CHARM-EU

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WORLD CAFE CASEBOOK

Universitat de Barcelona
Trinity College Dublin, Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath, The University of Dublin
Utrecht University
Eötvös Loránd University | Budapest
Université de Montpellier
Åbo Akademi University
Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg
HRW Hochschule Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences
University of Bergen

Table of Contents

Event 1: Professional Development Café1.....3
Event 2: Educational Research Café.....5
Event 3: Cafe on AI for All: Empowering European University Alliances.....7

[1] The format of the World Cafe as the Professional Development (PD) Series of Events was initially launched by WP11 and subsequently continued and expanded by WP12. Event 1 was referenced in the WP11 deliverable; however, it is conceptually connected to the subsequent PD offers. Together, the three events form a coherent professional development pathway that builds on WP11's foundational work and is strategically advanced through WP12.

Event 1: Professional Development Café

- **Date:** 3 December 2024.
- **Purpose/Focus:** This online World Café was explicitly designed to **discuss and exchange best practices in professional development for teaching and learning** across European University Alliances. It aimed to provide a platform for participants to share experiences and gain new insights.
- **Participants & Organisers:**

A total of **72 members from 18 European University Alliances** gathered for the event.

The event was **co-organised by Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU) and Utrecht University**.

Keynote Speaker: Katrine Moland Hansen from the University of Bergen, who discussed the evolution of European higher education policies, highlighting milestones like the Erasmus program and the concept of a "fifth freedom" (free movement of knowledge). She also addressed challenges such as slow economic growth, demographic shifts, and the need for increased investment in education, research, and skills, emphasising the balance between national priorities and EU-level integration for competitiveness and inclusivity.

Breakout Session Contributors/Speakers:

- **Innovative Teaching Methods and Learning Environments:**
- **K. Niewalda** from Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU) (topic: Hybrid classroom teaching)
- **A. Granberg** from Abo Akademi University (topic: CHARM-EU hybrid classroom model).
- **R.M. Gray** from the University of Bergen (topic: Writerly Teaching and Learning).

Digital Transformation in Education:

- **N. Lazebna** from JMU (topic: Transdisciplinary activities with students, including spatial data mapping, pedagogy, and data-driven linguistic studies).
- **D. Könning** from Utrecht University (topic: GenAI professional development and policy at Utrecht University)
- **A. Schalk** from Trinity College Dublin (topic: Using GenAI in T&L in Higher Education)

Intercultural Competences and Inclusive Education:

- **R. Zendendel** from Utrecht University (topic: Erasmus students engaging in cultural exchange).
- **N. Marakhovska** from Masaryk University (Czech Republic) (topic: DIVE model and the importance of a teacher's positionality).

Professional Development in Higher Education:

- **L.Bespala** from Oxford University, UK (topic: supporting new teachers and recognising professional development activities).
- **Silvia Gallagher** from Trinity College Dublin (topic: Literature review on interinstitutional professional development activities).
- **Rada Mogliacci** from University Gustave Eiffel, France (topic: Shared approaches for using student data to inform professional development).

Sustainability in Higher Education:

- **Maria Theresa Dömling** from JMU (Embedding sustainability principles, with examples from CHARM-EU and the Sustainability Laboratory WueLAB at JMU).

Key Impacts:

- The event was a resounding success, providing a warm, friendly, and inviting atmosphere for sharing experiences and gaining new insights.
- It revealed valuable insights into best practices for professional development within European University Alliances.
- Participants valued the engaging discussions and the opportunity to establish valuable contacts.
- The contributions from Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg were particularly noteworthy, highlighting their active role in advancing innovative teaching methods and digital transformation in education.

Future Ideas/Recommendations from Participants:

- Sending questions to the speakers beforehand.
- Allowing more time for interactivity.
- Discussing more thematic overlapping topics.
- Due to its success, CHARM-EU is considering hosting this event every semester.

Event 2: Educational Research Café

- **Date:** 27 May 2025.
- **Purpose/Focus:** This World Café was dedicated to educational research, aimed at **sparking dialogue, fostering collaboration, and innovation in higher education**. It explored complex themes related to educational research to build connections across institutions.

Participants & Organisers:

36 Members of European University Alliances participated.

Structure & Key Sessions: The online interactive session encouraged open dialogue in small, rotating groups. A 20-minute open discussion segment allowed attendees to propose additional topics, ensuring the conversation remained responsive and inclusive.

Thematic Block 1: "Researching Innovation and Transformation":

Challenge-Based Learning (ChBL): Led by Kenan Dikitilas from University of Bergen, exploring its evolving landscape.

Thematic Block 2: "Future Directions of Educational Research":

- **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL):** Examined its potential to empower educators, with **Dr. Robert Kordts** igniting a vivid discussion on SoTL perspectives in Europe.
- **Assessment Methods: Dr. Donatella Camedda** from Trinity College Dublin and **Dr. Avelina Tortosa** from the University of Barcelona shared insights on practices across university alliances.

Key Impacts:

- Participants shared case studies and engaged in peer review, creating a collaborative research dialogue that transcended institutional boundaries.
- It served as a platform where participants shared ideas, explored new directions, and built connections across institutions.
- The World Café format proved to be "more than just a meeting—it's a platform for co-creation, shared learning, and building a stronger, more connected European higher education community" (*participant's feedback*).

Future Ideas/Recommendations:

- The provision for **contact sharing for informal connections and collaboration** at the end of the event is a key model for fostering continued dialogue and partnership beyond the session itself.

Event 3: AI for All: Empowering European University Alliances

- **Date:** 29th of October 2025

The **World Café on AI in Education**, organized by the **CHARM-EU Alliance**, served as a collaborative platform to explore the integration of artificial intelligence into higher education.

Purpose and Focus

The primary purpose was to develop a **CHARM-EU strategy for teaching and learning with AI**. The focus was on inspiring both teachers and students to experiment with emerging **Edtech solutions** and to collect good practices from partner institutions. Ultimately, the goal was to co-create policies and procedures regarding AI use in assessment, teaching, and learning while addressing ethical, methodological, and sustainability considerations.

Participants and Organizers

- **Organizers:** The event was spearheaded by the **CHARM-EU Alliance.**

- **Invited Speakers**: which includes partners such as the **Université de Montpellier** (Vanessa Vigano, WP 8.4 lead, and Antoine Chollet), **Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg** (Prof. Dr. Alicia von Schenk), **Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences** (Isabel Lausberg), Utrecht University Marnick van Lith, **Trinity College Dublin** (Prof. Na Fu)
- **Participants: 86** Attendees included **students and teachers** from various international and multidisciplinary backgrounds, such as research hub students from **Utrecht and Montpellier**. The broader CHARM-EU community, encompassing nine European universities beyond CHARM, was also involved.

Key Topics

The discussions covered a broad spectrum of AI applications and implications:

- **AI in Academic Research:** Exploring tools for literature search (e.g., Elicit, Perplexity AI), writing (e.g., Mistral, Claude), and reference management.
- **Social Interactions and Lie Detection:** Analyzing how AI lie-detection algorithms affect human social preferences and whether AI should be seen as a neutral assessor or a social actor.
- **Module-Specific AI Assistants:** The creation of custom assistants, such as **HORUS**, designed to provide 24/7 support for specific course content and generate exercises.
- **AI Literacy and Ethics:** Addressing student needs for knowledge on **AI ethics, data privacy, academic integrity**, and the sustainability challenges of AI.

- **Human-AI Partnership:** Identifying where to deliberately invite AI into learning and where to maintain **"human-only" territory** to cultivate uniquely human capacities.

Key Impacts

- **Increased Responsibility:** By involving participants in the discussion of **co-creation of their own AI rules**, the sessions fostered greater responsibility and reflection on the implications of AI use.
- **Appropriate Usage:** Practical implementations, such as using AI in management courses to create images for escape games, showed that students used AI critically and appropriately without abuse.
- **Performance Gains:** Meta-analysis shared during the sessions indicated that learning performance can increase significantly when AI is used with clear scaffolds.
- **Teacher Innovation:** Educators felt empowered to integrate new technologies and tools into their educational materials.

Future Recommendations

- **Strategic Scaffolding:** Future AI integration should use clear scaffolds (e.g., Bloom's taxonomy) to ensure gains in higher-order thinking.
- **Selective AI Use:** Educators should purposefully decide at which stages of a learning activity to switch AI "on" or "off".
- **Structured Development:** The creation of module-specific AI assistants should follow a structured six-step process, including goal setting, knowledge base curation (RAG), and continuous monitoring.
- **Ethical Vigilance:** Continued deep discussion with coaches regarding **data protection, bias**, and the validation of AI outputs is essential.

References

- IMPACTFUL BEST PRACTICES FOR EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCES IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - CHARM-EU
- https://charm-eu.eu/news-events/events/world-cafe-best-practices-for-european-university-alliances-in-professional-development-2/
- Online World Café on Educational Research - CHARM-EU
- World Café: AI for All, Empowering European University Alliances - CHARM-EU