

## Interdisciplinary Critical Creative Collaboration – IC<sup>3</sup>

<b>Activity:</b>	Interdisciplinary co-creation Project in Innovation
<b>Title:</b>	Interdisciplinary Critical Creative Collaboration – IC <sup>3</sup>
<b>Audience:</b>	Students from Marketing, Design and Nutrition
<b>Duration:</b>	Semester course for Marketing students (14 sessions) 3 workshops for Design and Nutrition Students (3 sessions)
<b>Outcome:</b>	Innovation Plans for research projects of the FH
<b>Benefits:</b>	Collaboration and team work between departments Learning and practical experience for students Identification of market opportunities for research outcomes

### INTRODUCTION

The Innovation Management and Marketing IMM course is part of the Strategic Marketing Module offered to bachelor students of Business Administration, CALA and EBP at the FH Münster. The aim of the course is to provide the students with theoretical and practical knowledge on how to manage and market innovative products, services and processes. We use a project-based learning approach to provide the students with the opportunity to work on practical cases while learning the conceptual bases. This project is usually developed by IMM students alone.

We have identified the need and opportunity to collaborate with other Departments of the FH to improve the learning process, the quality of the proposals and the knowledge sharing. Simultaneously, the research projects will benefit from market concepts that support the commercialisation process. In the following sections, we present the experience during WiSe 2016 and propose an extended and complemented activity for SoSe 2017.

### BACKGROUND

During the Winter Semester 2016-17, in an effort to increase interdisciplinary and collaboration between different disciplines, the IMM course started to collaborate with the Nutrition School. Two research projects with commercial potential of the Nutrition School were used as real cases to learn and manage the innovation process. In this way, IMM students benefit from current research projects, and the Nutrition Department will receive updated information on market trends and identification of new concepts that contribute to the commercialisation of research outcomes.



*On the left: introduction and presentation of the research projects from the Nutrition department for the IMM students by Prof.Dr.oec.thoph. Ritter. On the right: inter-disciplinary workshop with the participation of Design and Nutrition students.*

Additionally, students from design and nutrition were invited to participate in the development of innovation plans. We conducted an inter-disciplinary workshop to bring the students from different disciplines together to develop concepts about product development and innovation plans. Students from the three departments share a similar interest on innovation, although from different perspectives. For example, design students emphasise on the design process and input for the concepts, innovation marketing students have a commercial approach to product development, and nutrition students focus on the product technical feasibility. The objective was to identify other disciplines' strengths, challenge status quo of each discipline and incentivise students to think outside the box and to collaborate. Students presented their perspectives and gave feedback on the different aspects of product development, at the same time they learnt how the other areas work.

After the workshop, we collected feedback from the students. According to their experience, the workshop offered positive outcomes for all participants. Marketing students could reevaluate their projects and think more carefully about design aspects and target objectives, while the Design students could identify business situations and methodology that helps to bring the design concepts further. Students in general perceived an improvement on the quality of their innovative concepts. The workshop also reflected the interest and possibility to improve the inter-disciplinary work at the FH. Students acknowledged the value of other perspectives for their own expertise. They identified the strengths of other disciplines and potential complementarities with their own work.

Additionally, some challenges were identified. The first point is the difficulty to engage with students from other departments under a volunteer basis. For example, only one student from nutrition responded to our call; the rest of the contacted students reported interest but not the time or accreditation within their work load. In term of logistics, students reported difficulty to engage with the projects as they knew about the project only on the day of the workshop.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Currently, very few occasions exist for students from different disciplines to interact and work together. The FH acknowledge that " *Voraussetzung für umfassende Lösungen ist es, die vielfältigen Ansätze der Fachgebiete zusammenzuführen. Daher ist interdisziplinäres Zusammenwirken in Lehre und Forschung für uns selbstverständlich*" (Hochschulentwicklungsplan 2016-2020, page 27). Despite the acknowledged benefits of inter-disciplinary work and open collaborations, the daily activities still lack of this component. As an example, the Innovation Management and Marketing IMM course lacks the opportunity to work collaboratively with other actors in the FH.

## OUR PROPOSAL

We propose to conduct the Interdisciplinary Critical Creative Collaboration – IC<sup>3</sup> in the Summer Semester 2017 to bring students from different backgrounds together under an innovative project. Based on our experience in 2016, we propose to expand to three workshops in a semester in which the students work closely together and have the opportunity to get involved in the innovation class, exchange ideas and knowledge and generate an Innovation Plan based on research projects and outcomes of the FH.



*Images from the concepts developed by the IMM students on the WiSe 2016-17.*

## RELEVANCE

The FH Münster 2016-2020 Development Plan (page 8) suggests that: "(...)Durch intensive und professionelle Austauschprozesse greifen wir den Wissensbedarf und die Erwartungen unserer Partner auf und unterstützen deren Entwicklung (...)". This project contributes to this aim in terms of interdisciplinary in teaching and research, development of scientific results, interaction with professionals and development of innovative business areas.

We believe that this proposal brings not only a complete and real case study for the students, but also supports the development of commercial potential of the scientific research. This proposal contributes to „(...)Dies umfasst zielgerichtete Maßnahmen zur Erschließung innovativer, noch nicht bearbeiteter Geschäftsfelder, somit Marktbewertung, Kunden- und Wettbewerberanalyse, (Folge-)Geschäftsanbahnung, Geschäftspläne sowie konkrete Geschäftsmodelle“. In this way, this proposal

contributes to the process of research transfer and commercialisation and the *Erweiterung der Dienstleistungsangebote und Verwertungsformen* from the Strategic consideration (page 30) in the FH's Development Plan. We propose the continue using of research projects as real cases for the Innovation Marketing classes, thus we support the identification of commercial value of the scientific research in the FH-Münster by developing an innovative market strategy as a learning activity.

## How

The IC<sup>3</sup> is a one semester project-based course on innovation. It uses research outcomes of the Nutrition School to teach concepts on innovation at the same time that provides a practical opportunity to manage the innovation process. It includes three workshops with the participation of students from the three departments. At the end of the session each group should be able to present a solution according to the workshop's task.

The three workshops would be a part of the normal semester course from IMM Students. Those students will be responsible for the finalisation and the presentation of an innovation plan, as stated in the course assignment. Design and Nutrition students will join during the three workshops, providing discussions and feedback, as detailed in Fig. 1.

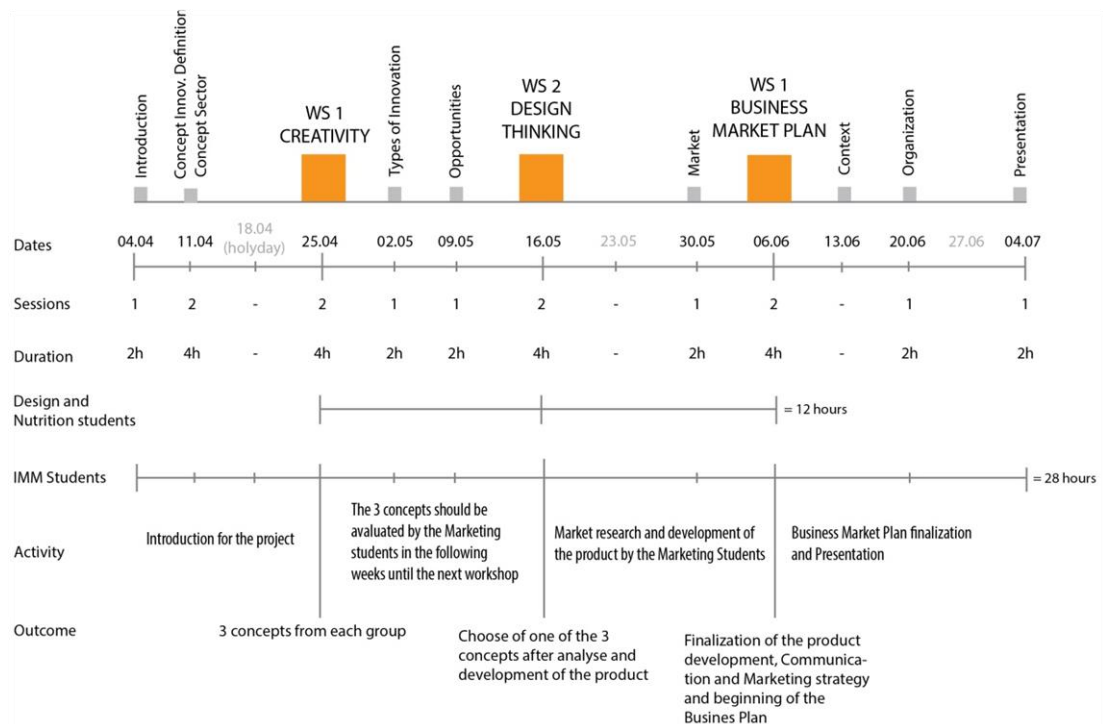


Figure 1. IC<sup>3</sup> project.

## THE PROJECTS

During the WiSe 2016, the projects used as a learning base were the result of two Bachelor Thesis of the FH-Münster's Nutrition Department. The first project aims at using insects as a replacement to already used proteins. The second project was a Polarization Food Database, developed in partnership with the IT department. This Database can collect and organize information about specific polarized foods according to the location, making able to evaluate where the products are more or less consumable.

We propose to keep working with projects from the Nutrition Department. The idea is that the projects chosen as case study are based on research developed by the FH and have potential for commercialization.

## THE STUDENTS

We propose to work in inter-disciplinary groups that include students from the three departments as follows:

- 30 students from IMM (full semester)
- 20 students from Design (12 hours – 3 workshops)
- 10 students from Nutrition (12 hours – 3 workshops)

To overcome the problem of low participation, we suggest that there will be credits for the students from Design and Nutrition. This could be achieved by using "Forum Gestaltungs" stamps or as part of the credits towards another course. That would facilitate engagement during the project as the external students would also be evaluated. It would also avoid time crossing between the proposed activity and the regular external departments' courses. The three workshops would support the themes worked in the classes.

The evaluation will be divided in two groups: the IMM students and external areas' students (Design and Nutrition). IMM students will be evaluated according to the participation during the classes, the final group report of the project and Business Market Plan development and the presentation. Design and Nutrition students will be evaluated according to the participation during the workshops and a brief group report after each workshop. This report should contain the contribution from those students on the IC<sup>3</sup> Project and new inputs and knowledge learned from the activity. There will be final cross-evaluation among the group of students.

**Proposed dates for the workshops:** 27<sup>th</sup> April, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> June

**Proposed by:** Lina Landinez. Research Associate and Lecturer.

[landinez@fh-muenster.de](mailto:landinez@fh-muenster.de)

[www.science-marketing.com](http://www.science-marketing.com); [www.fh-muenster.de](http://www.fh-muenster.de)

Innovation Management and Marketing.  
FH Münster - Münster School of Business  
Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre  
Prof. Dr. habil. Thomas Baaken  
Johann-Krane-Weg 27, D - 48149 Münster