Pedagogical Script for Consumer Engagement course

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Course contents

The course consists of four thematic units. The first unit is about the consumers of the plastic packaging industry and consumer behaviour regarding plastic packaging circularity. In the second unit, the students will analyse how consumers are informed and engaged in plastic packaging circularity. The third unit will familiarize students with the value creation approach including an analysis of benefits that different stakeholders may achieve from circular products and services. Finally, the fourth unit consists of an innovation project, where groups of students plan consumer engagement activities in plastic packaging circularity.

The course is dedicated to people who want to adopt the consumer-centred approach in their activities and to engage consumers in plastic packaging circularity.

Schedule

The course is organized as a 5-week intensive entity. Each week contains one or two contact learning sessions together with students' individual tasks and learning activities. An example of the course schedule is given in Figure 1.
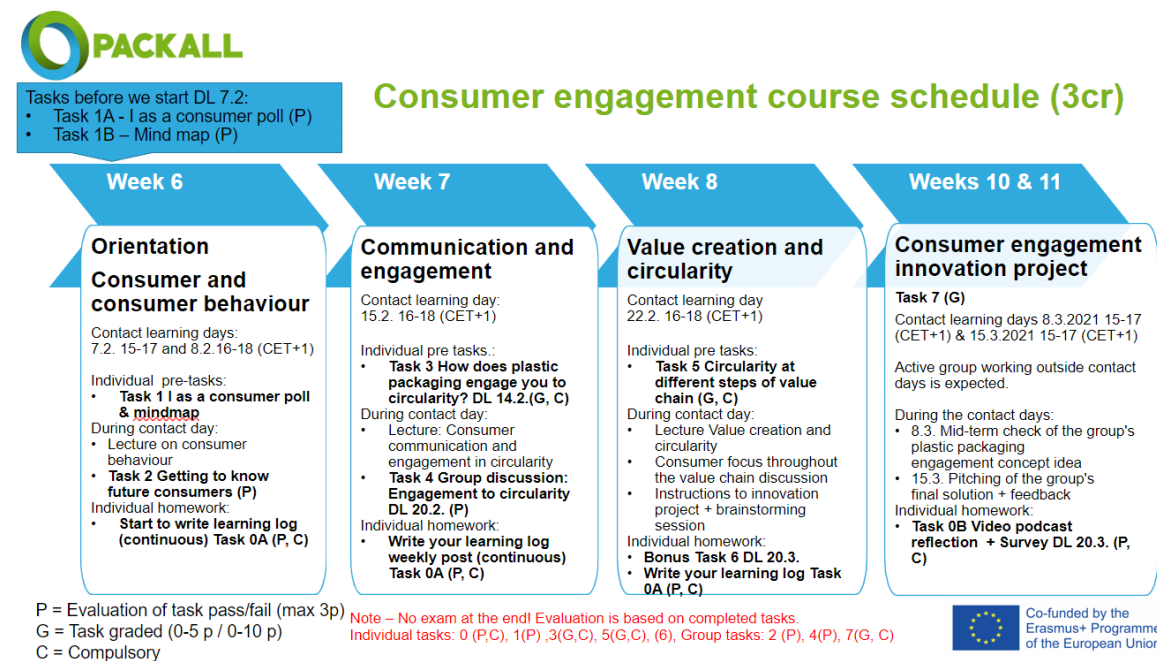

Figure 1. Example of the course schedule.

The working hours of the 3 ECTS course consist of 75 hours of student work as follows:

- Lectures 9 hours

- Classes 10 hours
- Project sessions with lecturers 6 hours
- Online tasks 5 hours (asynchronous communication with the lecturers)
- Independent work with tasks (units 1-3) 20 hours
- Independent work in project teams (unit 4) 20 hours
- Orientation and independent learning log 5 hours

Pedagogical approach

The pedagogical approach in this course emphasises the students' active role in the learning process. For example, joint discussions in small groups, ideating together, analysing industry expert interviews, and analysing one's own consumer behaviour, are used as the activating learning methods. Each unit also includes a theory part with online lectures, supported by group discussions and individual tasks related to the theory content. The students are required to keep a learning log to structure and reflect on their learning throughout the course.

The following tasks (Task 0-task 7) are planned to support the learning of the course's main contents.

Task 0 Learning log

Motivation for the task:

Reflection is the activity of structuring and learning from what has happened. Based on the experience, information is accumulated that can be structured and new perspectives can be found. Reflection is a particularly useful way - and often a prerequisite - for individual learning and action development. The task is given for the students in the following format:

Learning log - post a chapter every week and make a video podcast at the end.

Write a learning log during the course. Post your log texts in the platform (e.g. Moodle) weekly and the video at the end of the course. NOTE that you submit one combined learning log of the contents of the whole module (Citizen engagement & Consumer engagement course learnings combined).

Content requirements: Weeks 1–5: Post your weekly summary as one pdf (the length approximately 200 words/post, weeks 1–5 = 5x200 words). In your text, consider:

- What were your key learnings about the topics of Citizen engagement and Consumer engagement this week?
- What new thoughts & ideas these topics raised?
- What would be your advice to the plastic packaging industry?

Reflect on your learning log and make a 3-minute video podcast where you highlight the three key takeaways from this module. Please include in the video an answer to how well did you achieve your (course's) learning targets? What will you bring to practice?

Post your (compulsory) self-reflection to the learning log return box on the course platform. For the final video reflection, for example Flipgrid can be used.

Task 1 I as a consumer

Motivation for the task:

As the course studies consumer behaviour, it is good to start by studying oneself as a consumer, as every one of us is a consumer. The tasks are given to the students in the following format:

A. Poll: Answer to the poll questions that relate to your behaviour as a consumer.
   The poll question setting is presented in the Appendix Task 1.
B. Make a mind map:
   After answering the poll, make a mind map about yourself as a consumer of plastic packaging. What concrete activities are related to it and what aspects do you regard as important? Post the mind map as a pic or as an attachment to the discussion forum of Task 1 for the next lecture as we will discuss the poll outcome and the mind map topics at the lecture together.

   For the creation of the mind map you can use any suitable tool, e.g., Mindmup https://www.mindmup.com/ is an easy and free tool for mind mapping.

Task 2 Getting to know future consumers

Motivation for the task:

To understand consumer engagement practices, it is important to understand who the consumers are. We have already studied ourselves as consumers in Task 1 and this task extends the perspective towards the future. Are the consumers the same or different in the future? As there is no straightforward correct answer, this task gets the students to think for themselves what critical changes are taking place in consumer behaviour in the future. The task is given to the students in the following format:

Think about a case where you are developing a new sustainable plastic packaging solution for the market. It is not yet available today but is targeted to be widely available in 10 years' time. How do you know what the future users and consumers of this packaging think and what do they want? Let us get to know the future user by studying today's consumers and reflecting on the changes they have experienced to the changes taking place in the future.

How? In groups, familiarize yourself with the future user template (reference given below) and use for example the joint Jamboard working platform created by the teacher to fill in your own version of future user analysis for your selected sustainable plastic packaging product and target consumer.

1. Define and present your target consumer of today: Note their age (take a real example person here, for example, one of your group members or someone that you will interview). Discuss

and write down what their lifestyle, choices, and values were 10 years ago (how old were they, what did they do, what did they own, what did they aim for...).

2. Describe the young future customer as they exist today (a person that is the same age as today's customer 10 years back that you defined in step 1).
3. Now think about your future consumer 10 years from now. Compare them to the customer of today, at their starting ages and the target ages. What has changed and what has not changed?
4. After you have completed steps 1 to 4, reflect with your team on what you learned from the future users. Did you find something new that you did not think of before? How do you think these learnings will help you to develop plastic packaging to better meet the demands of the future user?

Be prepared to present your findings for others in the next week following the task. Selected cases will be discussed together.

Information source including the assignment template:

Carleton, T., Cocayne, W. and Tahvanainen, A.-J. 2013. Playbook for Strategic Foresight and Innovation.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258256239_Playbook_for_Strategic_Foresight_and_Innovation.

Task 3 How does plastic packaging engage you to circularity?

Motivation for the task:

By observing the environment (supermarket, home, internet, other) and available plastic packaging solution, the students will get a hands-on understanding of the current state of engagement methods in use and relate the theory into practice in a concrete way. The task is given to the students in the following format:

Start by choosing an example of plastic packaging (from home, take a picture in a store, Google, other) that you think communicates well with the consumer or engages the consumer effectively to circularity.

Post your 'Engagement to circularity' reflection of on-pack communication and engagement to circularity to the dedicated Moodle discussion forum generated by the teacher. Answer all the questions in the given answer template provided by the teacher as the first discussion in the discussion forum. Name your file with your name when posting it.

- Images of the package
- Why did you choose this plastic packaging?
- How does the packaging material affect your choice of a product?

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- Are you actively looking for materials that might replace plastic as a packaging material? Explain.
- What kind of consumer experience did you get from this plastic packaging?
- What kind of packaging labels and claims were there?
- Is circularity of the packaging clear / credibly expressed through the labels and/or claims used? Explain.
- Were there signs of greenwashing?
- How can on-pack communication be improved
- How did the packaging labels and claims affect your consumer behaviour? For example, would you have paid attention to these labels and claims without the task?
- How do you see the importance of labels/claims in consumer communication?
- Do the labels guide you to responsible and circular consumption? Explain.
- How do you dispose the packaging after use?
- Did the packaging labels and claims guide you to disposal options?
- Did they guide you to close the loop?
- Did you learn something new while doing this task? (You can use this in your learning log as well)

Task 4 Group discussion: Engagement to circularity

Motivation for the task:

The purpose of this task is to share the findings from Task 3 by discussing them with other students. This is beneficial both for reflecting one's own learning as well as in learning new viewpoints from other students. As the groups are international, the students get a chance to compare communication and engagement practices in different countries with the help of this exercise. The task is given to the students in the following format:

Group discussion (organized at an online lecture in smaller groups of students).

Share your findings and discuss them with your group. Compile your observations on one PowerPoint slide in the joint working platform, e.g. a Jamboard generated by the teacher.

You may structure your discussion by:

- Pay attention to the similarities and differences in your consumer behaviour, especially regarding labelling and claims stated by the manufacturer
- In your opinion, what are the possible advantages and disadvantages of labels and claims?
- Is circularity of the packaging visible or credibly expressed in the packages you studied?
- To what kind of consumption do the labels and claims on plastic packaging guide you?
- Based on these examples, did the packaging communication engage you to circularity? Why/why not?

Task 5 Circularity at different steps of value chain

Motivation for the task:

This task will provide the students with the opportunity to hear the voice of the different players in the circular plastic packaging value chain through a series of recorded expert interviews by the teacher or material from other sources. The interviews may be e.g. 10 min to 15 min "vodcast" type insights where the interviewees are asked to answer a set of 5 to 10 questions relevant for the course content and their topical expertise.

The recorded interviews make it possible for the students to select the time of watching that suits their weekly schedule, despite the different time zones and working times, to maximize the reach and impact. Further, this approach gives the interviewers the possibility to select the desired interviewees regardless of their availability at a specific day of contact learning session, and to prepare high quality edited and subtitled materials for the students. The task is given to the students in the following format:

Listen to the four industry expert interview recordings provided. Think about their position in the value chain, and how they take the consumer into account. Think about aspects such as circularity, communication, and value creation. Answer the questions in a questionnaire, e.g., in Forms.

- In your opinion, how strongly is the consumer taken into focus?
- How is the consumer engaged to circularity?
- What are the methods of consumer communication and engagement?
- If you think of yourself as a consumer, what is your impression, and would you improve something in engagement to circularity? If yes, what actions?
- In your opinion, how well is the circularity value created to stakeholders?
- What players in the value chain get and create new circularity value and how?
- What challenges there may be in creating value?
- What would be the value for you as a consumer?
- What other comments do you have?

Alternative for task 5:

Students will interview 2–5 stakeholders from the distinct parts of the packaging value chain e.g., packaging material producer, brand owner (packed goods), retailer, consumer and/or associations.

For example, the questions as follows are recommended to use:

What is the story behind your innovation (in brief, 2-minute elevator version)
What do you think about plastic as a packaging material?
How does your material create value and to whom?
What additional value do your materials bring to me as a consumer?
What do I do for the packaging made from your material after use? Where does it end up?

What makes me as a consumer select a product packed in your material from the store?
How should the consumer be engaged to ensure the circularity of plastics?
How does your innovation save the world?
What three main points should I remember from your material?

Task 6 Discovering consumer value of reusable packages (Bonus task for active students)

Motivation for the task:

This task motivates the students to read relevant literature on the course topic of reusable packages and analyse its content critically through identifying the benefits and challenges and reflecting them to one's own thinking. Furthermore, the task motivates to also explore co-students' opinions on the same topic and commenting on those to practice peer-review. The task is given to the students in the following format:

Familiarize yourself with the material "Reuse – Rethinking Packaging" by Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

A. Benefits and challenges of reuse models. First, study the four reuse models pp. 7–11. Find and list the benefits for consumers (value creation) and challenges for consumers (value destruction) and reflect how you find them. Are they valid? Do you see more benefits or challenges for consumers? Write down your results in a table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Benefits and challenges of reusable packages for consumers

Reuse packaging model	Benefits (value propositions) of the model	Challenges (value destruction) of the model	My reflections and additions as a consumer
Name of the model	- Benefit 1 - Benefit 2 - etc.	- Challenge 1 - Challenge 2 - etc.	Tell how you personally and as a consumer find the mentioned benefits and challenges of the respective model.

B. Benefits element analysis of an inspiring reuse case. Select one case from reuse cases (starting from pp. 20) that inspires you the most as a consumer. Explain how the solution would fulfil your needs and what type of benefits/value you achieved? Apply the value types of benefits elements explained in the intro presentation (slides 9–10):
- Economic – customer e.g., saves money or time
- Functional – product/service is useful, performs desired function, e.g., increases shelf life
- Environmental/ethical – product/service advances environmental attitudes/objectives

- Social – product/service enhances social interaction and engagement
- Symbolic – product/service supports expressing individual identity and social membership
- Emotional – product/service triggers emotions such as curiosity, novelty, wow, desire for knowledge

Format of the answer: Combine the answers (A and B to the same document (e.g., word, pdf, power point presentation, or directly to the discussion field of Moodle). The number of words is about 750. Post your answer to the respective discussion forum by the DL (date).

C. Peer review. Read two other answers of your fellow students and reflect their findings with yours. How similar or different the answers are when compared to your findings? Did you learn something from their papers? Post your review as a direct response to the reviewed post. Give the DL (date).

Task 7 Innovation project

Motivation for the task:

This task teaches the students the principles and steps of an innovation project that they will later need in a wider CHAINs challenge. The topic of this small innovation project made in groups of 5 students is selected by the students themselves based on their own interests and preferences. The fast 2-week sprint type innovation project will show the students that there are distinct levels of innovations projects, and that the depth of analysis needs to be set accordingly. The task is given to the students in the following format:

The last unit invites you to innovate consumer engagement in plastic packaging circularity. Your team works in the RDI-development of a plastic innovation company that sells packaging solutions to brands. Your task is to innovate a service concept that a brand can elaborate on to engage their consumers in circular objectives and actions. In the project, you will follow the principles of lean customer development, thus your first rule is: Go outside the office and ask people what they want!
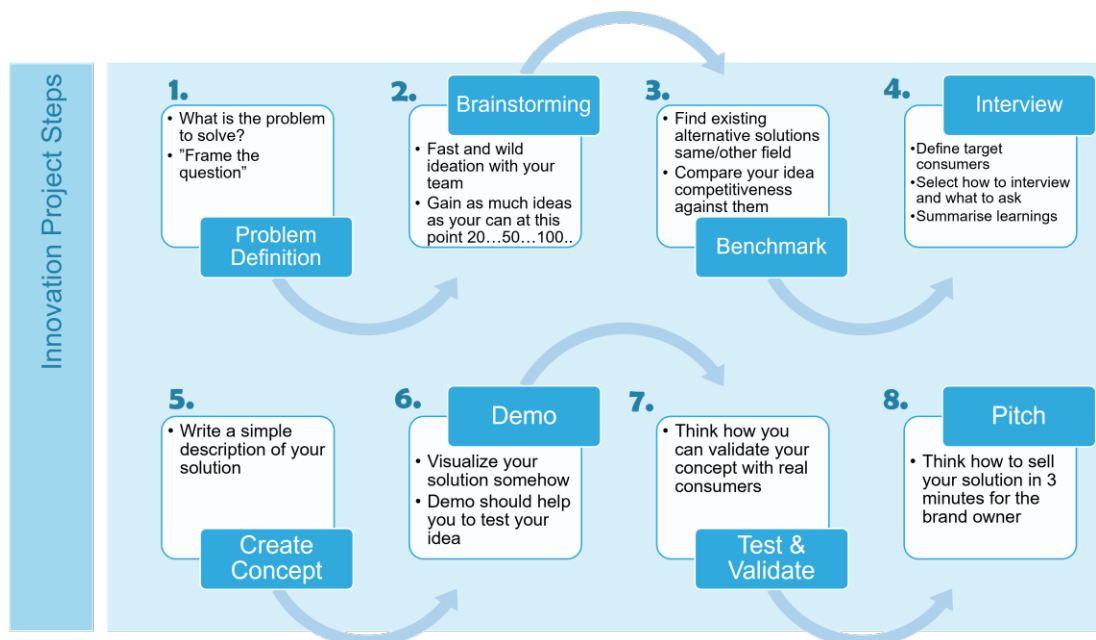
Figure 2. The steps in the innovation project.

There are eight steps in this innovation project model that we use in this course (Figure 2). 1. Problem definition, 2. Brainstorming, 3. Benchmark, 4. Interview, 5. Create Concept, 6. Demo, 7. Test & validate, 8. Pitch. There are three common video lecture sessions related to the innovation project: first for starting the project and brainstorming preliminary ideas, the second for the mid-term check, and final session where students pitch their concepts. In the mid-check, a lecturer meets with the teams.

The lecturers also answer the questions and tutor the work of students when needed. You may post your questions to the Q&A discussion forum provided by the teacher.

Evaluation

The assessment framework for the course is described in Table 2. (The higher level always includes the lower-level competences)

Table 2. Assessment framework.

	1–2 (satisfactory; limited professional skills)	3–4 (good; applied professional skills)	5 (excellent; creative, and developing professional skills)
Knowing	Can recognize phenomena and basic concepts of consumer engagement, communication, and value creation in relation to plastic packaging circularity.	Understands the assignment. Structures relations between phenomena and concepts of consumer	Defines the assignment appropriately. Understands extensively the entities and relations of consumer engagement in

		engagement in plastic packaging circularity. Applies theory in the assignment. Explains and compares alternative solutions. Structures things in relation to one another.	plastic packaging circularity. Generalizes, and analyses. Cradle-to-cradle and/or systems thinking is visible in the output.
Acting	Participates in activities and manages the assigned tasks under supervision/assisted. Acquires knowledge. Recognizes important ways of action in consumer engagement for plastic packaging circularity.	Acquires new knowledge. Applies knowledge learned before. Presents justified solution alternatives. Recognizes and follows the important ways of action in consumer engagement for plastic packaging circularity.	Can bring their diverse skills to common use. Assesses diverse new courses of action. Combines solution alternatives creatively or creates new ones. Understands and assesses the important ways of action in consumer engagement for the requirements and needs of plastic packaging circularity.
Being	Recognizes their interaction skills. Can work responsibly in a team. Can give and receive feedback. Considers and assesses things from their viewpoint	Cooperates responsibly and develops their interaction skills. Can give and receive feedback actively and constructively during the entire process. Considers and assesses things both from their team's and the community's viewpoint.	Cooperates responsibly, flexibly, and constructively. Develops their own and the team's interaction skills. Develops new, creative solutions. Uses feedback systematically as a tool for their and the community's professional growth.

The tasks may be evaluated as shown in Figure 3.

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- Course accounts for 3 credits and is evaluated with grade from 1 to 5
- Total points of the course add up to 35 p as follows:
    - Task 0 (P) 6 p Learning log + video podcast COMPULSORY
    - Task 1 (P) 3 p
    - Task 2 (P) 3 p
    - Task 3 (G) 0-5 p How does plastic packaging engage you to circularity COMPULSORY
    - Task 4 (P) 3 p
    - Task 5 (G) 0-5 p Circularity at different steps of value chain COMPULSORY
    - Task 6 (P) 3 p Bonus task
    - Task 7 (G) 0-10 p Consumer engagement innovation project, COMPULSORY

P = Evaluation of task pass/fail
G = Task graded from 0 points to max points

Table shows the points needed for different grades. In the graded tasks (G) the principles of the evaluation matrix are used.

	Grade
17 p	1
22 p	2
26 p	3
30 p	4
34 p	5

Figure 3. An example of the course evaluation.

The feedback collection

Feedback and feelings were collected from the participants continuously after each lecture in the form of a simple survey and by requesting open feedback. At the end of the course, a future ideas-oriented feedback survey was carried out.