Examples and guidance from pilot implementation of Module Session 4 by the University of Vechta

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Instructor Guide: Community Action in the Seminar "Soil Health & Soil Protection"

Goal of the Community Action

The Community Action is a practice-oriented learning unit in which students independently develop and implement soil-related educational or conservation measures for the university community or the local community. The aim is to combine subject knowledge with societal impact, communication, and action competence.

Basic Structure

1. Define topic & target group
2. Develop concept
3. Implement
4. Document & reflect

Formats and Time Variants – Overview

A) Digital learning path (Option 2 – information campaign)

B) Hands-on activity with educational component (Option 1 – hands on activity)

C) Exhibition / pop-up information space (Option 2– information campaign)

D) Educational workshop / participatory offer (Option 1 – hands on activity)

Collaboration with External Partners

Possible partners:

- Environmental education centres
- Municipal environmental offices
- Agricultural businesses
- Citizen initiatives
- Schools
- Botanical gardens, parks, community centres

External partners are preferred but internal partners such as a University society or network can be identified if this is not possible (e.g. Green Campus / Climate Action society / network)

Forms of collaboration:

Providing space or materials

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Expert input

Joint implementation

Reuse of materials prepared (we recommend collaborators be given access so they can reuse them)

Checklist for Instructors

Before the seminar:

☐ Clarify goal

☐ Set timeframe

☐ Obtain permissions

☐ Clarify format

☐ Contact cooperation partners (option to then ask students to write a follow up email)

During the seminar:

☐ Explain formats

☐ Support groups

☐ Check feasibility

☐ Address safety and data protection issues

After implementation:

☐ Conduct reflection

☐ Secure results (materials developed, learnings for next time)

☐ Check for continuation (are changes needed to the materials developed so that partner can reuse)

Recommended Tools

Design:

- Canva
- Genially

Interaction:

- Mentimeter
- Actionbound (for digital scavenger hunts)

Organization:

- Padlet
- Trello

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Student Instructions (adaptable)

Goal: Develop and implement a measure for soil-related education or soil protection.

Define topic & target group

Choose format

Plan (content, materials, location, tasks)

Implement

Document & reflect (short report, photos, impact, challenges)

Project Planning Template for Students

Project title:

Topic (e.g., soil life, sealing, humus, nutrition):

Target group:

Chosen format (Digital / Hands-on / Exhibition / Workshop):

Brief description of idea:

Planned location:

Required materials:

Task distribution within the group:

Schedule:

Possible cooperation partners:

Risks / open questions:

Expected impact:

Documentation (photos, links, files):

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FORMAT A: Digital Learning Path / Online Information Offer

Target group: Campus community, school classes, interested public

For 2 hours:

- Interactive presentation (e.g., Genially or Canva)
- 3–5 learning stations (slides or pages)
- Short texts, images, 1 quiz question per station

For 3–4 hours:

- Location-based learning path (campus, park, neighborhood)
- 3–5 real stations, QR codes for digital content
- Observation tasks, short reflection questions

For 5+ hours:

- Didactically structured learning path (Introduction – Deepening – Conclusion)
- Videos, interviews, small experiments integrated
- Test run with feedback from fellow students

FORMAT B: Hands-on Activity (the optional elements listed below include an educational component)

Target group: University community, local community

For 2 hours:

- Small planting activity (pots, raised bed)
- Show and explain soil sample
- Optional: brief info on posters (can be divided among group members depending on size)

For 3–4 hours:

- Create small bed or soil profile
- Optional: design an explanatory info board (divided among group members if needed)

For 5+ hours:

- Larger planting activity or garden module (e.g., erosion hedges)
- Info board or multiple info stations
- Optional: involve external target groups

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FORMAT C: Exhibition / Pop-up Information Space

Target group: University buildings, library, foyer, campus

For 2 hours:

- 3–4 posters with key messages
- QR codes for further info

For 3–4 hours:

- Posters + participatory stations
- Quiz or soil samples
- Visitor survey

For 5+ hours:

- Multiple topic areas
- Workshop or lecture elements
- Invitation of external guests

FORMAT D: Educational Workshop / Participatory Offer

Target group: Other students, school classes, youth groups

For 2 hours:

- Short workshop: 1–2 experiments, quiz, brief discussion
- Optional: implementation as learning stations

For 3–4 hours:

- Learning stations format with 3–5 participatory stations (methods like World Café are also suitable)
- Group rotation, final discussion
- Optional: station with hands-on practical task e.g. experiment to visualize a concept from another station

For 5+ hours:

- Structured workshop plan
- Prepare material sets
- Feedback and reflection session

Note: All formats can be implemented in cooperation with external partners (environmental education centres, municipalities, agriculture, NGOs, schools, parks).

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Other Session 4 Materials

The following Resources that complement this guide are also available from the LOESS project at https://loess-project.eu/training-module/ :

- Handbook for Facilitators for Training Session 4 (translated)

which includes the following materials that can be edited as required:

- Identification by lecturer of soil health problems to be tackled
- Identification by students of soil health problem to be tackled
- Guidelines for students on 30 minute Problem Analysis & Target Definition activity Option 1
- Guidelines for students on 30 minute Problem Analysis & Target Definition activity Option 2
- Email template for contacting potential cooperation partner (prompts provided)
- Agreement of ground rules among group
- To Do list planning template Option 1
- To Do list planning template Option 2
- Lesson plan for designing workshop
- Template for 1 page summary submitted at end of meeting 1
- A list of existing soil health literacy material that can be drawn from for the information campaign material development (Some of these resources are available in a range of languages).
- Evaluation form for participants and collaborators when hands-on activity / information session completed
- Supporting Resources on Soil Health Fundamental
  Some supporting resources to provide a basic knowledge of soil have been compiled for students who may come from a different discipline and have not completed the other 3 sessions. (Some of these resources are available in a range of languages).

- Introductory slides for Option 1 meeting
- Introductory slides for Option 2 meeting

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