

Practical Tips



Virtual
Hackathon



**Cofinanciado por
la Unión Europea**

Subject definition and question formulation

- Relate subject to experiences of participants
- Using relevant problems increases the motivation of participants
- Consider testing the clarity of the question in a relevant focus group
- Be specific
 - Confine the problem
 - Make the problem concrete
 - However, the problem shouldn't have an obvious solution

Script

- Prepare a script of the hackathon before the hackathon starts. It helps if the script contains
 - The names and phone numbers of stakeholders, experts and the organization
 - A planning for each day, both for the organization, stakeholders, experts and participants
 - A short description of the problem and question
 - A short introduction on the methodology that is used

Hackathons as an educational instrument

- Manage the expectations of the stakeholders
 - primary goal of the hackathon is the learning outcomes of the students, solving the problem is bonus
- Know your students in advance
 - What are their backgrounds and experience with hackathons
 - What is their motivation for joining?

Group Dynamics

- Consider whether participants can sign up as teams or individuals only
 - Signing up as teams increases the chance that students are capable of cooperating
 - Signing up as individuals gives you the opportunity to ensure mixed groups
- Include teambuilding exercises at the start of the hackathon
 - For the group to get acquainted, if not yet
 - To teach group dynamics and trigger a conversation about specific roles within a project group

Group Dynamics

- Examples of useful social/teambuilding exercises, i.e.
 - Keep talking and nobody explodes
 - Come up with a group name, logo, mascotte etc.
 - Two truths, one lie

Motivation and progression

- Hackathons can be intense, and upholding motivation can be challenging – especially if
 - Students are not enrolled in the hackathon by choice, or
 - Students are stuck in their progression or assignments
- Build in moments for feedback within the schedule, either by
 - Staff, teachers, or
 - Peer feedback sessions (if not competitive), or
 - Deadlines (i.e. ideation should be finished Friday 8pm)

Grading criteria (if applicable)

- Be clear upfront what the learning outcomes and grading criteria are
 - Coupling grading to learning outcomes can ensure that students go through the entire process
 - If there is a jury or panel involved instruct them on the learning outcomes
- Consider whether the grading is on the end-product or whether other parts of the process should be included

Skills training

- Provide training of required skills throughout the weekend
 - Through the roadmap
 - Through workshops by the lecturers/organisers
 - Through external experts
- Skills workshops to consider;
 - Ideation techniques
 - Problem Analysis/Stakeholder Analysis
 - Leadership and communication
 - Pitch training

Skills training

- Workshops can be provided to the entire team or to specific members
 - Workshops can be mandatory or optional
 - Specific members increases the amount of workshops you can provide
 - Entire team gives every participant the chance to train the skill

Good luck!



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