

[European Maturity Model for Blended Education]

The maturity model's aim is to map blended learning practices, conditions, strategies and policies in a systematic manner and, ultimately, to identify tracks for optimization or change. Before elaborating on the pillars of the maturity model, we refer to a series of implicit and explicit assumptions:

BLENDING LEARNING, TEACHING & EDUCATION

For this framework we use the following definitions:

- **Blended Learning** = learning as a result of a deliberate, integrated combination of online and face-to-face learning activities.
- **Blended Teaching** = designing and facilitating blended learning activities.
- **Blended Education** = the formal context of blended learning that is determined by policies and conditions with regard to the organization and support of blended learning.

MATURITY

The concept of 'maturity' relates to the degree of formality and optimization of the design, evidence-based decision making, documentation and continuous quality improvement which characterize the uptake of blended learning practices, or the implementation of blended learning conditions and strategies.

QUALITY ≠ MATURITY

Quality approaches can be in place within each of the maturity levels. However, maturity does not equal quality. Moreover, it has been observed that repeated blended learning practice at a particular maturity level does not result in an actual increase in maturity.

ALIGNMENT

We assume that instructors or instructional designers are knowledgeable about how to align course objectives/expected outcomes, learning activities, and assessment (both formative and summative). We also assume that they are knowledgeable about the alignment between the course objectives and the target student group.

VALUE OF (INFORMED) DESIGN

We explicitly adhere to a design-focused approach of courses and programmes. Consequently, we see growth in maturity as a result of the ability of (teams of) instructors, instructional designers and others involved to make informed decisions about blended learning courses and programmes. This includes using design principles and/or instructional theories, from blended learning activity design right up to whole programme design (i.e. the organization, planning and documentation of a structured series of courses or units).

VALUE OF EVIDENCE, EXPERIENCE AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI)

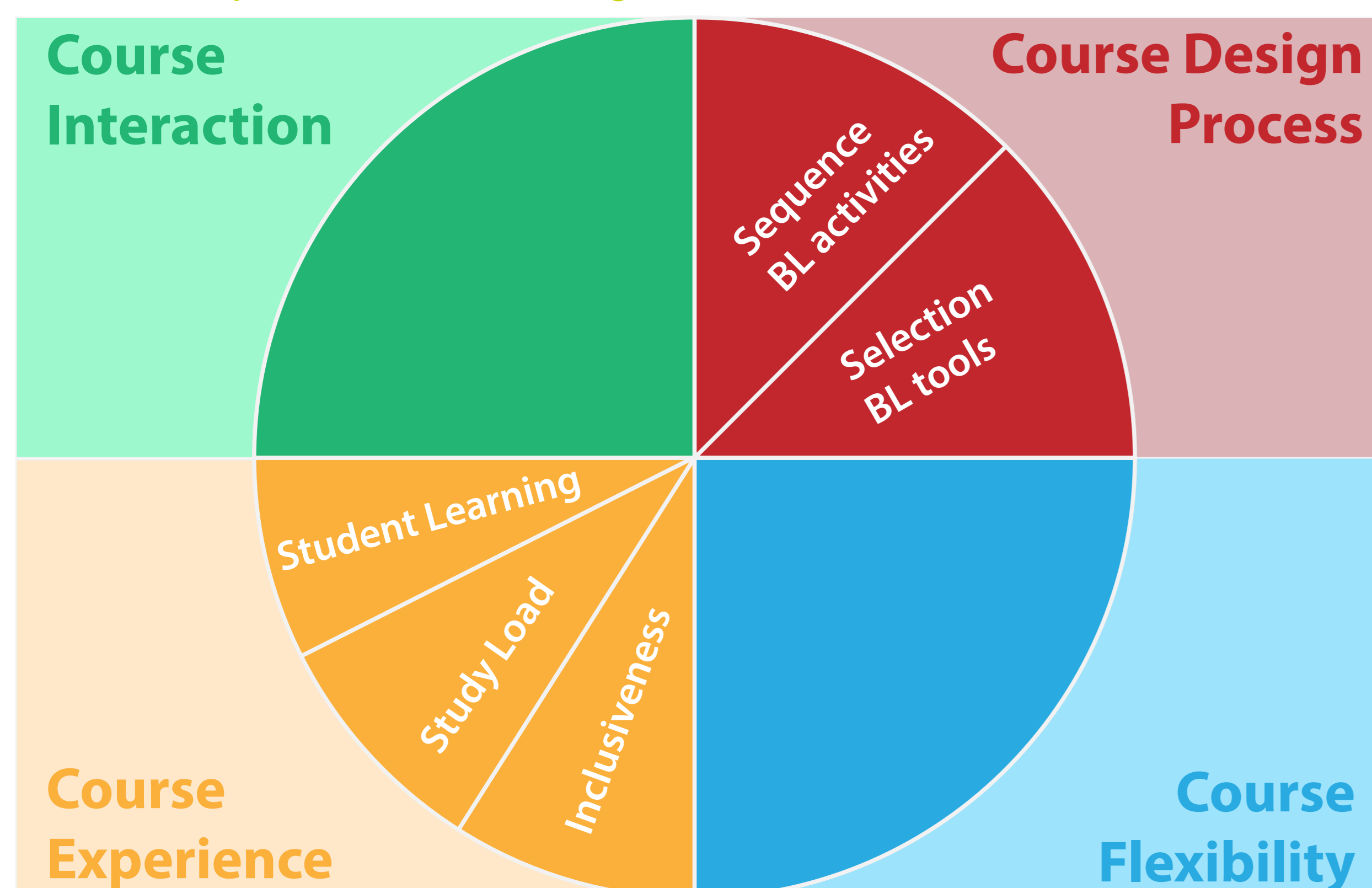
When backed up by research and/or practical evidence a course or programme design is reinforced. The extent to which continuous quality improvement processes and products are embedded in a course or programme determines the maturity level of a blended learning practices. These allow course instructors/designers to continuously improve blended learning courses in an iterative manner.

ACTION LEVELS AND KEY ACTORS

Three action levels are included in the model: the micro, meso, and macro level. We deem the main actor at the micro level to be the instructor or the instructional designer of a course. At the meso-level different key actors, teams, or bodies for decision making play a role in the decision-making process. Programme coordinators, department heads, deans, and heads of teaching and learning centres are involved, among others.

[Course Level]

The course level refers to the core of the educational system, where both learning processes and instructional processes are situated. It refers to the primary educational process, in other words the development, execution and evaluation of courses. The stakeholders of this level are mainly teachers/educators and students, but also instructional designers, learning developers, content developers and sometimes management.



Course Design Process

The process of planning, designing, developing and evaluating a blended learning program.

Selection of blended learning activities and their sequencing

The rationale for the deliberate selection and integration of face-to-face and online learning activities.

Selection of blended learning tools

The rationale for selecting tools for the delivery and organisation of blended learning activities.

Course Flexibility

Opportunities for learners to adjust particular features of the blended learning course, based on their needs and preferences. This includes features such as the selection of learning activities, the selection of resources, the mode of delivery (online/face-to-face activities), pace (educator-paced/self-paced).

Course Interaction

Extent to which the blended course facilitates learners' interaction (learner-content, learner-learner, learner-educator).

Course Experience

Fit of particular blended course components with the course outcomes.

Student Learning

The use of blended course features which facilitate students' self-regulated learning (orienting and planning, monitoring, adjusting and evaluating).

Study Load

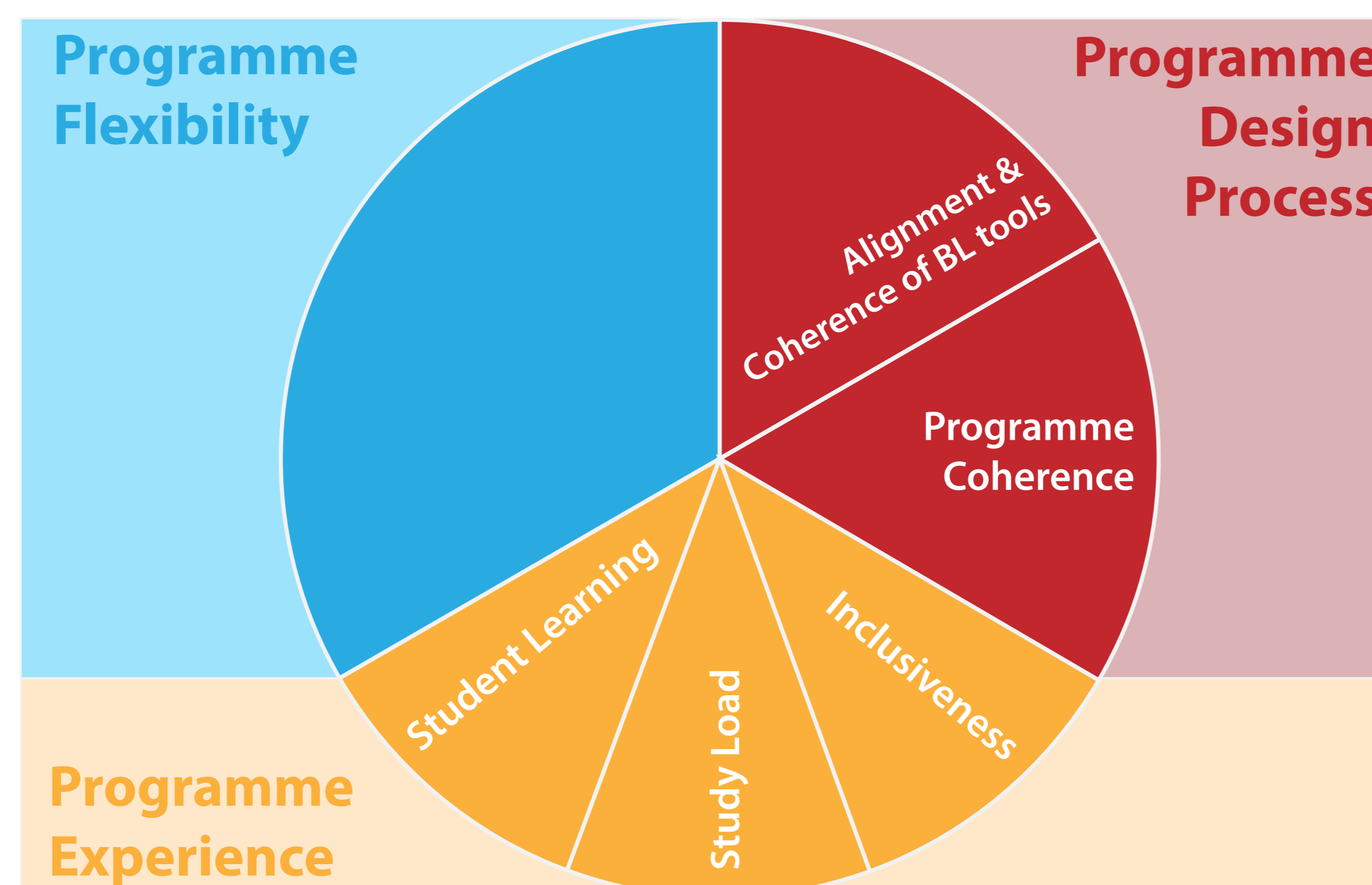
The match between the intended and achieved study load of a course (distribution and correctness).

Inclusiveness

The consideration for the diverse needs (including accessibility aspects) and backgrounds of all students to create an online and face-to-face course experience where all students feel valued, safe, have a sense of belonging, and where all students have equal access to learning.

[Programme Level]

The programme level refers to educational programmes or curricula. A programme is a structured series of educational courses. The stakeholders of this level are mainly teachers/educators and students, but also instructional designers, learning developers, content developers and management.



Programme Design Process

The process of planning, designing, developing and evaluating a blended learning programme.

Programme coherence

The vertical (course-programme) and horizontal alignment (between courses) of a blended programme.

Alignment and coherence of blended learning tools

The rationale for the alignment and coherence of educational tools in blended learning programmes.

Programme Flexibility

Opportunities for learners to adapt particular features of the blended learning programme. This includes features like the selection of courses/tracks, the mode of delivery (blended course, online course, traditional course), workload (full time/part time), pace (paced/self-paced), progress in a programme, and the possibility to follow courses at other institutions.

Programme Experience

The extent to which a programme enhances students' learning and eliminates any obstacles that stand in the way of learning.

Student Learning

The use of blended programme features which facilitate students' self-regulated learning (orienting and planning, monitoring, adjusting and evaluating).

Study Load

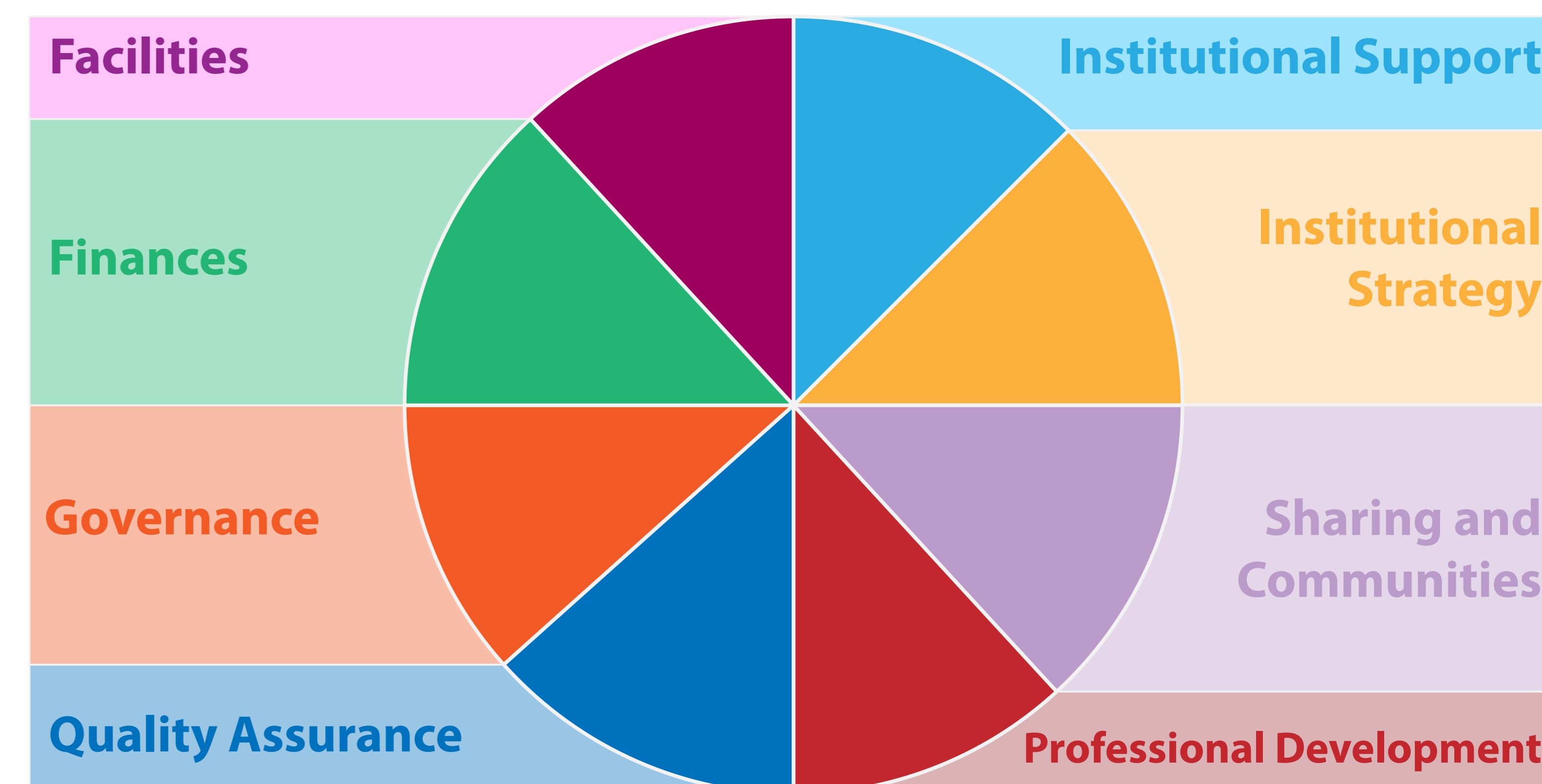
The match between the intended and achieved study load of a programme (distribution across courses and correctness).

Inclusiveness

The consideration of the diverse needs and backgrounds of students in order to create a programme where all students feel valued, safe, have a sense of belonging, and where all students have equal access to the online and face-to-face environments of the blended learning programme.

[Institute Level]

Opportunities for learners to adapt particular features of the blended learning programme. This includes features like the selection of courses/tracks, the mode of delivery (blended course, online course, traditional course), workload (full time/part time), pace (institution paced/self-paced), progress in a programme, and the possibility to follow courses at other institutions.



Institutional Support

The manner in which an institution supports teachers and students' blended learning activities.

Institutional Strategy

The extent to which blended learning, teaching and education are embedded in the vision, educational model and goals of an institution.

Sharing Communities

The degree to which an institution facilitates communities for sharing blended practices, materials and courses.

Professional Development

The extent to which teaching staff are able to develop their blended teaching skills.

Quality Assurance

The process where blended courses, programs, strategy, rules and regulations are evaluated and revised on a regular basis.

Governance

The way in which the vision and policies are translated to rules, regulations and actions that facilitate blended education.

Finance

The extent to which financial resources are allocated to develop, support, and stimulate blended learning.

Facilities

The extent to which institutions are equipped to facilitate blended learning and teaching.