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A picture containing text, clipart, sign

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# Case Description

Education is facing a complex knot: how to equip students with the capacities to address the wicked societal challenges of today? One thing is for certain, one person is not able to take on this challenge alone. That is why there is a need to educate students who can collaborate across boundaries of all sorts, institutional, cultural, disciplinary, personal, and societal - a main driver for transdisciplinary education.

By involving external stakeholders, teachers, and students from a wide variety of backgrounds as equals, a collaborative learning environment is set up where all learners experience the complex boundaries and environments themselves and how to act in them. This collaborative learning environment is time consuming. It must be actively managed to succeed, and the supervision of students and engagement of stakeholders are particularly intensive aspects of this environment.

Because of the open nature of transdisciplinary education, the conventional lecture style, embedded examination requirements, and the existing governance structure of educational institutions are challenged. Initiatives of the sort therefore often end up as minors or extra-curricular activities instead of integrated into degree programs.

## Pilot

During the first two quarters of this academic year, a pilot in transdisciplinary education has been performed at *Comenius University*. The 30 EC elective minor geared towards students in their second year of study has been a cross-faculty initiative, involving students and staff from the Psychology, Computer Science, Business Administration, Health Sciences, Biomedical Engineering, Public Administration, and Physics departments.

The pilot was initiated by a core team of four educators, followed by in total 12 students from all programs, and comprised of a challenge (20EC), small courses (2EC each), and a personal development line. The project was divided into an exploration, individual deepening, and integration phase over the course of 20 weeks. In this project, students are challenged to make sense of the situation and find a goal in a self-directed manner in the context of e-health in collaboration with health care innovator HealthWise. These activities were supported by weekly meetings between students, educational staff, and the challenge provider allowing for ad hoc organisation of educational activities and the reflection on learning surprises.

The results of a student evaluation on the pilot were positive (8.7/10), while the educational staff experienced it as exciting yet challenging. HealthWise was positively surprised by the creative reframing of their professional practice and appreciated the learning experience. Expert appraisal preceding the try-out by educational professionals was very positive about the student-centred setup of the education but warned about high workload for the educational staff because of the responsive nature of their involvement.

## Implementation in Health Sciences

The pilot leader has expressed the ambition to make the minor a mandatory element in Q1 and Q2 of year 2 of at least the health sciences bachelor programme and grow the number of students to 100 per cohort over the course of three years. Confirmation for collaboration with various external stakeholders, including HealthValley, a public-private collaboration in the East of the Netherlands, HyWorks, the lead developer of hydrogen infrastructure in the Eemshaven, and ProDemos, an NGO from the Hague focused on promoting democratic values in society, are already secured. To realize the roll-out, the pilot leader needs support from the health sciences programme, the examination board, staff, and faculty management. According to the prognosis, the implementation can be sufficiently covered by the conventional financing of education within Comenius University.

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