



Parallel Session 2

Embedding generic skills in the curriculum

This session originates from previous work by T&L TPG2:

“Empowering students for their future professional life and civic engagement”

Session Abstract

- Universities offer many activities that support students in developing transversal skills and professional competences
- These activities are often voluntary/extracurricular
- They are only accessed by a small percentage of students
- In order to engage with all students, it is necessary to:
 - ✓ integrate the development of transversal skills into the curriculum
 - ✓ explicitly identify these in the curriculum description and expected outcomes

Three Key challenges

- **Lack of participation and engagement of students in extra-curricular activities or support services offered by the university**
 - > Only a small proportion of students engage voluntarily and those are most often the ones that have least need of such activities/support
- **Lack of time or motivation for academic staff to invest in developing such activities / support and integrating this into their teaching**
 - > Linked to lower value placed on teaching as compared to research and lack of flexibility within the curriculum
- **Lack of student self-awareness and self-reflection skills**
 - > Many students are not able to identify and talk about what they can and cannot do, and do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these skills

Principle 1: Integrate and explicitly identify skill development into the formal curriculum

- Allocating ECTS for compulsory modules focusing on transversal skill development
- Adapting teaching and learning methods to combine transversal skill development with discipline-specific learning
 - ✓ e.g. service learning, problem-based learning and work-based learning
- explicitly identifying the skills that are being developed in existing curricula

Principle 2: Recognise or reward skills developed through non-formal learning and civic engagement

- ECTS for voluntary activities, for example involvement in running student organisations or community work
- Digital badging schemes as a way of recognising specific non-compulsory activities or skills
 - ✓ completing a certain period of voluntary work, developing specific skills through dedicated courses, leadership skills demonstrated through positions in student/community organisations, etc
- Rewarding students who make a significant contribution to university life or civil society
 - ✓ through prizes or awards

Principle 3: Embed responsibility, ownership and opportunities for reflection across the institution

- Communicate the importance of developing civic and professional skills
 - ✓ alongside discipline specific knowledge
- Identifying students' needs at the point of admission so they can be addressed throughout the period of enrolment
 - ✓ self-assessment of generic competences in the admission/orientation process
- Embedding reflective practice into development paths for both staff and students
 - ✓ in order to increase awareness and facilitate ownership:
 - ✓ students: reflecting on skills that they do and do not have
 - ✓ for staff: reflecting on their own skills and opportunities for continued professional development

Four stations, four practical topics

- **Station 1: Curriculum planning and design**
 - ✓ **How can curriculum planning and design best support the integration of generic competences in the curriculum?**
- **Station 2: Teaching methods**
 - ✓ **What teaching methods support / encourage the development generic skills?**
 - ✓ **How can technology support and enhance generic skills development?**
- **Station 3: Assessment & recognition**
 - ✓ **What types of assessment and recognition are suitable for evaluating generic skills?**
- **Station 4: Implementation**
 - ✓ **Who are the relevant stakeholders and how can they be convinced?**

”World café”-like format

- you will be able to choose **two stations** during the session
- choose your first station and discuss the question with the other participants at that station
 - ✓ use the markers to note down **key words** and **ideas** as **answers**.
 - ✓ 15 minutes
- choose a second station and repeat the exercise at that station
 - ✓ including your comments on the key words written by the previous group
 - ✓ 15 minutes
- Each station will have an observer, that listen to the discussion and takes notes
 - ✓ Paolo Cherubini, Magdalena Iordache-Platis, Jan Danckaert, Arthur Skenazi
- Each observer gives a 2-minutes summary of the discussions at her/his station, followed by a closing summary