project	
		Minor/ Exchange/ Internship	Minor/ Exchange/ Internship	Minor/ Exchange/ Internship	

4

(Non)Concurring Curriculum Perspectives

& Educator Narratives

Lecturer 4.0

expert, networker, co-creator, guide, mentor educational developer, coordinator, head, (life-long) co-learner, facilitator, coach, researcher, ...

Lecturer 4.0

Sage on the Stage

Guide on the Side

Sage on the Stage

Fascinating Storyteller

Coach on Call

Guide on the Side

Sage on the Stage

Fascinating Storyteller

Expert at Disposal

Mentor in the Mix

Coach on Call

Guide on the Side

Sage on the Stage

Fascinating Storyteller

Expert at Disposal

Humble Helper

Mentor in the Mix

Coach on Call

Guide on the Side

Cheering Supporter

Anything but a destructive discourager, an apologetic apathic, an ivory tower titan, or an I-jumped-through-these-meaningless-hoops-when-I-was-a-student-so-you-must-too-corner-cutter

Sage on the Stage

Fascinating Storyteller

Expert at Disposal

Humble Helper

Flexpert Teacher

Mentor in the Mix

Coach on Call

Guide on the Side

Cheering Supporter

Anything but a destructive discourager, an apologetic apathic, an ivory tower titan, or an I-jumped-through-these-meaningless-hoops-when-I-was-a-student-so-you-must-too-corner-cutter

Maybe we’re all just reciprocal learners

Our old Industrial Design Engineering Curriculum

Our new Industrial Design Engineering Curriculum?

KTH | SoTL 2025 | Suzanne Brink | UPL | Umeå University

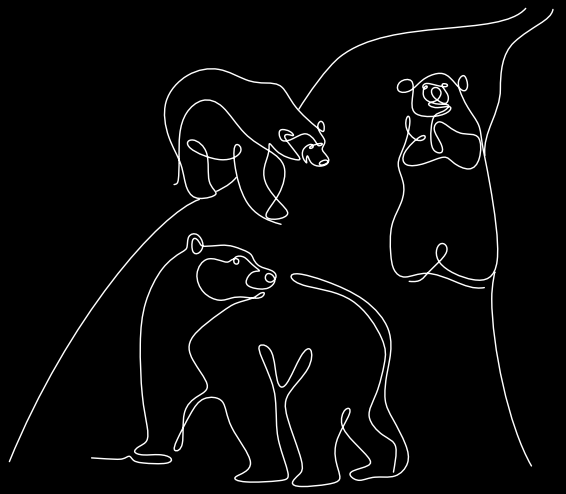
Our future Industrial Design Engineering Curriculum

Education

- *Students choice-stress.*
- *Teaching staff competence.*
- *We need stability.*
- *Quality assurance.*
- *Cost reductions.*
- *National competence profile.*
- *Professional profiles...*

Organisation

- *That's in the law.*
- *Against our policies.*
- *Not with the current systems.*
- *Will take years!*
- *Students will complain.*
- *Top-down – bottom-up.*
- *"They" will never agree...*



Overarching

- *No vision.*
- *Not in line with vision/strategy*
- *Industry partners not visionary*
- *We are too big/old.*
- *Resources?*
- *Inter-silo collaboration.*
- *Not my responsibility…*

5

Curriculum Agility

Curriculum Innovation

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Wicked

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Scala of Stakeholder

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Scala of Stakeholder Ambiguous Aims

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Scala of Stakeholder Ambiguous Aims Variable Values

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Scala of Stakeholder Ambiguous Aims Variable Values

Differing Definitions

Challenge

Curriculum Innovation

Scala of Stakeholder

Ambiguous Aims

Variable Values

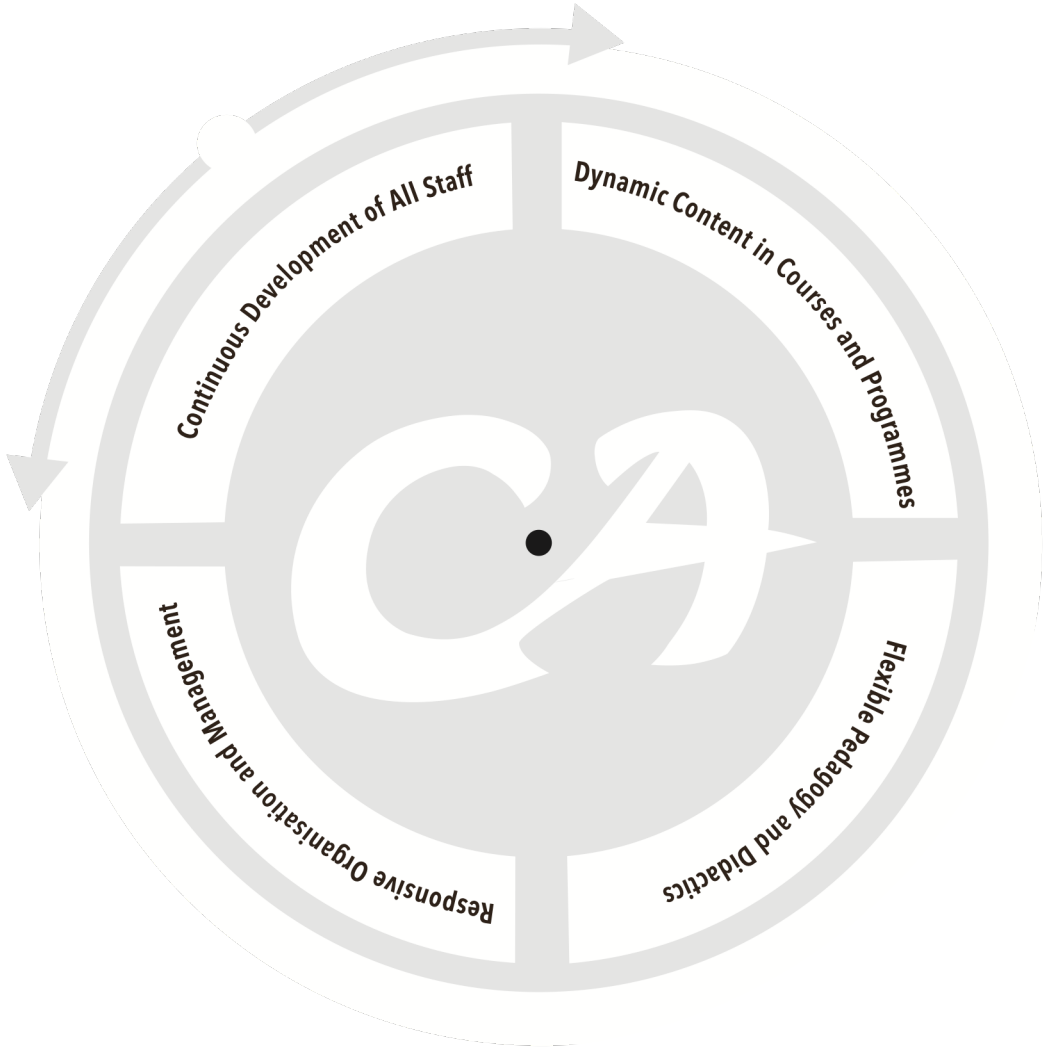
Differing Definitions

Complex

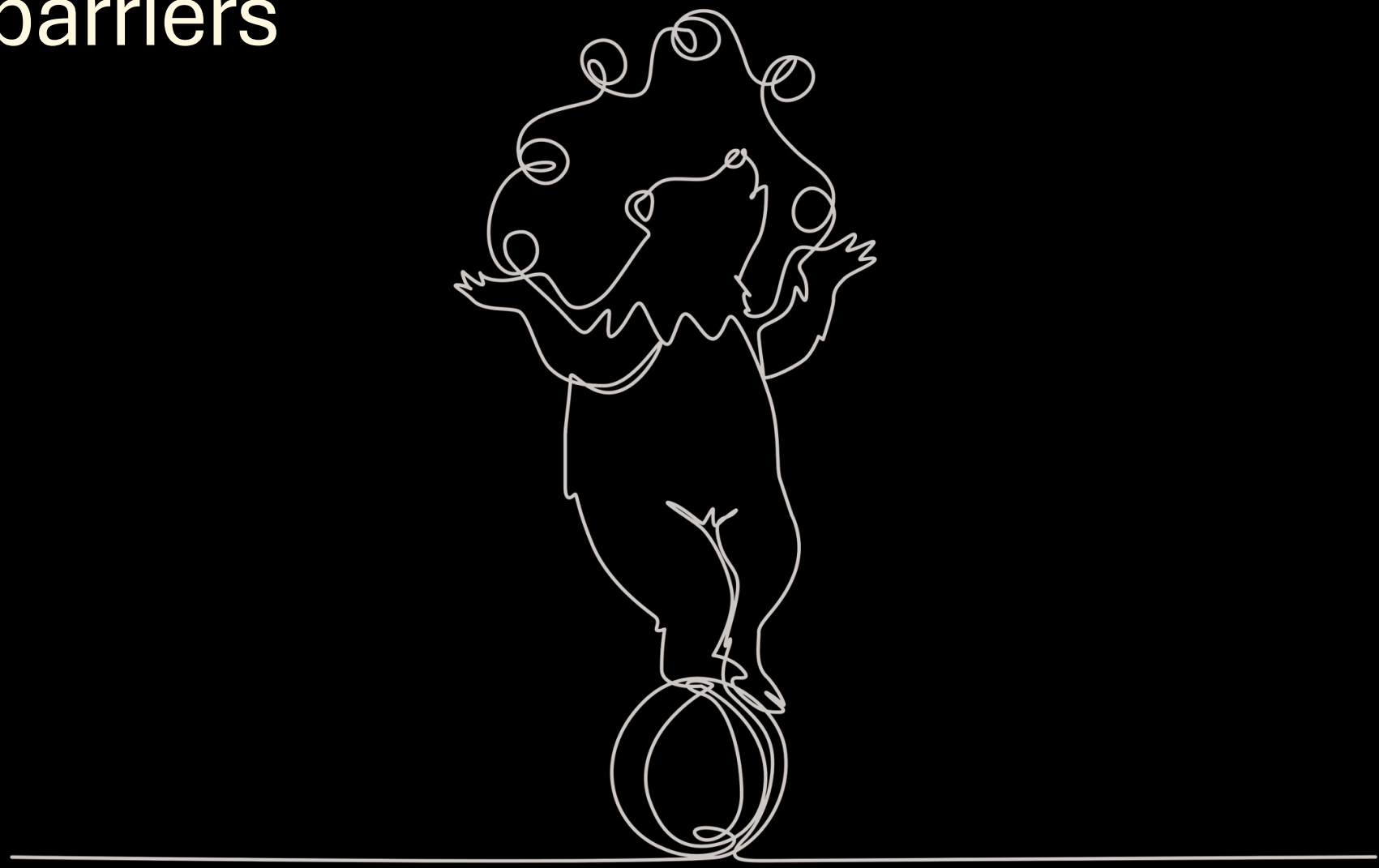
Challenge

Curriculum Agility Co-Creators

Characteristics of Curriculum Agility



Dealing with barriers



The Principles of Curriculum Agility

Overarching

- Educational Vision: With Agility
- Stakeholder Involvement:
  Co-creation Including Decision-Makers
- Pedagogy and Didactics: Supporting
  Pedagogic Innovation and Leadership

Organisation

- Management Approach:
  Cultivating Change Culture
- Legislation and Policy:
  Reframing the Rules
- Organisation and Governance:
  Responsive Administration
- Decision Making :
  Accommodating
  Implementation Politics

Education

- Learning Objectives:
  Assessing on Holistic Learning Goals
- Programme and Course Design:
  Dynamic Content and Flexible Education
- Learning Spaces: Flexible Physical,
  Digital, and Social Solutions

CA Toolkit

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

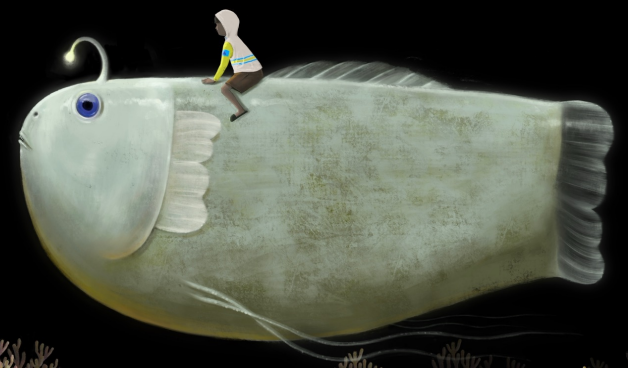
Who owns Curriculum Agility?

All those who are responsible for a lesson, a course, a programme, or other forms of education, ánd those who have responsibilities in education directly or indirectly (organizationally as well) in an institute, centre, or other university unit.

Integrated approaches to these

5 Challenges

from a Learner Experience Perspective,
sometimes the students, sometimes the teachers

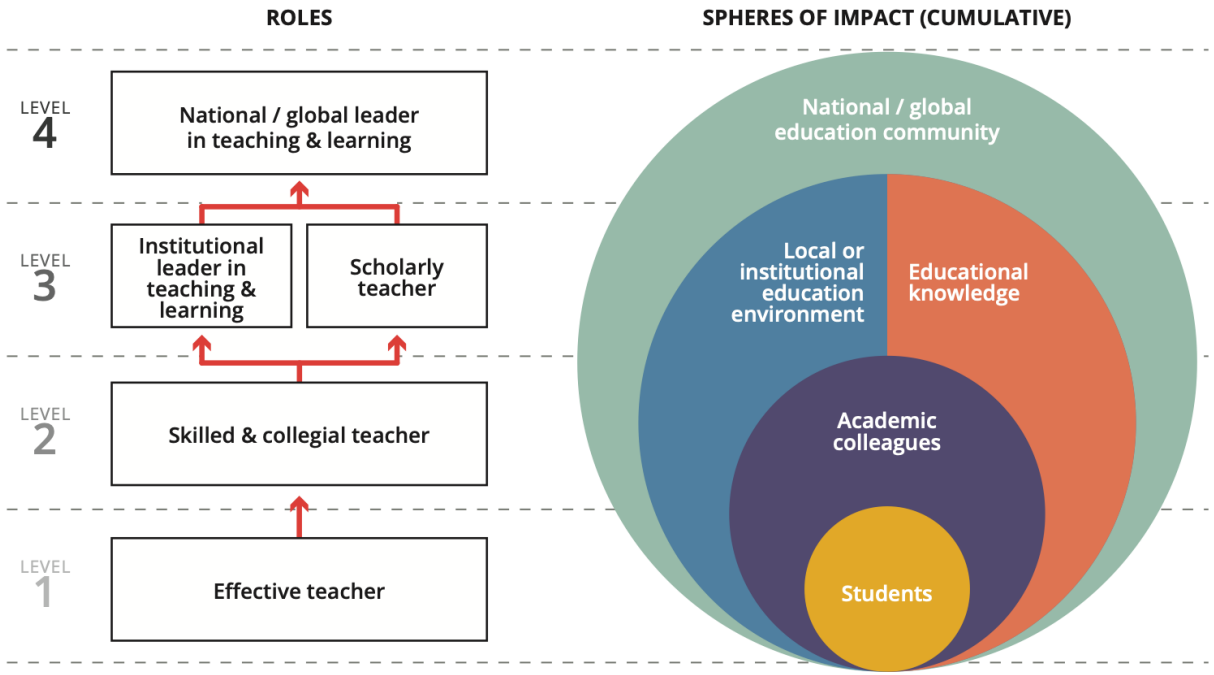


The Career Framework for University Teaching

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

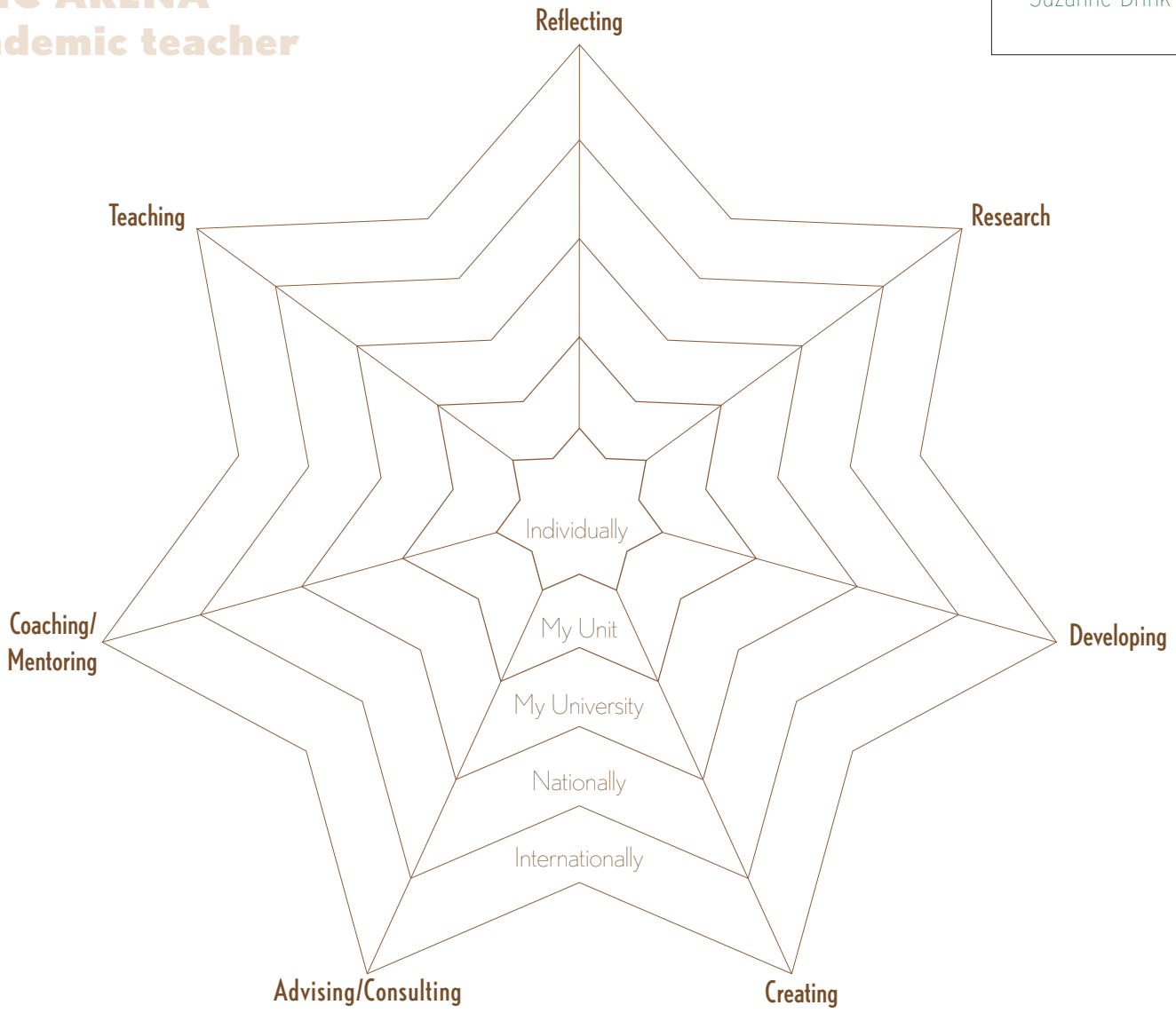
A. Spheres of impact

Further details can be found at www.teachingframework.com/framework/spheresofimpact/



STRATEGIC ARENA
of the academic teacher

Suzanne Brink | UmU, LU



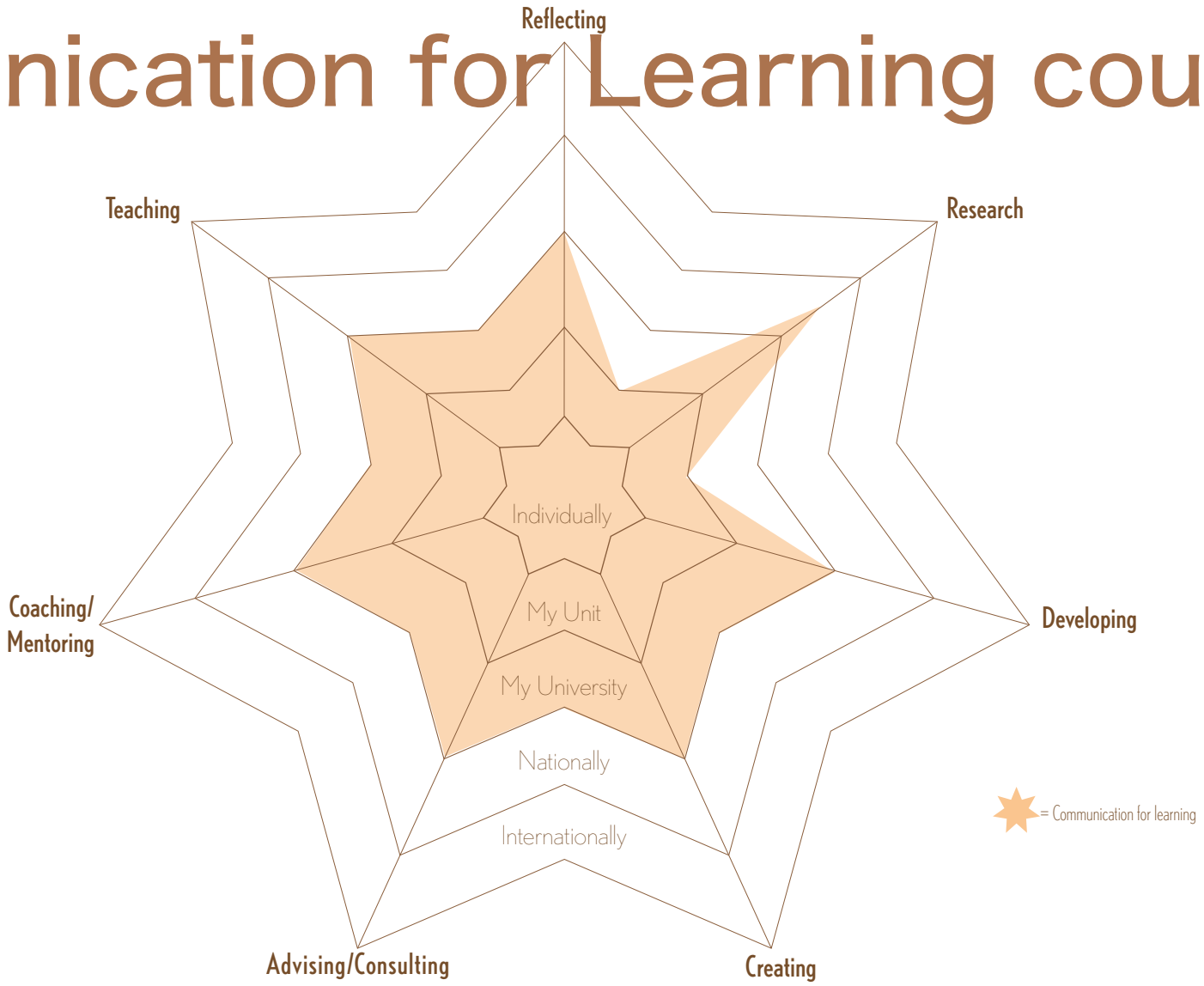
How

Reflective Practitioner
Human-Centred
Proactive Exploration
Co-Creation

WHY

Being continuously adapting
Raising awareness
Increasing understanding
Catalyzing new insight
Changing practice/policies

Communication for Learning course



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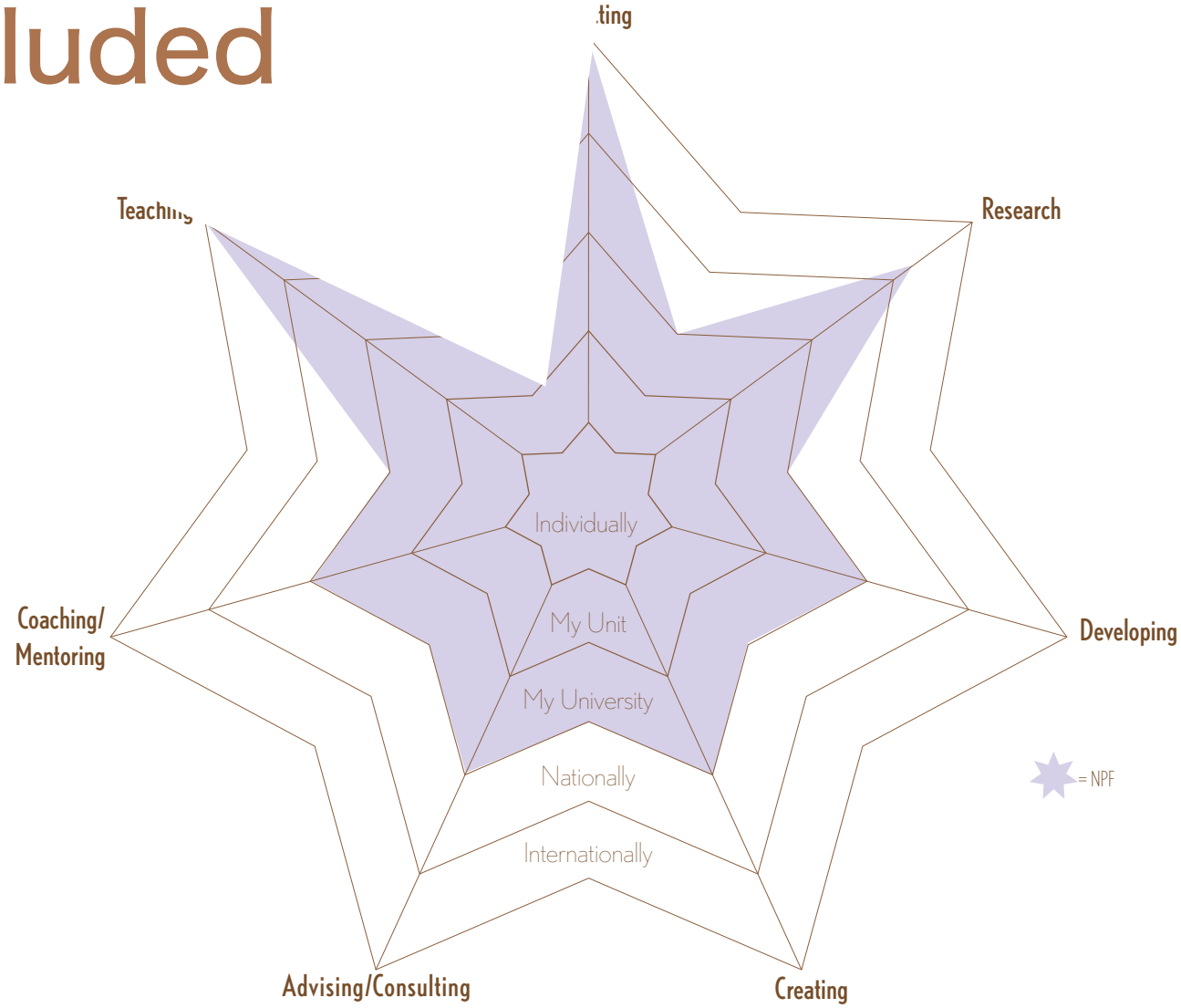
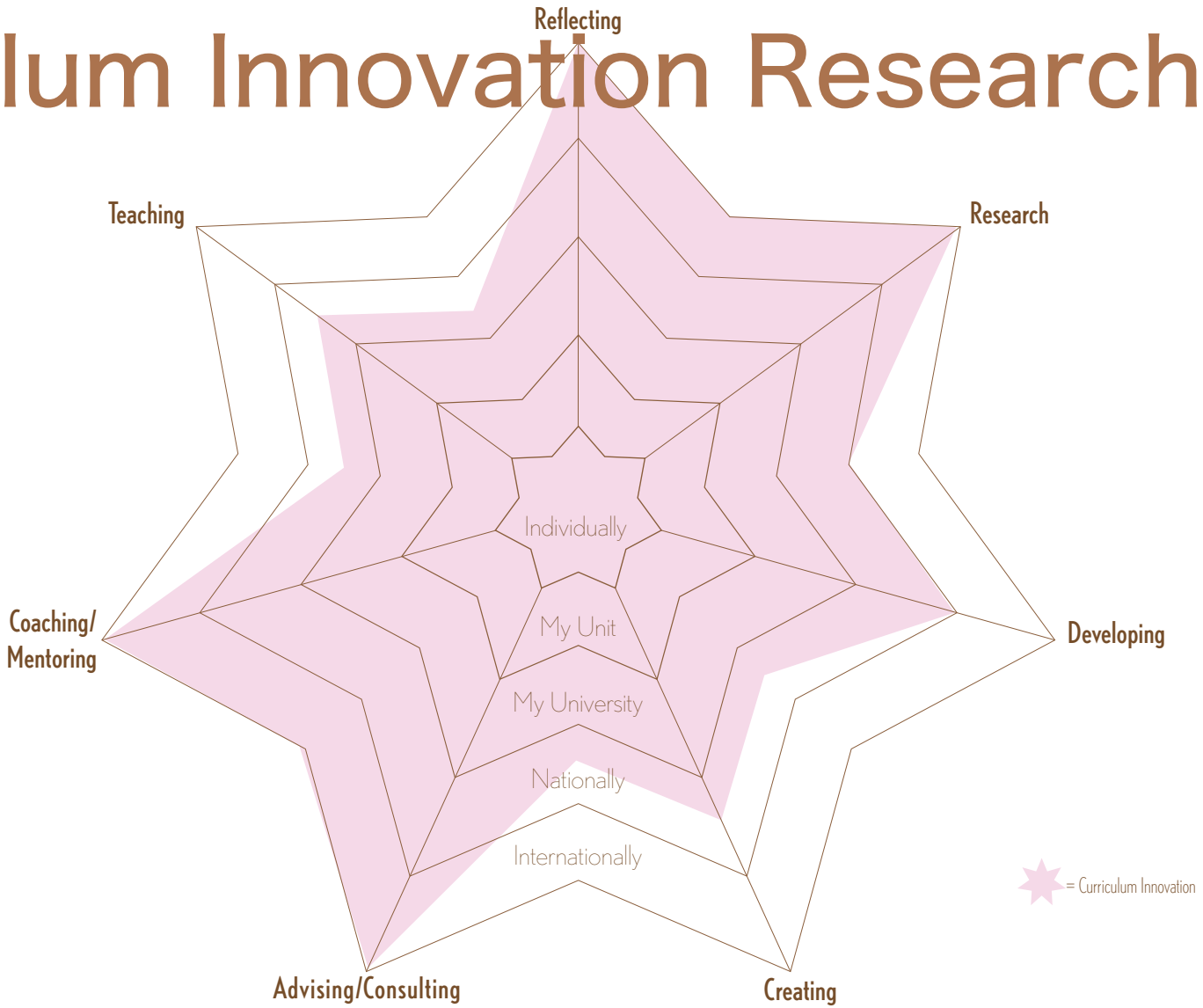
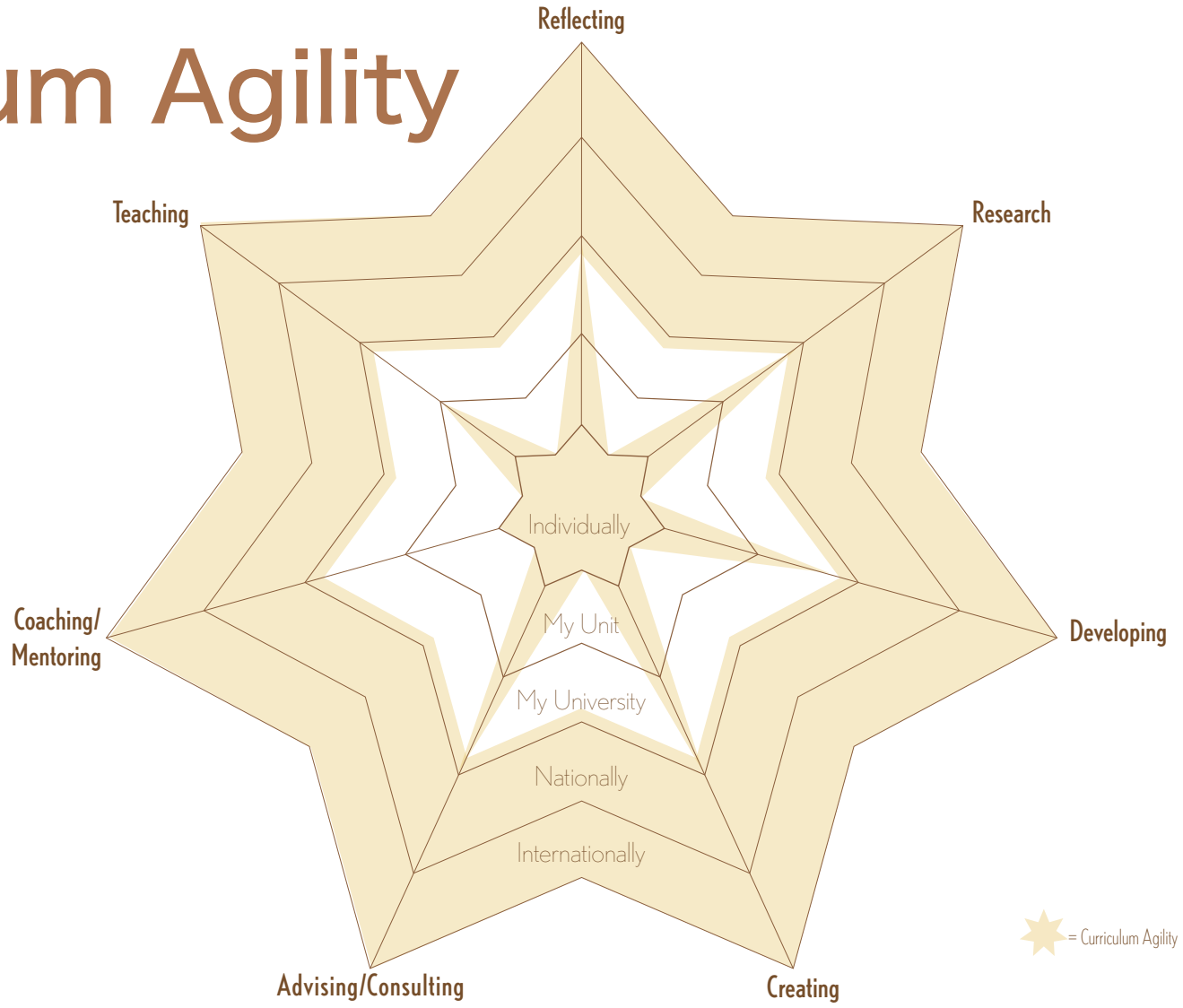


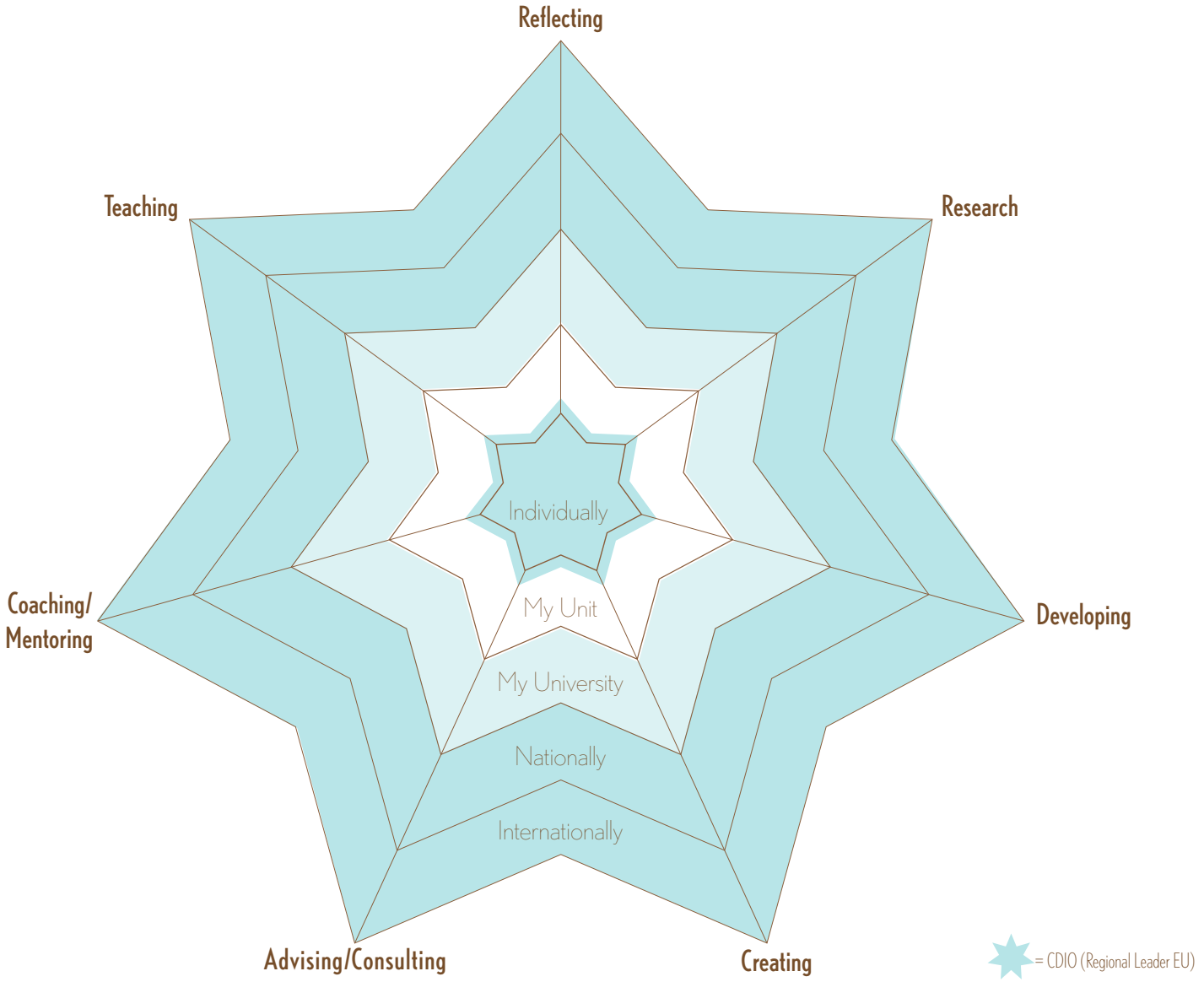
Curriculum Innovation Research



Curiculum Agility

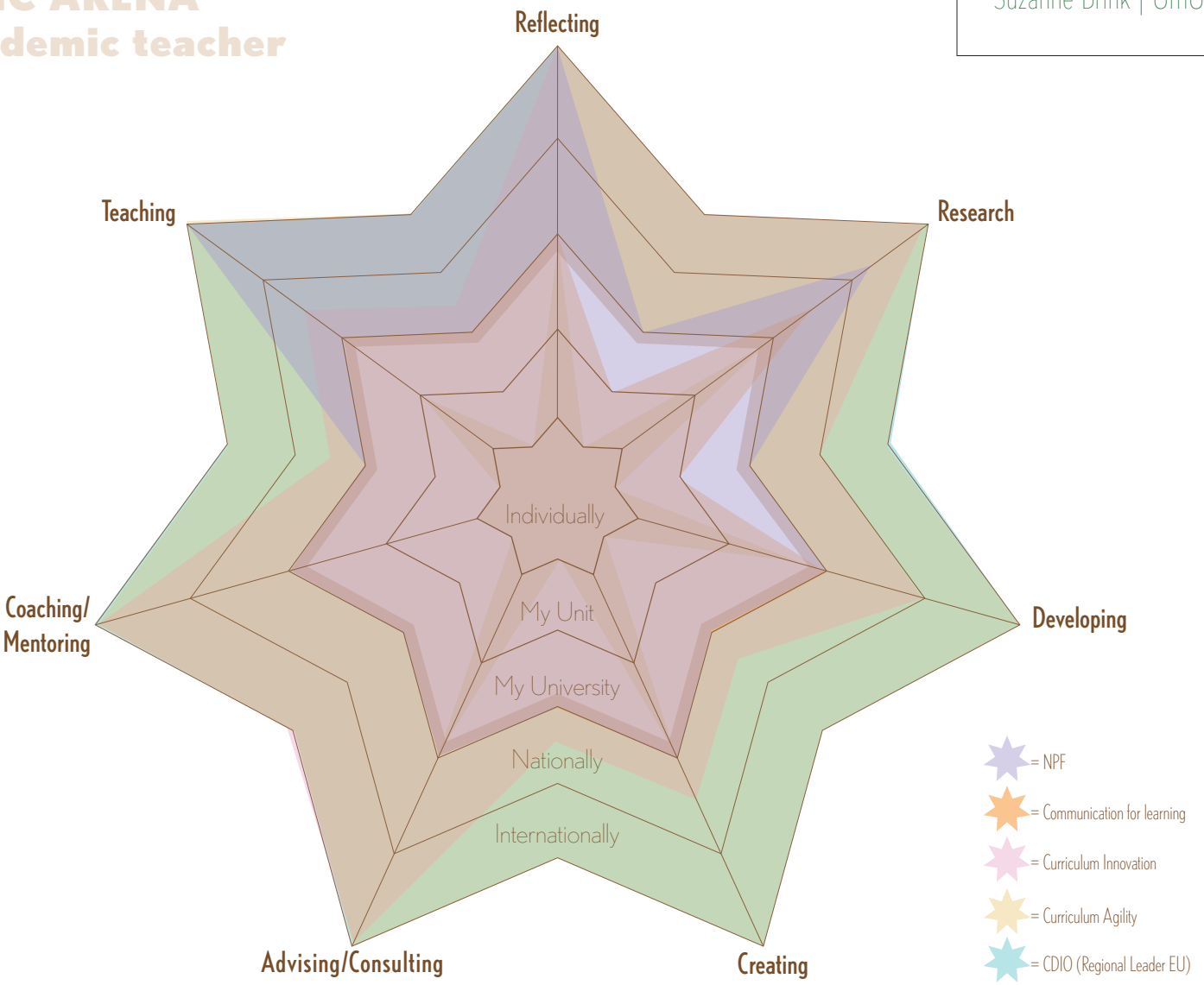


CDIO


Reflecting
Research
Developing
Creating
Advising/Consulting
Coaching/
Mentoring
Teaching
Individually
My Unit
My University
Nationally
Internationally
= CDIO (Regional Leader EU)

STRATEGIC ARENA
of the academic teacher

Suzanne Brink | UmU, LU



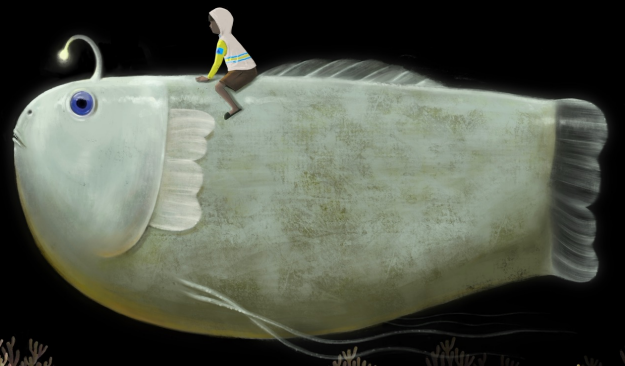
How

Reflective Practitioner
Human-Centred
Proactive Exploration
Co-Creation

WHY

Being continuously adapting
Raising awareness
Increasing understanding
Catalyzing new insight
Changing practice/policies

Thank you!



suzanne.brink@umu.se

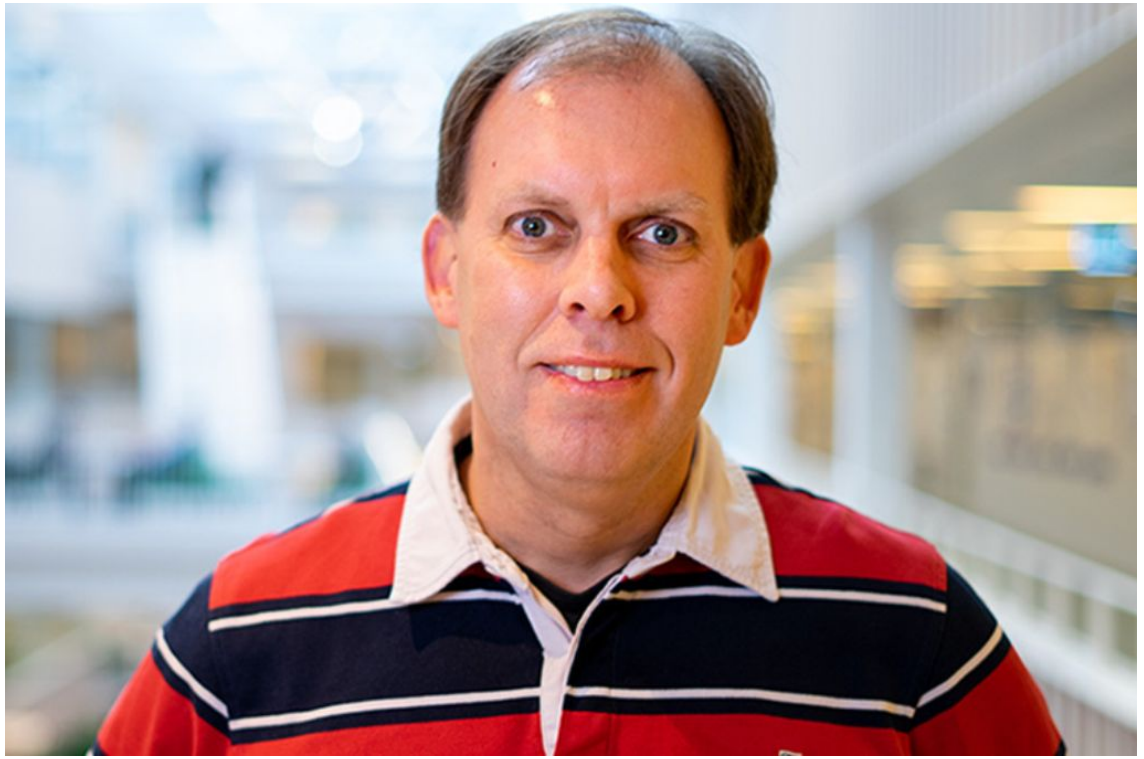
Summary, reflection, conclusion

Storträffen Meetup VT25

PriU - Working Groups for Prioritised Educational Issues

PriU groups are cross-school and cross-functional working groups that work in between the Storträffen meetups.
Everyone is welcome to join a PriU group!

Mats Nilsson 1971–2025
Leader of PriU Student perspective and influence



PriU Assessment methods

Today's discussions:

Peer assessment as a learning activity and a time-saving strategy

Assessing the process not the product in an AI universe

Next meeting will be **June 11, 2025 at 13:15-14:45**

in Seminar Room 4523, level 5 in D building, and in Zoom

Topic: **Using computers for assessment** (Elisabet Lövkvist)

For more information, contact:

Viggo Kann viggo@kth.se or Elisabet Lövkvist elilov@kth.se

PriU Connections to professional practice

Today discussions: KTH:s strategic partnerships, external engagement in education, project courses, outgoing mobility of staff

Project courses at the KTH web

Call outgoing mobility

Next meeting: September 18th. 10.30-11.30

For more information, contact: Johan Blaus johbla@kth.se

PriU Digitalization

Aim: Be a bottom-up forum for discussions about anything related to digitalization in education. Discuss latest trends, test new solutions, give feedback:
AI for assessing open-ended questions, learning analytics in Canvas, generate course material with AI support

Theme and time for next meeting: TBA

For more information, contact: Magnus Andersson <magnusan@kth.se> or Fredrik Enoksson <fen@kth.se>

PriU Future learning environments, scheduling and planning

Today's discussions:

New ways of teaching the new digitally savvy student

Today´s challenge: How do we get the students to learn?

Time for next meeting: 4 June 2025, 12:00-13:30, V3

Topic: Konst och arkitektur på KTH med anledning av den nya skulpturen vid V-salarna (Teknikringen 76)

For more information, contact: Charlotte Hurdelbrink, hurdel@kth.se or Marika Strömberg, maristr@kth.se

PriU Gender, diversity and equal opportunities (JML) perspective

Topic & time for next meeting: autumn

We are looking for a second leader!

Send an email for more information.

For more information, contact:
Anne-Kathrin Peters, akpeters@kth.se

PriU KTH teachers' lifelong learning

What continuous competence development does a teacher at KTH need to meet tomorrow's challenges and how is this made possible?
What is continuous competence development for teachers?

Discussions will take place in the autumn!
Until then, take the opportunity to develop your competence by taking a higher education teaching course.

https://intra.kth.se/utbildning/utveckling-och-hogskolepedagogik/hogskolepedagogik/fortsattningskurser-i-hogskolepedagogik-1.1274874

PriU Student perspective and influence

Next meeting: TBA

For more information, contact:

Elizabeth Keller ekeller@kth.se

PriU Sustainable development in education

How far have we come in integrating sustainable development into our programmes – and what is needed to take the next step?

Next meeting: We are planning three meetings for the autumn, no dates yet.

- Wicked problems (Continuing our series, searching for examples of this, preferably from CBH and SCI)
- Follow-up of the current sustainability objective for education
- The new sustainability objectives 2026-2030

For more information, contact: Héléne Hermansson (heleneh@kth.se) or Anders Rosén (aro@kth.se)

The students have the floor

Alexander Sjölund & Iris Callerholm
THS Head of Educational Influence

Oliver Salomonsson
THS Head of Student Welfare

Sofia Ritzén
Dean of Faculty

KTH
VETENSKAP
OCH KONST

Documentation of Storträffen Meetup VT 2025

- Recordings of the opening and closing sessions
- The discussion leaders will compile a document summarizing the key points from today's discussions

Will be posted on the group web of the Storträffen Meetup and PriU groups:
https://www.kth.se/social/group/prioriterade-fragor

Award Ceremony:
Storträffen Meetup Participant Recruitment Award

Winner: Gabrielle Paulsson-Berne

Fill out the evaluation survey for the Storträffen Meetup and influence the next one

December 1, 2025 **(Save the date!)**

Welcome to the after-talk and mingle outside the Q building!