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The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership: Internationalising Blended Learning through Interdisciplinary Advocacy-oriented Research

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Abstract:

The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership was established in 2019 based on a collaboration between researchers from nine European universities working in the field of digital rights, governance, and constitutionalism who teach undergraduate and postgraduate modules. The Covid-19 pandemic facilitated the organisation of synchronous online sessions, which were subsequently integrated with in-person activities and short-term mobilities of students and instructors thanks to the Erasmus+ blended intensive programmes (BIP) funding. This paper offers a reflective account of how digital constitutionalism as a research topic has been embedded in a transnational, interdisciplinary, and advocacy-oriented teaching programme, and draws out the lessons from six years of experience. It investigates how an interdisciplinary research field such as digital constitutionalism can be effectively translated into a subject taught across multiple universities and disciplines through innovative educational modalities and effectively contribute to existing advocacy initiatives. Drawing on instructors' reflections and students' evaluations of the Teaching Partnership, the paper examines the research context, pedagogical approaches, benefits, and challenges of establishing the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership. The paper illustrates how internationalising *blended learning* through interdisciplinary advocacy-oriented research fits the objectives of training future generations of professionals in people-centred understanding of digital futures.

Keywords: teaching partnership; digital constitutionalism; internationalisation; Erasmus+ blended intensive programmes (BIP); participatory action research; policy advocacy.

1. Introduction

The Digital Constitutionalism Network (DCN) is an interdisciplinary group of academics from around the globe, interested in how constitutional rights and governance is reacting to the challenges of the digital age.[1] In 2019, the DCN launched the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership with the aim to connect its research and teaching transnationally.[2]

The Teaching Partnership represents a blended type of learning based on online and offline classrooms and interactions. Its teaching activities commenced in the spring semester 2020, at the outset of the first global wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, in the second semester of every academic year, the partnership has organised a series of synchronous and asynchronous online teaching activities, involving students from different European universities in the exploration of digital constitutionalism from both theoretical and practical perspectives. An in-person component was added in 2022, thanks to funding opportunities offered by the Centre for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) in Bochum, Germany, and then institutionalised through the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) scheme.

The Partnership is interdisciplinary and international. In the most recent iterations of the Partnership, this blended teaching experience saw the participation of a team of academics from up to eight European universities. Across six iterations of the Teaching Partnership, from 2019 to 2025, over 350 students were involved, enrolled in both bachelor's and master's degrees - in Law, European and Global Studies, Media and Communication, Political Science, and Internet Studies. Lastly, but certainly not least, a peculiarity of the Partnership lies in its capability to connect research-led teaching with policy advocacy-oriented activities. Instructors design learning activities where students contribute to real initiatives promoted by civil society organisations in the field of digital rights.

This paper offers a reflective account of how an interdisciplinary topic, such as digital constitutionalism, can be effectively translated into a subject taught in university settings through innovative educational modalities. In particular, we analyse to what extent internationalising blended learning through interdisciplinary advocacy-oriented research fits the objectives of training future generations of professionals in people-centred understanding of digital futures. This paper contributes both to the existing literature on digital constitutionalism – as it explains how this research topic can be translated into an international educational setting and become the propeller of advocacy initiatives involving students – and to the growing scholarship on transnational hybrid teaching collaborations, especially those funded by the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme.

[1] See the Digital Constitutionalism Network's webpage: <https://digitalconstitutionalism.org/> accessed 29 April 2026.
[2] For information about the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership see: <https://digitalconstitutionalism.org/teaching-partnership/> accessed 29 April 2026.

The authors of this paper are all instructors involved in the organisation of the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership. In developing this educational program, we were guided by a perceived lack of existing offers and motivated by new technological and funding opportunities. In this paper, we aim to analyse and reflect on the Teaching Partnership from a pedagogical perspective, assessing its potential and discussing its limitations.

This reflective account is based on two sources. First, it draws on the authors' experiences in designing and delivering the programme. Second, it incorporates the findings from 58 post-course surveys carried out at the end of each edition across participating institutions. These evaluations combined Likert-scale items and open-ended questions, capturing students' perceptions of learning, skills development, and overall experience. Given the voluntary and anonymous nature of these surveys, and the absence of consistently comparable response rates across cohorts, the material is used to complement the authors' reflections on the organisation and delivery of the programme. References to outcomes of the Teaching Partnership therefore do not reflect systematically measured effects.

The paper is structured in five parts. Section 2 analyses how instructors' objective of internationalising their teaching experience was translated, firstly, in a virtual teaching element, and, subsequently, in a hybrid collaboration between the participants' institutions. The paper highlights the role that the new Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme plays in offering in-person opportunities of interaction. We argue that this hybrid format represents a smart alternative to the general trend that sees 'onlineness' as the economic-savvy solution of contemporary internationalisation practices in European universities.

Section 3 examines how emergent digital constitutionalism research can be transformed into a multidisciplinary learning space. It contextualises its main focus areas, highlighting the variety of approaches that different disciplines can offer. Instructors found effective ways not only to connect their research, but also to embed their collaboration into teaching and learning practices contributing to the missions of digital constitutionalism as a 'movement'. The paper considers to what extent the Partnership is shaped by Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) teaching practices.

Section 4 discusses how advocacy activities in the field of digital constitutionalism were embedded in the Teaching Partnership. Translating and contributing to spreading the Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet,[3] creating a 'constellation' of Wikipedia entries on digital constitutionalism in different languages, and drafting concrete policy briefs to create research with the potential to influence policy processes are all examples of the advocacy activities that the partnership's instructors incorporated in their lectures and assessments. The objective was not only to train the next generation of students and help shape capacities to become

[3] Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition, 'The Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet (8th Edition)' (Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition, 2022) <https://internetrightsandprinciples.org/charter/> accessed 29 April 2026.

informed and active citizens in digital society, but also to effectively contribute to existing advocacy initiatives in the field of digital constitutionalism.

Section 5 investigates the benefits of the Teaching Partnership, both for students and teachers. The Partnership contributes to enhancing the interdisciplinarity and internationalisation of classes, fostering intercultural exchange and understanding through a variety of collaborative activities and assessment methods. This initiative also allows the development of a shared teaching and assessment toolkit while participating in international exchange and advocacy activities. It benefits from practices used across various disciplines and national traditions. It contributes to honing students' digital skills and promotes awareness about their possibility to have their voices heard, even in international policy venues.

Section 6 examines the challenges encountered, discussing how a cooperative approach allowed us to identify innovative solutions to address them. Practical logistical issues such as coordinating across multiple time zones and national academic calendars required instructors to adopt a flexible timetable with clusters of joint activities and innovatively introducing a hand-over assessment technique. The choice and use of online platforms as well as data governance and protection issues expose criticalities that are rooted in the institutional systems where we work. The absence of structural funding for the Teaching Partnership shaped the progressive transition from virtual-only to hybrid activities. In this regard, we argue that the Erasmus+ BIP scheme partially addresses this issue, but does not offer solutions to ensure long-term sustainability of similar initiatives.

Finally, the paper concludes with a series of broader questions that link the various dimensions of the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership: from teaching and learning to research and advocacy. Blended intensive programmes partially address the issue of the environmental impact of teaching mobilities but de facto rely on digital platforms – mostly private and environmentally extractive – that paradoxically perpetuate data monetisation practices that are criticised by the very scholarship on digital constitutionalism.

2. Internationalisation through blended (intensive) learning

2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the forced transition to virtual learning

Virtual exchange and online teaching have become familiar assets in academic environments as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although long-distance learning has a long history through Open University-type initiatives,[4] and virtual exchange[5] emerged as a concept and practice in the US and European context since the early 2000s, it has been the unprecedented challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic's

[4] See Open University webpage and background: <https://www.open.ac.uk/> accessed 29 April 2026.

[5] The term identifies initiatives that harness the potential of pairing the power of technology and the science of dialogue to activate meaningful change. This is a practice that, over the past twenty years, has been promoted by projects like Soliya (https://soliya.net/) and organisations like the Sharing Perspective Foundation (https://sharingperspectivesfoundation.com/).

distancing that accelerated the process of teaching and learning beyond in-person activities in university classrooms.

The original plans for the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership were elaborated in 2019 with a view to connecting classes from different universities in Europe making moderate use of Skype calls while maintaining a traditional in-person approach to most learning practices. However, they were in fact completely disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the envisioned activities had to be fully reconsidered. Our universities simply stopped operating as a physical space of learning - for months. The new situation, which forced universities to adjust quickly and to develop interoperable digital educational infrastructures, also proved to be a relevant testbed for operating across countries, semesters, and educational traditions. Educational platforms and modalities of virtual learning were new to most of the involved participants. Over time, the emergency situation translated into a push to blending in-person and remote activities, synchronous and asynchronous, thanks to available infrastructures, new teaching formats, and the fast acquisition of skills amongst students and instructors, also building on the previous experience of some DCN members.

In terms of organisation, the partnership took place through a number of online coordination encounters amongst instructors to design programmes, define priority themes, negotiate calendars, and to suggest and share teaching modalities, activities, etc. Interestingly, involved teachers had the opportunity to design a partnership which, from the onset, would comprise traditional forms of teaching – identifying common readings and tasks, planning for diverse class activities in the different universities and connecting them conceptually – and different formats of online learning (mostly making use of the Zoom platform). These comprised introductory seminars where digital constitutionalism and related core concepts were presented; online conversations amongst participating teachers, each reflecting on specific aspects of the same theme or activity, thus making classes diverse and engaging; guided discussions (through questions, tasks, games); peer-to-peer activities; as well as breakout rooms where students could meet and discuss in smaller groups on the topics of the class, generally being invited to identify issues and open questions, share their respective experience and knowledge on the theme, record their conversations in shared files while discussing, and nominate rapporteurs to report back to the plenary.

From the outset, the project consisted of joint in-class lectures and online seminar activities with students from five partner universities. Students from different courses and universities were invited to carry out multimodal assignments between classes, which, as we explain later in the paper, constituted a form of hand-over activities, i.e. a collaborative, sequential approach in which different student groups built on the outputs produced by earlier cohorts or groups working in parallel. Along with intersecting schedules, this allowed some classes and teachers to collaborate more closely and carry out specific projects within the broader partnership while core activities, such as expert and themed webinars, were always made available to the entire network and all participating entities, and the recordings made available through different university platforms. This kind of cooperation can be characterised

as heterogeneous, with groups from some universities interacting more deeply, whereas others were only marginally involved. No central organising principle 'forced' a minimum engagement from instructors; the barriers to entry into the Teaching Partnership were low in this phase.

Thus regular classes – carried out in local contexts, by individual teachers, and according to specific time schedules and learning plans – were enriched by the possibilities offered by virtual exchange: intercultural sharing of experiences and knowledges; more international and comparative elements in themed discussions and projects; and working through synchronous and asynchronous sessions to allow time for students to further read, research, explore, and reflect, individually and in groups, on the various issues addressed in class. This was widely appreciated by students from all involved partner universities, as the innovative element of inhabiting the digital learning space was paralleled by the discovery of how rewarding the development of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary projects could be.

What many students mentioned as a missing element, in their feedback at the end of the first two editions of the partnership, was the possibility of meeting in person and spending time on those same relevant issues, while inhabiting the same physical space. This feedback was the basis of a first attempt at bringing (at least some of) the students together, thanks to the hospitality and support of the CAIS in Bochum, Germany, in spring 2022. The event was organised as a scientific gathering of DCN scholars, yet space was made for other participants including members of civil society organisations and students. They had the opportunity to sit around a square table, present their work, and participate in all discussions on the same footing.

2.2 Erasmus+ and the advent of Blended Intensive Programmes

Meanwhile, the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) emerged as a new institutional mode of funding and fostering the blending of in-person and virtual learning and teaching.[6] BIPs represent the latest innovative approach under the Erasmus+ programme and are designed to provide a short period of study or training abroad, integrated into a jointly offered course. Short-term mobilities had been an element of the Erasmus+ program before, but the focus on joint organisation of courses and the blended element marked innovations in the 2021-2027 programme. This model allows students to maintain their academic plans at their home institution while participating in the BIP as a parallel activity. This flexibility is particularly appealing to students, as it enables them to gain valuable international experience without the need for prolonged relocation or major disruptions to their studies.[7]

[6] European Commission, 'Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Version 1 (2024)' (2023) 52 <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-11/2024-Erasmus%2BProgramme-Guide_EN.pdf> accessed 29 April 2026. There is a growing literature on the topic: see, e.g., Elizabeth Frank and Petra Hogendoorn-Schweighofer, 'Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes' Role in Promoting Inclusivity and Sustainability in Management Education - A Survey-Based Evaluation' (2026) 24 The International Journal of Management Education 101358 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2026.101358> accessed 7 May 2026.

[7] Romée Jager, 'The Development of Intercultural Competence through Internationalisation at Home. The case of Erasmus+ blended intensive programmes within European University

Furthermore, students who engage in BIPs often reported in our surveys an increased motivation to pursue further international opportunities, indicating that this model can have a positive long-term impact on international engagement.

For university lecturers, BIPs present a unique opportunity to establish international teaching collaborations. By jointly designing and delivering course content, educators can expand their professional networks and create connections that may evolve into future research partnerships. Such promotion of exchange and collaboration may foster synergy effects in terms of teaching quality and teaching collaboration. The partnerships developed through BIPs not only enhance the international profile of the educators and institutions but may also have the potential to serve as a foothold for future collaborations under initiatives such as the European University Initiative.[8]

Beyond academic benefits, BIPs actively encourage students and staff to engage with cultural diversity.[9] Teachers and students alike have the possibility to engage in an international setting where certain objectives have to be met by collaborating online and face-to-face. This fosters an environment where participants must consciously navigate cultural differences, promoting deeper intercultural understanding and the adoption of an international perspective. Crucially, however, by integrating both virtual and face-to-face engagement, BIPs exemplify a more sustainable model of student mobility – one that combines the benefits of academic travel with reduced environmental impact.[10]

Based on the above, on the occasions of the 2023, 2024, and 2025 editions, the Digital Constitutionalism Network started to experiment with the BIP framework. In these instances, a proposal for a BIP course was made by an individual teacher at a specific location, and on all occasions the plan involved adding to or integrating existing courses with the new programme (depending on university system rules). BIPs imply a minimum number of in-person hours over at least five days, hosted by a partner university, paralleled by online activities before and/or after the off-line sessions. Building on previous experience, the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership organised online and offline activities to offer students a coherent journey through digital constitutionalism – concept, theories, perspectives, and controversial issues – as well as to engage in imagining digital futures that reflect the rights and principles of the approach, while engaging with current policy-oriented debates. This resulted in optimal use of different learning formats, using the virtual component for

Alliance' in Alexander Frame and Barbara Curyło, *The European Universities Initiative and the 'Euro-internationalisation' of European Higher Education* (Routledge 2025).

[8] Sonja Gögele and Petra Kletzenbauer, 'Blended Intensive Programmes: Promoting Internationalization in Higher Education', *Education and New Developments* (2023) <https://end-educationconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023v2end086.pdf> accessed 29 April 2026.

[9] Jonathan Q Tritter and others, 'Making Cross-Cultural Collaboration a Reality for Students and Teachers: The Power of Blended Intensive Programmes' (2026) 58 European Education 44 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2025.2600943> accessed 7 May 2026.

[10] Krzysztof Kafarski and Jan K Kazak, 'Erasmus Staff Mobility in the Building of a European Network: The Case of a Central European University' (2022) 14 Sustainability 4949 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/9/4949> accessed 29 April 2026.

introductory elements, and the in-person component as the actual moment of deeper and sustained exchange aimed at producing concrete outputs, such as policy briefs, as we will explain below, which were then again finalised online. From a pedagogical perspective, with the introduction of the BIP format, the Teaching Partnership now follows the 'three-tier' structure tested by Gögele and Kletzenbauer, meaning it contains: (i) an (online) exploration of foundational concepts, (ii) an in-person 'hands-on workshop', and (iii) an activity that allows the students to apply what they learned in practice, represented by their final assignment.[11]

2.3 Erasmus+ and the advent of Blended Intensive Programmes

Universities have always been an international meeting-place, for academic staff and students. Over the last two decades, internationalisation has become a cornerstone of university student recruitment and research funding strategies worldwide.[12] As noted above, the EU's Erasmus programme has been a longstanding champion of education abroad as a means to generate cultural understanding and goodwill between member states across linguistic and culturally diverse educational systems.[13] Managements are now undergirding this ambition with the roll-out of digital networked teaching administration and learning tools, a range of products falling under the rubric of EdTech, a profitable enterprise for large tech companies such as Microsoft and Google and their affiliates, now the dominant players as they enlist university administrations with compelling (inexpensive) licensing deals.[14] The internationalisation paradigm for this century, and since the pandemic, now presumes that intercultural exchanges through cross-border and collaborative learning and research are inseparable from digital forms and formats, internet connections, and live video streaming: 'onlineness' and internationalisation have become one and the same in effect.

Against this backdrop, recent initiatives, such as the Erasmus+ BIP, look to providing multi-sited ways for students to learn and engage with others, in person and virtually, under the motto of 'blended learning'. Instigated as a way to develop the Erasmus mission, the EU is funding experiments further embedding digitally networked tools and spaces across the education spectrum and the EU's digital single market. Buzzwords such as 'enhanced learning environments', 'online classrooms', and 'active learning' using the latest tools are cashing in on both the 'Covid effect' and the early ethos of the Internet's original design premise: knowledge exchange across time and

[11] Gögele and Kletzenbauer (n 8).

[12] For a comparative analysis, cf. Liviu Matei and Julia Iwinska, 'National Strategies and Practices in Internationalisation of Higher Education: Lessons from a Cross-Country Comparison' in Adrian Curaj and others (eds), *Higher Education Reforms in Romania* (Springer International Publishing 2015).

[13] See Sahizer Samuk and others, 'Learning in Transition: Erasmus+ as an Opportunity for Internationalization' in David Cairns (ed), *The Palgrave Handbook of Youth Mobility and Educational Migration* (Springer International Publishing 2022).

[14] MI Franklin, 'University Life Corporatizing the Digital: Academic Agency Interrupted?' in Leonie Maria Tanczer and others (eds), *Online Surveillance, Censorship, and Encryption in Academia*, vol 21, Issue 1 (International Studies Perspectives 2019) <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekz016> accessed 29 April 2026.

space by way of computer-mediated communication, the Internet in short. With or without internet access or social media apps, video conferencing as a way to develop students' awareness of the wider world through cross-border teaching collaborations is not new.[15] But the move online for all teaching and learning dates from 2020, foisted on students and teachers for two years during the pandemic, and with mixed effects according to the research literature.[16] The pandemic is over, officially, and we have all returned to the standard, analogue classroom albeit one more fully equipped with screens, webcams, and other digital tools, and in which online interactions by way of video conferencing/live-streamed events are now commonplace.

As this paper goes to press, the outlook for internationalisation as part of providing students with a 'good education' is less optimistic, particularly in the UK and parts of the EU. The vagaries of diminishing government funding for higher education across national and regional jurisdictions notwithstanding, recent electoral successes of far-right political parties targeting migration have put universities in a difficult position. Prominent voices in the media and decision-makers have come to regard the 'international student' as a problem, a Trojan horse for more unwanted immigrants. Yet, in some educational systems, international students generate university income (their fees are up to twice the amount that 'local' students pay for the same degree programs), and they spend money, contributing to local economies and, in the case of smaller cities or neighbourhoods, becoming a major source of income for service providers, retailers, and restaurants.[17] But students, local and from abroad, also put pressure on local facilities, housing, and health services that cannot always be met at the start of each academic year. Online education – Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have been a focus for some years now – can generate income (such is the belief, not always borne out in practice) as they recruit students from around the world without the pressure on housing or local facilities – internationalisation as a 'virtual' experience, a simulacrum of the traditional university trajectory. With the latest shift to the anti-migration right of the political spectrum and its accompanying linguistic nationalism, governments, in the Netherlands and Denmark for instance, do not distinguish between international – foreign – students and other 'migrant' categories.[18]

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[15] MI Franklin and Kenton T Wilkinson, 'Transnational Communications in Action: A Critical Praxis' (2011) 4 Communication, Culture & Critique 361 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-9137.2011.01112.x> accessed 29 April 2026.

[16] See, inter alia, Sumitra Pokhrel and Roshan Chhetri, 'A Literature Review on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Teaching and Learning' (2021) 8 Higher Education for the Future 133; Laura Ihm and others, 'Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Health of University Students' (2021) 36 The International Journal of Health Planning and Management 618; Katerina Kedraka and Christos Kaltsidis, 'Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on University Pedagogy: Students' Experiences and Considerations' (2020) 7 European Journal of Education Studies <https://oapub.org/edu/index.php/ejes/article/view/3176> accessed 29 April 2026.

[17] This is not the case for some national university systems in Europe where EU and non-EU fees are identical, such as for example in Germany, Italy, France, or Spain.

[18] See, e.g., Ian McManus and Michelle Falkenbach, 'A Hollow Victory: Understanding the Anti-Immigration Shift of Denmark's Social Democrats' (2022) 18 Journal of Contemporary European Research; Merijn Oudenampsen, 'From Clashing Civilizations to the Replacement of Populations:

The 'blended' premise is distinct in this context because it supports the travel and accommodation of students and staff on the basis that there is an equivalence between online and offline (in person) teaching and learning during the course. In short, despite the pushback against internationalising higher education as an English-language undertaking, an approach that Denmark and the Netherlands have taken in recent years for instance, online collaboration with an offline commitment can mitigate against this emerging 'hostile environment' for international students. The Erasmus+ BIP program has potential to provide impetus for the innovations in how we teach, in how students learn and communicate ('digital natives' that they are), and in how scholarly knowledge is generated and exchanged that the pandemic threw into relief. Another plus for the BIP concept project was how engaging online cuts a substantial amount of overhead for those staff and students who cannot (afford to) travel for multiple weeks, thereby facilitating internationalisation and cultural awareness of others by technological means. The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership has benefitted from the older tradition of international exchange through meeting as learning-by-doing, by being together on the ground and online using information and communication technologies. The 'blending' elements that the BIP requires offers opportunities for students and teachers alike to discover in new ways, and formats how learning should be about broadening horizons; no longer just through travel to a designated locale but also with computer-mediated encounters and group-work projects online. In that regard, the online shift that the pandemic ushered in, and Big Tech facilitated, has kept the spirit of university learning and scholarship as an international experience alive in the face of concerted efforts of incoming legislators to force universities to 'deinternationalise'.[19]

3. Embedding research into teaching

3.1 Digital constitutionalism research

The concept of 'digital constitutionalism' is an umbrella term denoting various phenomena, all however linking the constitutional law dimension - mainly the protection of fundamental rights and the balancing of powers - with the digital society.[20] This observation is not surprising, given that the notions of 'constitution'

The Transformation of Dutch Anti-Immigration Discourse' in *The Politics of Replacement* (Routledge 2023) 180.

[19] See, e.g., Susan Wright, 'Danish University Governance Reforms: Internationalisation and De-internationalisation' (2022) 57 European Journal of Education 96; Romeo V Turcan and Valeria Gulieva, 'De-Internationalization of Universities: An Exploratory Study' in M Marinov and O Sørensen (eds), *Finding Solutions to the Challenges of Internationalisation* (Aalborg Universitetsforlag 2016) 313.

[20] Lex Gill, Dennis Redeker and Urs Gasser, 'Towards Digital Constitutionalism? Mapping Attempts to Craft an Internet Bill of Rights' (9 November 2015) <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2687120> accessed 29 April 2026; Claudia Padovani and Mauro Santaniello, 'Digital Constitutionalism: Fundamental Rights and Power Limitation in the Internet Eco-System' (2018) 80 International Communication Gazette 295.

and 'constitutionalism' have been variously defined and have themselves evolved over time.[21]

The first generation of scholars using the concept of digital constitutionalism emerged in the decade from 2009 to 2018.[22] These authors employed this term in an original and innovative way, delinking the notion of constitutionalism from the dimension of the state. Digital constitutionalism refers to the idea of incorporating traditional constitutional guarantees, such as respect for the principle of due process or freedom of expression, in virtual environments regulated - to a large degree - by the internal rules of multinational tech corporations. On the one hand, constitutionalism is projected beyond the state, as international constitutional law already did, questioning the ability of nation states to address the challenges of globalisation.[23] On the other hand, constitutionalism encompasses normative instruments going beyond the traditional Kelsenian pyramid of legal sources, thus embracing a socio-legal approach. Indeed, this first generation of scholars denote as digital constitutionalism the efforts of social media companies to incorporate the principles of rule of law within their terms of service, either through rules imposed by private law or after interpretative interventions from the judiciary.[24] The terms of service of these online platforms are themselves considered as private constitutional instruments.[25] Digital constitutionalism also encompasses attempts by a plurality of actors, from national parliaments to civil society organisations, to craft an 'Internet bill of rights', a 'constitution' that would re-articulate traditional constitutional rights and principles for the digital world.[26]

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[21] András Sajó and Renáta Uitz, 'Introduction', *The Constitution of Freedom: An Introduction to Legal Constitutionalism* (Oxford University Press 2017); Charles Howard McIlwain, *Constitutionalism: Ancient and Modern* (Amagi 2007).

[22] For a literature review of these scholars, see Edoardo Celeste, 'Conceptual Approaches to Digital Constitutionalism: A Counter-Critique' (Nomos 2025) <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748938644-15> accessed 7 May 2026.

[23] Anne Peters, 'Compensatory Constitutionalism: The Function and Potential of Fundamental International Norms and Structures' (2006) 19 Leiden Journal of International Law 579 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156506003487> accessed 29 April 2026; Petra Dobner and Martin Loughlin (eds), *The Twilight of Constitutionalism?* (Oxford University Press 2010).

[24] Vaios Karavas, 'Governance of Virtual Worlds and the Quest for a Digital Constitution' in Christoph B Graber and Mira Burr-Nenova (eds), *Governance of Digital Game Environments and Cultural Diversity* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2010); Nicolas Pierre Suzor, 'Digital Constitutionalism and the Role of the Rule of Law in the Governance of Virtual Communities' (Thesis, Queensland University of Technology 2010) <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/37636/> accessed 29 April 2026.

[25] Edoardo Celeste, 'Terms of Service and Bills of Rights: New Mechanisms of Constitutionalisation in the Social Media Environment?' (2019) 33 International Review of Law, Computers & Technology 122.

[26] Edoardo Celeste, 'Internet Bills of Rights: Generalisation and Re-Specification Towards a Digital Constitution' (2023) 30 Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies 25; Francesca Musiani, 'The Internet Bill of Rights: A Way to Reconcile Natural Freedoms and Regulatory Needs?' (2009) 6 SCRIPT-ed 504; Dennis Redeker, Lex Gill and Urs Gasser, 'Towards digital constitutionalism? Mapping attempts to craft an Internet Bill of Rights' (2018) 80 International Communication Gazette 302; Claudia Padovani, Francesca Musiani and Elena Pavan, 'Investigating Evolving Discourses On Human Rights in the Digital Age' (2010) 72 International Communication Gazette

As scholarship on digital constitutionalism has become more consolidated, the 'hybrid' and 'multi-level' nature of the phenomena analysed becomes more apparent.[27] We witness a widening of the research horizon of digital constitutionalism. It affirms itself as a more encompassing 'ideology' advocating for a translation of fundamental rights and principles to address the challenges of the 'digital age' as well as a 'movement' that pushes for the constitutionalisation of the digital world at all societal levels.[28] It does not include exclusively the powerful multinational tech companies which de facto regulate the virtual environment, or the action of civil society actors who first reacted to end online injustices, but also traditional legal actors, such as national and supranational courts and legislators.[29] The whole legal spectrum is now in motion to provide normative counteractions to the constitutional challenges of the digital revolution. This scenario may appear fragmented but is, in reality, guided by the same orienting principles that support contemporary constitutionalism.[30] Yet, a series of open questions remain to be analysed. Current scholarship still explores how to translate traditional constitutional principles to effectively tackle the issues generated by the digital revolution and how to foster the synergy between the processes of constitutionalisation involving traditional legal actors, private corporations, civil society organisations, and individuals.

3.2 From interdisciplinary research to teaching collaboration

While digital constitutionalism might seem like a very abstract and legal concept, in reality it denotes a broader ideology advocating for the translation of principles of contemporary constitutionalism to address the challenges of the datafied society.[31]

359; Mauro Santaniello and others, 'The Language of Digital Constitutionalism and the Role of National Parliaments' (2018) 80 International Communication Gazette 320; Andrea Pettrachin, 'Towards a Universal Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms?' (2018) 80 International Communication Gazette 337.

[27] Edoardo Celeste, 'Digital Constitutionalism: A New Systematic Theorisation' (2019) 33 International Review of Law, Computers & Technology 76; Santaniello 2018 (n 26).

[28] See Dennis Redeker, 'Exploring the Bottom-Up Constitutionalism of the "Feminist Principles of the Internet"' [2018] SSRN Electronic Journal <https://www.ssrn.com/abstract=3490214> accessed 29 April 2026; Celeste 2019 (n 21); Edoardo Celeste, *Digital Constitutionalism: The Role of Internet Bills of Rights* (1st edn, Routledge 2022); Edoardo Celeste, 'The Constitutionalisation of the Digital Ecosystem: Lessons from International Law' in Angelo Jr Golia, Matthias C Kettemann and Raffaela Kunz (eds), *Digital Transformations in Public International Law* (Nomos 2022); Celeste 2023 (n 27).

[29] Oreste Pollicino, *Judicial Protection of Fundamental Rights on the Internet: A Road Towards Digital Constitutionalism?* (Hart Publishing 2021); Giovanni De Gregorio, *Digital Constitutionalism in Europe: Reframing Rights and Powers in the Algorithmic Society* (1st edn, Cambridge University Press 2022).

[30] Edoardo Celeste, 'The Constitutionalisation of the Digital Ecosystem: Lessons from International Law' in Angelo Golia, Matthias C Kettemann and Raffaela Kunz (eds), *Digital Transformations in Public International Law* (Nomos 2022); Gunther Teubner, *Constitutional Fragments: Societal Constitutionalism and Globalization* (Oxford University Press 2012).

[31] See Sofie Flensburg and Stine Lomborg, 'Datafication Research: Mapping the Field for a Future Agenda' (2023) 25 New Media & Society 1451; Jose Van Dijck, 'Datafication, Dataism and

This interdisciplinary field incorporates legal perspectives, political science, global studies, media and communications, sociology, and computing, allowing for intersecting reflections by scholars and students. Consequently, the scholarship on digital constitutionalism has striven to be interdisciplinary too.[32] Legal scholars work alongside and often together with social scientists to better understand not only the legal (theoretical) developments and implications, but also the social and political drivers of legal change and the impact of law and policies. Computer science perspectives help to guide legal and social science researchers to better understand the constantly developing technologies.

The evolving and broadening research agenda of digital constitutionalism is also accompanied by scholarly activism in fostering their object of study. The progressive constitutionalisation of digital and human rights and principles in a global society dominated by powerful technology companies besides nation states did not remain a topic of academic investigation. Scholars involved in the Partnership have also contributed to shaping the 'movement' of digital constitutionalism, participating in civil society and institutional advocacy initiatives. Such advocacy-oriented research was a good fit to drive the Teaching Partnership. Involving students as potential 'actors' and 'stakeholders' in the 'movement' of digital constitutionalisation and deploying teaching as a vehicle to connect fundamental rights and principles to the challenges of the digital age – the everyday challenges as well as the political wager of emerging socio-technical systems – opened new horizons for the partners involved.

The internationalisation ambitions of these transborder teaching and learning initiatives were aligned: the object of investigating the impact of digital technology was consistent with the aim of embracing and enhancing technology through education; the momentum of constitutionalisation of digital rights and of revolutionising teaching involving alliances and networks built within the extended virtual classrooms coincided; the means of advocacy and activism corresponded with the methods of participatory, action-based, crowd-sourced teaching and learning; and finally, the aim of meaningful impact on the digital turn overlapped with visibility and prominence of students' work as inherent elements of participatory education. In sum, these conditions provided a foundation for embedding burgeoning research into digital constitutionalism into teaching.

3.3 Participatory action learning and research

The Teaching Partnership academic team identified the most suitable pedagogical approaches according to their relevance to the aspirations of the digital

Dataveillance: Big Data between Scientific Paradigm and Ideology' (2014) 12 Surveillance & Society 197.

[32] See, e.g., Edoardo Celeste and others, *The Content Governance Dilemma: Digital Constitutionalism, Social Media and the Search for a Global Standard* (Palgrave Macmillan 2023); Edoardo Celeste, Dennis Redeker and Mauro Santaniello, 'Anchoring Digital Rights: Digital Constitutionalism in Hard Times' in Claudia Padovani and others (eds), *Global Communication Governance at the Crossroads* (Springer International Publishing 2024); Nicola Palladino, Dennis Redeker and Edoardo Celeste, 'Civil Society's Role in Constitutionalising Global Content Governance' (2025) 14 Internet Policy Review.

constitutionalism movement. Since movements need action and activation, the Teaching Partnership's learning journey was designed for participation and engagement. Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) combined with crowd-oriented educational practices offered ideal opportunities to connect the ambition of digital constitutionalism with the classroom.[33] Participatory Action Learning and Action Research also had a proven track record in reimagining the classroom as a space for social change and preparing students for a socially reflective and engaging role in the digital context.[34]

Participatory Action Learning and Action Research is a well-established pedagogical approach, rather than a concise method, and connects action learning – defined as 'learning from and with each other in small groups' – with action research – defined as 'a cyclical process of action and reflection in action'.[35] Both elements reside in the partnership and collaboration between the educators and the learners, and builds upon relationships, reflection, and recognition: the so-called '3 Rs'.[36] The Teaching Partnership deliberately pursued this approach, starting from the curricular design through the teaching practices, students' evaluations, and their output to this very reflection on the experience of the programme.

Trust-based relations among all educators and students dominated the atmosphere from the outset, both in the physical and virtual settings. Next to the action-orientation of teaching and learning, participation was the central organising principle, enabling students to construct their own knowledge actively. Research targets, working methods, and outputs were designed and realised in collaboration with educators through ongoing exchange and involvement. With the help of crowdsourced-oriented education, the partnership pursued intrinsic, integrated, and identified motivation, including perceived enjoyment, sense of belonging, and social identification.[37] Educators' active engagement with students' group work not only

[33] Elzbieta Gajek and Katerina Zdravkova, 'Preparing Teachers for Crowdsourced Language Learning' (2021) 20 Infotheca - Journal for Digital Humanities 7.
[34] Krisztina Rozgonyi, 'Education for Social Change: The Potentials of Participatory Teaching and Learning with Students in Media and Communication Education' (2021) 10 Journalism Education 19; Lucia Gloria Vázquez-Rodríguez and Krisztina Rozgonyi, 'Pedagogy for Change: Building International Teaching Alliances for Gender Equality in Media through Student-Driven Advocacy' (2025) 40 European Journal of Communication 391.
[35] Zuber-Skerritt 2018 (n 4); Lawrence Stenhouse, *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (Heinmann Educational 1975); Kurt Lewin, 'Action Research and Minority Problems' (1946) 2 Journal of Social Issues 34; see also Georgeta Ion, Marta Kowalczuk-Walędziak and Chris Brown, 'Unlocking the Potential of Research-Informed Practice: Insights into Benefits, Challenges, and Significance among Teachers in Catalonia, Poland, and England' (2024) 59 European Journal of Education e12639 <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12639> accessed XXXX.
[36] Judith Kearney, Lesley Wood and Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, 'Community–University Partnerships: Using Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR)' (2013) 6 Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement 113.
[37] Gajek and Zdravkova 2021 (n 33).

facilitated collaboration but also enabled constructive reflections and ongoing feedback.

In all iterations of the partnership to date, final group presentations were organised to give visibility to students' work and provide a sense of reward and acquired capacity towards contributing to making change. For this purpose, the coordinators invited special expert guests to the final session, who engaged in discussions and provided valuable feedback. For instance, for the BIP in 2024, two members of transnational civil society engaged in European and UN-level Internet governance joined the final group presentations. Students' contribution to digital constitutionalism resources was made visible by design and – according to their feedback and evaluations, as highlighted below – motivated them to learn more. This opportunity was a key driver in the partnership's pedagogical journey. Thus, the partnership could utilise the potential of crowdsourcing as distributed problem-solving.[38]

Working across disciplines to ideate, design, and implement such coordinated teaching activities amongst university courses – including selecting literature and reading assignments, defining core themes, and articulating digital constitutionalism encounters around specific topics, issues, and approaches – has enriched both class activities as well as respective research perspectives, thus further proving the value of connecting research and education. Furthermore, teaching interventions have been planned from the beginning of the DCN with the aim of providing students with theoretical knowledge and a good understanding of the relevance of constitutional principles in the digital environment so that they could explore, interrogate, and problematise different stakeholders' efforts to uphold those principles in the elaboration of digital policies and regulations.

4. Involving students in real-life policy advocacy

The working collaboration emerges from a shared interest in exploring digital constitutionalism as both an empirical and normative phenomenon. It also reflects a style of socially engaged scholarship that characterises and distinguishes the DCN's members: an attitude also communicated to students in Teaching Partnership events. Thus, beside experimenting with principled knowledge exchanges in class, the Partnership also wanted to elaborate the idea of fostering an awareness and critical approach to the development of human, if not digital, rights and to involve in such an effort the next generation of policy- and decision-makers that our students represent. It was conceived and executed as a truly transnational experience: proactive and mutual conversation between scholars and students, group work as alliance building, and teaching and learning advocacy for impactful communication with direct policy relevance. As such, issues of policy-orientation, implementation, and advocacy have been central to the planning of each edition of the Teaching Partnership.

[38] Daren C Brabham, 'Crowdsourcing as a Model for Problem Solving: An Introduction and Cases' (2008) 14 Convergence 75.

Topics had to be selected and presented with due consideration to the background of students, the terminology of the instruments considered, timing of courses, and class sizes. This adaptive approach worked well in maintaining the relevance of the programme as the field transformed over time. Yet, it also required the educators to update the established approach of the Teaching Partnership with new contents. In order to make the experience as practical and project-based as possible, a joint assignment component was added. This was done through different types of assignments – such as guided analysis of existing documents, group reflection, production of summaries, and highlighting of priority issues related to students' personal experiences – that encouraged students to interact with each other, while engaging with the complexities of digital constitutionalism 'in the real world'. These assignments fostered collaboration and applied understanding, as evidenced by the cohorts' outputs outlined below.

Table 1 below systematises the types of joint activities organised in the context of the past five editions of the Teaching Partnership.

Table 1: Overview of the Iterations of the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership (2020-25)

Edition & Title	Year	Type	Format	No. of Partners	Joint Activities
1st ed. – No title	2020	TP	Online	[5]*	Lectures and seminars on the topic of Digital Constitutionalism : Law, Humans and Machines.
2nd ed. – No title	2021	TP	Online	[5]*	Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet; Remote participation in the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG).
3rd ed. – No title	2022	TP	Hybrid: Online & Center for Advanced Internet Studies	[5]*	Online lectures and seminars; 'Digital Constitutionalism ' Wikipedia entries; Participation in a national multi-stakeholder workshop in Rome.

4th ed.: Digital Constitutionalism & Platform Governance	2023	BIP	Hybrid: Online & University of Padova	[9]**	Remote collaborative research tasks and guided discussions; In-person workshop; Development of policy briefs.
5th ed.: Digital Constitutionalism & the UN Global Digital Compact	2024	BIP	Hybrid: Online & University of Bremen	[8]***	Remote collaborative research tasks and guided discussions; In-person workshop, Development of policy briefs; Remote participation in the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG).
6th ed.: Digital Constitutionalism & Digital Sovereignty	2025	BIP	Hybrid: Online & University of Salerno	[6]****	Remote collaborative research tasks and guided discussions; In-person workshop; Development of policy briefs; Participation in the 9th GIG-ARTS Conference.

TP = Teaching Partnership; BIP = Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme

* University of Padova, University of Salerno, Dublin City University, Maastricht University, and the University of Bremen

** University of Padova, University of Salerno, Dublin City University, University of Bremen, University of Groningen, Maastricht University, Complutense University of Madrid, WZB Berlin, and the University of Klagenfurt

*** University of Bremen, University of Padova, Dublin City University, University of Salerno, University of Helsinki, University of Groningen, University of Klagenfurt, and Tallinn University

**** University of Salerno, University of Bremen, University of Groningen, Tallinn University, University of Padua, and Dublin City University

4.1 Translating the 'Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet'

In the second edition of the Teaching Partnership (2021), and within the context of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), students jointly translated the fifth edition of the 'Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet' from English into Italian.[39] This was mainly carried out by Italian-speaking students from the Universities of Padova and Salerno under the supervision of a legal scholar from Dublin City University. The aim was to localise the language of digital constitutionalism by translating a digital bill of rights, thus bringing the movement closer to the students' context.

The translation activity created a collaborative space across institutions, languages, and disciplines, where students worked collectively on the text, while the instructor's role was to facilitate discussion around contested meanings. This relational dimension was important because the activity required students to negotiate with one another over how concepts travel across languages and legal contexts.

The translation also turned out to be an exercise in reflection, due to the peculiarities of languages and the many discussions and decisions students had to make, so as to convey appropriate meanings while remaining faithful to the original text. These decisions opened discussions about the epistemic constraints of digital constitutionalism itself, whose language defines digital rights, how concepts become authoritative, and what is lost or transformed when they are translated. Overcoming the language barriers was meant to respond to the political challenges of the knowledge and knowledge-generation process, a way of finding 'solutions' to matters of social justice.[40] This way, action research facilitated 'knowledge creation' within the process of acting, residing with 'the belief that knowledge is socially constructed, subjective, and influenced by culture and social interactions'.[41] The results and the difficulties involved in arriving at them were presented to the other participating student groups, generating further discussion and reflection.

This activity also proved to be a highly relevant intervention beyond university classes, as the translated version of the Charter was then adopted by the IGF's Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition and was officially presented on the occasion of the EuroDIG in June 2021, with the participation of some of the students. This mattered pedagogically because it recognised students as contributors to a digital rights community by connecting their work to further action. More broadly, it also showed the Teaching Partnership's success in training future professionals

[39] András Sajó and Renáta Uitz, 'Introduction', *The Constitution of Freedom: An Introduction to Legal Constitutionalism* (Oxford University Press 2017); Charles Howard McIlwain, *Constitutionalism: Ancient and Modern* (Amagi 2007).

[40] Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, 'Educational Action Research: A Critical Approach' in Susan Noffke and Bridget Somekh, *The SAGE Handbook of Educational Action Research* (SAGE Publications Ltd 2009).

[41] Elizabeth Koshy, Valsa Koshy and Heather Waterman, *Action Research in Healthcare* (SAGE 2011) 12.

capable of engaging with a wider policy and civil-society environment on envisioning people-centred digital futures.

4.2 Drafting Wikipedia entries on 'digital constitutionalism'

In the following edition of the Partnership (2022), another advocacy-oriented practical exercise was carried out: the elaboration and implementation of 'Digital constitutionalism' as a Wikipedia entry, or, better, a 'constellation' of entries. Students from different universities worked across the semester (January through June 2022), starting with law students at DCU who developed draft texts on the concept based on readings and class discussions; moving on to Padova and Salerno where – thanks to expert technical support and oversight provided in the context of a collaboration between the University of Padova and Wikimedia Italia – the actual entry was made on Wikipedia; and concluding with students at the University of Bremen, who substantiated the initial entry with further entries so as to develop a constellation of concepts related to digital constitutionalism.[42] The Wikipedia entries are available in several languages (including English, French, Swedish, and Suomi: the languages spoken by international students in the classes), addressing – again – linguistic epistemic barriers.[43]

Students were highly motivated by the relevance of this platform for open sharing of knowledge and the possibility of contributing to setting a global stage for digital constitutionalism as a normative concept and a political proposal. This aligned with the goal of the project: democratising research by challenging its exclusive and exploitative institutionalisation.[44] The creation of the 'Digital Constitutionalism' entry on Wikipedia demonstrated the simultaneous processes of taking action and doing research linked by critical reflection, as students had to ask not only what digital constitutionalism means, but also how such a concept can be explained to non-specialist publics.[45] Participants realised how relevant their work was to a diverse set of actors, when they presented this project on the occasion of the multi-stakeholder national workshop titled 'Platform governance and fundamental rights', organised in Rome in November 2022. Closer collaboration between some universities was

[42] Additional entries were written about digital bills of rights, including the 'Santa Clara Principles', the 'African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms', the 'Feminist Principles of the Internet', the 'Delhi Declaration for a Just and Equitable Internet', the 'Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet', and the 'Joint Declaration on Challenges to Freedom of Expression in the Next Decade'. Student groups at the University of Bremen were asked to browse the database of the Digital Constitutionalism Network (https://digitalconstitutionalism.org/database) to pick their choice of document - the majority of the entries had been deleted by Wikipedia editors as of time of writing (three years later).

[43] 'Digital Constitutionalism', *Wikipedia* (2025) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_constitutionalism> accessed 29 April 2026.

[44] H Waterman and others, 'Action Research: A Systematic Review and Guidance for Assessment' (2001) 5 Health Technology Assessment (Winchester, England) iii <https://doi.org/10.3310/hta5230> accessed 29 April 2026.

[45] See Kay Hammond and Catherine Powell, 'Entry-level tertiary student perceptions of challenges when using a wiki: Trust and peer teaching', Unitec ePress Occasional and Discussion Paper Series (2017:2) <http://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress> accessed 29 April 2026.

possible due to similar teaching schedules, in particular between Padova and Salerno. In this case, over the years, students have worked together in critically engaging with emerging regulatory frameworks of the European Union, such as the Digital Services Act (DSA), Digital Markets Act (DMA), Artificial Intelligence Act (AIA), the Media Freedom Act (MFA), and the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA). By interrogating such proposals through the lenses of digital constitutionalism, students managed to bring to the analysis previous knowledge and individual interests, and to develop a comparative attitude thanks to their geo-culturally diverse backgrounds. Every year, the possibility of mastering research competences, which then translated into concrete advocacy interventions, offered students the opportunity to test their capacities, understand what it takes to make their voices heard, and to strengthen the conviction that their voices, as young adults and citizens, are valuable to the future of digital environments.

4.3 Policy briefs as group assignment

Given the specific value of these 'transversal competences', the adopted 'research to policy advocacy approach' – implying the acquisition of skills in public speaking, group work, intercultural exchange, and of the know-how needed for effective interventions in digital governance settings – was embedded in the plans for the more recent editions of the Partnership (Padova, 2023; Bremen, 2024) through a specific activity: that of drafting policy briefs focused on topics and documents addressed during the BIP. As such, from the spring semester of 2023 onwards, the Teaching Partnership fully embraced the role of the educators as the planner-leader-catalyser-facilitator-designer-listener-observer-synthesiser within the educational settings.[46] This shift was significant because it made the PALAR-inspired movement from research to action more explicit. Students were not only asked to understand digital constitutionalism as a field of study, but also to consider how their research can be translated into advocacy interventions.

In both the 2023 and 2024 edition of the Teaching Partnership, instructors guided student analyses of various EU regulations directly relevant to digital constitutionalism. On these occasions, students have been invited to discuss the rationale of policy advocacy based on the concept of 'communications for influence' as proposed by the Association for Progressive Communications policy manager Willie Currie, which emphasised the role of 'com[bining] research, communicating the research and advocating on the basis of that research to influence policy processes'.[47] The discussions sparked key points of attention, including the valorisation of the social impact of academic research, the 'global engagement' mandate of academia, the calls for visibility of research output, and the importance of community building in and outside of academia. This interrogation of the relationship of academia with

[46] Hilary Bradbury and others, 'A Call to Action Research for Transformations: The Times Demand It' (2019) 17 Action Research 3.

[47] Alan Finlay, 'Communicating Research for Influence: Strategies and Challenges for Bringing About Change' (Association for Progressive Communications (APC) 2012) 22 <https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/APCCommsForInfluence_EN_20120917_0_1.pdf> accessed 29 April 2026.

broader publics was both strengthened and limited by the fact that students did not always have direct access to those other actors or to feedback from the policy communities they were addressing.

Next, after sessions dedicated to the 'what, why, how' of policy briefs as instruments for advocacy, practice-oriented exercises prepared students to write actual policy briefs so as to present research findings and recommendations to policymakers and other stakeholders. The instructors provided resources in the form of examples and templates as well as practical guidelines for developing policy documents and identifying policy stakeholders. Students were asked to carefully choose their target and to adapt and tailor their policy briefs, language, and requests to the selected target actor. Their aim was twofold: on the one hand, assessing the implementation of the above-mentioned documents by different types of actors and, on the other hand, providing specific and practical recommendations related to the implementation of the above-mentioned documents. The resulting policy briefs addressed possible 'solutions' to the challenges to rights-based digital governance and the potential of civil society participation in governing the digital.

In the 2023 edition of the Partnership, five student groups worked on policy briefs addressing different 'digital bills of rights' that are exemplary of the evolution of digital constitutionalism in different geo-cultural contexts. These were: the Marco Civil da Internet, the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, the Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights, the Carta Portuguesa de Direitos Humanos na Era Digital, and the Carta de Derechos Digitales. This comparative approach allowed students to engage with digital constitutionalism as a plurality of normative projects shaped by different actors as much as different legal, political, and cultural contexts. The 2024 edition focused on the then on-going negotiation of the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC). Students were invited to identify a priority focus based on the topics addressed during the online and in-person sessions to carry out further research so as to develop a consistent argument, and to elaborate briefs targeting specific actors within the realm of the GDC discussions with concrete requests for action and intervention. The briefs that resulted from this focused on topics as varied as digital skills, facial recognition, and hate speech, as well as the role of human rights and gender equality in the governance of AI. The texts were published as part of a policy brief series and students, once again, participated virtually in the EuroDIG 2024 to follow discussions regarding the GDC and other topics.[48]

5. Assessing benefits for students and teachers

5.1 Fostering interdisciplinarity in teaching and research

Interdisciplinarity involves the integration of disciplinary perspectives to produce insights that go beyond the sum of disciplinary knowledge. The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership fostered interdisciplinarity across a plurality of levels, from teaching and research to the human experience of students and

[48] See <https://www.globaldigitalcompact.org/> for the students' policy briefs.

lecturers. As such it emerged not only as a feature of the subject matter, but also as a pedagogical practice.

First, the object of the Teaching Partnership, i.e. the processes involved in the constitutionalisation of digital infrastructures, required a holistic understanding of complex issues with a huge impact on political, juridical, economic, and cultural conditions. By uniting expertise in law, technology, political science, ethics, and communication, among other fields, the partnership addressed digital constitutionalism from multiple perspectives, enriching the learning experience for all involved. In this capacity, interdisciplinarity supported the building of relationships among participants who did not necessarily share the same disciplinary vocabulary, assumptions, or methods, but who were invited to work together around a shared concern.

Second, the collaborative, transnational, and experimental nature of the Teaching Partnership relied on interdisciplinarity as an instrument to foster collaboration, innovation, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills. By bringing together expertise from different fields, the Partnership offered unique opportunities for students and lecturers to engage in collaborative learning and research, and to co-design the learning experience in the making, by taking advantage of the variety of knowledge and skills present in the learning group. This encouraged reflection, since participants were required to make explicit their own disciplinary assumptions and to reconsider them in light of other perspectives.

Third, the interdisciplinary approach provided a strong anchor for the partnership, guiding participants towards a shared purpose and practical examples. Interdisciplinarity helps to choose an overarching concern that cuts across traditional academic boundaries, eventually spanning all aspects of social learning and decision-making. By approaching topics such as data privacy, internet governance, and human rights and freedoms online from an interdisciplinary perspective, and connecting such issues to established knowledge fields, students and lecturers gained a more comprehensive understanding of the interconnected nature of digital constitutionalism and developed innovative solutions that draw on diverse disciplinary insights.

Fourth, the policy orientation of the Partnership, which aimed at providing participants with tools and methods for fostering their participation in digital-related policymaking, emphasised networking among people with diverse backgrounds as a valuable and actionable asset that participants may also use afterwards, as learning subjects and as engaged citizens. Likewise, it created space for different forms of expertise, different professional trajectories, and different lived experiences to be acknowledged as relevant to both the study and the process of digital constitutionalism.

Finally, interdisciplinarity provided the Teaching Partnership with a further layer of diversity which has enriched the in-person component with diverse views, voices, and stories. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and a holistic understanding of digital governance, the Partnership equipped students and lecturers with the

interdisciplinary skills and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of the digital age and contribute to our evolving understanding of constitutional principles in a digital context. This approach also had an impact on the cultural and human dimensions of the Partnership, and it was effective in fostering both the creation of new networks and the political engagement of participants.

5.2 Crafting a shared teaching toolkit

The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership contributed to the development of a shared teaching toolkit and syllabus, offering benefits to students and educators alike. From our perspective as instructors involved in the organisation of the Partnership, the toolkit functioned as a pedagogical device through which we attempted to align research-led teaching, internationalised blended learning, and advocacy-oriented student work.

At the core of the teaching toolkit lies its commitment to maintaining a research-led approach. Researchers and teaching staff participating in the partnership contributed on the basis of their areas of academic expertise throughout the content development process. This alignment ensured that the teaching materials reflected current debates in digital constitutionalism, including evolving policy frameworks, emerging regulatory issues, and digital rights advocacy. By integrating their research directly into the toolkit's content, educators ensured that students engaged with cutting-edge scholarship and contemporary discussions in the field. At the same time, this approach allowed the Partnership to respond to a perceived gap in existing curricula whereby digital constitutionalism, albeit having become increasingly relevant in academic and policy debates, is not always available to students as a subject within existing programmes.

The research-led approach further encouraged educators to draw on their own disciplinary backgrounds, enriching the teaching materials with diverse perspectives from fields such as law, political science, communication and media studies, and computer science. These disciplinary lenses further strengthened the toolkit's relevance, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of digital constitutionalism. To accommodate the diverse curricula and teaching structures across partner institutions, the partnership employed multiple strategies for developing and integrating content into the shared teaching toolkit. Three models – each designed to accommodate different teaching objectives and institutional needs – were particularly effective in ensuring flexibility while facilitating collaboration between educators and students.

Firstly, adopting Muccini and others' fusion model, partners from the different institutions collaboratively developed the BIPs of 2023, 2024, and 2025, which combined their respective areas of expertise.[49] The educators co-designed the

[49] Henry Muccini and others, 'Collaborative Teaching Methods for Joint Creative Classrooms' (Teach4Edu4 - Accelerating the transition towards Edu 40 in HEIs 2023) 9 <https://teach4edu4-project.eu/sites/default/files/2023-05/IO3_TEACH4EDU4_Collaborative%20Teaching%20for%20JCC%20(2.0%20-%20Final).pdf> accessed 29 April 2026.

syllabus, jointly delivered sessions and integrated assessments to ensure consistency under the BIP framework. This approach was particularly valuable when designing content that required a comparative perspective or cross-national insights, such as platform governance or digital rights frameworks. It therefore proved especially suitable for the design and delivery of the BIPs, where students were expected to learn not only from instructors but also from peers located in different institutional and national contexts. Examples of this model include the policy brief exercises, which required students to synthesise insights from multiple disciplines, drawing on the common materials provided via the shared toolkit. By engaging in joint discussions, group assignments, and peer feedback activities, students experienced an integrated learning environment that encouraged cross-institutional collaboration. More so, the fusion model helped connect blended international learning with the practical skills needed by future professionals working on digital governance.

Secondly, the expansion model,[50] used as part of the earlier editions of the Partnership, focused on enhancing existing courses at individual partner institutions by integrating supplementary content developed through the partnership. Rather than designing entirely new curricula, this model enabled educators to enrich their existing materials with additional resources, guest lectures, or collaborative exercises. This model proved particularly effective in ensuring that partner institutions could align content without requiring major curriculum overhauls. It also allowed educators to connect their teaching with ongoing research, ensuring that students engaged with contemporary debates in digital constitutionalism. Through such expansion of existing courses, the Partnership encouraged content diversity and strengthened the connection between research and teaching, ensuring that both students and educators remained closely engaged with current developments in the field.

Thirdly, building on this, the complement model provided a flexible framework for connecting distinct yet related courses across partner institutions.[51] In this model, two (or more) separate courses exploring digital constitutionalism from different perspectives were linked through collaborative learning activities. For instance, during the 2021 and 2022 editions of the Partnership, students enrolled in separate courses across the partner institutions were brought together for a joint project. This collaborative exercise encouraged students to combine insights from their respective disciplines, synthesising legal, political, and social science perspectives to produce a joint outcome. In this way, the complement model not only fostered critical thinking but also encouraged students to reflect on how different disciplinary frameworks shape digital governance discourse.

In this regard, an innovation within the Teaching Partnership was its emphasis on ‘topics’ rather than fixed course structures. This abstraction-based approach encouraged educators to identify shared thematic interests across institutions, making it easier to align content without requiring identical course frameworks. By shifting focus to themes or topics – such as digital sovereignty, platform

[50] ibid.
[51] ibid 9.

accountability, or AI regulation – educators could not only connect content across institutions but also build new collaborative exercises that reflected evolving challenges in digital constitutionalism.

As alluded to above, this thematic flexibility proved especially valuable when developing new joint activities or integrating content into the three editions run under the BIP framework. However, it also opened the possibility for topic-based assignments, such as when students participated in a project that explored the DSA through a digital constitutionalism lens. This activity enabled students from diverse academic backgrounds to contribute their perspective and insights, enriching the learning experience. By emphasising such shared topics rather than rigid course designs, the Teaching Partnership maintained the ability to adapt content in response to emerging policy debates or technological developments. This adaptability was crucial in a field where the object of study is itself rapidly changing.

From the perspective of participating educators, the development of the shared teaching toolkit and syllabus was particularly valuable. The toolkit provided a structured yet adaptable resource that encouraged lecturers to work together in designing content, sharing resources, and aligning assessments. This collaboration fostered deeper professional relationships and created opportunities for future research partnerships. Likewise, by drawing on shared materials such as readings, lecture slides, and assessments, educators reduced the need for individual educators to build content from scratch (i.e. preparation time) and instead allowed them to focus on enhancing learning outcomes by introducing diverse perspectives and methodologies. Together with the toolkit's emphasis on integrating current research, this meant that students across institutions benefited from access to high-quality content and engaged with contemporary debates in digital constitutionalism.

The toolkit's structure also had a transformative impact on students. By providing shared readings, joint lectures, and collaborative assessments, the toolkit ensured that students across partner institutions received a cohesive learning experience. As detailed above, this also meant that they could acquire interdisciplinary insight into current platform governance discourses. At the same time, the collaborative and in large part advocacy-oriented assignments ensured that students gained valuable skills in research and writing while also reevaluating their role as active stakeholders in the digital revolution.

This shows that the goal of such a Teaching Partnership is not only to jointly provide an educational programme, but also to activate new topics which are not currently available to students as part of their curriculum. Overall, the toolkit's combination of theoretical foundations and 'real world' exercises equipped students with the skills needed to critically assess future developments. In sum, the Partnership demonstrated how a shared teaching toolkit can serve as a powerful resource for enhancing teaching collaboration as well as translating digital constitutionalism scholarship into teaching activities that align with its ambitions as 'ideology' and 'movement'.

5.3 Crafting a shared teaching toolkit

The digital environment of the Teaching Partnership contributed in many ways to the development of the digital skills of involved students and lecturers. The Partnership's activities were conducive to the socialisation of a set of operational digital skills, including those related to the use of specific platforms, services, and tools. Some digital instruments already in use at one partner university were transferred to other partners through a smooth process of peer-to-peer training. These instruments include collaborative web platforms like Padlet, learning management systems like Moodle, and cloud applications like Workspace, Canva, and generative AI. In other cases, external competencies contributed to the development of students' and lecturers' digital skills, like in the already mentioned activities aimed at co-drafting Wikipedia entries on digital constitutionalism.

Similar processes of digital skills diffusion were observed in online breakout groups, where students from different universities worked together on specific projects. Within these groups, individual students have regularly shared their knowledge of digital tools in order to collectively produce posters, presentations, infographics, and databases. From this perspective, the Teaching Partnership provided a space for practices where digital skills were reinforced, co-produced, and shared. It represented a flexible space where the contingent availability of certain individual skills was effectively activated upon an infrastructure of social relations.

Beside operational digital skills, the Teaching Partnership also produced and circulated analytical and critical digital skills. Strong analytical digital skills were employed in the activities related to the exploration of the Digital Constitutionalism Database, a structured collection of 321 documents which includes declarations, bills of rights, policy recommendations, strategies, and laws promoting the protection of digital rights and democratic principles for the Internet.[52] Students were involved in individual and group exercises including comparing documents, mapping topics, crossing variables, identifying historical trends, and interrogating the database for specific purposes (e.g. advocacy, policy analysis, etc).

Finally, critical digital skills were developed in parallel with operational skills. The intensive use of digital services for a Teaching Partnership focused on digital rights inevitably triggered a self-reflective process interrogating the digital infrastructure of the Teaching Partnership. Insights and reflections developed in this collective effort of critically thinking about the fabric of the learning space itself, as described in detail above, led to the common development of an attitude that represents a crucial digital skill in current times.

[52] Digital Constitutionalism Network, 'Digital Constitutionalism Network Database' <https://digitalconstitutionalism.org/database> accessed 29 April 2026.

6. Addressing challenges through cooperative solutions

6.1 Harmonising teaching schedules through hand-over activities

As rewarding as it was for both students and teachers, the Teaching Partnership was also demanding and challenging. Logistical aspects, in particular scheduling events across time zones and with different academic calendars, proved to be difficult. This not only concerned the joint teaching activities but also the preliminary organisation meetings. In terms of time zones, the Teaching Partnership spanned from Irish Time (GMT/GMT+1) to Finnish Time (GMT+2/GMT+3). This involved taking into account that Irish or Finnish students could not be available in the first and last hours of the Central European Time working day. Teaching semesters were also timed very differently across the institutions involved in the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership. For example, Dublin City University (Ireland) usually runs its teaching terms from September to December and from January to May, while the University of Bremen (Germany) does so from October to February and from April to July.

These logistical issues were amplified by the involvement of a significant number of institutions at the same time. A solution was to manage joint activities in a flexible and creative way, introducing clustered parallel streams of events. In this way, two or three groups of students from various universities could follow the same teaching activities or work together without excessively disrupting their timetables. These events were made compulsory to specific groups, but they were open to all other students involved in the Teaching Partnership. In terms of coherence of themes, coordination efforts were made to ensure that all groups of students were offered a cohesive flow of activities. This did not necessarily imply the same type of content. Indeed, the Teaching Partnership has always built on different individual syllabi. Different parallel streams were designed to complement these learning programmes from different disciplinary perspectives. Such a diversity of learning content became an intentional teaching strategy, through a system of activity hand-over among student groups.

The difficulty of offering the same programme across all student cohorts and over the same timeframe has been transformed into one of the peculiarities and added values of the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership. The activities that students perform throughout their teaching semesters build on each other. For example, if groups 1 and 2 worked together on theme X and produced output X1 as their assignment, groups 3 and 4 used the output X1 to better study their topic Y and produce their output Y1 building on X1. An example presented in the sections above is the work that the students involved in the 2022 Teaching Partnership did to create Wikipedia entries for concepts related to digital constitutionalism. Such a dynamic was explicitly presented to students as a teaching ‘hand-over’. This process not only guaranteed cohesiveness in the teaching content but also increased the sense of responsibility and motivation of each group of students, knowing that their work would have been subsequently used and complemented by their colleagues and that they would have equally contributed to a final output.

6.2 From local assessment to joint grading

One of the central elements of formal higher education is the assessment of students' work, as much as of the work of teachers, researchers, and the entire university, all interwoven with power and reproduction of dominant orders on the one hand, and empowerment and social justice on the other.[53] For the Teaching Partnership we faced the challenge that, while cooperation between teachers across universities can be achieved where there is the willingness to do so, formal assessment decisions usually need to be made in accordance with the respective universities' rules and regulations. Hence, in the first three years of the Teaching Partnership, each instructor set standards and decided on means for assessment individually. For instance, while students at the University of Bremen participated in the joint production of Wikipedia articles, they were assessed only through two written assignments graded by the local instructor. In this case, one of these assignments was a reflection essay on Wikipedia editing, illustrating the cohesiveness strived for. Only from 2023 onward, as part of the BIP, did a meaningful joint assessment take place. This is grounded in the format of the Erasmus+ BIP, which intends for students 'to work collectively and simultaneously on specific assignments that are integrated in the blended intensive programme and count towards the overall learning outcomes [awarding] at least 3 ECTS credits for students'.[54] The resulting logic of a unified assessment of credits awarded and joint grading was welcomed by the DCN consortium.

Joint assessment and grading require instructors to further discuss and reflect on discipline-specific and country-specific modes and cultures of grading. The required consensus on what assessment format and standards ought to be used was forged together but eventually had to be carried by the credit-granting instructor (i.e., the host of the BIP), who would input grades in the local grading scheme, for them later to be recognised and translated by the students' home universities. This peer-to-peer exchange on grading practices and case-by-case discussions about grades for student work as part of co-grading has been an exercise in transcultural learning for the instructors. Students were generally highly motivated to participate in the Teaching Partnership and we did not encounter work that would have warranted failing or even poor grades based on our standards. Students rightly might have had a feeling that it was not clear how grades would be established, apart from general advice. This is perhaps a downside of the learning process for the instructors, which occurred where the action was effectively taking place, i.e. during grading itself.

6.3 Surveillance and data protection risks: choosing online learning platforms

The use of shared online platforms to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous teaching activities implied a careful assessment of related data protection issues. Deploying existing and emerging virtual and distance learning technologies bring

[53] Carole Leathwood, 'Assessment Policy and Practice in Higher Education: Purpose, Standards and Equity' (2005) 30 Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education 307.
[54] European Commission (n 7) 63.

opportunities but also new challenges for educators and students as the technologies include emerging 'surveillance by design' affordances.[55] This problem was approached following two intersecting levels of analysis: a macro level related to the general data protection choices of higher education institutions, and a micro level concerning decisions made in the context of the Teaching Partnership.

First, there is the choice that higher education institutions make when adopting specific online platforms for distance learning. As we have seen in the previous section, platforms are used to offer students an online learning environment (e.g. Moodle) or for streaming lectures (e.g. Zoom). Most of these platforms are offered by private corporations pursuing commercial aims, thus presenting the risk of conflict with universities' educational objectives.[56] When universities rely on third-party platforms, they need to perform an adequate assessment not only of the suitability of the tool for educational purposes, but also of the guarantees that the platform offers in terms of data protection. Ideally, personal data should be processed by universities strictly for pedagogical purposes and platforms must have adequate data minimisation practices in place.[57] Higher education institutions have to carefully consider if these platforms also process personal data for independent purposes, and if those purposes are compatible with the original purposes of data collection in the teaching context. Indeed, universities, even if not directly controlling data processing for other purposes, might be considered joint data controllers from a data protection perspective.

Still absent a consensus among European universities, choices made at university level in terms of platform used were considered at micro level when organising the Teaching Partnership in order to ensure that the platforms supporting common activities were in line with the overall approach taken by all universities involved. The development of a common framework for these activities is envisaged through the new EU Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, which involves shared standards, interoperability, accessibility, and quality assurance.[58] However, who owns access to the data produced during the Teaching Partnership (video footage, slides, audio, live stream chat archives) captured and stored by the 'service provider' remained a key question, since access to these expanding digital footprints of real-time learning and thinking could easily go to private, US-owned companies and their 'cloud services', depending of which university services were used.

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[55] Franklin (n 14); Franklin and Wilkinson (n 15).

[56] Edoardo Celeste and Giovanni De Gregorio, 'Towards a Right to Digital Education? Constitutional Challenges of Edtech' (2023) 14 JIPITEC – Journal of Intellectual Property, Information Technology and E-Commerce Law 234.

[57] Maria da Conceição Freitas and Miguel Mira da Silva, 'GDPR and Distance Teaching and Learning' in Alvaro Rocha and others (eds), *Proceedings of CISTI 2021 - 16th Iberian Conference on Information Systems and Technologies* (IEEE Computer Society 2021).

[58] Chiara Angiolini and others, 'Remote Teaching During the Emergency and Beyond: Four Open Privacy and Data Protection Issues of "Platformised" Education' (2020) 1 Opino Juris in Comparatione - Studies in Comparative and National Law 45.

Further work was required at micro level to ensure adherence to the GDPR when organising joint teaching activities and exchanging student data. All efforts were put into minimising exchange of student names and records. No templates were available at institutional or EU level on how to draft a data protection notice to inform students about data processing activities in the context of the Teaching Partnership.

6.4 Securing structural funding for staff and students: the Erasmus+ BIPs

Funding is a pivotal consideration in higher education and in modern research universities. The level of funds required and the provision of grants, e.g., for mobility of students and staff, affects what kind of activities are more likely to take place. For instance, a BIP is required to include a five- to thirty-day in-person component, but base local funding will not increase if more days are dedicated to the activity. The BIPs of the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership lasted five days, and a quick online survey of other BIPs reveals that many are scheduled for five days. Students are often as much guided by financial opportunities, concerns, or limits as universities and their instructors are. We first present an institutional view before examining the perspectives of students.

The fully virtual iterations of the Teaching Partnership of 2020 and 2021 did not require any form of funding beyond the costs of educating students in the participating study programs. In this sense, joint teaching activities can easily serve as experimentation prior to higher effort funded teaching programs with a hybrid element, even outside of global pandemics. However, since we and our students found that some form of in-person meeting would be valuable, in 2022 we decided to include nine students from four participating universities in an international conference, which the DCN received funding for and hosted at CAIS. Where the budget of the conference could not cover them, some students were funded through small grants from sending universities, outside of the Erasmus+ programme. Other students joined that conference virtually. This way, the Teaching Partnership in the spring of 2022 had a reasonably strong hybrid component, though not for all students. A selection of who could join in person was made at each and every participating partner university. Students were invited or nominated based on expression of interest and an informal assessment of the quality of past in-class contributions. While the selection process was not formally standardised across institutions, similar criteria were applied in each case.

Erasmus+ BIPs fundamentally changed the DCN's approach to its Teaching Partnership. While BIPs started as merely one element of the Teaching Partnership, they became the dominant activity. With the BIPs, a relatively reliable access to funding for blended learning formats became available, thus funding the 2023, 2024, and 2025 iterations of the Teaching Partnership. A hosting partner would be able to secure base funding to invite additional speakers, for catering and rooms, or for student assistants. BIPs are also a way to easily streamline processes for teaching and student mobility under the Erasmus+ programme. While students and teaching staff can apply for short-term mobilities outside of BIPs, the latter represents a format well-known and appreciated by international offices. Usually, a call to host and a call to participate in BIPs is published by each university, and all participating partners in

a BIP need to be successful in securing funds. Then, students can be selected and Erasmus+ funds for students and instructors (there may be a separate call) are secured in line with Erasmus+ procedures. For the host university, BIPs provide 400 EUR per participating student for general costs of hosting, up to a limit of twenty students. In the most current version of the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, the minimum number of students for this base funding to be available is ten.[59]

Students may experience funding as a crucial factor. As part of the general Erasmus+ mobility grant system, students receive a daily allowance and, in some cases, additional funds for green travel and top-ups for -participants with fewer opportunities-.[60] Depending on a number of factors, participating was experienced as a drain on student resources or even a financially healthy choice. As part of our annual feedback exercise, we asked participating students how they experienced the funding, if it (1) just about covered the costs, (2) was less than the costs, or (3) more than the costs. Overall, our results showed that Erasmus+ scholarship represented a relatively solid funding line for students in mobility.

In contrast to longer mobilities, short-term mobilities in general, and BIPs specifically, are ideal for allowing students to participate in an Erasmus+ activity with low financial risk and without leaving their place of residence for too long. Thus, (single) parents, students with disabilities or under regular medical treatment, and students with very limited financial resources or social access to a longer exchange period are able to participate in BIPs, where they otherwise could not participate in the Erasmus+ programme. This is not a hypothetical notion (only) entailed in the official justifications of these programmes, but represents the result of feedback provided by our students.

Teaching staff largely participated though opportunities for Erasmus+ teaching mobility, or, where this option was not available (e.g., mobility within the same EU member state), through grants available to them or through the BIP host funding. Unlike the earlier iterations of the Teaching Partnership in 2020 and 2021, the in-person component added to the program does require a much higher level of planning and continuous work with other stakeholders at all participating universities, most importantly the international offices. Deadlines to apply for BIP related grants – to host, for students, or for instructors – vary greatly between institutions.

The institutions involved in blended intensive programmes benefit from these often singular (but in this case, repeated) events in a structured way. Since universities are required to put in place Erasmus+ interinstitutional agreements on recognition and exchange modalities in order to conduct an Erasmus+ funded BIP, they usually create a long-lasting infrastructure for cooperation. Our experiences show that agreements forged to facilitate BIPs also come with the welcome consequence that regular, e.g., semester-long, exchanges between institutions are fostered. This is particularly interesting when a BIP is conducted in an interdisciplinary way, like the ones

[59] European Commission (n 7).
[60] ibid.

integrated into the Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership, which then links departments, faculties, and institutes across disciplines.

7. Conclusion

From our experience and evaluations of these 'blended learning' encounters across multiple educational and cultural university contexts, internationalisation and connectedness emerge as the aims of a digitally enabled teaching and learning approach which looks at research and advocacy as a participatory engagement tool, enhancing the sense of reward of both the students and teachers involved while promoting their awareness as global citizens. Learning about digital constitutionalism becomes a vehicle to make students aware of their possible role as stakeholders in current policy-oriented debates. The specific features of digital constitutionalism as a subject of research and as a space of multi-actor and multi-level mobilisation offer multiple elements to ground intercultural activities and discussions in principled readings of digital transformations.

The Digital Constitutionalism Teaching Partnership has been based on the voluntary commitment of participants who do not receive additional paid hours formally at their host institutions. This aspect alone has proven to be demanding on the teaching team, along with other practicalities: from harmonising teaching schedules and assessment to identifying and securing funding for in-person activities. The Partnership continued to evolve and has become a yearly event thanks to the adoption of innovative approaches, all based on cooperation among instructors, students, and their institutions, and supported by technological applications. The recent introduction of funding for Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes is presented as a welcome – yet still partial – solution to the absence of structural funding and guidelines for these types of initiatives, particularly if the aim is to consolidate these activities and make them economically sustainable over time.

While, over its multiple iterations, the Partnership's instructors found pragmatic solutions to many issues, some deeper questions remain open. For example, the environmental sustainability of the world's increasing dependence on digital technology may seem and feel far-removed from the intensity of online-offline encounters that characterise a Teaching Partnership that, like ours, last a few months every year. However, this partnership has a stake in burgeoning debates about the environmental impact of hybrid learning and collaboration. These questions fall beyond the scope of the present paper but represent important avenues for future research. For this reason, the next edition of the Teaching Partnership, which has taken place online and in Dublin in May 2026, aims to reflect on the theme of 'Digital Freedoms and Sustainable Futures', to foster a conversation and also promote awareness of the sustainability of our teaching model.

Finally, when reflecting upon the synergies that cross-border and cross-culture interactions can engender, friendships and new forms of knowledge included, the substantive content of this particular Teaching Partnership's curriculum, and its basis in the Digital Constitutionalism Network and affiliated research, policy, and advocacy work embedded in human rights principles, highlights potential contradictions.

International classrooms at the online-offline nexus are dependent upon mostly private technology providers. There is an inbuilt surveillance functionality in all the tools and applications that these kinds of projects use. Useful archiving and live transcriptions are also invaluable marketing data for the service providers who track at all moments during online sessions. Data is retained and content can also be scanned and assessed, if or when deemed necessary, for national security or even copyright protection reasons. This raises broader questions concerning platform dependency, data governance, and the political economy of digitally mediated education. While such issues are not examined systematically within this paper, they represent important directions for future research and further critical engagement within digital constitutionalism scholarship.

We recognise that a Teaching Partnership focusing on legal theories of constitutionalism, media, political and social theories, and digital human rights advocacy within internet governance and technology/media policy making is deploying the technologies and their accompanying advertising business models that we, as educators and publicly engaged scholars, are problematising. We do not have all the answers on how to address these issues, but we hope that this paper will open a broader call for critical reflexivity that will foster debate among academics and institutions, and will help similar initiatives continue to thrive in the future in a more aware and responsible way.