

## **DELIVERABLE D6.2**

### **Roadmap:**

**creating Soft Skills training programmes  
that are valorizable for both employees  
(researchers and staff) and for HR services**



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<p><b>Abstract</b></p>	<p>The deliverable 6.2 aims to describe how Soft Skills development across various EDUC experiences can support the Alliance's future action plan by aligning research trajectories and outcomes for innovation.</p> <p>It emphasizes the importance of integrating Soft Skills into European universities' Human Resources plans, considering the diverse workforce and the impact of technology on human and professional relationships.</p> <p>The document illustrates how EDUC Alliance undertook innovative methods for developing Soft Skills among researchers and administrative staff, building on insights from Staff's needs evaluations.</p> <p>UPN has led the creation of Soft Skills Online Trainings, by issuing an EDUC certificate tailored for its staff with the purpose to bridge the gap between Human Resources and Research &amp; Innovation Services, while refining international practices within the academic environment.</p>
<p><b>Keywords</b></p>	<p>Soft Skills - Human Resources - Training programme - Career development - Academic professional environment</p>



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## Introduction

The purpose of this deliverable is to describe how the development of soft skills through multiple EDUC experiences can be a key support to strengthen the future action plan of the Alliance through shared research pathways and outcomes for innovation that support the improvement of working conditions and the creation of career development opportunities.

Because the peculiar academic frameworks combine the very heterogenous class of workers, differencing them in typology and background, but also in the strategies for professional changes and new competencies gaining, it is clear that European universities need to fully recognise the acquisition of Soft Skills as integrated into the Human Resources plans and endeavours. At the core of this perspective, we must also consider the impact of new technologies on human relationships and the increasing presence of digital devices, along with their applications, in several professional and intimate spheres.

Built on the University of Paris Nanterre's previous experience with Soft Skills programmes, essentially designed for Bachelor and Master students, several targeted initiatives have been formulated to enhance a set of mindful acquirements, useful for both research and administrative staff.

By cultivating international exchanges and promoting the importance of career progression in Higher Education Institutions, EDUC-SHARE elaborated and proposed original training programmes that succeeded in endorsing the mastery of transversal competencies and their acknowledgement. Indeed, we can testify that people involved in EDUC Soft Skills tasks raised the « desire » to employ renewed tools of communication within a cooperative ecosystem and at a cross-border scale. This peculiar awareness, issued from evaluations on EDUC staff participation and involvement, can be as well tied to the key concept of « emotional intelligence » which effectively functions as a tool for establish good team-working and team-building processes.

Also, by discovering the empowerment of « emotional intelligence » approaches, we can easily perceive the human interaction within different cultural realities as a chance to express ourselves



as a multifold subject, rooted in civil and political environments, linked to a culture and language horizons, inter-connected through « situated knowledges ».

In light of this consciousness, as well as of EDUC-SHARE achievements concerning Soft Skills, we propose also to **focus on Human Resources management and inter-unit collaborative frames** to empower the whole academic staff by prompting *21st-century skills deployment*.<sup>1</sup> This will sustain university units and chairs in drafting innovative academic architectures and underling the emergence of exploring interactive digital mindsets.

The 6.2 Deliverable aims to elucidate innovative methods to reshape the approach to developing Soft Skills among researchers and administrative staff, in alignment with the objectives of the EDUC-SHARE project. During the project's initial phase, a comprehensive evaluation of existing Soft Skills training across participating institutions was conducted (T6.1) which insights supported the operational reflection informing our text. We will detail the EDUC foundation for crafting bespoke Soft Skills training programmes by recognizing the importance of fostering international communication and networking.

Indeed, UPN took the lead in establishing an EDUC certificate tailored for the university heterogenous staff engaged in Soft Skills activities. However, acknowledging a recurrent gap between Human Resources and Research & Innovation Services, UPN's primary objective has been to analyze, formulate, and implement concrete strategies to empower many aspects of European Advanced Soft Skills Policies, refining international practices and academic core perspectives by leveraging Soft Skills themes within the academic environment.

Furthermore, acknowledging the vital role Soft Skills play in advancing the objectives of higher education institutions (HEIs), with the present document UPN proposes and develops an examination of the relationship between New Digital Environments, Human Resources tools, and Educational strategies. These elements, truly interconnected, need to be observed and exploited, for framing new cultural and professional contexts. This examination aims to inform possible developments of HR programmes by integrating research materials and academic findings from the field of Soft Skills subjects into various stages of Staff Career development processes, including recruitment, job descriptions, and annual professional assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> See, Lamri, Jérémy, Lubart, Todd, Barabel, Michel, Meier, Olivier. *Le défi des Soft Skills : comment les développer au XXIe siècle ?* Dunod, 2022.



As a consequence, by restarting from the multiple EDUC experiences and illustrating UPN's engagement in common purposes, the Deliverable structure reflects a dual exercise:

- ◇ Reporting on the pilot-innovative practices performed in WP6.
- ◇ Highlighting how Soft Skills development has been, and can be for the European educational ecosystem, a powerful device in reinforcing the EDUC Alliance's future Action Plan and nurturing it.

The content of D6.2 has been distributed and organised into five sections to allow for discourse and reflection on the EDUC-SHARE approach to 21st century skills, as follows:

- **Mapping European academic insights** to interpret the stakes and issues associated with Soft Skills in university policy, fostering innovation in research, and multicultural programmes (section 1).
- **Detailed report on the 3-year Soft Skills project experience across the EDUC Alliance**, highlighting local Human Resources practices and existing training offers. Jointly, we offer a brief overview of the initial phase of the WP6, completing the 6.1 Deliverable (section 2). This section, organized into distinct chapters, illustrate the main actions such as the Soft Skills Colloquium occurred physically in Nanterre Campus, the Online Training Programme, the statistical analysis of the results of the 1st and 2nd Evaluation Forms completed by attendees of the Soft Skills trainings and the delivery of HR Certificates of attendance, which contributed to the evolution of WP6 and its collaborative outcomes.
- **Main learnings and good practices identified** (section 3)
- **Soft Skills EDUC roadmap** (section 4). The Roadmap structure has been drafted by:
  - Traversing **the complexity and variety of the academic network**;
  - Endorsing **methodological instruments for assessing** the new and increasingly **transformative needs and expectations** of **both** administrative and research staff regarding career development;
  - Suggesting **performative and analytic processes** linked to the **Field Research Study and human science scientific practices**;
  - Drafting new research trajectories and outcomes for **innovation within Academy at different levels**.

The Roadmap issues and perspective are presented in a performative and analytic methodology, which follows and mirrors some core practices issued from the Field



Research Studies. The Soft Skills landscape for joint and stable actions within the Alliance has been foreseen by:

- Allowing the **improvement of EDUC people's working** conditions;
- Creating a **Sustainable Plan** for career development opportunities within European Universities.

Thus, relevant conclusions integrate the roadmap structure. Included in the research methods proposal, they function as a crucial part of the broader final considerations on the WP6 actions, results and achievements.

- **Comprehensive reflection on Soft Skills topics based on a theoretical approach** (research academic bibliography indicated) (section 5). This section includes a chapter on the pivotal role of digital instruments, new technologies, and virtual horizons within the contemporary needs of EU society.

In conclusion, through this document, the wide range of activities related to soft skills undertaken by all EDUC partners should serve as inspirational sources of best practice, catalysing institutional change within the EDUC Alliance and fostering a culture of holistic skills development, innovation and progress across the European university ecosystem.





## 1. Soft Skills as a key topic within a European Alliance ecosystem

Before delving into the Report of Work Package 6, it is essential to contextualize the subjects and themes considered in constructing and developing actions that enhance Soft Skills training and HR mechanisms in European Academies. This effort is crucial for highlighting this key topic through the EDUC-SHARE projects' main goals and achievements. Therefore, we must begin by exploring the meanings and domains associated with Soft Skills.

Soft Skills, often referred to as "people skills" or "interpersonal skills," play a critical role in fostering effective collaboration, implementing successful methods and practices in the workplace, and facilitating valuable career advancement and diversification projects. Unlike Hard Skills, which pertain to the technical aspects of a job profile and specific environments, Soft Skills encompass a broad range of competencies essential for exploring and navigating the actual complexities of professional interactions and dynamics within both public and private organizations.

The theoretical framework of Soft Skills is based upon the possibility of nourishing competencies such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, flexibility, and leadership. These skills are essential for creating a positive and productive work environment. They play a crucial role in Human Resources strategies, particularly in improving recruitment processes, fostering research development, and establishing sustainable and digital campuses.

Effective communication and cooperative relationships, for instance, are the cornerstones of Soft Skills because they involve active listening, empathy, and the ability to correspond with diverse audiences. Strong, smooth, and inter-languages communication, supported by multiple interactive devices, facilitates better teamwork, enhances problem-solving capabilities, and ensures a widely satisfactory execution of tasks.

Indeed, teamwork and team-building are also critical for creating collaborative projects, which imply a deep understanding of team dynamics while fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. Both effective teamworking and co-construction lead harmoniously to higher productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction, which are vital for academic and professional success but also for implementing a way of living that we can call "caring at work."



By focusing on academic settings, it is clear how problem-solving skills are essential for research and innovation, especially if they are connected to flexibility, leading research projects, mentoring students or colleagues, and managing administrative responsibilities.

Also, when viewed from a Human Resources perspective, Soft Skills integrate seamlessly with policy plans for career evolution and progression, self and collective improvement, and high-quality training programmes. Nowadays these skills are significant components for experiencing more open work systems and hierarchical structures, serving as fundamental way of prompting positive and productive work culture.

By considering Soft Skills as priorities for imagining the future of digital academies, European organizations can enhance employee engagement in these projects and construct new working ecosystems.

Supported by European Commission directives, the many initiatives dedicated to implementing Soft Skills in the EDUC-SHARE settings have been transforming traditional employment approaches. Because these initiatives led different academy services and actors to work jointly and cooperate, simultaneously they encouraged the reframing of new devices and practices within decision-making plans, promoting a more dynamic and responsive academic environment. For instance, EDUC-SHARE experienced incorporating Soft Skills training into their curricula, offering workshops and seminars focused on developing these competencies. Additionally, this experience lets HR departments of the Alliance integrate Soft Skills assessments into their recruiting and evaluating practices, considering the favorable impact they had on the HRS4R process evolution for ensuring that interpersonal skills are necessary for driving innovation and ensuring long-term project success.



## 2. The work carried out and achievements

### a) A cross-Alliance survey and inventory of existing staff training related to Soft Skills needs

The initial phase of the work carried out consisted in conducting a comprehensive survey (T6.1) to evaluate how researchers and administrative staff perceive their own soft skills and their needs, while identifying potential training and career opportunities. This work is detailed in deliverable D6.1<sup>2</sup> which main goal was to collect feedback from Alliance members in order to frame a training proposal for EDUC staff and researchers. This action was possible thanks to the HR services implication and support. The survey was distributed among the employees of the six EDUC Alliance universities. It provided the following feedback on the employees identified soft skills needs:

- *Expressing interest in speaking in English*
- *Being innovative*
- *Proficiency in project management*
- *Finding solutions and problem-solving*
- *Managing and motivating a team*
- *Mastering non-verbal communication*
- *Creating and maintaining a network*
- *Public speaking*
- *Constructing an argument*
- *Interacting with people from different cultures (including work cultures)*
- *Adapting communication for others and in different situations*
- *Cooperating with others in teamwork*
- *Demonstrating perseverance and self-motivation*
- *Speaking in an additional foreign language*
- *Being a good listener and showing consideration for others*

After the survey, and by following its clues for conceiving a real needs-based training proposal, UPN called upon the six partners for collecting diverse and already existing staff training programmes related to Soft Skills. The further step was to conceive a common inventory of Soft

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<sup>2</sup> Source: EDUC-SHARE Deliverable 6.1, Statistics Survey.



Skills trainings which could valorise each partner institution's transversal training ecosystem (T6.2). This inventory highlighted the diversity of training approaches for impulsing fresh skills acquirement, and exploring varying levels of « Soft Skills packages » across EDUC institutions.

## b) Setting up a Soft Skills training programme

To address the need for a unified and coherent approach, UPN started creating a prototype training programme for EDUC community to enhance their international Soft Skills (MS8). This programme, the EDUC Online Staff Training Programme, focused on 21st-century skills and successfully completed its first and second editions.



UPN opened the rich training offer to the EDUC potential and heterogenous attendees, coming from different backgrounds and experiences. UPN has invited administrative and research staff to join the educational opportunity offered by all the Alliance partners. The goal was twofold: to develop and upturn Soft Skills spheres of action, while letting people involved create eager correspondences between « professional paths and cultural identities » while observing their own acknowledgement of new global competencies. Because the targeted audience had varying levels of education and job roles, UPN suggested to participants to take part in the training group as unique members of a daily work environment. In this way, the actors-trainees had the possibility



to approach their usual job tasks and responsibilities by employing transversal skills for envisioning their career progression in dissimilar and uncharted ways.

Throughout November 2023, based on a partly renewed training programme (compared to the first edition)<sup>3</sup> and always in line with the inputs gathered during the Soft Skills first phase (questionnaire basis we mentioned above) the *2nd Edition Online Staff Training Programme* took place, led by professors and trainers from EDUC universities, with truly positive results in terms of reception and participation.

In the following pages is the full Soft Skills educational programme, available for enrollment through a registration format. Between the Summer and the Fall 2023, the full programme has been published on the dedicated EDUC webpage of the UPN site.

Afterwards, each partner took responsibility for internally disseminating the registration link through their communication channels and mailing list system. Subsequently, based on a « first come, first served » criteria, UPN collected and managed registrations from all member universities, and later shared the information with partners which informed selected participants from all EDUC universities.

Ultimately, each university conducted the online session<sup>4</sup> corresponding to their educational proposal, facilitated and performed by one of their trainers, entirely in English, with a required level of B2 or higher. The use of English as a *lingua franca* in training aimed precisely at facilitating interaction among a diverse background audience, also taking into account individuals whose management of their daily professional lives is fair peculiar, particularly within academic structures. Indeed, throughout November 2023, Online training sessions yielded positive outcomes as evidenced by the reception of the training and the active participation of EDUC staff<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The full presentation of the 1st Edition programme is included in the deliverable 6.1, and submitted to the European Commission previously.

<sup>4</sup> As we worked on harmonizing and streamlining the 2nd Edition - EDUC Online Staff Training Programme, collaborating with all partners for logistic and contents management, a noteworthy exception deserves attention. The University of Potsdam proposed and decided to organize an invaluable in-person training session during the EDUC Steering Committee on October 9-10, titled **Embracing Cultural Diversity and Inclusion at EDUC** and conducted by the Intercultural Communication Trainer, **Dr. Gabi Kratochwil**. This unique training experience, although not part of the program presentation on UPN's EDUC webpage, provided valuable insights and hands-on learning opportunities for EDUC staff.

<sup>5</sup> Some valuable screen-shots of the UPN Online Training, titled Staying motivated in another language are in Annex.



In fact, after each session, trainers suggested that participants fill out the Evaluation Form with the purpose to collect feedback, report on the training, and acknowledge everyone's contribution and involvement. Responses provided by participants, such as *"I truly appreciated the online training session and found it immensely inspiring, offering a plethora of valuable tools... For the future, I would welcome similar training sessions and guidance on learning strategies when dealing with multiple languages... I firmly believe that the convergence of different hierarchical levels is crucial for the success of such transformative projects... It promotes collaboration and mutual understanding,"* underscores a strong desire for implementing and improving working collaborative devices and international settings. Furthermore, the observed success aligns with the potential for developing *new* human and professional environments within the EDUC structures. These environments would embrace the diversity of cultural perspectives, multidisciplinary expertise, and cross-cutting approaches, fostering international dialogue and recognizing them as invaluable assets to be cultivated by all stakeholders, thereby addressing contemporary inquiries effectively.

Undoubtedly, the favorable outcomes reaffirm the significance of such training programmes and underscore the ongoing endeavor to integrate Soft Skills into academic and professional milieus. In essence, the commitment to promoting Soft Skills, as exemplified by the Educ-Share project and UPN's leadership in this initiative, not only meets current professional requisites but also lays a solid foundation for the future advancement of both the human and professional spheres.



► **Web Presentation of EDUC Online Staff Training Programme in 21st Century Skills // Second Edition - Fall 2023** <sup>6</sup>



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**PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING**

**By Cristina Cabras, Associate Professor of Social Psychology, Work and Organizational Psychology (UniCa) & Mirian Agus, Associate Professor of Psychometrics, Psychologist (UniCa) – Cagliari**

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10 November 2023

Number of participants: up to 50

The training activities will refer to the scientific area of Cognitive Psychology Applied to Problem Solving and Decision Making.

During the 3 hours of the course, the teachers will address the following aspects of problem-solving and decision-making:

- Topic presentation
- Exercise
- Problem finding – detection of a problem
- Problem setting – definition of a problem
- Problem analysis – decomposition of the main problem in secondary problems
- Decision making – decision on how to act
- Decision taking – transition to action
- Question time
- Discussion and conclusions

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<sup>6</sup> Here below the direct link to the 2nd Edition Soft Skills Online Programme as posted on the UPN web site.  
<https://recherche.parisnanterre.fr/educ-share/register-for-the-2nd-edition-educ-online-staff-training-programme-in-21st-century-skills?fbclid=IwAR0YtxNzptit1GPqhwb3A2WJMM5PEM5cYsycf-IOjATFfuRx7IacXGctys>



20 November 2023

Number of participants: 30-40

Make full use of your brainpower! In this workshop full of practical exercises, you will find out how our memory works. How we create memories and why we forget.

How to remember and learn anything you want. And here is a little spoiler alert: although our brain is an amazing organ, you will discover it cannot be always trusted...

Workshop contents:

- What do we remember and why do we forget?
- Creating memories. Even the false ones.
- Sensory, short- and long-term memory in practice
- Storytelling and memory hacking





## RESILIENCE

By Edit Bányai, Associate Professor of Marketing and  
Intercultural Business Communication - University of Pécs

16 and 23 November 2023

Number of participants: 15-20

Resilience training focuses on the following areas:

- Master the skillset, toolset and mindset of cultivating resilience, reframing adversity and unleashing your potential.
  - How could you establish your inner stability and resilience regarding change and crisis?
  - Our emotional health, reactive-proactive approach
  - Positive attitude, self-motivation
- Our energy levels
- The different types of stress. Positive stress, effects of stress
- Mastering and implementing some efficient stress management techniques and coping mechanisms into our everyday lives, creating a positive attitude.



21 November 2023

Number of participants: 15-20

Operating in international contexts can be tricky for several reasons — particularly when we have to work in a different language. Low motivation, language anxiety, and difficulty focusing are just a few of the things that can make it difficult to develop our language skills at work. This training will help you incorporate language development into your daily routine to help you become a more effective, confident foreign language user. Topics covered:

- Tools for autonomous practice (resources, websites, AI chatbots...)
- Tools for reflexive practice (journals, discussion boards...)
- Strategies for keeping motivation high & stress low

\*\*Contrary to other training programs, this program is open to those with a B1 level of English or greater.





**IDENTIFY AND MOBILIZE YOUR SOFT SKILLS**  
By Lucy Arbuckle, Associate Professor in Applied  
Linguistics - University of Rennes

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14 November 2023

Number of participants: up to 16

Soft Skills are increasingly valued by recruiters. Used on a daily basis, they help to anticipate a person's ability to integrate easily, to work in a team and/or independently. This workshop will help you identify your Soft Skills and develop them.



c) Training programme evaluation

i. Evaluation forms analysis: comparing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition feedback

**Main outcomes:**

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants emphasizing the importance of sharing and exchange. Here are the key-themes that emerged from the feedback of training participants, coupled with reflections from the involved experts and task leaders.

- **Co-construction of an Educational Alliance:** Participants underlined the importance of building a sustainable career improvement plan, through collaborative efforts and methods shared across the Alliance.
- **Transformative Power of Collaboration:** WP6 teamwork embodied the positive impact of collaborative efforts among countries, languages and diverse academic roles and European universities' peculiar hierarchies.
- **Commitment to Advancing Educational Practices:** One of the main takeaways from the 2 editions was the importance of nurturing a *global community of learners* to promote cooperation in the digital age.

**Detailed analysis:**

Before delving into a qualitative and quantitative analysis of trainees' feedback on their Soft Skills experience, it is necessary to highlight and compare the level of interest and active participation among individuals from all EDUC universities in the online training. UPN succeeded in collecting genuine feedbacks because after each session, each EDUC trainer suggested that participants fill out the Evaluation Form with the purpose to gather true information, report on the training, and acknowledge everyone's contribution and involvement in the initiative.

In the first edition, we received **178** subscriptions, while in the second edition, slightly fewer, at **172**. Participants were allowed to express their preferences and choose from various courses (using a 1-3 scale-choice preference) and, if desired, attend up to 3 out of the 7 programme



training sessions. Options were managed and selected based on a priority criterion (first come, first served), ensuring that each participant had the opportunity to attend at least one session.

However, each institution, based on each trainer's objectives and pedagogical needs, HR indicators and local guidance, as well as specific requirements, decided to open the attendee list differently. While the University of Cagliari (UNICA) welcomed approximately 50 people, the University of Rennes (UNIVREN) and UPN chose to limit attendance to an average of 15-20 individuals. This decision was made by respecting, valorizing, and *listening* to the diversity across the Alliance, aiming to preserve the variety of EDUC partners working together under common values, particularly in the context of career lifelong projects and endeavours.

This decision aligns with the recent Erasmus + EDUC II project deliverable 5.1.1, which introduces a « Career Development Policy plan » proposing a catalogue by which partners promote training to the EDUC members and offer HR tools for career implementation. Stepping forward, partners will share guidelines and best approaches to zoom the focus on Soft Skills as a valuable and practical « device » for nourishing an equal, research-oriented and digitally boosted consortium. The scope of the catalogue specifically addresses the crucial aspect of Soft Skills acquisition nowadays, while also highlighting the background and achievements of EDUC-SHARE active cooperation.

## QUANTITATIVE TABLE

### ▸ HOME UNIVERSITY/STATUS - 1st and 2nd EDITION - EVALUATION FORM CONTRIBUTORS

	First (N=46)	Second (N=88)	Total (N=134)	p-value
<b>Home university</b>				0.744
Masarykova Univerzita	4 (8.7%)	11 (12.5%)	15 (11.2%)	
Pécsi Tudományegyetem	7 (15.2%)	13 (14.8%)	20 (14.9%)	
Potsdam University	5 (10.9%)	7 (8.0%)	12 (9.0%)	



Università degli Studi di Cagliari	21 (45.7%)	31 (35.2%)	52 (38.8%)	
Université de Rennes	7 (15.2%)	21 (23.9%)	28 (20.9%)	
Université Paris Nanterre	2 (4.3%)	5 (5.7%)	7 (5.2%)	
<b>Status</b>				0.004
Administrative Staff	24 (52.2%)	67 (76.1%)	91 (67.9%)	
Faculty	20 (43.5%)	15 (17.0%)	35 (26.1%)	
Other	2 (4.3%)	6 (6.8%)	8 (6.0%)	

### Table commentary

The data from the table provides valuable insights into the participation and composition of informants in the first and second editions of the *EDUC Online Staff Training Programme in 21st Century Skills*. In the second edition, there was a substantial increase in the number of responses to the questionnaire, totalling **88**, compared to the **46** responses recorded in the first edition. This surge in participation suggests a growing interest, and probably awareness among the participants in providing feedback and sharing their experiences. One notable trend is the dominance of respondents affiliated with UNICA, a pattern observed in both editions, also if we consider a larger number of trainees. Hence, in the first edition, 21 participants were from Cagliari, and this number increased to 31 in the second edition. Despite the increase in absolute numbers, the proportion of Cagliari participants, by referring to the total respondents, has decreased and indicates a more diverse participation from other universities. Conversely, the responses from Masaryk University (MU), UNIVREN and UPN have shown a proportional increase, suggesting an expanding engagement from these institutions.

A deeper examination of the university-specific data reveals that UNIVREN emerged as the second-highest contributor in terms of the number of respondents during the second edition, with a total of 24 participants, constituting 23.9% of the total responses. This shift in prominence may signify a thicker interest or involvement from UNIVREN in the training program. However, it is remarkable that both the University of Potsdam (UP) and UPN recorded responses below 10



participants in both editions, indicating a relatively lower engagement from these universities. Further investigation may be required to understand the factors influencing the lower participation from these specific institutions.

Turning to the occupational categories of the respondents, a substantial majority fall under the administrative staff category. In the first edition, administrative staff represented 52% of the respondents, and this percentage increased to 76% in the second edition. On the other hand, the proportion of Researchers among the contributors decreased from about 43% in the first edition to 17% in the second edition.

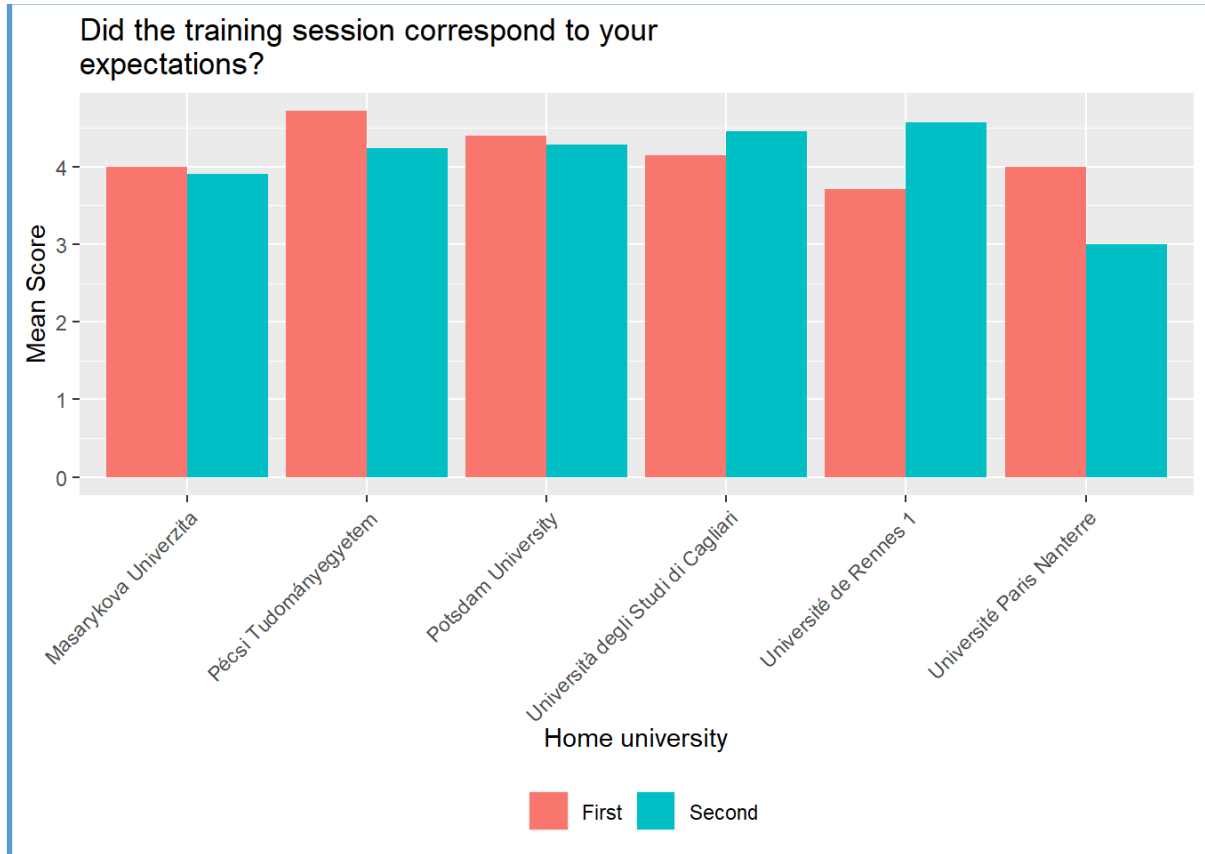
The statistically significant difference in the composition of the sample questionnaire between the first and second editions, as indicated by *p-value* ( $p = 0.004$ ), highlights an outstanding profile of participants. This shift may have implications for the generalizability of findings across different editions and emphasizes the importance of considering these variations in further subsequent analyses.

In summary, a detailed examination of the table data provides a nuanced understanding of the participation trends across universities, highlighting variables in the composition of trainees in terms of both institutional representation and occupational categories. These issues are crucial for interpreting survey results accurately and tailoring future iterations of the training program to address the specific needs and expectations of diverse participant groups.



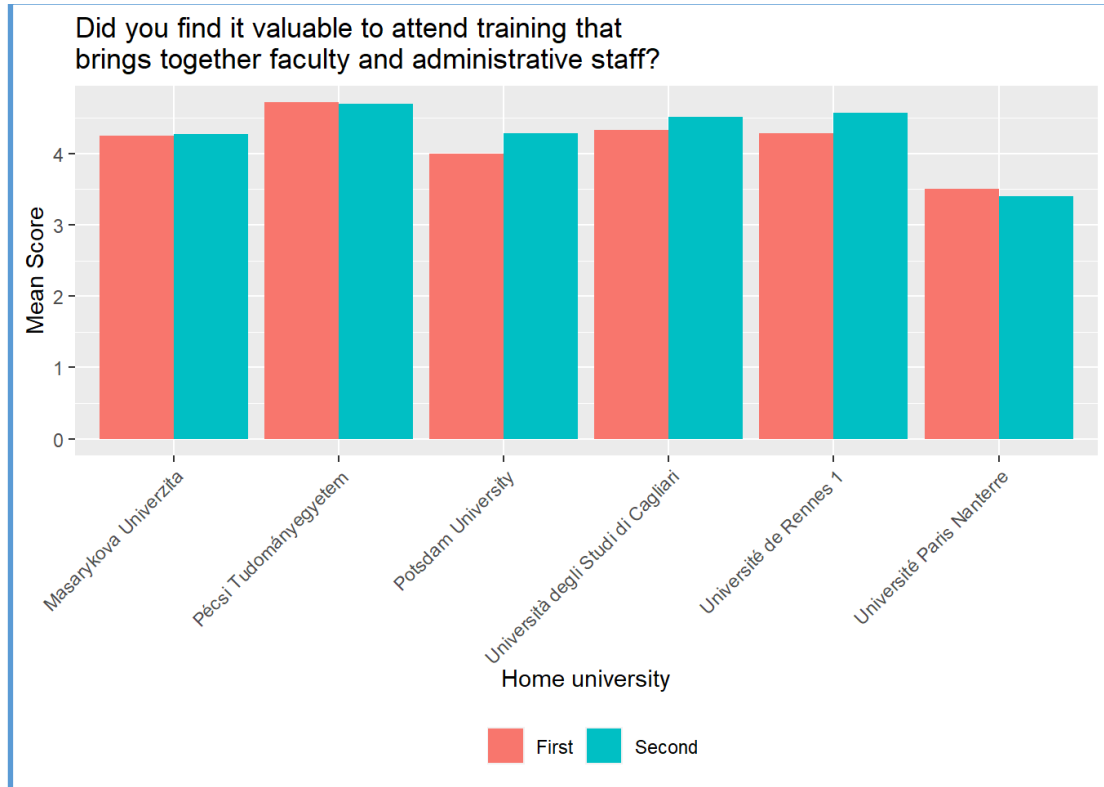
**GRAPHICS  
 QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 1.**

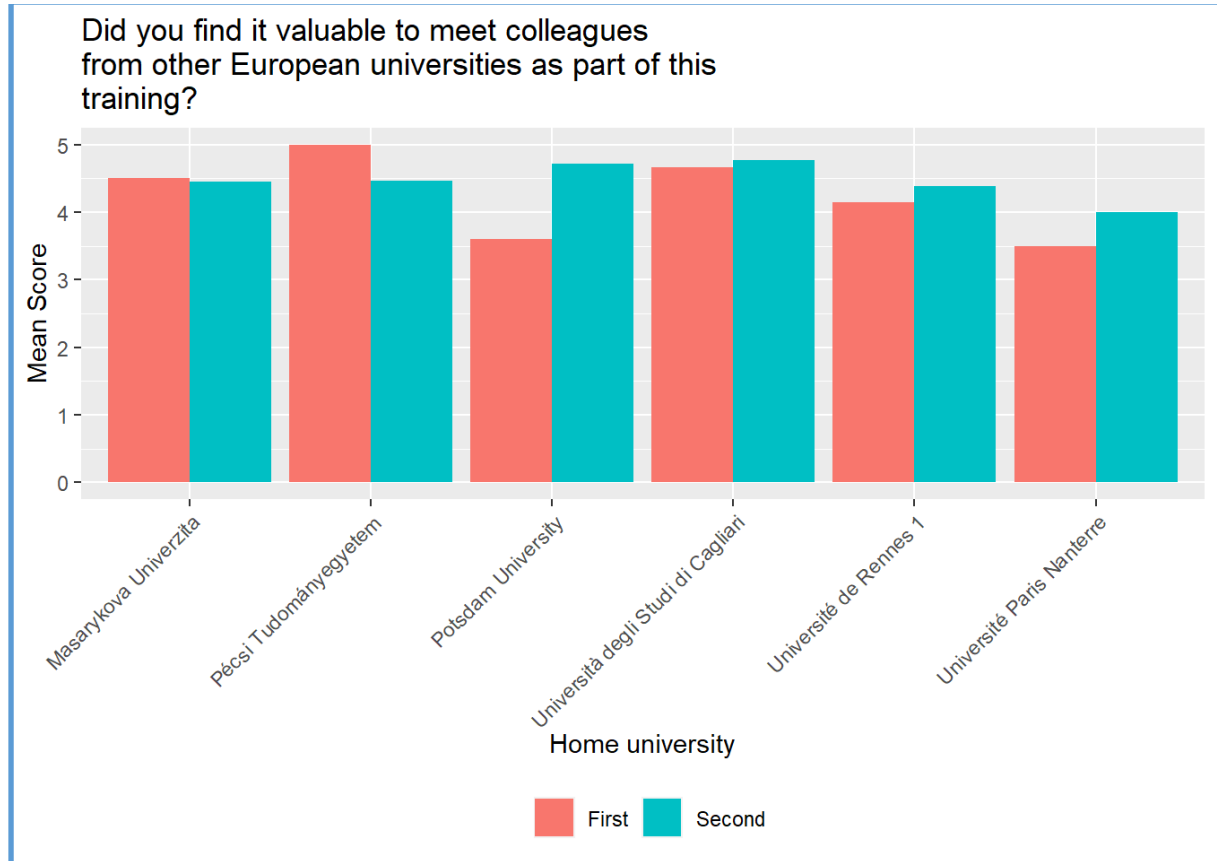




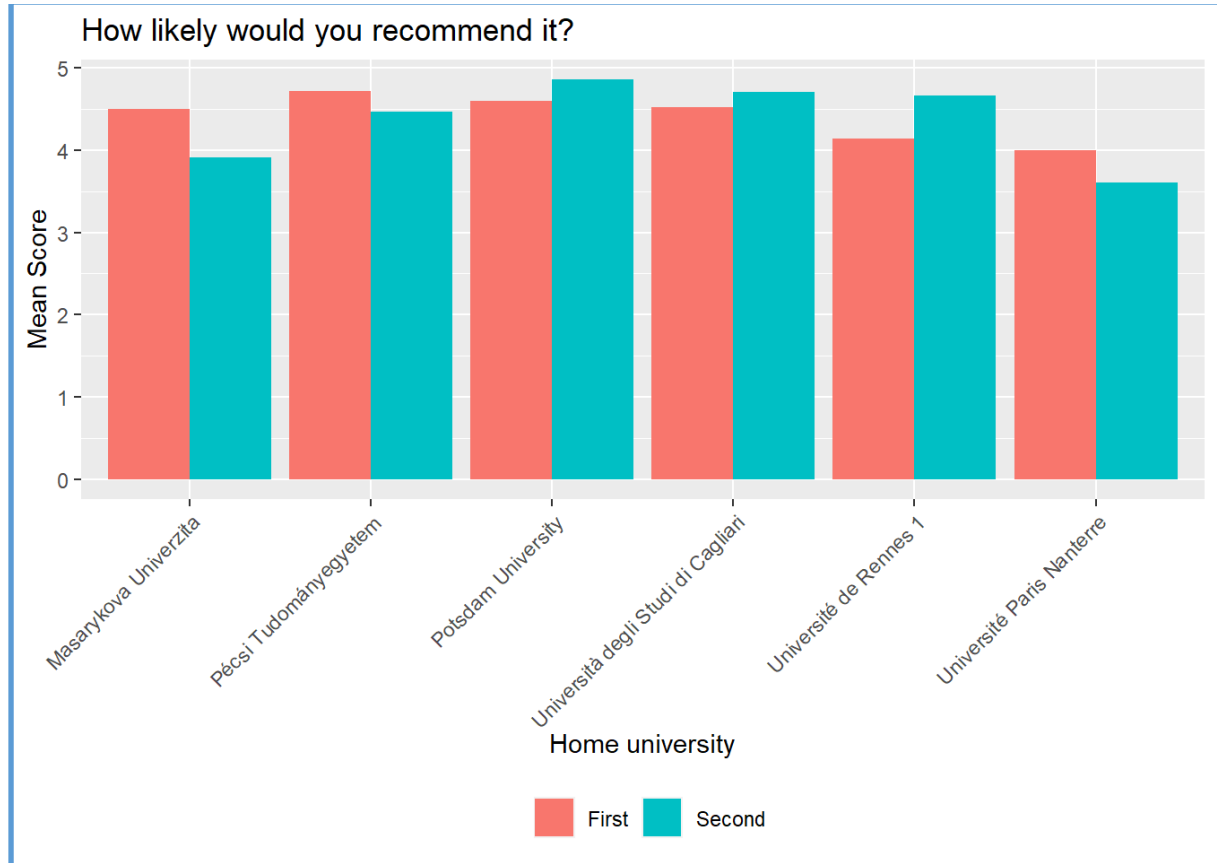
## QUESTION 2.



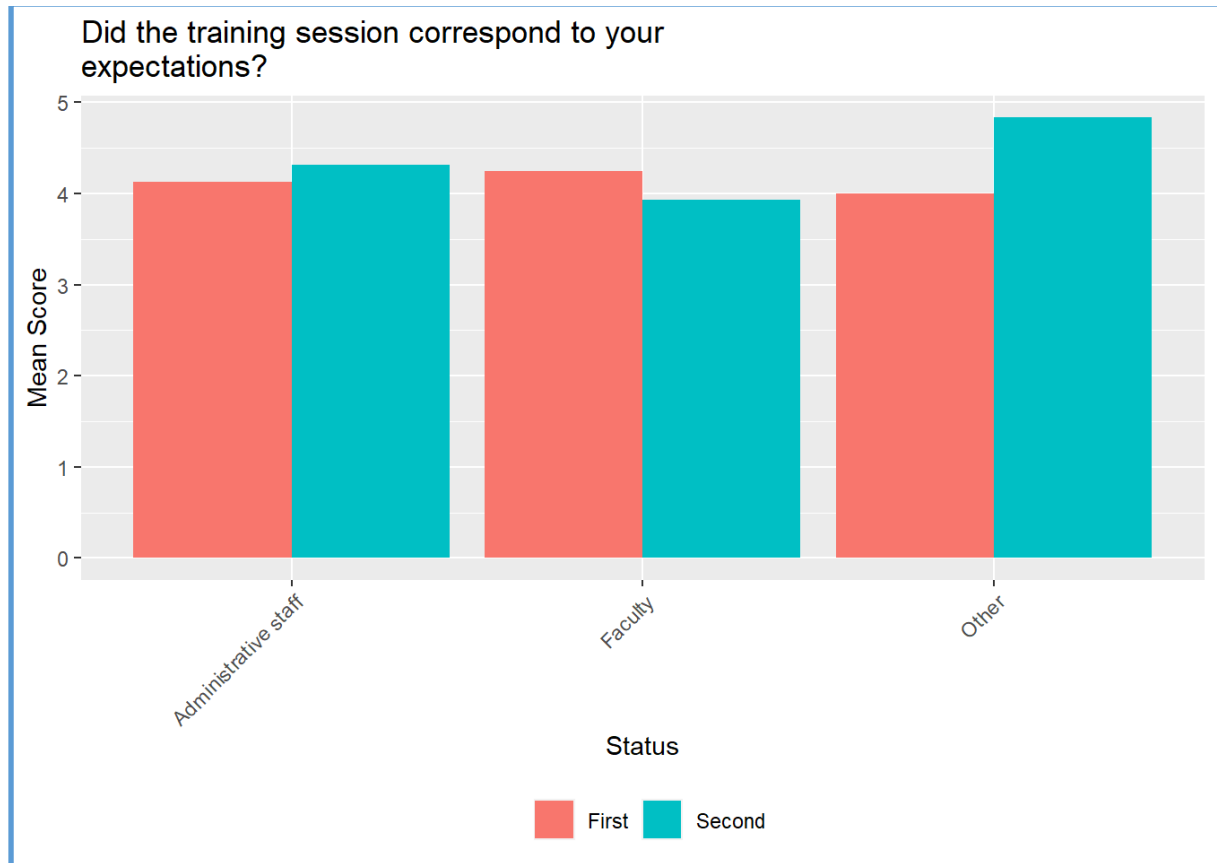
### QUESTION 3.



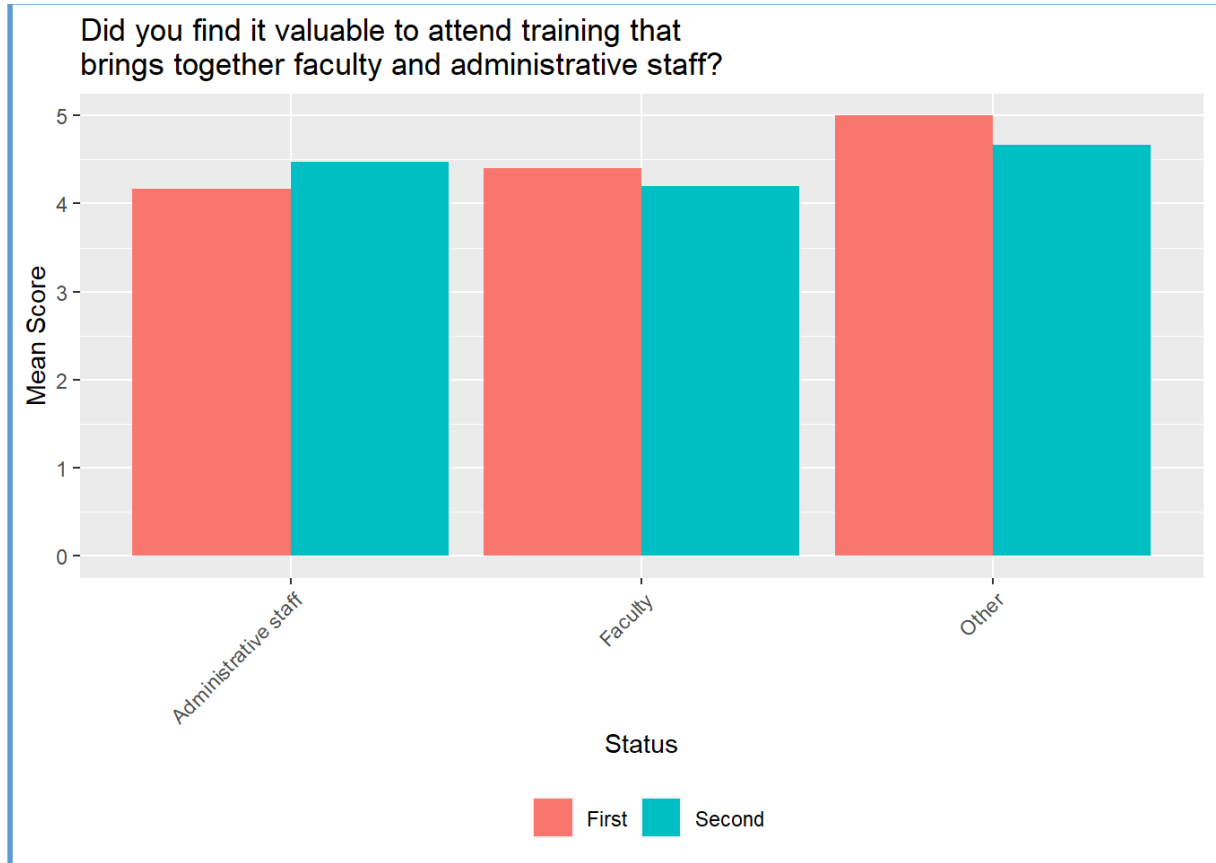
QUESTION 4.



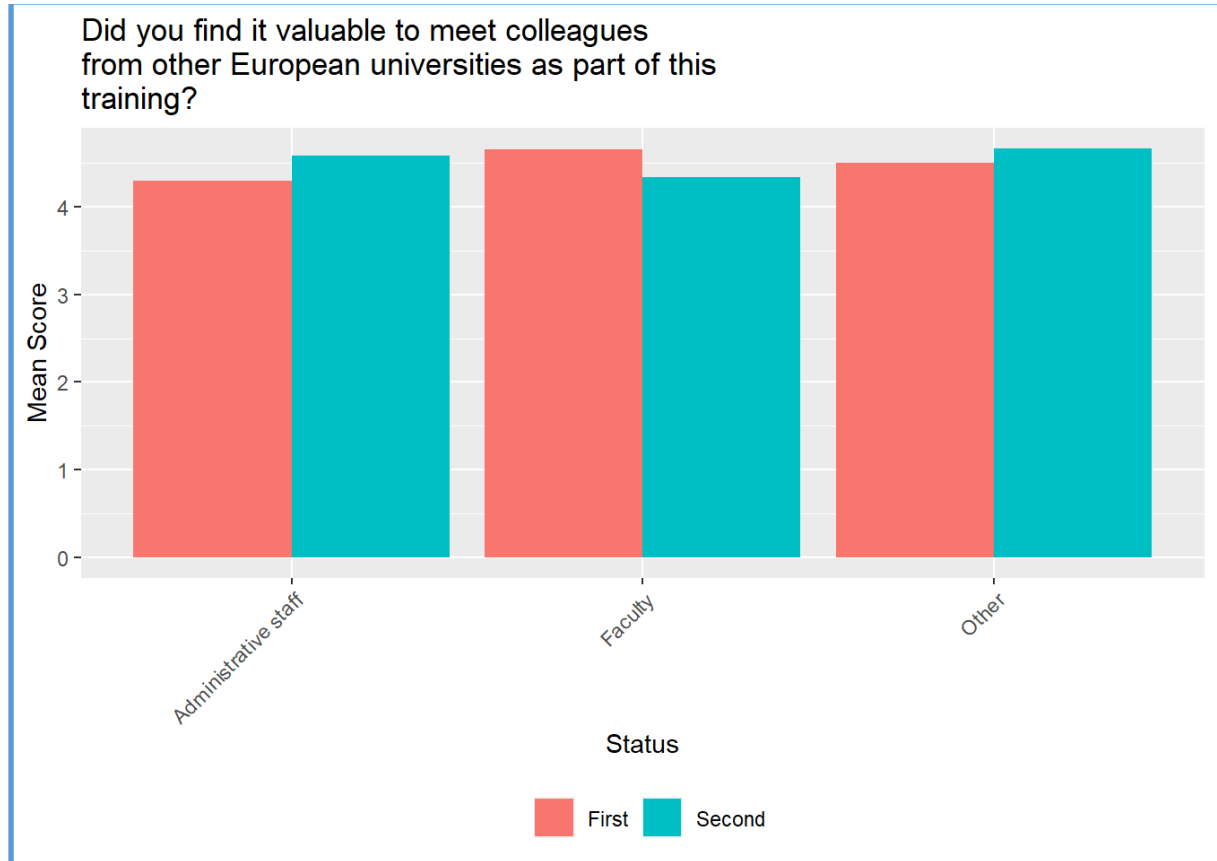
### QUESTION 5.



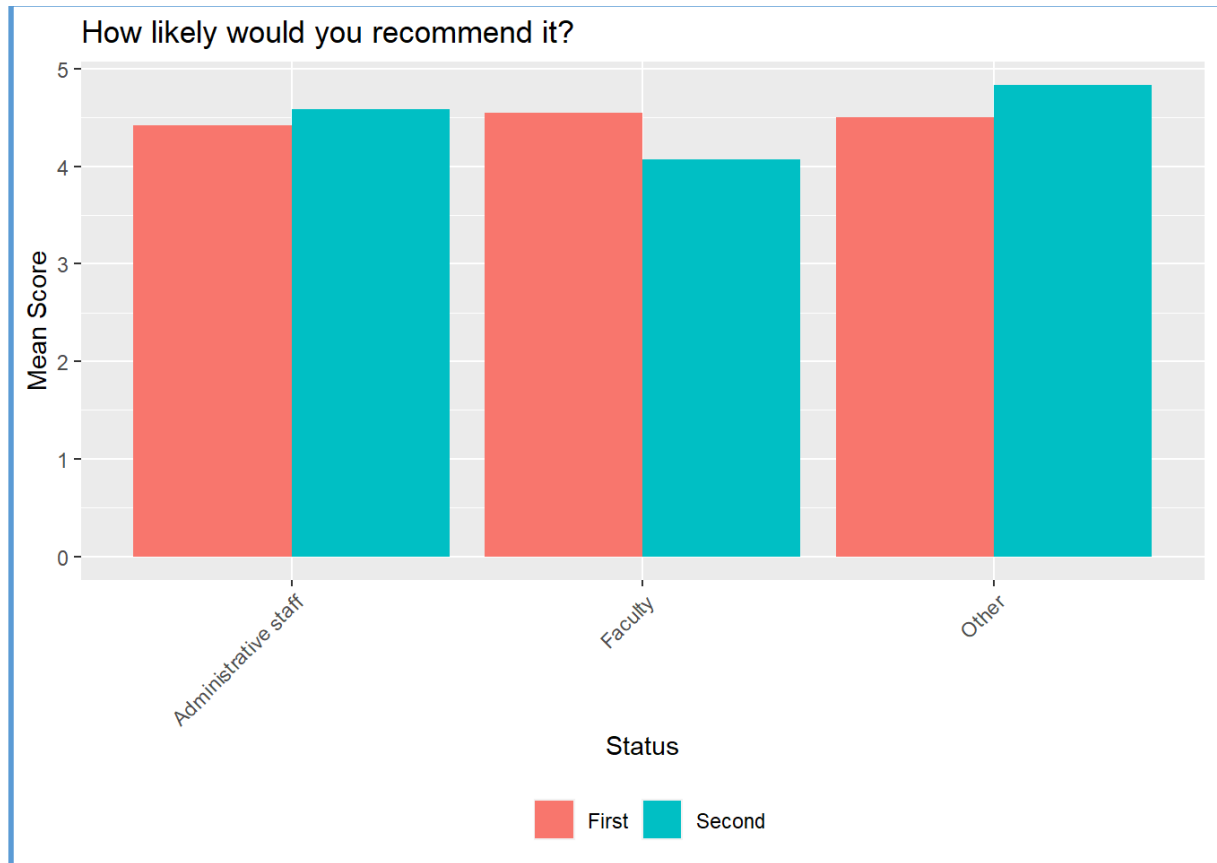
### QUESTION 6.



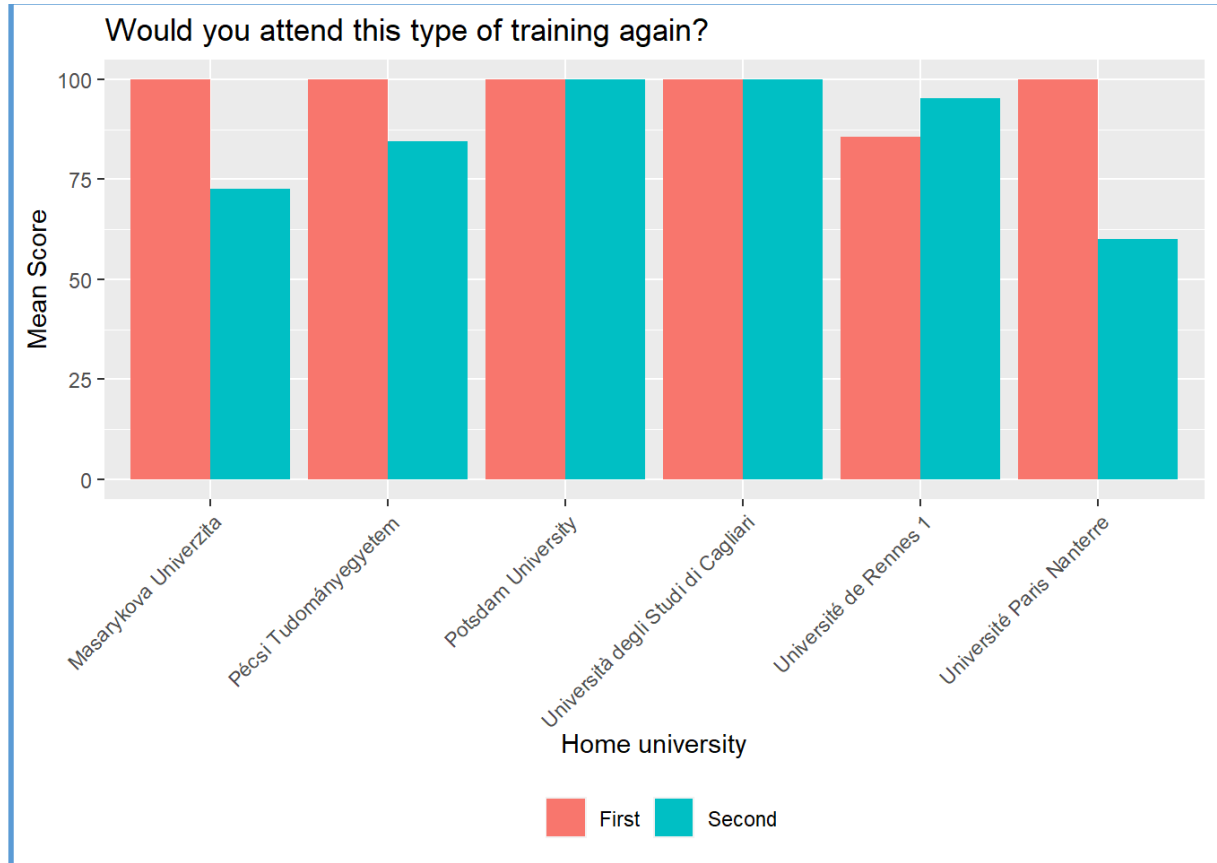
### QUESTION 7.



### QUESTION 8.



QUESTION 9.





## Analysis of the charts based on the most noteworthy Universities' response

### *A. Did the training session correspond to your expectations?*

The average score given by respondents (considering that 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree) is **around pt. 4**. Expectations were less met for UPN, especially in the second edition, with an average score of 3. The score improved in the second edition for UNICA and UNIVREN, while it decreased significantly for UPN. This decline suggests a need for a more in-depth examination of the factors contributing to the diminished satisfaction level, possibly through qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups. A reduction in the average score was also observed for the University of Pécs (UPECS), MU and UP. Understanding the unique challenges or concerns faced by participants from these universities can inform targeted improvements to address their specific needs.

Conversely, UNICA and UNIVREN experienced an improvement in participant satisfaction during the second edition, reflecting a successful adaptation or enhancement of the training program. Identifying the specific changes or elements that contributed to this positive shift could suggest keys of interpretation for optimizing the training content or delivery, and performing the digital setting.

Moreover, analyzing the individual university performances provides a valuable understanding of the nuanced experiences of participants from different institutions. The overall average score indicates a generally positive response to the training, but the variations among universities reveal distinct patterns.

In summary, the detailed analysis of individual university responses highlights the heterogeneous nature of participant experiences. While the overall satisfaction level remains positive, the variations among universities underscore the importance of tailoring training programs to address specific institutional contexts and participant expectations. Further qualitative research can provide a deeper understanding of the underlying factors influencing satisfaction and guide strategic enhancements for future training sessions.



***B. Did you find it valuable to attend training that brings together faculty and administrative staff?***

The joint participation of faculty and administrative staff was generally appreciated (**average score > 4 based on a 1-5 scale**) almost for all universities. Indeed, the collaborative involvement of both faculty and administrative staff received positive feedback across most universities, reflecting a shared appreciation for this integrated approach.

The data suggests that the integration of faculty and administrative staff in the training program is generally viewed favourably, contributing to a positive learning experience. However, the variation in scores, especially in the case of UPN, emphasizes the importance of considering contextual factors and tailoring approaches to meet the unique dynamics of each university. This insight can guide future adjustments to optimize the collaborative training model for diverse academic environments.

***C. Did you find it valuable to meet colleagues from other European universities as part of this training?***

The majority of universities received an **average score exceeding 4**. Notably, the score for UPN is lower, although it showed an increase in the second edition, suggesting a positive shift in perception. Conversely, there is an upward trend in the scores for UP and UNIVREN in the second edition. On the other hand, UPECS experienced a decline, although it consistently remains above the 4-point threshold.

The assessment of the value derived from interacting with colleagues from different European universities varied among the participating institutions. The positive shifts observed in some institutions (such as UPECS and UP) suggest opportunities for continued enhancement and optimization of the networking aspect of the training programme.



#### ***D. How likely would you recommend it?***

Assessing the **likelihood** of recommending the program, respondents were asked to assign a score on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely). Notably, the majority of universities received a **score exceeding 4 points**, indicating a generally positive feeling toward the programme. However, MU and UPN stand out as exceptions, particularly in the second edition. Nevertheless, both universities managed to achieve an average score above 3.5, suggesting a moderate level of endorsement.

Delving into the specifics, UP, UNICA, and UNIVREN exhibited an upward trend in the likelihood of recommending the course. This suggests a positive evolution in the perception of the programme's value over time and it would be insightful to explore the factors contributing to this positive shift, potentially uncovering areas of improvement that resonated well with participants from these universities.

In conclusion, while the overall trend leans towards a positive likelihood of recommendation across universities, the nuanced variations highlight the importance of a *granular analysis* to ensure the programme's progressive alignment with the diverse expectations of the EDUC community.

#### **COMMENTARY ON THE GRAPHICS (Questions)**

##### ***A. On academy ROLES***

Regarding the question "Did the training session correspond to your expectations?" with a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree), the average score given by trainees **hovers around 4 points**. Expectations were generally met to a similar extent in both editions, with slight statistical fluctuations. Participants generally found that the training met their expectations, suggesting a certain level of overall satisfaction across various roles.

Examining the data further, it emerges that there are subtle variations between the two editions, indicating potential areas for refinement. Despite these statistical fluctuations, the overall



sentiment remains positive, reaffirming that the training sessions were effective in meeting the participants' expectations.

Interestingly, a notable improvement is observed for individuals whose category is *Other*. (perhaps post-doc or docs students). This positive trend suggests that the training had a more pronounced impact on those whose roles may not fit into a fixed category or, as in the case of doctoral figures, are drafting their role in the academy. This shift in perception could be attributed to tailored content or delivery methods that resonated more effectively with a « transversal range of participants ».

### ***B. Bringing together faculty and administrative staff in a European context***

The collaborative participation of faculty and administrative staff in training sessions garnered positive feedback, with **an average rating exceeding 4 on the scale**. This appreciation was echoed not only by administrative personnel but also by faculty members, as well as other category members. This integrated approach used to involve EDUC people in the training sessions was met with positive responses from all categories. Administrators acknowledged the benefits of collaborative engagement, highlighting the synergy that emerges when diverse perspectives come together. Similarly, faculty members expressed their appreciation for the inclusive nature of the training, emphasizing the richness gained from interacting with administrative colleagues.

This indicates that the collaborative model of training, which brings together individuals from different roles within the academic institution, has been perceived as worthy and beneficial by a diverse range of participants. Mostly, both faculty and administrative staff express a common sympathetic attitude regarding interacting with colleagues from other European universities. This aspect, as an integral part of the training program, was considered original and valuable. The average score for both categories surpasses 4, indicating a high level of appreciation for the cross-university collaboration experience. This observation extends to the other category as well.

The consensus among faculty and administrative members underscores the positive impact of fostering connections and engaging in knowledge exchange with peers from diverse academic backgrounds. This inter-university interaction not only enriches the training experience but also contributes to a broader and more interconnected professional network.



In conclusion, the program's success in faculty perception is linked to the choice of facilitating meaningful connections and promoting a collaborative ethos among staff members, transcending traditional boundaries and enhancing the overall learning experience.

### *C. How (much) likely and if renewable?*

Using a scale where 1 = very unlikely and 5 = very likely, most of the attendees indicated a **high likelihood of recommending the training** to others. It is noteworthy that all the group categories, despite this favourable response, have shown a slight decrease in the likelihood score in the second edition. However, it's important to emphasize that even with this slight dip, the average score remains consistently above 4 points.

This indicates a robust positive signal among all faculty members towards endorsing the training program to their peers or colleagues. While the faculty members exhibit a minor decline in enthusiasm in the second edition, the fact that the average score remains above 4 suggests that the training continues to be well-regarded by this group. Seeking direct feedback through a system of interviews and personal contributions during both formal and informal meetings could uncover nuances that would inform new practices for enhancing overall satisfaction and endorsement levels.

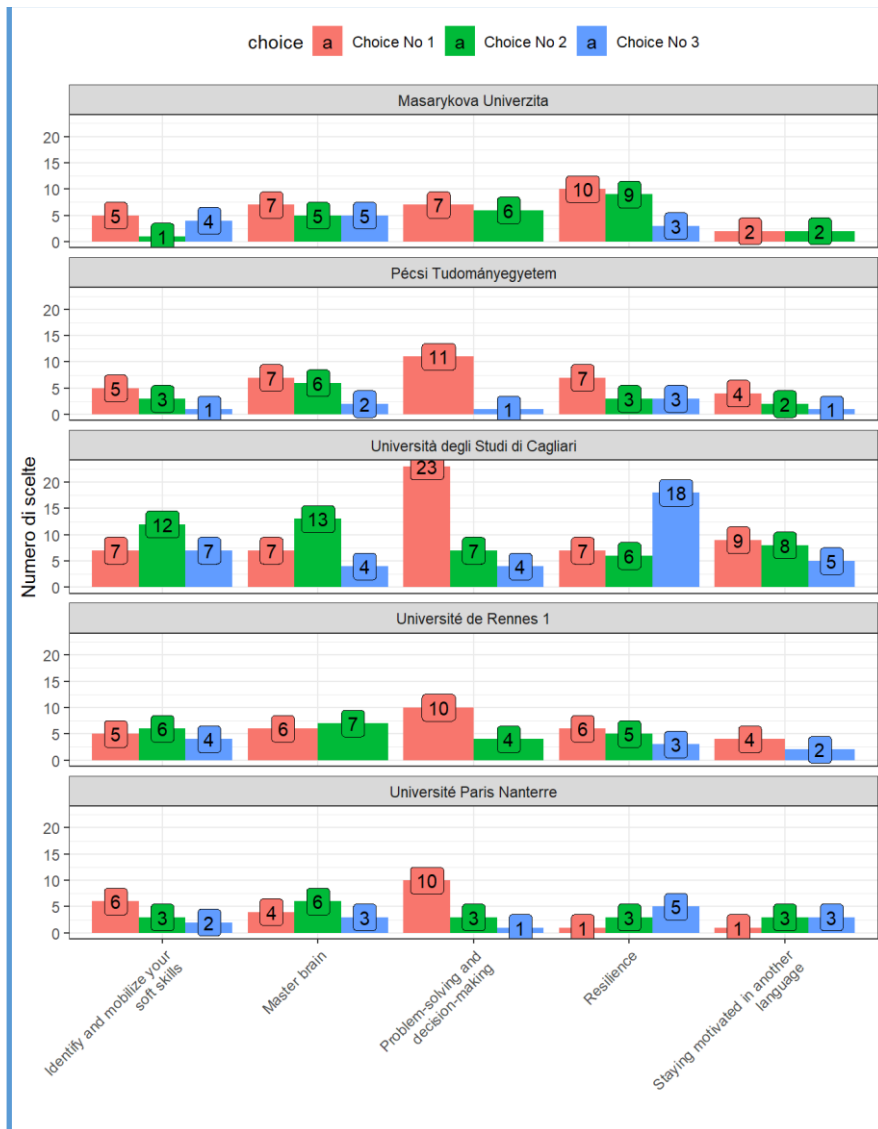
The data from the questionnaire responses provide valuable insights into the participants' sentiments across different universities and categories of personnel. Examining the responses from UNICA and UP reveals a remarkable trend, with 100% of respondents expressing their willingness to undergo the training again, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction in both the initial and subsequent editions. In contrast, MU and UPECS experienced a shift from 100% satisfaction in the first edition to approximately 70-80% in the second edition. This decline suggests a considerable change in participants' attitudes or experiences, prompting us to closer examine the factors which influenced this line.

Particularly striking is the apparent significant decrease in satisfaction for UPN, indicating a considerable drop in participants willing to repeat the training in the second edition.



Understanding the specific reasons behind this decline could be crucial for refining the program for future iterations.

**STATISTICAL DATA ON THE INDIVIDUAL COURSE (number and type of participants per university) and COMMENTARY ON THE GRAPHIC**



The graph presents a detailed overview of the preferences expressed by participants in various universities regarding the offered courses. Notably, the "Problem Solving and Decision Making" course emerged as the top choice across all universities, except for MU, where the preference leaned towards the "Resilience" course.

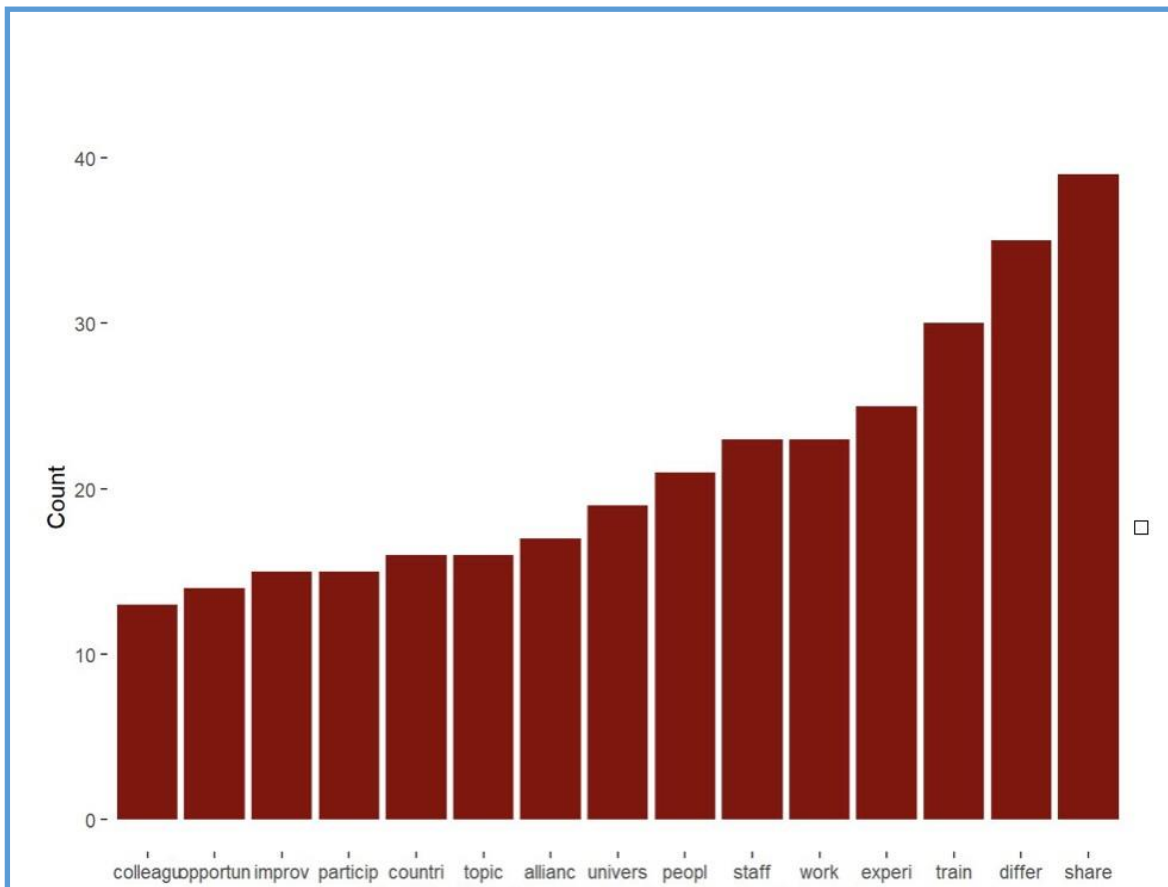


This divergence in preferences indicates a nuanced response to the course offerings, reflecting the varied interests and priorities of participants at MU compared to other universities.

In terms of second preference, the courses "Master Brain" and "Identify and Mobilize Your Soft Skills" garnered higher popularity. It is intriguing to note that MU, despite favouring the "Resilience" course as the first choice, also demonstrated a significant interest in it as the second option. This dual preference might suggest a particular resonance with the content or delivery style of the "Resilience" course among MU participants.

The choice of "Staying Motivated in Another Language" as the second option was notably prevalent among participants from the UNICA. This specific preference may signify a particular interest or need for language-related skills and motivation among this group of participants. Additionally, the trend of participants from UNICA frequently opting for the "Resilience" course as their third preference provides further insights into the sustained interest or perceived relevance of this course among the participants at this university. The reasoning behind these choices could unveil valuable information for course development or customization. Indeed, the graph highlights both commonalities and variations in course preferences across different universities. The intricate patterns of first, second, and third choices offer a comprehensive perspective on participant content preferences, which can inform future course tailoring.





## Conclusions and future perspectives

The chart above has been **elaborated on the quantitatively most significant responses** to the question: "In your opinion, what is the added value of staff training at the scale of the EDUC Alliance", and relating them to the **etymological roots of several recurring words, such as: *colleagues, opportunity, improvement, contribution, topic, alliance, university, people, staff, work, experience, training, offer, share.***

A prevailing theme that emerges is **the concept of an educational alliance for improvement.** Respondents express their belief in the transformative power of collaborative efforts, even across different countries and roles. This points to a shared commitment to advancing educational practices and fostering a global community of learners. The responses not only emphasize the tangible benefits of the training in terms of knowledge acquisition but also shed light on the intrinsic value of interpersonal connections, collaborative learning, and the broader aspiration for educational enhancement on a global scale. In summary, the opportunity to undergo the training





again, although still positive, shows a slight decrease in the second edition. This may suggest the opportunity to introduce new elements, updates, or modules that consider participants' feedback to maintain high interest over time. Continuous refinement and adaptation based on participant feedback will be crucial for the sustained effectiveness of the training program in the future.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the average scores (issued from the Evaluation Form-graphics) indicate that, overall, the training programme has met participants' expectations. However, a nuanced analysis reveals variations in satisfaction and perceptions across universities and among different staff roles. Role-based analysis indicates that, overall, EDUC University staff have positively evaluated the training experience. Nevertheless, there are some statistical fluctuations and slight declines in satisfaction during the second edition, especially among faculty members.

Despite the majority of participants being willing to undergo the training again, there are some variations across universities and a slight decrease in the second edition. An **in-depth analysis of the training professional context** would provide valuable considerations which will be useful for the future perspectives of the EDUC Soft Skills approach. Conducting **further and innovative research through a Human Sciences perspective** may be beneficial to identify specific areas of interest or concern for participants and **tailor the program accordingly, using their active involvement**.

The divergence in evaluations between universities may indicate the **need for course design to be conceived to the specific (even more local) needs of each institution**. A more flexible approach could ensure that the program better aligns with the expectations and **requirements of diverse academic realities**. For instance, regarding negative or declining responses, as observed in the case of UPN, **qualitative interviews -research-oriented-** could be beneficial to understand the specific reasons for some dissatisfaction and implement targeted concrete actions.

Regarding the interaction between faculty and administrative staff, the positive results suggest implementing **additional interdisciplinary and cross-academy units, and inter-services, collaboration initiatives, strategical actions, and more structural and structured postures towards 21st-century challenges in the work academy**.



To further solidify attendees' commitment, we can analyze their feedback from a semantic standpoint. In fact, through the reading of their responses, we can estimate the current use of terms such as "sharing" and "exchange" which underline the general appreciation for collaborative learning and the circulation of ideas and experiences across diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Many expressions included words such "experiences," "topics," "perspectives," "new ideas," and "interests." This highlights the significance of managing different aspects of one's professional life through a broader approach. It's essential to grasp the universities' individuals, their expectations, and their role in advancing knowledge.

## ii. A research meeting: 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris

To further disseminate knowledge and foster continuous improvement, a Soft Skills Conference and accompanying workshops were organized. These events provided a platform for reflection on Soft Skills training, Human Resources programmes and Policy, offering an opportunity for participants, trainers, and other administrative stakeholders to share their experiences and insights. The conference featured a series of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, all designed to deepen the understanding of Soft Skills and their critical role in personal and professional development.

At the conference, the discussions and the workshops centered on various aspects of « acquiring, transmitting, and valorizing Soft Skills within the academic milieu ». Key topics included:

- effective strategies for integrating Soft Skills training into academic curricula;
- methods for assessing and certifying these skills, and best practices for fostering a culture that values and promotes Lifelong Learning;
- hands-on experience and practical tools for enhancing international communication, teamwork, problem-solving, positive leadership and respectful management.

These events also highlighted the importance of Soft Skills in adapting to the rapidly changing demands of the modern workplace. By focusing on the real-world application of these skills, the conference has been intended to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation. Participants were encouraged to think critically about how they can leverage their Soft Skills for driving innovation, improving sustainable forms for well-being in the workplace.



Overall, the UPN Soft Skills Conference and workshops were instrumental in advancing the goals of the EDUC-SHARE project.

Based on the reflection trajectories and goals outlined above, the physical meeting was organized in Paris, encompassing not just the UPN local community but also representatives of EDUC partner universities who convened in France for a two-day study session. The primary objective was to encourage collaboration within the Alliance, discovering and sharing diverse viewpoints on opportunities geared to allow new skills acquisition for university staff. Also, there was a joint aim to closely explore Soft Skills initiatives and HR actions through a research-oriented lens on scientific disciplines. Consequently, the meeting was divided into two sessions: a seminar (with an academic conference format); and a more interactive time featuring workshops and roundtables which would lead to a focus on the construction of the second edition of the training.

Henceforth, on September 19 and 20, 2023, the Soft Skills meeting titled *Acquiring, transmitting, valorizing 'Soft Skills' in the academic milieu: an EDUC experience* received contributions from various UPN researchers. Their focus was on offering theoretical insights for operational aspects concerning both the conception and execution of actions aimed at developing Soft Skills.

Researchers and professors from UPN, spanning applied sociology, international communication (Information and Communication Sciences), work psychology, foreign language teaching, and university engineering related to education, presented their findings and specific research by intertwining Soft Skills within the professional context, especially in academia.

To trigger interdisciplinary discussions, EDUC partners contributed to thought-provoking conversations, detailing trajectories towards Soft Skills management, and highlighting the approaches adopted by their respective faculties. Particularly, they delved into executed intersections with existing policies and strategies for promoting and developing these skills for their staff. In tandem, resources' role in enhancing Soft Skills was emphasized, with a comparison of diverse practices and the exchange of ideas based on everyone's educational background, mostly linked to their cultural environment, nourished also by their university belonging.

During workshops, employing brainstorming and role-playing techniques, participants engaged in authentic and productive interactions, drawing from personal and professional experiences.



This contributed to inquire the contemporary theme of Soft Skills in an academic environment that aligns with new communicative transitions, such as digitization, technologization of work and social relationships on a broader scale.

The outcome formed an excellent foundation for reflection and in-depth analysis, providing genuine research material for constructing the second edition of the online training. This training, conceived as an international opportunity for interacting with other people from EDUC universities, was carried out using English as a key language. The offer remained open, as in the first edition, to both administrative staff and researchers. The goal persisted in facilitating exchange and reflections among a diverse audience, each grappling with distinct issues and challenges in the management of their daily professional lives, particularly within academic structure and hierarchy.



Here below is the 2-day schedule detailing the different activities that occurred:

### 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023

#### > *Professional environments and « intimacy skills »*

Introduction to EDUC-SHARE Soft Skills initiative and experience

##### **Claudia Dell’Uomo d’Arme**

EDUC Project Manager, Comparative Literature and Languages Ph.D.

#### > *Emotions & Language Learning during E-Tandem Exchanges*

Presentation in the field of Didactics of language and culture - Applied linguistics

##### **Daniel Schug**

UPN - Associate Professor in English for non-English majors

#### > *Health and suffering at work*

Presentation in the field of Psychology of work

##### **Stéphanie Stankovic**

UPN - Associate Professor in Psychology

#### > *Questions and discussion*

#### > *Terminology, AI Bias, and the Potential Risks for Knowledge Construction and Management*

Presentation in the field of Digital Information and Communication

##### **Zhao Alexandre Huang**

UPN - Associate Professor in Information and Communication Sciences

#### > **Roundtable** with all the partners active participation (all participants welcomed)

Convenors: Claudia Dell’Uomo d’Arme and Monica Heintz

*Sharing of experiences within a professional environment, sharing of content about working new perspectives and practices, Identifying recurrent needs through HR policies and procedures, EDUC point of view*



**20<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**> *Social and digital inequalities behind the notion of Soft Skills***

Presentation in the field of Sociology and Digital Studies

Soft Skills- a point of view from Sociology and Digital Skills

**Yann Bruna**

UPN - Associate Professor in Sociology and Digital Humanities

**> *To Guide by developing (soft) skills « à plusieurs »***

Presentation in the field of Career development strategies and academic HR management

**Sophie Le Bars**

UPN - Head of Career Guidance and Support, Human Resources Department

**> *Negotiating identity in a cross-cultural setting***

Presentation in the Didactics of Languages and Cultures

**Nicole Divoux-Ringuette (UPN)**

Pedagogical and learning engineer, Ph.D.

**> *Questions and discussion***



> **Workshop**

« *Communicating....: a workshop on cross-cultural collaboration* »

(Nicole Divoux-Ringuette)



#### d) Delivery of Certificates of attendance

The involvement of HR in the relevant initiative has been crucial in the process of elevating the formative experience from an administrative standpoint. The formative experience indeed highlighted the importance of acquiring new expertise throughout the career journey and also in the broader enrichment of contemporary workers. Thus, each university, based on a model chosen in agreement with partners, issued certificates of attendance for both editions of Soft Skills EDUC training programme (2022-2024) (T6.3). The document (sample document in Annex) was duly signed by the HR Direction representatives of each partner university. These certificates testified:

- the recognition of the participants' commitment and new skills acquisition;
- the *soft-knowledge* attendees acquired and performed during the on-line sessions;
- productive self-assessment process.

This acknowledgment aims to motivate and inspire EDUC partners to pursue similar paths at several academic scales, and taking into account the multifold aspects of one's status and specific work-environment.

Moving forward, there is the contemplation of establishing a more intricate rapport with HR to craft training mechanisms, learning initiatives and meetings aimed at weaving a multicultural network based on common interests and inclinations. This network may be grounded at the intersection of local needs and the stimulating imperatives of the international context of the Alliance.

#### e) Partners' testimonials and involvement

Adopting a structure akin to sociological studies that brings out testimonial collection as one of the most effective tools for conducting a valuable, and useful, field investigation,<sup>7</sup> we proposed to the partners involved in the initiative to provide their feedback from a close perspective. A succinct questionnaire structure was presented to partners, allowing them to indicate and valorize,

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<sup>7</sup> See, Sebastião, Luís, Filipa Tirapicos, Rita Payan-Carreira, and Hugo Rebelo. Skill Profiles for Employability: (Mis)Understandings between Higher Education Institutions and Employers. *Education Sciences* 13.9 (2023): 905.





for the benefit of a meaningful investigation and further research studies, their experience. Particularly, the focus was oriented towards cooperative work and preparatory brainstorming for Soft Skills actions in the future. Here below some genuine contributions from EDUC people involved, from different perspectives and with different tasks, in the Soft Skills package.

## UPN

*Your feedback about the Online Training 2nd edition - EDUC managers  
(you can also add some comments referring to the 1st edition if you consider it valuable)*

The online trainings were successfully conducted by all EDUC partners. Communication with attendees was efficient, and we can confirm that no significant complications occurred throughout the entire process. The registration and evaluation system for the training, already tested, was user-friendly, and coordination among the different universities was excellent.

*Testimonials from your Soft Skills Trainer or the Administrative in charge  
+ possibly 1 or 2 trainees (attending your course)*

**Daniel Schug, Associate Professor of English at UPN:** *«I have taught English and French in the United States, Italy and France for over 10 years, working with students of various levels and in different contexts. In my courses, I focus on helping students and trainees become more autonomous learners all while gaining confidence as foreign language users. While preparing the Soft Skills course for the EDUC-SHARE initiative, my main objective was to equip participants with the tools necessary to advance their learning independently as they navigate working in a multilingual context.»*

*Your administrative process in relation to HR services*

Undoubtedly, there is room for improvement in the implementation of inter-service exchanges, cooperation, and joint activities, particularly in integrating research resources into the career development processes within a more equitable and open academic environment, and with the scope to put into action *intersectional* policy and HR management.

*Your feedback about the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris (EDUC participants)*



**Dr. Claudia Dell’Uomo d’Arme, EDUC manager:** *«After reflecting with Monica Heintz, Professor of Anthropology at LESC, UPN/CNRS, and Deputy Director of EDUC, we decided to organize a research meeting to emphasize the topic of Soft-Skills and explore further actions across the Alliance. This was approached through an interdisciplinary lens within university environments. The outcome was a highly productive exchange that brought attention to queering Soft-Skills perspectives within the Western academy and challenged prevailing Western dominant thought.»*

**Prof. Monica Heintz:** *«Based on my two years of experience working on identifying needs and facilitating the transmission and acquisition of Soft Skills within partner universities of the EDUC Alliance, my aim -jointly with Claudia Dell’Uomo d’Arme- was to bring together Soft Skills trainers, human resources managers, and researchers specializing in work and work environments (including ergonomists, sociologists, and historians). We intended to explore issues related to the transmission and valorization of Soft Skills within the academic environment. The primary objective of the event was to facilitate an exchange of best practices in Soft Skills training and discuss who should be involved in training, how it should be conducted, what topics should be covered, and when an employee’s career Soft Skills training should occur. The secondary aim of the colloquium was to develop a roadmap for Soft Skills training in academic environments for the future of the EDUC network. This roadmap would have been informed by research on 21st-century workforce needs and competencies, as well as several researches on academic environments. Contributions from researchers working on Soft Skills through human sciences disciplines would help evaluate the unique aspects of training in the academic milieu, which emphasizes lifelong learning but tends to focus more on 'hard' skills. Finally, the workshop would feature presentations from Soft Skills trainers involved previously in EDUC training as well as EDUC human resources managers engaged in the WP6 action from the beginning of the project.»*

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UP

*Your feedback about the Online Training 2nd edition - EDUC managers  
(you can also add some comments referring to the 1st edition if you consider it valuable)*

Thanks to the flexibility of EDUC-SHARE and the WP6-lead (UPN), the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Soft Skills training at UP could be transformed into an « Alliance building workshop » during a physical EDUC Steering Committee Meeting. Bringing together academic and administrative colleagues from across EDUC/EDUC-SHARE, this workshop helped colleagues from different areas such as project management, instructional design of eLearning instances, vice presidents, researchers and student representatives to discuss cultural differences in their institutions and ways to work and to develop concrete solutions by using the SWOT analysis method. The results of the workshop have been distributed among the participants and EDUC is currently establishing a working group « team building » to follow up on the to-dos.



*Testimonials from your Soft Skills Trainer or the Administrative in charge  
+ possibly 1 or 2 trainees (attending your course)*

**Dr. Gabi Kratochwil, Trainer for intercultural communication:** *«Many thanks to you and your great colleagues for this wonderful collaboration. It was - once again - a pleasure.»*

**Dr. Katja Jung, EDUC manager:** *«Working together in a European University alliance is a privilege and we are all enriched by the many professional and personal encounters we can have daily. Organizing the workshop for the EDUC/EDUC-SHARE colleagues was a long-timed wish from many partners. It allowed the colleagues to exchange beyond the daily aspects of work. It helped the participants to understand each other better and thus also to deepen alliance cooperation across institutions, cultures, languages and sections.»*

**Testimonial participant:** *«I found the workshop on 'Alliance Building' very helpful and inspiring. The workshop took place about half a year after I joined the EDUC Alliance, providing a great opportunity to get to know the alliance partners and colleagues at other universities better. It allowed me to understand common challenges and identify different approaches on both institutional and personal levels.»*

*Your administrative process in relation to HR services*

This was very low-key for the second edition regarding the physical workshop in Potsdam as the participants of the EDUC/EDUC-SHARE Steering Committee Meeting were at the same time the participants of the workshop. For the online training of the partners, the information on workshops offered and the registration tool was shared on the local EDUC/EDUC-SHARE website and distributed through the local staff mailing list. This process was taken over by the officer for continued education at the University of Potsdam. After the training, the participants were sent the evaluation form and the certificates if requested.

*Your feedback about the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris (EDUC participants)*



**Dr. Katja Jung, EDUC manager:** «Unfortunately, I could not participate to the 2-day conference workshop in Paris. This was due to both to clashes with other urgent tasks and meetings as well as due to a lack of proficiency in Soft Skills training or research on the topic. But I am sure that it was a well-planned and considered exchange on how to plan, implement and optimize staff trainings in the alliance context.»

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## UNICA

*Your feedback about the Online Training 2nd edition - EDUC managers  
(you can also add some comments referring to the 1st edition if you consider it valuable)*

It was a very positive and enriching experience. It allowed UNICA team to discuss and share training issues with the other EDUC-SHARE partners. With the Problem-Solving training, UniCa trained a total of 77 people (first and second edition), although we received 160 applications to enroll in the course. (between administrative staff, professors, and researchers) from all 6 partner universities.

*Testimonials from your Soft Skills Trainer or the Administrative in charge  
+ possibly 1 or 2 trainees (attending your course)*

**Trainers. Professors Mirian Agus and Cristina Cabras:** *«The training sessions were particularly interesting and suggested other aspects that could be covered in the future. Particularly appreciated:*

- *The suggestion about gender differences in identifying problems/challenges.*
- *The need expressed by scholars to create ad hoc modules for them to deal with issues such as motivation and group involvement and presence/distance modes, etc.»*

*Your administrative process in relation to HR services*

The training activity was carried out in close cooperation with colleagues from the UniCa training unit and Prof. Cabras and Prof. Agus. The administrative process consisted of several steps, including planning and identification of the objectives of the training offer, promotion, and joint management of all activities related to the session.



### *Your feedback about the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris (EDUC participants)*

**Trainers. Professors Mirian Agus and Cristina Cabras:** *«Participation in the group work at the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris from 18th to 20th September 2023 allowed us to get to know the characteristics of the whole project better, and to share with the partners the various activities carried out by the Alliance.*

*The heterogeneity of the contributions was stimulating, offering a view from different angles (psychological, anthropological, sociological, linguistic, IT). This provided food for thought, particularly regarding the difficulties shared by the partners in promoting and supporting the development of Soft Skills in the various people involved in academic life (students, professors, researchers, and administrative staff). The discussions that emerged highlighted the need to make everyone (both management and others involved in the academic context) aware of the importance of transversal and Soft Skills.*

*Key concepts were identified to work on and to promote a process of growth and promotion of the person within the organizational structure: aspects related to motivation, enrichment of one's skills, communication between different levels, and empowerment.*

*The need to identify the critical points that could constitute obstacles to the realization of the individual/organizational growth process were highlighted.»*

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## MUNI

*Your feedback about the Online Training 2nd edition - EDUC managers  
(you can also add some comments referring to the 1st edition if you consider it valuable)*

We greatly appreciate the educational activities within the project and the opportunity to offer a topic chosen by us. The offer of workshops at Masaryk University is very varied, however, we offer Soft Skills workshops only on a face-to-face basis. That's why we welcome the opportunity to offer employees online workshops as well. However, I must mention that not all Soft Skills workshops are suitable online. Therefore, I would recommend the other universities in the project to think more about this in the future.





*Testimonials from your Soft Skills Trainer or the Administrative in charge  
+ possibly 1 or 2 trainees (attending your course)*

**Trainer, Dr. Václav Strnadel:** *«Thank you very much for the invitation, the participants were a great audience.»*

**Admin in charge:** *«We had a positive experience with the Master Brain workshop already from the first round of workshops in the project. The topic is very attractive and interesting for the practice of academics and non-academics. The interest was again very great. A total of 36 participants took part in the workshop. Throughout the workshop, the lecturer actively engaged the participants and supported their interactivity. The audience was great and actively engaged. In conclusion, we can say that in terms of the objectives of the workshop, our expectations were fulfilled.»*

**Trainees:** *«Thanks for the really great course ! I would appreciate if you would do a second course called "Master Brain II" for us :) »; «Thank you very much for the organization!»; «I would like to repeat this type of training, e.g. on a similar topic with the given lecturer, sometime in the future.»*

*Your administrative process in relation to HR services*

The administrative process was slightly different from our standard practice. By default, employees log into our system through an action based on the website of our Competence Development Center (<https://cerpek.muni.cz/>). We have the administration set up automatically - the system sends them confirmation of participation, notifications, they have the option to log out. As part of the project, the login was done through UPN. This means a certain change for us, but not a complication. We actively promoted the events on our website and through the L&D coordinators of individual faculties and institutes, as we are used to. We think the process went well overall.

*Your feedback about the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop in Paris (EDUC participants)*



A personal meeting within the project is always very welcome and beneficial. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share good practice in employee development. We think that this was probably the most beneficial part of the conference, talking together about the state of development at individual universities. However, we must state that we would appreciate more the involvement of HR staff or L&D staff who are in charge of development. The participants were mainly academics, who may have a different perspective and focus only on the development of academics. Although the topics of the conference were interesting and the speakers were experts, we see a lot of spaces here for topics that are more usable in practice and based on the reality and practice of L&D and HR. We would be happy for another meeting in a similar spirit and possibly with topics that we will use for the further development of employees (academics and post-academics)

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## UNIVREN

*Your feedback about the Online Training 2nd edition - EDUC managers  
(you can also add some comments referring to the 1st edition if you consider it valuable)*

Two online training sessions entitled "Identify and Mobilize your Soft Skills" were organized by Prof. Lucy Arbuckle for the administrative staff, professors, and researchers of the University of Rennes. The training was successful and has been incorporated into the university's staff training program with the support of Cécile Lefaix from the Human Resources Department. The first training session took place on January 31, 2023, and had 11 participants. The second session took place on November 14, 2023, and had 10 participants. During the interval between the two training sessions, Prof. Lucy Arbuckle met with other trainers in person at the 2 Days Colloquium-Workshop at the University of Paris Nanterre to exchange feedback and good practices related to the organization of the first edition of the training. It is worth mentioning that both training sessions provided an opportunity to present the EDUC-SHARE project and to contextualize the training activity.



### 3. Main learnings and good practices identified

The good practices identified in the course of WP6 are the following:

- **Fostering cooperation** within the Alliance and between local inter-units;
- **Creating synergies** between project needs and researchers' engagement;
- **Creating a dialog** between the administrative staff and HR policy makers;
- Emphasizing the importance of **valuing partners' local needs** and research perspectives;
- **Encourage the development of interpersonal and transversal skills;**
- **Improve European working environments** with the aim of:
  - Sharing personal and professional experiences in cross-bordering areas
  - Acquire new and more flexible skills and knowledge
  - Improve working conditions through a sustainable living environment
  - Link one's own culture with other cultures by developing an international attitude at work.

### 4. Common and sharable perspectives for a Soft Skills EDUC Roadmap

#### a) What the Roadmap aims to achieve

On the basis of a **Field Research** methodology and drawing insights from perspectives and results in the Human Sciences, UPN created and developed a Roadmap in which the wide-ranging topic of Soft Skills is observed through an interdisciplinary approach. The main purposes of Roadmap 6.2 can be summarized as follows:

- Performing a *cooperative Soft Skills & New Digital Era Roadmap* in order to distinguish and assess in progress the evolution of the **EDUC Staff multiple needs and career progression** (T6.4);
- Ensuring continuity to the project's overarching aims by showcasing and exploiting EDUC key-research topics linked to urgent;
- **Evolving & co-building** a sustainable educational environment;
- Boosting for an **ethical research and innovation Action Plan**;
- Fostering an **inclusive and open community**.



The Roadmap's intentions have been drafted based on the results obtained from the pilot actions led throughout the progression of WP6. Their most brilliant issues emphasize the crucial standing-point picked around a cooperative Soft Skills & New Digital Era Roadmap. It will sustain EDUC community to assess the evolving needs of the Alliance staff as well as to ensure continuity of the project's overarching aims.

This involves showcasing and exploiting core research topics, evolving and co-building a sustainable educational environment, and promoting an ethical research and innovation action plan. Ideas and practices which foster an inclusive and open community need to overlap EDUC core objectives, with Soft Skills & International Skills recognized as important tools for improving HR policies across European Higher Education Institutions.

The following objectives will guide EDUC future interactions and co-joint research by implementing packages for innovation through various scopes and fields of EDUC digital universities. The Alliance teams could indeed sustain and improve action-plans which promote best-practices for:

- Assessing continuously the EDUC staff career evolution and needs (Evaluating in progress);
- Showcasing Core Research Topics, exploiting key research aspects linked to HR innovative process and management, such as Ethical Research, Inclusive and Open Community, Gender Equality Plan;
- Evolving and co-building a supportive educational setting for a *Sustainable Educational Environment*;
- Integrating Soft Skills Training at various stages of career development with the purpose to endorse a coherent strategy linked to Life-Long-Learning programmes.

#### b) Sharing and outlining a Roadmap: a Soft Skills overview for EDUC members

The success of these initiatives reinforces the value of integrating Soft Skills into professional spheres and diverse career stages, fostering cultural and knowledge environments that embrace diversity, multidisciplinary perspective, and international dialogue. Yet, what held in the past may not align with the ongoing landscape for Soft Skills development. Effectively, this requires a progressive update of educational and research institutes and concerns strictly the joint implementation of Soft Skills actions across EDUC academies. Here are two pivotal considerations.



Firstly, the dynamic nature of contemporary work outreaching « **more and more flexible structures** » **demands a permanent evolution in skill sets**. The rapid advancement of technology, changes in communication methods, and the globalization of markets have ushered in a new era, necessitating a reevaluation of the skills deemed essential for professional success.

Secondly, the growing recognition of the impact of Soft Skills on overall workplace effectiveness and employee well-being underscores the need for a paradigm shift. **Soft Skills**, encompassing interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and teamwork, are now acknowledged **as integral components for a whole individual and collective accomplishment**.

How can this be achieved? We can attribute the success of Soft Skills endeavours to key practices, such as the establishment of a shared theoretical vision, an operational approach similar to *Critical Thinking*, and the use of a *Participatory Co-Design synergy*. Indeed, numerous academics underscore the importance of synergizing Critical Thinking and Participatory Co-Design in the advancement of professionalism and career development. This combination is viewed as a crucial 21st-century skill that boosts graduates' as well as workers' profiles in today's evolving workplace.<sup>8</sup>

As was the case with the EDUC-SHARE experience, a true collaboration among partners can be reinforced by thorough discussions of objectives, efficient and clear communication, mutual monitoring and support. However, if the members of the EU projects carry out specific tasks conjointly, by using similar professional tools and communication within a common overview of actions they carry out day-by-day, one may feel distant from the audience with whom and for whom the people-project aims to develop initiatives. Chiefly when we handle a Soft Skills matter, there might be a sense of detachment from the audience one is striving to engage Soft Skills involvement. Similarly, the target audience may experience a sense of estrangement towards an action that entails a full involvement of one's identity, life history, and future expectations.

This is the reason why, as previously suggested, UPN intends to propose and undertake a collaborative long-term Soft Skills initiative, prompting research correspondences between

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<sup>8</sup> See. Rebelo, Hugo. University–Business Collaboration for the Design, Development, and Delivery of Critical Thinking Blended Apprenticeships Curricula: Lessons Learned from a Three-Year Project. *Education sciences* 13.10 (2023).



human sciences theories and genuine exchanges on progressive Soft Skills contents among academy staff, even by endorsing mobilities across EDUC different environments. While investigating on-site to identify staff's specific needs, it would be possible to observe strictly how Soft Skills impact partners' local research proceedings and HR structures. While spotting structural components inherent to each academic context, and rooted in peculiar cultural environments, we will contribute to a mapping investigation of EDUC diverse realities. Thus, a **Soft Skills field research, cartography-oriented**, would be executed by interviewing heterogeneous groups of faculty members. Placing their hands-on interaction feedback at the core of new projects and actions, the EDUC community would succeed in enhancing opportunities to potentially frame the practical and operational dimensions of Soft Skills in *EDUC academia*.

### c) The field research tool: what specifically for EDUC?

Field research corresponds to a qualitative method of data collection that « aims to observe, interact and understand people while they are in a natural environment ».

Field research includes several social research approaches, including direct observation, analysis of documents and archives, oriented interviews, and surveys. Field research can involve aspects of quantitative research and usually starts in a particular environment, intending to observe and examine the specific behaviour and attitudes of a subject, or a group, within that « natural setting » spotted by numerous variables. Data collection relies heavily on correlation between different elements rather than exclusively on cause and effect. It means that this study requires a work of interpretation and comparison which would be the proper tool for mapping the heterogenous mindset of EDUC Alliance.

Certainly, when employing a qualitative methodology to engage academic staff in the authentic Soft Skills Roadmap process, the use of semi-structured interviews emerges as a valuable tool. These interviews can be conducted individually with selected groups of university teachers, HR members, and administrative staff who contribute to the study. As suggested earlier, the interview instrument is widely utilized to collect and analyze data, allowing participants—whether interviewers or interviewees—to discuss their interpretations of the world and express their perspectives on various situations. Interviews hold a pivotal role in diverse research designs, and



the analyzed content may include transcripts of interviews conducted with different academic figures, encompassing university teachers from various research fields.

In addition, a less structured interview approach can be employed to fulfill the exploratory objectives of the study. This approach involves a set of predefined aspects and questions, that align with the study's objectives. However, due to its more fluid and flexible nature, it allows for the exploration of unforeseen aspects that may arise during the discourse, promoting a degree of improvisation. Given the rapidly evolving context, such as the rise of digital Soft Skills in the current era, various recording devices will be utilized. This approach enables the observation and management of the multimedia potential associated with the diverse languages used for contemporary self-expression.





*Which methodological instruments? Crossing transversal approaches*



*Direct Observation* endorses observing and collecting data within a natural environment, offering contextual information on people management, interactions and surroundings. This method is widely used in a public setting.

*Participant Observation* allows the researcher to be deeply involved in the analysis process, not just as an observer, but truly as a participant. Also conducted in a natural environment, this approach places the researcher actively within the discussions. In this method, the researcher interacts smoothly with the research target group and environment, opening up to in-depth discussions.

*Ethnography*, with its specific epistemology and practice, could serve as an extensive framework through which observations in Human Sciences research can be translated into objective data.

*Qualitative Interviews* involve posing direct questions to target subjects or groups. It can be deployed in various forms, including informal and conversational, semi-structured, standardized and open-ended, or a combination of these. This diverse approach yields a rich dataset that researchers can sift through, facilitating the collection of relational data. Employing this method in field research may include a blend of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and text analysis.



*Case Study* entails a comprehensive examination of an individual, scenario, or occurrence. Although it may seem complex to implement, it is among the clearest approaches to conducting research, involving a keen exploration and comprehension of data in which it draws useful inferences.

Given the inherent challenges in terms of timelines and costs associated with field research, its planning, implementation, and measurement can be particularly demanding. Key steps in managing field research include:

*Building the Right Team*, by clearly defining the roles of the primary researcher and auxiliary team members, along with setting specific milestones. It's also important to ensure that upper management is fully engaged in supporting the field research.

*Recruiting Participants*. The effectiveness of field research relies on the selection of suitable participants.

*Data Collection Methodology* employed by surveys, interviews, case studies, and observation. Planning and establishing milestones for each method, including pre-testing survey and interview designs, which are essential.

*Site Visit* involves venturing beyond conventional locations and immersing oneself in the actual natural environment of the respondents. Coordinating the site visit with the chosen data collection methods is crucial.

*Data Analysis* is instrumental in drawing meaningful conclusions from the gathered information and it is directly linked to *Communicating Results* which subsequently facilitate informed decision-making and action based on the insights gained from the field research.

### *Reasons-Advantages- Disadvantages*

Field research, a prevalent practice in 20th-century social sciences, is favoured by researchers despite being time-consuming, expensive, and sometimes invasive. Its popularity is attributed to



several key reasons such as *overcoming the lack of data and understanding truly the context of the study*. At the same time, field research increases the quality of gathering data by employing multiple tools for collection and analytic comparison. The advantages of field research include its conduction in real-world settings, data collection in an open environment, and the opportunity for researchers to gain a deep understanding of research subjects. However, challenges include the expensive and time-consuming nature of studies, potential researcher bias, difficulties in note-taking, subjectivity in interpretation, and limited control over external variables.

Nevertheless, thinking about the long-term agenda process of innovation, specifically linked to Soft Skills extension and development through multiple spaces of EDUC academy, the adverse factors could be easily overturned. Elements such as the need for time and resources can be easily transformed into strengths, or rather, essential requirements for the ongoing construction and potential in-depth transformation of the EDUC environment. This environment is dedicated to establishing a true research ecosystem that respects the timelines for a meaningful definition of its borders. It does so starting from various instances and visionary perspectives on its architecture, internal and external energies, technology and communication improvement.

Finally, as demonstrated earlier in the Graphics Analysis section, a field study on Soft Skills would meet the requirement of charting innovative paths to achieve the integration of Soft Skills across the research structures and Human Resources strategies within the multifaceted landscape of European academia.

Indeed, Field Research constitutes a methodology and a tool in its own right for assessing the needs of researchers and academy staff, as well as their professional environment and the challenges of the university ecosystem. Within the scope of EDUC, this observation tool could also actively involve HR (following a preliminary field research analysis of the EDUC Alliance framework) in the process of implementing cross-cutting training schemes, precisely for Soft Skills valuable acquisition and recognition.

#### d) Detailing the Roadmap for a Field Study on Soft Skills integration in European academies

##### 1. Needs Assessment

#### Interviews and Identify Soft Skill Gaps



- Conduct interviews, create and propose focus groups with heterogeneous background participation, among faculty, staff, and students to identify the most critical Soft Skill gaps.
- Analyze feedback from stakeholders, peer studies and performance reviews in the field of Soft Skills management.

## 2. Define Soft Skills Framework

### Identify Key Soft Skills and create a Framework

- Starting from previous EDUC experiences, but mostly based on future interview observations, define a set of Soft Skills relevant to the EDUC environment. Potentially, **international communication, digital teamwork, and sustainable leadership** can be the key skills required for the Alliance strengthening which would be developed in a framework outlining specific behaviours and competencies associated with Soft Skills empowerment issues.

## 3. Incorporate Soft Skills into Job Descriptions and Roles

### Update Job Descriptions

- Include Soft Skills requirements in job descriptions for academic and administrative positions, by incorporating perspectives such as gender and inclusion, foreignness, digital challenges, and sustainability. These aspects will enhance the overall effectiveness of Soft- Skills development in the EDUC environment.

More generally, while assessing inclusive needs within research and HR strategies, they should be considered as fundamental requirements across diverse groups, including gender, nationality, and cultural backgrounds. It may embrace a culturally sensitive professional framework and integrate a global perspective in Soft Skills training.

These practices have to enhance understanding and appreciation of different cultural norms within the Alliance multiplicity.

## 4. Language Support

### Language Inclusivity

- Provide language support for non-native speakers to ensure effective communication.



- Offer language proficiency courses and resources.

## **5. Digital Inclusion and Technology for Inclusive Learning**

### **Digital Literacy Programmes**

- Implement digital literacy programs to address the digital challenges faced by students and staff.
- Ensure accessibility of online Soft Skills training materials for all.

### **Accessible Learning Platforms**

- Select online learning platforms that are accessible to individuals with different abilities.

## **6. Virtual Collaboration Skills**

### **Digital Communication Training**

- Emphasize virtual collaboration and communication skills in response to the increased use of digital platforms to support global sustainability
- Guide and Inspire by innovation effective/research online meetings, teamwork, and networking and ensure compatibility with assistive technologies.

## **7. Gender-Inclusive Policies**

### **Gender-Neutral Language and vision**

- Review and update policies to use gender-neutral language.
- Ensure that examples and scenarios presented in training materials are inclusive.
- Promote research-oriented meetings through which a wide audience could gather more scientific insights concerning gender academic approaches.

## **8. Inclusive Mentorship Programmes**

### **Diverse Mentorship Initiatives**

- Promote diversity in mentorship programs, considering gender, nationality, physical and cultural diversity.
- Encourage mentorship relationships that foster inclusion and support.



## 9. Sustainability Focus

### Environmental Awareness

Developing the point on "Environmental Awareness" under the Sustainability Focus involves implementing various initiatives to endorse consciousness and understanding of environmental aspects within an academic setting. To promote contemporary sustainability at a micro-scale and engage society broadly, it is vital to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration on bottom-up joint projects, with a focus on targeting youth, students, and dedicated services.



## 5. A comprehensive reflection on Soft Skills topics based on a theoretical approach

The work carried out in WP6 was inspired by intensive academic work to understand soft skills and how they can generate innovation in practice within the Alliance environment. It was necessary to formulate theoretical solutions to experience future ways of implementing soft skills offerings and new applicable knowledge.

### a) A theoretical approach to Soft Skills

#### i. Mapping a landscape

Given that the Soft Skills initiatives for EDUC-SHARE raised within an exploratory dimension for pilot research, those operational perspectives (mentioned above) are required to be concretely outlined by making them transferable, and as methodological and theoretical objects for disseminating and sharing knowledge from research studies, it is necessary to restart from some formal studies that have been conducted in recent years on the subject. For this reason, it seems useful to go back to the 21st-century digital dawn and refer to and draw some keen standpoints from, some French and Anglophone scholarly works.

As was pointed out in the French essay *Le Réflexe Soft Skills* (published in 2014), at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Western society was in transition, straddling between the old world of work where the reference organisation was the hierarchical company based on a set of technical skills devices, and a new agile, responsible ecosystem ever-changing while facing the major changes of the virtual world.

Nowadays, we can affirm that workers take action within a performing flexibility which features the contemporary world of work. More specifically, a rift is emerging between workers who are already experiencing this social and professional transformation; and those who are remaining blind to this revolution. Because a new work environment is taking shape, two strong signals are



noticeable and profitable for the EDUC Soft Skills outlooks: first, the job market is undergoing a significant transformation; second, the criteria for recruitment are completely changing.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, by reflecting on the future of working conditions, we better understand how it will evolve in the coming years and mostly, how the future of skills needs to be analyzed and implemented as a bi-core requirement for employers and employees. On one hand, it has to offer the best chances of success in one's professional life; on the other hand, it compels leaders to facilitate their employees' access to different opportunities for personal and professional enhancement. Especially, if we consider the uncertainty surrounding the attainment of stable and guaranteed employment, mainly if we look at the academic spotting, our academies may deploy political policy which guarantees a smooth path for equitable, ethical and fair-minded career progression.

Indeed, embracing the future in collaborative exchange-driven environments, and new key skills training, the human resources management needs to re-think how this work transition could be achieved by fitting the employees' expectations and needs. On a fruitful and intellectual exchange with the « knowledge workers », that is the professional category and social class composed of engineers, doctors, lawyers, researchers and managers of culture and education, the university boarding would give the emerging *knowledge and multiple skills society* its character, its guiding line, its social profile. In other words, it is the duty of actual faculties framed upon a heterogenous system of different « bodies » and actors, to inspire and foster new methodologies for facing the current economic period as a transitional era.

In his best-seller *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (2006), the famous American author and political advisor Daniel Pink, describes our global society as an historical massive story-telling, shaped between the "age of information," which witnessed the valorization of analytical qualities attributed to the left brain, and a "more conceptual era" where those who can cultivate additional qualities and complementary skills, such as Soft Skills, will thrive. In some way, he subverts the more traditional vision of brain-mastering by giving a more efficient agency to the more intuitive part of the brain, the right brain, instead of conferring a determining role to the left part, the more analytical one. If technical skills would thus be primarily linked to the analytical, and supposed operational brain, in today's Western society the intuitive right brain

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<sup>9</sup> See, Mauléon, Fabrice, Julien Bouret, et Jérôme Hoarau. *Le Réflexe Soft Skills*. Dunod, 2014.





needs to increasingly perform tasks that are connected to Soft Skills execution and practical daily exercise.

## ii. Soft Skills: An interpretation

### How to define them?

Previously, in the overview of WP6's multiple experiences, we tried to interpret Soft Skills by relating these particular competencies to the EDUC-SHARE context. However, it is fair to approach the root meanings of this concept by returning to the semantic spectrum in which Soft Skills are encompassed.

Referring again to a vocabulary system, and according to the French dictionary Larousse, a skill is « a set of specific dispositions, capacities, and aptitudes allowing any subject speaking a language to master it, and that he/she implements during his/her effective speech acts in concrete situations (which constitutes performance). » Certainly, Soft Skills can allow the improvement of an individual's performance on different and varied tasks. Compared with technical skills, which are attached to specific tasks, the peculiar nature of Soft Skills is that they are also *human skills*, coming from the own *mind and body set*, rather than knowledge transmitted by others.

Moreover, Soft Skills seem to deeply concern creativity as well as the ability to make decisions while they aid the development of *individual boundaries and proficiency* through one's environment. The above definition aligns also with the Anglo-Saxon vision, which adds the dimension of *sustainable personal development*. Here is the definition of Soft Skills by the Oxford Dictionary: « Personal characteristics that enable each person to interact effectively and harmoniously with others ».

All these features seem to draft a quite complete vision of Soft Skills nature and their practical implementation enacted in the real world. Nevertheless, to exploit Soft Skills dynamics within the academic workplace, and let them be accessible and transferable, it would be eager to nourish our definition by adding a dimension of *cross-cutting and sustainable* personal development, related to actions which take into account the virtual realm and the multiplication of *nomadic* workers, companies and cultural institutes.



## b) The digital opening, a pivot for the future of the European University Alliances

Because the social and economic world is undergoing a revolutionary digital transformation, we need to evaluate the acquirement of technological skills through the risk of potential in-progress obsolescence. There is a widespread belief that the ongoing acceleration of technological advancement compels companies to actively pursue a more highly skilled workforce. This is aimed at ensuring that broad and adaptable skills and competencies are present throughout all levels of an organization. This advancement is not exclusively tied to automation capabilities but is notably associated with the rise of artificial intelligence and the growing complexity of organizational structures. For example, a website today is neither conceived nor designed as it might have been a few years ago. The same goes for many digital communication tools,<sup>10</sup> considering forcibly that the Fourth Industrial Revolution has been introducing unpredictable changes, and giving rise to new professions, which increased the demand for workers to acquire company-specific skills.

Then, focusing on the European academic universe, what does it mean to be a digital employee, worker, researcher as well as a digital *actor & subject* facing the digital revolution touchstones? Firstly, the cognitive bias primarily stems from the issue that such a question can arise at any stage, and in any circumstance of one's professional life. The accelerated emergence of new technologies is associated with the need to develop joint and correlated skills, which become key devices for properly completing, « offer » and performing professional duties. Despite a (quite) unanimous agreement on the necessity to cultivate versatile and dynamic *know-how* and competencies, there is a lack of consensus in defining the specific skills that should be prioritized and which kind of organizations bear the responsibility for capacity-building in this regard. From an EDUC perspective, this is the reason why academic structures need to embody pioneering and flexible frames through which Soft Skills systematic and operational reflection involve structural standpoints and research unfolding. Also, because the sustainability and effectiveness of companies hinge on a well-trained workforce,<sup>11</sup> the instrumental significance of this matter is evident in the studies conducted by international organizations, business associations, and their stakeholders over the past thirty years. These studies have involved inquiries directed at trainers

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<sup>10</sup> **Slack** is a very new platform, actually one of the most widely used tools to replace enterprise social networks. **Angular** also is a development platform that would be naive to ignore, surfed by several users' organizations from not long ago.

<sup>11</sup> See, Li, Ling, Reskilling and Upskilling the Future-ready Workforce for Industry 4.0 and Beyond. *Inf. Syst. Front.* 2022, 24, 1-16.



and, most importantly, employers, boarding, and research chairs seeking insights into the attitudes, abilities and competencies deemed indispensable for the labour.

Therefore, in the planetarium of optimal skills required in the digital era, and while questioning Academy people, a group of skills - bordering on the boundaries between hard and soft features - seem to be essential for the contemporary achievement of one's day-to-day missions, functions and assignments. In a digital setting, mostly within faculties where common and shared responsibilities pertain to growth benchmarks such as **innovation, research, knowledge dissemination, equality** and **inclusion** as well as **openness to wisdom**, members of faculty need to be *multilingual* executors, *multi-task* experts, finally open-mind and reactive individuals, mutually interconnected. If communication is the primary step for cooperating at the European level, the handling of foreign languages and the possibility of improving linguistically should be integral components of innovative policies and strategies put forth by the HR departments.

In conjunction, empowering skills across intersecting domains of daily tasks and behaviours should accompany all workers' profiles through a continuous training process, ensuring ongoing adjustment and refinement in their role within the organization. In the dynamic landscape of academia, the cultivation of Soft Skills, particularly open-mindedness, inclusion, and gender opportunities, stands as a pivotal commitment towards nurturing versatile and holistic *in-working subjects*.

Hence, *open-mindedness*, an essential Soft Skill for encouraging university staff to embrace multiple perspectives and ideas, can foster an environment where intellectual discourse thrives. Besides, the promotion of inclusion should be coupled with decision-making policies which ensure that academic spaces welcome individuals from varied backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. This commitment not only enriches the learning and training settings but also empowers us to invent and produce from the richness of diversity.

Furthermore, in addressing gender opportunities, academia plays a crucial role in dismantling barriers and providing equal platforms and opportunities for all. By actively fostering an *inclusive culture* that values and supports staff members regardless of gender, or other social position, academic institutions contribute to breaking down stereotypes while promoting equitable boundaries and spreading *intersectional thought* reflex. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal



growth, these Soft Skills form the cornerstone of a progressive academic framework. Re-starting from the educational training programmes tailored for students, the academy should stand as a sample for sustaining and shaping inclusive global citizens, at all stages of one's life and career growth.

Moreover, by crafting innovative HR policies, external stakeholders should co-operate across the academic community. This partnership networking could be established and practised by use of focus groups, regular feedback sessions, cultural actions and events that succeed in involving regular faculty, staff, and students in the policy-making process. By doing so, HR policies will reflect the evolving needs of the academic system and contribute to a sense of *collective ownership* and *commitment* within their work world while fostering and performing the European multiple culture of open research, inclusion and equality.

In summary, to meet the demands of digitally overseeing and controlling progressive skills, HR policies in academia should prioritize a strategic focus on endorsing open-mindedness, supporting multilingualism, embracing multiculturalism, and providing equal gender opportunities for learning and improvement. If these initiatives are imaginative and groundbreaking, they should interchange with academy members who will actively engage as inclusive contributors to European society. This way, everyone's unique background can be fostered, enriching the overall unity of the academic community.

### c) Experimenting visions and concepts for Soft Skills

« In the era of digital transformation in the professional world, hyperconnectivity, automation, and information overload, we must learn to navigate an unprecedented wave marked by complexity, uncertainty, and high demands. To do this, we have at our disposal Soft Skills: transversal, behavioral, and deeply human competencies (such as emotional management, self-confidence, the ability to create connections, and problem-solving skills). »<sup>12</sup>

As indicated at the beginning of the text, the subject of Soft Skills and the various fields in which these competencies are applied and discussed are evolutionary in nature for several reasons. On

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<sup>12</sup> See, the Soft Skills' author and expert Julien Bouret job profile. [https://www.linkedin.com/in/julien-bouret-25029029/?original\\_referer=https://www.google.com/&originalSubdomain=fr](https://www.linkedin.com/in/julien-bouret-25029029/?original_referer=https://www.google.com/&originalSubdomain=fr)



one hand, Soft Skills are directly linked to the socio-economic context in which they evolve, constantly adapting to meet the demands imposed by the professional world. On the other hand, they parallel the personal and cultural trajectories of individuals acting in the new digital environment, in relational and linguistic, productive and creative terms.

Therefore, it seemed useful to propose a theoretical framework, articulated in two modules, within which the metamorphic nature of Soft Skills in contemporary times can be understood through a comparative perspective. This perspective places these competencies in dialogue with the historicity of the digital age while tracing new figures, visions, and metaphors to approach their rooting in the structure of men and women subjectivity.

By revisiting the analyses of several experts in coach-management and keynote speakers for sustainable team-working and educational organization (see note 13), we found it useful to propose an analytical model (the VUCA model) which highlights today's world driven by the accelerated issues of globalization and digitalization.

Since this makes planning and analysis more challenging for leaders, this model could assist higher educational leaders in responding agilely to professional demands by embracing innovative working methods to endorse improvement and innovative practices for HR structures and practices.

At the same time, and benefiting from these insights, we have attempted to produce a metaphorical and conceptual processing-frame through which a dynamic visual structure has been experimented. This framework allows us to identify the interconnected and evolutionary process that embody and perform the contemporary subjects, confronting the acquisition, implementation, and evolution of their competencies and persona in all fields of human life. This occurs at the intersection of personal and professional experiences, fostering a proactive awareness with which it will be possible and fruitful to act creatively, constructively, and cooperatively in several daily landscapes.



i. VUCA model

**How to trace the practical boundaries of 21st Century Soft Skills? How to put them into action?**

During the last few years, and given the Coronavirus repercussions, we are entering a new period of huge changes that necessitates the evolution of some characteristics of Soft Skills as they were initially considered and described. We live and act in an accelerated era and it is needed to be aware of the competences obsolescence, as the restrictive character of 21st-century Soft Skills acquirement, combined with the useful relationship that humans maintain with their environment. It is enough to look at all the professional themes revolving around this naturally evolving notion: career development, training needs, working conditions, annual performance reviews, mobility, etc. Companies, like employees, are taking more time to queer the role of employees in the enterprise and the evolution, of their careers. Increasingly, they seek a formula that turns skills assessment into a continuous and evolving, rather than a unique and annual, moment.

Hence, the very concept of competence has become inseparable from the interrogation concerning its obsolescence. Also, it is crucial to think over global and digital transitions to transform this social and historical constraint into an opportunity for *knowledge employees* to expand their professional and personal horizons. According to this perspective, it is necessary to constantly update Soft Skills and, specularly, to write up and open up Soft Skills training promotion across several professional contexts. With this aim, and by making allowance for spreading a *Soft Skills reflex* (as we intended above), researchers, Human Resources (HR) and trainers should compass new forms of knowledge transfer by adapting their coaching, exercises and guidance to the « VUCA » world principles, opportunities and connections.

The acronym « VUCA » (issued from a military approach, but quickly adopted by the business world) summarizes 4 aspects attempting to characterize the transformation which currently occurs across all kinds of companies. VUCA constantly implicates challenges for employers and employees because is *Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous*. We notice that the semantics expressed by VUCA inform, and remind us, how the work conditions are more and more precarious. This is why it is needed to overturn this perspective and take advantage of it by fitting Western Soft Skills training models and trajectories to the VUCA compels. Here below is a short



scheme on the VUCA MODEL proposed by three French entrepreneurial experts, Julien Bouret, Jérôme Hoarau and Fabrice Mauléon, in their work on social management and innovation, titled *Soft Skills. Développez vos compétences comportementales, un enjeu pour votre carrière*.<sup>13</sup>

VUCA MODEL	Understanding	Posture
Volatile	Attention to numerous changes	Draft your vision exploring the environment
Uncertain	Lack of perspective on the present	Be attentive
Complex	Decisions are made based on multiple factors	Be creative
Ambiguous	Lack of clarity on numerous facts	Be clear

If we learn from the uncertainty and the complexity of the VUCA, its contradictory features could be transformed into departure points to evolve and boost the company staff's proficiency. This is why, the image of a VUCA professional system, seems to keenly question the work reality as we know it today, by announcing different answers for tomorrow. For example, within the VUCA, French contracts and professional certainties, which correspond to items very difficult to sustain in the new corporates, should be used to draft more flexible and more collaborative strategies, at the company, or organization, full-scale. Meanwhile, it would be successful to rethink HR timing and philosophy on the frame of new methodologies like *design thinking* or *lean startup*, which have been used to evolve services both in educational and business structures. These guiding principles of innovation for renewing HR policies emphasize rapid prototyping, testing and learning, as well as continuous iteration.

<sup>13</sup> See, Bouret, Julien, Jérôme Hoarau, et Fabrice Mauléon. *Soft Skills. Développez vos compétences comportementales, un enjeu pour votre carrière*. Dunod, 2018.



If in all sectors, professional bodies face increasingly unstable settings and ambiences, the VUCA option/mindset provides a critical framework suitable for boarding and managers who want to handle uncertainty. Similarly, this approach requires rethinking skills inherently with the actual environment changing. Since the world has become more and more volatile, virtual and fluid, employers need to:

- Promote UNITY and SUPPORT nourishment within the *teams*, by building a *common vision* and an *interactive social stance*.
- Foster RELATIONSHIPS with OTHERS through different cooperative contexts, and consider the importance of international exchanges (while it is possible to do it in action).
- Prioritize LISTENING and EXCHANGE among the different services and through a *horizontal dynamic* of exercising power to enable people to make decisions within the organization.
- Place CREATIVITY at the core of daily tasks, endowing it with the function of acquiring new and unexpected knowledge. Creativity could be a very worthwhile, functional and cognitive tool; it will help to reclaim one's professional identity as an *active subject* expressing his/her work skills with critical awareness towards today's society challenges and life-sustainability.
- Guarantee gender and social parity and inclusion as a milestone within the construction of a contemporary professional environment, suitable for all background postures and by enhancing *intersectional networking*.

We conclude this paragraph by quoting Philippe Vallat, a Collective Intelligence Consultant who participated in a sociological interview project: « *We are shaped by Descartes' rational thought and the mechanistic representation of the industrial world. In mass production, I press a button and know what will happen. Our worldview is calculated. It is based on the idea that I must know, and understand to act. We have, in a way, lost the value of experimentation, which is the appropriate posture for learning and adapting* ».<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.





### iii. Rhombus Model

Starting from this experience, the following journey of the University of Paris Nanterre (UPN) through the Soft Skills valorization process set the groundwork for a pertinent query. During the management of the second phase of WP6 Soft Skills actions, and re-thinking the construction of the second online training programme, the UPN team outlined a methodological context and shared it with partners, intending to follow a heuristic approach. Heuristic pursuing proves to be an advantageous strategy for unfolding cooperation and co-thinking among partners upon the academic research *modus operandi*. **Thus, the heuristic perspective has the potential to enhance Soft Skills because it encompasses epistemology and the scientific method, through facilitating access to fresh and in-progress theoretical advancements and empirical revelations.**

In essence, **a heuristic process is characterized as an approach to problem-solving** that diverges from a predetermined path, instead relying on intuition and the *transient state of circumstances to generate innovation and unexplored knowledge*. More specifically, the heuristics associated with process-building, and joined in specific fields of study, also by transversal proceedings - from humanities to scientific disciplines - ought **to illuminate potential avenues for deeper explorations of Soft Skills horizons.**

This is undertaken in **an endeavour to render a theory progressive, ensuring empirical development capable of predicting new phenomena** that were previously unknown. Historically, heuristics has been intertwined for numerous centuries with the validation of empirical discoveries. In connection with the Soft Skills question, the heuristic approach would more easily enrich the multiple European Soft Skills inquiries. This lies in their ability to navigate

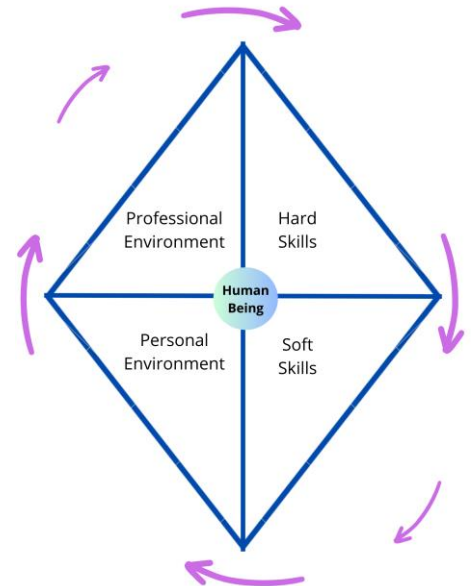


problem-solving without a predetermined path, relying on intuition and adaptable situations, thereby fostering a dynamic and progressive approach to skills development.

Consequently, **if we would trace a metaphorical image to designate the encounter between Soft Skills and heuristic insight, we would signify the geometric shape of a rhombus.**

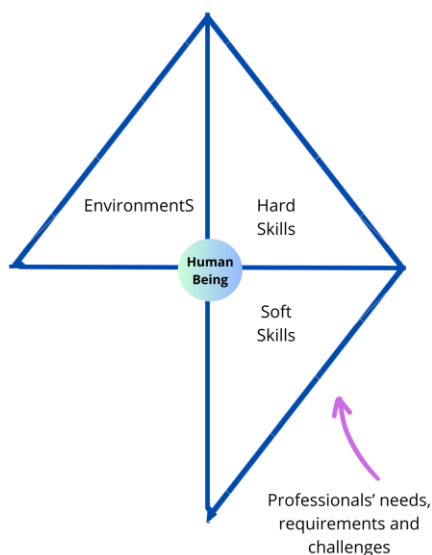
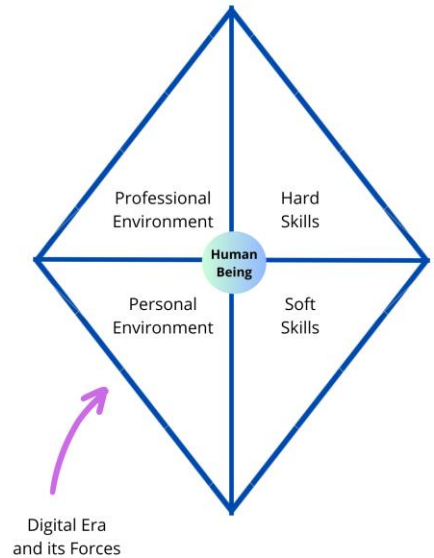
Heuristics could be a strong analytical method for observing the evolution of Soft Skills at the frontier of changeable, disseminated and virtual dynamics, issued from the digital society. By exploring the properties of a rhombus, and drawing analogies with soft-skills settings in the digital era, we notice that:

- A rhombus has all four sides of equal length and opposite angles equal. **This symmetry suggests uniformity and equivalence which, in the context of Soft Skills, can be compared to the need for a balance of various Soft Skills.** In the digital era, professionals often require a combination of Hard skills and Soft Skills which often overlap. **If communication, collaboration, adaptability, and creativity correspond to skills that usually, and mostly, we expand within a personal environment, actually they are transforming into hard competencies allowing all sorts of work figures to navigate diverse and dynamic virtual environments.**



- The diagonals of a rhombus bisect each other at the right section. This characteristic introduces a sense of order and similarly, **in the digital landscape, the ability to intersect and integrate different Skills at the right section could signify the need for a structured approach.** For example, combining *effective communication* with *problem-solving skills* might lead to innovative solutions in the working set-up.

- The symmetrical nature of a rhombus suggests stability. In Soft Skills development, professionals need a **stable foundation of skills but it must also be adaptable. The digital habitat demands continuous learning and adjustment to new technologies and ways of working.** The rhombus, with its

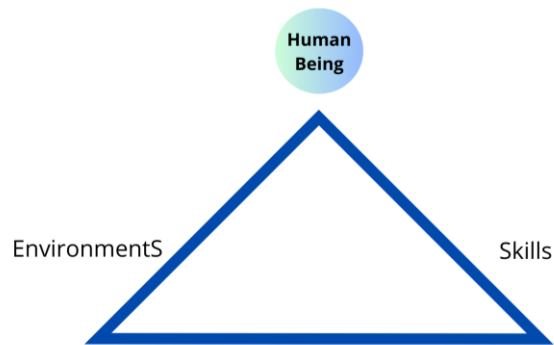


stable structure and adaptable nature, mirrors the necessity for a proportion between stability and flexibility in Soft Skills implementation. The professional side, akin to one triangle, embodies the skills demanded in the digital workplace, encompassing adaptability, technical proficiency, and collaborative prowess. Concurrently, the personal side, mirrored in the second triangle, encapsulates the softer aspects of interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence, and creative thinking.

- The rhombus, when divided into its constituent triangles, **reflects the intricate interplay between professional and personal dimensions.** In the context of the digital era and the evolving landscape of Soft Skills, **each side of the rhombus corresponds to essential facets of an individual's skill set. The intersection point at the midpoint of the diagonals symbolizes a crucial juncture where Human Beings's evolution and their need for a well-state at work, could be achieved by converging and overlapping professional and personal dimensions.**



This congruence resumed in **an *only-multiple figure*** as the harmonious and stable result



**issued from the progressive combining of 21st-century skills (and geometrically, from the translation of the rhombus sections), aligns with the contemporary demands of the digital landscape as well as actual professionals' requirements and expectations.** In the digital chameleon space, individuals are expected to navigate complex professional challenges while fostering meaningful connections and adapting to the fluidity of the digital environment.

**Settling on the rhombus as a visual representation of the Soft Skills universe, we can deduce that the changing facets/sections can symbolize the progress of skills over time.** Because Soft Skills in the digital era are not static, evolving step-by-step with technology and work environments' sudden changes, **the metamorphic figure of the rhombus spins off the dynamic cultivation of collective interrelated synergies.** Finally, **the rhombus, with its multifold properties, serves as a metaphor for expanding and transforming Soft Skills demands while the academy investigates the ever-evolving digital landscape and draws from it a new way to interact with actual society.**

Our considerations can be particularly significant given the historical oversight of Soft Skills within the French academic environment in which UPN certainly represents one of the universities more avant-garde. In terms of research trajectories, collective organization of culture, and political stances, it is notable that the UPN origin and foundation occurred in tandem with the societal and cultural transformations of the 1960s. Hence, Soft Skills, which were once predominantly associated with Anglo-Saxon contexts, have progressively gained recognition in the French management sphere. Several aspects of this paradigm shift have been elucidated in the pursuit of individual and collective success within a European research community.



The consequent query, linked to the valorization of EDUC-SHARE actions within UPN structural projects, revolved around the prioritization of adaptable, contemporary skills, essential for fostering a sustainable and enduring evolution in employees' capabilities.

From a more strategic and structural standpoint, and emphasizing the need to weave a comprehensive vision capable of promoting best practices in research and innovation, the objective of incorporating Soft Skills training into the organizational framework of European campuses would make it possible to form new consortia among disciplines and both local and international partners. This influence approached with openness, could positively impact socio-political lines to increasingly engage with society, opening science and research to a broad audience. This, in turn, could make the development and evolution of culture (and the opportunities associated with it) the most effective means to question and attempt to resolve conflicts within our society.



## Smart conclusions: impact and continuity

Evaluating Soft Skills as fundamental tools for improving HR policies and practices across European Higher Education Institutions is crucial. UPN proposes to move forward by incorporating Soft Skills at different stages of the career development of EDUC staff and by supporting a long-term strategy linked to the career development and training of EDUC staff. The dedicated tasks and deliverables for on-going EDUC projects include:

- EDUC Staff Development Policy and Trainings: Creating an interdisciplinary and networking EDUC research ecosystem (5.1)
- EDUC-WIDE Career Diversity Expert Group: Focusing on gender and equality plans and research.

Thus, we can state that UPN's initiatives have highlighted the critical role of Soft Skills in enhancing individual and organizational development within the EDUC Alliance. By integrating Soft Skills training into various stages of staff career development and fostering a culture of holistic skill development, innovation, and advancement, UPN aims to create a sustainable and impactful educational ecosystem that benefits researchers, administrative staff, and HR services alike. This comprehensive approach ensures that the development of Soft Skills is not only a tool for personal and professional growth but also a strategic asset for the long-term success of the EDUC Alliance.

The realization that these skills contribute significantly to enhanced collaboration, innovation, and employees' satisfaction prompts a rethinking of their significance in the context of professional development. In essence, the evolving demands of the modern digital workplace and the enhanced understanding of the role Soft Skills play in fostering a positive and productive work environment constitute the primary drivers behind the imperative to reassess and update the approach to Soft Skills within the European academies. This strategic adaptation ensures that individuals are equipped with the aptitudes necessary to navigate the complexities of the contemporary professional landscape successfully.

Indeed, the decision to foreground Soft Skills development within the EDUC consortium, as outlined and pursued in the Erasmus + EDUC Deliverable 5.1.1 (already validated by the members of the Alliance), reflects a proactive approach towards fostering equal, research-oriented, and digitally enhanced cooperation among partners. By proposing a comprehensive "Career Development Policy Plan", EDUC Alliance aims to offer training opportunities and HR tools geared



towards implementing career advancements and diversification. All these EDUC initiatives not only address the contemporary importance of Soft Skills acquisition but also underscores the collaborative efforts and achievements of EDUC-SHARE cooperation.

However, despite this awareness, there remains a challenge in ensuring that initiatives focused on Soft Skills increase and expansion effectively engage the intended audience. While shared professional tools and communication strategies within EU projects may offer benefits, there is a risk of disconnect between project members and their audience. This detachment can hinder meaningful engagement and limit the impact of Soft Skills initiatives.

To address this challenge and capitalize on the awareness of the benefits of Soft Skills development, UPN proposes to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application by promoting genuine exchanges and research correspondences among academy staff. By leveraging the insights gained from EDUC-SHARE's understandings, UPN proposes to endorse mobilities across different EDUC environments and conduct on-site investigations to identify specific staff needs. Through field research that prioritizes hands-on interaction and qualitative data collection methods, UPN plans to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately enriching both research proceedings and HR structures within the consortium.

By integrating Soft Skills development initiatives into the fabric of EDUC's research and HR structures, the consortium can effectively enrich both academic proceedings and professional growth opportunities for its members.

In summary, the dedication to Soft Skills, as demonstrated by the EDUC-SHARE project and UPN's leadership in this endeavour, not only addresses current professional needs but also lays the groundwork for future human and professional spaces. The recognition of the richness inherent in multifaceted characteristics, multidisciplinary skills, and transversal attitudes reinforces the notion that Soft Skills are not only relevant but essential for navigating the complexities of contemporary academic and professional life.

To conclude, the achievement of this cooperative Soft Skills venture in EDUC was attributed to the heterogenous partners' engagement and the set-up of effective communication channels, transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, and a shared commitment to common goals. The ongoing exchange and collaboration became the catalyst for innovative solutions, driving the EDUC-SHARE project toward its intended outcomes.



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# ***Annexes***

# ***TRAINING SESSION UPN \****

***\* Staying motivated  
in another language***

**- Presentation and Screenshots -**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101017526



# Staying Motivated in Another Language

(EDUC Online Staff Training)

Daniel Schug  
[dschug@parisnanterre.fr](mailto:dschug@parisnanterre.fr)  
21/11/2023



European  
Digital  
UniverCity

EDUC-SHARE  
EDUC-SHARE

# First...Who am I?

---

Daniel Schug

Associate Professor of English language at Université Paris Nanterre

Polyglot with a passion for language learning & studying motivation

# Second...

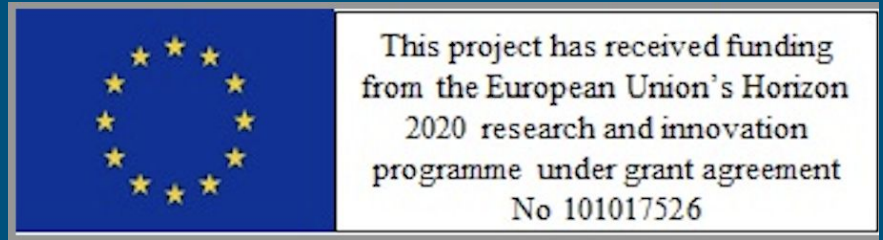
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What do you hope to get out of this session? What do you expect to learn?

Please go to the website [pollEV.com/danielschug601](https://pollEV.com/danielschug601)

# Session Objectives

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By the end of this session, participants will have...

- 1) Developed a deeper understanding about different types of motivation & identify their own
- 2) Set goals & objectives to overcome periods of low motivation
- 3) Practiced using tools for developing language skills & reflecting on their own learning

\*Several activities based on those provided by Hadfield & Dörnyei (2014) - *Motivating Learning*

# PART 1: What is motivation?

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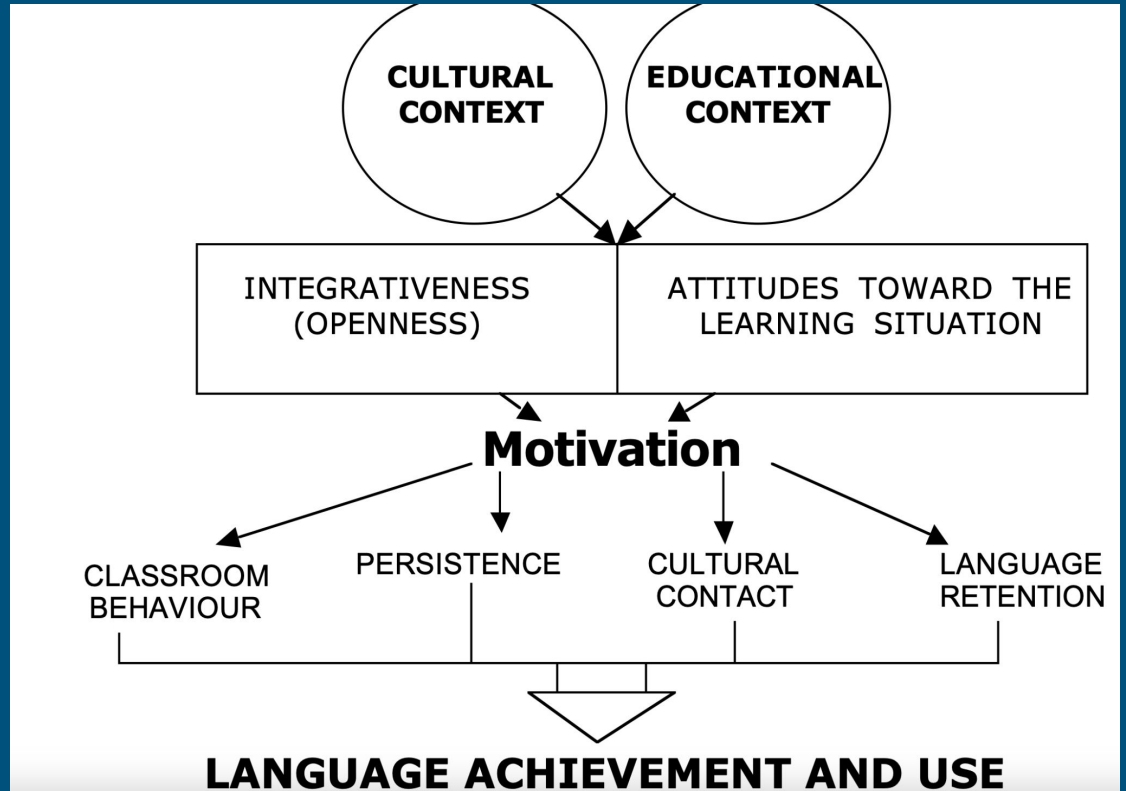


# What is motivation? –Continued

Generally speaking, it is measured in behaviors + effort + attitudes/beliefs <sup>1</sup>

Simply: If I want to do something & try to do it, I'm motivated.

But...it's more complicated than that <sup>4</sup>.



# Factors impacting motivation - Age

## Learning as an adult<sup>2</sup>

- For early stages of learning, adults learn faster than children <sup>5</sup>
- Adults tend to learn for professional reasons & have higher expectations for learning/teaching<sup>2,6</sup>
- Adults rarely cite general proficiency as a goal<sup>7</sup>
- Pragmatic use is important <sup>8</sup>
- More success with autonomous learning & tendency to use inner-speech <sup>9,10</sup>
- Adults know themselves, their needs, their learning styles – their motivation is therefore much more complex & resistant to change <sup>11</sup>



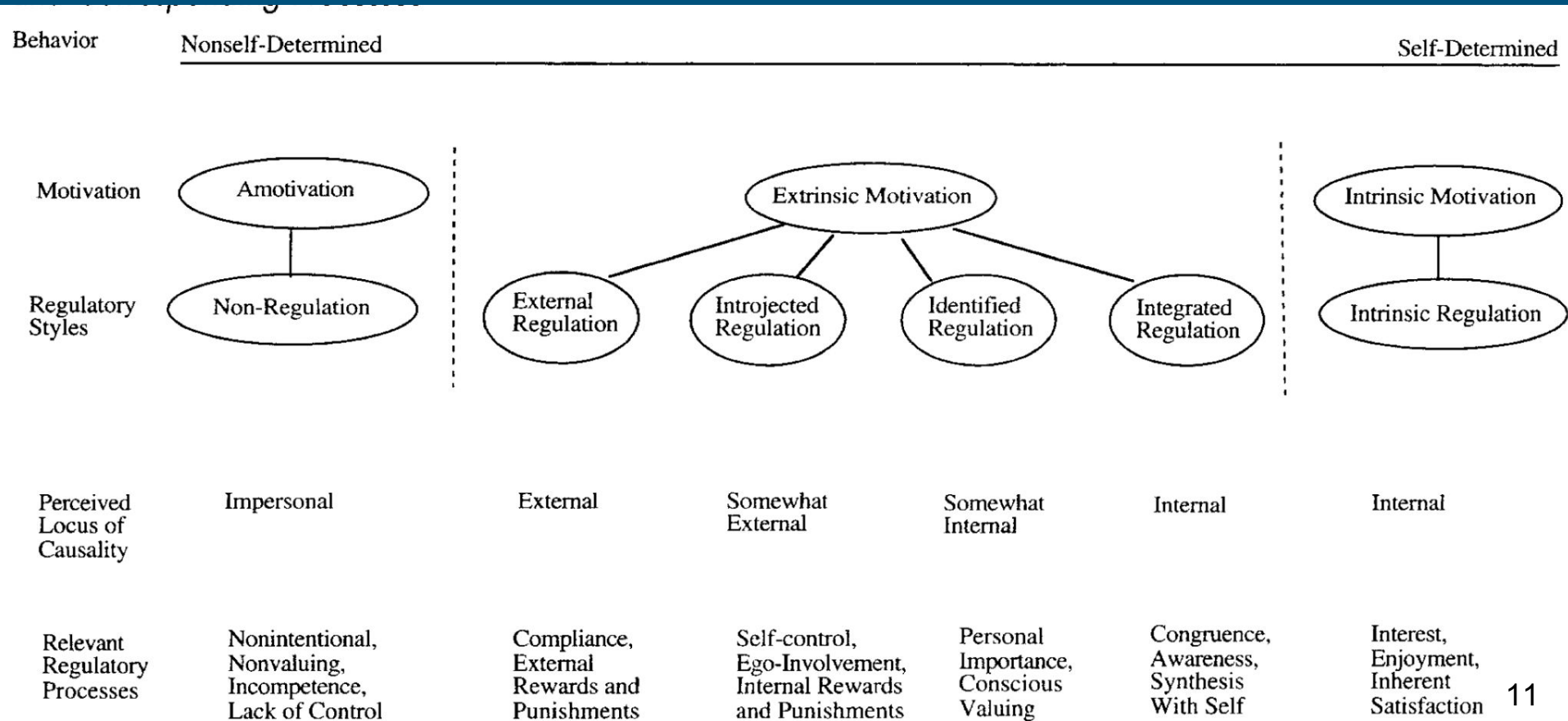
# Factors impacting motivation - Autonomy

## Autonomous Learning

- Knowing how to be autonomous is hugely important to maintaining motivation <sup>13,14</sup>
- It requires careful guidance, some collaboration, and interaction <sup>15</sup>
- It is different from independent learning <sup>16</sup>
- Crucial for meeting adult learners' very specific needs <sup>17</sup>
- Difficulties include ignorance about how to be autonomous & what do when there are problems <sup>18</sup>



# Self-Determination Theory - a continuum <sup>3</sup>



# Self-Determination Theory - examples

<b>Amotivation</b>	I don't want to learn and I have no reason to learn, so I won't learn.
<b>External Regulation</b>	I need to attend a conference in English and report back to my boss. If I can't, I will be in trouble
<b>Introjected Regulation</b>	I will be so embarrassed if I can't speak well in front of my colleagues, so I better practice my English.
<b>Identified Regulation</b>	This information is useful, but it's only in English, so I better practice
<b>Integrated Regulation</b>	I want to be promoted at work, but learning English is necessary. So, I better improve.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>	I really want to be someone who speaks English well. Learning the language makes me happy, so I'll keep doing it.

# Part 1 group discussion

Understanding what type of motivation you have is crucial for progressing.

With your group, take 5-10 minutes and discuss the following questions:

- 1) Look at the Self-Determination Theory continuum. At what point on the continuum are you?
- 2) Do you take any steps to develop your language skills autonomously (films, reading, conversation practice, tutors, e-tandems...)?
- 3) Do you have any specific language skills that you would like to develop?
- 4) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current motivation to develop your language skills?

# Part 1 - Pause

---

Take 10 minutes away from your computer :-)

# Part 2: Setting Goals & Objectives

Motivation is difficult to maintain, particularly for adults:—

- 1) Language anxiety
- 2) boredom
- 3) Lack of familiarity with learning habits

Goals & objectives are necessary for determining behavior<sup>19</sup>. These goals must be<sup>20,21</sup>:

- 1) In line with how we imagine ourselves in the future
- 2) Self-Defined
- 3) Plausible
- 4) Vivid & detailed
- 5) Behavior-pushing
- 6) Adaptable into a plan of action

## Exercise

*Look at the following list of possible goals. Based on the criteria in the other column, are these goals effective?*

- 1) I want to be able to understand a conference presentation in English
- 2) I want to be able to speak English without making any grammar mistakes
- 3) When a foreign student speaks to me in English, I want to be able to respond to his/her question effectively
- 4) I want to speak the foreign language with a native-like accent
- 5) I want to have a good level of English



# Defining goals - Group Exercise

With your group, you will read one learner's description of his/her goals for language learning. Afterwards, your group will respond to some questions about the description.

**Identifying motives.** Scan the QR code that corresponds to your group & read the text. After you finish reading, complete the activities with your group.



Group 1



Group 2



Group 3



Group 4

# Goal setting - practice exercise

*Go to the following link & prepare a brief, personal profile that describes what your goals are for language learning (English or another language) & how the language will be useful in your present and future.*

*<https://forms.gle/qjAg83zu4h9APwxs9>*

Remember to be specific.

The responses are anonymous.



# Action Plans

As stated, goals must be accompanied by action plans to be effective. Again, these action plans must be relevant, specific, and most importantly– plausible. You need to know how you learn best.

Look at the following questions & discuss them with your group:



# Action plans - continued

---

Once you have an idea of what your goals are and how you like to learn, you can make a clear action plan, with concrete steps. Examples:

- 1) Reading skills: I will identify & read one article relating to my field, 5 times per week. I can do this while waiting for my train every morning.
- 2) Listening skills: I will download a podcast relating to my interests each week. I will listen and re-listen until I understand the general idea. I can do this in my car while driving.
- 3) Speaking skills: Every 3 weeks, I will participate in an event geared towards international students/researchers at my university. I will talk to one person in my target language.

# Action Plans - continued

---

Think of 1 strategy you can employ to improve your skills.

Go to [pollEV.com/danielschug601](https://pollEV.com/danielschug601) to submit your strategy.

It will be anonymous.

# Part 2 - Pause

---

Take 10 minutes away from your computer

# Part 3 - Tools for Independent Practice

---

# AI Tools for Independent Practice - Twee

---

Skills that you can practice with Twee:

- 1) Target vocabulary development
- 2) Listening comprehension
- 3) Reading comprehension



# ChatBots for Independent Practice

Two common chatbots:

ChatGPT: [chat.openai.com](https://chat.openai.com)

TalkAI: <https://talkai.info/chat/> – many people prefer this, because you don't need to create an account

Skills you can practice with AI ChatBots:

- 1) Conversation about many different topics, at different levels
- 2) Proofreading
- 3) Grammar exercises
- 4) Recommendations for external resources
- 5) Learning tips

# AI tools for Pronunciation

---

Accent & pronunciation are major sources of stress for many people. The tool **Pronounce** works very well for giving feedback on your pronunciation, word stress, and articulation. There are free & paid versions of the tool: <https://app.getpronounce.com/>

Other languages: TalkPal AI

# Online forums for special interests

Reddit - Higher Education <https://www.reddit.com/r/highereducation/>

Reddit - Language Learning <https://www.reddit.com/r/languagelearning/>

Reddit - special interests (psychology, finance, business, international relations, local cities, countries, music...)

Skills practiced:

- 1) Interaction + Exchanging ideas with other specialists from your field
- 2) Written expression
- 3) Reading comprehension
- 4) Vocabulary development
- 5) Cultural knowledge

# Meetups + University events

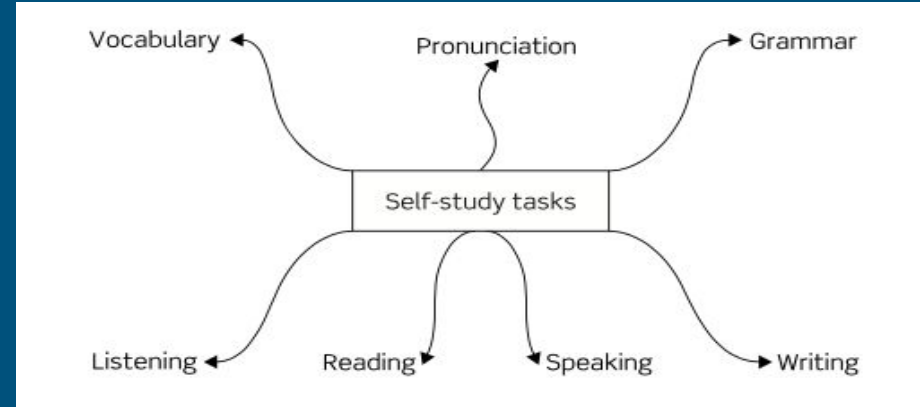
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- 1) Meetup: <https://www.meetup.com/>
- 2) Conferences, Erasmus student events, study days, visiting professors, EDUC exchanges

# A Self-Study Guide

In your groups, think about how you can use some of these tools in your own language development.

Use this mind map as a basis to think about specific strategies you can implement to develop your skills.



Take 5-10 minutes to discuss this with your group.

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Meet - snv-pcfe-rke

Daniel Schug (Présentation)

docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqn\_BJGtyNMtnBOD/pf0DcHTUrCaKMzJZ3qJQc/edit?pli=1#slide=id.p

Anglais B1 (PHILLI... SPSS and Statist... inscription gratuit...

EDUC Training - 21 Nov 2023

Fichier Édition Affichage Insertion Format Diapositive Réorganiser Outils Extensions Aide

Diaporama Partager

Ajuster

Arrière-plan Mise en page Thème Transition

1 2 3 4 5

1 This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101017526

2 Staying Motivated in Another Language (EDUC Online Staff Training)

3

4 Daniel Schug dschug@parisnanterre.fr 21/11/2023

5 European Digital UniverCity EDUC-SHARE

approximate timing:

Désactiver la caméra (%+e)

14:08 | snv-pcfe-rke

Daniel Schug

Clara

Dagmar Navratilova

LAURA LEVREL

Bianka Gazdig

Marina Sim

Francesca Stara

8 autres personnes

Claudia Dell'uomo

17



Daniel Schug (Présentation)

Meet - snv-pcfe-rke x EDUC Training - 21 Nov 2023 - x \*Staying Motivated in Another... x +

polleverywhere.com/free\_text\_polls/Cs2F3mfo3wFrA19JwgtqD

Anglais B1 (PHILLI... SPS and Statist... inscription gratul...

Activities Share Visual settings Deactivate Present

Join by Web PollEv.com /danielschug601 Join by Text Send danielschug601 and your message to +33 6 44 60 09 54

"Staying Motivated in Another Language" -- What do I hope to learn in this session?

using English (and other foreign languages) outside the class.

I am hoping to learn ways I can get out of a slump when it comes to learning a new language and feel stuck.

1. Configure 2. Test 3. Send

- > How people can respond
- > Audience restriction & identity
- > Response settings
- > Moderation
- > Timer

Review runs and export screenshots and other data on your new response history page. Got it

Edit Response history Delete

4/5 Instructions Responses Clear responses



B L

15 autres personnes



snv-pcfe-rke



EDUC Training - 21 Nov 2023

### Self-Determination Theory - a continuum<sup>3</sup>

Behavior	Nonself-Determined	Extrinsic Motivation				Self-Determined
Motivation	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Regulatory Styles	Non-Regulation	External Regulation	Introjected Regulation	Identified Regulation	Integrated Regulation	Intrinsic Regulation
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal
Relevant Regulatory Processes	Nonintentional, Normative, Incompetence, Lack of Control	Compliance, External Rewards and Punishments	Self-control, Ego-Involvement, Internal Rewards and Punishments	Personal importance, Awareness, Conscious Valuing	Congruence, Awareness, Synthesis With Self	Interest, Enjoyment, Inherent Satisfaction

Participant grid:

- Daniel Schug
- Francesca Stara
- Blanka Gazdig
- LAURA LEVREL
- Clara
- Dagmar Navratilova
- Marina Sim
- 10 autres personnes
- Claudia Dell'uomo d...

Meet - snv-pcfe-rke

Daniel Schug (Présentation)

docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqm\_BjGtyNMtrnBODipr0DcHTUjCaKMcJZ3qJQc/edit?pli=1&slide=id.g29cf7718db6\_0\_134

Anglais B1 (P14LL... SPSS and Statist... Inscription gratui...

EDUC Training - 21 Nov 2023

Fichier Édition Affichage Insertion Format Diapositive Réorganiser Outils Extensions Aide

Diaporama Partager

Ajuster

Roboto

Part 1 group discussion

Understanding what type of motivation you have is crucial for progressing.

With your group, take 5-10 minutes and discuss the following questions:

- 1) Look at the Self-Determination Theory continuum. At what point on the continuum are you?
- 2) Do you take any steps to develop your language skills autonomously (films, reading, conversation practice, tutors, e-tandems...)?
- 3) Do you have any specific language skills that you would like to develop?
- 4) On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current motivation to develop your language skills?

Cliquez pour ajouter les commentaires du présentateur

Daniel Schug

chiara mells

Blanka Gazdig

Clara

11 autres personnes

Claudia Dell'uom...

snv-pcfe-rke

Messages dans l'appel

Seuls les participants à l'appel peuvent voir les messages, qui sont supprimés à la fin de l'appel

for me is a great occasion to listen in English, cos I don't practise in daily life

LAURA LEVREL 14:12  
It dosent' work for me  
it's ok

Daniel Schug 14:13  
pollEV.com/danielschug601

Daniel Schug 14:34  
With your group, take 5-10 minutes and discuss the following questions:  
Look at the Self-Determination Theory continuum. At what point on the continuum are you?  
Do you take any steps to develop your language skills autonomously (films, reading, conversation practice, tutors, e-tandems...)?  
Do you have any specific language skills that you would like to develop?  
On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current motivation to develop your language skills?

Envoyer un message

# Defining goals - Group Exercise

With your group, you will read one learner's description of his/her goals for language learning. Afterwards, your group will respond to some questions about the description.

**Identifying motives.** Scan the QR code that corresponds to your group & read the text. After you finish reading, complete the activities with your group.



Group 1



Group 2



Group 3



Group 4

A grid of video thumbnails from a Zoom meeting. The thumbnails show: Daniel Schug (top left), Francesca Stara (top right), Marina Sim (middle left), Clara (middle right), Claire Le Page (bottom left), Sophie Leray (bottom right), chiara meis (bottom left), and Claudia Dell'uomo d... (bottom right). Some thumbnails are muted or have icons indicating status.

Read Aloud

The more you read the more feedback you'll get.

00:11

RECORDING SETTINGS RETRY

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, providing a platform for communication, self-expression, and information sharing. However, alongside the many benefits of social media, there is growing concern about its potential impact on mental health and well-being. This essay will discuss the psychological effects of social media on mental health, examining both the positive and negative aspects of this phenomenon.

One positive aspect of social media is its ability to facilitate social connection and support. Social media platforms allow individuals to maintain relationships with friends and family, engage with like-minded communities, and access resources and support networks. This connectedness can promote a sense of belonging and improve mental well-being. For instance, individuals who

Daniel Schug

Claire Le Page

Clara

Giuseppe Murtas

11 autres personnes

Epingler Dell'uom...

snv-pcfe-rke

👍 🙌 🥳 🤔 😬 😞 😡 🗑️

🔇 🗑️ 📄 🗣️ 🖱️ 📱 📞

Messages dans l'appel

Seuls les participants à l'appel peuvent voir les messages, qui sont supprimés à la fin de l'appel

Daniel Schug 16:00  
powerpoint link:  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqm\\_BJGtyNMtnBODIpf0DcHTUrCaKMzJZ3gJ0c/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqm_BJGtyNMtnBODIpf0DcHTUrCaKMzJZ3gJ0c/edit?usp=sharing)

Daniel Schug 16:11  
<https://twee.com/>

Daniel Schug 16:19  
[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqm\\_BJGtyNMtnBODIpf0DcHTUrCaKMzJZ3gJ0c/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1aRyoxsqm_BJGtyNMtnBODIpf0DcHTUrCaKMzJZ3gJ0c/edit?usp=sharing)

Daniel Schug 16:26  
<https://app.getpronounce.com/>

Roberta Tocco 16:27  
Is this free?

Envoyer un message

# ***TRAINING SESSION UP \****

***\* Embracing  
Cultural Diversity and Inclusion***

***- Presentation -***

Let's dive in!



## Embracing Cultural Diversity and Inclusion at EDUC

Dr. Gabi Kratochwil  
[www.cross-cultures.de](http://www.cross-cultures.de)

1

Let's dive in!



**8** full partners

in Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, Czech Republic, Norway, Spain

**38**



Associated partners



**200.000** students





**13.500** employees



**17.500** scholars



2

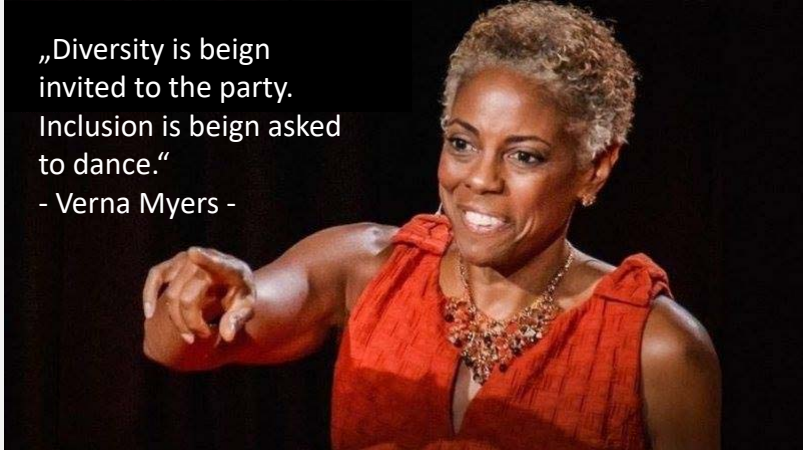



Model adapted from Gardenswartz & Rowe

[Source: Gardenswartz & Rowe, Diverse Teams at Work, 2nd Edition, SHRM, 2003]

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„Diversity is beign invited to the party.  
 Inclusion is beign asked to dance.“  
 - Verna Myers -

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## WHY ARE WE HERE?



WHERE DO WE STAND?  
TAKING STOCK...

Does „Yes“ always mean  
„Yes“?  
Managing Cultural  
Diversity Successfully  
Together

OPEN SPACE  
OUR COOPERATION  
REALIZING OUR FULL  
POTENTIAL TOGETHER  
DEFINING OUR WAY  
AHEAD ...

5

## SWOT



**S**trengths

**O**pportunities



**W**eaknesses

**T**hreats

6

## OUR ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR



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7

## SWOT



8

# SWOT

The intention of close cooperation

An openness towards different cultures and approaches

The joint expertise of pedagogical employees

The digital opportunities

Expansion of the alliance and funding for EDX II

An increasing internal understanding of Educ in the institution

The funding of EDX-WISE

Lack of joint understanding of meeting cultures/planning

Onboarding difficulties for new parties

Differences in funding on national/regional level so creates an imbalance in resources

Lack of budgets for mobilities and physical meetings

Unclear strategic leadership and direction in the governance of the alliance

Your world gets bigger!

Numerous rise and meeting opportunities for students

The potential in the steering group is all kinds represented

Influencing the European agenda for research/education

Access to funding mechanisms and networks

The European cultural dimension (especially important for international...)

Lack of commitment and engagement in the institutions

Different expectations to meeting contents and outcomes

Lack of future funding

No thematic focus - too widespread activities are not focused enough

# SWOT

COMMON OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

SHARING AN HORIZONTAL ALLIANCE

STRONG COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONALIZATION BY UNIVERSITIES

TEACHING AND DISCOVERING NEW COURSES AND WAYS OF THINKING/WORKING

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF

BEST PRACTICES SHARING

GOOD FOOD, GOOD DRINKS, GOOD FRIENDS.

GOOD LEVEL OF COOPERATION IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON RESEARCH AREAS

LOW INVESTMENT OF SKILLED STAFF IN TASKS

DIFFERENT LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

LIMITED DIGITAL SYSTEMS INTEROPERABILITY

INSUFFICIENT INTERNAL/EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF EDUC ACTIVITIES

DIFFERENT NATIONAL CO-FUNDING

DIFFERENT NATIONAL RULES LIMITING INDEPENDENT ACTIONS

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

# SWOT



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
internal communication	Workload	internationalization	lack of IT experts
creativity	digital teaching skills	international courses	future of mobilities
hospitality	national bureaucracy	cooperation possibilities	limited national fundings
international cooperation	infrastructure	cultural exchange	dependence
scientific diversity	time constraints		interference of politics
	external communication		
		ACHIEVEMENTS	
		international partnerships	
		growing audience	
		VE/UM	

11

# SWOT



WELCOME FEELING FOR NEW PARTNERS	DISTANCE	EXPERTISE SHARING	TIME PRESSURE
INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT	LANGUAGE BARRIERS	DESIGN OUR UNIVERSITY	DIFFERENT NATIONAL LAWS
FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE		BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS	SUST. FINANCE
EXPERT SHARING			
AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIFF.			
COMMITMENT		EDUC I → EDUC II	
		COMMON CHARTER VALUES	

12

# SWOT

OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESS	STRENGTH	THREATS
<p>Management optimisation Create ambassadors in the departments/faculties</p> <p>Staff weeks &amp; between department that do not work on EDUC daily. New forms of mobility for all</p> <p>Share facilities between partners of the alliance</p>	<p>Difficulty to make researchers / staff accountable for supporting the project different paths between the project and the organization of the university.</p> <p>Lack of knowledge of our ecosystem (governance, units, labs) ... Lack of knowledge of our partner universities (ex: research scenarios...) Cooperative project methodology for co-creation</p>	<p>Processes</p> <p>Political instrument for change (seen as)</p> <p>Concrete achievements (combine courses, tools, core facilities, open up BIP, etc.) A 3 years success story working together</p>	<p>Geographical distance</p> <p>Financial management</p> <p>Large number of stakeholders (internal)</p>
			<p>Online courses, tools, core facilities, open up, BIP, etc.</p> <p>Governance encompassing from rectors to task levels.</p>

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# SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Flexibility of processes</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Exchange</p> <p>Digital collaboration</p>	<p>Implementation speed of digital solution</p> <p>Special / personal distance</p> <p>Communication gaps</p>	<p>Internationalisation / Networking</p> <p>Knowledge Transfer</p> <p>Job shadowing</p>	<p>Lack of personnel &amp;</p> <p>Administrative hurdles</p> <p>Complexity of tasks</p> <p>Budget limitations and time</p> <p>Classical project structure vs. agile management</p>
<p>Development of virtual and blended mobilities</p> <p>Many student mobilities</p>	<p>Call for a lot of central administration units</p> <p>Established Governance Structures</p>	<p>Common Digital Solutions</p>	<p>Visibility (intra-institutional)</p>

14



„One cannot not communicate.  
Every behavior is a kind of communication.  
Because behavior does not have a counterpart (there is no anti-behavior), it is not possible not to communicate.“

- Paul Watzlawick -

Don't get me **wrong** ...



## Different countries, different customs



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## AGENDA | 09 October 2023



**9am-10am**

- Check In / Welcome / Introduction
- SWOT – Where Do We Stand?

**10am-11am**

- Cultural Dimensions: Decoding How People Think, Lead and Get Things Done Across Cultures

**11am-11:30am**

**Break**

**11:30am-1pm**

- How to Successfully Work in Our Diverse Set-up at EDUC
- Wrap Up Session / Take Aways / Feedback

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## Poll: The Missing Agenda

1. Which statement is more a reflection of what you thought spontaneously when you saw the agenda? (Einzelne Wahl) \*

11/11 (100%) haben geantwortet

Well finally! It is important for me to have an agenda so... (9/11) 82%

I actually don't need the agenda. Let's see what comes ... (2/11) 18%

What does this tell me about my own approach and my expectations?

”

Masters are cited. Students get best grades when they reproduce what teachers and textbooks have taught.

Chang Li  
Chinese Student





How can cultural differences have an impact on learning and teaching styles?

How can we adapt teaching for the culturally diverse?

How can we create a learning environment that promotes culturally responsive pedagogy?

How can we deal with cognitive dissonance?

How can cultural differences have an impact on **learning** and teaching styles?

How can we adapt teaching for the culturally diverse?

How can we create a learning **environment** that **promotes kulturally** responsive pedagogy?

How can we deal with cognitive **dissonance**?

Ouch!!!

Would you correct your professor in classroom?

Students with low-context and culture of blame context

YES!  
90%

Students with high-context and culture of shame context

NO!  
90%

### Different ways to give feedback....



Lovely weather !



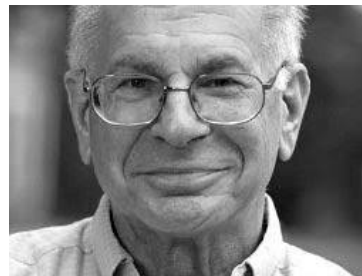
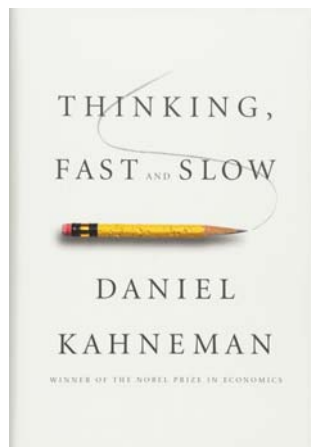
cartoon: Marcel Keller

What is yummy food?



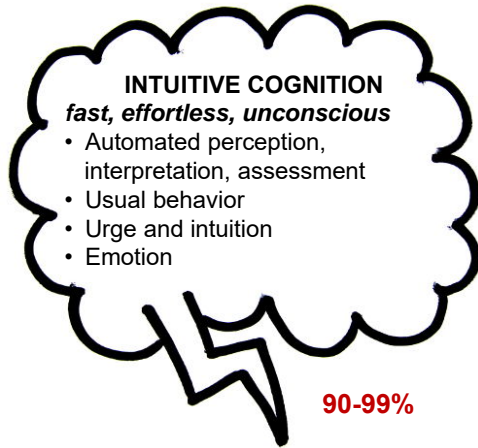


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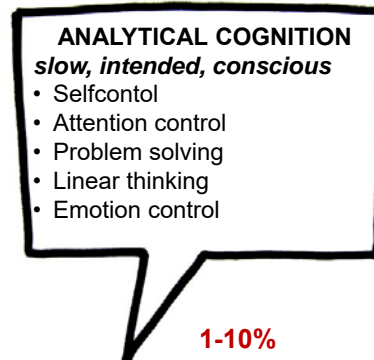


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## System 1



## System 2



D. Kahnemann: "Thinking, Fast and Slow", 2011

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Let's Move the Elephant...



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# Our Kind of People



Bayeté Ross Smith  
[www. bayeterossmith.com](http://www.bayeterossmith.com)

Bayeté Ross Smith is a photographer, artist, and education worker who lives in Harlem New York.

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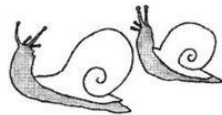
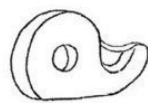


### The Types of Unconscious Bias We Need to Address

shine

<p><b>Beauty Bias</b></p>  <p>Judging people based on how they look.</p>	<p><b>Affinity Bias</b></p>  <p>Hiring people the same as ourselves.</p>	<p><b>Horns Effect</b></p>  <p>Negative assumptions cloud our judgement.</p>	
<p><b>Confirmation Bias</b></p>  <p>Searching for evidence to back up first impressions.</p>	<p><b>Attribution Bias</b></p>  <p>How we perceive the actions of others.</p>	<p><b>Conformity Bias</b></p>  <p>Changing opinions to conform with the group.</p>	<p><b>Halo Effect</b></p>  <p>Perceived as having more positive traits than others.</p>

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S.GROSS

"I don't care if she is a tape dispenser. I love her."



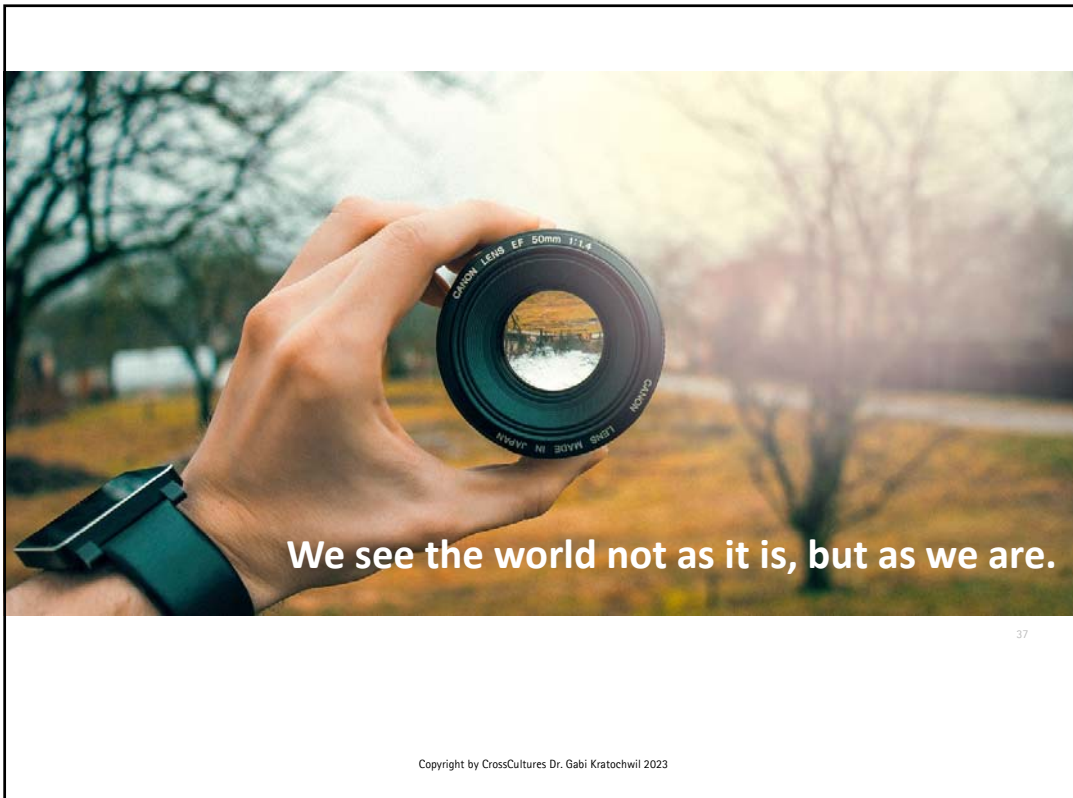
CARTOONSTOCK

"I trust this site to tell the truth."

36

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## Implicit Association Test (IAT)

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>





**Project Implicit®**

**PROJECT IMPLICIT SOCIAL ATTITUDES**  
 Log in or register to find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, and other topical

Or, continue as a guest by selecting from our available language/nation demonstration sites:

 United States (English)

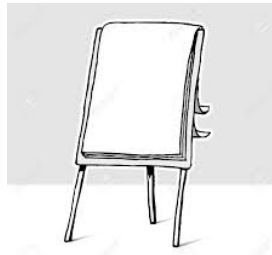
**PROJECT IMPLICIT HEALTH**  
 Find out your implicit associations about exercise, anxiety, alcohol, eating, marijuana, and other topics!

**PROJECT IMPLICIT FEATURED TASK**  
 Measure your implicit association between different social groups and Human/Animal

[LOG IN](#) [TAKE A TEST](#) [ABOUT US](#) [EDUCATION](#) [HELP](#) [CONTACT US](#) [DONATE](#)

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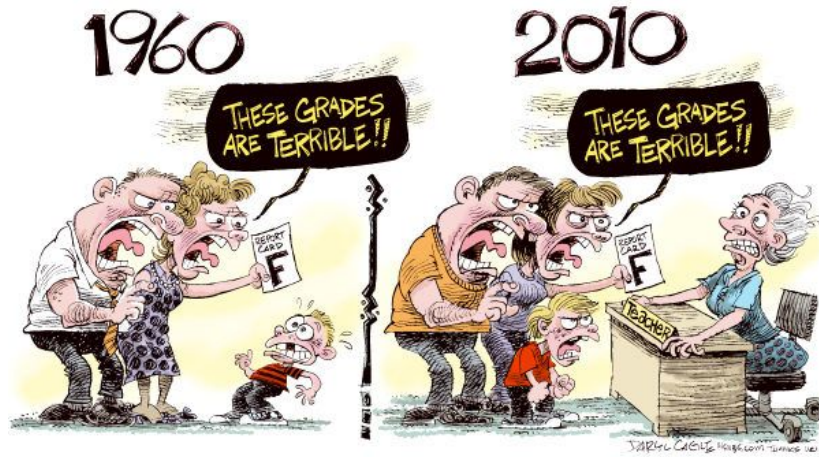
Which aspects were important in my early upbringing?

Which basic values, beliefs and behavioral norms have been conveyed to me?



“In cultural anthropology, **culture** is essentially a system of concepts, beliefs, attitudes and value orientations that are visible both in the behavior and actions of people and in their intellectual and material products. To put it simply: Culture is the way people live and what they do with themselves and their world.”

(Maletzke 1996:16)



Which **impact** when working together?



Typical !?!



**THAT'S SO GERMAN**  
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How can we decode how people think, tick and get things done across cultures?



## Intercultural Skills

Knowledge

Attitude  
Reframing  
Tolerance for  
Ambiguity

Enlarge Personal Skill  
Set / Change of  
Perspectives



## *Professor Geert Hofstede*

1928 - 2020

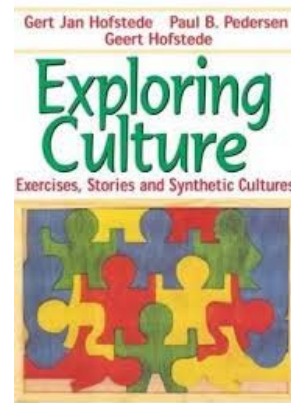
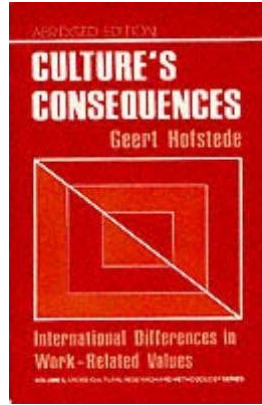
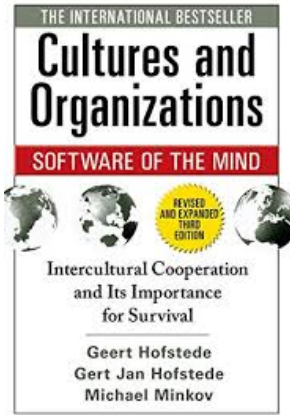
Professor Geert Hofstede was a Dutch social psychologist recognized globally for having developed the first empirical model of "cultural dimensions".

Hofstede can be regarded as one of the leading representatives of intercultural research and studies. The findings of his pioneering research and his theoretical ideas are used worldwide in both psychology and management studies.



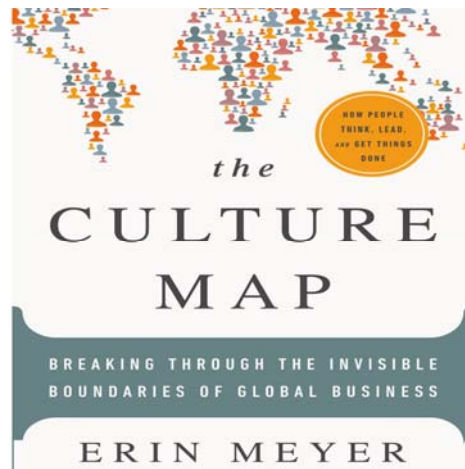
„**Cultural standards** are ways of perceiving, thinking, evaluating and acting that the majority of members of a particular culture regard as normal, typical and binding for themselves and others."

(Thomas 2003:25)



## Erin Meyer

professor at INSEAD, one of the leading international business schools. Her work focuses on how the world's most successful managers navigate the complexities of cultural differences in a global environment.

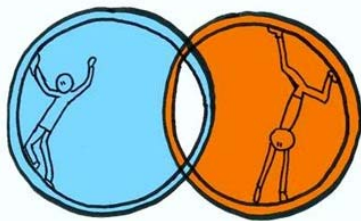


Fernando Ortíz Fernández (1881-1969)



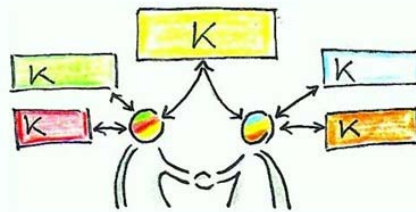
51

 Interkulturell (klassisch)



Kulturen begegnen sich

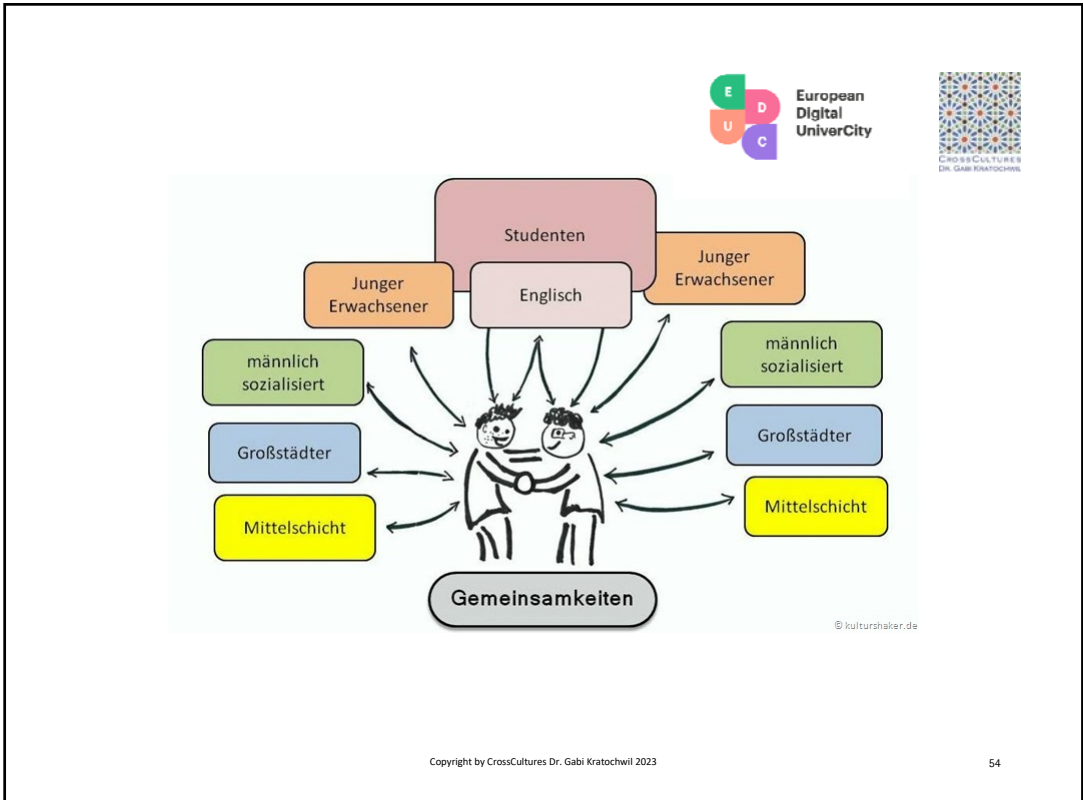
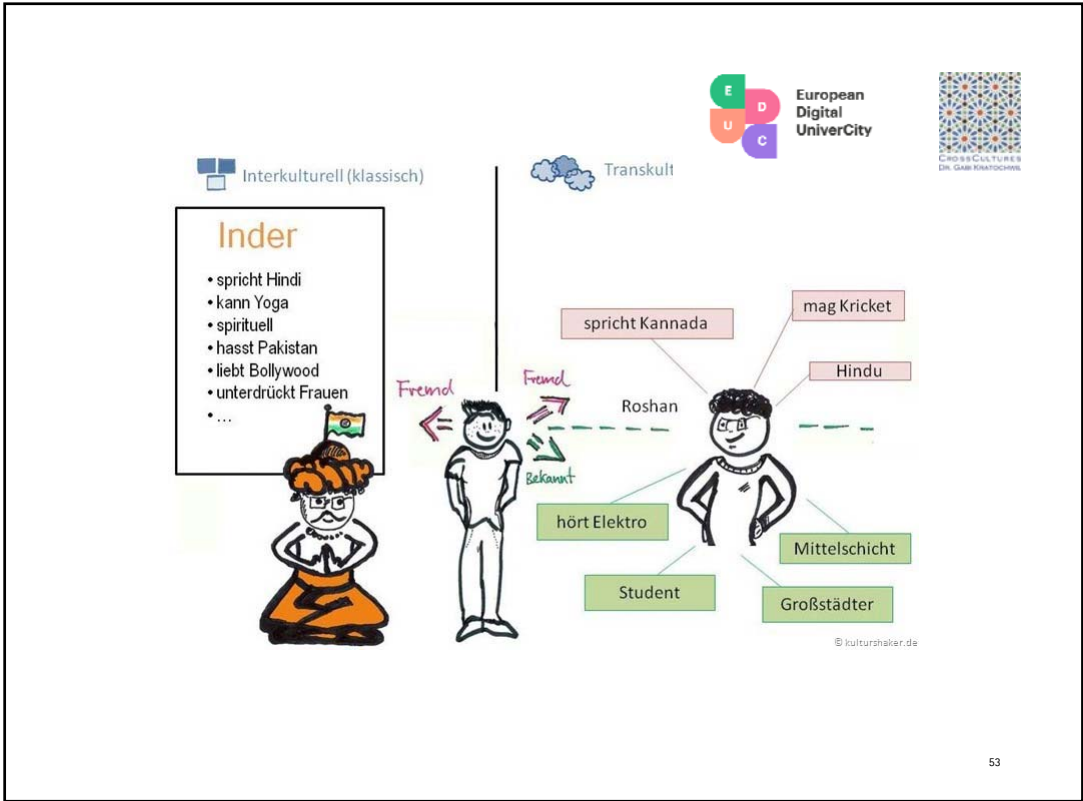
 Transkulturell



Menschen begegnen sich

52



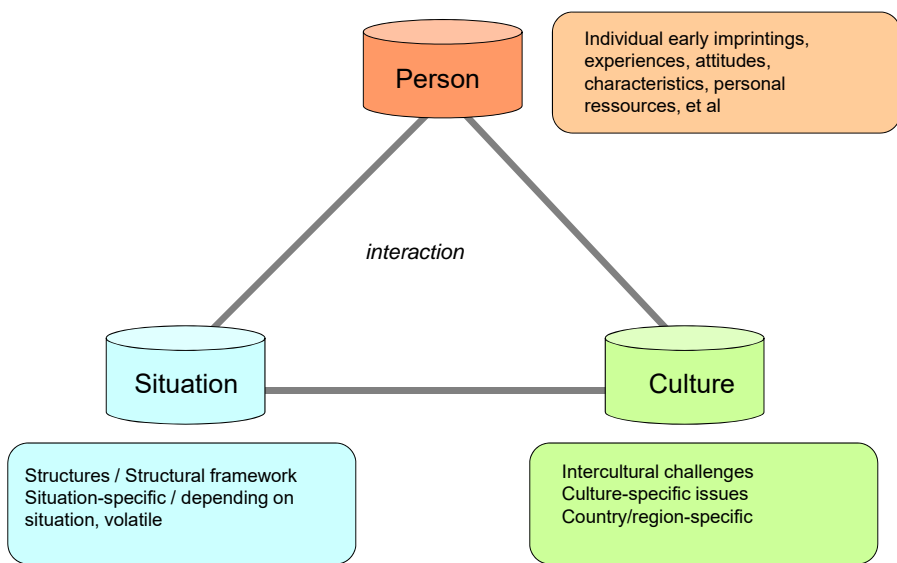


Cultural dimensions are **systems of orientation**



How am I ticking? How are you ticking?  
Which impact when working together?

The **PSC-Model**



Ziel Destination	Gleis Platform / Voie	
München Hbf	2	Verspätung ca 80 Mi
Salzburg Hbf	2	erte Wagenreihung. -
Lindau Hbf	3	5 Min. - Verspätung ca
Regensburg Hbf	28	leis 28 - Fahrt heute
Weißenhorn	5b	
Langenau (Württ)	4Nor	
Biberach(Riß)	8	



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„Does a bus in a remote area needs to start punctually at 6:23am?“

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**Cultural dimensions** – An orientation for cross-cultural situations



**Task-orientation**

**Individualism**

**Uncertainty avoidance**

**Neutral culture**

**Space**

**Low context communication**

**Culture of blame**

**Relationship-orientation**

**Collectivism**

**Uncertainty acceptance**

**Emotional culture**

**Proximity**

**High context communication**

**Culture of shame**

**Cultural dimensions** – An orientation for cross-cultural situations



**Monochronic time orientation**

**Workflow: consecutive-linear**

**Low power distance**

**Achievement culture ⇒ status**

**Internal control / individual responsibility**

**Specific culture**

**Polychronic time orientation**

**Workflow: synchronic-circular**

**High power distance**

**Ascription culture ⇒ status**

**External control / rule-oriented**

**Diffuse culture**

after: E.T. Hall / G. Hofstede / F. Trompenaars



- Go through the categories
- Rate yourself (0-10) on each category
- Compare with your table mates
- Where do you differ? What do you share?
- Consider/describe a critical situation in the work context for those category pairs where you differed most.
- Come up with some strategies to better deal with these differences.

**Cultural Dimensions**

- Neutral culture vs. Emotional culture
- Specific / diffuse culture

**Challenges**

- Finding a balance  
what is good for me? for my team?  
for the task?
- Working with friends /  
being friends at work  
difficult in crises

**Strategies**

- Awareness of differences /  
exchange about it
- Clear communication?

45

Cultural Dimensions

Challenges

Strategies

CULTURE OF BLAME /  
CULTURE OF SHAME

NAMING PROBLEMS  
PROVIDING FEEDBACK  
· TONE  
· SENDER / RECEIVER  
· TIME

COME UP WITH A THIRD  
WAY TOGETHER /  
CONSTRUCTIVE  
AWARENESS - BUILDING

Communication

Direct: can be  
perceived as rude

"Check in"  
Explain your comm. style

Uncertainty avoiding  
(situation)  
- Joint call 2.3 and 2.5  
- Clear communication to teachers  
(challenge) Anticipate questions  
(Strategy):

Collectivism	Cultural Neutral/Emotional	Uncertainty Avoiding/Accepting
HE VS WE	LACK OF EMPATHY	PREFERENCE CONFLICT
REACH COMPROMISE FOR THE WHOLE GROUP.	EMPATHY	Risk Management A/B/C...
Polychronic Time-orientation	Space	Indirect Communication

Challenges	Cultural Dimensions	Strategies
situational context	uncertainty: avoid vs. accept	One aspect leads the other (priority)
	task-orientation vs. relationship-or.	





Categories to **reflect on**...

Categories to **define mutual expectations**...

Categories to **create own team culture and shared values**...



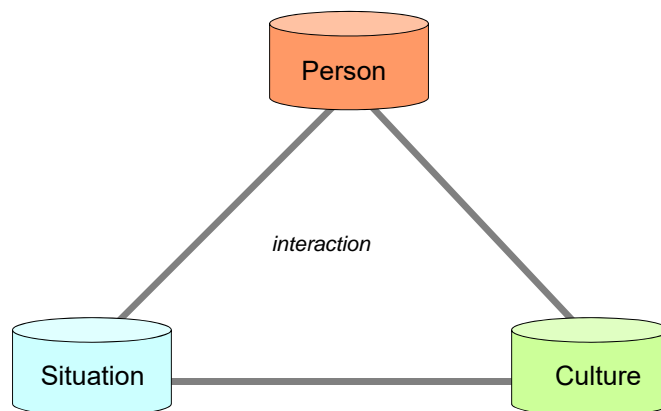
Defining the challenge

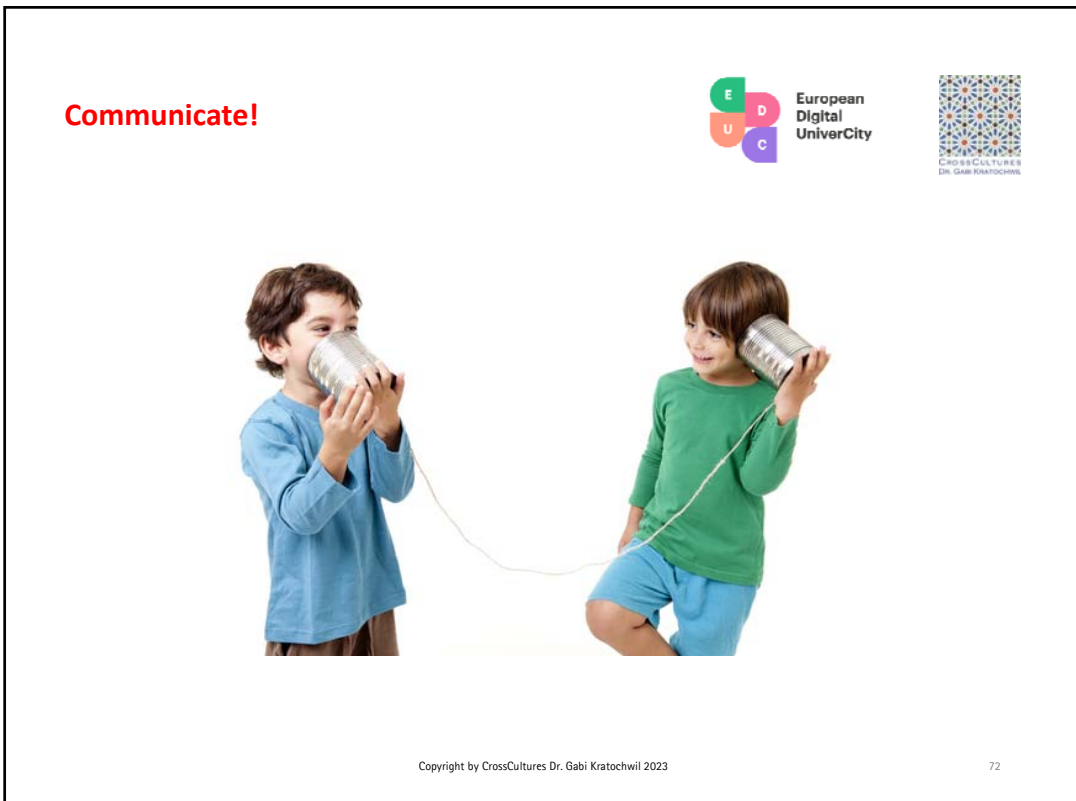
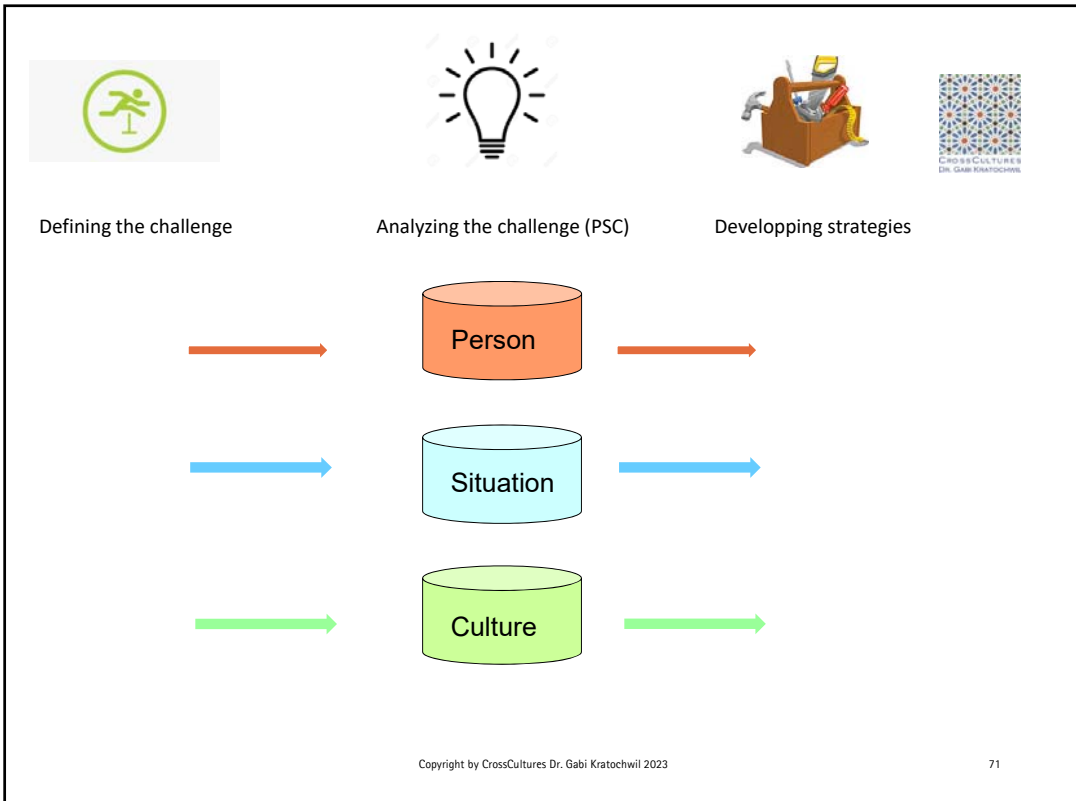


Analyzing the challenge (PSC)



Developing strategies










OPEN SPACE  
OUR COOPEATION  
REALIZING OUR FULL POTENTIAL TOGETHER  
DEFINING OUR WAY AHEAD ...


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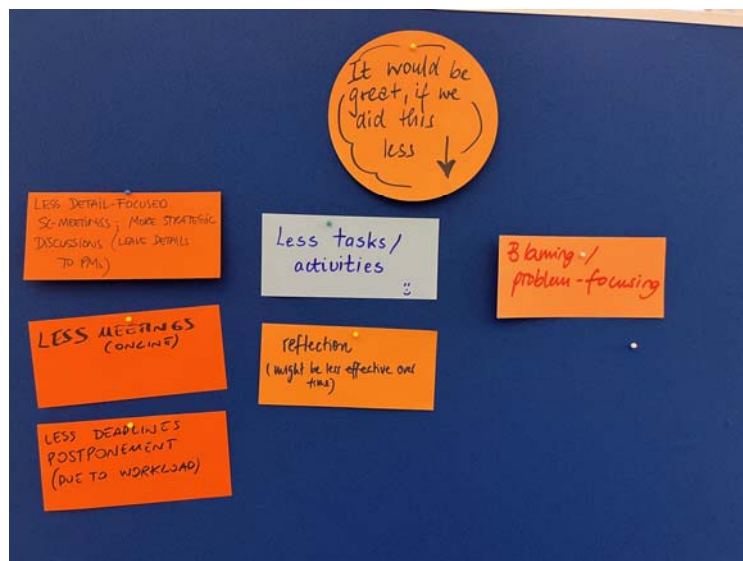
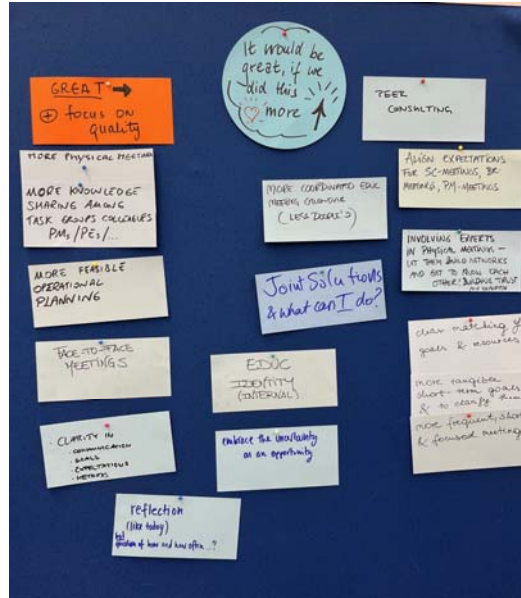
It would be great, if we did this **more** ...



It would be great, if we did this **less** ...



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**OUR TEAM**



You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

C.S. Lewis



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"OK, now that we all agree, let's all go back to our desks and discuss why this won't work."

THINK GLOBALLY,  
ACT LOCALLY,  
PANIC INTERNALLY





THANK YOU!

[www.cross-cultures.de](http://www.cross-cultures.de)

# ***SOFT SKILLS WORKSHOPS***

***2DAYS at UPN***





## Workshop

# *Communicating Identity to cross-cultural audiences: A workshop on cross-cultural communication*

Dr. Nicole Divoux Ringuette



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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

## Introduction

This 2 hour workshop aims to help you better identify and solve issues regarding cross-cultural communication. You will be given an opportunity to hone your current skills and practice with international partnering colleagues.

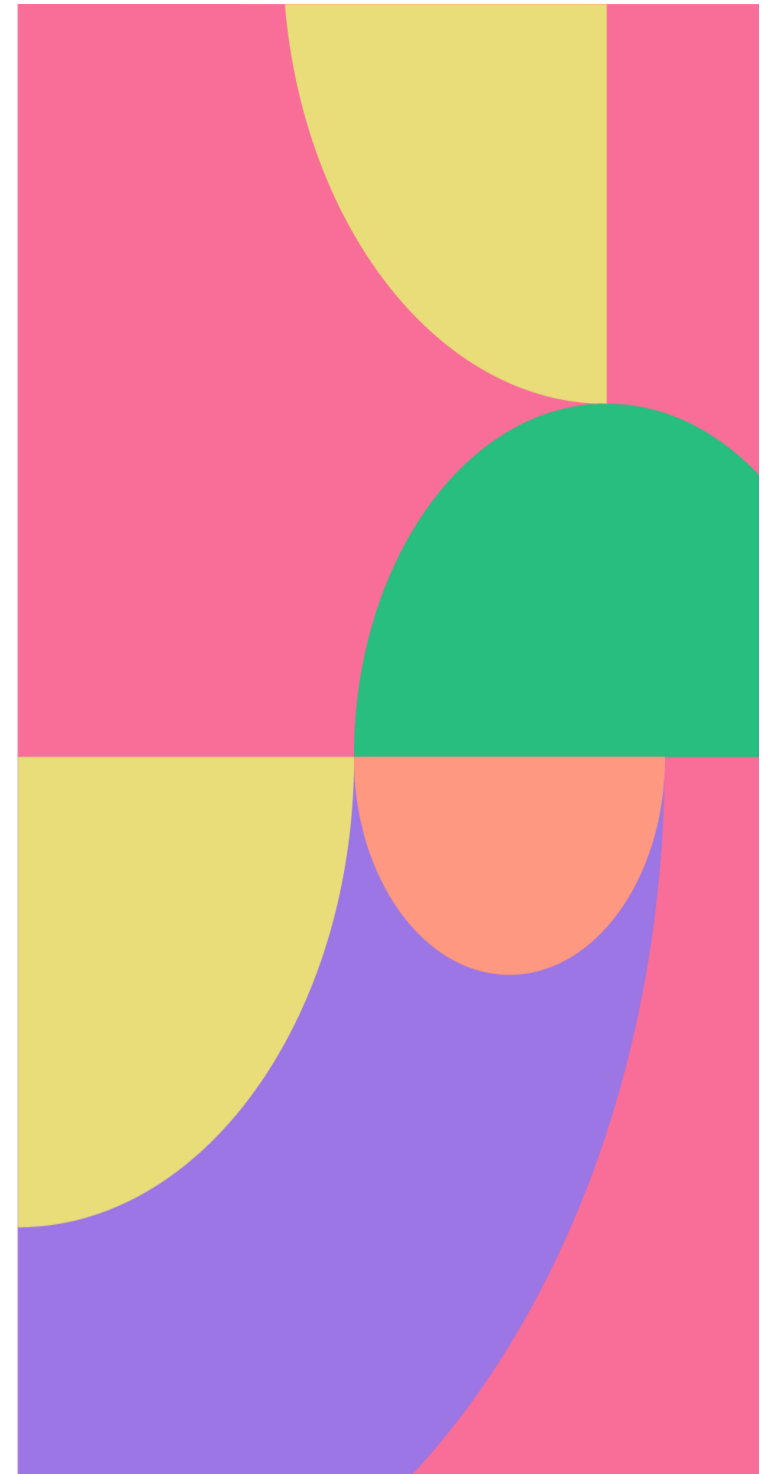
### You will:

- Participate 2-3 icebreaker activities
- Reflect and share your distinct cultural and professional experiences
- Practice your critical thinking skills
- Negotiate meaning
- Talk about cultural stereotypes
- Define cultural identity and capital
- Have an opportunity to recapitulate your learning by sharing best practices

## WORKSHOP

*« I think we spend too much time talking about it and not enough time expecting and adapting to it. »*

Prof. Mohamed Branine (2004)



# A little palate cleanser of noises

In multicultural groups of 4-8 pick an object from the bag and share its noise with your group.

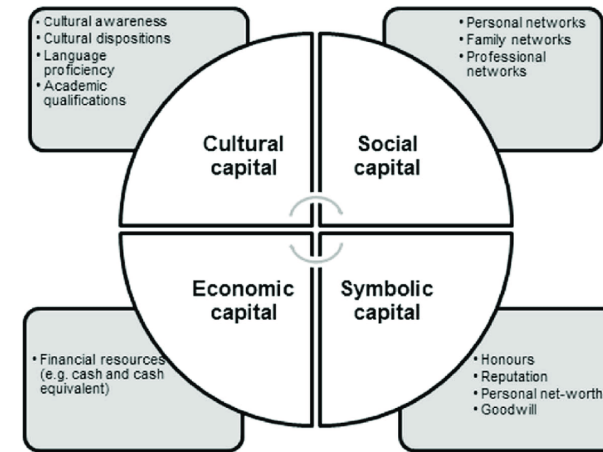


Workshop

## What did we learn?



# Cultural Identity Warm Up Task



Materials : Two different colours of Post-its

Task : Take 3 Post-its (2 of the same colour)

**First step:** Write your I am statements - Write TWO (2) - I AM statements

**Second step:**

Write ONE (1) gift you could give to someone else that you think would represent who you are.

**Step 3:** Discuss with a group about how you think some gifts are more evident than others.

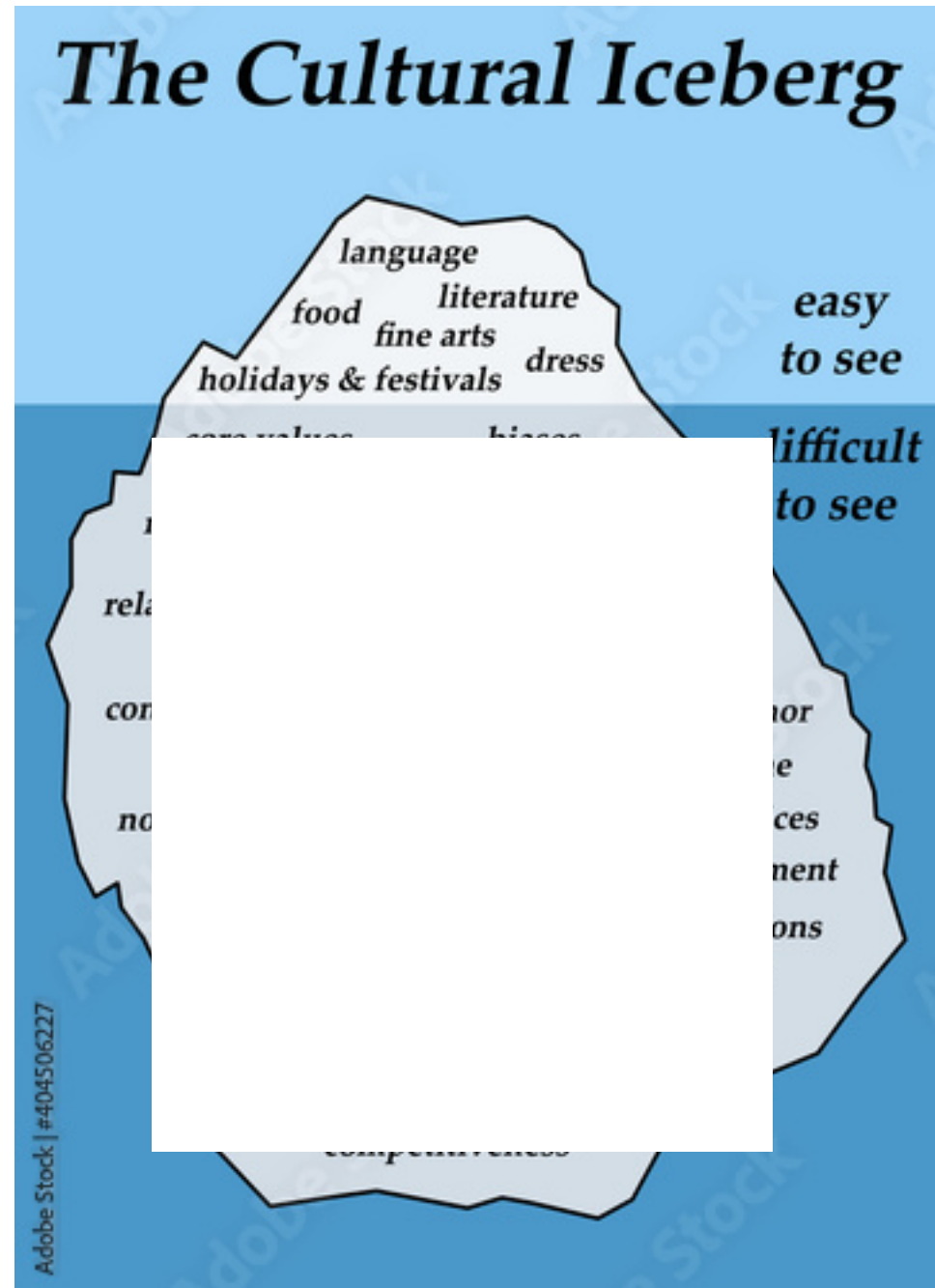
Workshop

# Pre-task conversation: The Ice-Breaker

In groups of 2-4 Brainstorm on the following:

WHAT IS EASY FOR NEWCOMERS TO SEE IN MY CULTURE

WHAT IS NOT EASY (provide anecdotes if you can)



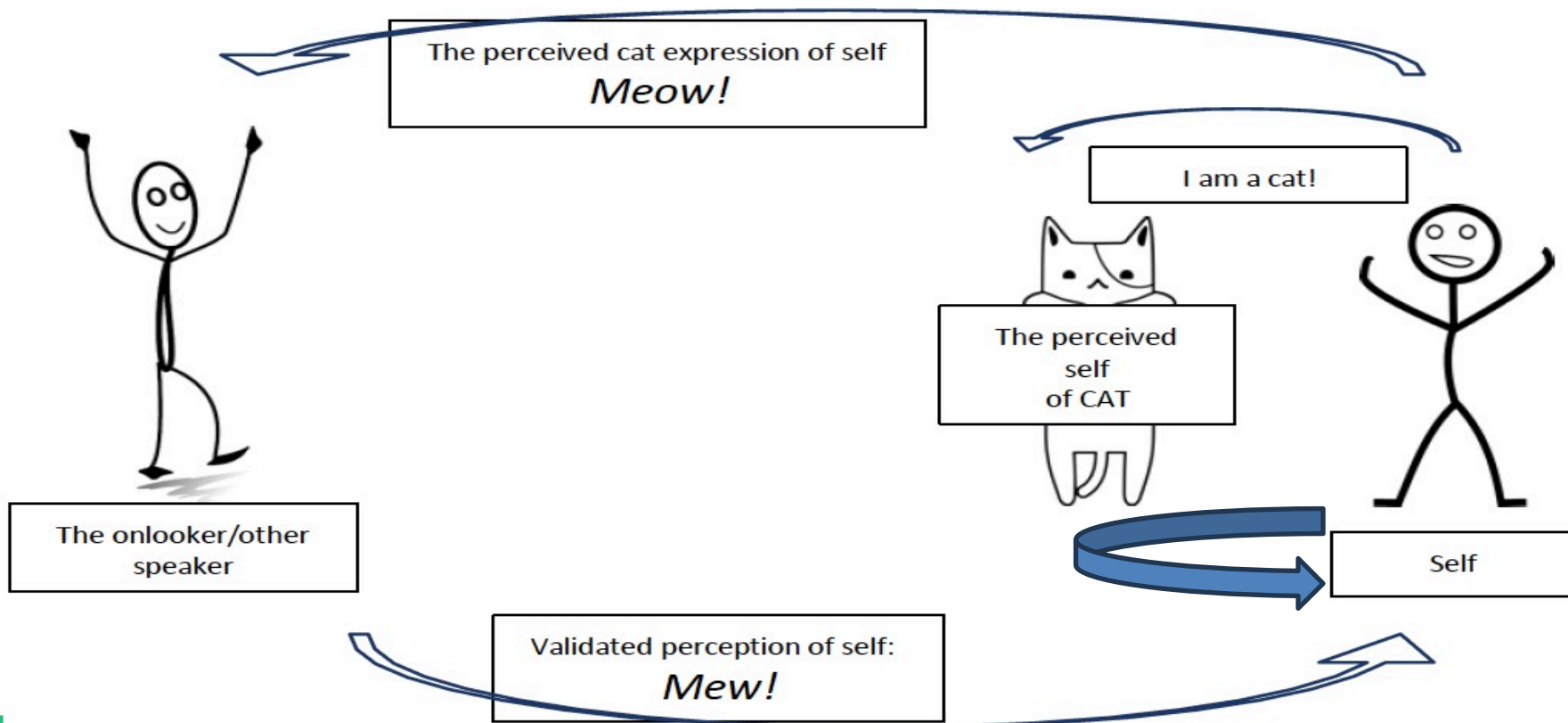
Workshop

## What did we learn?





# Meow Me Model of Identity



## Workshop

# Putting it in application –Tiny house build

### Group 1

Do task in COMPLETE SILENCE keeping your individual directions a secret

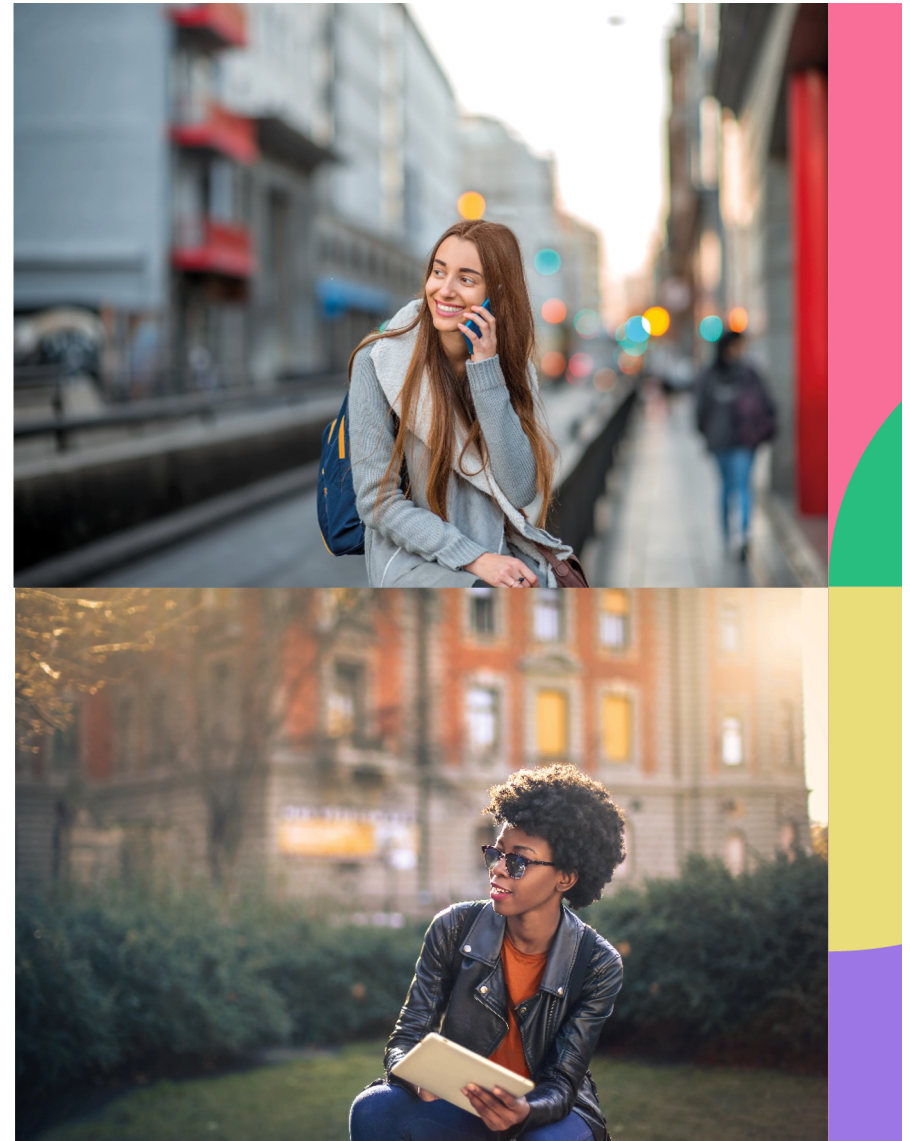
### Group 2

Do task speaking BUT only 2-word sentences in YOUR NATIVE language (group must be multi-lingual with no one sharing the same native language)

### Group 3

In another room, take your tools, and before starting negotiate each of your needs. Then build your house.

BUILD A HOUSE WITH LEGO - YOU HAVE 10 MINUTES



## Workshop

# Group by group learning recap.

In groups of three (where there is a member of each grouping in the Tiny House Task discuss the following:

What were the challenges in completing this task?

What did I notice about my team members?

What worked?

What would I do next time?

How is this related to cross-cultural communication?

Important take in this activity?



## Workshop

# Stereo Typing and Its Effects



Taking the broadest sense of stereotyping, in multilingual groups of 4 – 8 talk about the following:

What kind of stereotypes have you witnessed?

What is a common stereotype of your culture?  
DRAW A PICTURE - give it to me

What is a common stereotype of your gender?

What is a common stereotype of your profession?

What do you think is the impact of those stereotypes in your life or the life of others?

What is the difference between generalisation and stereotype?



## WORKSHOP

# Stereo Types and words that go with it

Ignorance  
Power  
Vulnerability  
Conformity

Prejudice

Harmful or not?

How do we know for sure?



“All too often our own prejudices remain hidden from ourselves, covered up with layers of justification and rationalisation that we have created over the years.” Clement and Spinks (2000)

“A stereotype does not allow for individuality”  
Tomalini and Stremplewski (2003)

**The next set of slides targets a multi-cultural group. Their aim is to have you and your partners discuss and negotiate terms of engagement **BEFORE** embarking on a common task. This will develop base understanding and strategies when working and collaborating with new groups.**

Workshop

# Construct of Time in the EDUC GROUP



Workshop

# How to start/end an interaction on the phone: BRAINSTORM





Workshop

# How to start/end an interaction in an EMAIL: BRAINSTORM



## Workshop

# MEETING BEHAVIOUR - DISCUSSION

- 1) What types of non-verbal communication are evident to you in national meeting settings but are not in international?
- 2) How do cultural differences play a role?
- 3) What is the best way to interrupt someone politely?
- 4) What is the best way to express disagreement?
- 5) Discuss what makes a meeting productive and how to better facilitate meetings.



Workshop

# MEETING BEHAVIOUR CASE STUDIES – AN INTROSPECTIVE AND REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY



Workshop

# BEST PRACTICES - ROUND TABLE



Workshop

# RECAPITULATION



# ***SOFT SKILLS PRESENTATIONS***

***2DAYS at UPN***

# INTERNATIONAL E-TANDEM: A TOOL FOR INCREASING STUDENT MOTIVATION

September 19, 2023  
EDUC Soft Skills Colloquium

Daniel SCHUG

Laboratory CREA - GREMLIN

UNIVERSITÉ PARIS NANTERRE

 **Université  
Paris Nanterre**

**CREA**

CREA • EA 370  
Centre de recherches  
anglophones



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# WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

- A complex variable related to one's identity: goals, attitudes, behaviors, past experiences with the target language (Gardner, 2005)
- **Gardner's Socioeducational Model:** Integration & Instrumentality are mediated by motivation to determine language success (Gardner, 1960)
  - Instrumentality is often stronger in non-English major university students, with some exceptions (Kirkgöz, 2005; Moinvazirii, 2007; Wimolmas, 2012)
- **Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS):** L2 Ideal Self, L2 Ought to Self, L2 Learning Environment (Dörnyei, 2009)
  - Self-concepts are based on real-life experiences & can be shaped by the classroom (Murray, 2011)
  - L2IS seems to be connected to increased levels of L2 Learning Effort (Lamb, 2009; Rajab, Roohbaksh & Etemadzadeh, 2012)
  - Potential for E-Tandems to strengthen L2IS (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2014)



# HOW HAS MOTIVATION CHANGED?

Recent research indicates that motivation may have changed following forced online learning<sup>16</sup>

Increased experimentation: ClassDojo, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, digital content & social media...and e-tandems!

Students were faced with an unprecedented amount of autonomy, but without the guidance to manage it.

Many reported that switching back to in-person classes was just as complicated as the initial forced switch to online courses.

–Implication that certain aspects of online learning may need to stay: increased use of technology, freedom to students to work on things that interest them

## WHAT ARE E-TANDEMS?

- Vassallo & Telles, 2006: "It basically involves some collaborative bilingual work done by competent speakers of 2 different languages. It serves some didactic purposes as users can exchange world views and help each other communicate"
- Numerous advantages: authenticity of communication, improving speaking skills, developing self-confidence, cultural awareness, fun & motivating (De Martino, 2020; Develotte, Guichon & Kern, 2008; Vassallo & Telles, 2006)
- Some disadvantages: frequent technological issues, logistical issues, differing personalities (De Martino, 2020; Fondo & Jacobetty, 2020; Longhi & Valero Gisbert, 2020)
- Research has promising implications for learner motivation, including in French-American programs (Develotte, Guichon & Kern, 2008)

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

- **Question 1:** What impact do e-tandems have on language learning motivation?
  - **Hypothesis:** Some initial awkwardness will give way to a desire to have deeper conversations. Motivation & willingness to communicate will increase.
- **Question 2:** How do students describe their experiences with e-tandems?
  - **Hypothesis:** Given the novelty of the project, we expect positive reviews. Perhaps some problems relating to technology and time differences

## STUDY DESIGN & CONTEXT

- 10 Students from 2 universities
  - Université Paris Nanterre (France): enrolled in a B2 English course for Sports Sciences Majors
  - Cornell University (USA): enrolled in an intermediate Medical French course
- Spring 2021: frequent COVID lockdowns & online courses

- 
- Participation was voluntary
  - Pairings based on estimated language proficiency
  - 3 meetings during the semester (approximately 1 every 2.5 weeks) with an activity to complete on the subject of health
  - After each meeting, students completed a journal entry<sup>15</sup>
    - Likert Scale questions (out of 5): L2 Ideal Self orientation, L2 Effort, feelings about the tandem
    - Open-ended questions: positives & negatives about the experience + activity

## RESULTS 1:

### WHAT IMPACT DO E-TANDEMS HAVE ON LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION?

	Pre-Q	T1	T2	T3	Post-Q
Self-Efficacy	3.6	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.2
L2IS/ Feelings about the Tandem	4	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.2
L2 Effort	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.2

All 3 tandems were positively reviewed (average 4.5/5)  positive experiences with the language (Gardner, 2005)

Open-ended questions: opportunity to learn about the target culture  integrativeness (Gardner, 1960)

- Answers were coded for the experience (E +/-), the activity (A +/-), technology (T +/-), and language (L0, L+/-)
- Most frequent NEGATIVE comments:
  - E+ (54 comments) – relationships & dynamics with peers: “It’s the third time where we call each other, so it’s easier to communicate with [my partner] and I like this process of tandem in [its] globality.”
  - A+ (58 comments) -- “I really liked this activity because it mixed my interests and my partner’s interests“
  - L+ (84 comments) -- “talking with an American student will help me a lot for my pronunciation and my vocabulary”
- Most frequent NEGATIVE comments:
  - A- (22 comments) – “I did not like the role play too much because I found that I did not speak much compared to my correspondent.”
  - T- (13 comments) – “my partners speakers were not functioning properly so it made it difficult for me to understand all what he was saying”

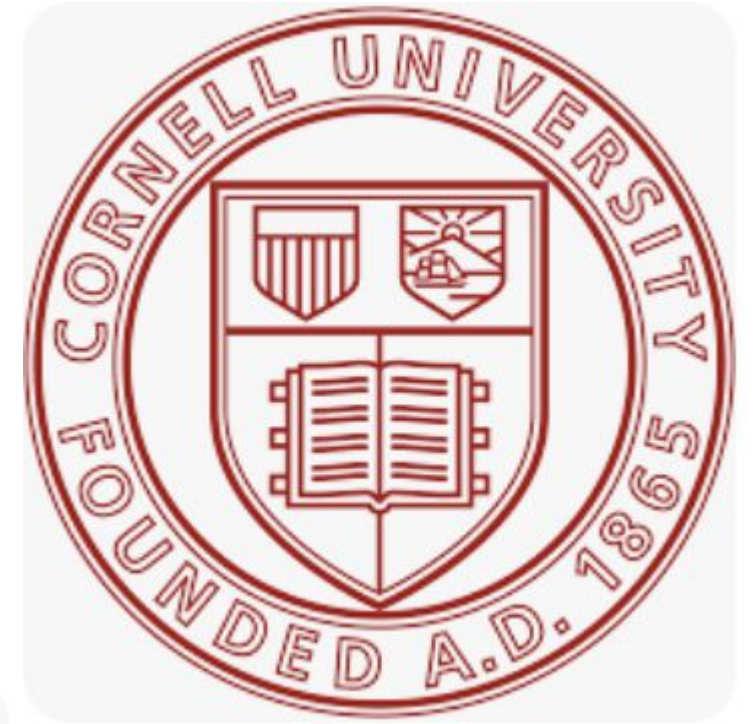
## RESULTS 2:

# HOW DO STUDENTS DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH E-TANDEMS?

# CONCLUSIONS

- E-tandems seem to have the potential to help learners imagine themselves as competent speakers of the L2
- E-tandems, when properly constructed, can increase motivation levels and make learning fun
- Technology issues & busy student schedules need to be accounted for – flexibility & constant feedback are key!!

# Experiences with E-Tandems





# Practical Implications

- Students need careful training on how to conduct e-tandems (technical aspects, intercultural communication...)
- A thorough understanding of the students' learning context is necessary
- Careful observation of the interactions is necessary


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# Social and digital inequalities behind the notion of 'soft skills'

**UPN – 20/09/2023**



# Context

- Le Monde, April 2016: study carried out among 309 French recruiters which proves that, for equal training, it is the candidates "with the best human qualities" who are most likely to be selected, and not those who have completed the best internships
- According to this study, the soft skills most in demand are adaptability (61%), positivity (48%), creativity (47%) and team spirit (42%).
- La Tribune, April 2015: recruiting tomorrow's talent is no longer limited to technical skills alone, but must include "emotional and relational skills".



## Defining a *soft* or *social* skill is difficult

- “**Catch-all term**” which, as such, can be adapted by anyone to suit their own purposes
- Examples: analytical capacity, critical thinking, active learning, problem solving, decision making, time management and emotional intelligence
- They are all ambiguous: **are they requirements or personality traits?**



# The quantification issue

- At a time when people are competing with robots, or have themselves become robots, like call center operators whose work is standardized to the extreme, putting human skills back into the workplace and society means putting life back into work and society
- Moreover, rethinking the importance of typically human skills, those linked to emotional intelligence and conviviality, which will be a differentiating factor for companies, is a competitive advantage that is far more sustainable than any digital initiative
- BUT **trying to measure the dimensions as we did with hard skills** (where it was already not that easy) **is a challenge full of pitfalls, biases, potential power plays and even injustices**



# A sociological approach to soft skills (1)

- Admittedly, **some forms of education are more likely to lead children, and therefore future adults, to different levels of sociability** or acceptance of otherness,
- Moreover, many social skills are largely learned through contact with others,
- Generalized rating becomes a constraint on behaviour, **tending to restrict marginal attitudes.**



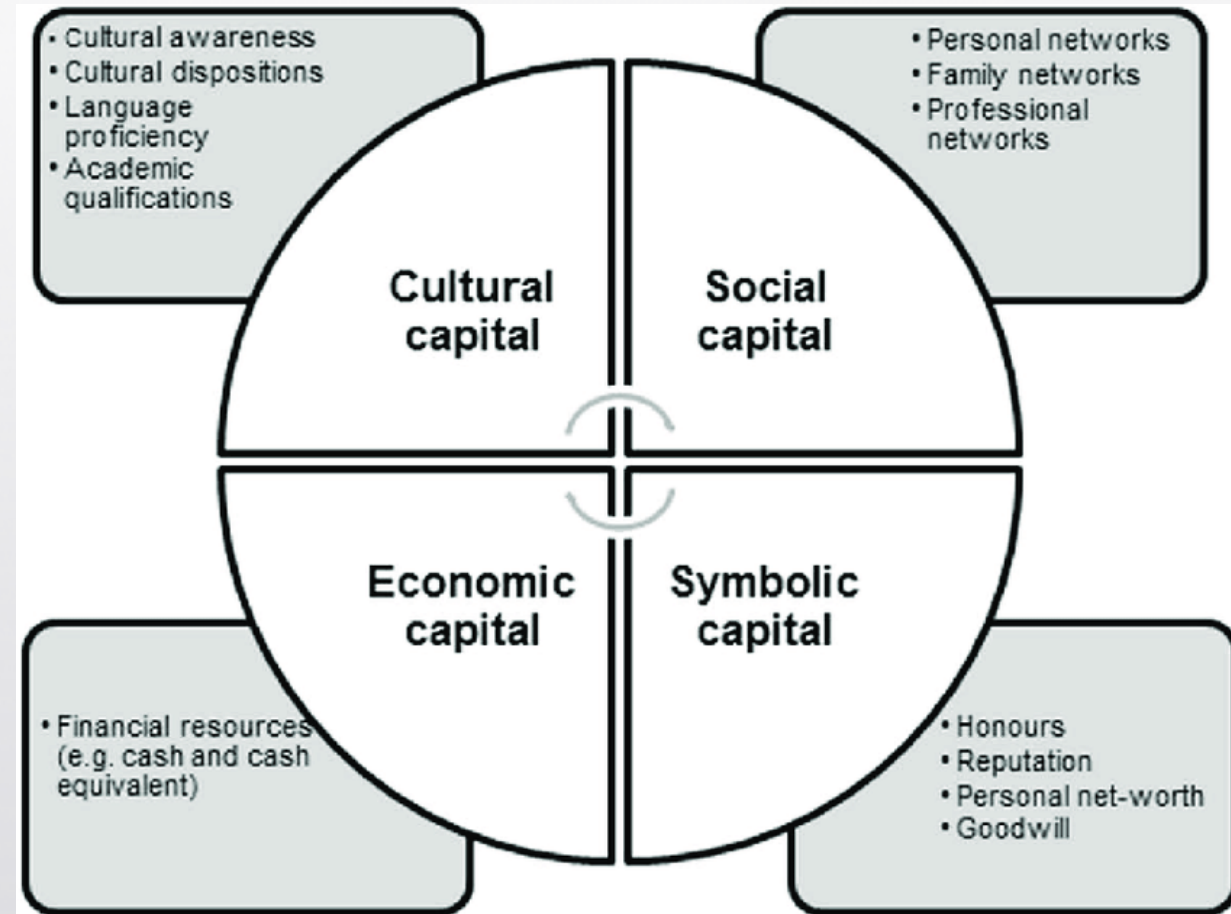
## A sociological approach to soft skills (2)

- The aim of the school environment and the symbolic value of its success (the diploma, distinction, etc.) is to smooth out differences and to **evaluate and verify the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a way that is depicted as objective...**
- **Yet individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are often deprived of some skills.** This is what Bourdieu and Passeron have been demonstrating since the 1960s in their work on schools and social reproduction (*Les Héritiers, La Distinction, ...*)
- Then, **if these symbolic values transmitted by the education system are neither sufficient nor privileged in a recruitment context, this means that it is the skills that are sought outside this system that will be considered more valuable**



# Soft skills are linked to capitals...

- **Cultural capital** -> Bourdieu (1977): "Instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed"
- **Social capital** -> Bourdieu (1986): "The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are **linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition** – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity--owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word"





... and all the capitals are linked together.

- “The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus **depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected...** [this network thus] exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right.” (Bourdieu, 1986)



# Soft skills and digital inequalities

- Children are trained from childhood in what Darmon describes as **multitasking**. Plus, there are **legitimate uses** for digital tools, particularly for information research and monitoring, but also for communication and self-exposure (Granjon, Pasquier, Boyadjian, ...)
- This also raises the emergence of a little-mentioned soft skill: **the ability to manage one's social image, one's social declarations on social networks, one's sources of social information**, and so on
- In a society of quantification, **evaluating people is becoming increasingly commonplace**. But it's not just a question of evaluating a service rendered: **the human relationship is an integral part of the equation, and sometimes weighs more heavily than the service itself**.



# Negotiating Identity in a cross-cultural setting:

## A reflection on pedagogical choices in Hybrid Learning and staff E-Tandem

**Presenter:**

**Dr. Nicole Divoux Ringuette**

**Representing institution :**

**Université of Paris Nanterre**

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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# Outline

1. Background
2. Theoretical Framework - My thesis and its relation to this learning framework
3. E-tandem and Online Course – Hybrid format
4. Identity and its relationship with the project
5. The big question
6. Pedagogical Theories and Framework
7. Learning objectives
8. Result – successes and failures
9. The overall take



# Contexts and constraints



E-Tandems

Target learners

Contexts

Issues

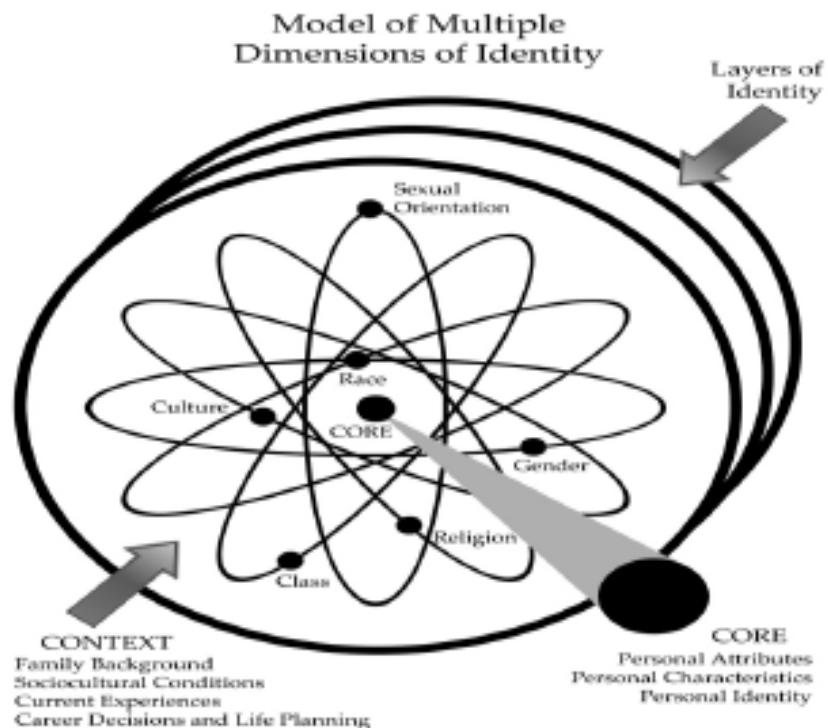
# Contexts and constraints



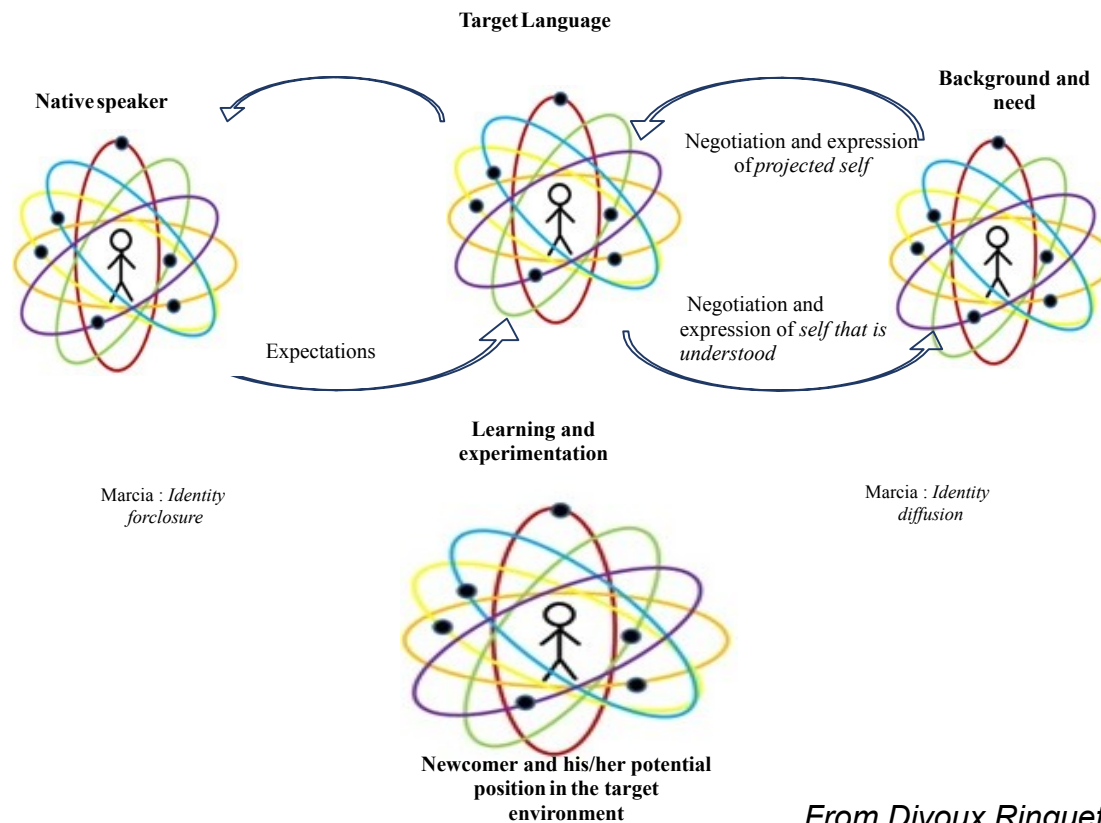
***Does focusing on learner identity and context in content and exchange opportunities make a difference?***



# Layers of theory aimed at one target

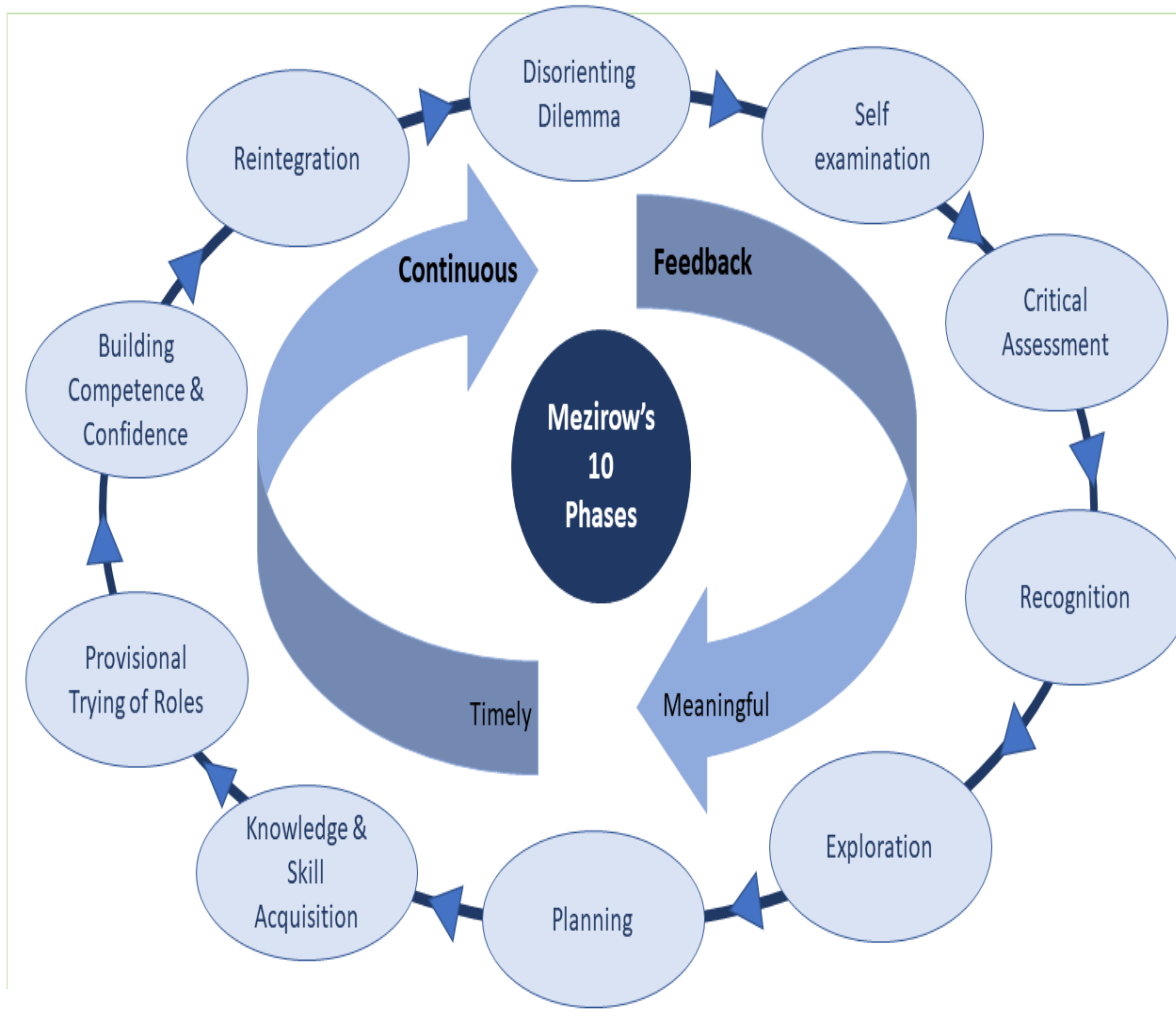


*\*with Susan Jones' permission (March 2016)*



*From Divoux Ringuette, 2019*





## Four dimensions of learning: And then some

### CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning)

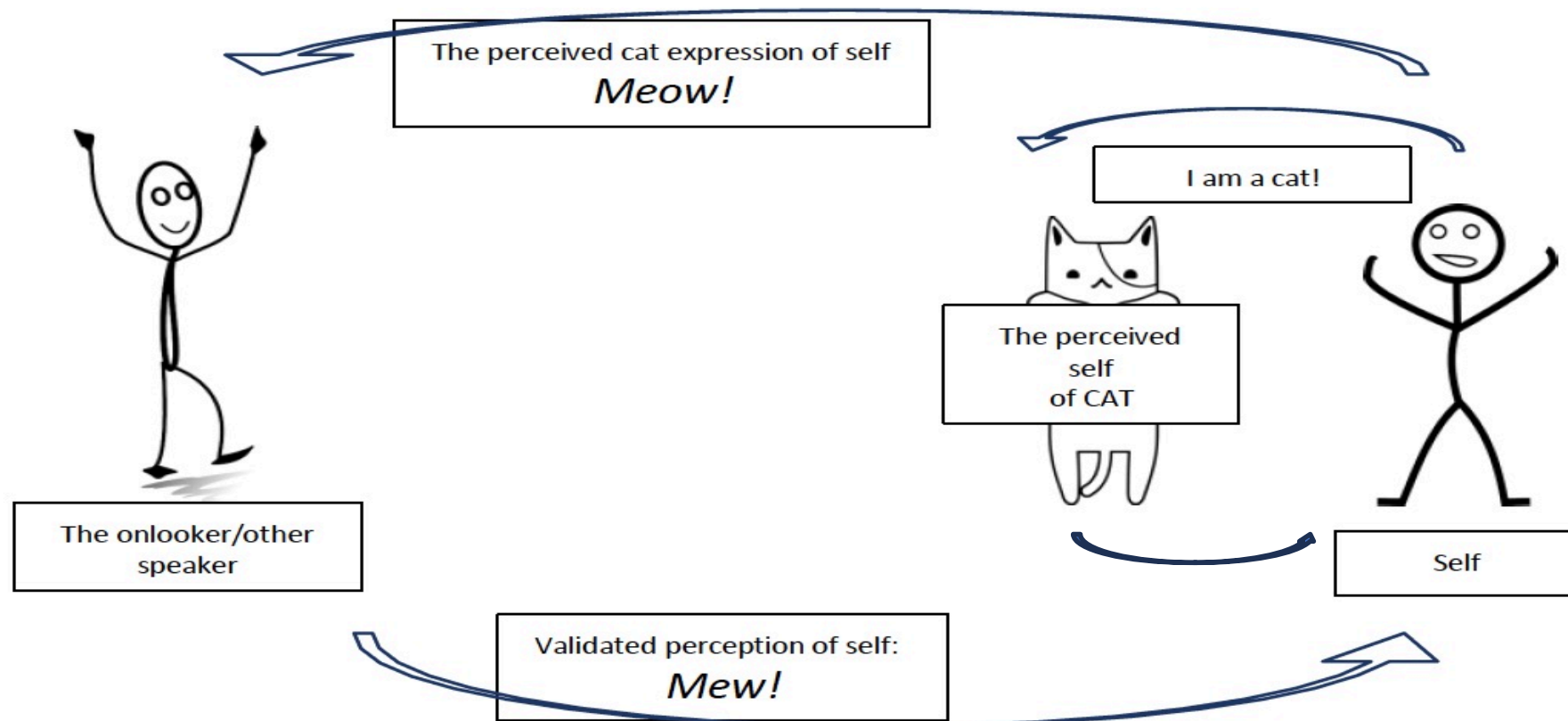
- Collaborative, interactive, content-based TRANSFORMATIVE
- Focus on reflection and understanding of reciprocity – MEOW ME Model

Tutor Facilitated

E-Tandem - EMC – English as a Medium of Communication

- Collaborative Common Goal and Project Mobility
- International Travel

Speaker listener roles of reciprocity – MEOW ME model



Adapted from Divoux Ringuette, 2019

# Content of the course

Modules	Objectives	Consistent online focus
Introductory	Introduce learner to mission and methodology, provide learning tools needed to engage, share, and continue learning autonomously	Introspective and Transformative Learning exchanges
Module 1	Understand and apply power, posture in cross-cultural situations. Understand the specificities of spoken interaction. Better identify what aspect of language and culture are subtle and how that can impede communication.	
Module 2	Using Case Study Analysis, better understand and identify situations of communication breakdowns. Develop a better understanding of academic cross-cultural situations	
Module 3	Apply and identify strategies that allow better communication during situations of cross-cultural communications breakdowns. Develop a stronger academic voice. Experiment and better understand the role of curse words in culture.	
E-Tandem	Apply autonomous learning in context. Share and exchange on culture, language, and strategies. Create a common goal final project in the target language.	

# DATA

	<u>ONLINE LEARNERS</u>	<u>E-Tandem Participants</u>	<u>E-Tandem Completion</u>	<u>Active Tutors</u>
<i>Brno</i>	/	/	/	/
<i>Caligari</i>	22	18	16	/
<i>Masaryk</i>	27	21	19	3
<i>Potsdam</i>	9	2	2	/
<i>Rennes1</i>	23	18	17	1
<i>UPN</i>	19	12	8	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>4</b>

## Results and Success

Cet échange était très intéressant. Le tuteur joue un rôle essentiel pour prendre confiance en soit...

The e-tandem part of the programme was great (and very well-matched), it was a very nice encounter and I felt very lucky to be able to practise my English in this context.

The course was dense but valuable and my partner was great, I am going to meet with her

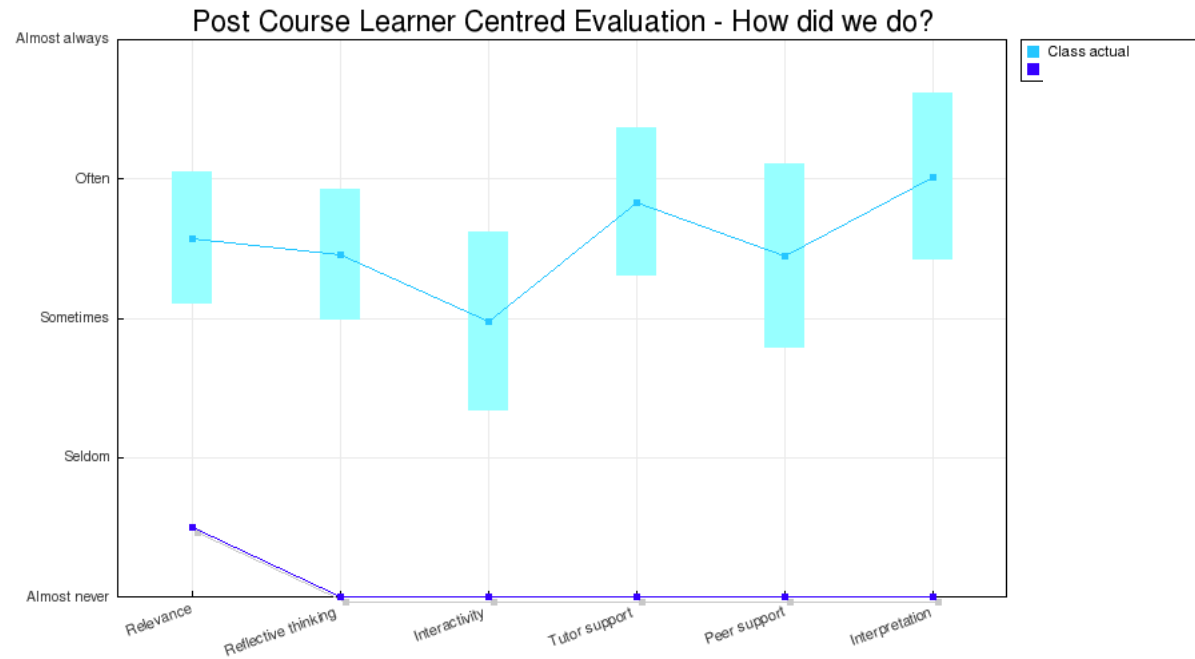
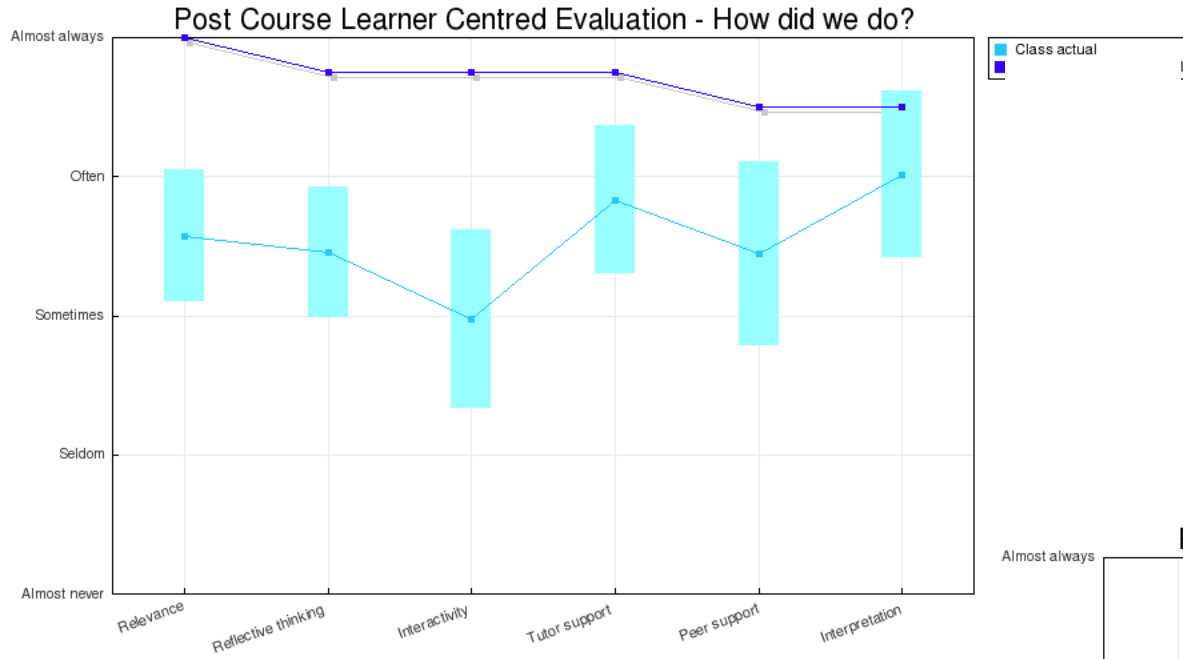
It helped me to better understand some aspects in my professional and personal life that could be related to the intercultural environment. It also impacted my confidence to speak English

The activity has impacted my intercultural competences and really broaden my horizons.

Cet échange était une opportunité, je suis vraiment contente d'avoir pu y participer. Je remercie mon tuteur David Fuller de son implication et Hana mon E Tandem pour les échanges.

# Post Course Satisfaction Survey Results

	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
<i>Course focus interests me</i>	8	13	8
<i>Learning is important to my professional practice</i>	15	8	4
<i>Learn how to improve my professional practice</i>	11	10	4
<i>Thinking critically about learning</i>	10	15	2
<i>Critically thinking about my own Ideas</i>	10	14	3
<i>Ask other students to explain their ideas</i>	10	8	2 (7 almost never*)
<i>Other learners value my contribution</i>	7	9	7



# What is the take?

- All in all the staff learners were happy and expressed a greater sense of confidence in not only their expression but also their ability be reflective and to hear their counterparts.
- Some even made the trip to visit their learning pairs truly actualizing this mission's goal of international collaboration.
- And now that I am ready to look at the data more closely – There is a lot to talk about.





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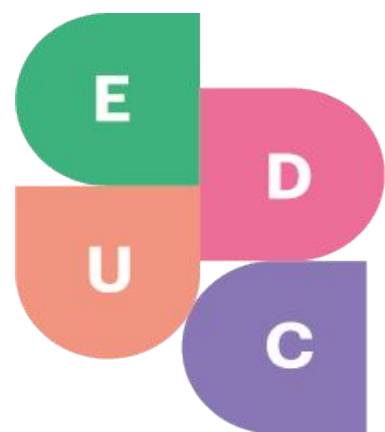
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**EDUC-SHARE at UPN - September 19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**2 Days Soft Skills Colloquium-Workshops**

**Acquiring, transmitting, valorizing "soft skills" in the academic *milieu*:  
an EDUC experience**



**European  
Digital  
UniverCity**



This project has received funding  
from the European Union's Horizon  
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programme under grant agreement  
No 101017526

**Université  
Paris Nanterre**

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# Professional environments and «intimacy skills»

**Introduction to  
EDUC-SHARE Soft Skills initiative and experience**

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**Claudia Dell'Uomo d'Arme**


## 1st edition - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills training (November 2022- January 2023)

*How it was conceived and set up?*

- ❖ Diffusion of a plurilingual survey, available in the six languages of the EDUC Alliance
  - > Purpose of **querying** the relationship between Soft Skills, international contexts and lifelong learning
- ❖ EDUC-SHARE partners took steps **to collect the inventories of courses and workshops**
  - > Prominence of personal experiences and working aptitudes within a **shared learning context**
  - > Focusing on the need of performing different roles and acquiring new *knowledgeS*
    - ❖ The training sessions matched the scope of joining people from **different countries and cultures**
    - ❖ The Soft Skills programme was **accessible** to all the members of EDUC

- ❖ The training groups brainstormed about:
  - > Development of **intercultural** approaches
  - > **Cooperation** at a *multi-level scale* of university
  - > **Link** between **cognitive and environmental theories**
- > Importance of connecting **historical common heritage and individual memory**
  - > **Implementing transversal skills**

within everyone's "active life" also by opening access to scientific, historical and citizen's *archives* \*

- ❖ Evaluation form issues  **positive feedbacks** reporting of shared perspectives on the necessity of creating trans-cultural interactions, enhancing professional spaces and practices, be part of a mixed relational world
- ❖ **Soft Skills Attendance certificate** delivered to all the Alliance participants

\* RÉF.

*ARCHIVI AL PRESENTE, ARCHIVI DEL PRESENTE*

Seminars by **Judith Revel** in collaboration with **IUAV Teatro e Arti performative '22/'23**

## Career progression \*

*Improvement, development and empowerment*



vocabulary that is often associated to the world of financial/economic strategies  
or Human Resources management

+

the semantic value expressed by these group of words is more and more declined to stress out:  
*political attitudes or psychological gestures/« postures (French) »*  
that could be observed/compared/analyzed switching from  
a public or political perspective to a personal point of view, and very intimate experiences

*\* The process of learning and improving your skills  
so that you can do your job better and progress to better jobs (Cambridge Dictionary)*

- **Background reflection** starting from the philosopher Étienne Tassin's \* reading of Hannah Arendt's political thought (from H. Arendt's books: The Human Condition, 1958, On Revolution, 1963):

→ As Tassin underlines, while Arendt speaks of "alienation of the world" (in the Wébérien sense) she points out a social mindset that matches with a "detachment from the world" (*Weltfremdheit*). For her, this detachment is a pillar of the modern and contemporary alienation perceived both as objective and intersubjective

In Arendt's perspective :

Alienation = detachment from the world

This process gradually separates human beings from their own world (the reality they crafted).

In some way, they become alien to the world as well as to the others.

Finally, it is alienation that provokes acosmism = the loss of the world

→ Our contemporary world is affected and overwhelmed by the notion of « **acosmisme** » (French)



\* RÉF.

Étienne Tassin // Le trésor perdu. Hannah Arendt, l'intelligence de l'action politique, 2017

*Acosmism* issued from Modernity →

the progressive capitalist movement of losing the world while people living inside it are losing  
« their human condition »

- Staying in a **worldlessness** means to lose the sense of doing / creating the world itself.
  - At the same time, people can be / feel lost as :
    - agens/productors
    - *interactive unique-beings* variety
    - a whole **species**

Living together = Sharing different life environments = Being linked one to each other

- *How to face the lack of modern sense and working-alienation - emerged with capitalism?*





The french sociologist Pierre-Michel Menger proposes to discover \* one's own self inner capability / potential / ability of featuring and crafting the **matter** of his/her own production processes

*In other words...*

Our intellectual or manual work could become **creative**,  
then potentially newfounded / dialectical / subversive while it is pursued -daily- as  
**a process of research** with the goal to acquire  
new knowledges about relational and productive human networking

→ Research of **otherness** within his/her own creations /crafts and across the others' making



\* The raise of unplanned and surprising elements becomes  
*a strategy* for renewing (subjectively and collectively) political *habitat cores*  
+ for changing / challenging everyone's "generative environment", tools & skills, communication



From Menger's perspective, the contemporary active life can be described as :

- a technological and digital aggregations of individuals
  - living through a relational environment
  - co-enhancing productive networks
  - co-crafting cultural objects

**« there is no more powerful element important in a job, in the broadest sense, than learning tools. The more we learn in the course of our professional experience, the more the creative, and creative elements are integrated elements of human production »**

**Pierre-Michel Menger // Le travail créateur - S'accomplir dans l'incertain, 2009**

*Indeed...* →

If our times are subjected to the *invisible power* issued from the exploitation of bio-political bodies and resources, we can conceive / perceive our existences « being operational » while *performing, resisting and creating* through the web of the nowadays social-productive system

*Because...* →

Our lives are truly dominated by a full-life and full-time logic of production  
we need to find solutions for avoiding  
a paradoxical **e-economic sustainment and sustainability system of living < > acting**

Through this perspective, why it is interesting today to refer to H. Arendt's perspective ?

1. The originality of her thinking is marked by the way "her mind" was deeply intertwined with the flux of world changes, modern communication (such as propaganda) and historical events.

To face the movements of History, and not to be subjected to them, she proposes to observe reality -and its web / network of power relationships- by developing an **active thinking**. What does it mean ?

**Active thinking** is a tool for crafting, creating, acting within reality, fitting the balance between system of powers, body production, social and intellectual needs.

People indeed can :

- bring new awareness into their actions
- refuse aimless and involuntary systems of thinking < > acting
- develop and practice individual and personal engagement, participation in the *Vita Activa*

2. To Arendt, politics is the realm of public « mass exchange », interaction and dialogue in which people come together, judge, and act. Politics does not belong exclusively to governments >> *consequently*

**One's ability to think politically.** What does it mean ?

**The act of performing intellectual and personal (intimate) skills**

by which everyone can be / become capable of *observing* and *judging* the real world by performing it and its (own) sources



→ *How to develop that ?*

*By using a double-tool for the individuation of the self \* and an "imagery" of the self :*

« the process by which a person becomes a psychological "in-dividual," that is a separate, indivisible unity or *whole* »

« the better and more complete fulfillment of the collective qualities of the human being »

- ❑ **Self-determination** : pursuing and analyzing the variety of public and intellectual practices of criticizing, disturbing, and opening up the concrete political horizons of our societies
- ❑ **Self-localization** within political spaces : underlying Arendt's experiential phenomenology that "the place" where individuals come to stand and hence "the conditions they are subject to" are the pillars for constructing a **political theory of this world** \*

→ She considers this **imagery** as a tool for articulating epistemological thinking, a practical way of shaping the reality and becoming "true citizens"

- This is an interpretive practice moving forward the political integration of particulars within their community
- The notion of « **la capacité de penser soi-même et les autres collectivement** » can empower people to acquire a full of meaning-chance of performing reality as contemporary political subjects
- **Learning** from real things, then from History, which would be re-acquired by **everyone's agency** stirring up singular choices and consciousness



\* RÉF.

**Hans-Jörg Sigwart** // The Wandering Thought of Hannah Arendt, 2016  
**Carl G. Jung** // Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, 1966 ; The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, 1959

→ *How to do that ?*

By adopting two *dynamics of observing reality*, highlighting the importance of a sociological point of view:

- ❑ **Integration of the double notion of *event and birth***, conceived as a unique / powerful everyone's Nativity (also metaphorically)
- ❑ Solving the equation between uniqueness / personal thinking and human action /condition as essential to politics > crucial for constituting the « **new-native common world** »

→ Because in Arendt's perception of reality, politics and the world are strictly intertwined, both conditions need to be experienced by acting through them, through the real things of daily life

→ If human beings erase in their mind the opportunity of a *world-to-come*, the destruction / annihilation of the whole *political cosmos* could concretely, *bodily* happen



→ *Indeed*

From a creative and critical perspective, men and women's crafts and activities need to be perceived and set up as unique, historical actions / acting performances

By shaping our working & cultural crafts-objects  
our (political and social) actions could /should be deployed as creative tools for :

- reading reality
- learning from reality
- transmitting knowledge across reality : the knowledge of our *in-making* and *by-making* experiences
  - To use and transform our bodies and brains, to empower both of them  
with the goal to be **creative agents < > means,**  
we need *to perform ourselves*, as well as our tools & skills, throughout the Arendt's living notion of :

« *Radical state of belonging to the world* »



- Without the human **belonging** and involvement in the cultural-natural and historical environments, spread out from men and women's personal and collective *telling-the-history*, the opportunity to conceive *plurality* as the major systemic approach to develop **in-common** a multicultural and inter-connected *time & space* for all the species in-living, risk to be denied
- The human exchanging link between to-live and to-produce could drown into an **acosmic**, barbaric structure in which all relationships and communication risk to be destroyed

### *MEANWHILE / ON THE CONTRARY*

- Adopting a double-shape behaviour (*posture*) characterized by a biopolitical resistance & resilience, through which *individual bodies* « move and make » for re-appropriating and re-building their inner unknown skills, everyone's **intimacy** can be exploited for acting consciously the "natural **belonging to reality**"



→ *Suggesting a CONCLUSION*

*by referring to the contemporary philosopher of UPN, Judith Revel who elaborated her thought in connection with Michel Foucault's opus.*

- Revel's famous article of 2010 - Construire le commun : une ontologie (Building a commun : an ontology), she underlines the importance, for a political new society project, of the Foucauldian concepts of ***biopower and biopolitics***



*FOCUSING ON*

1. Difference between *biopower* (literally the power over life) and *biopolitics* as a politics of **expression of the power of life**
2. Biopolitics framework and context = spaces for resisting the *devices of power* on bio-environments
3. Need to build an "articulation movement of bodies" among differences/singularities → Some relevant topics such as : political organisation, institutions and the "*utopias for the common*" could be placed at the core of individual reflexion, daily thinking
4. Difference : self-liberation process ≠ political collective construction



**« Biopower and Biopolitics :  
on the one hand, the difference that exists between biopower – literally  
the power over life – and biopolitics as a politics of expression of the  
power of life; and on the other hand, the need to build, within the  
framework of a biopolitics »**

**Judith Revel // Construire le commun : une ontologie - 2010**

In other words, and regarding the **biopowers over life**,  
the question raised by J. Revel could be formulated as the following



*faced by powers that exploit life in its wider social, relational, affective, linguistic, productive meaning,  
as inter-connected existences\*,  
how can we\* resist, how can we act in Resilience,  
without necessarily becoming the **other of power?***

### *SUM-UP*

- Overturning Arendt's préconisation of acosmism, if we want to improve our skills within a collective environment, we need to think that, historically, the possibility of establishing civic equality and freedom has been possible on the basis of a de-subjectivation, or de-singularization, of the figure of the political subject described as a lonely atom, gravitating in an empty human universe.
- Indeed, a double-bind processes of de-subjectivation and inter-connection, can be activated by developing soft skills as creative means for organizing intercultural spaces for resistance/resilience.

***SOFT SKILLS***

***PRESS RELEASE***

## EDUC Online Staff Training Programme in *21st Century Skills*

### *Soft Skills Training Session*

First Edition - Winter 2022-2023



Your world  
just got  
bigger.



During the last Winter term, from November 2022 to January 2023, the EDUC Alliance launched the first edition of its *Staff training programme* conceived with the aim to point out the relevance of Soft Skills throughout professional environments.

Developed within the EDUC-SHARE project, the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills training* offered a series of **online sessions** to all their faculty and administrative staff.

Across all the Alliance members, the virtual training was entirely animated in English by professors and researchers who wished to share their expertise in various fields of human science.

The point of departure for designing and constructing an educational offer that would concretely meet the interests of such a heterogeneous public was a survey campaign, conducted by Nanterre University.

All the EDUC project teams strongly cooperated with Soft Skills specialists and human resources representatives bringing out a plurilingual survey, available in the six languages of the EDUC Alliance. It was distributed via EDUC social media, but also by regular newsletters and email contacts.

The survey was framed with the purpose of querying the relationship between Soft Skills, international contexts and lifelong learning. The survey results were anonymised and participation was fully voluntary.

After gathering the results from the survey, EDUC-SHARE partners took steps to collect the inventories of potential courses and workshops underlining the prominence of personal experiences and working aptitudes within a shared learning context.

Focusing on the need of performing different roles and acquiring new knowledge.s, the training sessions matched the scope of joining people from different countries and cultures.

Afterwards, supported by the Alliance partners, Nanterre University as the WP6 leader of EDUC-SHARE project, succeeded in finalizing the Soft Skills programme, which was accessible to all the members of EDUC.

Proposing to choose among seven different sessions, around two hundred people, including administrative staff, teachers, researchers and doctoral students, applied to take part in the training.

“Embracing cultural diversity” or “Design thinking through storytelling”, for example, constituted two of the choices composing the rich and attractive offer. Through the wide range of humanities, the contents and frameworks of the sessions featured some core topics characterizing EDUC Alliance actions.

Indeed, all the training groups brainstormed about the development of intercultural approaches, the cooperation at a multi-level scale of university and the link between cognitive and environmental theories. Moreover, they discussed the importance of connecting historical heritage and individual memory, as well as the asset for implementing transversal skills within everyone’s “active life” by opening access to scientific *corps*.

Few working sessions welcomed a large number of people (close to fifty participants) though the majority of the courses have been animated by a smaller group of almost fifteen academic components. At the end of each session, the instructor asked to fill up the evaluation form by which people could confirm their involvement and give their feedback on how well the program took place. Afterward, each university had to send an attendance certificate to all the Alliance participants.

The response had been strongly positive while reporting common perspectives on the necessity of creating trans-cultural interactions, enhancing professional spaces and practices, drawing on the mixed relational world of daily life.

The results then, pretty encouraging, would be a spur to improve the training preparation of Soft Skills 2<sup>nd</sup> session which will probably occur during the 2023 fall semester.

***The project “EDUC-SHARE” received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101017526.***



This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101017526



## **SOFT SKILLS at PARIS NANTERRE and throughout EDUC PARTNERS' COOPERATION: a *DOUBLE-BIND* EXPERIENCE.**

January 2024

by *Claudia Dell'Uomo d'Arme*

UPN - Project Manager Educ-Share

In conjunction with the upcoming end of Educ-Share, we felt it important to give visibility to the second-phase activities that had taken place around soft-skills subject. The human resources strategies which pay attention to soft skills acquirement are becoming increasingly significant for improving the European projects design.

Especially, if we look at the renewed needs in the professional environment triggered by



the digital era changes, it is clear how human resources management is coupled with new issues and challenges. Indeed, as the task leader on the topic from the outset, UPN has implemented two interconnected actions giving space to a reflection both on research contents and possible co-operations looming in the development of transversal skills through academic communities.

First, a physical meeting was organized by UPN which involved not only the local community but also significant representatives of EDUC Alliance. They travelled to Paris for two study-days with the aim of fostering exchange on opportunities addressed to the university staff for acquiring new skills. At the same time, UPN argued for deepening a research-oriented approach to Soft Skills in order to evaluate how disciplines from Humanities observe the employment conditions within present society.

Therefore, divided into two distinct moments, the meeting included a seminar part, in the form of a conference, and another more hands-on part including workshops and roundtable discussions.

On September 19 and 20, 2023, the EDUC Soft Skills meeting titled *Acquiring, transmitting, valorizing 'soft skills' in the academic milieu: an EDUC experience* welcomed contributions from several UPN researchers aiming to provide theoretical insights for implementing a constructive Soft Skills training methodology. Then, researchers

and professors spanning Applied Sociology, Information and Communication Sciences, Work psychology, Foreign languages teaching, and University Engineering in Higher Education, presented their findings by intersecting a « soft skills query » with professional contexts and levels, especially the academic ones.

With the purpose of stimulating an interdisciplinary debate, all the participants contributed to very interesting discussions. Partners reported on the processes embraced within their faculties highlighting good existing policies and devices for the development of such skills, dedicated to their staff. Moreover, focus was directed on spotting the contribution of Human Resources while enhancing soft skills activities. Through a comparison of different practices, partners shared insights from experiences previously carried out within their own university.

Also, during the workshops performed with brainstorming techniques and role-playing, participants engaged in a genuinely productive interaction, grounding on personal know-how and contributing from within to the emergence of a deeper reflection on the theme. The more interesting result led to the awareness that engaging in activities focused on soft skills prompts us to interact with new communicative transitions, such as digitization and technologization of professional and social relationships.

We jointly yielded some good material for in-depth analysis and researches endorsing the construction of the second edition online Soft-Skills training programme. It has been initially conceived as an opportunity for EDUC staff -both administrative and academics- to interact within an international context. Indeed, by employing English as a *lingua franca*, the training's goal was precisely to allow interaction among a heterogeneous audience, witnesses to multiple concerns related to the management of daily professional lives, specifically in academic structures.

Throughout all the last November, the online training sessions took place, led by various professors and trainers from EDUC universities, with truly positive results while stating the reception of the training and the EDUC staff participation.

If we consider some feedback provided by participants, such as « *I really appreciated the online training session and it profoundly inspired me with a lot of interesting tools... For the future, I would appreciate similar training sessions and tips on learning strategies when two or more languages are at stake... I think it is also very important that different work levels come together in order to run such a transformation project... It fosters cooperation and better knowing each other* » a desire for dialogue and interaction between different academic services clearly emerges. Also, the successful results match the potential for implementing and creating new human and professional environments within EDUC framework and settings. These spaces would welcome the value of differences, multidisciplinary skills and transversal attitudes, international dialogue, considering them as assets to be acquired by



all, and crossing very actual inquiries. Truly, the positive outcomes reinforce the value of such training programmes and emphasizes the ongoing efforts to integrate Soft Skills into academic and professional spheres.

In summary, the dedication to Soft Skills promotion, as demonstrated by the Educ-Share project and UPN's leadership in this endeavor, not only does it address current professional needs, but it also lays the groundwork for the future in both human and professional living worlds.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101017526



***SAMPLE***

***CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE***



**European  
Digital  
UniverCity**

EDUC-SHARE  
ΕΔΟC-ΣΗΑΚΕ

**Certificate for successfully completing  
the online staff training in 21st century skills**

# Staying Motivated in another language

on November, 2023

organized by the University of Paris Nanterre

**to Anna Szegedi**

**Management Consultant at the University of Pécs**



**Juliette Sanchez Mondésir**  
Directrice Générale des Services  
Adjointe Ressources Humaines

at Nanterre, Signature



Horizon2020  
European Union Funding  
for Research & Innovation

Certificate no. 01-22-2024-12



**European  
Digital  
UniverCity**

EDUC-SHARE  
EDUC-SHARE

# CERTIFICATE SUPPLEMENT

The European Digital UniverCity (EDUC) is an alliance of six universities – University of Potsdam (Germany), University of Cagliari (Italy), Masaryk University (Czech Republic), University of Pécs (Hungary), University of Rennes 1 (France), and University Paris Nanterre (France) – striving to build an innovative transnational academic community integrating students, scholars, staff and management on the basis of shared European values. With a main focus on research, knowledge transfer and citizen engagement, EDUC-SHARE is committed to strengthen the research network among the partner institutions. The online staff training program in 21st century skills as organized by EDUC-SHARE is designed to support employees in their lifelong learning ambitions adapted to their working environment.

Operating in international contexts can be difficult for several reasons — particularly when we have to work in a different language. Low motivation, language anxiety, and difficulty focusing are just a few of things that can make it difficult to develop our language skills at work. This training was designed to help you incorporate language development into your daily routine and become a more effective, confident foreign language user.

Topics covered:

- \* Tools for autonomous practice (resources, websites, AI chatbots...)
- \* Tools for reflexive practice (journals, discussion boards...)
- \* Strategies for keeping motivation high & stress low

\*\*This program was open to those with a B1 level of English or greater.



Certificate no. 01-22-2024-12