

## Teaching and Learning UNITE!

# Pedagogical Activity 6

*It's an amazing experience*  
– Student interaction in the  
virtual international project  
**INSPIRED**

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University: TU Darmstadt

Dates and times: May 20, 2021, 14:00 CEST

Estimated workload: Single session of approx. 105 min

Maximum participants: 15

Format: Virtual workshop

### Registration details:

Registration link/ e-mail/ method	<a href="mailto:hd-workshops@hda.tu-darmstadt.de">hd-workshops@hda.tu-darmstadt.de</a> Please provide the following information: Title, Family name, Given name, Date of birth, University, Department, Lecturer in a UNITE Joint Program (yes/no), Attendance certificate requested (yes/no) Activity No. & title
Registration deadline	May 5, 2021

Pedagogical activities are part of a good practice teaching and learning initiative to enhance our understanding of learning cultures in the UNITE! network of universities.



## Overview and aim

[INSPIRED](#) (International Project Week for Interdisciplinary Research-Oriented Digital Learning) builds on a long tradition of international and interdisciplinary projects at TU Darmstadt. Coordinated by the Departments of Mechanical Engineering, Biology, and Materials and Earth Sciences, the short-term summer exchange program comprises two phases: a virtual e-Learning “Prep phase” and the so-called “Do phase” – originally, a three-week summer school that was held on-site in Darmstadt during the first edition of the program in 2019. In the e-Learning course, the participants of disparate academic backgrounds prepare independently to complete the task that awaits them during the main summer event. The primary aim of the “Do phase” is to investigate an unusual and challenging (bio)engineering issue together – in international and interdisciplinary project teams.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, INSPIRED 2020 was redesigned from its original blended format into an exclusively virtual course offer. Following the preparatory e-Learning phase, the program participants were invited to join the INSPIRED Virtual Team Project. Although the international students did not have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, they gave INSPIRED top marks for collaboration and networking and, at the same time, achieved very good academic results.

In the workshop, we will present how the digital working environment described above of the Virtual Team Project was designed and what concrete impulses and visual tools were used to support collaboration and interaction in INSPIRED. The participants will get an overview and the opportunity to try out selected tools for interaction in small groups.

Our aim is to stimulate our workshop’s participants to create their own team student projects in an interactive virtual working environment. Thus, we wish to share the good pedagogical practice concept developed at TU Darmstadt. While exemplified by INSPIRED 2020, it is applicable to a variety of teaching contexts – be it local or international, field-specific or interdisciplinary, as well as any digital teaching activities that stand to benefit from stimulation of collaboration and interaction between students.



## Target group and prerequisites

The workshop is designed for scientific and didactic university staff and student assistants interested in fostering interaction in diverse student teams (*e.g.*, various national and/or academic backgrounds) in a virtual context.

### Keywords

Interaction, collaboration, virtual working environment, international, interdisciplinary



## Learning Outcomes (LOs)

After completing the workshop, a successful learner will:

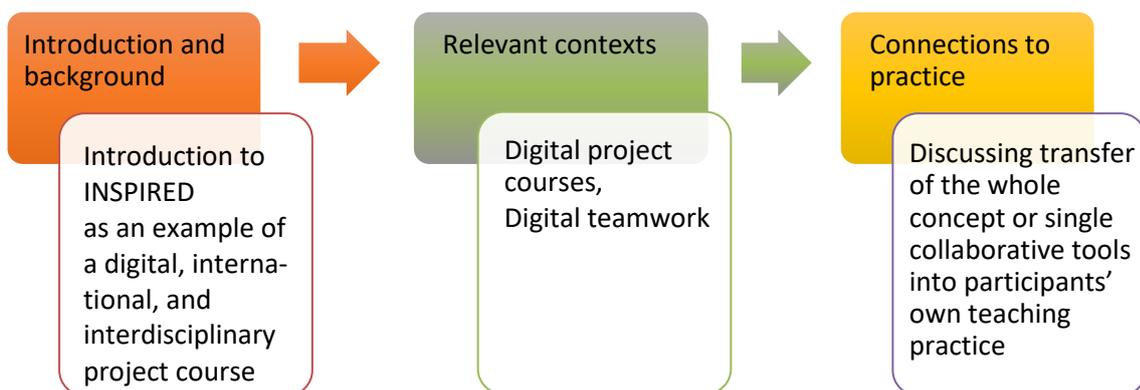
- have gained insights into the overall and digital design of international and interdisciplinary team student projects
- be familiar with a validated virtual working environment employing an online visual collaboration platform for teamwork (Miro) in concert with a video conferencing application (Zoom)
- be able to apply selected interaction and collaboration tools
- be able to develop ideas on how to design their own virtual team student projects
- have reflected on and gained an enhanced appreciation of the academic, social, and cultural diversity of the international research & student community.



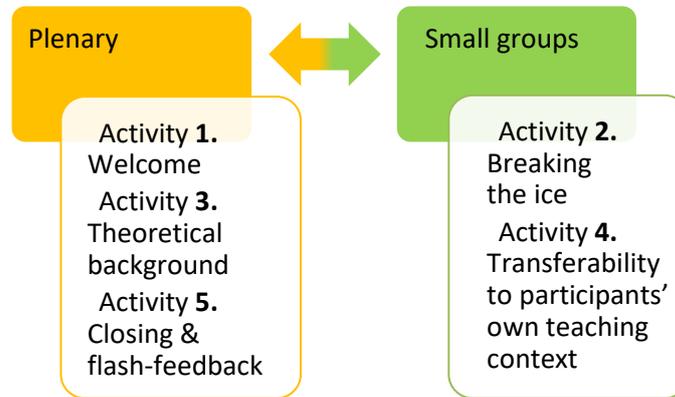
## Activity overview

The workshop will take place in the hybrid Zoom-Miro working environment applied in INSPIRED 2020. It will combine plenary sessions (theoretical background, input) and breakout interactive sessions in small groups (3 teams of 5 participants).

Workshop structure flowchart:



## Content



1. 5' Welcome & introduction to the workshop
2.  How can we use a visual collaboration platform to break the ice in a group and get to know each other?
  - Using selected interactive visual tools in Miro and getting to know available alternatives
3.  What is INSPIRED and how has it evolved into an exclusively digital project? Designing and supporting student interaction in the virtual working environment of INSPIRED: workflow and tools, team building and social networking, self-reflection of the teams, virtual mentoring.
4.  Brainstorming on the transferability of the INSPIRED concept, methods, and tools into the participants' own teaching context
  - Using selected interactive visual tools in Miro
5. 10' Closing & flash-feedback



## Learning resources



Access to computers & internet for collaborative work online (Zoom & Miro)



Presentation: Introduction to INSPIRED  
Student interaction in the virtual environment of INSPIRED



Templates for visual collaboration tools



Video: Interaction in INSPIRED | A student's view



Readings: Comprehensive handout as follow-up material  
Project Aristotle by Google | [Online report](#)



## References

*Project Aristotle* by Google | Online report:

<https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/introduction/> (accessed January 15, 2021)