



reSEArch-EU



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University of Gdansk



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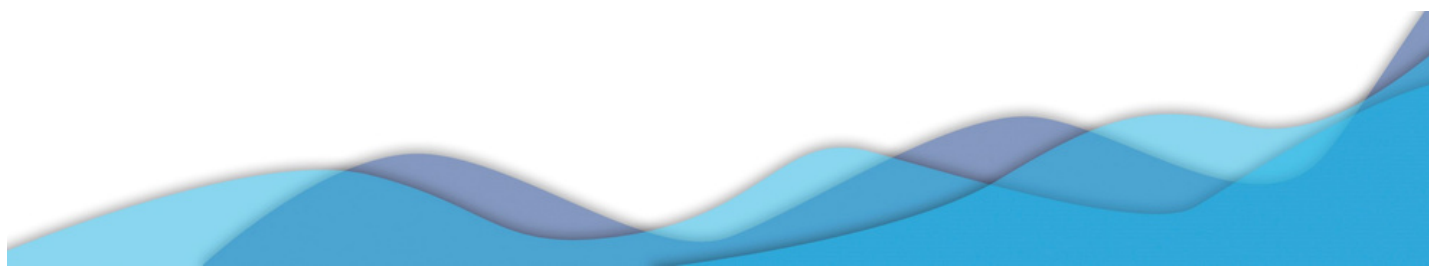
SEA-EU ACADEMY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

<https://academy.sea-eu.org>

Task 2.4 deliverable



Deliverable No. and Title	D2.4 SEA-EU Academy constituted with guiding principles
Leader	University of Split
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<p>This document includes feedback and discussions from the human-centred design (HCD) exercise, held on October 15th which outlined the SEA-EU Academy guiding principles focused on the perspective of university employees.</p>	



Version	Date	Modified by	Reason
0	29/11/2021	N/A	The first version was sent for review to the EEC.
1	1/12/2021	N/A	The first version was presented to the EEC.
1	27/6/2022		The final version was produced after the review and approval of the EEC.



INTRODUCTION

The SEA-EU Alliance launched in 2019 brings together six coastal and internationally-recognized universities sharing a common vision of education as a key catalyst for the sustainable future. The Alliance's objective is to build a unique and diverse interdisciplinary European University.

In order to further stimulate the development and the international dynamic of its research ecosystem, the Alliance is funded by the European Commission Horizon2020 project reSEArch-EU - reinforcing Sustainable Actions, resilience, cooperation, and harmonisation across and by the SEA-EU Alliance.

In line with a unified, integrated, and long-term plan, this initiative aims to strengthen SEA-EU research and innovation capabilities.

This is why the reSEArch-EU project's major goal is to create a robust, anti-fragile, and innovative pan-European institution that can openly link knowledge, skills, and resources from various units and research fields across nations, in a cost-effective way in order to solve societal and environmental challenges.



reSEArch-EU will improve the Alliance's anti-fragility and resilience through WP2, which in the Task 2.4 includes investments in human capital capability and expertise. With the boost of its human capital, Alliance increases its potential to deliver outstanding results and success in extraordinary circumstances.

This will be accomplished through the formation of the SEA-EU Academy. The SEA-EU Academy is envisioned as an entirely virtual learning environment as well as a digital platform for organizing and promoting regular virtual training, webinars, and seminars.

It will draw on the Alliance universities' existing experience, knowledge, and variety to enable staff to not only learn new skills but also to strengthen internal networks and collaboration through the exchange of know-how



The SEA-EU Academy will:

- Provide access to a broad range of skills and know-how from Alliance professionals
- Provide training on strengthening entrepreneurial abilities to collaborate with businesses on research activities
- Improve and establish the groundwork for new skills.

WHY WE HAVE USED

HCD?

Being attentive to Alliance staff needs is one of the most important aspects of the SEA-EU Academy's success as a digital platform.

The notion of putting the potential users of this platform at the center of the creative process led to the formation of the Human-Centered Design focus group, which included members of Task 2.4's task team as well as other task team members from the reSEArch-EU project.

Better customisation, more adoption, greater alignment with concurrent activities, and stronger involvement of potential users are all benefits of incorporating HCD into the design process.

Three main phases of design include:

- 1) inspiration;
- 2) ideation;
- 3) early stages of prototyping and implementation

INSPIRATION

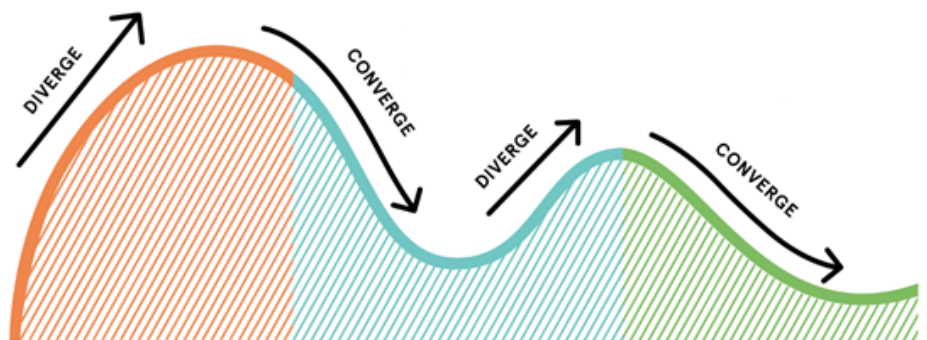
I have a design challenge.
How do I get started?
How do I conduct an interview?
How do I stay human-centered?

IDEATION

I have an opportunity for design.
How do I interpret what I've learned?
How do I turn my insights into tangible ideas?
How do I make a prototype?

IMPLEMENTATION

I have an innovative solution.
How do I make my concept real?
How do I assess if it's working?
How do I plan for sustainability?



The Human-Centred Design process model (IDEO.org, n.d.)

The goal of the focus group, which was organized by the University of Split, was to lay out the SEA-EU Academy's guiding principles.

This is why the first two phases of the human-centered design technique were the focus of this focus group.

Nikola Balić, the head of the University of Split's Department of Science and Innovation, moderated the focus group. He has prior experience organizing HCD focus groups and workshops.

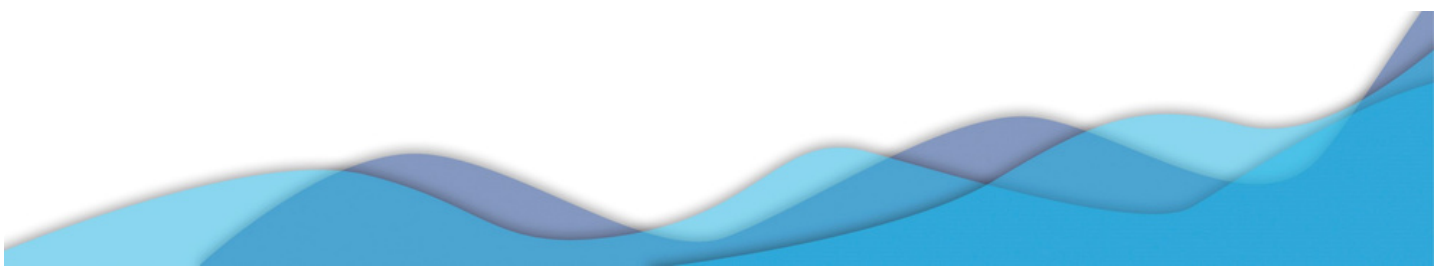
Video conferencing and break-out rooms were conducted using the Zoom platform, while for group exercises and collaborative work the Miro board was used.

Due to the project's connections with the Academy, the invitation for the focus group was sent out to the task team members and participants of tasks 3.4 and 3.5 of the reSEArch-EU project.

During the two-hour session, the focus group members offered their thoughts, comments, feedback, and discussion to the development of the SEA-EU academy's shared vision and guiding principles, which are described in this paper.

As a result, we'd like to express our gratitude to the following focus group participants:

- Josef Trapani
- Joanna Morawska-Jancelewicz
- Andrina Granić
- Miroslawa Malinowska
- Justyna Sikorska
- Juan Ramon Real
- Laura Martin
- Sebastian Susmarski
- Judith Barro
- Izabela Disterheft



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FOCUS GROUP

CHALLENGE DEFINITION

The design challenge definition activity kicked off the Focus Group.

The Human-Centered Design methodology was explained to the team, as well as how we should approach the Design challenge definition.

The team addressed the purpose of the Academy, and what areas should we focus on during the workshop.

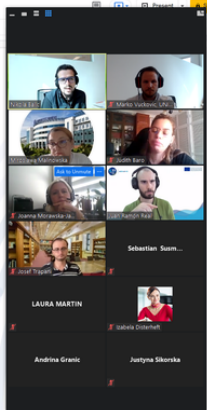
The following target groups have been identified as the platform's central focus:

- lecturers,
- researchers,
- support staff,
- management,
- students.

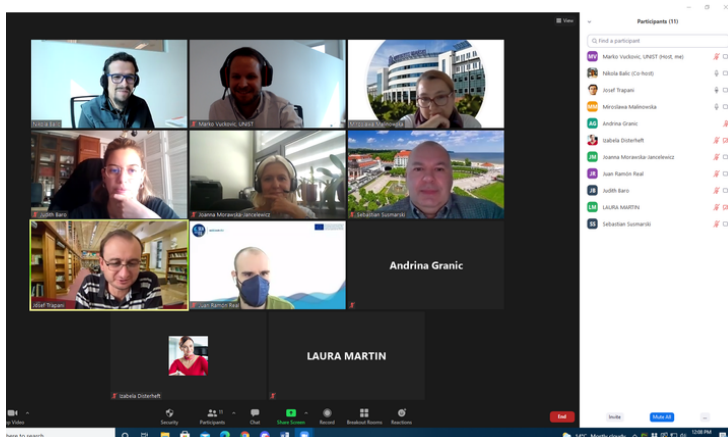


Scientists
Researchers
Lecturers
Support staff

Who else?
Should we focus on just one?

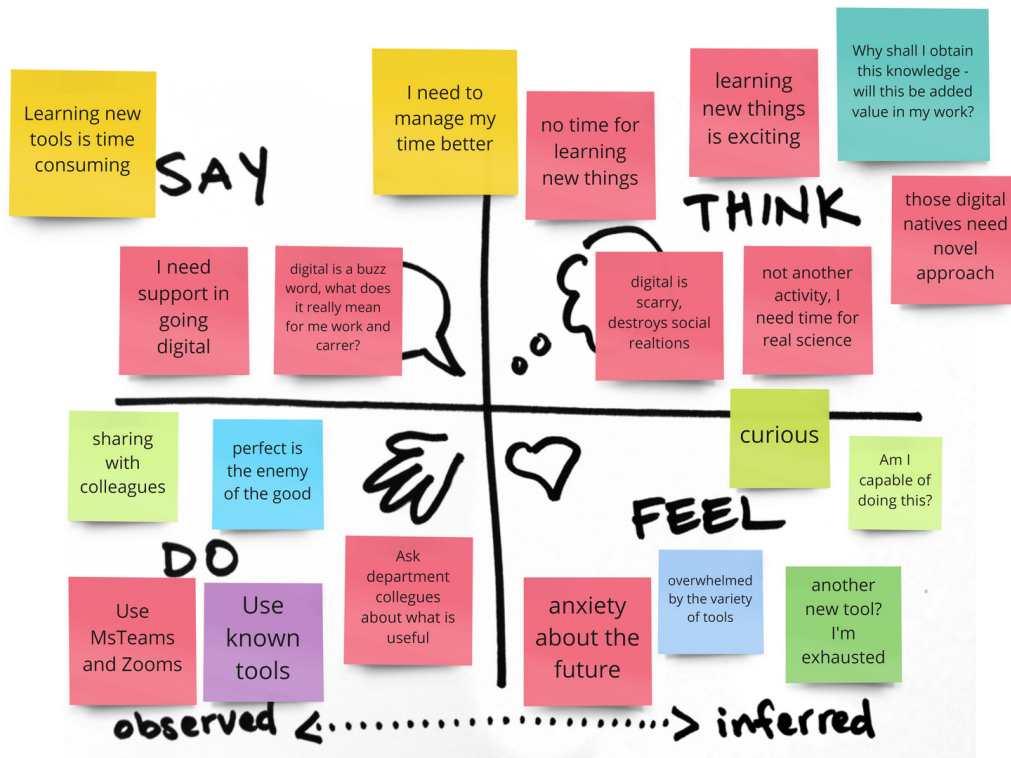


The question was raised as to whether we should construct the platform around PhD students or include other students as well. It was decided that no artificial boundaries should be constructed in this context since the line separating students is not always easily distinguished.



EMPHATY MAP

Participants were challenged to identify a typical SEA-EU Academy user and were asked about their opinion on what this user would say/think/do/feel in a situation where need for learning exist.



Map No1: This empathy map focused on typical researcher target group profile.

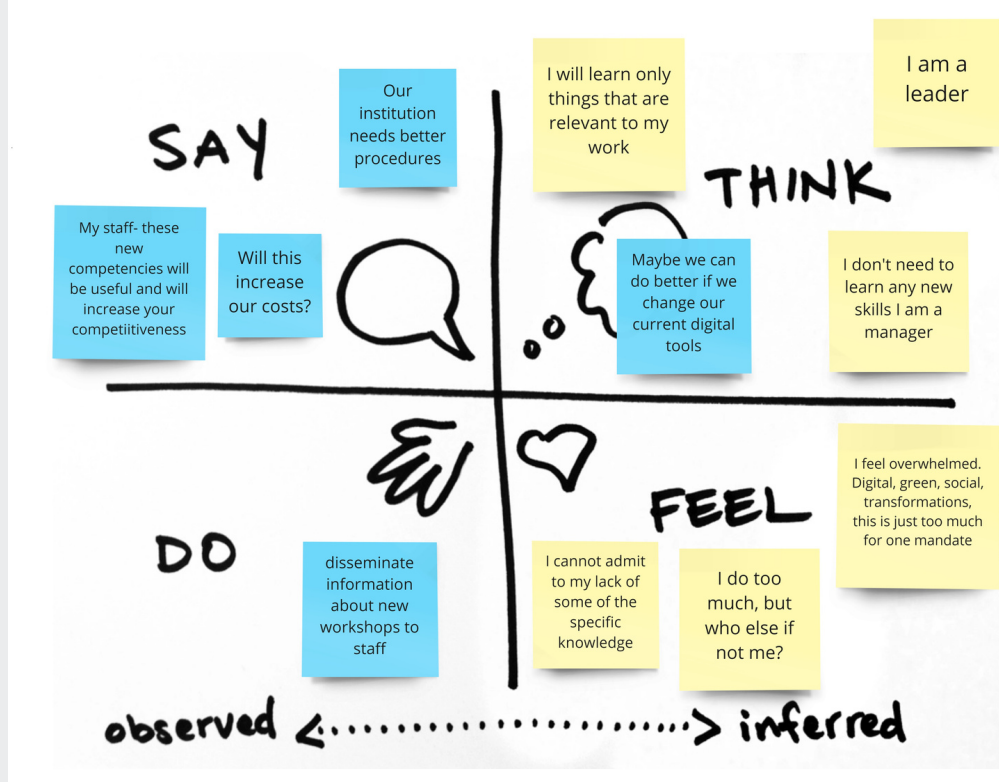
When new learning is required, a typical researcher would **feel** curious. At the same time, they must know that there is a range of tools available, which may lead the researchers to also feel overwhelmed or exhausted and to question whether they are capable of answering to this challenge.

The typical researcher **thinks** that learning new things is exciting, but that it is also important to consider how it affects social relations.

There's also the issue of time management, and a typical researcher would think if he has time to learn new skills and what value that would add to his work.

Typically they would openly **say** that learning new tools takes time and that they need support in making the transition to digital.

At the same time, they would **share** their new knowledge with their peers, ask about what is valuable from their department, and use well-known tools.



The empathy map helped us to better understand the needs of the user and was used to reach a common understanding among workshop participants.

The first empathy map demonstrated the need for researchers to implement peer-to-peer learning and tools such as a virtual library and a forum to support them in their learning.

With the second empathy map, we recognized the need of management members for micro-courses and quality control.

Map No2: Second empathy map focused on the management target group. The scenario in which a typical management member is expected to acquire new knowledge is marked in yellow, while the scenario in which they are requested to apply new procedures is indicated in blue.

In the first scenario, management members would **feel** overwhelmed with the number of tasks and responsibilities they need to handle. In this case, they would **think** they need to learn only things relevant to their work or that they do not need new skills.

For the second scenario, the focus group added that management has **stated** in the past that they encourage new things in the workplace, such as people management and new tools, since they **think** that new competencies would improve their employees' competitiveness and that they feel good about positive developments. In this instance, management would most likely disseminate the information to the employees.

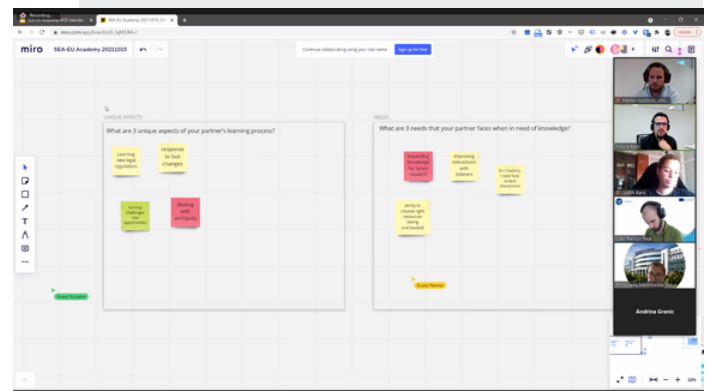
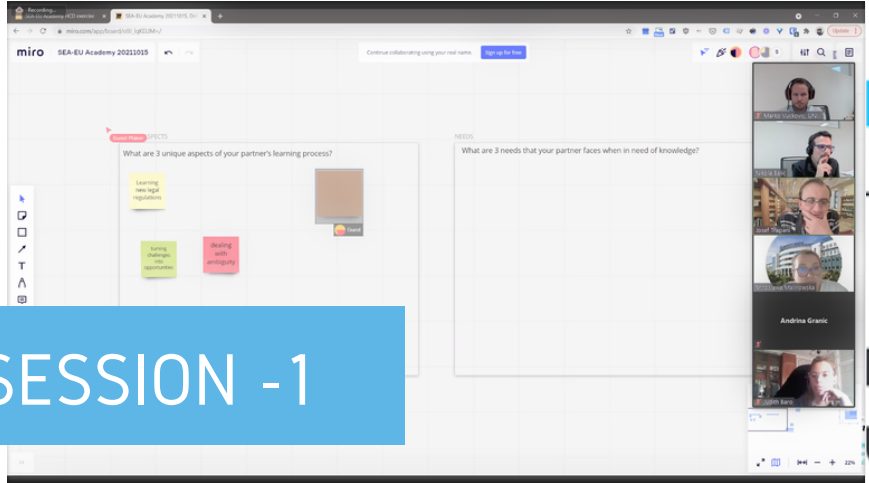
BREAK-OUT SESSION -1

The team was divided into four groups. They were asked to express their most important knowledge and assumptions. Every participant had a one-on-one interview with their partner and took notes.

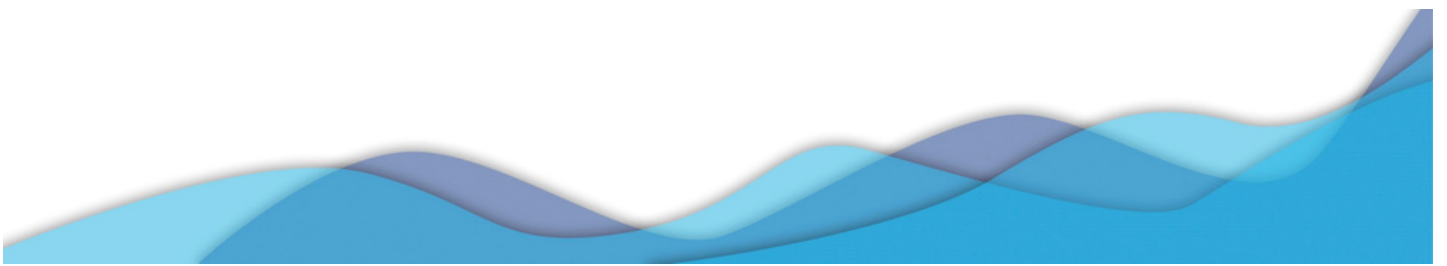
During the interviews, the focus group shared their unique characteristics of the learning process. Some stated that we are part of the fast-paced environment and that there is a need to adapt to changes that necessitate new learning and quick responses. Also, The learning process is a balance between opening doors and maintaining one's reputation.

In terms of learning further knowledge, participants have indicated the need for interaction with people in person since this is a must when it comes to being more creative and bringing fresh ideas to the table. Also, there is a need for better feedback. Although we have a feedback culture, we need to improve the quality of it. This is true in both directions: feedback for the instructor and feedback for the student. There is a need for instruments that will make existing feedbacks more accurate in this regard.

Break-out session - 1 helped us to reveal deeper insights about the requirements and specific needs of the focus group participants and to learn about their unique characteristics of the learning process



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BREAK-OUT SESSION - 2

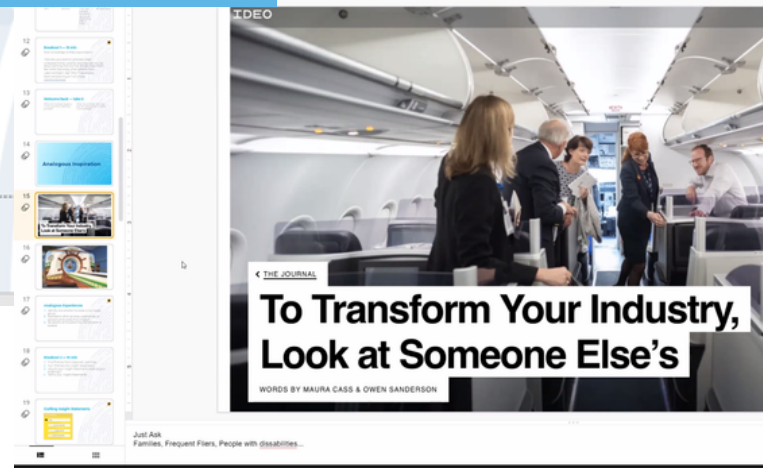
action, situation

because it makes him fat

aim, need, outcome

but it makes him feel safe.

restriction, obstacle, friction



During the second breakout, session participants were asked to find themes from captured learnings and to turn them into insight statements.

Before the start of this break-out session, participants discussed captured learnings and discussed the need for feedback as an example. Using the insight statement template following statements were created:

Teacher: wants to motivate and engage students. Because: we want them to actively participate in the teaching and learning process and because we want to develop a community of learners. But: some people may lack motivation intrinsically; some people prefer to learn individually rather in a community, some people feel challenged or even at risk when they express themselves and engage. It depends on the personality.

Student wants to pass exams / complete studies successfully; to belong/be accepted to academic community. Because: they want to join academic community. But: they can have self-doubts; they have other commitments and it can be challenging to manage time (teach; prepare teaching material; family commitments)

BREAK-OUT SESSION - 3

The participants were asked to discuss the challenges and unique aspects that were identified during the workshop.

The following questions were presented after the breakout sessions.

How Might We?



How might we receive constant teaching in legal matters and project management so we can deliver better results in our jobs and also to measure the quality of our work?

How might we improve the students' feedback for teachers so we can increase the satisfaction of students of learning and make learning more efficient?

How might we develop our teaching skills to make lectures and labs more attractive and also to make students more engaged?

How might we improve our presentation skills in an online environment so that meeting participants in online meetings can be more engaged in the presentation?

How might we help lecturers develop digital skills so we can make them more confident and provide new opportunities to our students?

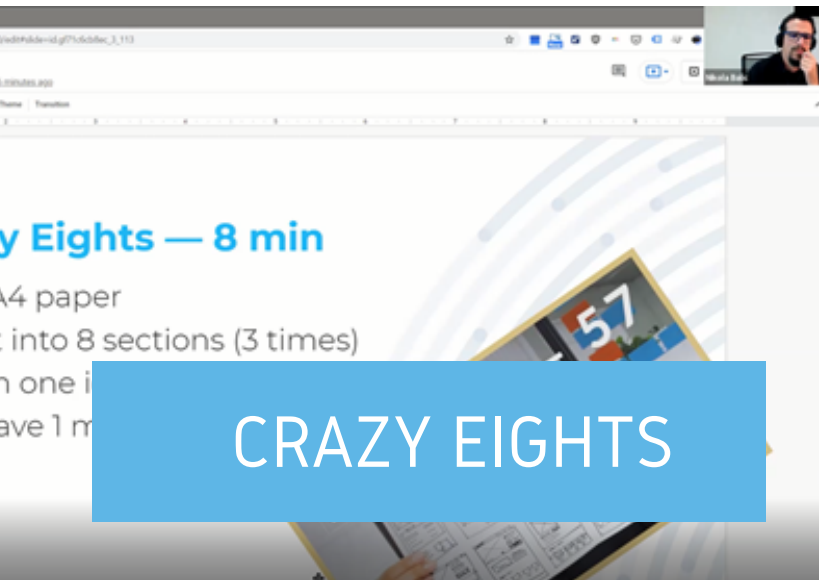
How might we make learning an integral part of their work so that they feel willing and we can attribute it to them?

How might we help staff to learn languages so we can make them confident and create more collaborations?

How might we involve learning mobilities so we can make our staff more successful and satisfied and we can benefit from new networks and up-skilled staff?

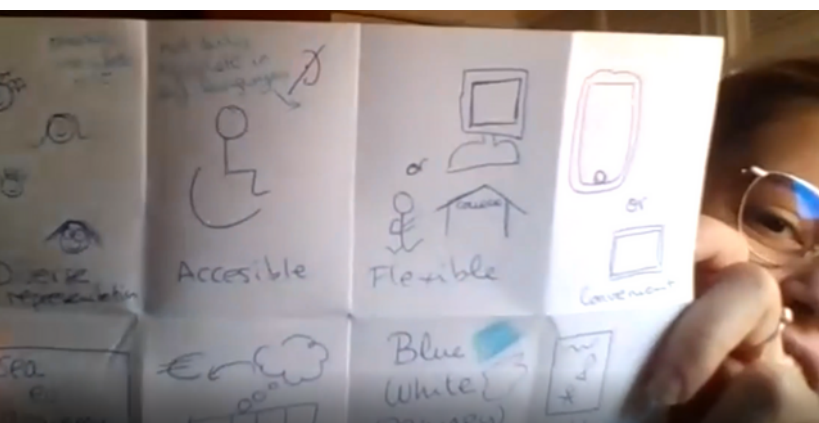
How might we help teachers to motivate and engage students so that we can develop a community of learners and increase overall motivation?

How might we help students to be academically successful so we can make help them save time and be more productive and make them more involved in the academic community?



Crazy Eights is a core Design Sprint method. It is a fast sketching exercise that challenges people to sketch eight distinct ideas in eight minutes.

Participants were asked to use eight pieces of paper on which they will add eight sketches (one minute per sketch) on which they will present their idea on how the SEA-EU Academy should look like and how they see this kind of learning and teaching space.



The SEA-Academy is seen by many participants as a learning area with a dedicated forum.

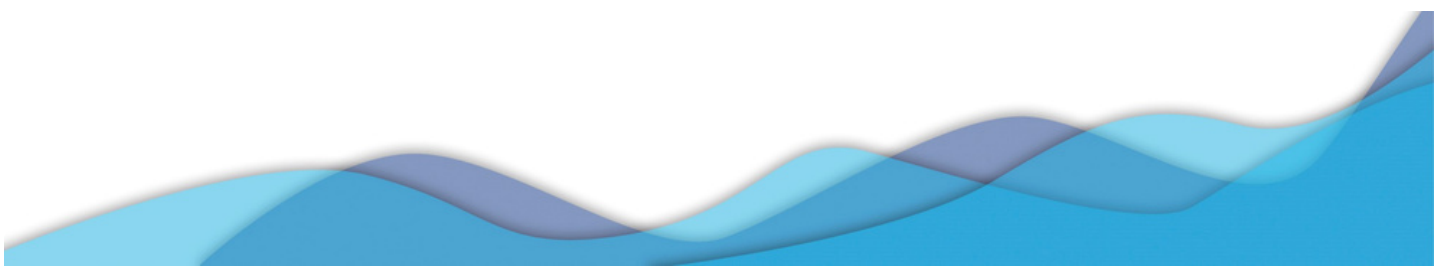
Forums should be regarded not just for academics, but also for students. They feel that such a feature would allow users to share their experiences with the Academy's learning materials and get to know one another, facilitating networking and future partnerships. This type of forum would create a learning community.

The focus group also supports the development of a directory of learning materials that would incorporate all existing learning resources developed by Alliance universities in one place, organized by themes or target groups addressed.

Virtual student hours were proposed as well where for example 2 staff members would be available in real-time.

During this exercise, it was emphasized that this kind of platform has to have a high-level functional specification in a usable way; ease of use here is crucial and should reflect user-centered design (and development) process.

Other ideas and features that were presented include Podcasts, personalized learning (opportunity to talk and learn via peer-to-peer), digitally disrupted professions, social media plug-in, mobilities section, live streaming area, etc.



CONCLUSIONS

After the completion of the ideation session, it was time to gather, categorize, and polish the creative ideas that had been introduced throughout the workshop. This was also the focus group's last phase, and a "brainstorming ideas assessment" graph was shown for a better overview. This phase is often referred to as a convergent stage.

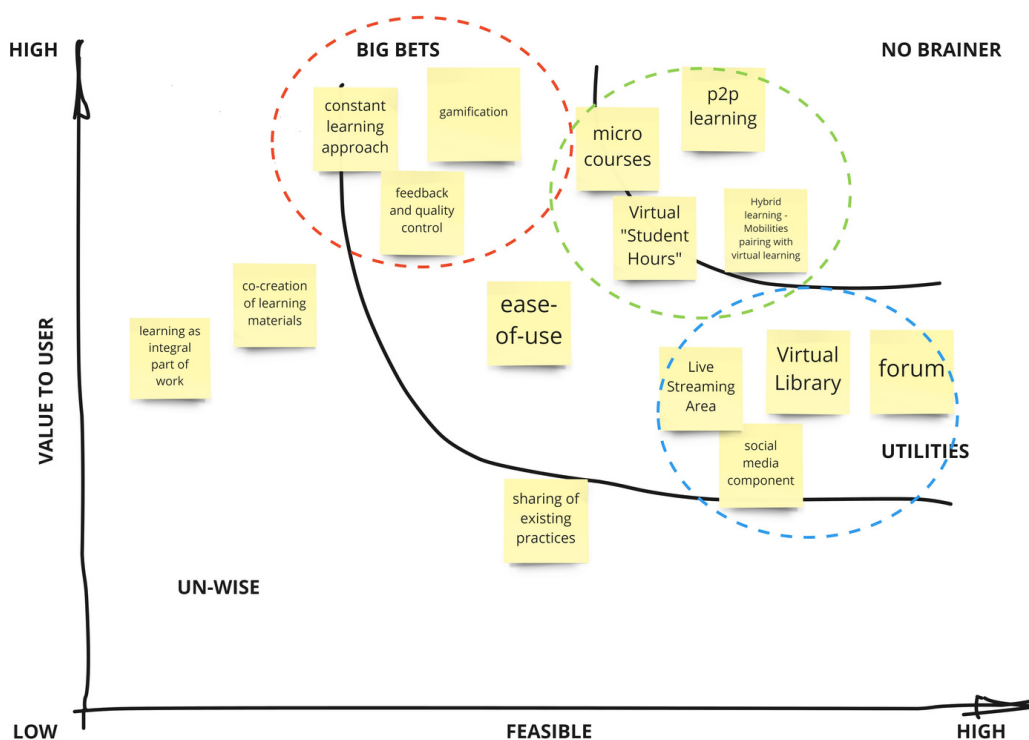
The **unwise** category contains ideas and solutions that will not be adopted at this stage of the SEA-EU Academy's development because they are of little value to users or are not possible at this time. While learning as an integral part of work and co-creation of learning materials are both beneficial to users, they are not realistic. Sharing existing practices, on the other hand, has higher feasibility but lacks value for potential users.

The **utilities** category include ideas and solutions that can be more easily incorporated into the SEA-EU Academy and will be used by platform users.

The live streaming area, virtual library, forum, and social media component also came out as ideas. And there was general agreement that these should be included in the SEA-EU Academy's initial phase of development.

The **big bets** category comprises ideas that have a lot of value for the consumer but are not easily implemented. These concepts, on the other hand, should be included in the guiding principles, and we should seek to incorporate them into the platform. The team highlighted a continuous learning strategy, feedback and quality control, and gamification as key components of the big bets category.

No-brainer ideas are those that are ideal for the platform because of their high user value and feasibility. These concepts will form the foundation of the SEA-EU academy's guiding principles. Micro courses, p2p learning, virtual student hours, hybrid learning - mobilities pairing with virtual learning are all part of the no-brainer category.



2

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Learners and teachers create a learner-centered environment.** Solutions are developed and decisions are made based on what is best for learners. Virtual office hours enable touch-points with colleagues and enrich the learning environment.
- 2 Using learning as an opportunity to network and create new connections.** Providing means of interaction and communications such as forums and regular webinars. Cohort-based learning provides an opportunity for bonding and multiplying the effect of peer-to-peer learning. Also, creating hybrid learning opportunities combining physical mobilities and virtual learning.
- 3 Peer to peer learning** - all participants act as both facilitators, learners and activators. Create a collaborative and reflective learning community. Professional learning communities are a result of relationships. All participants of the learning community jointly add value to the shared virtual learning library.
- 4 Creating time for busy professionals.** With a combination of various learning models such as micro courses SEA-EU Academy will provide quick learning opportunities. Live streaming and recordings are providing multiple opportunities for learning at the learners pace. Constant learning approach recognises that learning is a process that permeates all other spheres of learners activities.
- 5 Learners assume responsibility for goal setting as well as attaining proficiency on learning targets.** Student progression is based on mastery of content and verified through peer to peer participation, returning back to the community. Gamification and virtual credentials create opportunities to showcase achievements and get deserved recognition while also promoting the SEA-EU Academy. Feedback and quality control is pivotal for attaining learning targets.
- 6 Making space for learners and teachers to innovate** - only loosely aligning the learning community. Creating a positive environment where everyone can contribute both as teacher and learner. Favoring iterative processes and culture of feedback.
- 7 Learning community enables achievement and growth of learners in an equitable environment.**