

Zukunftswerk



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IN A NUTSHELL

The learning module **Zukunftswerk** explores themes and spheres of human action and existence in relation to sustainability issues, whilst allowing each discipline to set its own specific priorities.

Zukunftswerk aims to develop and strengthen sustainability skills without requiring any prior knowledge of sustainability issues. The learning module is designed for two to three 90-minute sessions and can be integrated into courses of various formats and degree programmes (max. 25 students). Within a course, **Zukunftswerk** can function both as a separate module and as a unit to which further sessions relate, either as preparation or follow-up. Further materials and examples for inspiration are available here (www.bne.unibe.ch). The time commitment for lecturers is limited to adapting the content to their course, delivering the face-to-face sessions and marking any assessment tasks.

Methodologically, **Zukunftswerk** comprises four learning activities:



Vision Creation



Mental Mapping



Exploratory Walk



Critical Design

By the end of the learning module, students will reflect on their own perceptions, values and actions and strive to understand those of others; experience learning as a collaborative endeavour and put this into practice; and jointly formulate and shape sustainable goals/futures and pathways to transformation – that is, new ways of moving towards sustainable development.

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INTRODUCTION

Zukunftswerk is a modular learning unit designed as a set of methods for developing and promoting sustainability competencies. Participating students are not expected to possess prior knowledge of sustainability, nor are they expected to share a common disciplinary or socio-cultural background. Rather, differing levels of knowledge and perspectives offer the potential for particularly rich learning experiences.

Sustainability challenges are typically characterized by a high degree of complexity, meaning that addressing them requires a wide range of competencies. Sustainability competencies are crucial for understanding complex environmental, social, cultural and economic interrelationships and for acting responsibly. They support systemic and forward-looking thinking, the development of effective strategies, and place particular emphasis on collaboration and critical reflection. As a result, sustainability competencies (see Brundiers et al., 2021) not only help to devise sustainable solutions in theory, but also to implement them in practice. Furthermore, they strengthen awareness of one's own responsibility within a global context.

Of these competencies, **Zukunftswerk** promotes *systems-thinking competency*, *values-thinking competency*, *futures-thinking competency* and *interpersonal competency*. Through a multi-stage process of developing shared visions on a topic relevant to the respective discipline for a better future, **Zukunftswerk** encourages students to examine specific sustainability issues in the context of different norms and values, interests and needs, and to devise a possible shared path towards their realization.

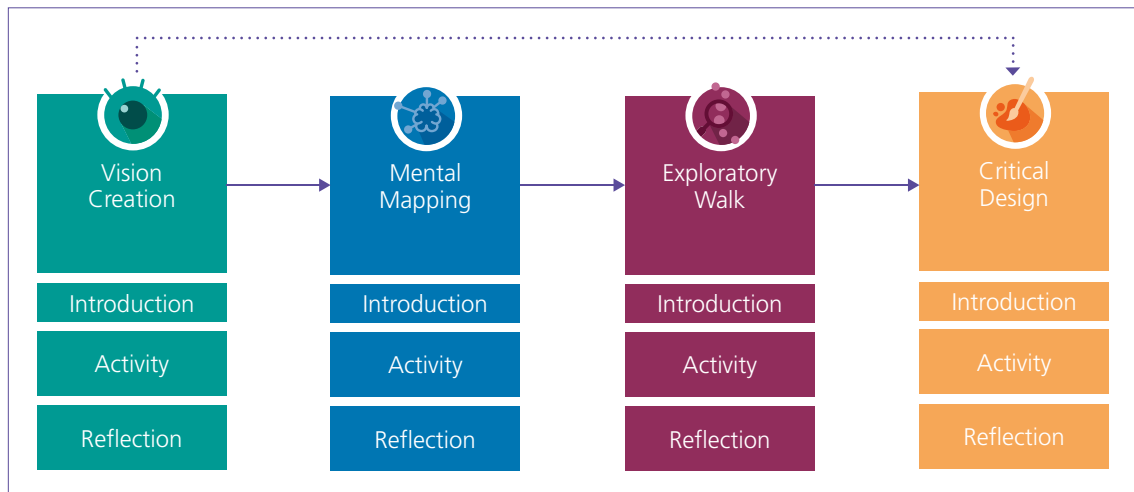
Zukunftswerk – the building blocks

At the heart of **Zukunftswerk** lies the development of positive visions in which students – both individually and collectively – link discipline-specific considerations with those relating to sustainability. **Vision Creation** (Part 1 of **Zukunftswerk**) is a central element of transformation processes towards sustainability. Visions can stimulate transformative thinking and action by enabling students to devise compelling, positive images of the future and narratives (Nerland et al., 2024; van der Voorn et al., 2023). As part of futures studies, visions formulate long-term goals, define possible endpoints and outline pathways to achieving them (Hölscher et al., 2022). By taking into account leverage points within social systems, visions also address the call for action-oriented sustainability research (Shrivastava et al., 2020). Furthermore, shared visions mobilize personal, social and material resources and foster collective commitment to sustainability goals (Borup et al., 2006).

To further develop the visions outlined in the first part of **Zukunftswerk**, this learning unit combines learning activities from the 'experience-based learning framework' as described by Caniglia et al. (2016) with approaches from critical mapping (Orangotango, 2012). The 'experience-based learning framework' comprises (mental) mapping and walking activities, which are supplemented by methodological and theoretical inputs and deepened through reflection and discussion. It builds on the tradition of experiential learning, which promotes learning processes through personally meaningful experiences and their conscious reflection.

Mental Mapping (Part 2 of **Zukunftswerk**) involves mapping perceptions, assumptions and feelings (e.g. on paper) and making ideas regarding their interconnections, interactions and meanings visible, thereby opening them up for discussion. According to Caniglia et al. (2016) and their predecessors (including Lynch, 1960), this 'mapping' refers to a physical space, such as an urban neighbourhood. With **Zukunftswerk**, mapping is also possible in other spaces, such as the digital space or 'in life', 'in society' or 'within one's own discipline'. Accordingly, the '**Exploratory Walk**' (Part 3 of **Zukunftswerk**) may, under certain circumstances, be understood in a figurative sense. As with Caniglia et al. (2016), this may involve an actual walk through the space in question, but it may also take the form of a walk as a research activity that, for example, explores areas within the digital space or 'in society'.

'Critical Mapping' (Orangotango, 2012) also essentially aims to provide space for subjective diversity, whilst drawing on a perspective that is explicitly critical of hegemony. It serves to illustrate and contextualize social phenomena from the perspective of people who have little or no say in decision-making and opens up opportunities to make their needs visible and to tap into new spheres of action. [Zukunftswerk](#) adopts this core principle but shifts the focus to the collaborative and creative development of ideas for the future, which goes beyond the creation of maps. This learning activity is therefore referred to as **Critical Design** (Part 4 of [Zukunftswerk](#)), and the product created collectively here can take various forms (a three-dimensional structure, a poem, a play, a map, etc.). What is important is that it symbolizes a shared vision for a positive, sustainable future for the students, incorporating their diverse perspectives, wishes and needs.



[Zukunftswerk](#): the four building blocks.

Reflection is a central element of all learning activities. It involves an in-depth reflection on the method, what has been learnt, the core elements of sustainable development, and the visions developed both individually and collectively – but also involves self-reflection. Questions could include: Why do I have certain needs and desires? What motivates me to put them into practice? What prevents me from doing so? Am I willing and able to continuously pursue goals that lie far into the future? How much consideration do I give to the needs and wishes of others? How do I deal with any conflicting values? Etc. In order to achieve the learning objectives (see next chapter), sufficient time, space and attention should therefore be devoted to reflection.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & SUSTAINABILITY COMPETENCIES

Zukunftswerk follows the 'constructive alignment' approach (Biggs, 1996), which aims to carefully align learning activities, learning objectives and assessment. The learning activities overlap and are aligned with the learning objectives in multiple ways. The following table lists only the key areas of focus. The learning objectives should be understood as stages in the development of competencies. Zukunftswerk focuses on fostering four key cross-cutting sustainability competencies: *systems-thinking competency*, *futures-thinking competency*, *values-thinking competency*, and *interpersonal competency* (Brundiers et al., 2021).

Learning objective	Learning activity(ies)	Possible forms of assessment
Students... ...reflect on the links between their discipline and topics relating to sustainable development ...outline positive visions for the future relating to specific subject areas within their discipline  <i>systems- and futures-thinking competency</i>	Vision Creation • Gaining an awareness of interrelationships, aspirations and scope for action in the direction of sustainable development • Open-ended development of positive visions for the future within a discipline-specific subject area	• Reflection report on the learning process
The students... ...reflect on their own perceptions, values and actions ...recognize and try to understand the perceptions, values and actions of others ...position themselves within the sustainability discourse on the basis of these perceptions, values and actions  <i>values-thinking competency</i>	Mental Mapping • Raising awareness of perceptions and perspectives Exploratory Walk • 'Reality check', highlighting blind spots Individual and group reflection exercises in all learning modules	• Reflection report • Learning journal • (Photographic) documentation of insights gained from the Exploratory Walk • Peer feedback
The students... ...understand learning as a collaborative endeavour and actively put this into practice  <i>interpersonal competency</i>	Exploratory Walk • Broadening horizons through exchange with fellow students, mutual learning Critical Design • Students work together to paint a positive picture of a sustainable future, taking all voices into account	• Role-play • Peer feedback • Poster presentation on Critical Design
The students... ...identify complex interrelationships and share a holistic understanding of sustainability ...develop complex visions of sustainability and strengthen their abilities to act creatively and sustainably  <i>systems- and futures-thinking competency</i>	Critical Design • Participatory design of shared visions for sustainable development within the discipline-specific selected subject areas	• Poster presentation on Critical Design

PREPARATION

Planning

Zukunftswerk is designed to consist of two to three 90-minute sessions. Depending on the time available, the **Exploratory Walk** (Part 3) can be set as homework, so that the (two) face-to-face sessions are limited to **Vision Creation** and **Mental Mapping** (Parts 1 & 2 – Session I) and **Critical Design** (Part 4 – Session II).

Zukunftswerk does not require any prior knowledge of sustainability. Rather, this is to be acquired in the course of the learning activities. Introductions to the topic of sustainable development in general, and to the relevant disciplinary approaches in particular, can take place at various points. An introductory session at the start helps to frame the activities, reflection exercises and discussions. For some disciplines, the University of Bern's '[Links to Sustainable Development](#)' (2026) can serve as a basis.

Materials

Below is a selection of materials that may be required:

- A3 sheets
- Flipchart or large roll of paper
- Post-it notes in various colours and sizes
- Various pens
- Glue and other craft materials
- Camera or video camera
- Theatre equipment
- Laptop (GIS, CAD, film software, etc.)
- ...

IMPLEMENTATION

Getting started

Zukunftswerk begins with a welcome, an introduction to the topic and a description of the learning activities and learning objectives.

Welcome and introduction to Zukunftswerk

Suggested welcome: Introductions using engaging methods ([e.g. sociometric line-up](#))

Suggested introduction: An introduction to the topics of sustainable development and education for sustainable development. In the field of education, the promotion of specific sustainability skills – including those targeted here – is considered to be of great importance. Further information is available at www.bne.unibe.ch.

Description of learning activities and learning objectives.

A description of the disciplinary approach, the main focus or the research question to be explored within the course through **Zukunftswerk**. A clear set of tasks with an explicit focus is important in order to foster reflective depth and collaboration.

Examples

For illustration purposes, two possible implementations of **Zukunftswerk** are presented. The examples are drawn from sports science and gender studies, or one of its sub-disciplines. They are listed in a separate box at the end of each description of a learning activity.

Part 1: Vision Creation



Part 1 of **Zukunftswerk** focuses on fostering creativity and visionary thinking with regard to addressing the chosen topic.



The visions developed here are incorporated – sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly – into Parts 2, 3 and 4 of **Zukunftswerk** (**Mental Mapping**, **Exploratory Walk**, and **Critical Design**). They serve as a catalyst for questioning the meaning and purpose of what is taken for granted, for recognizing potential for change and scope for action, and they fuel the motivation to engage with the relevant topic in depth or to prioritize specific aspects within it.

Like each of the four parts of **Zukunftswerk**, this one also consists of an introduction providing context and guidance, the (in this case individual) completion of the exercise, and a subsequent joint reflection.

1.1 Introduction to Vision Creation

The aim is to outline a vision that describes a positive future development of the identified sustainability issues.

The vision should be developed freely and creatively. Existing framework conditions can be disregarded – ‘think outside the box’. There is no right or wrong way to present it.

The vision can take many forms and may be expressed, for example, through writing, drawing, crafting or audio recording.

Depending on the group of students and the context of the educational session, various methods can be used to lighten the atmosphere or raise awareness of personal needs, including the ‘**body check-in**’ (Lewis et al., 2024).

1.2 Implementation of Vision Creation

Students develop and outline their personal vision of a positive, sustainable future in relation to the chosen topic.

OUTPUT

Individual visions

1.3 Reflection

Students compare and discuss the visions they have outlined (first in small groups or straight away in a whole-class session).

Possible reflection questions:

- What does a desirable future look like?
- What similarities are there between the visions they have sketched out?
- What are the differences?
- What are the possible reasons for these similarities and differences?

- To what extent have disciplinary (value) attitudes and debates been taken into account?
- To what extent have more individual (value-based) attitudes, experiences or social influences been taken into account?
- What opportunities and challenges do the visions highlight?
- What developments could jeopardize the attainment of the visions, and how could those developments be addressed?
- How do the visions outlined relate to selected aspects of sustainability?
- ...

OUTPUT

Compilation of the visions (e.g. on a flipchart: commonalities, differences, (value-)attitudes and debates, individual or social influences, opportunities, challenges)

Vision Creation – ‘Future Labour’

In the **Vision Creation** exercise, students formulate their vision of work in a positive, sustainable future. They base their ideas on the following questions, or a selection thereof:

Imagine work in a positive, sustainable future. What forms of work do you envisage? What distinguishes them, and where do they take place? How do the different forms differ from one another? What place does each type of work occupy in your life, and what significance does it hold in society? Who does what, and for whom or what? What drives these forms of work, what determines them, and what makes them possible? Which training and career paths are open to whom? Are there any restrictions? Why?

Are these forms of work an expression of human needs; are they individual and/or social necessities? What significance does wage labour have – for securing a livelihood, for social status? How are these forms of work interconnected? What do they have to do with giving and taking? And what role do gender relations play in this?

How do they relate to other dimensions of social reality, to nature, to history? Are they new forms of work, or the same as today's, or those of the past? How do other axes of social inequality (e.g. migration, class, racialization, disability), together with gender, impact your future world of work?

Vision Creation – ‘Urban Space and Mobility in Old Age’

Imagine you're 70 years old. How do you feel in your body? What activities give you a sense of purpose? What activities or movements do you enjoy, and how and when would you like to be able to do them? Alone and/or with others – with whom? What does your everyday life look like as a 70-year-old? What is important to you? Which places are important to you (e.g. your home, workplaces, shops, cafés, restaurants, walking routes...)? What would you like to be able to do there with your body? And how do you get there? Which modes or forms of transport suit you (e.g. on foot, by bike, by bus, etc.)? Would you like to be able to get about independently of timetables, or does waiting at stops not bother you? How would you like to use waiting time or free time – in terms of your mobility?

Part 2: Mental Mapping



The second learning activity, **Mental Mapping**, involves visualizing perceptions of the current state of affairs and their (spatial) location. To this end, the space to which **Mental Mapping** and the following **Exploratory Walk** (Parts 2 & 3 of **Zukunftswerk**) refer should be the same, and the ideas put down on paper relating to the event's theme should be open to scrutiny, expansion and discussion through physical or digital exploration. The aim here is not to create or reproduce objective representations of reality, but rather to make the significance of the identified topics conscious and visible to the students.



2.1 Introduction to Mental Mapping

An introductory session explains the procedure for creating such diagrams. Here, too, reference can be made (once again) to links with topics relating to sustainable development for the subsequent reflections and discussions.

The aim of this exercise is to visualize ideas relating to a topic, thereby making them accessible for discussion, scrutiny and the mutual appreciation of diversity.

The task is as follows: students put their subjective ('mental') conception of the selected topic onto paper, relying solely on their memory. They visualize how they see and experience this topic or area, which sub-topics or sub-areas carry what significance, what space they are given, what is central, what is peripheral or secondary, and what feelings and memories they associate with it. The mental maps may incorporate both tangible and intangible elements (memories, meanings, etc.) and may contain drawings as well as words.

2.2 Implementation of Mental Mapping

Students create their own personal mind map of the chosen topic.

For this purpose, they have access to, for example, A3 sheets of paper and various pens or other materials.

OUTPUT

Individual mind maps

2.3 Reflection

In the next step, students discuss their mind maps, explore the differences and similarities in their individual representations, and reflect on these in relation to selected (sustainability) issues, as well as their disciplinary and personal backgrounds. They gain insights into their own and others' – individual and shared – assessments and ideas regarding a specific area, which may previously have gone unquestioned or been taken for granted, and which is now revealed to be complex and multi-dimensional.

Possible reflection questions (first in small groups or straight away in a plenary session):

- What is given how much space in the representations? Does this reflect its significance? If so, significance for whom?
- To what extent are similarities and differences apparent? And how can these be explained?

- To what extent has one's own position (e.g. regarding gender, age, physical condition, lifestyle, social class/stratum, ...) influenced one's own portrayal?
- What prevailing narratives – for example, within the discipline or in society – lie behind this? To what extent do these influence the portrayal?
- What might a new narrative look like that reflects the students' ideas and wishes?
- ...

OUTPUT

Written reflection

Mental Mapping – 'Future Labour'

During **Mental Mapping**, students map out contemporary work, guided by the following questions:

In which areas do you work, and in what capacity? In which areas of activity are you perceived as 'responsible'? Which activities in your everyday life are explicitly regarded as 'work' (with a wage, contract, job title), and which are classified as 'help', 'love' or 'volunteering'? Where do you undertake care, support or emotional work for others (organization, listening, conflict mediation, nursing), and how is this work recognized, remunerated or rendered invisible? What drives your work in each instance? When do economic considerations come into play, and what do they look like in practice? Are they geared towards maximizing utility or towards 'satisficing'? What other considerations or reasons underpin your work? What about selfishness and altruism?

How can you combine the different forms of work? Where or when do you find yourself pressed for time because you can't juggle all your work? Are your working hours respected, or do you have to defend them? How flexible are they, and do you see this as an advantage or a disadvantage?

And what about other people's work – who takes on what for you, and why? What are you grateful for, and what do you believe you are entitled to? Which societal narratives about 'good' mothers/fathers and 'successful' men/women influence your ideas about what counts as valuable work?

How does the distribution of all the work you've mapped relate to gender-specific and intersectional attributions?

On your mental map, highlight situations in which you perceive yourself and others to be in a privileged or disadvantaged position with regard to work because of your or their gender (or other affiliations). Also highlight which workplaces, situations and working conditions trigger positive feelings in you and which cause you to feel uncomfortable.

Mental Mapping – 'Urban Space and Mobility in Old Age'

Students sketch a specific neighbourhood that they are all familiar with on a sheet of paper, highlighting its current opportunities and obstacles, as well as meeting places and opportunities for interaction for older people who are active. They can approach this in various ways, for example by mentally walking through the area street by street, or by starting with a visualization of what they perceive as the dominant feature of the area.

Part 3: Exploratory Walk



In the third learning activity, the students set off in small groups on **Exploratory Walks** (or research trips) within the area they have previously mapped out mentally. In doing so, they experience the complexity of that space, reflect on their perceptions and memories, and open their eyes to things they had forgotten or previously overlooked, as well as to order and disharmony. The space is to be traversed or explored collectively. As part of this collaborative activity, students discuss the social, ecological, economic and/or cultural dimensions of (non-) sustainability. They discuss their impressions and ideas regarding the areas they pass through and document their findings in a pre-defined manner (e.g. using photographs, audio recorders, notebooks or sketchbooks). This learning activity also begins with introductory input and concludes with the sharing, discussion and reflection on the experiences in a whole-group session.

3.1 Introduction to Exploratory Walk

Students are provided with information about the **Exploratory Walk** and the assignment, which sets out what they should look out for during their 'walk'. In addition, the introduction should explain and specify how their impressions and new insights are to be recorded – for example, through drawings or notes on paper, or using a mobile phone (photos and/or audio). It is important that students document everything that catches their attention in relation to the outlined vision, the course where '**Zukunftswerk**' takes place, and the perspective of sustainable development.

Possible guiding questions:

- What stands out and why?
 - To what extent are previous blind spots coming into focus? Why did these not feature in the **Mental Mapping**?
 - What unexpected elements are emerging?
 - ...
-

3.2 Implementation of Exploratory Walk

The students set off in groups on their **Exploratory Walks** within the defined area. They document their impressions in the agreed manner.

OUTPUT

Documentation

3.3 Reflection

The results are shared and discussed in a whole-group session.

The students analyse their own observations and thoughts, as well as those of the other groups. They reflect on these in the context of selected sustainability aspects and in relation to the learning objectives described above (based on sustainability competencies). They discuss the extent to which what they have observed differs from their mental maps and work together to get to the bottom of what has previously been invisible.

General reflection questions:

- What stood out and why?
- What new insights were gained? Where has your perspective opened up to previously overlooked areas?
- To what extent do patterns emerge (or not) in relation to the results of the walks? And how can this be explained?
- ...

Exploratory Walk – Research (two tasks) – ‘Future Labour’

1. Research (homework and partly in class, group work): Working in small groups, students will carry out research into the history of work in Switzerland (e.g. interviews with contemporary witnesses (20th century) about changing working conditions and/or perceptions of valuable and/or necessary work), and into selected theoretical and social debates (e.g. regarding *unpaid/paid labour*, the ‘meritocracy’, ‘unconditional basic income’).
2. Diary (homework, individual): Over the course of a week, students record what work they do and what work lies behind the things they use or consume. In doing so, they also pay attention to (over)representations of certain (desired) forms of femininity and masculinity and document areas of work in which migrant or precarious labour is predominantly carried out. In addition, they note moments when they feel (un)comfortable and when they recognize their own blind spots.

Exploratory Walk – ‘Urban Space and Mobility in Old Age’

The students form small groups (3–5 people) and explore a specific neighbourhood, taking on different roles of older people (homework assignment, approx. 3 hours). Some groups attempt to perceive the space from the perspective of people whose vision or hearing is impaired, or who are otherwise restricted in their mobility (and who, for example, are relying on a walking stick, rollator or wheelchair to get about). Others adopt the perspective of 70-year-olds with few or no limitations. They all look for interesting opportunities for movement and mobility (e.g. also in relation to interaction with other age groups).

In doing so, the students recall their sketches, recognize their own thoughts on the subject, but also discover gaps or new insights. They document their impressions photographically (5 photos per group on opportunities, barriers, untapped potential, etc., for physical activity in later life). The students send the photos, along with their comments, to the lecturer in the run-up to the next session.

Alternative: Students (also) conduct interviews with older people in the neighbourhood about their everyday physical activity, the opportunities, difficulties and wishes they have in this regard. The students have already drawn up the relevant questionnaire as part of their reflections on the mental maps. The interviews can take place in one location or whilst out for a walk. Students send the key findings from these discussions to the lecturer in the run-up to the next session.

Part 4: Critical Design



The fourth learning activity focuses on the collaborative development of a positive vision for a sustainable future in relation to the selected topic. To this end, the students return to the subject area they have already mentally mapped and explored. They revisit their previous reflections on the topic from the three preceding learning activities and then attempt to synthesize their collective findings.



The guiding principles are the concept of participation and the promotion of future-oriented thinking and action. Dominant narratives are to be consciously questioned; spaces are to be understood as being experienced in different ways, as enabling and limiting selective actions, and as socially constructed.



To this end, the students once again create a vision, but this time collaboratively from the outset (in groups or with all students together), drawing on different perspectives and with a keen sense of what is realistically possible. They imagine future ways of life, sharing, for example, anecdotes from their own lives, referring to political debates, social conditioning, discrimination and privilege, expressing both criticism and appreciation, and identifying possible or desirable spheres of action. The views of all students are taken into account. The atmosphere is open, honest, mindful, thoughtful and playful. It encourages unconventional thinking, allows for both wistfulness and joy, and provides space for compassion and creativity.

What is created collectively in the course of this learning activity is the product of participatory processes of imagination and the visualization of the visions outlined at the outset. It can, for example, serve as a starting point for further research and learning activities, as a tool for political practice, or initiate the development of community networks. Its function will be clarified collectively during the session.

4.1 Introduction to Critical Design

Students are provided with information on the approach and aim of **Critical Design**. This learning activity focuses on the collaborative development of a positive vision of the future, which is ultimately illustrated in a product. The guiding question is therefore what a positive, sustainable future might look like, whilst also considering possible paths to transformation.

4.2 Implementation of Critical Design

The steps involved in **Critical Design** can follow various procedures. One variant is a multi-stage process based on Mattes (2011, pp. 176–177):

In the first phase, students recall the central theme or problem statement on which the preceding learning activities were focused. They also agree on the form their vision will take (e.g. collage, text, mime, ...). In the second phase, criticism of the current situation is voiced and the reasons why change is needed from a sustainability perspective are set out. With regard to the 'collection of criticisms' or 'problem landscape', Mattes (2011, p. 177) suggests, for example, the 'placemat' method, whereby students first note down individually (but on a shared sheet of paper) what bothers them, and then together (in the centre of the paper) record what bothers them all collectively.

In the second phase, criticism of the current situation is voiced and the reasons why change is needed from a sustainability perspective are set out. With regard to the 'collection of criticisms' or 'problem landscape', Mattes (2011, p. 177) suggests, for example, the 'placemat' method, whereby students first note down individually (but on a shared sheet of paper) what bothers them, and then together (in the centre of the paper) record what bothers them all collectively.

The third phase is devoted to wishes, hopes and fantasies. The students jointly review the visions they developed in the first learning activity, [Vision Creation](#) of [Zukunftswerk](#), and reflect on any changes that have occurred in relation to these as they have continued to engage with the relevant topic..

On this basis, a joint decision is made in the fourth phase as to what is to be realized and presented. In [Zukunftswerk](#), the presentation of the shared vision(s) should be designed to be as plausible, coherent, challenging and relevant to the respective topic as possible (cf. Save the Children UK and School of International Futures, 2019).

Possible materials:

- Flipchart, large roll of paper
- Various pens
- (Heart-shaped) Post-its
- Stickers
- Photographs
- Theatre props
- Camera/video camera
- Newspaper articles
- Cartoons
- Lego
- CAD
- GIS
- ...

OUTPUT

New shared vision for the selected topic area

4.3 Reflection

The final phase of [Critical Design](#) is the presentation and reflection on what has been learnt and created. The focus is on bringing innovative ideas to light, (re)clarifying questions of relevance and exploring options for action.

Following the presentation and appreciation of the vision(s), a concluding reflection takes place in a plenary session. Possible general reflection questions.

- Was it easy to reach a consensus? Where were there differences of opinion, and why?
 - What has become particularly important during the course of the [Critical Design](#) process?
 - What would be a realistic next step towards implementation?
 - Where do you see scope for action within your discipline?
 - What can you personally contribute, and what would you like to contribute, to realizing this vision?
 - How do the visions outlined relate to selected aspects of sustainability?
 - ...
-

Critical Design – ‘Future Labour’

The students reflect on what they have learnt from previous learning activities relating to work. In a brainstorming session, they gather their memories, critical thoughts and aspirations regarding what a positive future for work might look like. They then decide together which of their ideas and aspirations should be realized and how they wish to illustrate this in a product. For example, this could take the form of a video message, a written manifesto or a sculpture.

In the (hypothetical) course described here, the students split into two groups. One group creates a sculpture out of clay and embeds within it specific principles of gender-just sustainability (such as a radical reduction in working hours alongside a fair distribution of care work, collective infrastructures for care work, and the reduction of precarious working conditions in feminized professions). The other group develops a short performance in which they attempt to portray the different perspectives of a precariously employed care worker, a cis-male knowledge worker and a non-binary person in the tech sector as they discuss their working conditions in a positive future.

Critical Design – ‘Urban Space and Mobility in Old Age’

The students decide to redesign the neighbourhood so that it provides space and support for the diverse (mobility) needs of older people. As their design medium, the students choose the collage, using a conventional map of the neighbourhood as their basis. They discuss which themes (e.g. accessibility, signage, social inclusion and/or infrastructure for meaningful activities) and/or locations (e.g. bus stops, parks, playgrounds or pavements) they will prioritize in the redesign, and design corresponding symbols which they will subsequently place on the collage.

In their work, they are supported by thematically relevant insights and discussions from their discipline and draw on their experiences of immersing themselves in the various perspectives of older people, on reflections on their visions, and on a holistic understanding of sustainability.

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