

# Preface

Maastricht University presents itself as a university committed to education and innovation. This is reflected in the slogan ‘Leading in Learning’. For the next few years this slogan will be implemented in the university by the programme Leading in Learning, led by Prof.dr. Wim Gijssels.

One of the specific educational innovations is research based learning, which is addressed as a spearhead in the Strategic Programme 2011-2014 “inspired by quality”. With the Sirius programme ([www.siriusprogramma.nl](http://www.siriusprogramma.nl)) Maastricht University has experimented with this new form of education.

The programme at Maastricht University is called Maastricht Research Based Learning Programme for Excellence, or MaRBL and offers talented and motivated students the opportunity to advance their research skills within a specific field or discipline while working closely together with academic staff. Within this programme students create their own research project and focus on the development of analytical skills which are important for a career in scientific research or research in business and industry.

The relevance of research based learning can be found, amongst others, in the report of the report of the committee Veerman (2010), in which is stated that the academic profile of universities should be strengthened and that education should be more research-oriented. Institutions should recognize students with special talents in research early and give them the opportunity to develop these qualities, even during the bachelor programme. Another focus of the report of the committee Veerman is that research should be more embedded in the triangle of business, knowledge institutions and government.

Thus far our experiences with research based learning are without exception positive. Students and tutors work enthusiastically and very intensively together on a great variety of research projects. Many of these projects provide interesting findings of which the Maastricht University thinks should be shared with a wider audience.

As the rector of Maastricht University and as the programme manager we are proud of the programme and the results of the students. Therefore with the steering committee of the MaRBL programme we have taken the initiative to create the MaRBL series. It’s our ambition to publish four editions each year. Two editions will be a collection of theses and

research papers from all faculties, two of these editions will be theme issues focusing on a specific research theme or discipline.

In this first edition of the new Marble-series a total of six studies are presented. Six faculties are represented in the first edition, in some cases by a research paper and in some cases the entire thesis is included in the edition.

The faculty of LAW and the faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences (FASOS) set up a research project on the effects of Europe on their citizens and member states called 'beyond the size of artichokes and cucumbers'. The project focuses on the range from binding legal norms to vague political declarations. One of the students from LAW in this research project, Ilaria Vianell, studied the effectiveness of agencies' tasks in promoting convergence of practices and described some lessons to be learned from these agencies for other agencies.

FASOS developed a research project on transparency, aiming at analyzing government transparency in a historical, political, and possibly juridical perspective. Jan Koesters concentrated on the issue that politicians throughout Western democracies are increasingly confronted with cynical citizens and hence in search for more public confidence. The underlying logic is straightforward. If someone is more open to the public, s/he is considered more trustworthy. This logic tends to lead to an instrumental use of transparency rather than to stress transparency's intrinsic value. His research paper is called 'Political Trust: A Question of Transparency?'

One of the research projects at our University College is called 'Analytical Discourse Evaluation: Using philosophy to make sense of politics'. In this research project the method of Analytical Discourse Evaluation is used. Frederike Kaltheuner reconstructed the parliamentary discourse on the Common Statute for the Members of the European Parliament in terms of the Toulmin model of argumentation in her paper called 'Wise men, clear guidance and the Common Statute for the Members of the European Parliament'.

Alexandru Surpatean from the Department of Knowledge Engineering conducted a research on the NAO-Robot, called 'Non-choreographed Robot Dance'. In his research he tried to teach the Nao robot to dance on music, where he moved away from the current choreographed approaches to Nao dance, and investigated how to make the robot dance in a non-predefined fashion. Aspects of both music and dance are investigated, and descriptions of how such elements were implemented in practice.

At the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience students can set up and conduct an individual research, guided by academic staff. Jan Knooren focused in his study on the influence of music practice during primary school on cognitive performance. His research was also presented at the first Student Research Conference in Leiden in October 2010.

Jan Bergerhoff and Philipp Seegers from the Business School of Economics have concentrated on the idea that education is an investment that pays off in the long run through higher economic growth on a path towards a “knowledge society”. They have used several models to capture the effect of education on growth. In their thesis called ‘International Education and Economic Growth’ they modelled the effects of international education on economic growth. This paper is accepted for the 67th congress of the International Institute of Public Finance (IIPF) in 2011.

With this short introduction into the six research papers that in our opinion represent some of the best researches conducted by third year students in 2010, we would like to thank the steering committee for their enthusiastic ideas and input for the realization of this series and we would like to thank students and their tutors for their research and the willingness to share this with a broader audience. We hope that the Marble series will bring something for everybody’s taste.

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