

**KU LEUVEN**

**CTO**



Department of  
Social & Cultural  
Anthropology

**HIVA**

CENTRUM VOOR TAAL & ONDERWIJS

# BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Using reflection to support LESLLA learners in  
formal and informal contexts

EBSN Conference

17 June 2025

Fien De Malsche, Helena Van Nuffel, Annelies Jehoul & Mariet Schiepers



# Center for Language and Education

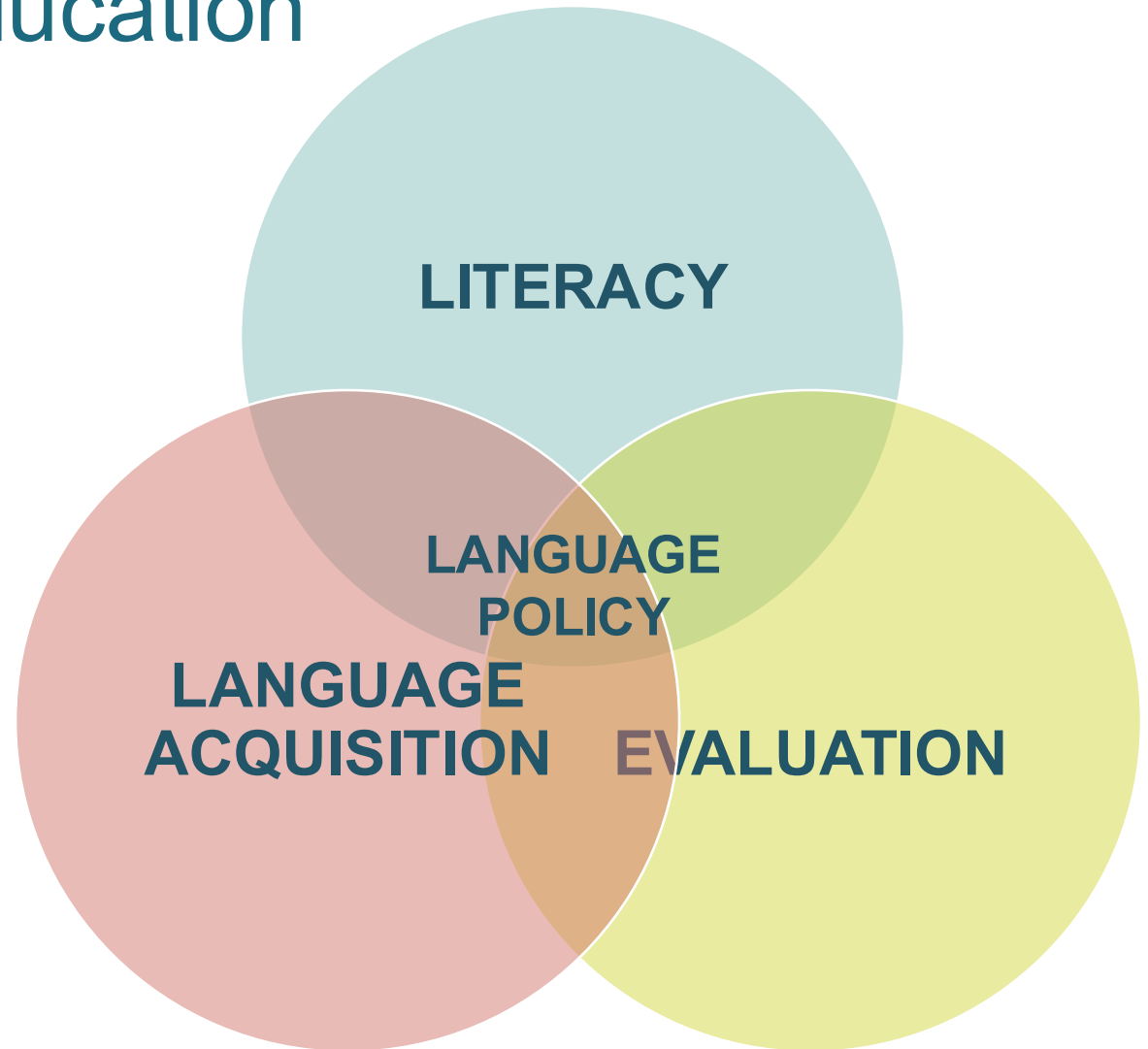


CENTRUM VOOR TAAL & ONDERWIJS

Multidisciplinary center of expertise for language, education and society

Affiliated with KU Leuven

Our mission? Language as engine for equal learning opportunities, for everyone



# Meet Farhiyo, Nadia and Sami



## Sami

- *Attends conversation class at the local social centre.*
- *Looking for more opportunities to speak and learn Dutch.*
- *Life goal: Support his family and integrate into the local community.*
- *Learning goal: Improve language skills to assist his children and become more independent.*



## Nadia

- *No longer enrolled in L2-courses; labeled as 'stagnated in learning'.*
- *Still motivated to learn and practice Dutch*
- *Feels isolated and wants more chances to connect with others.*
- *Life goal: Feel included and socially connected in Antwerp.*
- *Learning goal: Maintain and improve Dutch to participate more confidently in society.*



## Farihyo

- *Attends basic skills program for adult L2-learners.*
- *Looking for a job, wants to improve employability.*
- *Loves doing sports.*
- *Life goal: Secure employment and build a stable life in Belgium.*
- *Learning goal: Gain practical Dutch for work and daily communication.*

# LESLLA-learners?

- LESLLA learners: literacy learning and second language learning for adults  
= dual challenge: learning second language and literacy skills for the first time
  - Acquiring a second language: requires consistent practice across formal, non-formal and informal contexts
  - Non-formal and informal learning: important for LESLLA learners to reinforce their skills in everyday situations
    - ➔ Important to recognize and value the skills they develop through these experiences
    - ➔ importance of reflection
      - set personal goals
      - gain insights into their progress
      - foster self-regulation
- Challenges:
- limited metacognitive skills
  - memory constraints
  - little prior experience with reflective practices

# UNLOCK project

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## Optimizing learning opportunities for LESLLA learners

- Inside and outside of the classroom
- Avoid prolonged trajectories & maintain motivation
- Importance of reflection (Ellis & Shintani, 2013; Hooft, 2025)
- Situated in superdiverse context of Antwerp (Blommaert, 2014)



# Talk- and thinkbox 'Learning Dutch'

# Talk- and thinkbox 'Learning Dutch'

Exercises

Wh

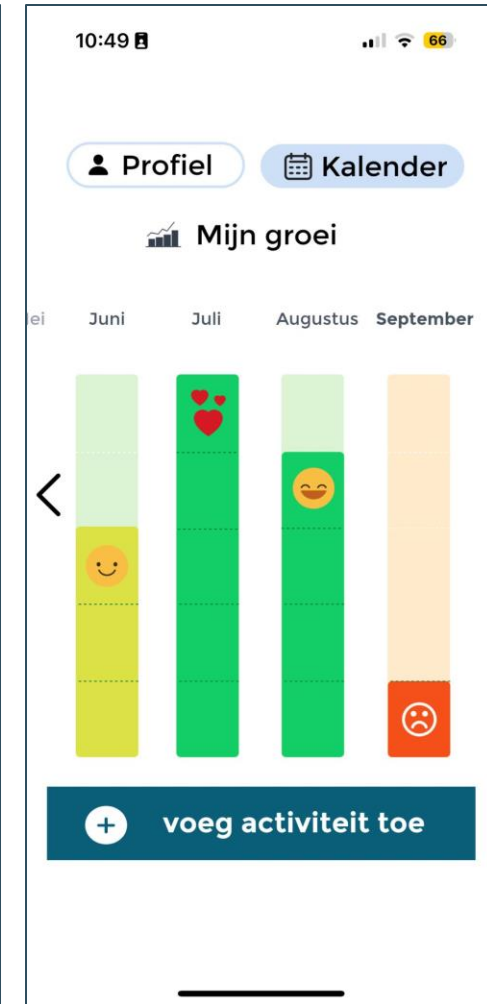
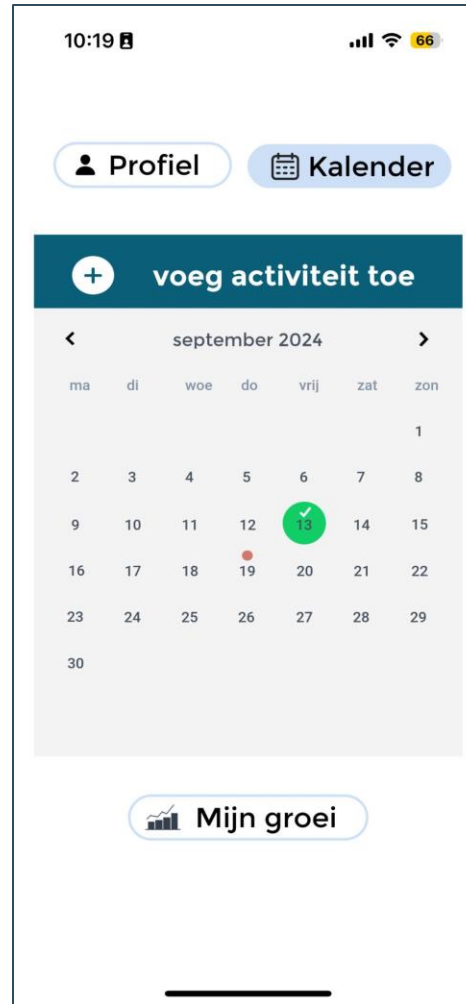
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learn



MIJN  
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WERKBOEKJE

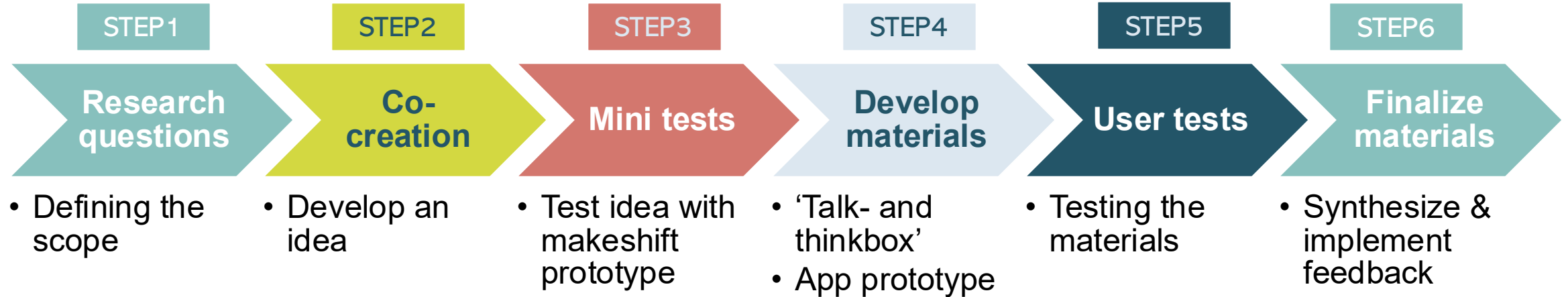
# Digital app





From idea to product

# Development process



# Research questions

How can we help LESLLA learners in Antwerp reflect on their learning process in Dutch, so they can optimally make use of learning opportunities in diverse learning contexts?

How can we provide LESLLA learners with insight into **where** and **how** they can learn Dutch?

How can we match LESLLA learners' needs and preferences with **specific learning opportunities**?

How can we enable LESLLA learners to **track and appreciate their own progress** in learning Dutch?

# Co-creation: partners

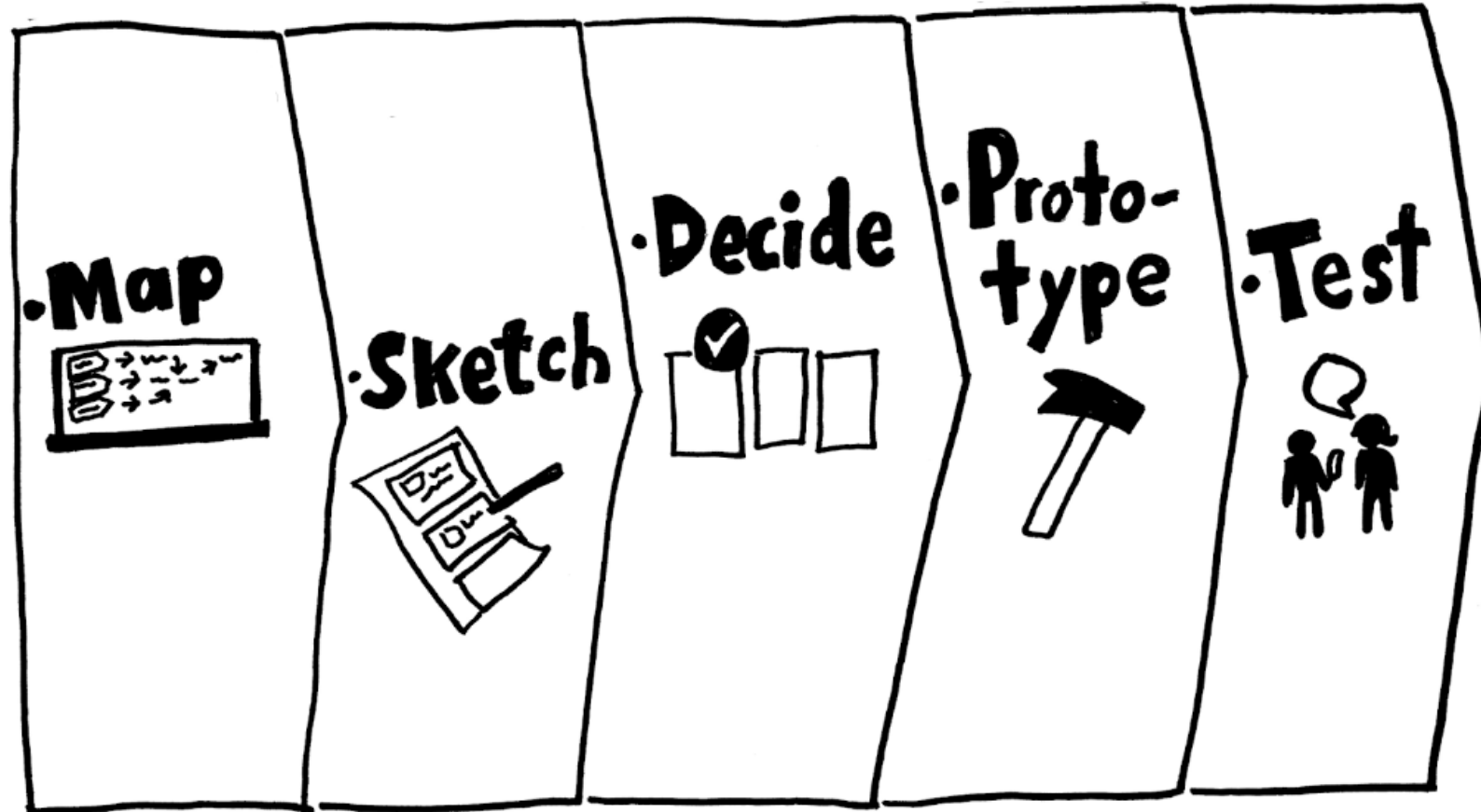
## Academic partners



## Partners in the field



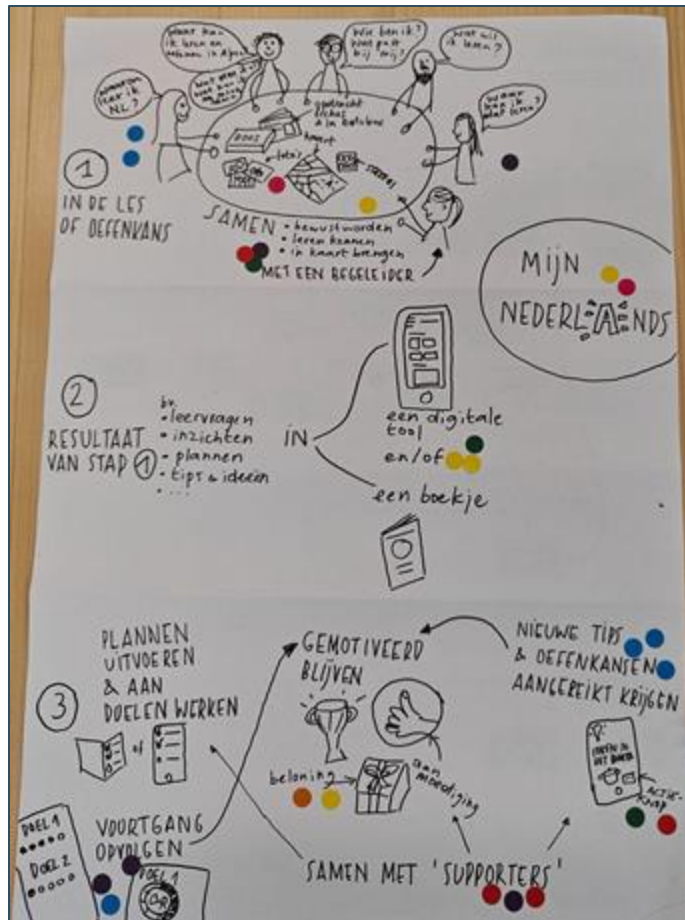
# Co-creation: process



# Co-creation: process



# Co-creation: outcome



# Co-creation: outcome

- Reflection tools built around core reflection questions
  - Group reflection on the basis of 'think box' with different exercises
  - Independent follow-up with digital app or individual booklet that turns reflection into action plan
- Usable in various learning environments (formal / non-formal / informal)
- Maximize links with existing or developing initiatives & tools

# Mini test

- Present idea with makeshift prototype and PPT
- Feedback from organizations, teachers, volunteers and LESLLA learners



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# Develop materials: talk- and thinkbox



# Develop materials: digital app

How can we enable LESLLA learners to **track and appreciate their own progress** in learning Dutch?

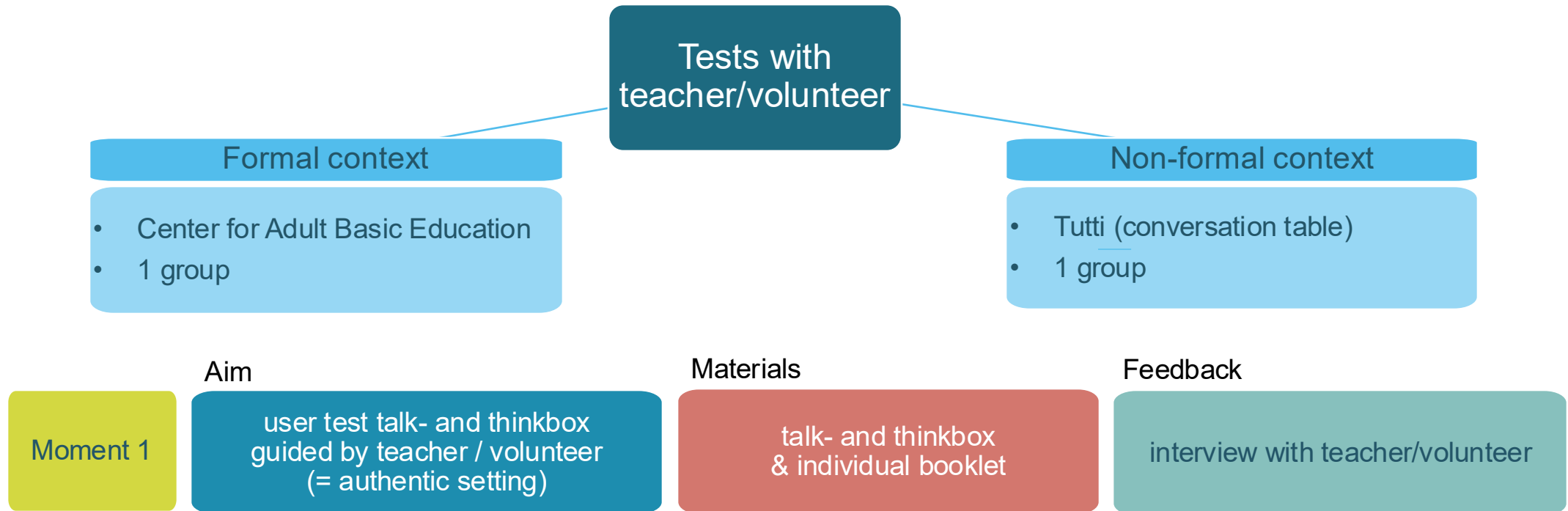


# User tests

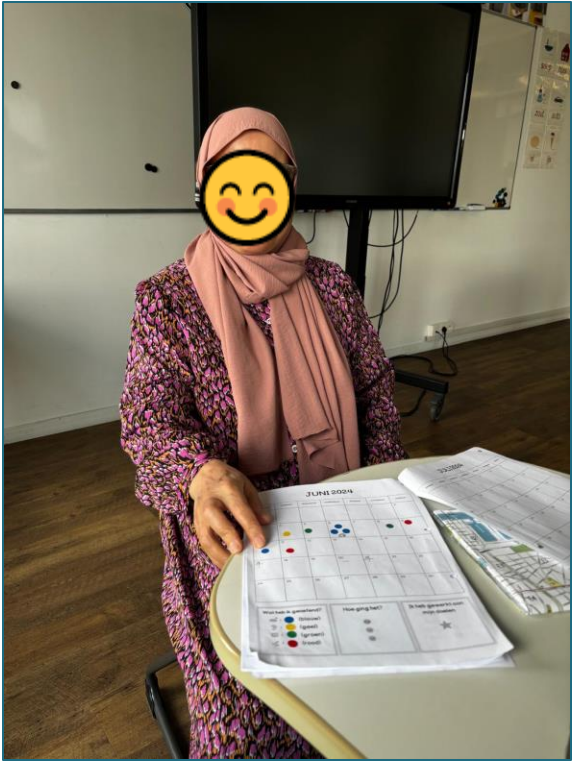


	Aim	Materials	Feedback
Moment 1	user test talk- and thinkbox guided by Fien & Helena	talk- and thinkbox & individual booklet	observations focus group with learners interview with teacher/volunteer
2 weeks	use of individual booklet (?)	individual booklet	
Moment 2	user test digital app comparison of digital app and individual booklet	individual booklet & digital app	think-aloud with learners (Five Act Interview)

# User tests



# User tests



# Test results & finalize materials

- Very positive reactions from learners, teachers & volunteers
  - Strong engagement from the learners
  - Clear interest from volunteers and teachers
- Focus on accessibility for LESLLA learners
  - Layout & visual support
  - Language use
  - Manual for the teachers & volunteer
  - Provide both digital and paper options for follow-up tool
- Formal vs. non-formal learning environments
  - Clear way of integrating materials in formal context
  - Progress monitoring fits less well in non-formal context



How can we help LESLLA learners in Antwerp reflect on their learning process in Dutch, so they can optimally make use of learning opportunities in diverse learning contexts?

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# Dissemination

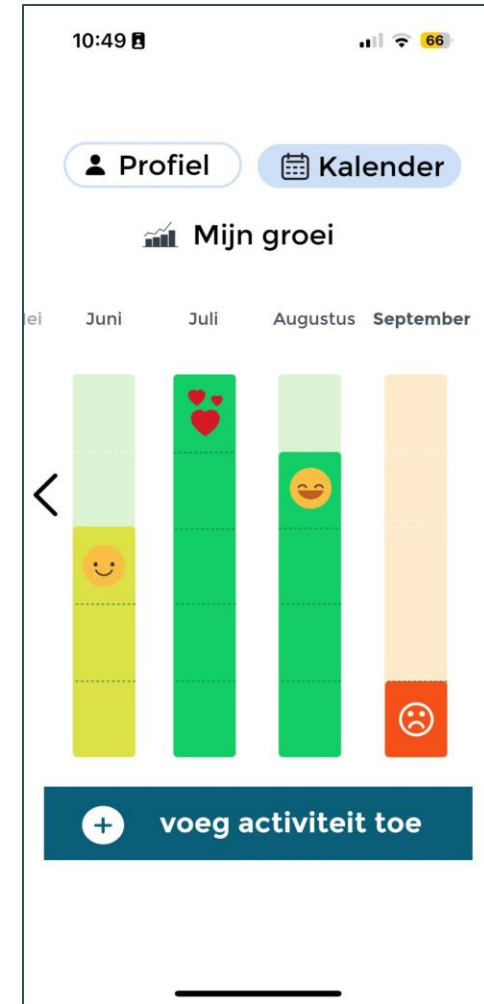
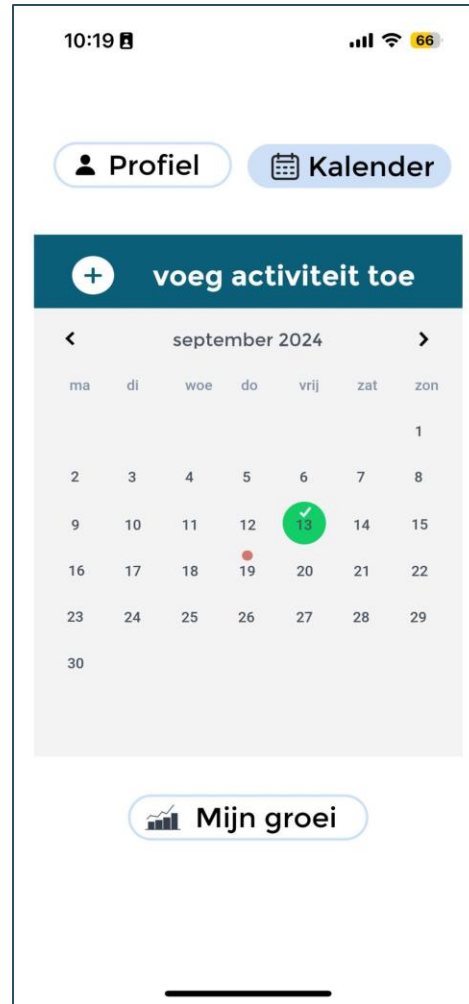
[www.unlockproject.eu](http://www.unlockproject.eu)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the UNLOCK-project website. At the top right, there is a link for 'KU Leuven Home >'. Below this, the 'KU LEUVEN' logo is displayed in a dark blue box. The main title 'UNLOCK-project' is centered, with a language selector 'NL' and a dropdown arrow to its right. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Over het UNLOCK-project', 'Materiaal praat- en denkdoos 'Mijn Nederlands'', and 'Contact'. The 'Materiaal praat- en denkdoos 'Mijn Nederlands'' link is circled in red. The main content area features a large light blue box with the headline 'Bruggen bouwen tussen formeel, non-formeel en informeel leren'. Below the headline, a sub-headline reads 'Samen met lerende nieuwkomers verkent, ontwerpt en test UNLOCK uitdagende en versterkende geletterheidstrajecten.' A button labeled 'Over UNLOCK' is positioned below the sub-headline. To the right of the text is a photograph of a man in a white shirt smiling and looking at a woman, with a laptop and a red card on the table in front of them.

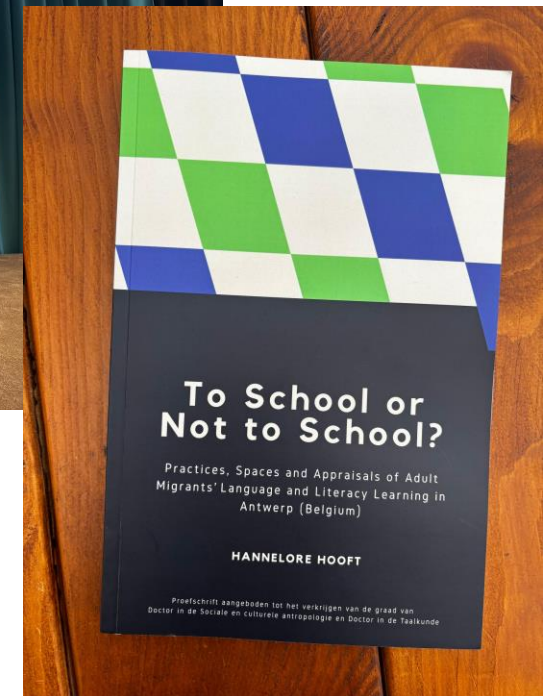
# Digital app prototype



prototype



# Keynote and interactive workshop for organizations, volunteers & teachers



# Contact



## Email

Helena.VanNuffel@kuleuven.be  
Annelies.Jehoul@kuleuven.be  
Fien.DeMalsche@kuleuven.be  
Mariet.Schiepers@kuleuven.be



Digital app prototype



## Website

[www.unlockproject.eu](http://www.unlockproject.eu)



## Read more?

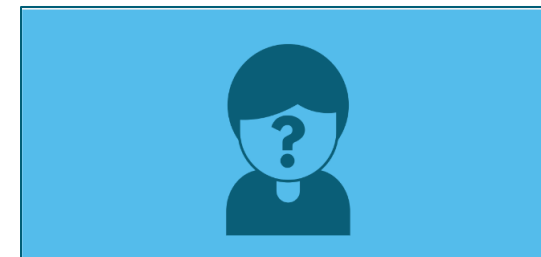
Hooft, H., Arnaut, K., Van den Branden, K., & Van Regenmortel, M. (2025). *To School or Not to School? Practices, Spaces and Appraisals of Adult Migrants' Language and Literacy Learning in Antwerp (Belgium)*.





# Exercises

# Who am I?



- **Questions:** Who am I? What do I like to do? Where do I like to be? What do I want in the future?
- **Aim:** Introduction

- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ Picture set *interests*
- ✓ Individual booklet

Wie ben ik?

mijn naam is \_\_\_\_\_ 

ik ben geboren in \_\_\_\_\_ 

ik woon al \_\_\_\_ jaar in België 

dit ben ik! 

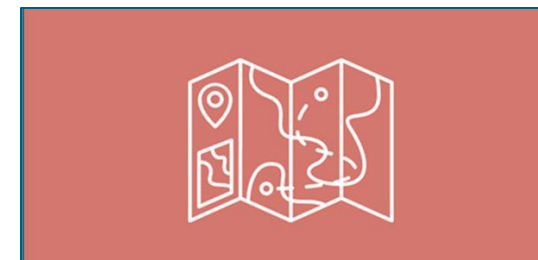
dit doe ik graag

hier ben ik graag 

later wil ik graag... 

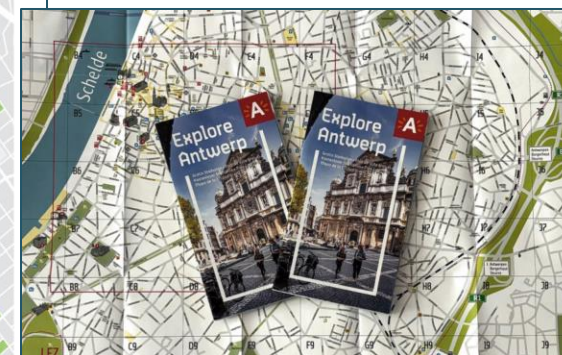
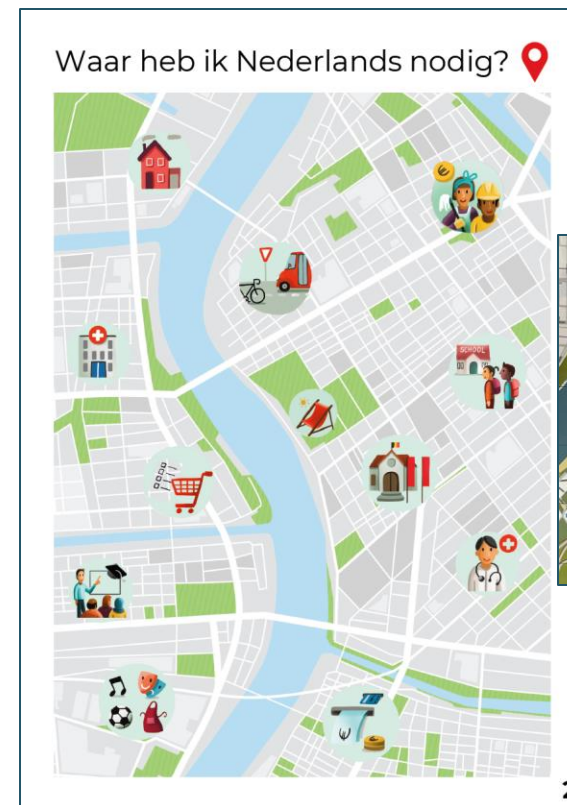
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# Where do I need to use Dutch?



- **Questions:** Where do I use Dutch? Where do I need Dutch?
- **Aim:** Defining situations and roles where Dutch is most important

- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ [Video](#)
- ✓ Individual booklet
- ✓ Optional: city map

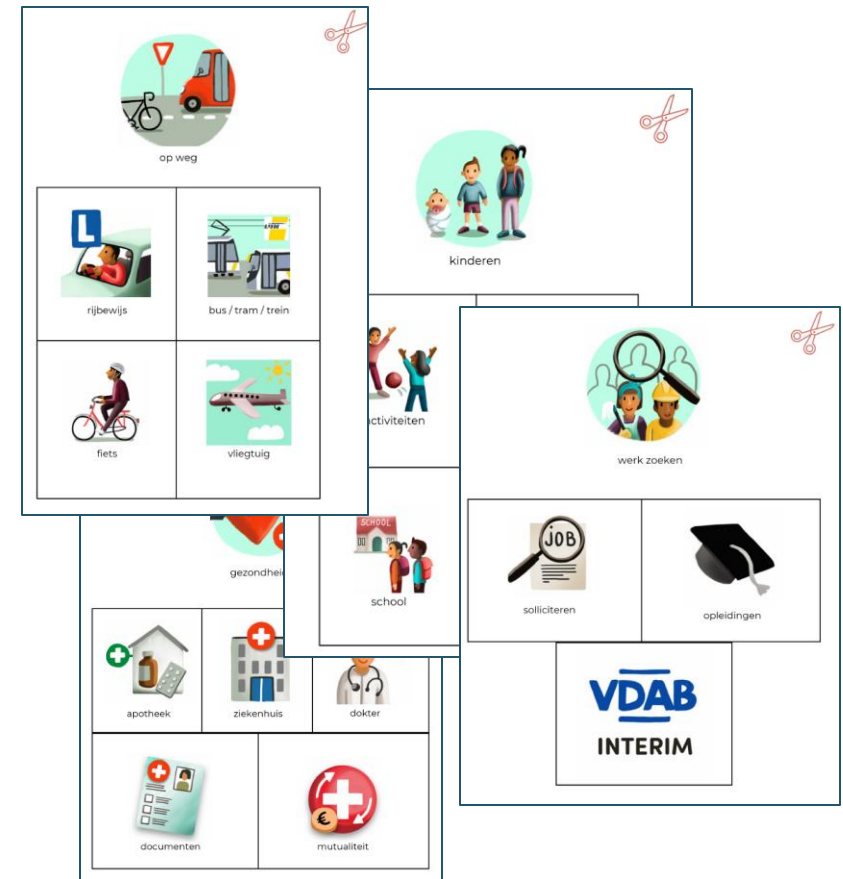


# What do I want to learn to do in Dutch?



- **Question:** What do I want to learn now?
- **Aim:** Defining specific learning goals

- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ [Video](#)
- ✓ Picture set *domains*
- ✓ Cut- and paste sheets
- ✓ Scissors and glue
- ✓ Individual booklet





# How do I learn Dutch best?

- **Questions:** What do I like to do? What matches my interests?
- **Aim:** Raising awareness that language is not only learned in school + introducing concrete learning opportunities

- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ [Video](#)
- ✓ Picture set *learning environments*
- ✓ Individual booklet
- ✓ Instructions for *ikdoemee.be*



# Who helps me to learn Dutch?



- **Questions:** Who is in my network?  
Who are my 'supporters'?
- **Aim:** Raising awareness that not only a teacher can help you to learn Dutch

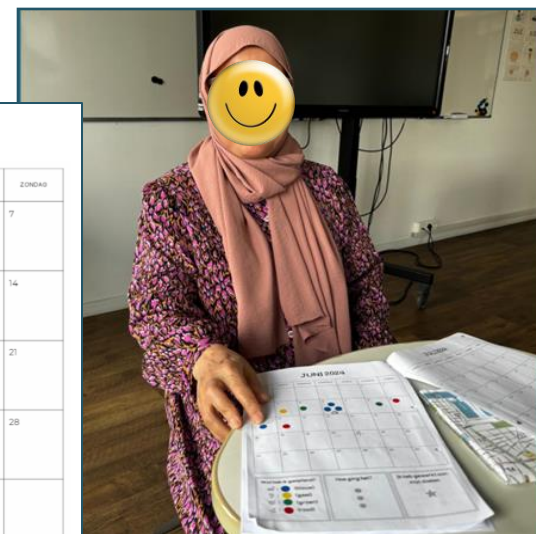
- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ Picture set *supporters*
- ✓ Individual booklet
- ✓ Instructions for *ikdoemee.be*

buren 	collega's 
echtgenoot / partner 	kinderen 
vrienden 	familie 
leraar 	begeleider 

# When do I use Dutch?



- **Questions:** When do I already use Dutch? How does that go?
- **Aim:** Showcasing and appreciating every (small) effort → motivation!



- ✓ Instructions and exercise booklet
- ✓ Example calendar
- ✓ Individual booklet

januari 2024

MAANDAG	DINSDAG	WOENSDAG	DONERDAG	VRIDAG	ZATERDAG	ZONDAG
1	2 brief van school 🔴 😞	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Open Inloop Taal 😊 🟦	12	13	14
15 op de bus 😊 🟡	16	17	18	19	20 trein 😊 🟡 😞	21
22	23 dokter 🟦 🟡 😊	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 in de klas 😊 🟦				

Wat heb ik geoefend?  
🟦 : (blouw)  
🟡 : (geel)  
🟢 : (groen)  
🔴 : (rood)

Hoe ging het?  
😊  
😐  
😞