

## Deliverable 8.5

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### Evaluation of the cross-disciplinary online curriculum

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Abstract	The report describes the steps taken to set up the curriculum, evaluates its success and presents recommendations to improve and extend it to a larger population of students.
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## Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to describe the steps taken to set up the curriculum: the choice and number of selected courses, the transcription/subtitling of online courses, and the description of the procedure for students. It then aims to evaluate its success in quantitative and qualitative terms, from the perspective of the students as well as of the institution, and to present recommendations to improve and extend the curriculum to a larger population of students. The initial desired outcome was allowing Master students to acquire cross-disciplinary knowledge along with intercultural and language skills.

## Introduction

The initial purpose of Task 8.2 was to create an international cross-disciplinary curriculum within the course of the regular 2-year Master program by replacing physical mobility with virtual mobility for students willing to complement their Master's program with courses in other fields of study without spending a full year abroad. However, it was decided early on that the task had to evolve and that the cross-disciplinary curriculum courses would become available to Bachelor and Master students.

The main objective of this scheme is to expand the students' disciplinary horizon by giving them access to courses not directly connected to their home program and discipline. Students who are interested in developing their interdisciplinary skills but cannot (or are not interested in) participate (ing) in the EDUC gap year or a traditional mobility scheme, can then have the opportunity to experience virtual mobility by enrolling in cross-disciplinary online courses.

This deliverable will include a description of how the cross-disciplinary online curriculum was set up and which processes were put into place, as well as present the results and their assessment. Finally, it will introduce recommendations made by students who took the courses during the academic year 2021/2022 as well as recommendations made by EDUC staff members.

Because the cross-disciplinary online curriculum courses and the online courses on European knowledge were developed in a very similar fashion and had objectives in common, it was decided early on that both types of courses would be worked on together. For this reason, there will be few differences in the implementation and evaluation processes and recommendations for both types of courses.

## 1. Setting up the cross-disciplinary online curriculum

### 1.1. Selection of courses

In order to create the common courses offer, each university of the Alliance identified existing courses at BA and MA level that could be relevant for EDUC students. In order to identify the right courses for the curriculum, partners agreed to select ones that would fulfill the following requirements:

- Fully asynchronous or blended learning with different educational formats such as podcast, slide cast, video course recorded, textual documents, interactive and collaborative activities and resources via an LMS system (Moodle platform).
- Open to Bachelor's or Master's students;
- Low or no prerequisite;

- Taught in English or in local languages (in which case written materials will have to be translated into English, and online and audio materials subtitled in English);
- A teacher commitment is needed to provide pedagogical support in English for EDUC students (tutoring and assessment);
- Available at your home university over the last years;
- Minimum duration of 1 semester (fall or spring);
- 15 to 36 teaching hours;
- Equivalent of 3 - 6 ECTS credits;
- Recognized by a diploma supplement or/and EDUC certificate (to be dealt with WP3). The credits equivalence does not necessarily mean that the student will have to collect ECTS credits.

It was also decided that the courses' selection would comply with the following principles:

- The total number of courses would be a minimum of 12;
- Each university would provide at least 2 courses;
- The selected courses could either be existing online courses or existing offline courses transformed into new online courses;
- The final selection would offer a wide diversity of disciplines in the three disciplinary domains identified by European Research Council (Physical Sciences and Engineering, Social Sciences and Humanities, Life Sciences);
- The final selection would offer approximately as many courses in Semester 1 as in Semester 2.

After identifying courses that met these criteria, the universities agreed on 13 courses. Each partner was then in charge of making their courses accessible to students (conversion into online courses and subtitling in English).

All courses were to be available on the EDUC Moodle (except for five courses that took place when the EDUC Moodle was not operational yet).

**Table 1**

*EDUC online courses offer*

<b>Name of the course</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Academic period</b>
Understanding Regulation, Theory and Practice	University Paris Nanterre	10/02/2022 - 07/04/2022
Luxury: social psychological approaches for professionals	University Paris Nanterre	07/03/2022 - 15/05/2022
Discrimination Law	University Paris Nanterre	14/03/2022 - 20/05/2022

Analytical Methods for Ceramic Studies (e-learning)	Masaryk University	13/09/2021 - 13/02/2022
XXth-Century Czech Philosophy	Masaryk University	13/09/2021 - 13/02/2022
Digital Competence Development course	Masaryk University	13/09/2021 - 13/02/2022
Alexander the Great	Masaryk University	13/09/2021 - 13/02/2022
Introduction to Media Studies	University of Pécs	01/09/2021 - 01/12/2021
Welfare and Social Economy	University of Pécs	01/02/2022 - 01/05/2022
History of Medieval Art	University of Cagliari	23/05/2022 - 02/09/2022
Marketing and Corporate Communication	University of Cagliari	23/05/2022 - 02/09/2022
Culture and Society of Arab Contemporary Countries	University of Cagliari	23/05/2022 - 02/09/2022
Citizenship of the European Union	University of Rennes 1	24/01/2022 - 03/04/2022

### 1.2. Enrolment of teachers and projects follow-up

The methodology for the identification of the courses and the contract terms and conditions established with the teachers involved, were proper to each partner. HR benefits were provided at the discretion of each partner according to their local contexts.

All teachers were offered support from Pedagogical Engineers at their home university during the preparation and implementation of their project. Pedagogical Engineers provided assistance regarding the adaptation and the creation of pedagogical content on the EDUC Moodle. The digital aspect of the online curriculum was a new pedagogical concept for many of the teachers. Thus they were offered training by Pedagogical Engineers on how to adapt a face-to-face course to an online and asynchronous version, how to use digital tools, videos, etc. Pedagogical Engineers also provided technical support in case of technical problems.

In addition, teachers received assistance for the translation and subtitling of their materials in order to make them available for all students across the Alliance. EDUC Pedagogical Engineers and staff members also prepared the EDUC certificates for students, based on the information provided by teachers.

### 1.3. Application process for students

The EDUC Course Catalogue was developed as a common tool by the Alliance in order to simplify the application process for students. The Course Catalogue provides students with information about – among others, all the courses available in the cross-disciplinary online curriculum, as well as the necessary information in order to apply to these courses. These included the language of the course,

starting semester, mode of the course (synchronous or asynchronous), platform used, prerequisites etc.

As for the promotion, since the Course Catalogue is online and accessible to students at any time during the year, it serves as a constant way to promote the online courses offer. Moreover, given the different academic calendars and local constraints, each partner was also responsible for the promotion of courses at their university at the start of / during application campaigns, using the appropriate communication channels in order to reach their own students.

It was decided early on that a decentralized approach was easier for applications: after finding the course they want to enroll in on the course catalogue, students can apply through the application link before the set deadline. The university responsible for the course can then review the applications and let students know whether they have been accepted or not, as well as all the necessary information in order to gain access to the platform used for the course.

Students are usually accepted on a “first come, first served” basis, under the condition that they are enrolled at one of the Alliance’s universities for the academic year and that they meet the prerequisites, if existing.

## 2. Implementation and assessment of the cross-disciplinary online curriculum

### 2.1. Number of courses and students’ participation

As for the number of courses made available to EDUC students in the framework of the cross-disciplinary online curriculum, the initial goal was to have 2 courses per university, in order to offer a total of 12 courses.

The number of places available for each course was adapted depending on the constraints of the teachers and each university’s local context, some being able to accept 15 students, while others agreed to teach their course without a limited number of places for EDUC students.

The expected number of students attending the course was initially set to 30 students per course, with an average of 5 per university, in order to reach at least 360 students a year through 12 courses.

At the end of the first phase of EDUC, 13 courses have been implemented.

**Table 2**

*Number of students involved in EDUC online courses*

Name of the course	Number of places available	Number of applications received	Number of students enrolled
Understanding Regulation, Theory and Practice	40	20	12
Luxury: social psychological approaches for professionals	30	46	26
Discrimination Law	50	51	29

Analytical Methods for Ceramic Studies (e-learning)	35	20	10
XXth-Century Czech Philosophy	without limit	13	13
Digital competence development course	300 (in total, no fixed number for EDUC students)	62	22
Alexander the Great	without limit	41	20
Introduction to Media Studies	30	43	43
Welfare and Social Economy	15	7	7
History of Medieval Art	50	11	5
Marketing and Corporate Communication	50	58	40
Culture and Society of Arab Contemporary Countries	50	34	22
Citizenship of the European Union	30	8	6

The overall number of students who participated during the 2021/2022 academic year is 255 and the average student dropout rate is around 52.7%. Feedback from students and EDUC staff members helped identify potential reasons for these rates and suggest recommendations in order to improve them in the next few years.

**Table 3**

*Number of students involved in EDUC online courses during the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year*

<b>Name of the course</b>	<b>Number of places available</b>	<b>Number of applications received</b>	<b>Number of students enrolled</b>
Digital competence development course	300 (in total, no fixed number for EDUC students)	19	12
Alexander the Great	without limit	18	12



History of Medieval Art	50	28	24
Marketing and Corporate Communication	50	110	53
Culture and Society of Arab Contemporary Countries	50	70	62

The overall number of students who participated during the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year is 163 and the average student dropout rate is around 45.3% for the three courses that had already ended at the time of this deliverable.

## 2.2. Milestones and indicators

Several milestones and indicators were established by the Alliance in the initial EDUC proposal, regarding the number of courses, students and regarding the procedure.

**Table 4**

### *Achievement of the quantitative indicators*

<b>Expected indicators, Milestones and Outcomes</b>	<b>Actual figures and comments</b>
Validation of the procedure	A common concept note was developed in order to define selection criteria for the courses. A joint procedure for applications was also developed by the partners and implemented through the Course Catalogue.
Launch of the experimentation	The experimentation was launched during the 2021/2022 academic year.
Number of online courses available for the curriculum (including a maximum of 12 new online courses)	13 courses were made available for the online curriculum during the 2021/2022 academic year.
Number of subtitled/translated online courses (including a maximum of 12 new online courses)	13 courses were subtitled and/or translated.
Number of students involved in these online courses: 30 students expected per course (180 students for 6 courses in Year 2, 360 students for 12 courses in Year 3)	A total of 255 students were enrolled in the online courses during the 2021/2022 academic year for 13 courses. The Covid-19 pandemic caused many disturbances in the internal organization of the universities. As a result, concerning the offer, only one session could be implemented for the majority of the thirteen courses. Another significant impact of the disturbances was the low average course occupancy rate (overall the courses could have been taken by more than 500 students).

## 2.3. Evaluation of the cross-disciplinary online curriculum

As stated before, the evaluation processes were the same for the European knowledge courses as well as the cross-disciplinary online curriculum courses, which means the evaluation led to common conclusions.

### 2.3.1. Evaluation from the teachers' perspective

Two main means were used to evaluate the online cross-disciplinary curriculum from the teachers' perspective: a teacher's questionnaire, and individual decentralized (individual or micro-group based) meetings with teachers at the end of the courses. Through the online survey, teachers were asked questions about the following topics:

- The EDUC support and follow-up
- Their online course
- Their skills development and acquisition
- Their project's perspectives and sustainability
- Their general satisfaction

#### **EDUC staff support and follow up**

According to the survey, the most used EDUC services were the EDUC Moodle and support for project development. Regarding the answers about the use of the EDUC Course Catalogue as a service, it is more likely that teachers did not know that their courses were actually being promoted there, as only two teachers mentioned it as having used it. The EDUC Academy service was not mentioned by the WP8/10 teachers who responded. Although they are part of the EDUC Academy, training sessions given by local Pedagogical Engineers were not presented as such at the time of the survey.

Nine out of ten teachers were supported for the development of their project. A large majority of them were supported on the technical and pedagogical aspects and a majority of them were satisfied with the support received. Half of the teachers also received financial and administrative support and seemed mostly satisfied with it as well.

All teachers were satisfied with the progress as well as the outcome of their project. Half of the teachers were quite satisfied with the project's temporality too. More than half of the teachers were little to moderately satisfied with the regularity of project meetings.

As a project management tool, most teachers mentioned Microsoft Teams, with some also using Google Workspace, and a majority of them seemed satisfied with the tools they used for project management.

#### **Online courses**

Half of the teachers communicated fairly regularly with the students (once a week or more), while the other half exchanged less frequently with them. More than half of the teachers were fairly dissatisfied with their exchanges, citing the general passiveness and low participation of the students as well as the low number of students participating during the offered synchronous tutoring sessions as reasons for their dissatisfaction.

All teachers declared that their final project was close to what they first imagined. They could fulfill their professional goals as they developed new materials and obtained a structure and content in line

with their initial expectations. Nevertheless several teachers find that there is still room for improvement regarding their project.

### **Skills development and acquisition**

According to the teachers, the skills that were mostly impacted by their EDUC project were digital, project management and to a lesser extent their language and rhetorical skills. There was mostly little to no impact on their skills related to coping with difficult / challenging contexts and their intercultural communication and collaboration skills.

The responses to the survey highlight a strong need for training in the fields of digital, project management as well as the language and rhetorical skills.

Of all recommendations made by teachers, anticipation is at the top of their list. They highlighted the importance of being able to invest a lot of time in the project, and of starting working on the project as early as possible because of the significant workload. According to the received responses, curiosity is also an asset.

On the technical side, teachers recommended having and/or developing video recording and editing skills, as well as following the advice of the Pedagogical Engineers. The teachers also recommended focusing on communicating more with students, which implies having good language (especially English) skills.

### **Project perspectives and sustainability**

Out of ten teachers, nine indicated that they would be willing to repeat their course, whereas one would rather not. A majority did not feel the need to make the project change in scale.

On the pedagogical side, the cooperation / interaction between students and teachers, the students' participation as well as the evaluation of students should be improved according to the teachers. On the technical / administrative side, the teachers requested technical assistance with making videos. One teacher also suggested enrolling fewer students to better engage with them.

Overall teachers seemed satisfied with the content of their courses. On the technical side, the video format and the EDUC support team are aspects the teachers want to maintain. Regarding the course characteristics and the methods of teaching/learning, positive aspects that were highlighted by teachers are the asynchronicity of the course as well as the implementation of self-paced learning and self-assessment quizzes.

### **General satisfaction**

Some of the teachers declared that their EDUC project changed their perception of virtual mobility and exchanges as they realized that mobility through virtual technology is easier than they expected and that asynchronous courses can actually work.

More than half of the teachers are open to developing more mobility courses in order to reach more students, but also because some of them came to a better understanding of the content of their course and the best ways to teach it. However some teachers disliked the virtual aspect of their course and would prefer face-to-face teaching. When asked if their experience made them want to further

internationalize their courses or develop new courses using virtual mobility and exchanges, teachers' opinions were divided.

Several teachers expressed a need for more "transparency" in regards to EDUC processes and during the project development. Some of them also request more time to develop and work on their project.

Only one of 10 teachers stated he/she would not recommend an EDUC project to fellow teachers. Although some teachers highlighted the time-consuming nature of EDUC projects and the high level of responsiveness required over several months, they also found it an overall interesting and enriching experience, as it enabled them to develop new skills (including digital), discover alternative teaching methods, as well as work in an international environment. These are reasons why they want to recommend EDUC.

Key factors making EDUC attractive for teachers include: the development of new skills and the use of new tools and media, the support received from EDUC during the development of their project, the internationalization of their course and their teaching, as well as the challenge that their project represents.

### 2.3.2. Evaluation from the students' perspective

The main tool that was used for the evaluation from the student's perspective was an online questionnaire sent at the end of each course, which included questions about the following topics:

- Communication
- Courses they took
- The EDUC learning platform
- Their general satisfaction

EDUC staff members also seized every opportunity to ask students for their general opinion about EDUC online courses and their experience directly: at other EDUC in-person events or at general university events for instance.

#### **Communication**

According to students, the most efficient means of promotion were the emails from local universities. Emails from the EDUC staff and the EDUC website also emerge but to a lesser extent.

The information about the courses and the registration process are very clear and rather easy to find and follow but incomplete. Students would have liked to find more details about the course schedule (end and start dates), course content, overall course structure, workload, and evaluations.

#### **Courses**

The documents, materials and activities were rated from satisfactory to good. Some students noted that documents were incomplete, some videos needed improvement, some materials were not in English.

Students liked the fact that the courses were asynchronous because they were more adapted to personal constraints. However there is a strong demand for more interaction with the teacher/platform [the average] and collaboration with students from other universities [the majority]. They made several suggestions such as: adding a chat on the platform, adding oral activities, or adding more synchronous sessions.

Students were not prepared for the workload and indicated very different hourly dedication. They reported that it was difficult to stay motivated because there was a strong feeling of loneliness and lack of guidance/supervision, not enough intermediate quizzes before the final exam and that it was hard to combine the EDUC online courses with their regular ones. For example a student asked for the possibility to complete courses with a high workload in two semesters.

As for the language of the course, using a different language of learning was a major obstacle for a large majority of students. It is important to consider this difficulty, however it needs to be nuanced with the fact that students also appreciate this opportunity to work on their English skills.

### **EDUC learning platform and tools**

The survey indicates that the EDUC Moodle was the most used learning tool by the students. As a majority of courses were taught through the platform, the majority of the students got to use it.

Moodle was deemed user-friendly and functional by students, but also limited for collaboration with other students according to the students's answers.

Microsoft Teams and Zoom were also used by some of the students.

### **General satisfaction**

Overall, the courses met the personal objectives of the students and their professional objectives to a lesser extent. They would repeat the courses and recommend them, and indicated that those courses are less stressful than their regular curriculum. They also liked that these courses offered other disciplines.

Regarding digital learning, students felt that it had a positive impact in the way that it pushed them to become independent in their learning, change their approach to education, discover different support and interesting sources of knowledge. However, the opinion that digital learning facilitates collaboration between students was very divided. In the comments, some students said that there was no interaction, no discussion or chat/forum, no assessments, no essays, and no group assignments. Despite the digital aspect, some courses did not include collaborative activities.

According to the students, international learning is relevant in the current globalization context, as nowadays countries are more connected with each other and it is mandatory to acquire international notions and work with people from other countries. They also appreciate the fact that it helps them leave their comfort zone. On the other hand, as the collaboration with the other students was often very limited, several students did not feel the impact of international learning on this aspect. Among the kind of exchanges and collaboration they developed, the two answers that stand out are the "chat" functionality and "none", which means that many students did not experience much exchanges and collaboration with others. Yet students search for more collaborations with the international students as it allows them to improve their language skills, find ways to communicate and consider other points of view on the topic.

Students identified that they worked on several skills through those courses, which can be useful for their professional projects: communicate in a foreign language, improve their language skills and their digital skills, work in an international environment, do research with various learning resources. Also, some expressed that this experience could be an asset for their application to Master's degree programs later on.

Regarding their personal goals, students liked the opportunity to practice their English, cooperate with students from other European countries and acquire a global approach on various subjects.

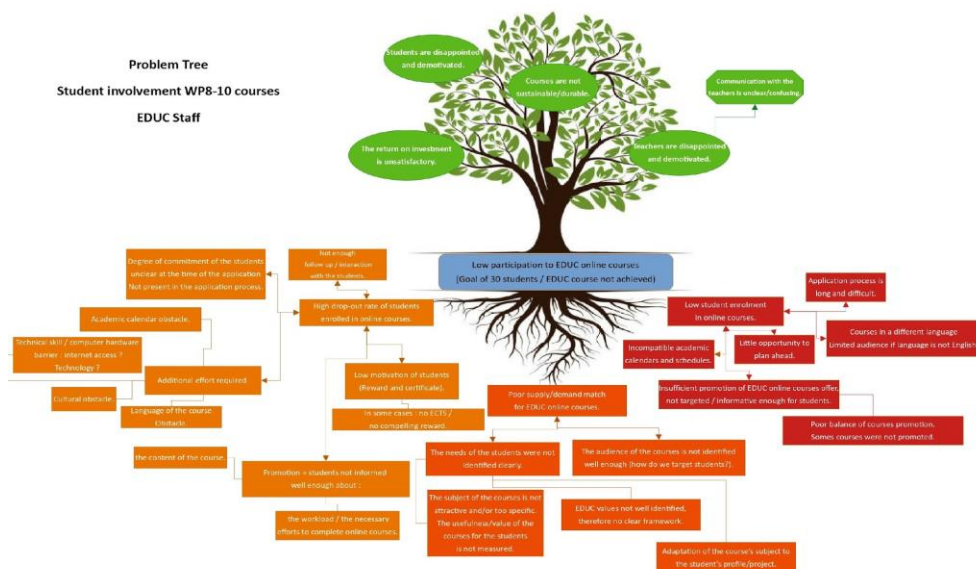
### 2.3.3. Evaluation from the staff members' perspective: Identified challenges

Due to the low average occupancy rate of the courses offered during the academic period 2021/2022 and sometimes high average student dropout rate of the courses, the expected number of enrolled students defined in the proposal was not met. It was therefore decided to reflect on the courses and processes from a staff member's perspective to identify the problems and obstacles responsible for the low participation in EDUC online courses.

As stated before the evaluation was common to the European knowledge courses as well as the cross-disciplinary online curriculum courses, therefore the staff members' analysis led to the same conclusions.

Each university was asked to reflect on the difficulties their EDUC teams had identified while implementing the courses and processes related to them, and to send their observations as well as potential causes for the identified difficulties. The feedback from all partners were then put together and analyzed in order to identify the main categories of problems that appeared during the implementation of the courses.

Three main problems were identified: the high drop-out rate of students enrolled in online courses, the poor supply/demand match for EDUC online courses and the low student enrolment in online courses. For each major issue, EDUC staff members detailed the related problems and barriers. The identified problems are presented in the following problem tree<sup>1</sup>.



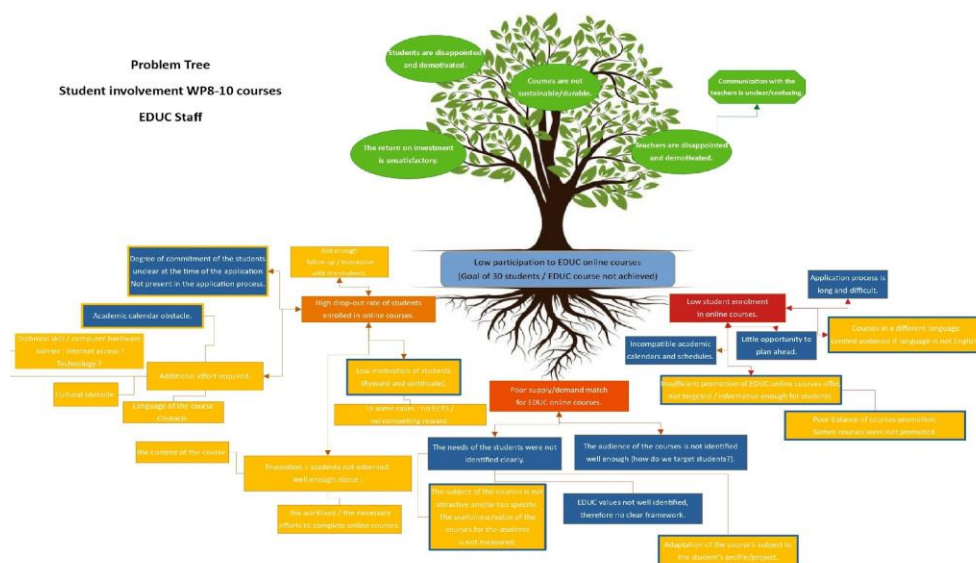
<sup>1</sup> The problem tree is available in the appendix.

### 3. Recommendations

The assessment of the implemented courses were complemented by two workshops, one with students and one with EDUC staff members, in order to work on a set of recommendations for further activities. As stated before, the evaluation process was common to the European knowledge courses as well as the cross-disciplinary online curriculum courses. It therefore led to common recommendations.

#### 3.1. Identification of the right levels of action for each identified challenge

Some improvements need to be made at the university level and others at the Alliance level. This distinction can introduce more flexibility for partners in the implementation of activities. An analysis of the previous problem tree helps to level out the problems and recommendations. It is interesting to note that some of the topics assessed as problematic by the staff were not identified as obstacles for students.



The problems in yellow are the ones that should be managed at the university level, taking into account the local context and the collaboration with local staff members outside of EDUC as well as the teachers.

The issues in blue are those that should be managed at Alliance level, such as developing a common framework, a common timeframe, and tools for collaboration and coordination.

The problems in yellow with a blue outline are problems for which solutions should be identified at Alliance level but whose implementation has to be done at university level.

The problems in blue with a yellow outline are activities that must be fully managed by the universities under the common framework.



### 3.2. Identification of solutions from the perspective of the EDUC staff members

The result of the assessment and the reflection of EDUC staff was the identification of three main problems causing the low participation of EDUC students in the online courses. Then, the partners identified smaller problems and the obstacles that caused these larger problems.

The next step was to prioritize and select some of these problems and come up with SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable/achievable, Relevant and Timely/time bound) objectives and suggest activities that can be implemented to solve them, which was done through an online brainstorming “workshop” session.

The objective of the workshop was to prioritize and select some of the small problems and define activities that could be implemented to solve the major ones. The EDUC staff members participating were divided into three focus groups.

The first group made the following suggestions:

- Offer a proper call for projects and develop truly new courses instead of importing an existing offer that may be hard to adapt. This implies giving time and funds to interested teachers.
- Define a clear course of action for these courses: targeted audience, format... Outreach/popularization is an easy to implement way of doing so.
- Offer a common valorization of said courses through ECTS to give stakes to hold onto for students. Possibly even find ways to integrate the courses in the degree curriculum of students, e.g. through container modules.
- The previous items will lead to a clear image of what we offer, and thus a clear image to communicate on. If these courses are offered as "the EDUC outreach courses" for instance, they must be identifiable as such everywhere in EDUC (Course Catalogue, Moodle, EDUC Website, Social media etc.).

The second group focused on the academic calendar, the promotion and incentives for students:

- For promotion, the information about workload and duration of the course should be highlighted. Some of the students dropped out because they did not expect such a long duration and additional workload for the course. A recommended weekly workload could be added in the course information in the Course Catalogue.
- Concerning the academic calendar, the access to the courses could be longer. The students could have the flexibility to complete the course in one month or in six months.
- As an incentive, the students could earn intermediate rewards such as badges. For example, "introduction to"/"intermediate knowledge in" or "gold/silver" badges. This could help students keep up with their educational pathway.

The third group focused on the application process which was deemed long and difficult:

- Agree at Alliance level on a list of all the information that is crucial to have in the Course Catalogue for each course, which would allow students to be better informed when they consider applying to a course. This list could then be taken into consideration during the further development of the Course Catalogue.



- Create a clear timeline for applications and courses, so that students know when to expect the EDUC team to contact them about the course, and so that they are aware of the courses' start and end dates from the moment they apply.
- Communicate more clearly and/or regularly with students. Several students felt “lost” after applying to courses. Communicating with them early on could help make the process easier for them, for example letting them know when they will have confirmation whether they are selected or not as soon as they apply.

### 3.3. Identification of solutions from the perspective of the students

The Alliance always seeks to improve student participation in the design and development of activities. Therefore, after analyzing the results of the online survey and in order for students to be able to have an impact on the EDUC courses offered, it was decided to hold a discussion round with students who took part in EDUC cross-disciplinary curriculum online courses as well as European knowledge courses.

#### 3.3.1. Structure of the students workshop

This discussion round was structured as follows:

**Activity 1:** Presentation of the students survey results to the students and discussion around these results.

**Activity 2:** Presentation of 3 problems selected by EDUC staff members among the ones reported by students in the survey (the lack of interaction with teachers and/ or other students, the adaptation of the course (subject) to the student's profile / project, the application process deemed long and difficult), and discussion round with students during which they were encouraged to write down their suggestions of ways to counteract these problems and improve the courses.

**Activity 3:** Discussion around three statements: “The course allowed you to add a different field of study to your curriculum”, “The course allowed you to improve your language and/or intercultural skills”, “The course allowed you to work towards your personal and/or professional goals”.

The initial goal was for 12 students from all EDUC universities (2 per university) to participate. However only 4 of them were able to join (2 from Masaryk University and 2 from University of Paris Nanterre). Considering the low number of students who participated it cannot be considered representative of all courses and student's opinions. Nonetheless this workshop was less about evaluating the courses than providing a space for students to discuss their experiences and have an impact on the way we improve our courses through the suggestion of solutions.

Of course, these suggestions do not take into account institutional and local limitations and may not be feasible from a data protection and/or legal perspective. Nevertheless they provide a good basis for new ideas and change in the coming years.

#### 3.3.2. Results of the workshop

##### Regarding the lack of interaction with teachers and/or other students

Students suggested several activities in order to make the online course more interactive.

- *Create a student profile on the EDUC Moodle:* create a space on the platform where students could introduce themselves to others through a short post, including what university they're from, what languages they speak, their interests. This would allow students to know who is taking the class with them in order to make the experience less « lonely ».

- *Hold an introduction synchronous meeting:* this would allow students to get to know their teacher and peers in order to facilitate interactions during the course of the semester.
- *Hold optional online synchronous sessions:* this would allow students to ask questions, discuss the course materials and would make the course more interactive overall. This would not necessarily have to be every week and could be occasional: dates could be set at the beginning of the semester in agreement with the students for example. The synchronous session should not be an online conference but an interactive session.
- *Include peer reviewing:* if synchronous sessions take place, then maybe create rooms for students to work together and discuss the session's topics for a short while, with the teacher being able to go to each room to answer questions and give more information.
- *Incorporate interaction on Teams during the synchronous sessions:* for courses that include synchronous sessions, include a channel for students to ask questions directly.
- *Implement interactions on social networks between sessions:* this would be a way for students to communicate in a more informal way than emails with their teachers and vice versa, but also to interact more easily with other students.
- *Include interactive videos:* one of the students suggested using interactive videos, i.e. videos on which you can click to answer a question for example, which he experienced in another EDUC language course. For example, the idea would be to create videos with quizzes at the end, where questions are asked and you then click on the right answer. The point would be to make the learning experience more « fun ».
- *Create an « online forum »:* have a space where (once a week for example) a few students would have to post a question in order to create a debate with the other students who would have to comment and leave their own arguments. The student who suggested this activity experienced it in another course outside of EDUC and found it very interesting.
- *Offer the opportunity for students to make short presentations about selected topics:* these presentations could then be made during one-off synchronous sessions with the whole group of students and the teacher.

### Regarding the adaptation of the course (subject) to the students' profiles and projects

Students were asked to reflect on the relevance of the subject of the courses. When asked how they would go about selecting adequate topics for new EDUC courses, students suggested following the overall trends in society and education in order to select subjects important to young people. What could be interesting would be for teachers to try and approach their subjects taking current trends into account.

In addition, the students made the two following suggestions:

- Provide even more options/topics in the catalogue: the students found that the current options are interesting but there could always be more subjects covered.

- *Provide more information « upstream »*: make sure that the course catalogue entails all the information that might help students determine whether or not a course suits their academical / personal goals, as well as whether or not they have the time and resources to take it and meet the expectations.

### Regarding the application process deemed long and difficult

Regarding the application process, the students suggested the following activities:

- *Communicate more with the students during the application and selection process*: keep them informed of the selection process and the expected start of the course, as well as the date they should expect an answer on whether they were selected or not.
- *Make sure that students know who they can contact*: at the university who provides the course as well as their home university if they have questions about their EDUC course.
- *Create a roster of EDUC online courses alumni*: this would allow students to have peers who already took a course whom they could contact to ask questions about certain courses and processes prior to sending their application.

### Additional suggestions

The conversation with the student led to additional suggestions regarding other problems they experienced:

- *Provide subtitles in English for all video content made by teachers*: a student shared that while the videos in her EDUC course included slides with key elements that were all in English, the teacher would explain everything in French without subtitles, which made her feel like she was missing out on more detailed explanations. Providing English subtitles for the entirety of the video when the teacher speaks in the home university's language would prevent this situation.
- *Make sure to provide all materials in English*: some extra materials, non obligatory but which could help students with the course, were not translated into English, which made it hard (if not impossible) for non French-speaking students to study them.
- *Provide subtitles in English including when the teacher is presenting in English*: because accents can differ which sometimes can make it more difficult for students to understand everything perfectly and also because there can be specific vocabulary or even names that students don't know. Subtitles would allow students to make sure they understand the full content of the video.

When asked if they would like to take an EDUC course that would include some parts in the receiving university's language, the students were of the opinion that it could be okay and even interesting to have a multilingual dimension to the course, as long as it is in a limited fashion and doesn't keep them from successfully following the course, and as long as long as the Course Catalogue specifies the languages so that they can apply knowingly.

### 3.3.3. Students' experience with cross-disciplinary curriculum courses

#### **“The course allowed you to add a different field of study to your curriculum”**

Both students chose topics that they already knew or that they had already approached. However they expressed that they still were able to learn new things. One of them added that since the course he took was taught from a Law perspective, whereas his normal classes are taught from a Political Science perspective, he was able to learn about aspects of the topic that he would not have been able to study otherwise. That is why he felt that he still was able to add a cross-disciplinary perspective to his curriculum (albeit a small one).

When asked whether they knew about this cross-disciplinary aspect before enrolling into the course their answers were different. One student knew already but he did not necessarily see much sense in taking a course tackling a completely different subject: he thought it better to take a course that would help him develop knowledge that he needs in his studies and/or would need in the professional field. The other student didn't necessarily know about the cross-disciplinary aspect, but similarly to the other student he decided to go for a course that was close to what he was studying and was interesting for him.

#### **“The course allowed you to improve your language and/or intercultural skills”**

**Language skills:** Both students felt that the courses didn't really help them improve their English. However, one of them shared that it was interesting for him to study a subject that he had previously studied in a new language, as it provided him with more specific vocabulary.

**Intercultural skills:** When asked about whether taking the courses provided them with an opportunity to learn more about the culture of the university whose courses they attended, they said they didn't necessarily learn a lot about the culture of the country of the university they studied in. However they both noted that they got to experience new ways of learning and were taught a little differently than at their home universities in some respects.

#### **“The course allowed you to work towards your personal and/or professional goals”**

Both students agreed that taking these online courses contributed to their professional goals, albeit in different ways. One of the students chose a course that tackled a subject he studies at his home university with a different academic perspective. According to him this course was also very practice-oriented, which he found was a positive thing for his professional future. The other student expressed that taking an online course had allowed him to know more about EDUC, making the course an entry point into the whole offer provided by the Alliance. He then participated in several more activities, which allowed him to meet someone from the professional field he was interested in and later on helped him find his first job after graduating his Master's degree.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the experience of EDUC phase 1 was overall satisfactory and promising for the future of the EDUC Alliance.

Although the context of the Covid-19 pandemic did hinder the implementation of the cross-disciplinary online curriculum, the Alliance still managed to implement thirteen online courses, which is one more than initially aimed for.

Most importantly, **“the world got bigger”** for 255 students and 14 teachers from across the 6 universities of the Alliance as they got the opportunity to take part in this international digital learning and teaching experience.

Following this experience, a majority of teachers wishes to continue and improve their courses and the feedback of students is overall positive. We have also observed that several students who took online courses during the 2021/2022 academic year have enrolled into new courses during the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year.

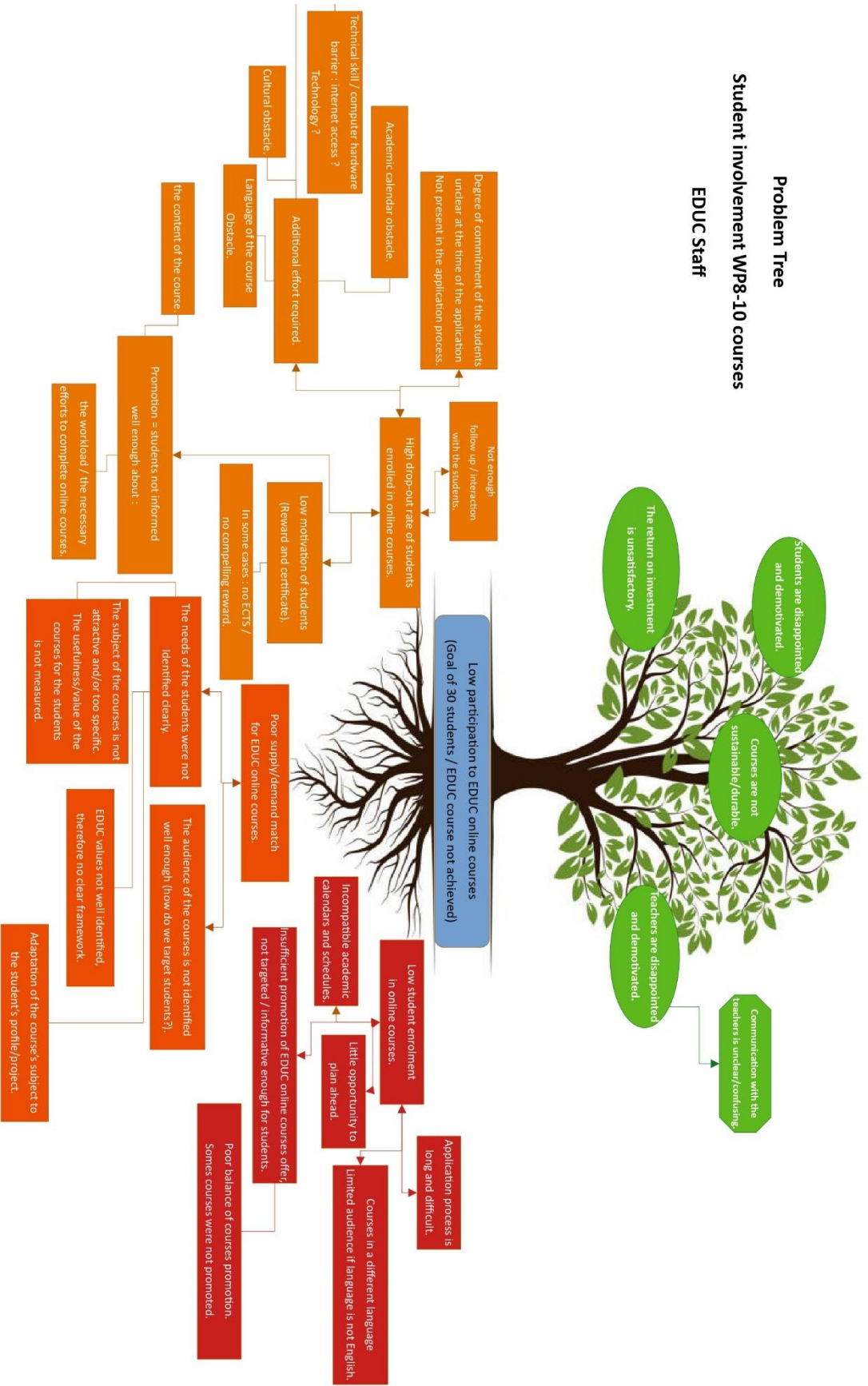
Moreover, it is important to emphasize the fact that the online courses offer is a visible activity provided by EDUC, and an entry point for students into EDUC and its wide range of activities.

With the objective of improving our offer, the main actors of the online curriculum were involved in the evaluation process in order to help the Alliance meet their needs and requirements during the next runs of the courses. Some of the interesting recommendations made by students, teachers as well as EDUC staff members could be implemented as soon as next semester, following a larger reflection with all the partners, including the new ones, to provide a unique and valuable learning experience during the next phase.

## Appendix

- Problem Tree (EDUC staff)
- The hierarchization of problems

# Problem tree (EDUC STAFF)





# The hierarchization of problems

