

Open Futures: First EDUC Student Think Tank

Students from Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, and Hungary participated in the first EDUC Student Think Tank “Open Futures” on June 22, 2021, and gave our alliance student input on four different structural issues.

29 students from our six partner universities spent an entire day on June 22, 2021, tackling four different structural topics of the Higher Education Alliance EDUC. In various workshops on **FutureSkills**, **FutureMobility**, **FutureInvolvement**, and **FutureDigitalCampus**, the students presented their perspectives on the topics, discussed them, and came up with exciting ideas for the future activities of the alliance.

The event took place in a digital environment on the Gather.Town platform and used the collaborative whiteboard tool Miro. The tools were selected in line with the nature of the event and were aimed at providing as realistic a teamwork experience as possible. Students were supposed to get the feeling of walking across an actual campus, exploring different spaces, and approaching and getting to know each other in an intuitive and self-directed way.

The screenshot depicts a section of the environment in Gather.Town as it appeared during our Student Think Tank (left: workspace with tables for work in small groups; right: the entrance area and access to the lounge):



In addition to common spaces such as the entrance area, the lounge, and a rooftop terrace with a campfire, there were also workspaces with tables for work in small groups, as well as a gallery used to display all the whiteboards at the end of the day. Each group worked with their own whiteboard, their own methods, and their own work processes so as to be able to discuss their topic appropriately.

Intensive work phases were interrupted by regular breaks and group activities such as games or physical exercise. At the end of the day, the participants took part in a so-called Gallery Walk. It offered students the opportunity to explore the whiteboards of the other groups, discuss them and ask questions. The day ended with a relaxed and interesting chat around the virtual campfire.

The initial session on student involvement in the university alliance EDUC was a complete success, full of important input and ideas that we want to include. The students were very satisfied with both the technology and the organization and expressed their support for regular and more advanced formats: “Thanks a lot for giving me the possibility to participate in an event like that, I hope we'll meet in some other occasions (maybe here in Sardinia!).”

We're look forward to working with you again and can't wait for the next event!
Your EDUC team