



Final Report of the IDEALiStiC Online Conference 2020-2

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1 General Information

This report summarises the results of the workshops of the IDEALiStiC Online Conference which was held on December 18th and 19th of the year 2020. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the Conference has been transformed into the second Online Conference of IDEALiStiC. The

main topic of the conference was concerning the universities post pandemic. Observations were made about the difficulties and benefits that have arisen through the change of virtual interaction in the classroom, as well as changes in the social dimension. To be able to structure the discussion accordingly, we decided to split the main topics and look at the social life aspect separately from the teaching at the universities. Each participant received input to these two subtopics by the workshops that were held. To support our discussions with expert opinions,

we invited two guests from the Education Development and Technology branch of the ETH. Additionally to their input about teaching during the Covid 19 pandemic, participants were able to ask them questions that had arisen in the workshops. During the course of the conference,

four interactive workshop sessions took place, where current situations were shared, problems were discussed, and solutions were worked out.

2 Workshops

2.1 Future of students life

2.1.1 Description

Beginning with the main topic of the conference, the participants were asked to give an update on the current pandemic strategy in their country and university. With this information in mind, we then split the participants into two groups, allowing both the topic “Social aspects and student life on campus after the emergency” and “Teaching, examinations and international mobility after the emergency” to be worked on parallel to each other. Each individual took part in both thematic workshops on the first day. On the second day, a workshop was held to allow participants to sum up the main points of the workshops. The results of this will be placed in the output (2.1.2).

Social aspects and student life on campus after the emergency

This workshop aimed at observing the situation of student-learning and the social life of university students in regard to the limits and boundaries set by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Using cluster techniques (Mural), a short individual survey and open discussion rounds, the participants tried to answer the following key questions:

1. What social aspects have you been struggling with personally or that you have observed with people in your surroundings? What could your university or the people around you do to help you?
2. How can student life on/or off campus be adequately changed to fit the situation of the pandemic?
3. What are ways of creating space for social life virtually? Have you had other ideas of allowing corona-conform options for students?
4. Which suggestions and ideas can we use for improving the future structures of online and/or classroom presence of our universities?

Teaching, examinations and international mobility after the emergency

The second workshop allowed students to reflect on the benefits and disadvantages of the sudden changes in teaching that the pandemic had caused. The goal of this workshop was to suggest proactive ideas and proposals for the university and how it might look in the future. The following key questions were set to help guide participants:

1. In what university experience do we believe?
2. How can we keep what is good of what we have discovered during 2020?
3. What will be the added value that we can regain? When will? we go back in presence, what will be the added value that we can regain ?compared to the distance?
4. Can teaching be reducible to a mere broadcast of contents during the lesson?

Tools like Mentimeter or Word Cluster supported the workshop participants to visualize their ideas and create a clear output.

2.1.2 Output

Social aspects and student life on campus after the emergency

After much open discussion and exchange between participants of this workshop, the general consensus was that social life is not ideal and cannot be substituted virtually. Even if efforts to create online social life are important for student wellbeing and were much valued during this time, everyone agreed that student life should not be held over zoom after the pandemic. However, since the end of the pandemic is unclear and social aspects play an important role in mental health and wellbeing, it is of uttermost importance that universities and their student associations stay proactive in ensuring possibilities of interaction between students. Participants wished that universities would take a more active role in enabling social life, as well as supporting the associations to do so.

Disadvantages were seen in fostering more social virtual interaction in post-pandemic times. Students struggle not only with the decreased spontaneous interactions (for example, coffee breaks), but also many voiced difficulties with the work-life balance. The time spent learning and studying online seems to be strenuous enough, and many have not managed to separate leisure and work. This can lead to a lack of motivation through procrastination at the workspace, or on the other extreme, can lead to a lack of wellbeing by overworking.

The participants believe that through the pandemic, our social community will have adapted and opened up to new online opportunities in regard to social life and student life. However, it became clear that although benefits were seen in virtual teaching, participants highlighted the need of social interaction in person to foster and maintain student wellbeing and mental health.

Teaching, examinations and international mobility after the emergency

As mentioned above, a workshop was held at the end of the two days of the conference to summarize the most important points. The importance of classroom interaction was particularly emphasized. Participants wished that teaching allowed the incorporation of more projects and practical aspects which would help to achieve the goal of increased interaction. This thought is also tightly linked with the overall idea of critically overthinking the concept of Front-Class-Lectures. This method of teaching was discussed and the question of whether this way of teaching is preferable or if it should be modernized to a new way of teaching. The change that the pandemic brought to ways of teaching can here be seen as a chance to make fast and visible changes for improvement in the university classrooms.

Other benefits that were presented by the participants were:

- Virtual Classrooms allow more and flexible cooperation between universities. This includes the idea of sharing online classes and lectures between universities.
- The value of recorded lectures increases the range and flexibility for studying.
- Blended-learning can be held partly digital, and can allow new ways of teaching

3 General Assembly

3.1 Decisions

There is a big preference for the next conference to be in presence. For this final report it is decided that the next conference will take place in presence in June/July. We are dependent on the measures that then apply.

3.2 Position Paper

We will make one big position paper. The subjects of the conference are too interconnected. We will divide the two parts. One part about teaching and one part about social life. We will merge them together at the end. The position paper will be written by the project managers, assisted by Vanessa, Marco and Vanessa.

- Mara is the project manager of Teaching
- Corentin is project manager of Social life

3.3 Elections

There were no elections this conference. The next elections will take place after the next conference.

4 Acknowledgement

The student unions of IDEALiStiC would like to thank the IDEA League and the member universities for their support.

The Secretaries General would like to thank all the participants for their active engagement and all the helpers that supported the organisation team.