

Dear colleagues, dear students,

Sophie Vanhoonacker, in her speech so full of love, already gave us a broad idea of the direction we ought to move in after today. Now, I get the chance to try to inspire you a little more. In particular, to inspire you to hold onto this moment. This positive energy, which – as we are told by those whose relationship with the university stretches back 40 years or more – was present even in those very early days. The people who, back then, helped to shape Problem-Based Learning as we know it today have many enthusiastic stories to tell. About how students worked together with tutors to shape this innovative form of education. About its small scale, and the guts needed to implement it. About the incredibly positive vibe.

I think we felt that vibe again today. And now, it is important to work together to further develop our PBL philosophy. EDview gives us a fantastic starting point. Add to that our quality agreements with the government, which already set out a number of concrete action points that overlap with or connect with EDview. Quality agreements on the maximum group size of 15 students, for example, or how we can prepare students who did their bachelor's programme elsewhere for a master's programme using PBL here. EDview takes all this a step further.

The members of the Executive Board, myself included, are pleased that our academic community has so clearly expressed its support for PBL. We too are convinced that PBL is still an innovative teaching method. And this opinion is shared by the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Its report, 'Supporting Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Higher Education in the Netherlands', describes Maastricht PBL as particularly valuable when it comes to interdisciplinary teams that require interactive group work. The report draws attention to problem-based and interdisciplinary learning approaches as valuable means of facilitating metacognitive skill development, by emphasising the importance of critical thinking, flexibility, innovativeness and skills such as giving and receiving feedback, or communication and presentation skills. And finally, it describes EDLAB as 'a good example of an institution-wide approach to enhance innovation in education.' High praise indeed, of which we are very proud!

To return to EDview: the Executive Board agrees wholeheartedly with the conclusion that PBL is more than just the seven steps. And that tutors should have the freedom to be creative, to the extent that their approach fits with the PBL philosophy. So what exactly is that philosophy, and what exactly will it mean for our students and staff in the coming years? Moving forward, we need to build on the results of EDview with best practices shared across faculties.

The new bachelor's programme in the making, Global Studies, which will involve teaching from all six faculties, makes this shared vision all the more necessary.

In short: how are we going to turn into specific, concrete projects this wonderful agenda that EDview represents? This enormous labour of love by Janneke, Stella and Sebastian (to whom I extend my deepest thanks!) with the cooperation of hundreds of students and staff (thanks of course to all of you too!) ...

To this end, I hereby call to life a steering group. Headed by professor Erik Driessen we are going to set sail from this fantastic starting point. And I cordially invite you to join us on the love boat. Maybe this is specific to my generation, but I can vividly recall that American TV series about a cruise ship, with its grizzled captain and a catchy theme song that gets stuck in your head whenever you hear it. I won't subject you to my singing, but the lyrics 'the love boat promises something for everyone' are more than applicable here. So take this opportunity and come aboard! Thank you.