

**New approaches to transform learning,  
new ways to rethink teaching,  
“in” and “out” of higher education...  
fostering learning opportunities for all ages...**

**Romiță IUCU, Ph.D.**

University of Bucharest | CIVIS European University

**Three theoretical perspectives...**



## **New approaches to transform learning, new ways to rethink teaching**

“Higher education is no exception...  
I fully anticipate that this period will be  
remembered as the single greatest  
disruption that instruction in higher  
education has ever seen.

**Learning will be forever changed.”**

*Gary Hepburn,  
Dean Ryerson University, Toronto*

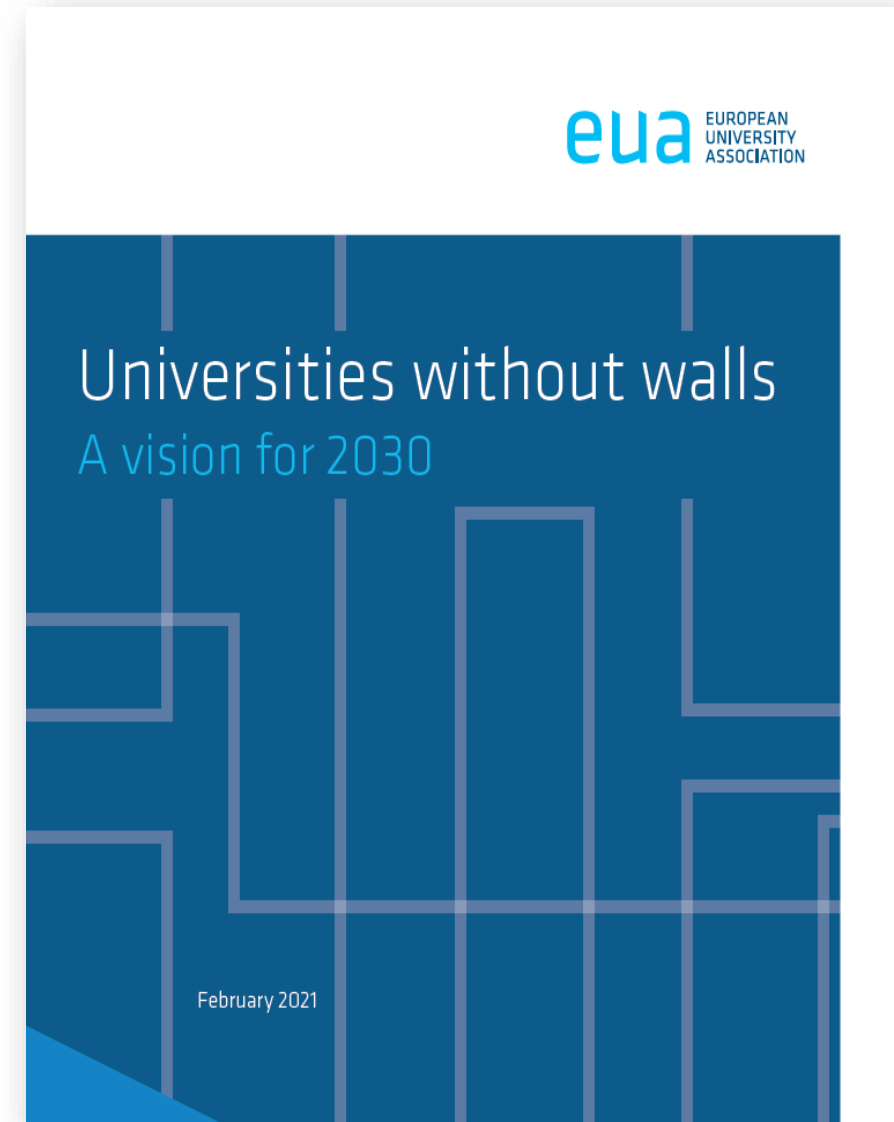
# “In” and “out” of higher education... Universities without walls

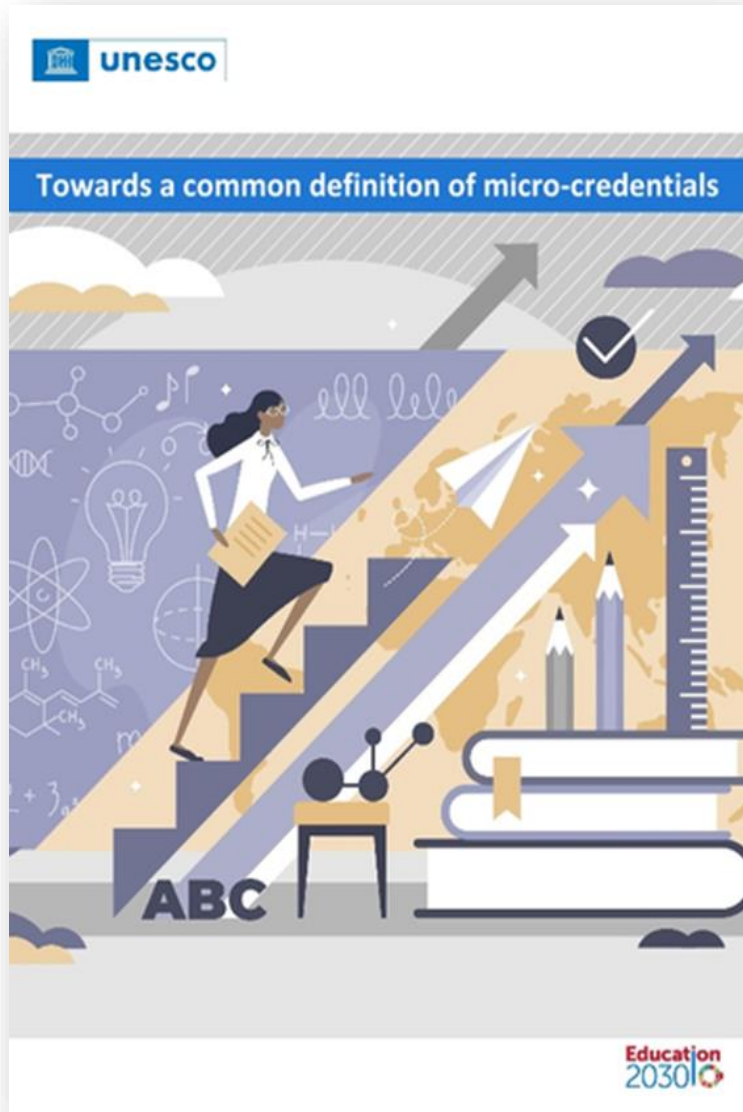
A new vision for the future...

Higher education institutions  
*(with all the components included)*

**without walls...**

*European Universities Association, 2021*





## Fostering learning opportunities for all ages

“Education changes lives, and micro-credentials, done well, can be a force for good as part of or to supplement and complement formal education systems, and prepare a wider range of learners across the lifespan **to lead better lives and healthier communities.**”

**And two philosophical reference points...**

REIMAGINING  
A new social  
OUR FUTURES  
contract for  
TOGETHER  
education

*UNESCO, 2021*



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REIMAGINING  
A new social  
OUR FUTURES  
contract for  
TOGETHER  
education

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## Innovative trajectories as new ways for transforming the futures

Future policy agendas will need to embrace all levels of education and better account for **non-traditional educational trajectories and pathways.**

Recognizing the interconnectedness of different levels and types of education, speaks to **the need for a sector-wide, lifelong learning approach** towards the future development of teacher education.

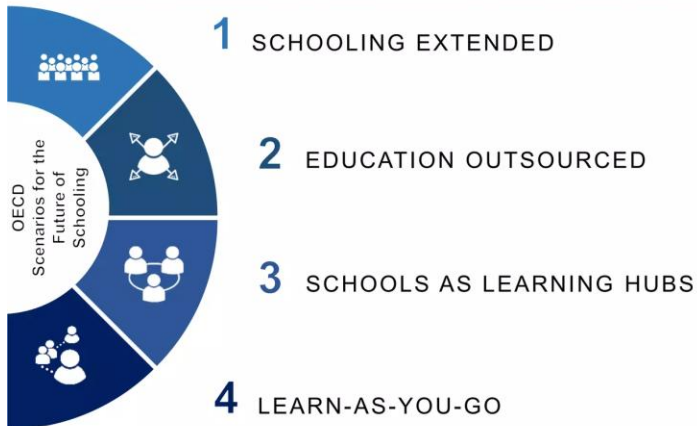


# Scenarios...

## Back to the Future of Education

FOUR OECD SCENARIOS FOR SCHOOLING

### Four OECD Scenarios for the Future of Schooling



Educational Research and Innovation

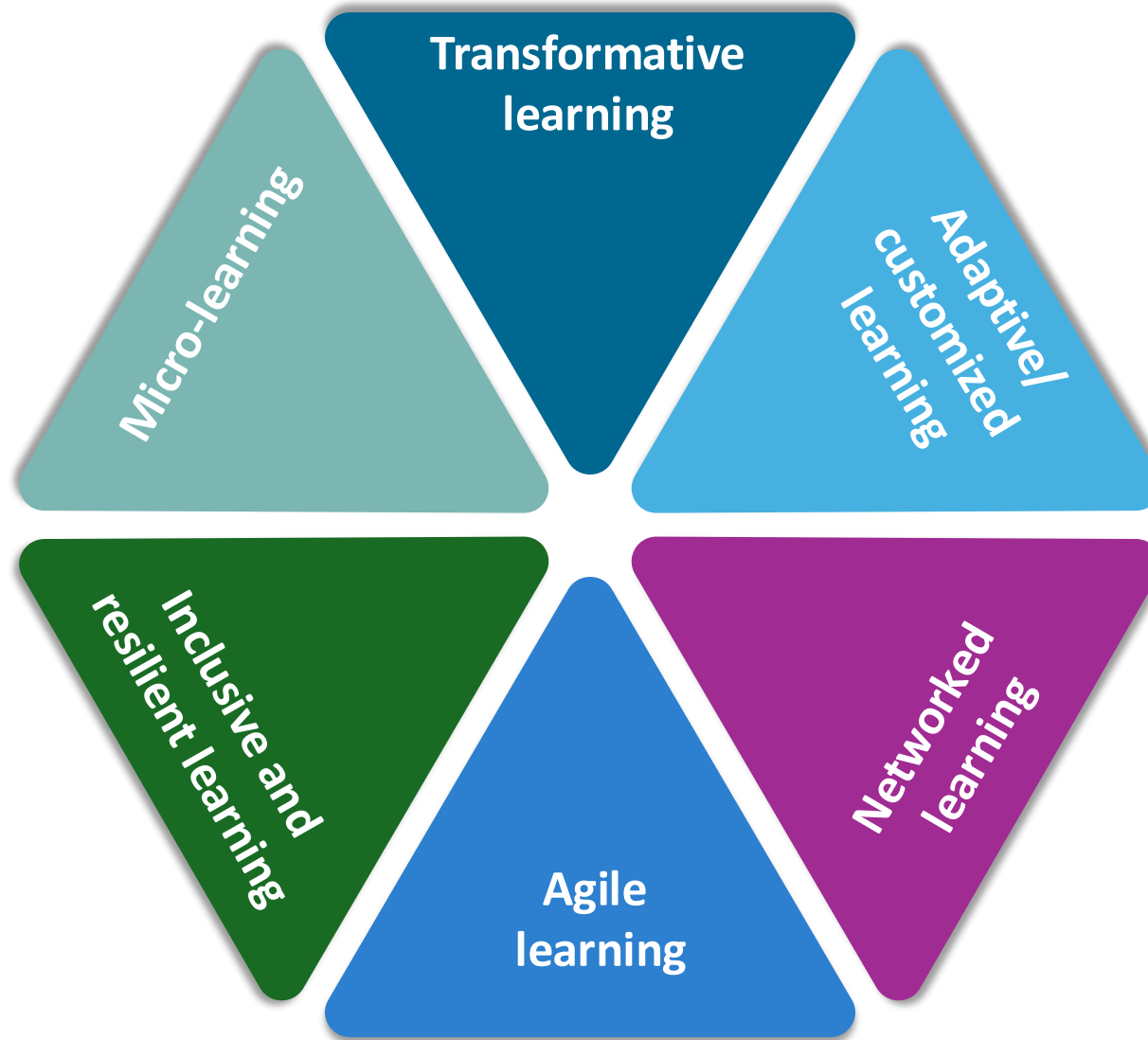
## Back to the Future of Education

FOUR OECD SCENARIOS FOR SCHOOLING



# **New approaches to transform learning, new ways to rethink teaching ...**

**Multidisciplinary approach – more integrative and  
based on variabilities models and scenarios**



# Transformative learning



**Transformative  
learning**

## Transformative learning...

- Transformative learning theory is defined as **“the process of effecting change in a frame of reference.”** *(Mezirow, 1978)*
- It’s a theory that explains **how adults receive, process, and use new information** to view the world around them.
- The start of Mezirow’s transformative learning theory dates back to **1978**, to be exact, when he published a white paper and an article (his research on adult women who returned to education.)

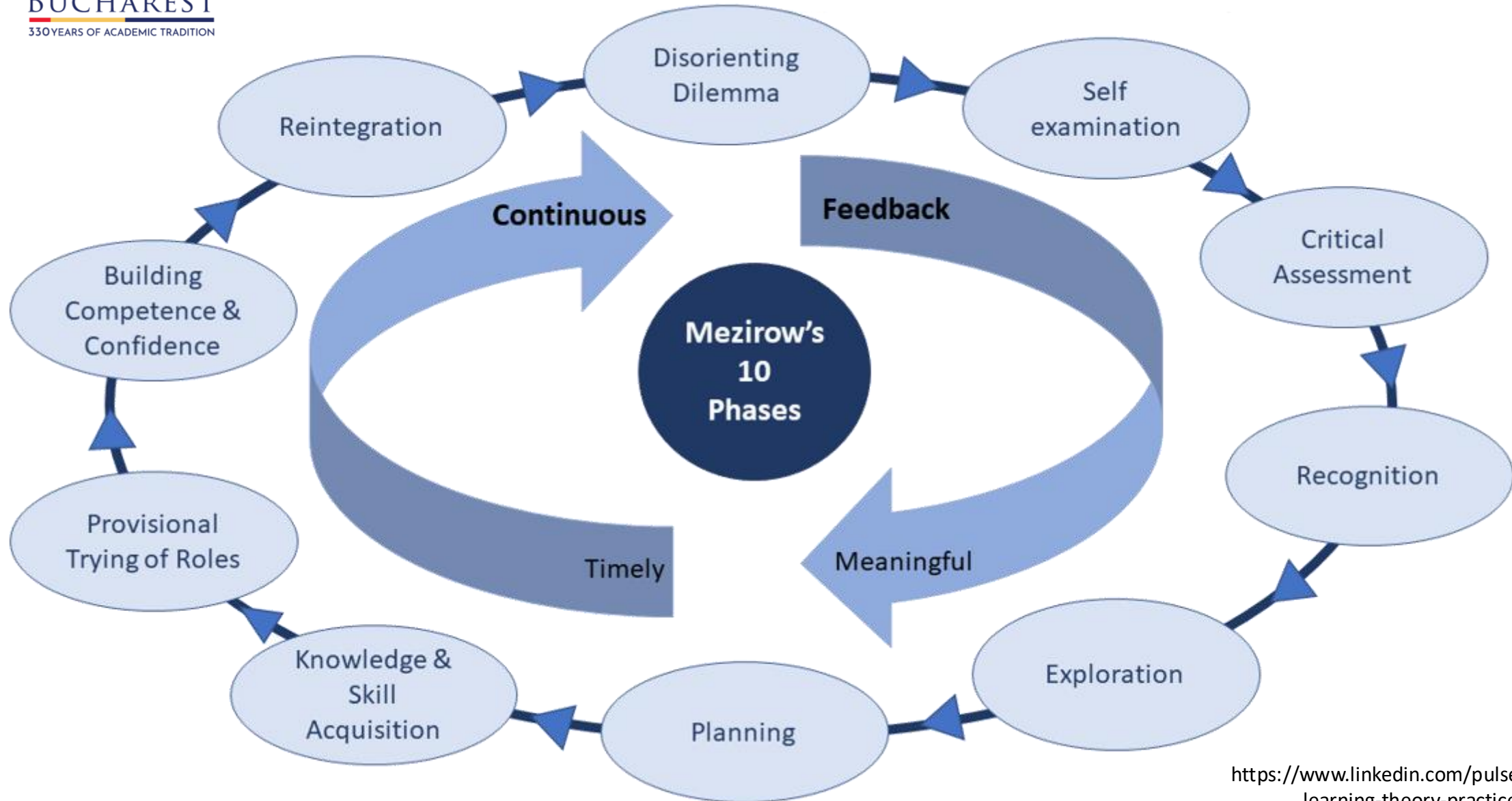
*(Baldino, 2023)*

# Transformative learning Mezirow Theory

**A frame of reference** encompasses cognitive, conative, and emotional components, and is composed of two dimensions: habits of mind and a point of view.

- **Habits of mind** are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes. **These codes** may be *cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological*.
- Habits of mind become articulated in **a specific point of view** – the *constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling* that shapes a particular interpretation

# Mezirow's 10 Phases



# Adaptive / customised learning





## Adaptive / customised learning

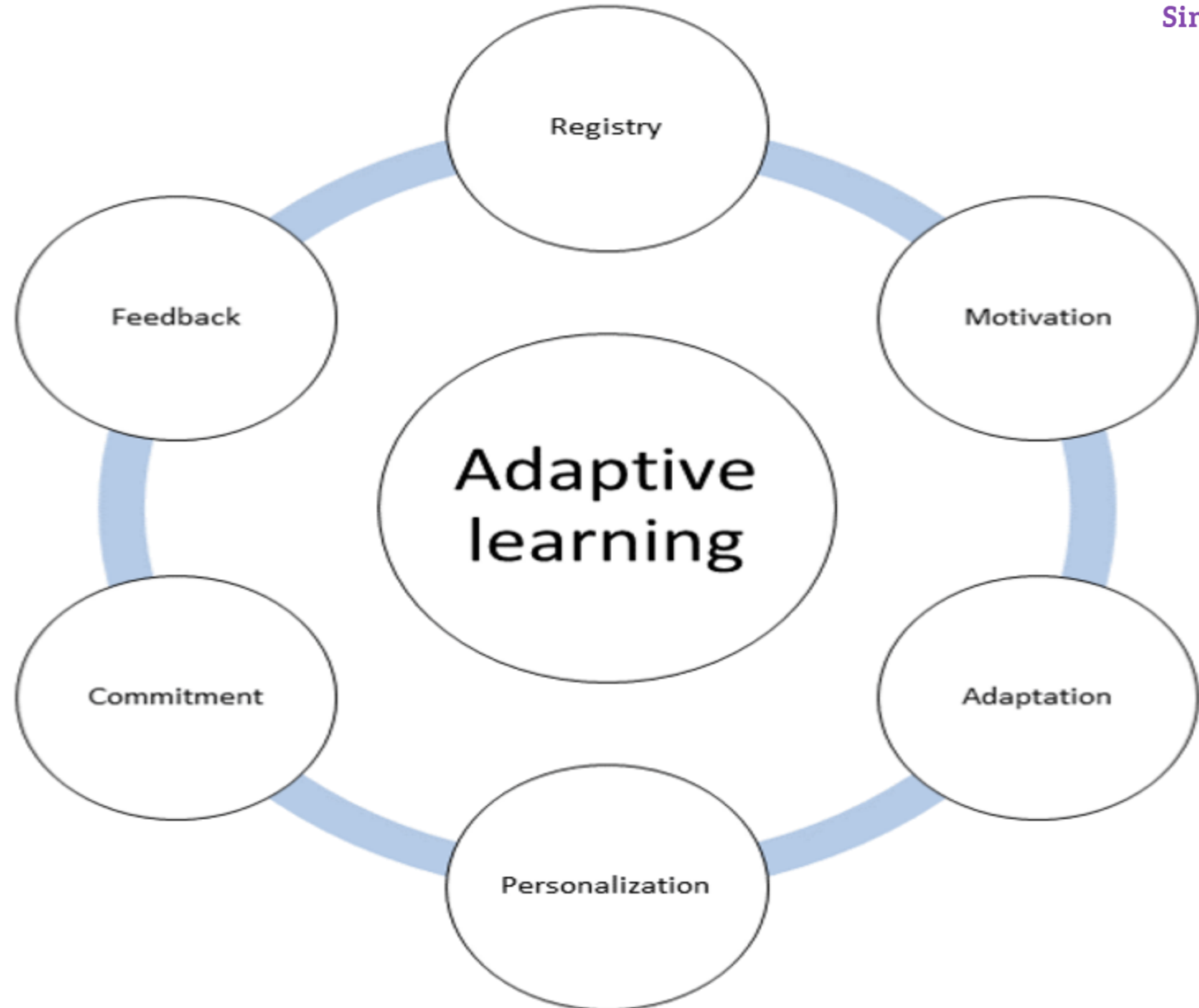
- The concept of adaptive learning is based on the foundation of **adapting to the individual needs** of students by offering **customized learning material and assessments**.
- Its models or platforms adjust the delivery of education and learning outcomes according to the **student's progress**. For instance, devices continuously monitor changes in individual characteristics and performances and **adjust the learning path**.

*(Barari, 2024)*

## Adaptive learning versus ‘one-size-fits-all’

- Is designed for an **evolving world** where workforces are becoming **more diverse**.
- Employees from different **age groups, ethnicities or backgrounds** can be seen working together as a team.
- A more diverse workforce brings **more diverse experiences and skills**.
- Training methods for such an assorted workforce must account for the **skill levels of each employee**.
- These experiences address the unique needs of an individual, dynamic learning paths, and resources through **just-in-time feedback**.
- This is not possible with the **‘one-size-fits-all’ approach** of traditional learning methods.

# Adaptive/ customised learning and the dynamic feedback



## Adaptive learning – AI powered tool

- Continued to develop over time and really made waves during **the artificial intelligence (AI) movement in the 1970s**. AI adapts and studies through **learning algorithms**.
- Adaptive learning platforms are now using more AI-powered tools **to provide personalized learning experiences to students**.
- AI-enabled learning tools are **improving the ability to create, access, and manipulate information**. Thus, students have complete control over what they want to learn and how. This is helping them **thrive in a fast-paced digital environment**.

*(Barari, 2024)*

# Networked learning



*Networked  
learning*

# Networked learning

Networked learning grew out of practices in open and distance learning, lifelong learning, computer-mediated communication, co-operative and collaborative learning, problem-oriented project pedagogy and critical and emancipatory pedagogy.

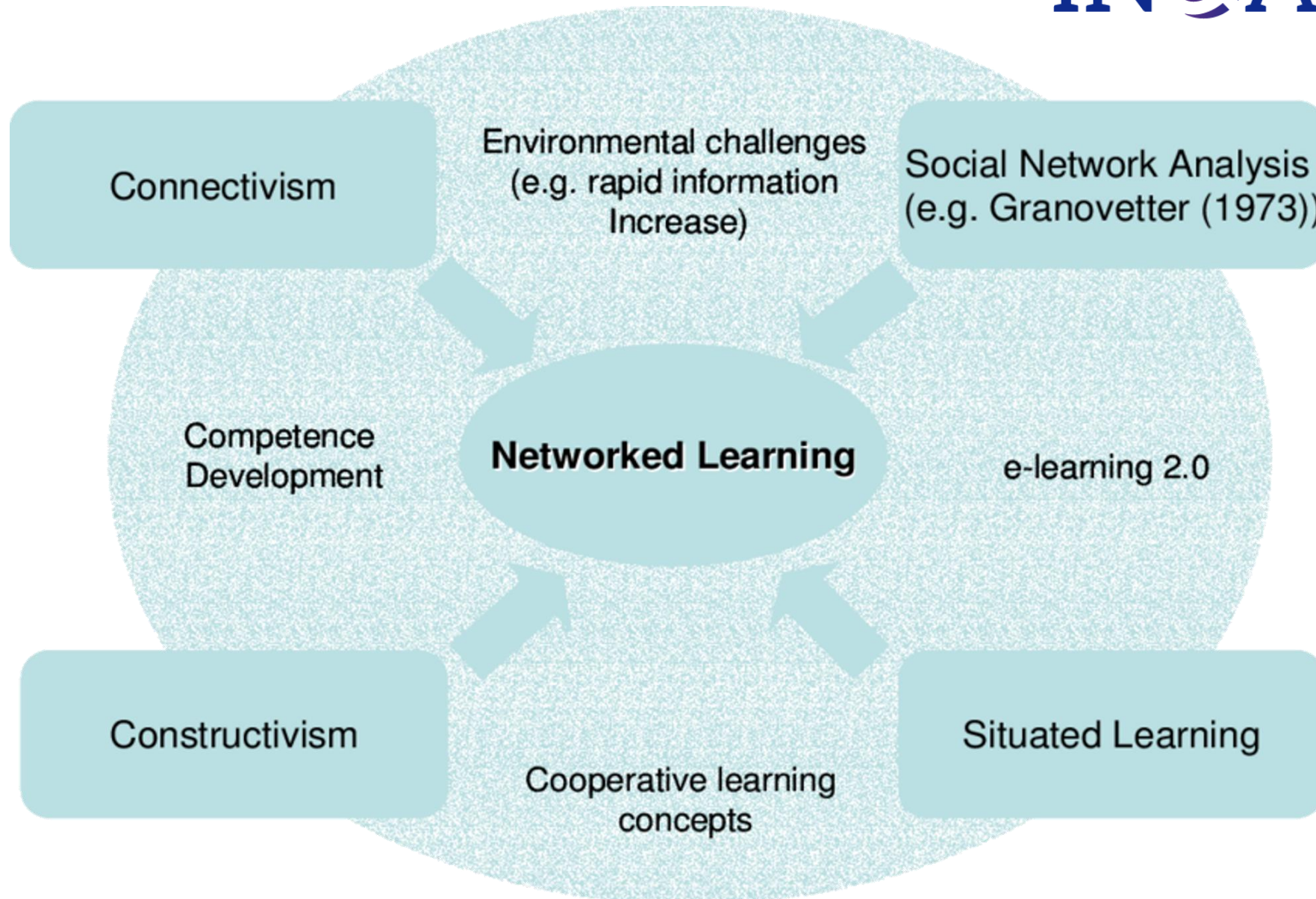
(Networked Learning Editorial Collective, 2021).

# Networked learning

## Definition:

Networked collaborative learning (NCL) is therefore the bringing together of learners via personal computers linked to the Internet, with a focus on them working as a ‘learning community’, sharing resources, knowledge, experience and responsibility through reciprocal collaborative learning.

(Networked Learning Editorial Collective, 2021).





# Agile learning



**Agile  
learning**

# Agile learning focuses

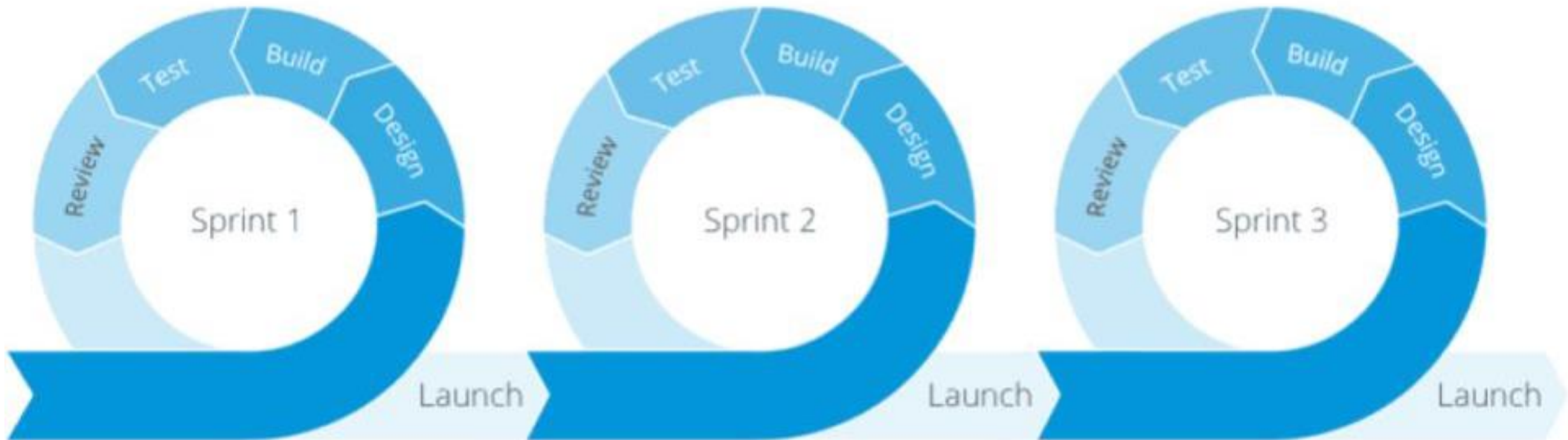
On speed, flexibility, and collaboration.

Characteristics of agile learning:

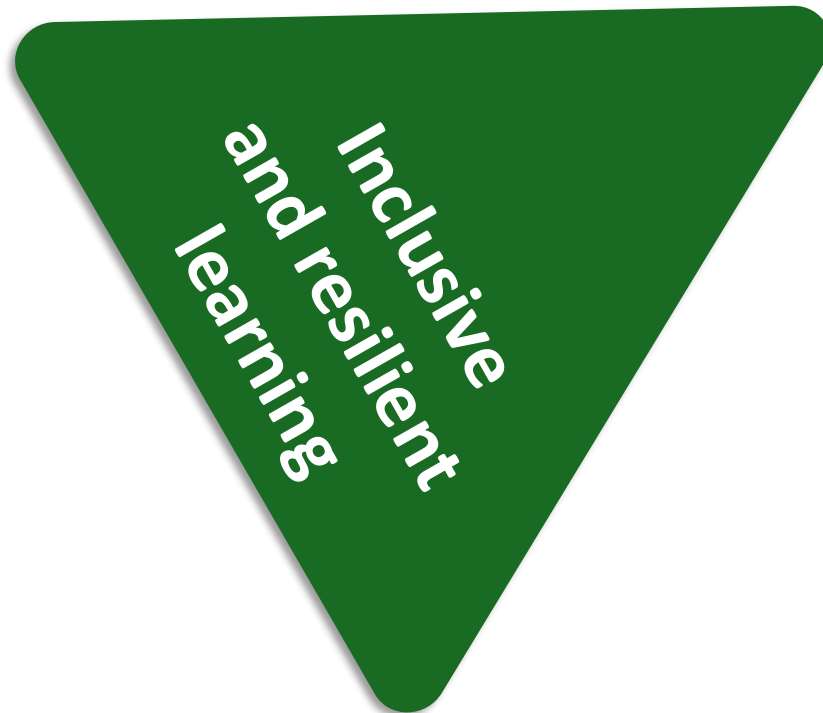
- Minimal focus on **procedures or rules**
- Reactive to **market feedback**
- Flat team structures and **continuous collaboration**
- Iterative **“fail fast”** approach to development
- Highly responsive to **stakeholders / external partners** of learning

*(Cognota, 2024)*

# Agile learning cycles



# Inclusive and resilient learning



## Inclusive and resilient learning

- The **Resilient Learner** is your key to transforming student stress into success.
- It is important to redefines the learning experience, offering a unique framework to build **mental and emotional** resilience.
- Students gain insights into rewiring their brain for growth mindset, adaptability, and optimism, turning setbacks into opportunities.
- Practical strategies in **emotional regulation, memory optimization**, and character strength application enhance academic performance and **overall well-being**.

*(Rojo & Aubrey, 2021)*

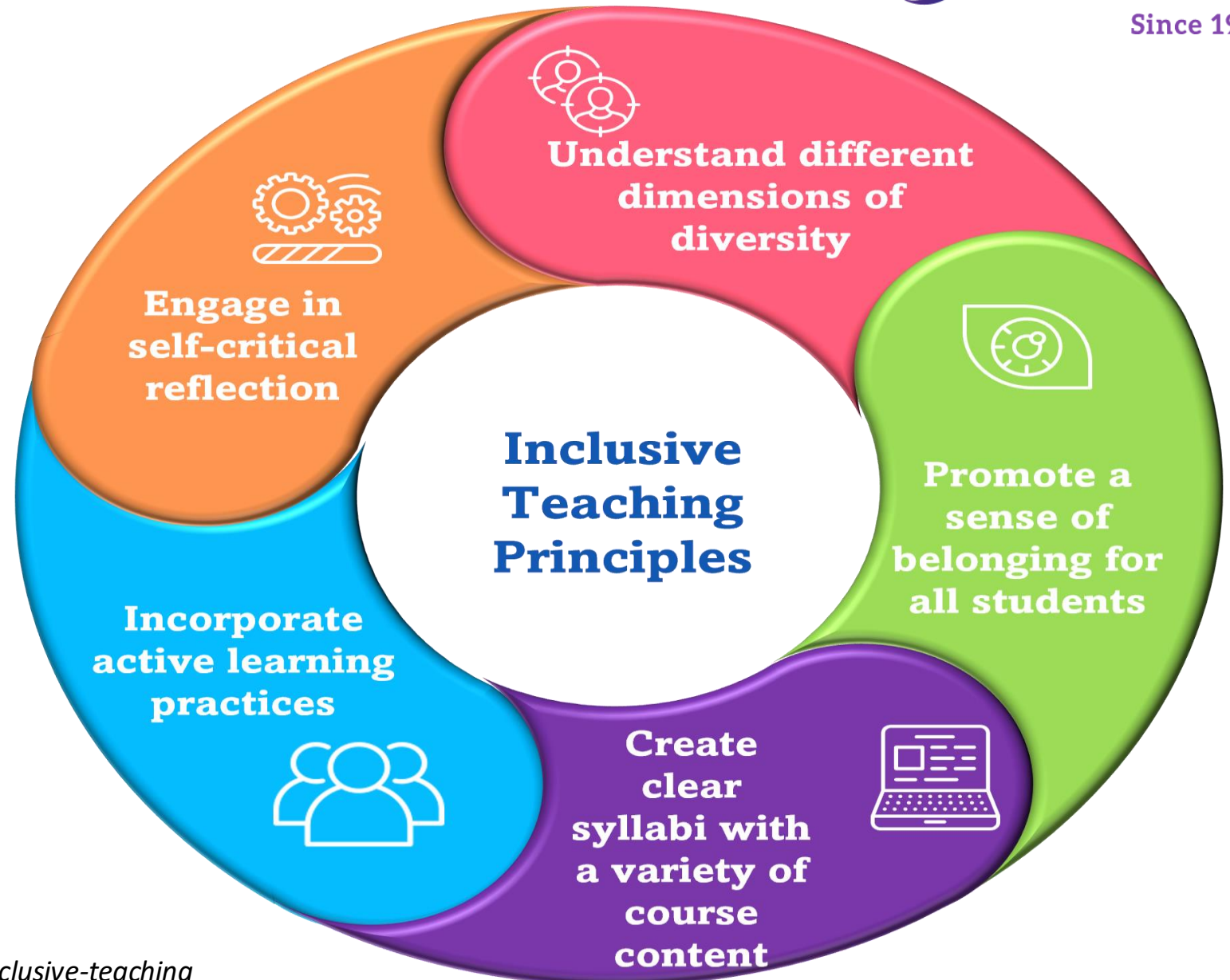
# Inclusive and resilient learning

- Confidence
- Perseverance
- Learning from failure
- Coping with criticism
- Independence, self-driven
- Facing challenges
- Security

The **Resilient Learner** extends its impact to various life domains – school, university, training, work, and personal growth.

*(Rojo & Aubrey, 2021)*

**Inclusive and  
resilient learning  
to go from stress,  
to success!**



# Micro-learning



*Micro-learning*

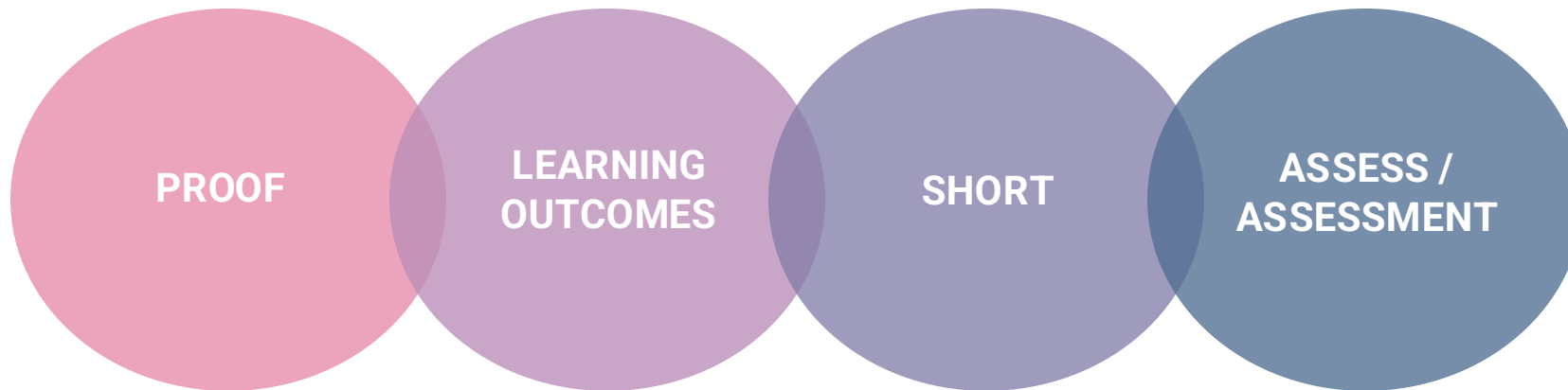


# Micro-learning

- Microlearning is a way of providing **short, focused pieces of content to an audience**. It's not a new idea, and the effectiveness of microlearning has been debated within the learning and development industry. Bite-sized courses don't necessarily equal good learning. However, in the right context, it can be highly effective.
- Microlearning refers to **a set of compact e-learning modules that are designed to reduce learner fatigue**. The modules can be educational, professional, or skill-based.

*(Greanie, 2020)*

# Micro-learning / Micro-credentials



**01** **Proof**  
Role of the credential

**02** **Learning outcomes**  
Evidence proved by the credential

**03** **Short**  
Duration of the learning activity

**04** **Assess / assessment**  
Attest solidity of the contained outcomes, competencies, or skills

# Learning transformation ...

## Points of reflections

- **curriculum design** – more flexible and adaptive
- **teaching styles** – more focus on facilitating and cultivating
- **multidisciplinary approach** – more integrative and based on variabilities models and scenarios
- **digital integration** – AI and all generative AI constellations
- **motivation and emotionality** to create an authentic well-being
- **assessment and evaluation** – to rethink students' progress and evaluation , through relevant feedback provided

**“In” and “out” of higher education...**

**Beyond the institutional walls...  
Alliances, entities, new structures**

## In – out Universities – European Alliances

*„Alliances are a process of transformation of our European Higher Education system where a common space for Higher Education in Europe can be built through them, based on the convergence of curricula, mobility, understanding and the European spirit“.*

**Margaritis Schinas**  
*Vice-President of the  
European Commission*



## In – out Universities – European Alliances

- *“Transformative” perspective*
- *“Co-creation” perspective*
- *Transnational perspective*
- *European perspective*

**IIFORUM** of European  
Universities Alliances

**14-15 September 2023**  
**Barcelona, Spain**

**EU23**  
SPANISH PRESIDENCY  
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

## In – out Universities – European Alliances

### European Universities initiative –

*“Transnational alliances of higher education institutions, paving the way towards the universities of the future.”*

- **50 alliances**
- **430 de universities**
- **35 countries EU** plus Island, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey



The infographic features a dark orange background with a white vertical line on the right side. On the right side, the text 'EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES' is written in white, stacked vertically. On the left side, the text 'We now have 50 European Universities alliances, involving more than 430 higher education institutions across Europe' is written in white. At the bottom left, the hashtag '#EuropeanUniversities' is written in white. The background is decorated with yellow and orange geometric shapes, including triangles and squares.

**EUROPEAN  
UNIVERSITIES**

We now have 50  
European Universities  
alliances, involving  
more than 430 higher  
education institutions  
across Europe

#EuropeanUniversities

## In – out Universities – European Alliances

**eua** EUROPEAN  
UNIVERSITY  
ASSOCIATION

« European degree, European legal statute, European Universities: what are we aiming at, federal institutions or flexible tools for transnational collaboration?



Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik  
European University Association

**EXPERT VOICES**



In – out

## Universities – European Alliances

Embedding new philosophy of micro-credentials applied in curriculum design process by piloting this type of new educational developments (*such as the transdisciplinary micro-programmes, flexible programmes*), building **a new academic curricula** for the alliances which shared with us their attempts on designing joint academic small units of learning:



Micro-credentials  
& Learner  
Transformation  
Framework



Smaller scale  
collaborations



Tracks



Core  
programmes



Modules &  
Micro-  
programmes



Learning units

In – out

# Universities – European Alliances



# Fostering learning opportunities for all ages

*Education changes lives, and micro-credentials, done well, (...) prepare a wider range of learners across the lifespan to lead better lives and healthier communities.*

*(UNESCO, 2021)*

## A new constellation: micro-credentials

COVID19  
pandemic crisis  
Energy crisis  
Inflation  
Labour  
productivity  
Demographic  
changes



Flexible,  
diverse, and  
up to date  
skills targeted  
education and  
training



Dynamic labor  
market  
evolving  
towards green  
and digital  
transitions



### MICRO – CREDENTIALS

*A micro-credential is a proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a short learning experience. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent standards. The proof is contained in a certified document that lists the name of the holder, the achieved learning outcomes, the assessment method, the awarding body and, where applicable, the qualifications framework level and the credits gained. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared, are portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards (European Commission, 2021)*

# Micro-credentials and Lifelong Learning

European Pillar of Social Rights establishes bold targets for 2030:

- employment rate of **at least 78%** in the EU
- reduction of at least 15 million in the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty
- **at least 60% of adults** attending training courses every year

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan refers to **micro-credentials as an innovative instrument** that ‘can facilitate flexible learning pathways and support workers on their job or during professional transitions’.

*(European Commission, 2021)*

# Possible scenarios for micro-credentials implementation

*(Camilleri, 2018)*

## Global micro-credentials marketplace

- Higher education institutions **cease to be the main providers of educational services.**
- A broad category of private-sector providers and newly established structures resulting from a process of **consortium-forming (emergence of 'mega-universities')** dominate the market.
- Certain platforms will act as **'aggregators'** on this market, providing their own training content.

*(Camilleri, 2018)*

## European Universities (Alliances)

- European University Alliances provide specialised academic / professional content, offering **‘joint flexible credentials’**.
- Learning and training experiences are **recognised** by higher education institutions and employers on the European market.
- European University Alliances become preferred learning paths for the acquisition of certain **European and international qualifications**.

*(Camilleri, 2018)*



## Lifelong micro-learning

- The **boundary** between higher education and continuing vocational training become **increasingly blurred** in terms of credentials.
- Lifelong learners juggle between the two systems and turn into citizens **‘engaged in perpetual learning’**.
- Higher education institutions pay increasing attention to employee life cycles, implementing **multiannual learning contracts** with employers and students.

*(Camilleri, 2018)*

## University gatekeepers

- Universities are perceived as **'guarantors of quality'** and are authorised to award academic qualifications.
- Institutional prestige becomes the **guarantee for the quality of credentials.**
- Universities become **hubs for the array of training programmes** put together by actors in the world of work, non-governmental organisations, or international organisations.

*(Camilleri, 2018)*

## Ivory Towers

- Universities fail to acknowledge the role and growing significance of micro-credentials, ignoring **technological and professional developments** and the **externalization of education**.
- Although universities continue to be the primary choice for certain areas, they are avoided when it comes to obtaining **highly placed positions or professional roles, as career paths become fragmented and highly individualized**.

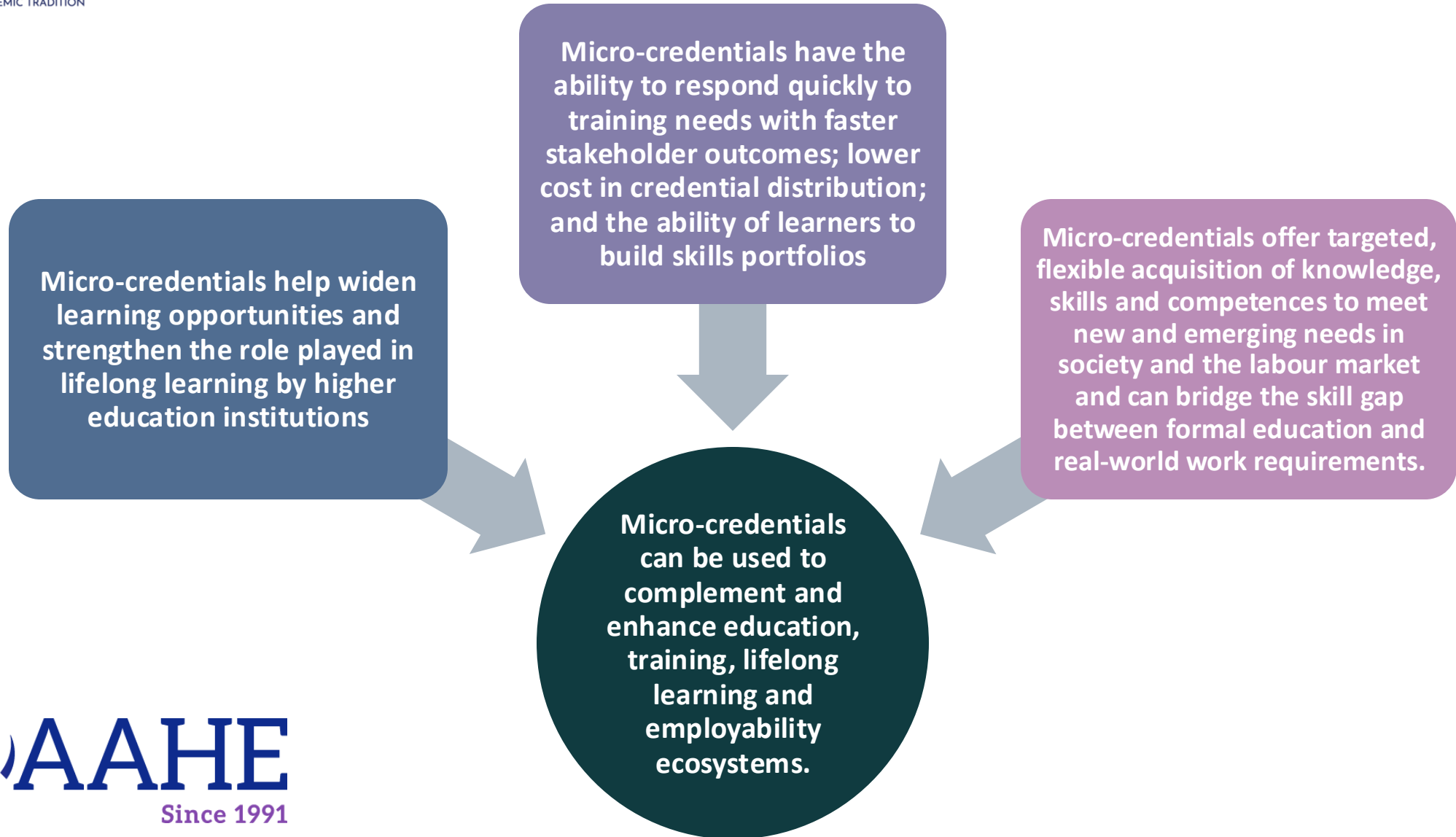
*(Camilleri, 2018)*

## Outsourcing education

- Micro-credentials are **tools of marginal significance to European students**, who opt for traditional educational pathways at the expense of micro-credentials.
- Educational institutions can put together **an attractive offer of micro-study programmes and micro-credentials** for developing countries.
- European universities become **leading higher education providers in developing countries**.

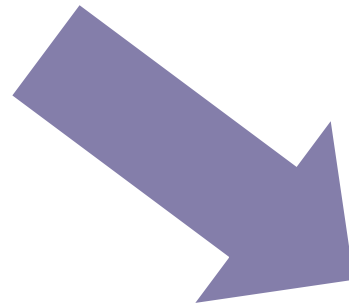
*(Camilleri, 2018)*

# Micro-credentials and lifelong learning



## Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials can play a role in delivering on the **EU's headline targets** to be achieved by 2030, including a target of 60% of all adults participating in training every year and an employment rate of at least 78 %.



MC are to be identified and further explored and understood, as they would most probably reshape the teaching inside and outside higher education, speedily. **What is happening with its quality mechanisms, remains an open debatable question...** as well, “in” and “out” higher education.

## Learning and Un... learning



Learn



Unlearn



Relearn

## Un... learning

**Unlearning is not about forgetting. It's about the ability to choose an alternative mental model or paradigm**

**When we learn, we add new skills or knowledge to what we already know**

**When we unlearn, we step outside the mental model to choose a different one**

**The problem isn't learning, it's unlearning**

*(Bonchek, 2016)*



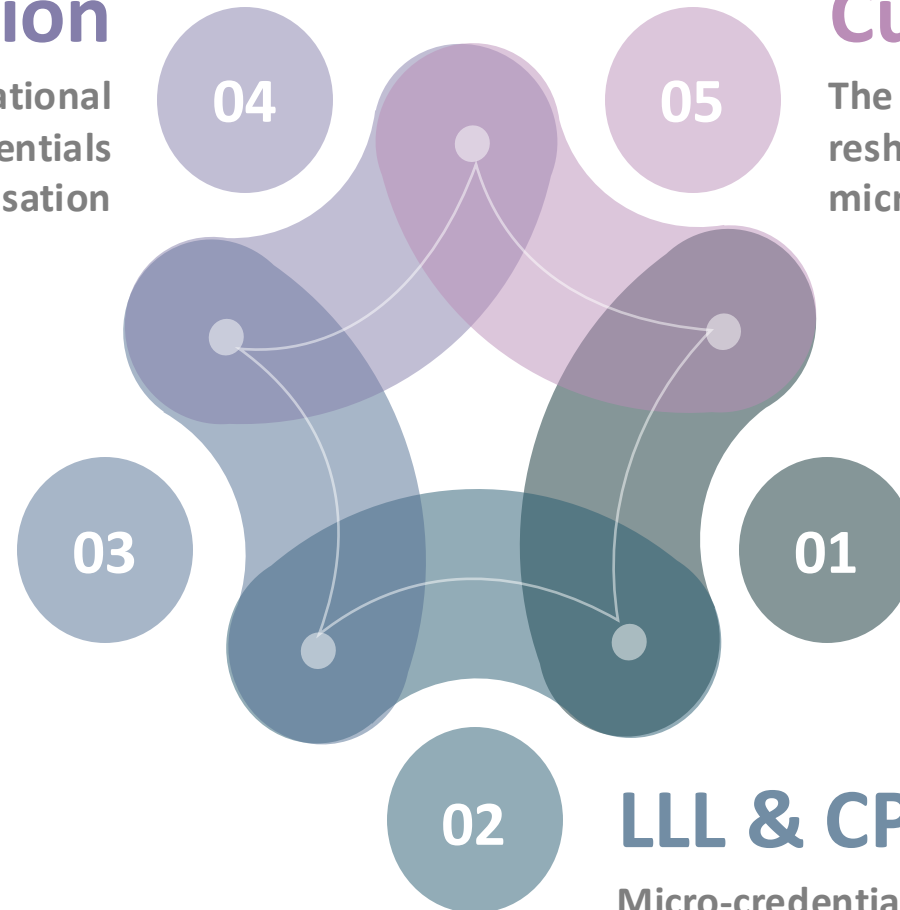
**Instead of conclusions:  
scenarios for the futures...**  
**Trying to unlearn and relearn**

## Modularisation

Alliances develop innovative educational activities designed on a micro-credentials philosophy, through modularisation

## Compromise

Micro-credentials remain second in importance for alliances, but they become present in some of the educational offers



## Curricular reshape

The academic curricula opens to reshaping processes based on micro-credentials and flexibilisation

## Ignorance

European Universities leave micro-credentials outside the formal curricula and concentrate on traditional degrees.

## LLL & CPD

Micro-credentials are important only for the lifelong learning and continuous professional development components



The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

(Alvin Toffler)

**New approaches to transform learning,  
new ways to rethink teaching,  
“in” and “out” of higher education...  
fostering learning opportunities for all ages...**

**Thank you very much for your attention !**

**Romiță IUCU, Ph.D.**

University of Bucharest | CIVIS European University  
romita.iucu@unibuc.ro

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