3.5.3 Figma

- *Aim*

The aim of Figma tool is to allow everyone having a collaborative design process online, so that teams will not only deliver better products, but they will do it faster. When creating with Figma, there were some great achievements envisioned, which are now made a reality, e.g., more people from more places could have access to powerful tools to design, people from all over the world can work on the same design online, and no struggles with having different versions anymore, which only created confusion. Figma wants to have the future where design is more collaborative, borderless, transparent, open-sourced, and community-driven. Figma's vision is to make design accessible to everyone.

- *Description*

Figma has a specific area for HE teachers and students, which allows to use Figma for free, after having a successful verification process for your education status. As an HE teacher, you can create a virtual classroom space for your students, but also collaborate visually with your colleagues. There is a possibility to create education teams to manage each class, deliver content and facilitate visual activities. With Figma you can make lessons interactive and make sure everyone's input or feedback is truly being recognised.

- *Key Features*

There are specific features for the educators provided by Figma, which allows for an innovative and a more interactive approach online. Figma will enable you as an HE teacher to *organise and deliver course content*. For this, you can use Figma's Education plan to develop teams that will be the central place for all your educational materials, such as lecture notes, activities, syllabus, brainstorms, and student work:
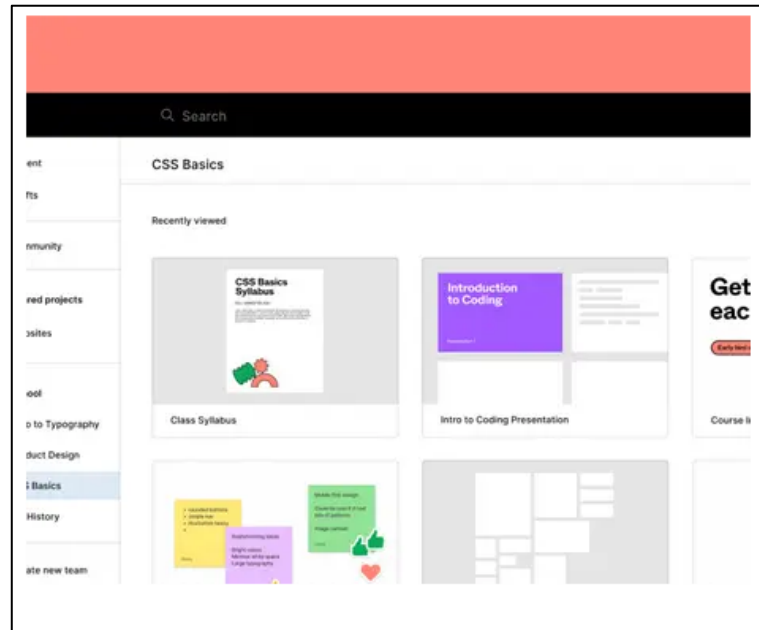
Figure 49: Figma GUI – Search Space

Figma is also a good tool to use to *facilitate engaging group activities*. You can collaborate with your students in the same file, which will enable you as a teacher to teach your students, while making things together in the same online space:
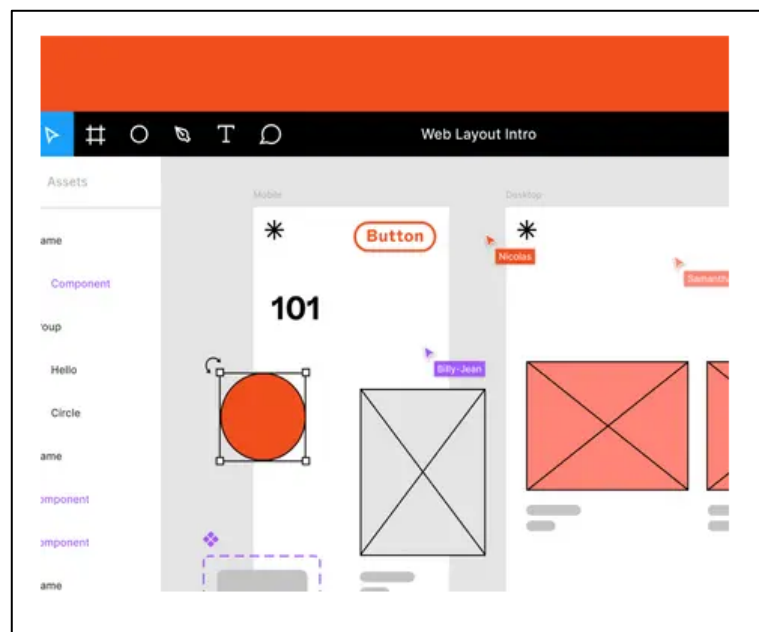

Figure 50: Figma GUI Web Layout Intro

Those regular feedback sessions are so outdated right? There is an interactive and more fun way to provide feedback. With Figma this will be a no-brainer. You can directly give your students feedback on their work by *running interactive critiques and feedback sessions*. There is also a possibility for your students to provide you with a link to their

work, so that you can provide them with feedback, so you can save time downloading (large files):

Figure 51: Figma GUI – Web Flow

Another key feature for HE teachers, is that they can create an actual *online community with your students, within own classroom*. For this matter, Figma provides collaborative tools to have your students work and learn along with one another.

- *Benefits*

Figma makes sure that the students enhance their creativity skills, by providing a virtual classroom space, but the students also learn to design and prototype. They will learn through experience with Figma. As an HE teacher with a Figma Education plan you will be able to:

Allows to create unlimited number of teams for each course.

Use FigJam Whiteboard to brainstorm with students and Figma itself to design with them.

Allows invitation to all attendees with just one link.

Enables unlimited collaborators in teams.

Access to community-created user groups and resources.

Access to version history that will be there as long as you want.

Enables sharing of asset libraries and templates with students.

Manage an unlimited number of projects and files.

Figma can be used across different operating systems.

Use Figma for free as long as it is used for teaching purpose after verification.

Figure 52: Figma Benefits

- *Implementation*

First, there is no IT provision required, so as a teacher, you can start in Figma right away. What you will need to use the education account for free is to get it verified, which you can do through figma.com/education/apply. After going through the verification process successfully and having an empty template in front of you, there is a possibility to invite the students to be editors (on the right side above). You will get the possibility to insert your students' addresses for that. What you also can do is send your students a link that they can use and that provides them the rights to edit.
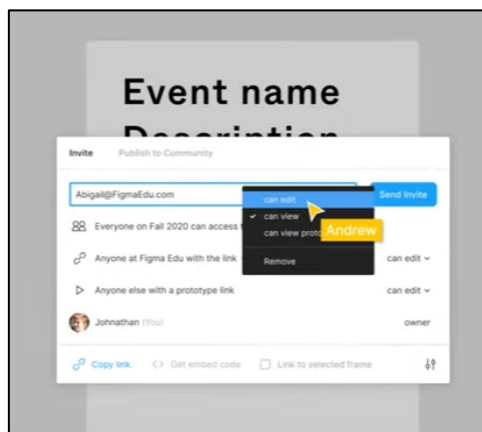
Figure 53: Figma Benefits

After your students are invited and have accessed Figma through your invitations, you can start designing together. During observation mode, you can give lectures to students, without having to share your screen. The students will see what you are doing. After your lesson, your students will be able to break out in groups and create on their own. In order to provide feedback, you can use sticky notes for example or write directly on the canvas, like below:
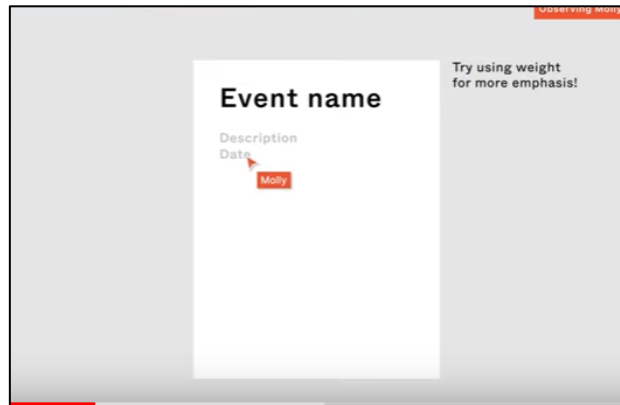

Figure 54: Figma – Sticky Note

Also, after the students have completed their assignments, you will be able to have an overview of their results and by clicking on the presentation mode, you will be able to see all their works presented, without clicking and scrolling.

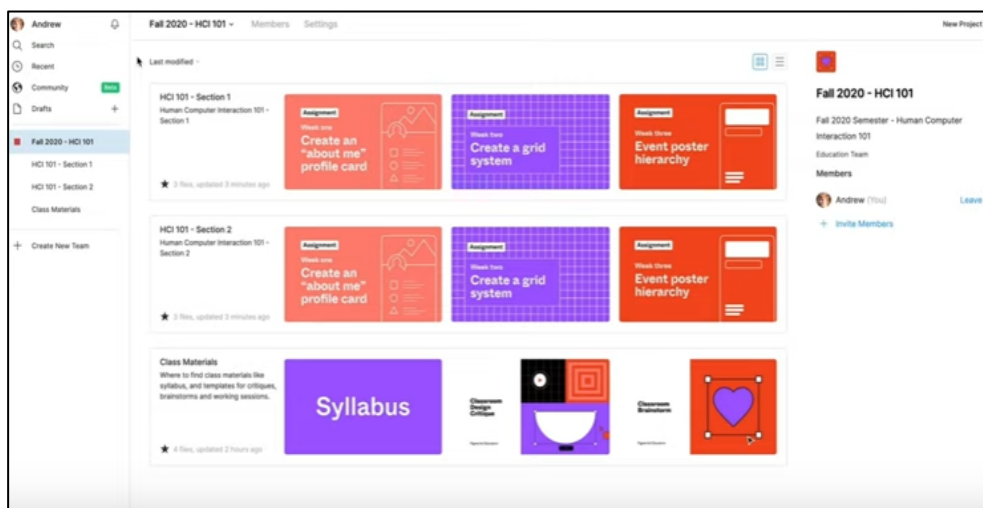Figma can also serve as a central hub for all your classroom assignments:

Figure 55: Figma – Central Hub

There, the files are always up to date, without having to email the most recent versions. A very convenient feature is also to create own teams:

Figure 56: Figma – Create New Team GUI

Teams in Figma have a description field where you can insert all the important information and resources you wish:

Figure 57: Figma – Description Field

To create a new project, you can click on the button New Project, above the team description on the right side. Projects have a description field, just like teams.

- o Describe the Purpose/Problem Definition
  - *General Overview:* It can be hard to think of something which enables the students to be creative and for them to learn how to design in a collaborative manner. Most of the tools for the creative purposes, such as designing are developed for individual use. However, for a teacher to provide education in a project (or workshop) context, it is most convenient to have a tool, which enables the students to work together on an assignment. Figma provides this possibility, moreover, the teacher can give classes to students or collect their work for assessment in Figma.
  - *Classroom Activity:* First, a brief presentation for the students (max. 10 minutes). You can show them a [video on how to create a student account](#) for example or show them some important video parts from a

video for the beginning users of Figma. For the students to get familiar with Figma, first individually, but at the same time seeing each other's work, the student trading cards activity will fit the most. What the students must develop is their profile in the social media style where for instance the auto layout is involved. When the students will design in the same Figma space, they will see a bit of each other's style and process, which could be helpful for own designs. When each student has finished the activity, you as a teacher can create a page in the file you are working in, which can serve as a gallery. It can occur that some of your students might already be familiar with Figma, in that case you can challenge them with extra tasks, like adding own questions and an icebreaker that they can share with other students. Thus, this activity enables the students to get to know each other (even better).
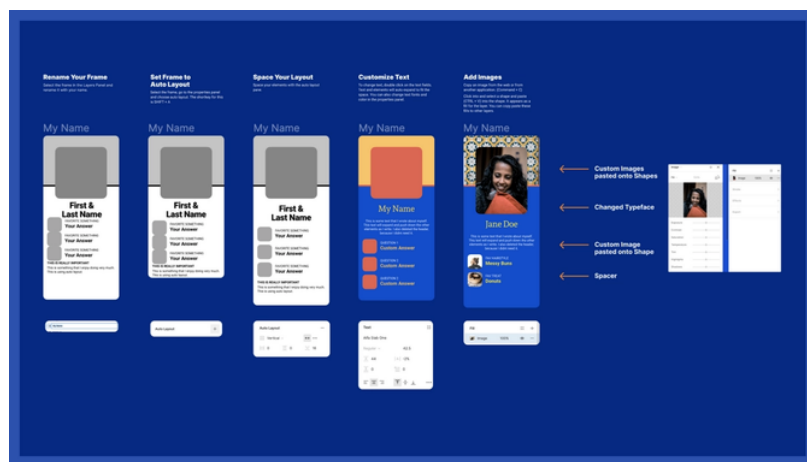

Figure 58: Figma – Activity Space

- o   Implement the Tool
    - ▪   *General Overview:* The students are globally familiar with Figma and are now able to create something there. They have already tried to and have created something in Figma. For you as a teacher, it was also the first step getting to know how educating through Figma can be like. Now, you will get a more in-depth experience with Figma, which will facilitate its use for you and your students, which will show more important features that Figma provides.
    - ▪   *Classroom Activity:* To have a better feeling with the actual design process (making shapes for instance), the students can get assigned with a task to make a heart shape with Figma's pen tool, layout grid and properties, after which the heart shape can be customised. Of course, you don't have to use the heart shape, you can also go for any other shape you would like your students to design, and which is probably more relevant for the tech education. After the students are done with this activity, you can again create a "gallery" to see all students' work in a clear overview. If you have already some students already experienced in Figma, you can ask them to make the heart shape pulse with the Smart Animate feature provided by Figma. They can also make other

shapes and style them according to their preferences. This will make the classroom activity extra challenging for them. It is also possible to assign this as a homework activity if that is of your preference.

- o Collect Data after Tool Implementation:
  - ▪ *General Overview:* Collecting data is in this case something different than probably interpreted at first. The overall aim here is to check what else is possible with Figma, so that the students are aware of it and know that they can explore it further in Figma. When the students will learn everything that Figma provides, they will be able to create much more there than they first would imagine.
  - ▪ *Classroom Activity:* Let the students explore Figma freely, without any directions other than to search for all the features that seem interesting for them to use. Thus, they will learn even more about Figma and what it has to offer. You can ask them to discover and provide three to five Figma features of their preference.

- o Analyse the Data and Reflect on the Outcome
  - ▪ *General Overview:* Check with the students what features they have explored in Figma and what they like the most to work on, to gain more skills with this Tool. You can have a rating session and eventually create a top 3 or top 5 of the Figma features, which you could explore with your students deeper. Thus, they will have the most benefit of this tool.
  - ▪ *Classroom Activity:* Let your students form groups based on one the Figma's feature's top 3 or top 5 and ask them to prepare a presentation (in Figma) about that feature with some examples. Thus, they will already learn everything about the feature of their preference and will be able to experiment with it already for the examples. By seeing the presentations of other groups, the students will get to learn the use the other Figma's features preferred by the students.

- *Examples of Organisations using Figma Tool*

Here are some examples of familiar companies using Figma and how they it has changed their workflow:

Dropbox moved to a virtual-first working model uses Figma to brainstorm and build remotely.	
By using Figma, **Repsol** has now a more collaborative and consistent approach to design, but also a measurable one.	

Because of Figma, **Kimberly-Clark** were able to solve the problems on the fly as a team and have their vision in the same direction.	
GitHub got excited about Figma because it did not require downloading and installing software as part of the workflow to update icons.	
At **Zoom**, Figma makes the overall process much smoother and richer than when providing verbal feedback for example.	
Deliveroo is very happy about working with Figma, as this results in an idea becoming a product quicker.	
Through Figma's processes, **Microsoft** designers are able to work allows the designer to work more autonomously, without the engineer being involved. Thus, the engineer can focus on the bigger problems.	
Spotify organises work in Figma to improve collaboration.	

Table 18: Examples on the Use of Figma Tool

- *Additional Examples on the Use of Figma Tool*

HE teachers appreciate Figma as a tool to use in class. For example, an article from Alicia Quan, a teacher, who emphasises the advantages of Figma in the classroom. Some of the highlights, which will come in handy when using Figma:
   o Figma can be used as a platform to see published files, make duplicates to iterate on etc. **It can be compared well with Google Docs for example**, which will make working with Figma easier.
   o There is a great possibility that your **ideal online learning environment** can be created in Figma. In Figma, a teacher can customise quite a lot in the open collaborative canvas with students.
   o There are **multiple approaches** that Figma provides to make sure classes are interactive, but also serve their goal. You can create interfaces and presentations that are clickable, students are able to make decisions within the collaborative canvas, etc.

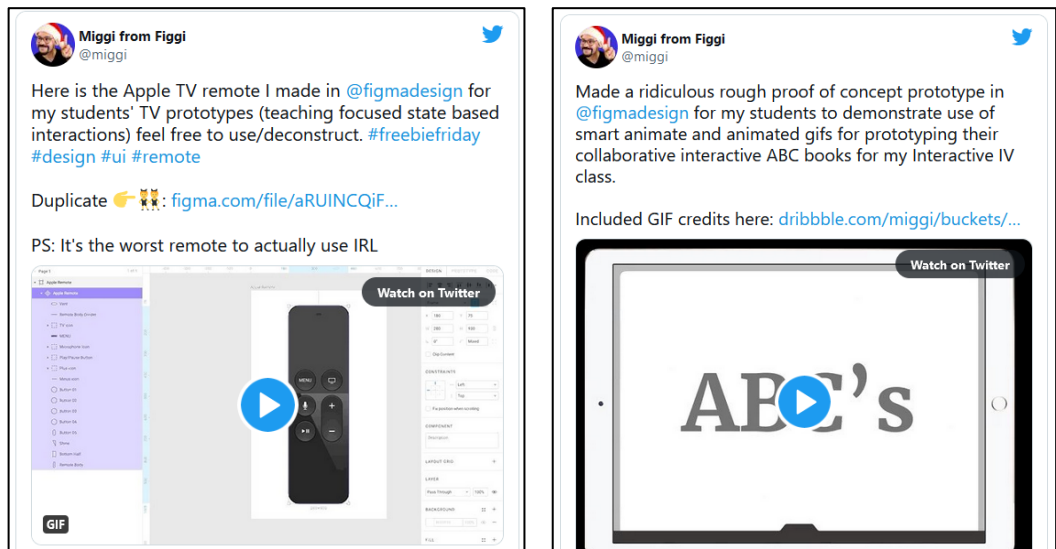Another educator tweets about his experiences with using Figma in classes/for homework:

Figure 59: Figma related Tweets

- *Links to Learning Resources*

  Following are general resources to understand Figma in more detail e.g., links to YouTube video clips.

  o YouTube Videos:
    - Figma Tutorial: Set Your Classroom Up in Figma – Link

  o Other Resources:
    - Figma for Education: Design for Learning Experiences – Link
    - Figma Examples and Community Files for Education – Link