



Deliverable 9.3

Report on the Virtual Journal Clubs

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Project Acronym	EDUC
Project Full Name	European Digital UniverCity
Grant Agreement No.	612442-EPP-1-2019-1-DE-EPPKA2-EUR-UNIV
Programme	Erasmus +
Instrument	European Universities
Start date of Project	01/10/2019
Duration	36 months
Deliverable No.	9.3
Document name	Deliverable 9.3 - Report on Virtual Journal Clubs
Work Package	9
Associated Task	9.2
Dissemination Level	Public
Contractual Submission Date	September 2022
Actual Submission Date	February 2023
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Abstract	This document illustrates the methodology adopted in the EDUC “Virtual Journal Clubs” and the activities carried out to achieve the final objective of developing students’ critical skills.
Keywords	Africa; BRICS; Development; Globalisation; Critical Thinking; Research; Plurilingualism; Language

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1. Purpose of this document

The aim of this Deliverable is to report on the Virtual Journal Clubs (VJCs) realized by the EDUC Alliance during the implementation of the pilot phase. Specifically, the program, the methodology adopted -Journal club method-, and the activities carried out to achieve the final objective of developing students' critical thinking will be illustrated.

It must be pointed out that though in the approved proposal four VJCs had been planned, only two were realized. No topics had been identified in the proposal to give more freedom to interested teachers to promote their research field. However, despite expectations, no expression of interest on this specific teaching approach was shown by teachers of four out of the six Partners' Universities probably also due to the scarce knowledge of the methodology.

2. Virtual Journal Club “Africa and the new dynamics of the global system”



Virtual Journal Club

Program

October 1
Intro about the method, requirements and Lecture by Prof. Tarrósy about the African state and globalisation

October 15
Lecture by Prof. Tarrósy about Africa's international relations

October 22 - Group presentation 1
Article 1: "The European Union and global emerging powers in Africa: Containment, competition or cooperation?"
Article 2: "Globalisation and Migration in Africa."

November 12- Group presentation 2
Article 3: "Growth, Security, and Democracy in Africa."
Article 4: "Rethinking justice and institutions in African peacebuilding."

November 19- Group presentation 3
Article 5: "Debt, distress, dispossession: towards a critical political economy of Africa's financial dependency."
Article 6: "What Destination Awaits the Development of Botswana. The Sharp Edges of Diamond Dependency: Some Political Economy Considerations."

December 3- Group presentation 4
Article 7: "The Geopolitics and Economics of BRICS' Resource and Market Access in Southern Africa: Aiding Development or Creating Dependency?"

December 10
Closing session with journal editors and reviewers

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Co-funded by the
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Figure 1: Leaflet on the Virtual Journal Club “Africa and the new dynamics of the global system”

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The Virtual Journal Club on African studies entitled “Africa and the new dynamics of the global system” started in October and finished at the beginning of December 2021 and was organised within the EDUC Alliance by the University of Pécs. It was addressed to enrolled students of all the EDUC partner universities (the University of Potsdam, the University of Masaryk, the University of Cagliari, the University of Rennes 1, the University of Paris Nanterre and the University of Pécs).

- **Selection of students and promotional activity**

Each EDUC university selected students with a B2 level of English, that previously applied through an online form created by the University of Pécs. A total of 28 students took part in the first Virtual Journal Club, (4 from Masaryk, 15 from Paris Nanterre, 1 from Potsdam, 2 from UNICA, and 6 from Pécs).

Regarding the selection procedure, each University published an open/public call on their websites to identify the best candidates based on their English level (and the study programme in which the students were enrolled: for example, UNICA selected only students enrolled in the Master Programme in International Relations).

The deadline established for the application was 24 September 2021.

As for the promotion, the main news was published on the University of Pécs website <https://international.pte.hu/news/educ-online-courses-pecs>

Furthermore, each University used its institutional channels (website) for the promotion of the opportunity.

- **Implementation of the Virtual Journal Club**

The Virtual Journal Club was held online in English. Each lesson of the course lasted 1 hour and a half. The first two lessons provided an introduction by EDUC researchers, about the method to be implemented and an overview of the main topics of the Virtual Journal Club to be discussed. The methodology implemented is the reading and analysis of scientific articles, selected by EDUC researchers, about the African current political processes and Africa’s potential place and role in a possible new world order.

After the introduction of the Virtual Journal Club the students selected were divided into international working groups, to analyze and discuss the selected articles in virtual mode.

Since the main purpose was stimulating critical thinking, during the last lesson the different groups met virtually in a plenary discussion, to present their analysis and compare the study methodologies used in the various works and the results obtained, with the help of some invited journal editors and reviewers.

Students were required to attend the sessions, work in a group, deliver in-class presentations (counting 50% of the final grade), and write one final review of an article (counting the other 50% of the final grade).

- **Impact**

The participants at the Virtual Journal Club had the chance to get more engaged with analysing Africa-related political issues, understanding more about the new dynamics of the global world and the changing world order, and critically analysing and evaluating the effects and possible scenarios of the involvement of the new actors in Africa. Students developed critical skills in working with different academic sources, mostly scientific journal articles, ranging from American, and African to Chinese authors. Furthermore, they developed both their oral and written argumentative skills in defending their opinions.



Figure 2 Participants at Virtual Journal Club during a Group Presentation

3. Virtual Journal Club “Centres and Peripheries in Romance Literatures”

The Virtual Journal Club “Centre and Peripheries in Romance Literatures”, was a continuation of the international EDUC research seminar of the same name, which was held in Nanterre from 4 to 7 July 2022, as a sub-topic of the "Culture and Heritage" topic.

- **Selection of students and promotional activity**

The Virtual Journal Club “Roman Literature” was organised within the EDUC Alliance by the University of Paris Nanterre, addressed to enrolled students of all the EDUC partner universities (University of Potsdam, Masaryk University, University of Cagliari, University of Rennes 1, University Paris Nanterre, University of Pécs) in December 2022. There were between 10 and 18 participants per session and in total, 48 participants. Among them, Master students, PhD students, and Professors. The feedback is enthusiastic about the 'book club' format. Participants were required to have a B2 level to attend the session.

There was strong participation from Nanterre and Masaryk, good for Pécs, lower for Cagliari, and for Potsdam. Few participants attended more than one session. Each session was held in a specific language (French thanks to a professor of Masaryk in French literature and then with professors of Paris Nanterre in Spanish, Italian and Portuguese).

- **Implementation of the Virtual Journal Club**

This seminar brought together, for four days, more than 40 PhD/Master students and about fifteen confirmed researchers from five partner universities (Nanterre, Masaryk, Cagliari, Potsdam, Pécs). It was proposed here to continue the theoretical reflection, notably within the workshops and during the plenary session "Travelling Concepts" (glocalization; translinguism; transculturality; world-literature; nomadic/sedentary literature; notion/suffix "-phonics"; semiperiphery; inter-literature; Mitteleuropa; migrant writing, de peripheralisation, etc.) by focusing on reference texts and major concepts, thanks to an in-depth analysis of the texts and thanks to the critical debate with and between the students. Through the confrontation of their knowledge and approaches, and the confrontation with scientific texts, students could develop their analytical and critical skills, as well as their argumentative potential.

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- **Impact**

The coordinating teacher provided each group with a theoretical article and a literary text, in the chosen language (French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese). The students had to identify the questions, methods and results, and then submit them to their critical eye, arguing their opinion. Teachers and students who participated in the July seminar were enthusiastic to continue the exchanges. It helped to deepen the cooperation between researchers and teachers on this topic. Participants would like to keep this type of activity.

- **Details of the session : 4 sessions of 3 hours each**

Titles, themes, professor, and dates:

1) **Centres and Peripheries in French-language literature** (responsible teacher Petr Kylousek: kylousek@phil.muni.cz).

Theme: *Plurilingualism and Translingualism/Plurilinguismes et translinguismes*

Friday 25 November, 9:00-12:00

2) **Centres and Peripheries in Spanish-language literature** (responsible teacher Lina Iglesias: maria-lina.iglesias@parisnanterre.fr).

Theme: *The Spanish crime novel: dialectic between geographical, political and social centres and peripheries/La novela policiaca española: dialéctica entre centros y periferias geográficos, políticos y sociales*

Thursday 1 December, 9:30-12:30

3) **Centres and Peripheries in Italian-language literature** (responsible teacher Ramona Onnis: ri.onnis@parisnanterre.fr).

Theme: *Intersectionality and literary criticism / Intersezionalità e critica letteraria*

Thursday 8 December, 15:00-18:00

4) **Centres and Peripheries in Portuguese-language literature** (responsible teacher Gonçalo Cordeiro: g.placidocordeiro@parisnanterre.fr).

Theme: *Hybridism, ultraperiphery and cultural translation/ Hibridismo, ultraperiferia e tradução cultural*

Thursday 15 December, 9:00-12:00