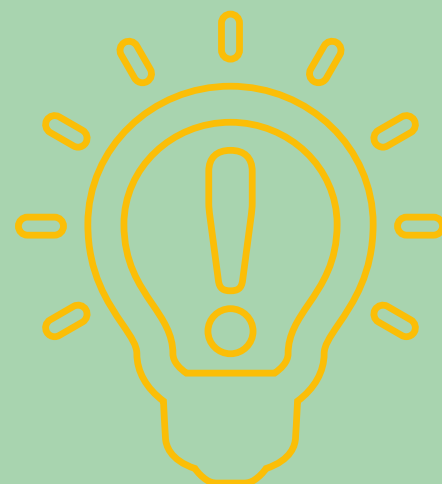# PORTUGAL CASE STUDY

ipvc

Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo

IPVC Community of practice for creativity and critical thinking

The Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo (IPVC) has 6 schools, with 5888 students and 450 professors, Technology and Management School, Business School, Sports and Leisure School, Agrarian School, Health Sciences and Education School.

The project is coordinated by the Pro-Presidency of Pedagogical Innovation with pedagogical councils in all schools. This is distributed by 10 municipalities in the north of Portugal and its 4 campuses are located in different municipalities.

The challenge

In each school with the engagement of the school's pedagogical councils, Directors and the coordinating team, faculty members were invited to enter in the community. The participation was totally voluntary and open to all.

Objective 1: To intervene, enhance and foster professional development of faculty members in creativity and critical thinking through innovative and active methodologies;

Objective 2: To develop creativity and critical thinking in students;

Objective 3: To develop a community of practice that promotes creativity and critical thinking on higher education, improving teaching methodologies, learning environments and assessment methods;

Objective 4: To integrate an international network, organized by the OECD that fosters creativity and critical thinking, having our professors engaged and active in redesigning courses. Also to be part of the data sample in a cross-country research.

IPVC before this project didn´t have a lot of experience in pedagogical projects so this was the first institutional project. It begun with a total 63 professors engaged from all our schools.

This case study integrated:

1_Training sessions (face to face and online) developed by the coordinating team, with the support from the OECD team. Through the project we had monthly or two weeks based trainings. These included rubrics of the OECD concepts, goals, scoring rubrics and tools/documents, different conceptualizations, experts proposals for different approaches; innovative and active methodologies. These trainings were developed with two goals, to increase knowledge but also to increase engagement in the project. We also developed teamwork and brainstorming to increase group cohesion. We sent a message of proximity and brought professors to training sessions where they can have doubts, questions, and really be comfortable with their own fears.

2_Development of a e-learning course with resources, forums of questions and submission of assignments:

2.1. Rubrics (starting from what you know; analyzing the text on rubrics; doing a small application exercise; showing the project

rubrics: the grids of the rubrics for teaching and the grids of the rubrics for evaluation);

2.2. Exercises on teaching strategies (working in heterogeneous groups; see lists of teaching / learning strategies, debate and share knowledge and resources);

2.3. Exercises from your course (working in groups by area; presenting the Template again; you can also see the OECD rubrics by areas: mathematics; science, language, Example from Ontario Tech and Teaching Education, and exercises from the last webinar: example making connections);

2.4. Pedagogical and scientific resources.

3_Planning of the project integrated different levels of knowledge proficiency, as different professors had different levels of knowledge and progressive tasks. This is a huge challenge to professors that don´t have this technical background in social sciences. So we are making learning a challenge, not a burden, and are working step by step:

3.1. Professors were divided on two teams, that worked on different semesters, based on their own choice, according to the course they will redesign.

3.2. On the first year of the project (2020/2021), we expected that faculty members would learn the rubrics, develop skills in fostering creativity and critical thinking and scoring rubrics, and apply rubrics in three or four lessons. On the second year (2021/2022), preferably within the same curricular unit, they would work on the full course redesign. We also developed specific workshops "hands on" and webinars.

3.3. Also, we developed specific workshops "hands on" between the coordinating team and the faculty members to develop one lesson for their specific course.

4_Peer learning: Every two weeks we had an informal meeting and trainings with the presentation of innovative methodologies. These trainings were proposed by all members of the team, assuming a peer learning methodology.

5_OECD webmeetings and seminars with participation of faculty. Also in these moments the team co-builds and learns with each other, shares experiences from pedagogical practices. The work is systematized and shared every two weeks and resources were allocated to a platform.

6_A very close monitoring by the project team in order to make professors gain autonomy and succeed.

7_The support of the constitution of a community of practice, where teachers can share their teaching experiences and support each other.

The outcome

Achievement 1: A community of practice integrating 28 professors that redesigned their courses in 6 different schools.

Achievement 2: A community of practice, with close collaboration and a very supportive environment among faculty members;

Achievement 3: Empowerment of our community, curricular and pedagogical changes on courses, with professional development for faculty members and 1406 students engaged;

Achievement 4: Integration in OCED network in pedagogical interventions, policy making, curricular changes and research.

IPVC had no relevant track record in the professional development of teachers, nor in the development of specific skills of students. This project is crucial for the whole strategic development of the IPVC, the professional development of the teachers, the insertion in an international learning network, the opportunity to learn inserted in a network promoted by the OECD of international institutions, and the development of these skills on students.

Regular and organized meetings, small task assignments, close relationship, open communication and continuous learning are indicators that we work actively in this development. This is based on of group sharing knowledge. The biggest challenges were around time and availability of resources, multidisciplinarity and course related.

In general professors seem to have some previous experience in integrating critical thinking as a learning outcome, particularly within some domains. On the other hand, creativity apparently has not received the same attention.

A community of practice with different levels of proficiency in the subjects, so people can learn and develop without being afraid of looking vulnerable was relevant. The simplified or class-friendly rubrics were suggested for teachers to use for their lesson planning. However, if they wish, they may draw on the more developed rubrics and even make a foray into the theoretical frameworks from which these rubrics have been drawn.

PORTUGAL CASE STUDY

ipvc

Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo

IPVC Community of practice for creativity and critical thinking

Contact:
Ana Teresa Oliveira
anateresaoliveira@ipvc.pt

#Construir o Futuro