

WHEN QUANTITY FOSTERS QUALITY: B-LEARNING AS A WAY TO ACHIEVE THE HIGHER EDUCATION PURPOSE

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Abstract

It is fundamental to create conditions in Higher Education (HE) to support all students in promoting autonomy and the power to act concerning their employability, as job transitions are becoming more frequent, impacting individual trajectories. As an answer to this context, the aim was to create a training programme that proved relevant and accessible to a large number of participants. Likewise, there was a focus on promoting a secure and challenging context to apply the programme's contents and the development of tools that would be useful both during and after its conclusion. A Curricular Unit (CU) was designed in a B-learning format targeting HE students. This CU combines a remote (asynchronous and synchronous) and presential format. The components are organized in steps, which allow students to reflect on their past, their future, and the labour market, and to have an autonomous role in the construction of their learning by selecting the activities they consider most relevant. A monitoring and impact evaluation model for this CU was also constructed. The development process of this CU started with the auscultation of students and companies, combined with a bibliographic review regarding employability. This led to the first design of the CU, which was applied to a pilot edition composed of 32 Bachelor and Master Engineering students, between February and July of 2021. Since then, this CU has been implemented for four semesters, involving over 1200 students. The results of the monitorization and impact evaluation showed that on a scale of 1 to 5, the students attributed an average of between 4.1 and 4.7 to the relevance of the CU's contents and tools. Regarding the future utility of these materials, the students attributed an average classification of between 4.1 and 4.7. The applicability of the CU's resources was also verified through an increase between 15.2% and 20.9% in the actions taken by the students regarding their employability in pre and post-test results. These results remained stable independently of the number of enrolled students. This study appears to show that the auscultation of relevant agents combined with a bibliographic review promotes high content relevance and future utility. Simultaneously, creating a safe context for experimentation during the CU facilitated the students' implementation of a set of actions. Lastly, this study demonstrates that it is possible to involve up to 500 students per semester in a CU without compromising the quality of their learning or their singularity.

Keywords: *B-learning, higher education, lifelong employability, training.*

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS ACROSS CONTINENTS: THE INTERSECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN, INCLUSION AND GLOBAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

In this presentation, the design of unique course assignments aimed at eliciting transformational learning before, during, or upon return of study abroad experiences will be highlighted. Colleagues at a large research university in the United States have led multiple 10-day study abroad field trips embedded within larger, 15-week courses. Only a subset of students in the course choose to travel abroad. The challenge was to create a set of assignments that would immerse the non-traveling students in the sights, sounds, and experiences of the host country as well as to contextualize the global experience of the traveling students within their own cultural norms and practices prior to traveling as well as upon return. As Kegan (2009) asserts, only when the form itself is at the risk of change then true transformational learning can occur. Using the tenants of this notion as a guide, this session will expand upon a revolutionary approach to global education that initially debuted at the 2021 END conference. In 2022, a follow-up presentation highlighted the structuring and sequencing of a virtual study abroad experience. Now that traditional global education initiatives have been re-initiated, this *current* presentation will highlight how the intersection of class format, student cohort, and study abroad destination were used to inform assignment development and creation. Artifacts from **four continents** worth of study abroad experiences will be covered, highlighting pedagogical elements that were universal along with contextual elements that were specifically adopted