

Birgit Boogaard
Teacher of the Year 2022
Jury Report



Birgit has a background in Rural Sociology and Animal Sciences and is currently involved in teaching **African Philosophy**, **Social Justice**, **Technology, and Development**, and **Advanced Communication Science** courses. She also gives guest lectures for the Master Organic Agriculture program. With her interdisciplinary background, she aims for substantial integration of philosophy, social sciences, and natural sciences. Her teaching certificate dates back ten years, and this will be her fifth year of teaching at Wageningen University. Birgit regards teaching as a great honor and she loves working with the students.

She is able to create a safe learning environment by keeping an eye on all of the students in class and designing her pedagogies and teaching methods in such a way that everyone can contribute. This takes a significant amount of time in the design process. She believes that a safe learning environment is essential, and if a teacher can create an environment in which every voice can be heard, and every student dares to speak up and contribute, then the learning process will be smooth.

One of the things that make her unique is her teaching style. Her teaching style is artistic, dialogical, impactful, and transformative. She uses illustrations of abstract philosophical concepts. She designs the drawings at home and displays them in class on a blackboard. As she delivers the lecture, she draws these illustrations and connects the dots for the students and will eventually distribute these illustrations in the form of handouts to her students. She combines her illustrations in the final lecture to see the big picture. These drawings assist the student in grasping more abstract concepts. This idea of her teaching stood out to the jury.

Another aspect that piqued the jury's interest was the notion that Birgit teaches the value of listening to one another. Intercultural philosopher Heinz Kimmerle has influenced her greatly. The importance of listening to one another is one of the first things we learn from this intercultural philosopher. Now, in academia, we are trained to debate each other in order to persuade the other of my point of view. She is teaching her students to truly listen to one another and to delay judgment. When students interact with one another, she encourages them to engage in dialogue in order to truly understand and connect with their classmates.

Furthermore, she readily solicits feedback while teaching (during the breaks or after a session). She is more of a facilitator and mediator than a traditional lecturer, so she incorporates these interactive methods for working in inclusive groups into all of her courses. One of her strengths is that she responds quickly to feedback.

To stay up-to-date, she communicates with African philosophers and scholars. She learns from and conducts research with them, which is why she immediately attempts to bring up-to-date knowledge back into class. She considers collaboration with African philosophers and scholars to be crucial. She believes that we need more diverse teachers from around the world to diversify education at our university. For instance, an African teacher to teach African Philosophy.

Birgit, the jury unanimously agrees that you are deserving of the title of **Teacher of the Year 2022**. We value your work as a teacher, and your authenticity is inspiring to us. This award is a token of appreciation for all your hard work, passion, and enthusiasm for your courses and for motivating your students, as well as for setting an example for everyone who strives for educational excellence.

Once again, Congratulations!

Best wishes,
Jury – Teacher of the Year 2022

