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Design at the Dawn of new Pedagogies.

Embracing nonlinear and iterative Learning Paths by Design

Jan Eckert, PhD | Head of the Design Unit | University of Gothenburg

- The «VUCA» World of Education
- Design won’t be enough…
- Design at the Dawn of new Pedagogies

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The VUCA World of Education

Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity

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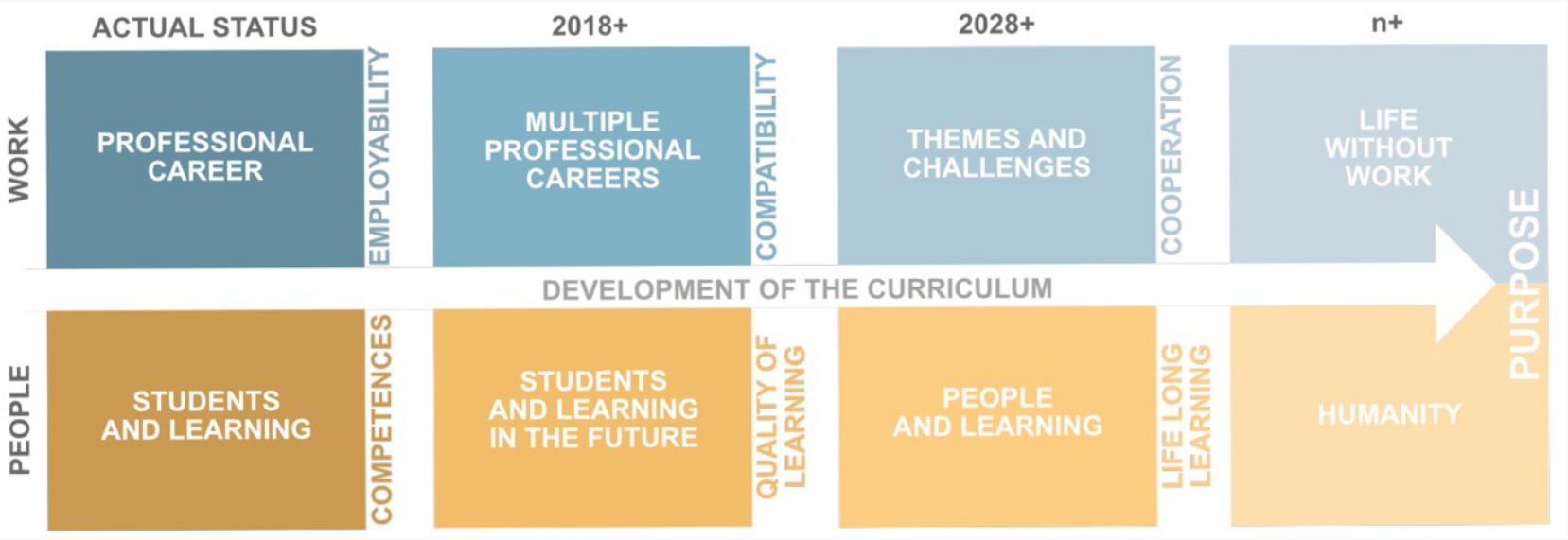
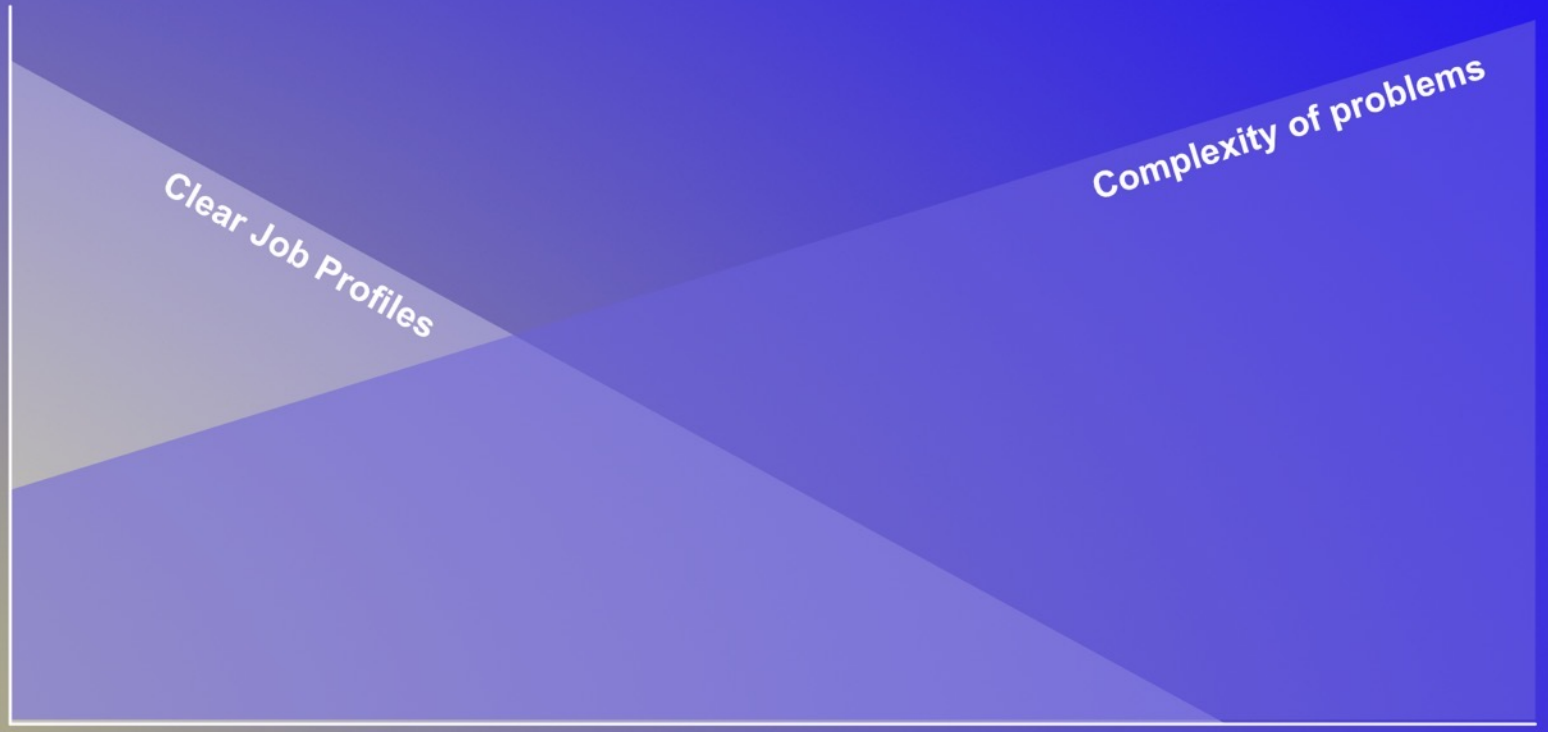
The VUCA World of Education



Eckert, J. (2018). *O ensino do design e o designer de acordo com o modelo Y*. EIMAD Conference 2018, Castelo Branco, Portugal

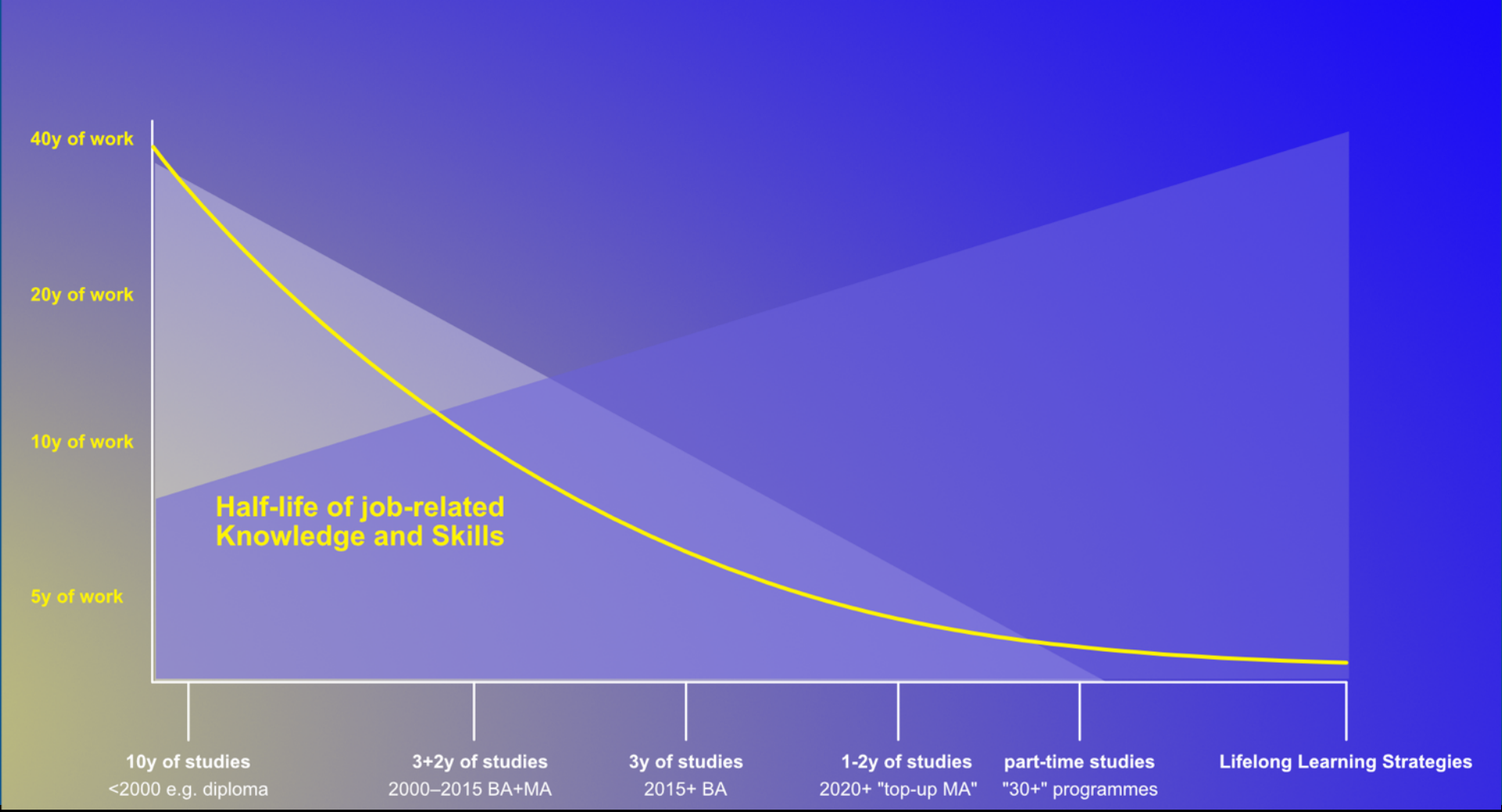
The VUCA World of Education

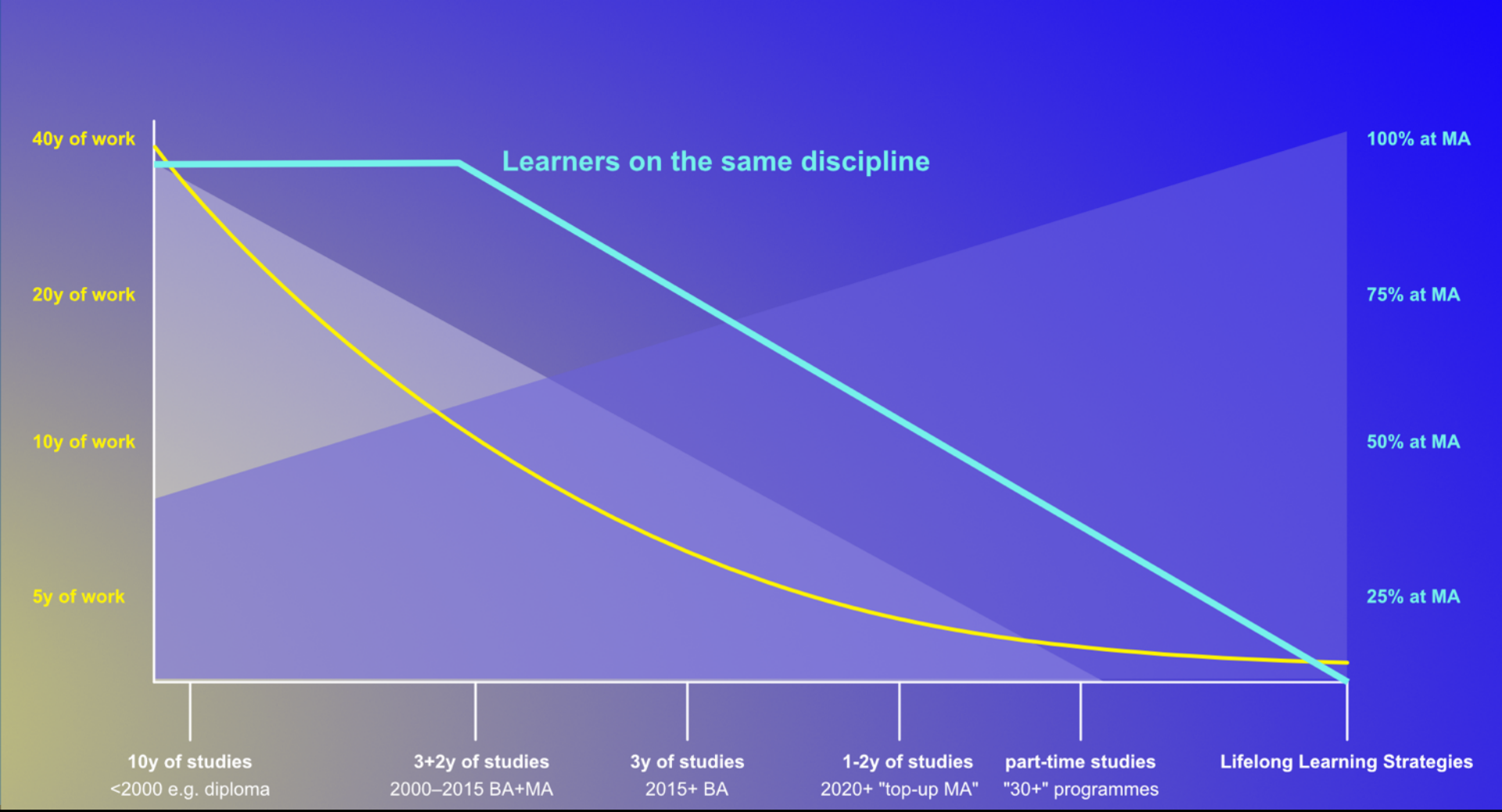


The VUCA World of Education

„Over the next decade, a non-negligible share of newly created jobs will be in job openings for wholly new occupations, or for existing occupations undergoing significant transformations in terms of their job content and skills requirements “

World Economic Forum. (2020). *Jobs of Tomorrow – Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy.*


40y of work
20y of work
10y of work
5y of work
Half-life of job-related
Knowledge and Skills
10y of studies
<2000 e.g. diploma
3+2y of studies
2000–2015 BA+MA
3y of studies
2015+ BA
1-2y of studies
2020+ "top-up MA"
part-time studies
"30+" programmes
Lifelong Learning Strategies


40y of work
20y of work
10y of work
5y of work
Learners on the same discipline
100% at MA
75% at MA
50% at MA
25% at MA
10y of studies
<2000 e.g. diploma
3+2y of studies
2000–2015 BA+MA
3y of studies
2015+ BA
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2020+ "top-up MA"
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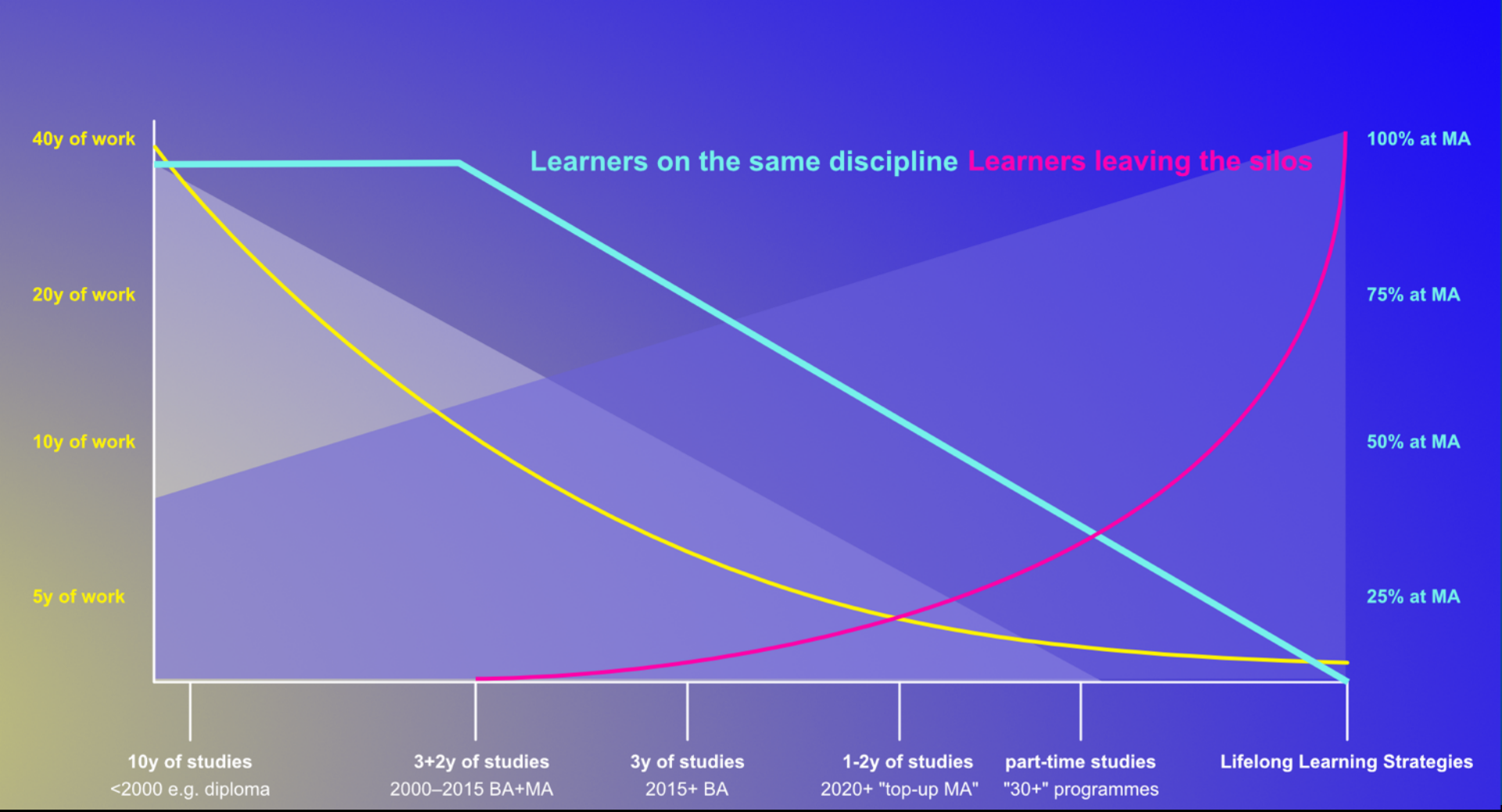
Lifelong Learning Strategies



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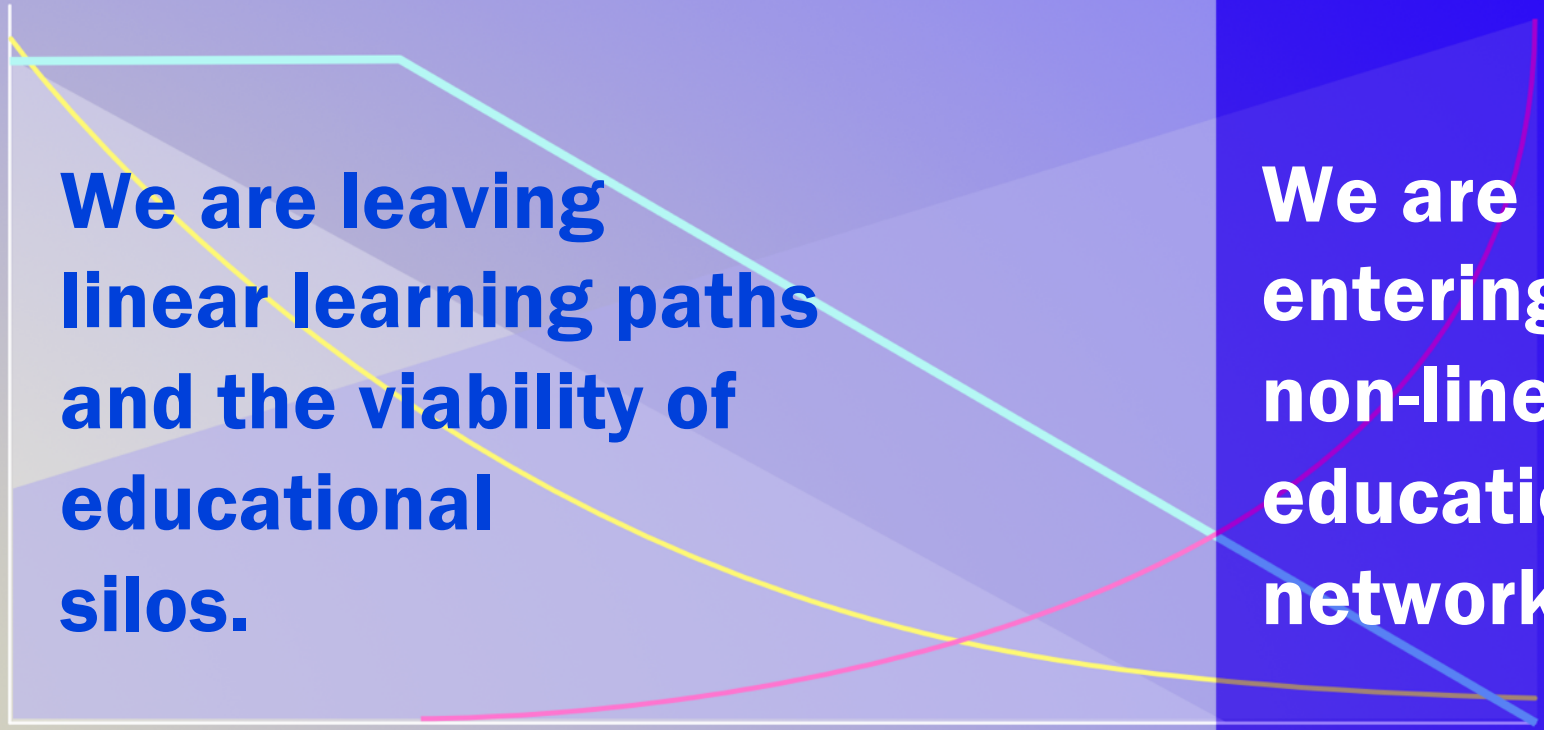
The VUCA World of Education



We are leaving linear learning paths and the viability of educational silos.

We are entering non-linear educational networks.

Symptoms we can observe today

- “degrees” and “job titles” are being invented.
- middle-aged learners joining MA programmes while coming from other disciplines.
- Some learners, who want to specialise are struggling.
- teaching staff and institutions having a hard time to adopt.
- private offers are extending the educational landscape.

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What have the Schools been doing, all that time?

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What have the Schools been doing, all that time?

- Implementing the Bolognese system.
- Struggling to introduce new public management in higher education.
- Detaching from the non-academic world by sticking to educational silos.

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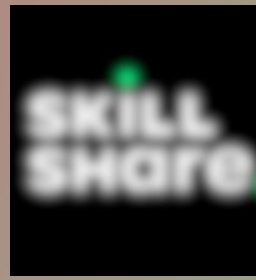
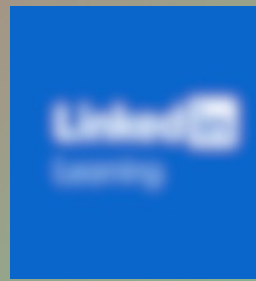
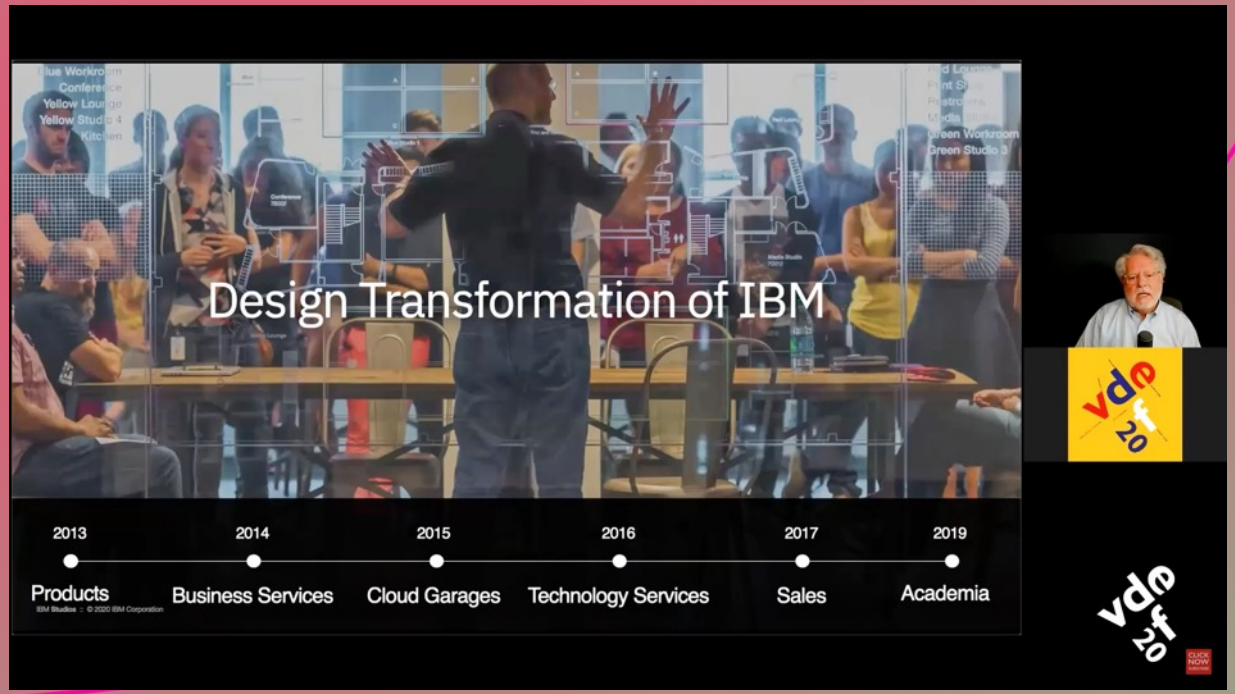
… meanwhile

New players extend the educational landscape



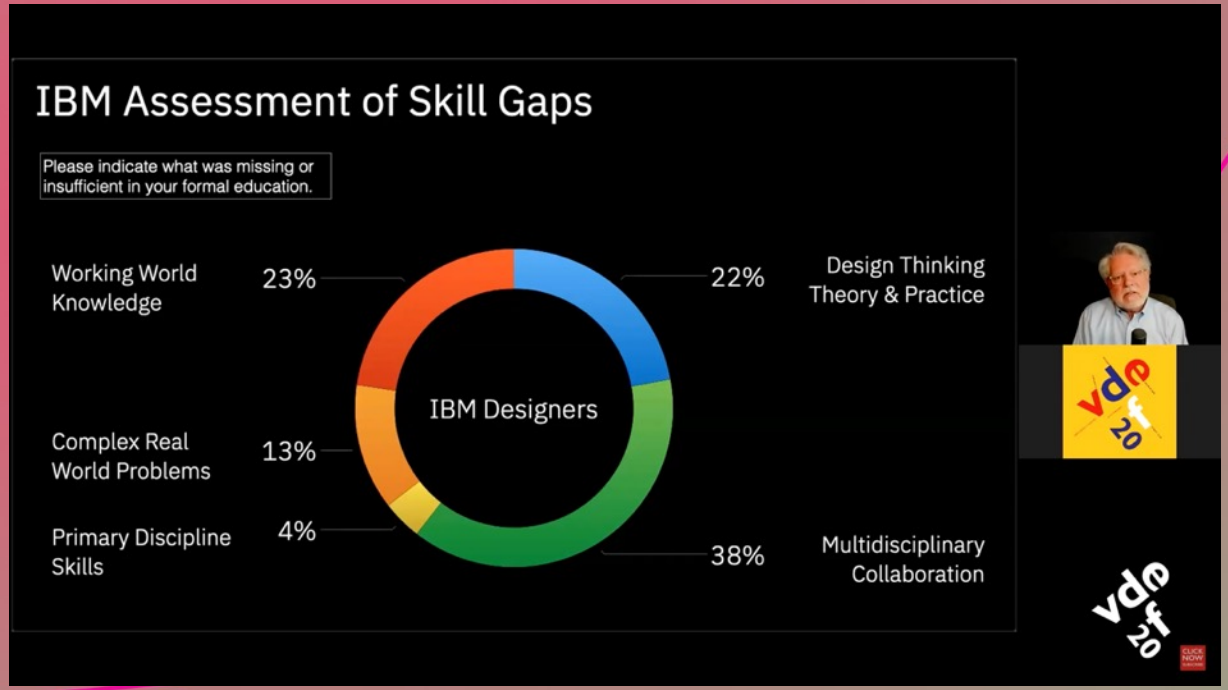


Corporates launching their own educational offers



Vredenburg, K. (2020) Educating Designers for the current and future World. VDEF 2020

… for good reasons!



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Wrap–Up: Challenges in (Design) Education

- Shift from linear to non-linear
  to life long learning.
- Slow process of introducing new public management versus a highspeed evolution that is needed in education.
- Institutional Silos.
- An extending educational landscape / market

We’re at the dawn of new pedagogies and learning environments.

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Shaping this shift comes with the same challenges that cause the shift:

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Shaping this shift comes with the same challenges that cause the shift: Design won’t be enough

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Shaping this shift comes with the same challenges that cause the shift: Design won’t be enough

Simply because no single discipline will be enough.

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Design at the Dawn of new Pedagogies

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Design at the Dawn of new Pedagogies

- Design is stuck in a disciplinary silo and ongoing identity crisis itself.
- (real) Multidisciplinary Collaboration still is something many designers are struggling with or are not educated for.
- Designers often fall short when engaging within hierarchical systems such as higher education.

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What Design(ers) might need to learn

- Collaboration with others: abandoning the belief of authorship and the “exclusiveness” of “artistic practice and creativity”
- Transition from a school of design towards a school of managing agents and processes of design and change. (comp. Christian Guellerin)

For schools of design this might mean

- Granting more agency to learners from different backgrounds
- Curricula based on student-led and Agile Learning (Christof Arn).
- Learning beyond institutional boundaries.
- Offering minors in design to other disciplines (breaking up silos).

What Design can contribute to the Shift

1 natural lifelong learning

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Design holds the transformative power to meet the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous with critical thinking and by stating hypotheses that designers are, then, able to turn into functioning prototypes of what we could call hypothetical futures.

Designers do so:

- with a human (and planet) centred approach
- by combining hard with soft facts
- by relating to evidence and creating new evidence
- by contextualising knowledge and skills

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Designers do so:

– by contextualising knowledge and skills

Designers are natural lifelong learners

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What Design can contribute to the shift

2 Pedagogies of Foresight

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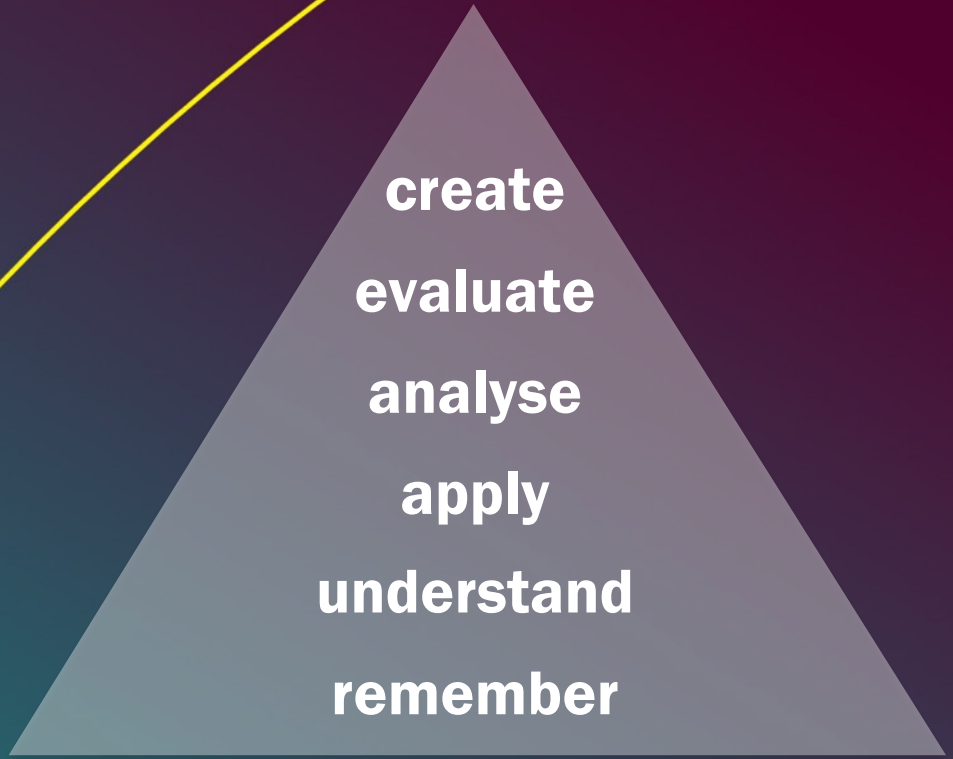
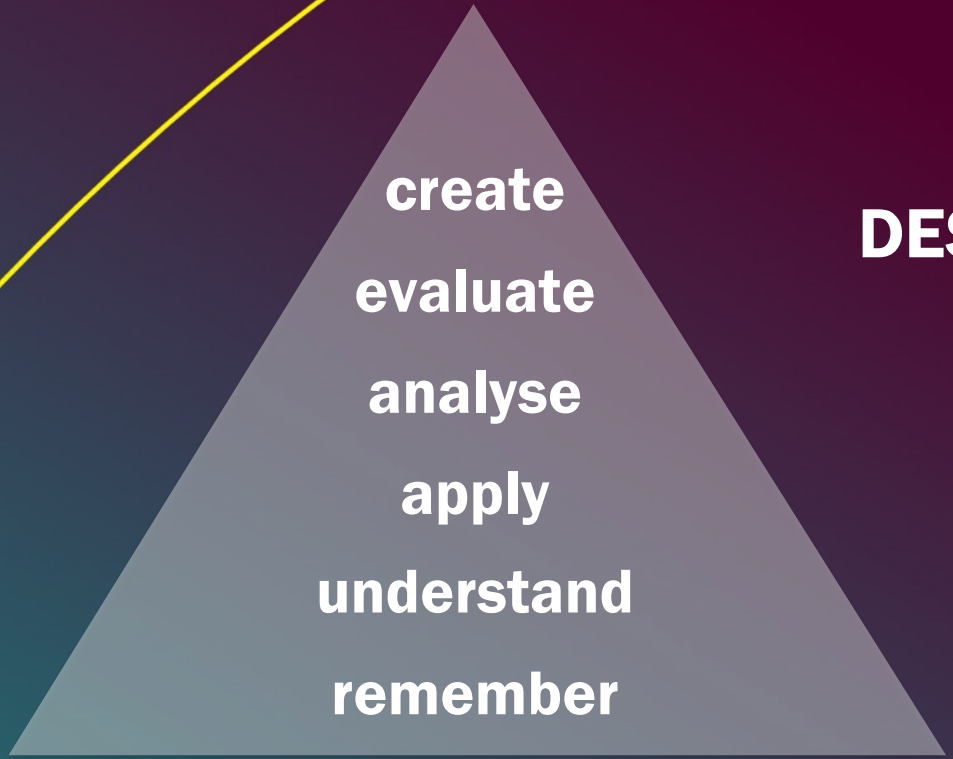
Bloom’s Taxonomy



Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company.

Bloom’s Taxonomy



DESIGN + foresee

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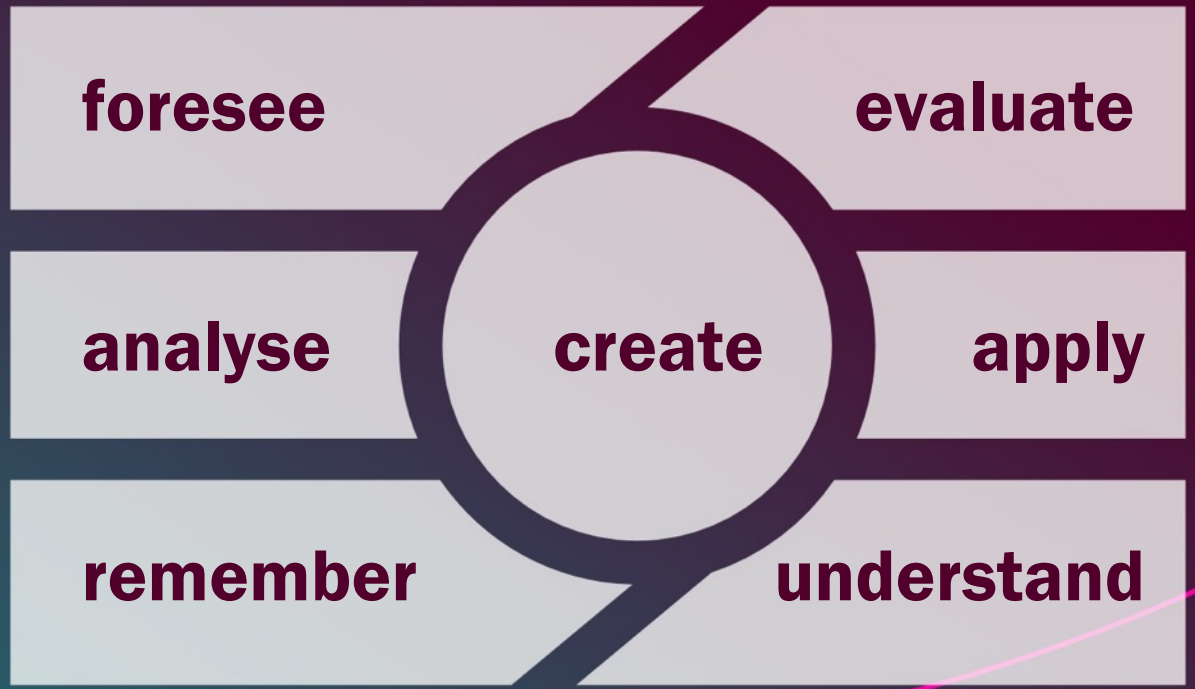
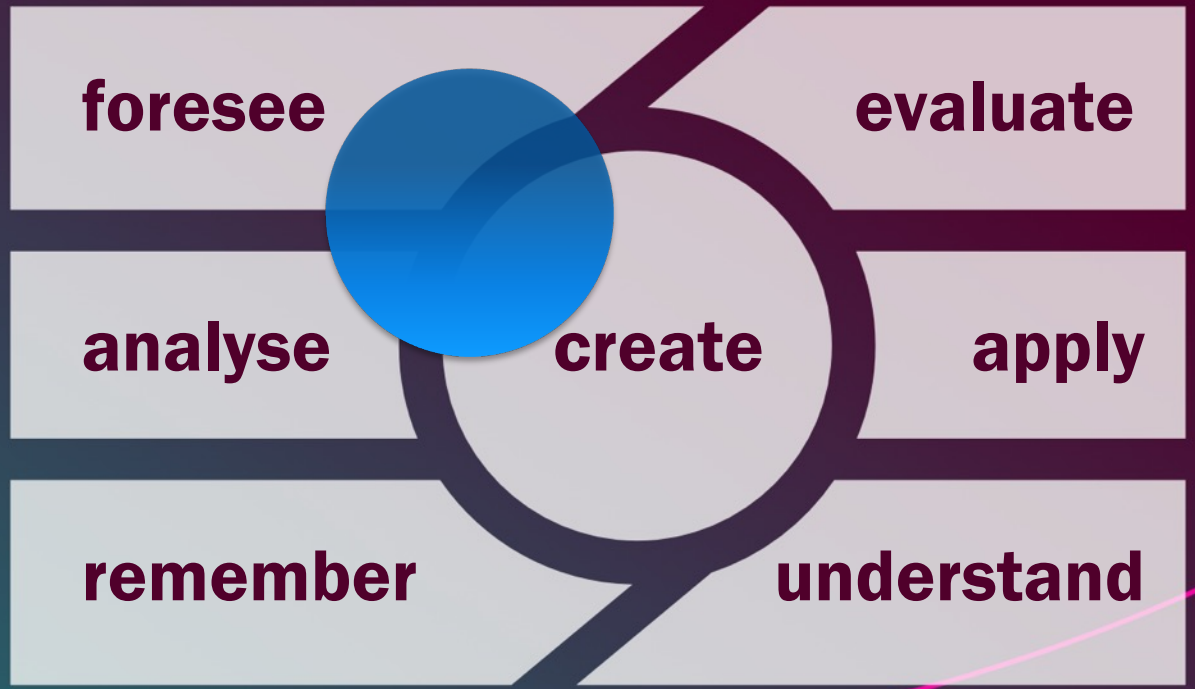
Bloome’s Plus Canvas – Eckert, 2021



Bloome’s Plus Canvas – Eckert, 2021



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Thank You for your attention!

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