Creative Teaching in Higher Education

Teaching Approaches, Support Structures and External Partners

Benefits | Challenges | Recommendations | Cases

Technisches Universität Dresden

Title

Creative Teaching in Higher Education:

Approaches, Support Structures and External Partners

Benefits, Challenges, Recommendations, Cases

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This ebook was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union as project n.º 2021-1- SK01-KA220-HED-000023022.

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

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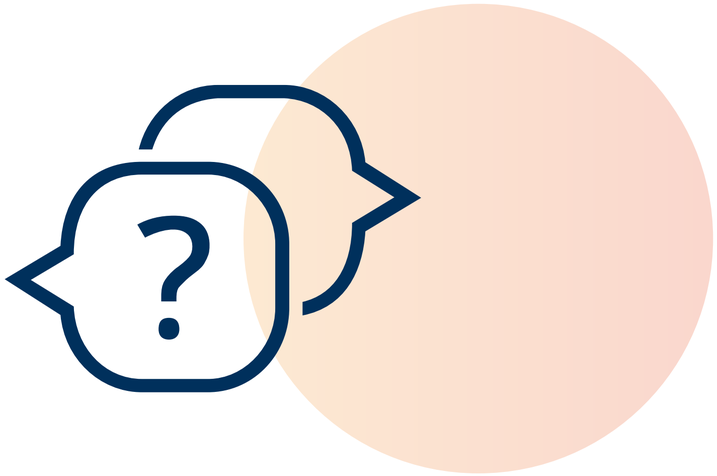
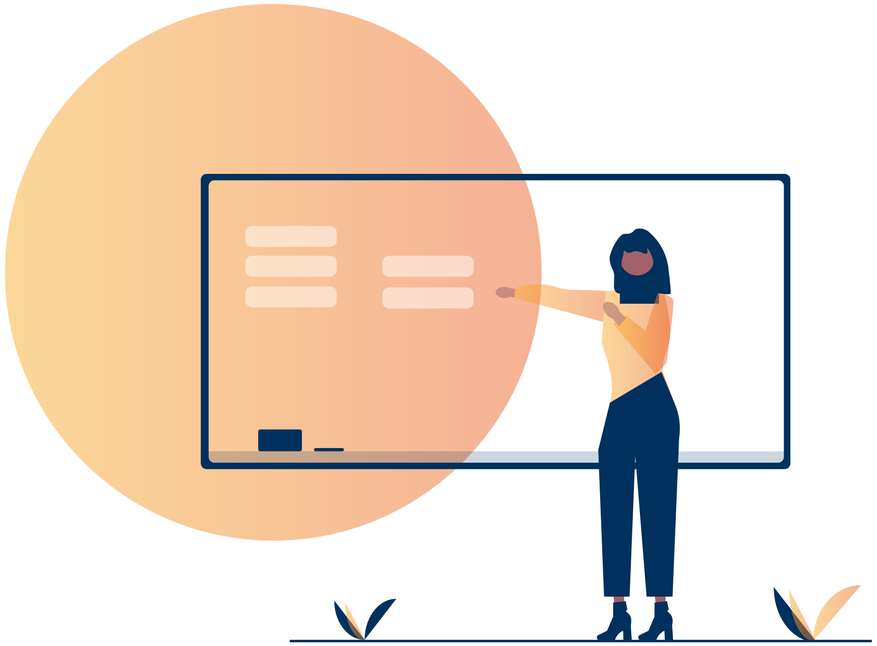


Within the framework of the ERASMUS+ project CT.Uni we analyzed 18 contributions from our partners regarding creative teaching approaches and 12 contributions from our partners regarding support structures for creative teaching and cooperation with external partners.

The goal of this publication is to produce a compilation of the cases as well as summarize the challenges and recommendations.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

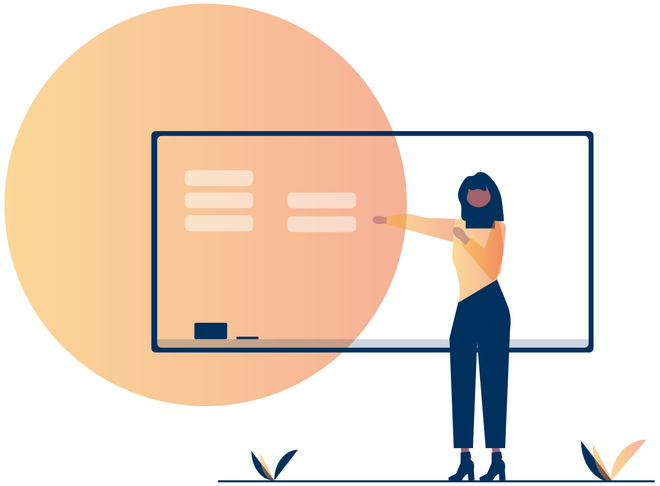
2.1 Definitions of Creative Teaching



Educators define creative teaching as a dynamic, engaging, and student-centered approach that moves beyond traditional instruction. It emphasizes sparking curiosity, encouraging critical thinking, applying knowledge in practical settings, and fostering independent learning. Creative teaching adapts to the needs of learners and often merges various disciplines, tools, and perspectives.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

2.1 Definitions of Creative Teaching



1 Engaging, Curiosity-Driven Learning

Creative teaching is described as a method of igniting curiosity and fostering a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. It transforms learning into an active and meaningful process rather than a passive transfer of information.

2 Dynamic and Adaptive Instruction

It involves tailoring the teaching experience to the learners' needs, using flexible and innovative approaches to encourage exploration and relevance. This includes shifting formats, incorporating surprises, and being responsive to class dynamics.

3 Bridge between Theory and Practice

Some educators emphasize the importance of connecting academic content with real-world application through creativity. It helps students apply traditional knowledge in novel ways, particularly in fields like design or architecture.

4 Mutual Development (students + teachers)

Creative teaching is seen as beneficial not just for students but also for the teacher's own development and enjoyment. It fosters a more stimulating and inspiring teaching environment.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

2.2 Methods and Techniques

Creative teaching employs a wide array of tools and methods, including prototyping, teamwork, storytelling, games, real-world projects, and discussion-based strategies. Flexibility, responsiveness to student needs, and integration of diverse approaches are central. Methods are iterative, participatory, and geared toward practical applications and problem-solving.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

2.2 Methods and Techniques

1 Using interactive and Hands-on Methods

Creative teaching involves tools like games, role-plays, field trips, and multimedia that allow students to engage physically and emotionally with content. These approaches foster experiential learning and help solidify understanding.

2 Teamwork, Empathy, and Peer Learning

Group work, empathy-based exercises, and peer presentations are used to build collaboration and communication skills. These methods mirror professional practices and enhance critical and social learning.

3 Reflection and Metacognitive Techniques

Teachers encourage students to reflect on their learning processes and decisions. This helps build awareness of how knowledge is constructed and fosters deeper problem-solving capabilities.

4 Flexible, Tailored Lesson Design

Methods are adapted dynamically to student needs and session goals, sometimes introducing surprise or novelty to spark attention. This strategy aims to align content with critical and innovative thinking.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

2.3 Benefits of Creative Teaching

Creative teaching fosters deeper understanding, critical thinking, and practical application of knowledge in students. It motivates learners, prepares them for complex challenges, and creates a more engaging and rewarding experience for both students and educators.

2 Creativity in Higher Education Institutions

2.3 Benefits of Creative Teaching

1 For Students – Increased Motivation, Critical Thinking, and Retention

Students are more motivated and better able to retain knowledge when engaged creatively. Creative tasks demand active thinking, questioning, and problem-solving that are crucial in both academic and professional contexts.

2 For students – Development of Collaboration and Real-World Skills

By engaging in group projects, prototyping, and real-life scenarios, students gain teamwork and communication skills. These experiences prepare them for multidisciplinary challenges beyond university.

3 For teachers – Renewal of Engagement and Reduced Burnout

Creative teaching helps educators find renewed joy in teaching by breaking routines and enabling professional growth. It keeps teaching fresh, stimulating, and personally rewarding.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.1 Challenges in Creative Teaching

Creative teaching opens exciting possibilities for student engagement and innovation, but it also comes with a distinct set of challenges. Educators navigating this terrain report difficulties ranging from student resistance and group dynamics to time constraints, assessment dilemmas, and institutional barriers. These challenges reflect the tension between traditional structures and the demands of more open, participatory, and dynamic learning environments.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.1 Challenges in Creative Teaching

1 Student Resistance to New Approaches and Mindsets

Educators frequently encounter student resistance when introducing creative, student-centered methods. Many students, accustomed to passive, teacher-led learning environments, struggle to adapt to autonomy, open-ended tasks, and the discomfort of ambiguity. This resistance often manifests as confusion, low motivation, or skepticism, especially when creative work diverges from traditional academic expectations.

2 Team Work and Team Dynamics

Group-based creative learning exposes challenges such as unequal participation, inconsistent commitment, and interpersonal conflicts. Some students dominate, others disengage, and group dynamics can suffer without careful facilitation. Educators note difficulties in maintaining motivation, balancing contributions, and achieving consensus, particularly when students bring different levels of motivation or skill.

3 Time Constraints and Curriculum Fit

Creative teaching demands time—for preparation, feedback, iteration, and deeper exploration of concepts—but course schedules and academic calendars are often rigid. Educators struggle to fit creative activities into already crowded curricula and highlight the extra effort required for class design, institutional approvals, and collaboration.

4 Challenges in Assessment of Creativity

Assessing creativity remains a persistent dilemma due to its subjective, context-dependent nature. Educators find it hard to design fair and consistent grading criteria that recognize divergent thinking and original work, while aligning with institutional standards. There is a tension between valuing the process and meeting formal evaluation requirements.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.1 Challenges in Creative Teaching

5 Institutional and Infrastructure Barriers

Systemic challenges include institutional resistance to change, lack of resources, and bureaucratic hurdles. Gaining support from colleagues or leadership can be time-consuming, and access to essential tools or interdisciplinary collaboration is often limited. These obstacles can delay or dilute creative efforts.

6 Technology and Digital Skill Limitations

Digital tools are essential for many creative activities, but technical problems and digital illiteracy — among students or faculty — can undermine the learning experience. Some students struggle with access, usability, or adapting to new platforms, while digital collaboration may lack the richness of face-to-face interaction.

7 Educator Workload and Sustainability

While creative teaching is rewarding, it is also labor-intensive. Designing unique sessions, offering personalized feedback, and continuously innovating can be exhausting, especially over multiple semesters. Educators report increased prep time, emotional labor, and the pressure to keep content fresh and engaging.

8 Language and Communication Barriers

Language differences and communication breakdowns — especially in diverse or international settings — pose additional hurdles. Students may struggle to articulate complex ideas in a second language, and coordination with external partners can be affected by mismatched expectations or availability.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching

Educators have developed a range of thoughtful strategies to support creative teaching and help students thrive in less traditional learning environments. From scaffolding tasks and managing team dynamics to modeling creative mindsets and linking learning to real-world practice, these recommendations emphasize structure, empathy, and relevance. Underpinning them all is a shared commitment to building inclusive, flexible, and supportive spaces where experimentation and collaboration can flourish.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching

1 Scaffolding and Gradual Introduction of Creative Methods

Many educators emphasized the importance of gradually introducing students to creative tasks, especially when they lack experience or confidence. Techniques include breaking down tasks into smaller steps, gradually increasing complexity, and setting clear expectations. This scaffolding helps reduce anxiety, boost engagement, and foster a safe space for experimentation.

2 Peer Collaboration and Team Dynamics

Teachers addressed challenges related to group work by encouraging early discussions around motivation, collaboration rules, and conflict resolution. Strategies such as group contracts, rotating teams, peer evaluation, and team-based assessment help manage imbalances and promote accountability, improving group dynamics and outcomes.

3 Modeling Creative Mindsets and Values

Educators highlighted the need to model curiosity, empathy, and a tolerance for mistakes. Demonstrating a growth mindset and connecting creative tasks to professional relevance helps students accept uncertainty and find meaning in creative processes. A culture that accepts failure and prioritizes process over product is key.

4 Managing Time and Structure for Flexibility

Clear planning, phased project stages, and adaptable timelines are critical for making creative tasks manageable. Educators recommend pre-planned structures that allow room for exploration while accommodating students' diverse attendance and pacing needs. Flexibility enables inclusive participation without compromising creative depth.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching

5 Accessible Tools and Low-Barrier Materials

To reduce barriers to participation, educators suggest using simple, widely available tools like paper prototypes and low-tech resources. This allows all students—regardless of skill level—to engage in creative tasks, especially at early stages. Making the creative process physically tangible and inclusive is a recurring theme.

6 Creative Assessment and Feedback Approaches

Innovative forms of assessment such as peer reviews, self-assessment, and process-focused grading help align evaluation with creative learning. Educators also explore hybrid models with GenAI-assisted feedback or moderation systems to support and validate peer input. These methods reinforce learning and improve feedback quality.

7 Contextualizing Creativity and Linking to Real-World Practice

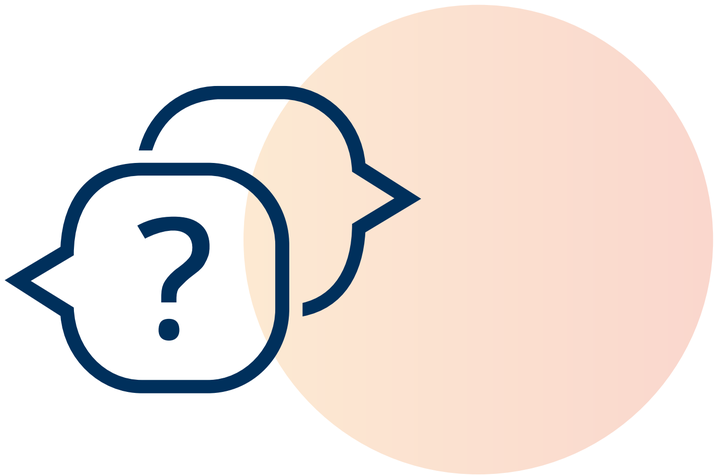
Making creativity relevant by connecting it to real-life professional scenarios enhances student motivation. Teachers link creative tasks to discipline-specific practices (e.g., design presentation, user empathy) and community engagement. These authentic connections help students see value in their efforts and prepare for future roles.

8 Teacher Support and Culture of Experimentation

Teachers recommend supporting one another through collaboration, sharing ideas, and building a teaching culture that embraces trial and error. This peer support not only encourages innovation but also spreads successful practices institutionally. Teachers also noted that visible success can influence others, including leadership.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.3 Creative Teaching Approaches



Problem-based and Scenario Learning

These approaches immerse students in real or hypothetical problem-solving contexts. Learners explore issues, apply theory to practical challenges, and collaboratively develop solutions, fostering critical thinking and ownership of learning.

HMW reduce AMR emergence

#creativity
#research
#inquery
#experimentation
#reflexion

Feasability ●●●●○
Student Engagement ●●●●○
Preparation Time ●●●●○ 10 h
Students ●●●○○ 15-25

Students can work in teams to develop a proposal targeting industry, authorities, clinicians, pharmacists, or the community to combat antimicrobial resistance.

Description

I applied problem-based learning through "What-If Scenarios" in addressing antimicrobial resistance. I present students with a scenario where a new drug-resistant bacterial strain emerges. They work in groups to research possible causes, explore prevention strategies, and design innovative solutions. This method encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world application, helping students grasp the complexity of antimicrobial resistance in biotechnology.

Infrastructure

For this challenge, I used a flexible classroom setup to encourage group work, along with digital collaboration tools like Moodle and dedicated tutorials during the semester. Multimedia resources, such as research articles and case studies, supplemented the discussion.

Effect on the students

These activities and learning experiences promote the engagement of students, the critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, essential for future careers.
Their performance in applying knowledge and practical/technical expertise in a flexible and open environment fostered a mindset of curiosity, openness to new ideas, and confidence in tackling complex challenges like antimicrobial resistance. So, they became more proactive in finding innovative solutions and encouraged a more engaged, hands-on attitude toward learning.

Production Management

#team work
#design thinking
#project-based learning

Feasability	●●●●○
Student Engagement	●●●●●
Preparation Time	●●○○○ 3-4 h
Students	●●●○○ 10-25

A „What-If“ scenario uses hypothetical situations to analyze the consequences of alternative decisions, thereby promoting critical thinking and teamwork.

Description

One of the creative approaches I applied was project-based learning in the form of a “What-If” scenario. Students analyzed a problem from a given issue and developed it into 4 phases (analytical, conceptual, verification and argumentative), worked in teams and used design thinking.

Infrastructure

I used project-based learning with topic from production management, design thinking tool like WWWH? persona, letter to grandmother. PowerPoint to make presentations. In class, we used a flipchart for brainstorming and sticky notes.

Effect on the students

Students actively generated ideas, worked in teams, and asked relevant questions about the topic. Their presentations were relevant to the topic.

What-If

#alternative scenarios
#critical thinking
#hypothetical situations
#team work

Feasability	●●●●○
Student Engagement	●●●●●
Preparation Time	●●○○○ 3-4 h
Students	●●●○○ 10-25

A „What-If“ scenario uses hypothetical situations to analyze the consequences of alternative decisions, thereby promoting critical thinking and teamwork.

Description

One of the creative approaches I applied was project-based learning in the form of a “What-If” scenario. Students analyzed alternative historical events and presented the consequences of changed decisions. This approach encouraged critical thinking, teamwork and the ability to make logical arguments. Students actively participated and mastered the subject matter in a fun way.

Infrastructure

I used digital tools like Google Classroom to share materials, Padlet to visualize ideas, and PowerPoint to make presentations. Students had access to online resources, historical documents and videos. In class, we used a flipchart for brainstorming and consumables for creating visual prototypes.

Effect on the students

Teaching with the “What-If” approach improved students’ critical thinking and analytical skills. Team work and discussions increased their engagement and confidence in expressing their opinions. This approach awakened interest in new perspectives and strengthened a positive attitude towards innovation, experimentation and creative problem solving.

Creative Scenario Mapping

#stakeholder analysis
#social norms
#sustainability
#critical thinking
#pro-environmental behaviors

Feasability	●●○○○
Student Engagement	●●●●○
Preparation Time	●●●●● 10-15 h
Students	●●●●● 40-50

The approach uses case studies and What-If scenarios to engage students in analyzing stakeholders and social norms, deepening sustainability insights.

Description

I adopt a creative approach by using case studies for stakeholder mapping and “What-If” scenarios to explore social norms in pro-environmental contexts. Through case studies, students analyze diverse stakeholder roles and interests, gaining insight into sustainability’s complexity. Meanwhile, the “What-If” scenarios enable them to evaluate how changes in social norms might drive or hinder pro-environmental actions in organizations, connecting theoretical concepts with practical applications.

Infrastructure

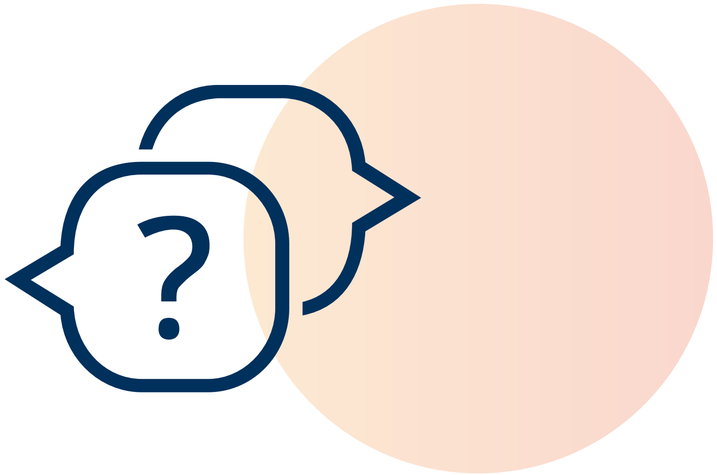
I used a flexible classroom set-up to support group work and discussions, along with digital tools such as Miro for interactive stakeholder mapping and scenario design. In addition, multimedia resources on sustainability concepts facilitated brainstorming and visualization.

Effect on the students

This approach boosted students’ engagement and critical thinking, as they actively connected theory with real-world applications. Working through case studies and scenarios enhanced teamwork and fostered open-mindedness, encouraging a proactive attitude toward innovative problem-solving in sustainability contexts. Students grew more confident in proposing creative solutions and demonstrated a lasting curiosity for exploring diverse perspectives on environmental challenges.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.3 Creative Teaching Approaches



Design Thinking and Prototyping

Built around user-centered processes and iteration, these approaches emphasize empathy, experimentation, and feedback. Students use prototyping or design thinking to generate, test, and refine solutions to meaningful problems.

Prototyping: Software Requirements Gathering

#creativity
#prototyping
#apps
#software requirements

Feasability ●●●●●
Student Engagement ●●●●●
Preparation Time ●●●●○ 12 h
Students ●●●○○ 15-21

Prototyping, used as a creative approach to help identify requirements in software development, promotes user feedback and promotes innovative solutions.

Description

Prototyping has been used as a creative approach to help identify requirements in software development. This process involves creating preliminary versions of an application, allowing interested parties to preview and interact with features before final implementation. Software development teams can better capture users' functional requirements, reducing misunderstandings and costly reviews. Thus, prototyping not only improves requirements identification, but promotes user feedback and more effective development with innovative solutions.

Infrastructure

In the creative process, digital tools, like Figma, Adobe XD, DrawIO, Miro, were used to create prototypes and design user interfaces. The prototypes created by the students facilitated the validation of ideas and interaction with users.

Effect on the students

The "Prototyping: software requirements gathering" approach made students more active in the development process and increased their understanding of the requirements. This approach encouraged critical thinking, problem solving, and practical learning. Observable impact includes increased engagement, team collaboration, and confidence in software implementation. This approach promoted adaptability, essential in an ever-changing world and even more so when building software. It also encouraged an attitude of experimentation and constant feedback, essential for ongoing innovation.

Design Thinking Challenge

#design thinking
#innovation
#empathy
#creativity
#problem-solving

Feasability ●●●○○
Student Engagement ●●●●●
Preparation Time ●○○○○ 1-2 h
Students ●●●○○ 15-20

A creative teaching approach that empowers students to think critically, empathize with users, and generate innovative solutions to real-world problems through a design-thinking process.

Description

I recently applied a creative teaching approach inspired by design thinking to a design studio project. Instead of providing students with a traditional design brief, I presented them with an open-ended challenge: “Design a product that enhances the well-being of future generations.” This approach encouraged students to think critically about the potential impact of their designs, to empathize with future users, and to generate innovative solutions that address complex societal issues.

Infrastructure

I used a flexible classroom design that encouraged collaboration and creativity. Students had access to a variety of digital tools, such as design software like SketchUp and collaboration tools like Miro. Additionally, materials such as sketching supplies, prototyping materials, and whiteboards were available to support ideation and experimentation.

Effect on the students

Teaching with design thinking approach significantly enhanced my students’ general performance. It encouraged them to take ownership of their learning, develop critical thinking skills, and approach challenges with a creative mindset. By empathizing with users and iterating on their designs, students gained confidence in their abilities to innovate and solve problems. Additionally, the approach fostered a collaborative and supportive learning environment, leading to increased student engagement and motivation.

Prototyping in Critical Thinking

#prototyping
#design thinking
#teamwork

Feasability	●●●●○	
Student Engagement	●●○○○	
Preparation Time	●●○○○	5 h
Students	●●●○○	20-25

Students design prototypes addressing real-world challenges, engaging critical thinking, fostering teamwork, and enhancing practical problem-solving skills.

Description

In the course, students tackled complex problems by creating functional prototypes. They designed systems to optimize urban traffic flow using physical mock-ups and simulation software. This hands-on approach enhanced their ability to integrate theory into practice, develop systems thinking, and collaborate effectively under real-world constraints. This promoted deeper learning, as students had to defend their design choices, consider trade-offs, and refine prototypes based on peer and instructor feedback. It emphasized critical evaluation and iterative improvement.

Infrastructure

For prototyping we arranged modular classroom setups with group workstations. Tools included system modeling software (MATLAB, Simulink), digital collaboration platforms (Miro, Microsoft Teams), and physical materials like whiteboards, 3D printing kits, and simulation labs. This enabled both creative and technical exploration.

Effect on the students

Teaching with design thinking approach significantly enhanced my students' general performance. It encouraged them to take ownership of their learning, develop critical thinking skills, and approach challenges with a creative mindset. By empathizing with users and iterating on their designs, students gained confidence in their abilities to innovate and solve problems. Additionally, the approach fostered a collaborative and supportive learning environment, leading to increased student engagement and motivation.

Research-based learning for empathizing in DT

#research-based learning
#design thinkin
#empathy
#critical thinking

Feasability ●●●○○
Student Engagement ●●●●●
Preparation Time ●●○○○ 5 h
Students ●○○○○ 1-2

The method consists of collecting information on the selected workshop topic and developing two reports as an introduction to the empathy stage in DT.

Description

During the Design Thinking workshop, we decided to do an individual homework assignment that was to be an introduction to the workshop topic on the climate crisis and at the same time an initial stage of Empathy in the DT process. It consisted of creating two reports from a desk research study and from interviews with a person running a household.

Infrastructure

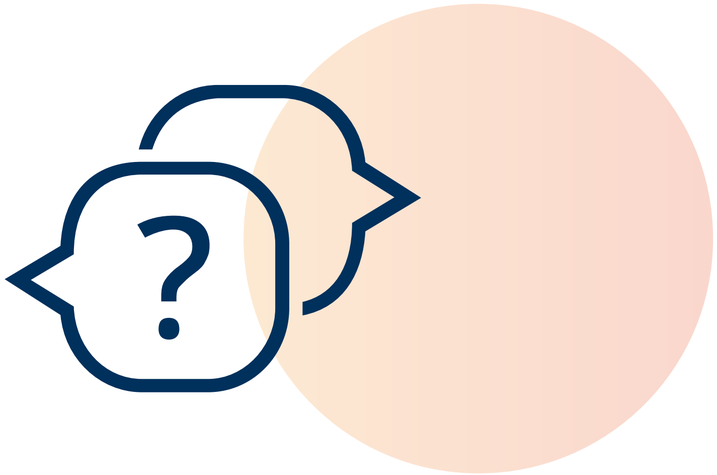
The students needed online resources to complete the first report. The second report was based on in-depth interviews (IDI) with the home care provider. Both reports were to be completed on separate A4 sheets so that they could be used in later stages of DT.

Effect on the students

During this assignment, sociology students had the opportunity to delve deeper and critically into the problem - in this case, the sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the household. They had to critically refer to researched information and synthesize it for the workshop purposes. During in-depth interviews, they had the opportunity to see the perspective of the potential user learning to empathize. An indirect effect of the assignment was to gain knowledge about the sources of the climate crisis and the impact of people's everyday actions on it.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.3 Creative Teaching Approaches



Interdisciplinary and Stakeholder Collaboration

These methods engage students in cross-disciplinary teamwork and collaboration with external partners. Real-world challenges are tackled through joint learning, mirroring professional contexts and boosting motivation and practical relevance.

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Final Theses with Stakeholder

#brainstorming
#collaboration
#stakeholder

Brainstorming together with students to find a final task combining theory and practice by using their professional background.

Infrastructure
Meetings on site and digital.

Description
For bachelor and diploma thesis I try to get in a brainstorming process with the individual person, asking for their work experience, working collaboration and interests. We also supervise distance learning students, who often are working in a company/office parallel to their studies.
Thus, we create a task combining practical and theoretical knowledge, their experience and my assignments.

Effect on the students
Students are more engaged and reach best results.

Feasability	●●○○○	
Student Engagement	●●●●●	
Preparation Time	●●●○○	5-10 h
Students	●○○○○	1

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Interdisciplinary Group Project

#self-responsible
#interdisciplinary
#project-based

Feasability	●●●○○
Student Engagement	●●●●○
Preparation Time	●●●○○ 8 h
Students	●●●●○ 10-40

Students are working in defined sessions in interdisciplinary groups on projects independently over a full academic term with guidance by the staff.

Description

The students from different disciplines are grouped in interdisciplinary teams to collaborate on one project by applying firstly new tools from the lectures and secondly their individual expertise. The distribution of tasks and the group management are part of the learning goals, the students are supposed to work as self-responsible as possible, with the teaching person having rather the role of a consultant.

Infrastructure

A big classroom with enough space and fitting furniture for group-based working: large tables to sit around, enough space between groups, templates for the planned tools/ tasks (e.g., Persona template, paper and glue for paper prototyping), a projector for session introduction session.

Effect on the students

Students seemed overall motivated and highly engaged through Emphasizing the students' responsibility early on, while giving the possibility to influence their task and steps by their interests. Shaping a concept from an abstract problem definition towards a well-defined concept made the impact of design a process and the following innovation visible. Generally, I had the impression of a big(ger) interest in innovation by going through the process of making innovation specific and graspable.

Collaborative Ethnography of a Bus Station

#collaborative ethnography
#community-based work
#place-making practices

The class used an ethnographic approach to research the needs and possibilities of community-based work in a specific cultural space.

Description

I proposed a “creative fieldwork approach”. My ERASMUS student was to prepare in cooperation with me and the director of a cultural center in a nearby town a plan for developing a community-based collaborative ethnography project.
The outcome was a proposal of a plan for collaborative ethnography that would serve as a place-making practice for the community.

Infrastructure

The cultural and community centre in Puławy, Additional infrastructure like Google Docs, readings and field trips.

Effect on the students

The student was very engaged and eager to do ethnographic work; he enjoyed the class format.

Feasability	●●●○○	
Student Engagement	●●●●●	
Preparation Time	●●●●●	15 h
Students	●●○○○	1-20

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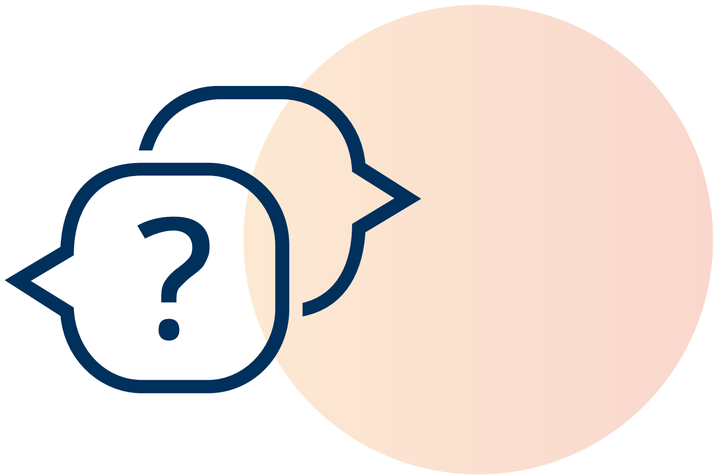
3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.3 Creative Teaching Approaches



Structured Reflective Learning Through Cases and Research

Reflection is guided through the study of structured materials such as case studies and research tasks. Students learn to synthesize theory and evidence, engage critically, and translate insights into context-sensitive applications.

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Study Case Studies

#analysis
#case study
#reflection
#argumentation

Study and analysis case studies and an explanation of the application to the student design.

Description

Students in the course designed a community and cultural center. At home they had to study several case studies which they had to present publicly in the next class and describe what interested them about the case study and what they would like to apply in their design. The case study could be any architecture that inspired them. For example, the dimension and character of a hall in a theatre which might inspire them when designing a community centre hall.

Infrastructure

Students present selected case studies using any technique. Some use a data projector and a laser pointer to explain and some use printed handouts on papers. We work in small groups in the course (about 15 students per lesson). Students sit at one large table and can ask the presenting student questions about their chosen case studies.

Effect on the students

The students knew that they would be presenting prepared case studies in front of their classmates, which motivated them to prepare better because they cared about being able to defend themselves in front of others. Students prepared better because they knew they had to explain why they had chosen the case studies they had chosen and thus there were less often case studies found in the calculus or ones that the student had chosen and did not know why.

Feasability	●●○○○	
Student Engagement	●●●●○	
Preparation Time	●○○○○	2-3 h
Students	●●○○○	10

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Tourist Strategy in Practice

#tourism
#strategy
#creativity
#analysis

Feasability ●●●●○
Student Engagement ●●●●●
Preparation Time ●●●○○ 8-10 h
Students ●●●○○ 12-20

Students analyzed real data, created marketing campaigns, and proposed innovative solutions to increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations.

Description

I used the tourism case study method. The students were given the task of designing a strategy to increase the attractiveness of the selected tourist destination. They analyzed real data, researched the needs of tourists, created marketing campaigns, and presented their solutions. This approach supported their critical thinking, creativity, and practical application of theoretical knowledge in tourism.

Infrastructure

I used digital tools like Google Maps to analyze destinations, Canva to create campaigns and PowerPoint to make presentations. For multimedia, we drew on online videos and tourism statistics. Physical materials included maps, posters, and stationery to visualize the designs. The class was organized into team zones.

Effect on the students

This approach improved student performance by developing their analytical and presentation skills, creativity, and teamwork. I observed increased motivation, a better understanding of tourism concepts and a greater willingness to try innovative solutions. Their attitude towards innovation became more open, they showed more courage and initiative.

Research/Project-based Learning

#research projects
#nature-based interventions
#pro-environmental behaviors
#experimental design
#literature reviews

Feasability ●●●○○
Student Engagement ●●●●○
Preparation Time ●●●●○ 10 h
Students ●●●●○ 25-30

Using real research projects, students explored environmental psychology topics and conducted literature reviews to design experimental studies.

Description

In the Environmental Psychology course I assisted with, I applied a project-/research-based learning approach. We presented real research projects on relevant topics such as natural soundscapes and pro-environmental behaviors, and nature-based interventions. Additionally, we incorporated research-based learning by guiding students through literature reviews on these themes, helping them understand how to design experimental studies or develop effective nature-based interventions.

Infrastructure

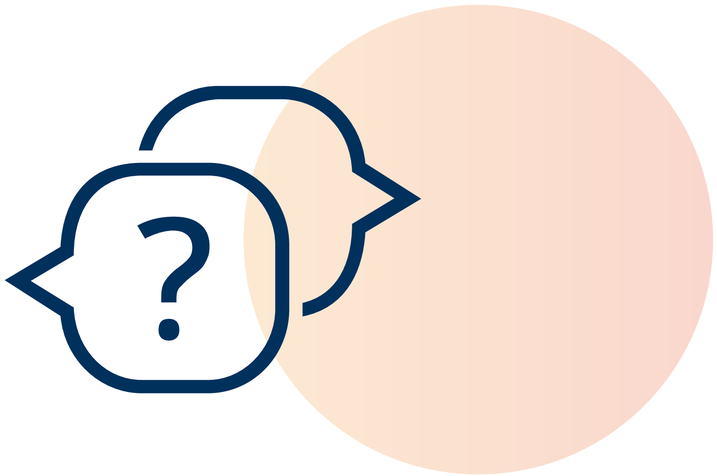
The activities involved tools such as academic databases for literature research, images and videos for the research project presentations, and templates for summarizing relevant studies from the literature review.

Effect on the students

This approach significantly enhanced students' general performance by fostering critical thinking and deeper engagement with the material.
They became more proactive in their learning, collaborating effectively on projects related to environmental psychology. This approach also cultivated a positive attitude toward innovation, as students felt empowered. At the end of the course, they presented their cases in groups, reflecting on their experiences, further reinforcing their confidence and enthusiasm for the subject.

3 Creative Teaching Approaches at HEI

3.3 Creative Teaching Approaches



Reflective and Peer-Centered Learning Enironments

These approaches cultivate trust, feedback, and reflection through collaborative work and a growth-oriented mindset. Students learn from one another and from failure, supported by environments that encourage open communication and co-ownership of learning.

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Peer Review and Explanation in Coding

#peer feedback
#code design
#teamwork

Students explain their code and give feedback on each other's coding solutions.

Feasability	●●●●○
Student Engagement	●●●○○
Preparation Time	●●●●● 16 h
Students	●●●●○ 20-30

Description

I implemented peer review & peer explanation to a programming course. Students were forced to check & correct each other's code and explain ones code to each other code throughout the course. This method promoted deeper learning, as students had to both understand code by others (and ask for clarification) and defend their coding choices. This way of working emphasized critical evaluation and to explain/articulate choices. These are skills essential throughout the science disciplines as well as in multidisciplinary challenges.

Infrastructure

To support the process, we enabled digital tools where the students could upload their feedback. Furthermore, the classroom allowed students to sit side-by side to do part of the feedback in-class.

Effect on the students

The approach empowered students to articulate their coding skills – partially sharpening their analytical skills and at the same time stimulating collaboration.
By learning approaches/ideas from peers, they will also learn about alternative approaches to the coding problems they hadn't thought about.

Fail Fast Error Culture

#experimentation
#feedforward
#resilience
#adaptation
#opportunities

Feasability ●●●●●
Student Engagement ●●●●●
Preparation Time ●●●●○ 10 h
Students ●●●○○ 15-25

Build mindsets for rapid, interesting learning, embracing mistakes as opportunities and evolving through open collaboration in intercultural teams.

Description

While many approaches to creative teaching fit into a creative teacher's toolkit, the present case will explore the underlying ethos of a fail fast error culture that is transversal to all creative classrooms, regardless of the area of study.
Our perspective is informed by the transversal nature of course offerings for English language at university, where IPG's four schools offer these courses as Applied English, respectively enhancing their contextual relevance in each specific case.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure for the transversal approach to creative teaching is all about the relationship with the learners you are creating in your classroom, which can be on the beach, in a park, standing up on a field trip, or sitting down in a classroom. We like modular tables/chairs and paper.

Effect on the students

Each year, this fail fast error culture is eye-opening for students. To them, it represents freedom from the chains of fear of failure. They engage in every aspect of the learning activities with inclusive and supportive interaction, actively accepting and encouraging each other's efforts to grow.

Problem-based Creative Learning

#theory for problem solving
#critical thinking

Feasability ●●●○○
Student Engagement ●●●●○
Preparation Time ●●○○○ 3-4 h
Students ●●●○○ 20

Teaching sociological theories by applying them to analyze social phenomena fosters critical thinking, research skills, and collaborative learning.

Description

The goal was to apply classical and contemporary sociological theories at critically analyzing social phenomena. Through group work, students were tasked to use theoretical assumptions of a given sociological classic to analyze an area of social life (contemporary family, science, religion, social media, etc.)
Firstly, students learned how to pose research questions. Secondly, they researched these questions and formulated a scientific interpretation of a given phenomenon or social process. The results of their work were presented and discussed in class.

Infrastructure

A computer and projector for displaying presentations, a classroom equipped with mobile tables and chairs, cardboard sheets, and pens.

Effect on the students

This approach encouraged students to engage more actively in class activities compared to traditional lectures. They were more willing to participate in discussions, ask questions, and draw conclusions. By demonstrating the application and usefulness of various sociological theories, there was a noticeable increase in their interest in exploring these theories further. When answering questions, students were able to formulate conclusions in their own words without simply repeating memorized definitions or terminology from the texts discussed in class.

Flipped Classroom with Case Studies

#flipped classroom
#case studies
#active learning
#problem-solving

Using a flipped classroom model, students watched pre-recorded lectures before class and engaged in hands-on case studies during class to enhance cognitive application.

Description

I implemented a flipped classroom approach, allowing students to engage in active problem-solving and case studies in class after watching pre-recorded lectures. This boosted their analytical skills and class participation.

Infrastructure

The flipped classroom utilized pre-recorded lecture videos, an online learning platform (Moodle), case study handouts, and digital tools including PowerPoint and interactive software for group discussions.

Effect on the students

Students demonstrated improved critical thinking and cognitive retention through in-class problem-solving. Their engagement with material deepened, and their openness to innovative learning methods increased.

Feasability	●●●●○	
Student Engagement	●●●●○	
Preparation Time	●●●●○	10-12 h
Students	●●●●○	20-30

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CREATIVE THINKING

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.1 Challenges in Support Structures

Educators navigating institutional support structures for creative teaching encounter a range of challenges, from bureaucratic burdens and rigid curricula to limited time for innovation. While many struggle with inflexible systems and competing demands, others adapt policies creatively or focus on what is within their control. These varied experiences highlight both the constraints of academic systems and the resilience of educators committed to fostering innovation.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.1 Challenges in Support Structures

1 Bureaucracy and Administrative Burdens

Heavy workloads, rigid schedules, and administrative demands are cited as major hindrances to creative teaching. Faculty members report teaching multiple subjects with limited preparation time, dealing with bureaucracy, and lacking incentives to innovate, all of which reduce their capacity and motivation to implement new teaching strategies.

2 Rigid Curriculum and Institutional Structures

The inflexibility of traditional curricula, assessment systems, and institutional policies often restricts opportunities for creativity. Educators struggle with structures that do not easily accommodate experimentation, interdisciplinary projects, or course redesign, making it difficult to foster student-centered, innovative learning.

3 Lack of Time and Space for Innovation

Time constraints—whether due to teaching loads, research obligations, or administrative responsibilities—emerge as a core barrier. Even motivated educators find it difficult to explore or implement creative approaches when there is little time allocated for experimentation, planning, or reflection.

4 Navigating Policies through Adaptation

Rather than directly confronting structural challenges, some educators found success by interpreting policies flexibly and adapting within constraints. By adjusting curricula, using internal resources, or finding workarounds, they managed to maintain creative teaching despite systemic limitations.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

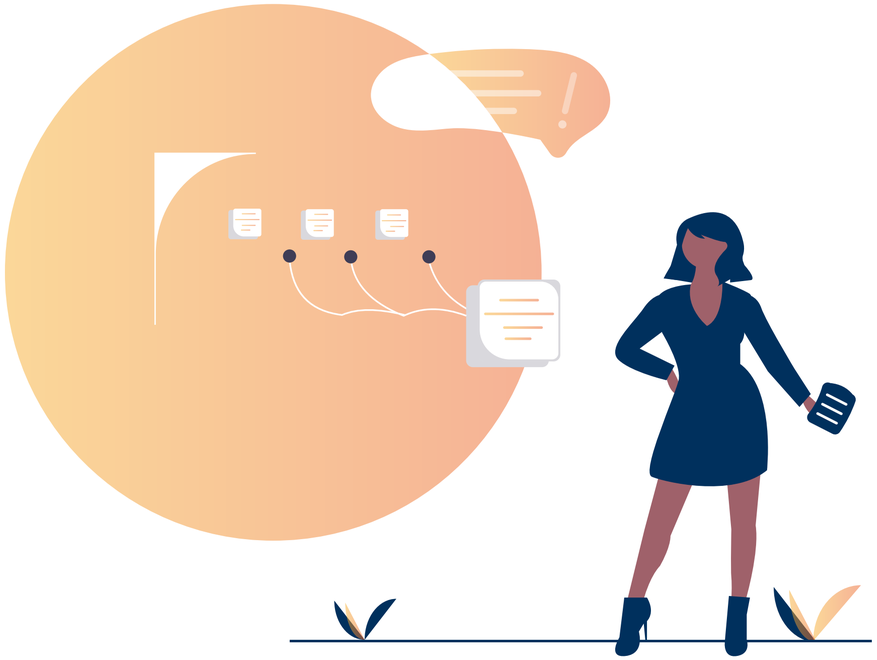
4.1 Challenges in Support Structures

5 Minimal or No Perceived Barriers

A few contributors did not perceive any significant structural obstacles to creative teaching. Some emphasized personal mindset over institutional change, suggesting that focusing on what is possible and ignoring what can't be controlled is key to maintaining creative energy.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

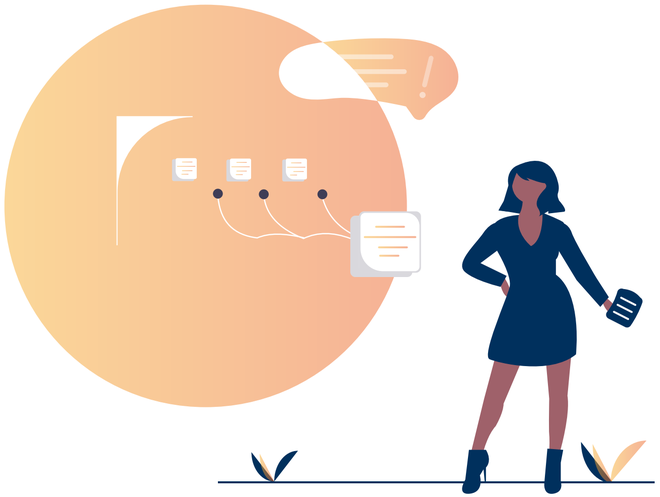
4.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching



Effective support for creative teaching depends not only on individual initiative but also on the broader institutional environment. Educators emphasize the importance of clear policies, professional development, and access to resources, while also calling for structural changes such as workload adjustments and recognition systems. Collaboration—both within institutions and with external partners—emerges as a key enabler, highlighting the need for a culture that actively values and sustains educational innovation.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching



1 Institutional Support and Policies

Several educators acknowledged institutional efforts to support creative teaching, such as setting up teams for educational organization, offering internal grants, and supporting curricular innovation. However, others noted the lack of formal policies or clear institutional directives, suggesting a need for broader structural endorsement and a more open-minded university culture that embeds creativity into its core.

2 Professional Development and Training

Ongoing training in teaching innovation is seen as a cornerstone of creative pedagogy. Institutions that offer regular workshops, pre-training in methods like design thinking, or professional development in digital teaching equip faculty with the skills and confidence to experiment. Several contributors emphasized the importance of continuous and structured learning opportunities to build creative capacity.

3 Resources and Infrastructure

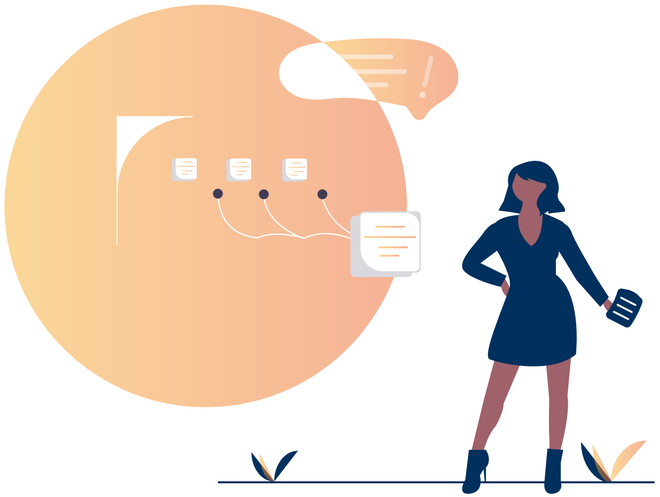
Access to practical resources—such as technology tools, media labs, or dedicated support teams—plays a vital role in enabling creative teaching. Contributors highlighted the importance of infrastructural support, including administrative assistance and funding for experimentation. Expanding resource availability and ensuring access to the latest tools can make a significant difference in educators' ability to innovate.

4 Time and Workload Adjustments

Even with training and resources, many educators find that time constraints severely limit their capacity to teach creatively. Heavy teaching loads, lack of dedicated time for innovation, and administrative pressure were recurring themes. Contributors strongly recommended workload reduction, protected time for research and design, and more flexible structures to make creative teaching viable and sustainable.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.2 Recommendations in Creative Teaching



5 Collaboration and Community Engagement

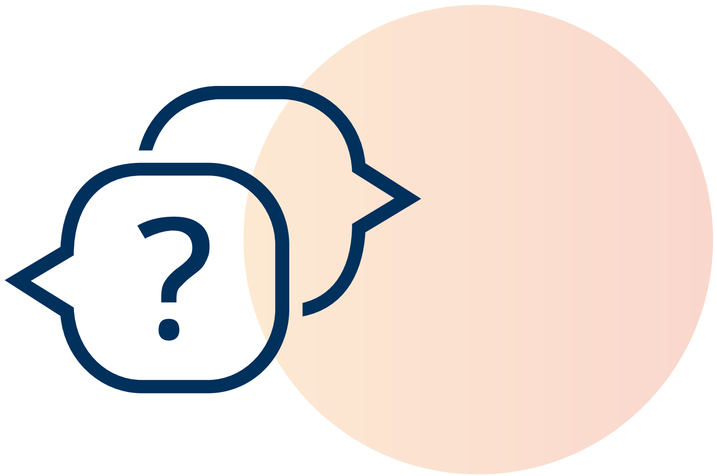
Collaboration with colleagues, departments, and external partners is a key driver of creative teaching. Educators valued peer networks for exchanging experiences and co-developing ideas. Suggestions also included stronger community engagement, especially with business and professional partners, to enrich the learning process with real-world perspectives and broaden the impact of teaching innovations.

6 Recognition and Motivation

Recognition of innovative teaching is crucial to maintaining educator motivation. Some contributors expressed appreciation for supportive teams and supervisors, while others called for stronger institutional mechanisms to reward creativity. Greater visibility and acknowledgment of creative work could encourage more faculty to pursue innovation despite structural barriers.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.3 Support Structure Cases



Curriculum Flexibility and Integration

Creative teaching is supported by enabling flexible and interdisciplinary curricula. Educators are empowered to customize courses, design cross-subject projects, and implement dynamic teaching methods. These frameworks allow teachers to connect classroom learning with student interests, societal relevance, and professional needs.

Customizable Curriculum and Interdisciplinary Project Integration

#interdisciplinary projects
#cross-disciplinary learning
#curriculum design
#concept integration
#collaborative learning

Customizable curriculum and interdisciplinary projects allow professors to help students explore and connect concepts across multiple fields.

Support
The institution offers courses to equip professors with innovative pedagogical strategies.

Description
Allowing professors to tailor curriculum design and establish joint interdisciplinary projects between courses, making possible for students to explore and connect concepts from different fields.

Example
Applying Design Thinking techniques in computer science classes to define app functionality led to improved outcomes, enhanced by students' creativity.

Dynamic Curriculum for Fostering Creativity

#dynamic curriculum
#student engagement
#personalized learning
#critical thinking
#creative culture

A dynamic curriculum enhances student engagement and fosters creativity by personalizing learning experiences and encouraging critical thinking.

Description

A dynamic curriculum enhances student engagement by offering a more personalized, creative, and adaptable learning experience. Instructors can customize lessons to align with students' interests and strengths, making the learning process more meaningful. This stimulates critical thinking and encourages active participation, supports various learning styles. It creates an environment conducive to experimentation, collaboration, and innovation. Ultimately, this culture of creativity prepares students to tackle complex, real-world challenges.

Support

Creative teaching is supported locally through resources, including the integration of company collaborations in the classroom, hands-on workshops, guest expert invitations, participation in competitions, and promotion of real-world projects. These initiatives enhance the learning experience and foster creativity among students.

Example

One successful co-creating project involved collaboration with companies, where students developed real-world applications using design thinking methodology. They later presented the best solutions to these companies for recognition. This collaborative approach encouraged students to actively engage with industry professionals, fostering innovation and practical skills.

Curriculum of the BQL-WTH/S Program

#curriculum
#workshops
#qualification

For the BQL-WTH/S program, our special module descriptions are based special situations of the participants and on the requirements of the Ministry.

Description

For the BQL-WTH/S program, we have special module descriptions that are based on the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs with regard to teacher training, but also take into account the special situation of the participants. Courses in workshops are an integral part of the module descriptions. In these courses, the participants are particularly involved in the teaching considering their background qualification (some of the participants have a professional qualification, all of them have a university degree).

Support

The university offers various further education programs in which university members are also taught the skills to try out and ultimately use new methods.
For the BQL-program e.g. we have a special media lab where our participants get to know digital methods of teaching and can try them also out.

Example

We have special module description that take also into account the situation of the participants regarding their background (all have a university degree; they are 2 days of the week at the university and work 3 days in schools).

Long-term Cooperation with External Partners

#cooperation
#real assignment
#external partners

At our faculty we have long-term cooperation with external partners such as municipalities, cities, private investors and companies.

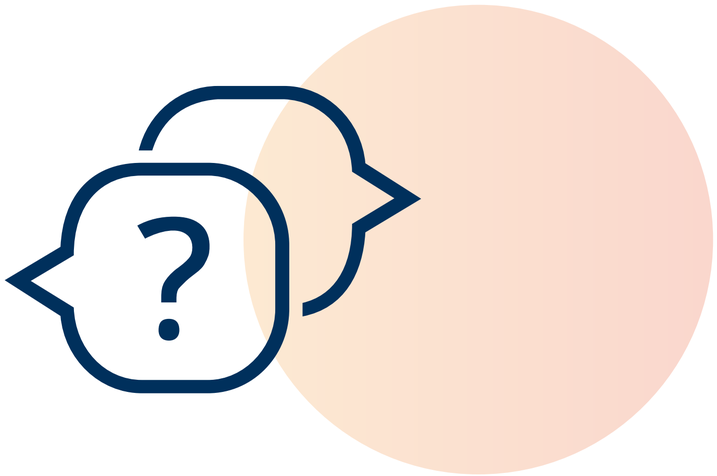
Description
Long-term cooperation with external partners such as municipalities, cities, private investors.

Support
Collaborations with stakeholders are on a voluntary basis. External partners sometimes offer students who have prepared the best assignments a financial reward or a prize in kind or experiential rewards such as a trip to an architecture biennial, etc.

Example
Long-term cooperation with renowned architectural studios whose representatives come regularly to inspect the work in progress of our students and then to the final defense of their semester theses, which are processed every semester.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.3 Support Structure Cases



Digital and Technological Support

Creative learning can be promoted through digital platforms, flipped classrooms, and the integration of specialized technologies. These tools not only modernize content delivery but also facilitate student collaboration, independent learning, and access to diverse instructional materials across devices and formats.

Flipped Classroom Initiative

#flipped learning
#collaboration
#online resources

The university provides access to digital platforms and training for faculty, enabling students to review theoretical content in advance and focus on in-class practical applications.

Description

My university promotes the use of digital learning platforms (e.g., Moodle) and flexible teaching models such as flipped classrooms, which allow students to engage with material before class, freeing up in-class time for collaborative exercises and case-based problem-solving.

Support

The university allocates budgets for digital tools and offers internal grants for teaching innovation. Faculty are also provided with professional development opportunities to improve their creative teaching methods.

Example

I introduced a flipped classroom approach in cognitive ergonomics where students watched pre-recorded lectures and then worked on group case studies in class. This increased participation and deepened their understanding of cognitive load in real-life scenarios.

Digital Tools in Creative Learning

#digital tools
#creativity
#hotel software
#automation

Students use hotel reservation software to simulate reservation management, analyze availability, and optimize tourism processes.

Description

At our university, one of the policies supporting creative learning is the commitment to the implementation of digital tools and technologies in learning processes. The university provides access to various digital platforms and software. This approach supports the development of students' creative abilities and prepares them to use modern technologies in professional life.

Support

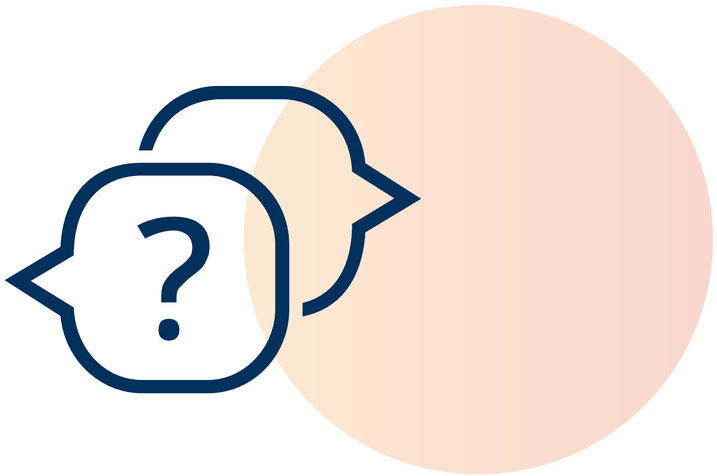
Creative teaching at our university is supported by internal grants that fund innovative projects and partnerships with industry that provide students with real-world experience. The university also invests in the professional development of educators and provides access to modern technologies and digital tools.

Example

One of the successful cases was a partnership with hotel reservation software, where students proposed improvements to reservation processes using the design thinking methodology.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.3 Support Structure Cases



Institutional Vision and Pedagogical Strategy

Creative learning can be embedded into a broader pedagogical vision or strategy. This is reflected in institutional quality programs, teaching philosophies, or long-term professional development. These strategies aim to promote reflective, autonomous, and future-ready teaching cultures grounded in shared values and institutional identity.

Vision for Teaching Strategy

#joint responsibility
#shared gains in knowledge
#individual and flexible learning

Fostering creative freedom to rethink and develop teaching.

Description

In the sTUDium 3.0 teaching strategy we understand teaching, learning and examination as interrelated components of shared gains in knowledge. Teaching is characterized by teaching and learning opportunities that open up opportunities for individual and flexible learning and encourage students' personal development. Teaching fosters open discourse, critical thinking and self-reflection. The objective is to develop high-level subject-specific and interdisciplinary skills. At the same time, our teaching encourages students to assume social responsibility.

Support

In order to plan teaching well, you need creative freedom. This is made possible for us in the team and means that the workload is not increased too much by other tasks. I very rarely had this time freedom as a teacher at a school - but now here at the university, I'm very motivated to do really good teaching.

Example

1. I get time to plan the creative teaching very well.
2. We reflect on teaching as a team and think together about how we can optimize it further.
3. The purchase of an AI-based feedback tool was made possible in order to make feedback processes even more individualized.

Teaching Quality Days

#seminars
#discussions
#exchange of experiences
#best practices

An annually organized series of seminars dedicated to teaching quality at the university.

Support
Adaptation of classrooms for group work, collaboration with external partners primarily initiated by individual teachers rather than the institution.

Description
Training in teaching methods, such as Design Thinking and Creative Thinking. Seminars on didactics, such as Teaching Quality Days, provide valuable opportunities to enhance teaching practices and exchange experiences.

Example
Implementation of the Youth Citizens' Panel project conducted as part of a student research group in collaboration with the Lublin City Hall, aimed at developing a local youth policy.

Academic Staff of the Future

#trainings for teachers
#design thinking workshops
#supervision of teaching activities

Training for teachers: how to conduct activating teaching methods, DT workshops and individual methodological support.

Description

This project provides high-quality training for teachers on how to conduct activating teaching classes, how to use digital tools in teaching, and DT workshops. In addition, individual counseling was provided during the process of creating their own classes incorporating activating teaching methods. During their implementation, supervision took place and then learners received final guidance.

Support

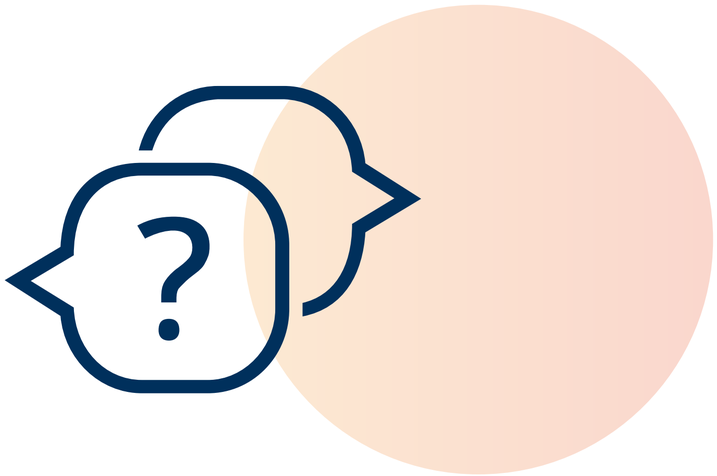
I don't recognize that kind of support. Rather, there are no developed mechanisms that make it so that making an effort to increase the quality of education and activating students is supported. In my opinion, the fact that teachers make such an effort depends only on their individual desire to be a better teacher.

Example

Workshop classes that require more hours of instruction at a time. They were able to be put on the class grid or held on the weekend.

4 Creative Teaching Support Structures at HEI

4.3 Support Structure Cases



Support for External Partnerships

External collaboration can be integrated into a support systems for creative teaching. Partnerships with NGOs, municipalities, companies, and industry experts are institutionally encouraged or facilitated. They serve as a source of real-world input, societal relevance, and applied learning, enriching course design and student engagement.

Flexibility and Innovation in Learning

#creative learning
#project learning
#design thinking
#cooperation with external partners

The university supports creative learning through flexible curricula, project-based learning, and collaboration with external partners, which enhances students' creativity.

Description

Creative learning is encouraged at our university by allowing students flexibility in their curriculum and subject choices. The university also supports the use of innovative teaching methods such as project-based learning, design thinking and collaboration with external partners, which provides students with opportunities for creativity and practical experience.

Support

Creative teaching is supported by internal grants that finance innovative projects and research activities. The university also develops partnerships with industry, allowing students real-world experience.
Additionally, teachers are provided with the tools, space, and the encouragement they need to implement innovative teaching methods.

Example

One of the successful cases was a project where students collaborated with external companies on the development of an Internet platform. This project combined theoretical knowledge with practical experience, which significantly increased student engagement. Another success was the use of design thinking in solving real problems in the community.

Interdisciplinary Study Programs

#interdisciplinary learning
#creative thinking
#innovation
#problem-solving
#flexibility

Interdisciplinary study programs encourage students to combine knowledge from different fields, fostering creativity, innovation, and critical thinking.

Description

One institutional policy that supports creative learning is the emphasis on interdisciplinary studies. Many programs encourage students to combine courses from different fields, fostering innovative thinking and problem-solving skills. This approach allows students to connect ideas across disciplines and develop unique perspectives.

Support

The university supports teaching through resources. Internal grants fund innovative projects, while partnerships with industry provide opportunities for real-world collaborations. Funds are allocated for technology, equipment, and professional development. This empowers faculty to implement creative teaching strategies and enhance student learning experiences.

Example

Our university partnered with Škoda Auto to develop a new electric vehicle concept. Students from various disciplines, including engineering, design, and business, collaborated on the project. This partnership provided students with real-world experience, industry insights, and opportunities to contribute to innovative solutions.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.1 Benefits of External Partners

Cooperating with external partners brings significant benefits to creative teaching by grounding learning in real-world contexts and student interests. Whether through industry challenges or socially relevant themes, these collaborations enhance engagement, authenticity, and motivation. They also offer students valuable exposure to professional expectations and feedback beyond the classroom.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.1 Benefits of External Partners

1 Enhancing Relevance Through Real-World Contexts

Most contributors noted that involving external partners—such as companies, local organizations, or professionals—makes learning more relevant and engaging. These partners bring real-world challenges and industry expectations, motivating students through authentic problems, feedback, and potential networking opportunities.

2 Shaping Projects with Student Interests and Trends

Some educators choose external collaborations based on current trends, sustainability, or student passions. In these cases, relevance and engagement come from connecting coursework with timely societal issues, often complemented by expert input to refine students' ideas.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.2 Challenges with External Partners

Collaborating with external partners can enrich teaching, but it also presents a distinct set of challenges that educators must navigate. Common obstacles include misaligned schedules, inconsistent partner engagement, and institutional barriers that complicate coordination. Cultural differences and the lack of strategic support structures further underscore the need for clearer frameworks and shared expectations to make these partnerships more sustainable and effective.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.2 Challenges with External Partners

1 Time and Scheduling Misalignments

A common frustration is the misalignment between academic and external partner schedules. This includes delayed responses, last-minute cancellations, or mismatched project timelines, making it difficult to synchronize educational activities with partner engagement.

2 Lack of Commitment or Reliability from Partners

Several educators experienced unreliable or inconsistent involvement from external partners. Challenges include partners disengaging, attending inconsistently, or deprioritizing the educational collaboration—often undermining the continuity and quality of student experiences.

3 Institutional Barriers and Bureaucracy

Institutional constraints such as rigid procedures, lack of structural support, or absence of official mechanisms for partner engagement pose significant challenges. These bureaucratic hurdles slow down collaboration and place a burden on educators to manage logistics alone.

4 Cultural or Communication Gaps

Differences in professional cultures, unclear expectations, and communication issues between academic and non-academic partners can hinder productive collaboration. These mismatches require mediation and often challenge students and educators to bridge different working styles or assumptions.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.2 Challenges with External Partners

5 Lack of Strategic Integration or Support Structures

In some cases, collaboration with external partners is not institutionally embedded, relying heavily on individual teacher initiative. The absence of a formal support system or strategic vision leads to fragmented or unstable partnerships that are hard to sustain over time.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.3 Recommendations with External Partners

To foster successful collaboration with external partners, educators recommend a mix of strategic planning and interpersonal sensitivity. Key practices include setting clear expectations, maintaining open communication, and remaining flexible in the face of differing timelines and priorities. Just as important are trust-building and institutional support, which help create lasting, productive relationships that benefit both students and partners.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.3 Recommendations with External Partners

1 Flexibility and Patience in Collaboration

Several educators highlight the importance of staying patient, being flexible with timelines and expectations, and accepting that external processes often work differently than academic ones. Adjusting to partner needs, accommodating delays, and keeping a long-term perspective are seen as key to success.

2 Clear Communication and Role Clarification

Establishing clear expectations, communication lines, and division of responsibilities from the beginning is seen as critical. Educators recommend discussing goals, timeframes, and roles upfront to reduce misunderstandings and ensure productive engagement with external partners.

3 Institutional Support and Structure

Some contributors emphasize the need for systemic solutions: institutional frameworks, support mechanisms, and shared processes that make collaboration easier and more sustainable. They suggest developing organizational models or advocating for policies that formalize partnerships.

4 Relationship Building and Trust

Investing time in building mutual trust and a shared understanding is seen as essential, especially in collaborations that are long-term or cross-sector. These educators stress the relational side of external partnerships—empathy, openness, and shared purpose—as a foundation for success.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.4 Strategies for Cooperation

Effective collaboration with external partners relies on a blend of clear structure and human connection. Educators recommend strategies such as open communication, shared goal setting, and institutional integration to create stable and mutually beneficial partnerships. At the same time, trust, adaptability, and a flexible mindset are essential for navigating the unpredictable dynamics of real-world engagement.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.4 Strategies for Cooperation

1 Clear and Regular Communication

Maintaining open, structured communication is the most widely recommended strategy. Regular meetings, early feedback loops, and transparent exchanges help build trust and prevent misunderstandings. Conflict resolution is often framed as a process of dialogue, negotiation, and shared problem-solving.

2 Defining Shared Goals and Mutual Benefits

Several contributors emphasize the importance of clearly defined roles, common objectives, and aligned interests from the beginning of the collaboration. Establishing mutual benefits early helps sustain commitment and gives all parties a sense of ownership.

3 Institutional Integration and Strategic Framing

Some strategies focus on embedding collaboration into broader institutional structures—through research-teaching synergies, cooperation agreements, or university policy. This framing not only stabilizes the collaboration but elevates its value for both sides.

4 Relationship Building and Trust

These contributors stress the personal and relational dimensions of collaboration—choosing trustworthy partners, celebrating shared successes, and nurturing the human element of cooperation. Trust and personal chemistry are seen as foundations for sustainable partnerships.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

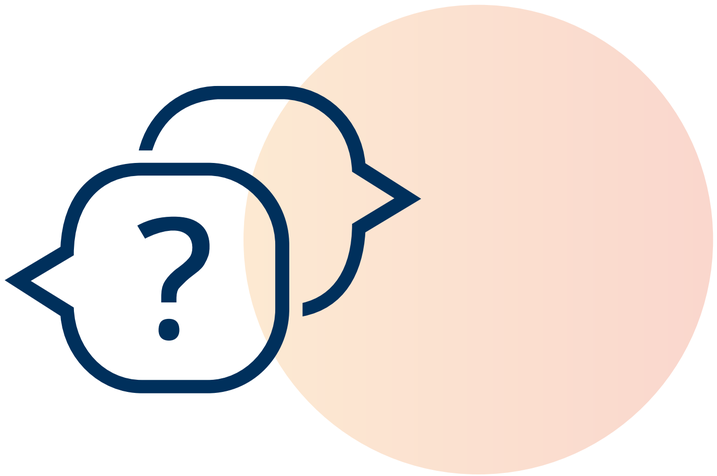
5.4 Strategies for Cooperation

5 Flexibility and Adaptive Attitude

In complex, dynamic collaborations, adaptability is seen as essential. Flexibility in timelines, expectations, and even goals allows projects to move forward despite challenges. Patience and emotional calm are also framed as key to managing conflict respectfully.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.5 External Partners Cases



Long-Term Institutionalized Partnerships

Long-standing collaborations can be maintained with external partners, such as municipalities, private investors, or sector-specific organizations. These relationships are well-integrated into the educational structure, recurring regularly, and offer consistent input to student projects or course design. classroom learning with student interests, societal relevance, and professional needs.

What about the old cinema?

#renewal
#concept
#collaboration

Application of the processing of problematic buildings of the city to the teaching process.

Description

It is often the case that external partners already approached the university. If I were to tell you my specific experience in which I was involved, it was when I was approached as an architect by the mayor of my hometown when he wanted to consult with me about the vision of several spaces within the city, such as the old cinema. So I advised him to work with the faculty and the possibility of giving these questionable places as an assignment for architecture students.

Example

We are currently communicating specific requirements with the city and working on an assignment that could be presented to the students.

Use of External Workshops

#textile design
#cooperation

We work together with an external partner using its workshops and we benefit from the experience of the teachers there.

Description

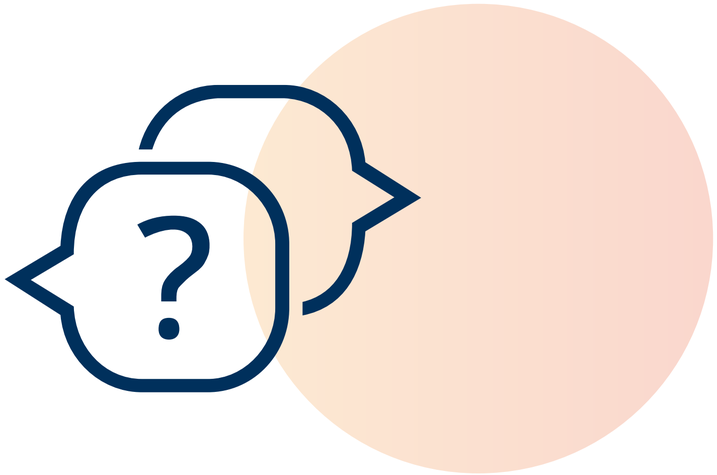
We use external workshops for our courses “Metal technology” and “Textile design”. These workshops are run by an established training provider that offers placement and integration measures as well as further training courses and retraining for a wide range of target groups.
At this point, we successfully have been working together for more than 5 years. I have a contact person that I contact every year to coordinate the schedules.

Example

We use external workshops for our courses “Metal technology” and “Textile design”. Participants can familiarize themselves with metalworking machines and practice using them. They can also practice using sewing machines. This reduces participants’ inhibitions and gives them the confidence to teach such work to their pupils.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.5 External Partners Cases



Real-World Projects with External Stakeholders

In these cases, external partners are directly involved in shaping student projects and providing authentic, real-world challenges. Students work with businesses, NGOs, or municipalities on applied tasks, often producing solutions or prototypes for actual use, enhancing engagement and motivation.

Shipment Route

#local cooperation
#practical activities
#problem analysis
#application of knowledge

A project with a local company combined theory and practice, with students analyzing issues and gaining real-world experience.

Description

A company contacted us by email about a possible collaboration between the faculty and their company in the form of excursions and lectures. Managers went to lectures at the university and students went with teachers on excursions to the company.

Example

One of the successful example involved teamwork to design innovative solutions to local challenges, which encouraged creativity and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Interactive Education in the Region

#local cooperation
#practical activities
#problem analysis
#application of knowledge

A project with a local NGO combined theory and practice, with students analyzing regional issues and gaining real-world experience.

Description

As part of one project, we approached a local non-governmental organization. We worked together to create interactive teaching that combined theoretical knowledge with practical activities, such as analyzing problems in the region. The organization provided experts to guide the students in practical exercises and field work. In this way, students learned to apply their knowledge in a real environment, which increased their engagement.

Example

One of the successful cases was a project with a non-governmental organization, where students solved real problems of the region, which increased their practical skills and involvement.

University-Industry Design Partnership

#industry partnership
#design education
#student projects
#real-world experience
#collaboration

A successful university-industry partnership enabled students to collaborate on real-world design projects, fostering creativity, innovation, and practical skills.

Description

One successful collaboration involved a partnership with a local design studio. We approached the studio to propose a joint project where students could work on real-world design challenges. The studio was enthusiastic about the opportunity to mentor students and gain fresh perspectives. We established clear communication channels, regular meetings, and a shared project timeline. This collaboration provided students with invaluable industry experience and enhanced the quality of their design projects.

Example

One successful case involved a partnership with a local design studio. Students collaborated on real-world design challenges, gaining industry experience and applying their knowledge to practical problems.

Co-Creation for Creative and Innovative Solutions

#co-creation
#company collaboration
#design thinking
#creativity solutions

A co-creation project with a local company allowed students to develop creative, innovative solutions for a specific business problem, fostering practical skills and collaboration.

Description

One successful collaboration involved a co-creation project with a local company to develop a solution for a specific problem by emphasizing the mutual benefits: students would gain real-world experience, while the company would receive innovative solutions. The company provided mentorship and resources throughout hosting design thinking sessions where students brainstormed ideas. Ultimately, students presented their solutions to the company, receiving valuable feedback and fostering stronger ties between academia and company.

Example

Over the past three years, we involved external companies (NGOs, industry, tech firms, etc.) in co-creation initiatives. Students and projects were selected based on motivation statements. We engaged nearly 50 companies and around 300 students. During the project, students had the opportunity to visit the companies, gaining firsthand insight into real-world problems.

Effective Partnership in Talent Reshaping: The UPSkill Program

#talent reshaping
#workforce development
#vocational training
#skills enhancement
#partnership

Successfully retraining unemployed individuals in digital skills through collaboration among higher education, companies, and IEFP.

Description

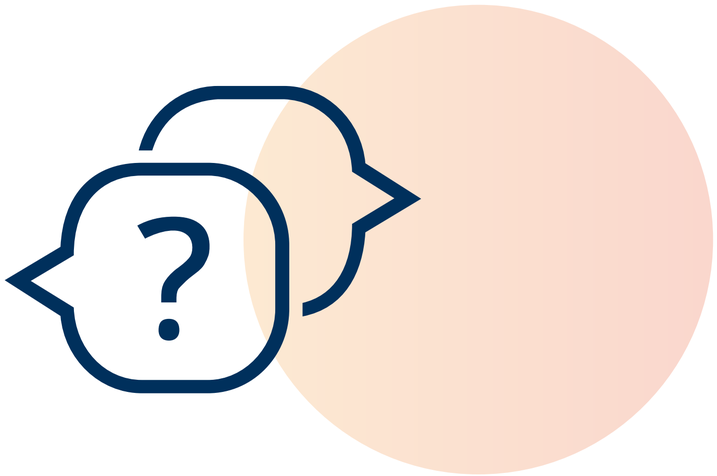
One successful collaboration involved the UPSkill program (digital skills and jobs), which aims to retrain unemployed or underemployed individuals in computer science areas.
This successful collaboration emerged from the close partnership between higher education institutions, companies and the Portuguese employment and vocational training institute (IEFP).

Example

Most of the trainees were employed by the companies.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.5 External Partners Cases



Expert Involvement for Inspiration and Feedback

Some educators collaborate with external professionals mainly as guest speakers, workshop leaders, or reviewers. These experts support courses by offering feedback, specialized insights, or mentoring during key stages of student projects, enriching the learning process through targeted contributions.

Ergonomic Workplace Study

#cognitive load
#ergonomics
#industry collaboration

We collaborated with a tech company to study cognitive ergonomics, offering students real-world applications while enhancing workplace productivity.

Description

I worked with a technology company to analyze cognitive load in employees using ergonomic workstations. We approached them through academic-industry networking events and collaborated to design a research study that benefited both the company and my students through case-based learning.

Example

The collaboration provided both research data for the company and hands-on learning experiences for students, who analyzed real cognitive workload cases and presented ergonomic solutions.

Innovations in the Hotel System

#tourism
#reservations
#innovation
#cooperation

Students collaborated with a hotel chain on the analysis and innovation of reservation systems, applying real data and proposals in the field of tourism.

Description

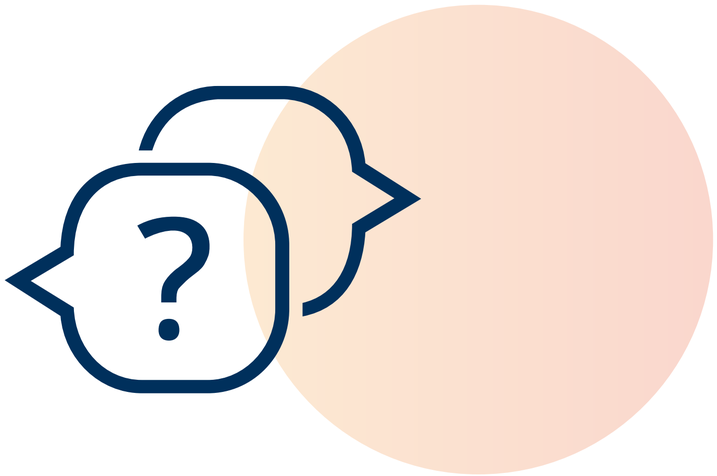
One example of cooperation was an initiative with a local hotel chain to integrate their reservation system into teaching. I approached external partners from the tourism industry so that students could work on real projects. We collaborated on the analysis of reservation processes and proposals for innovations. Partners provided expert advice, real-world data and practice, giving students an authentic experience and access to professional tools, improving the quality of education.

Example

A successful example was cooperation with a hotel chain, where students proposed improvements to the reservation system, thereby applying theoretical knowledge to real problems.

5 External Partners in Creative Teaching at HEI

5.5 External Partners Cases



Emerging or Informal Collaborations

These examples describe external collaboration as either informal, opportunistic, or still in development. The focus is on building potential partnerships or enabling staff to create links with external actors, but these are not yet embedded or institutionalized within the structure of the course or program.

Digital Information Platform

Providing information does not automatically lead to information.

#providing information

Description

All external partners have the opportunity to view our materials and documents via a digital platform (OPAL). Some lectures are stored as videocasts so that teachers from schools, for example, have the opportunity to gain an insight and understand the topics. Unfortunately, this is very little used. Presumably because the workload of the external partners for other tasks is too high.

Example

We work with three cooperating universities and meet online 1-2 times a month for 90 minutes to coordinate, inform and now even plan together.

Versatility+

#universal design
#supervision
#consultation with potential beneficiary

A workshop on designing universal solutions in cooperation with a person with disabilities and a representative of a consulting company.

Description

During the Versatility+ project, learning activities were conducted with a representative of the consulting company that won the tender to handle part of the project. In my part of the class, the external company supervised student projects and activities. The class was designed as a workshop involving the design of universal solutions, which the external partner was to evaluate in terms of meeting the specific needs of people with disabilities (with special needs).

Youth Citizens' Panel

#research
#students contributing to city
#youth policy development

Students, in collaboration with the UMCS CityLab team, conducted research and social consultations with Lublin's youth and contributed to developing the city's youth policy.

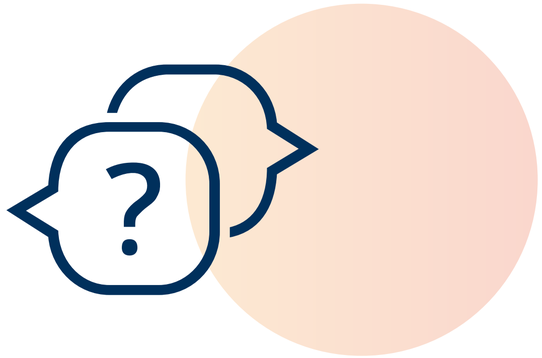
Description

I proposed collaboration to representatives of the City Hall responsible for strategic planning and developing partnerships with academic institutions. The collaboration involved jointly conducting research projects to support public policies developed by the City Hall. Students were included in these research projects as part of their coursework and through the activities of the Sociology Student Research Group.

Example

The Youth Citizens' Panel project was co-funded by the Dean of the Institute and the Lublin City Hall.

6 Conclusions on Creative Teaching



1 Creative Teaching as Deeply Rewarding but Demanding

Many educators emphasized the satisfaction and engagement that creative teaching brings, both for themselves and students. However, they also noted the high energy, adaptability, and preparation it requires. Teachers stressed the importance of flexibility, continuous learning, and regular updates to maintain course freshness.

2 Positive Student Transformation and Impact

Some educators described how creative approaches led to noticeable transformations in students—building confidence, deeper understanding, improved teamwork, and real-world skills. These methods were credited with increasing motivation and ownership of learning.

3 Pragmatic Reflections and Improvement Goals

Others reflected on what still needed improvement—such as balancing freedom and structure, defining clearer outcomes, or dealing with unstructured settings. These insights often led to revised teaching practices, better alignment with learning objectives, and more strategic planning.