

Learning through the others: underlying principles that guided learning activities

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The design of the professional development activities was guided by several of key principles that highlight features that research has pinpointed as crucial for meaningful experiences among professionals (e.g., Peleman et al., 2018). The relevance of embedding learning activities into daily practices, of supporting sharing and collaboration, and following a project-based approach was transversal to all activities and experiences designed for professionals.

EMBEDDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES: LEARNING HOW TO NOTICE AND FEEL.

Active participation & Connection to everyday experiences:

Recent perspectives on professional development highlight it is most effective when is closely connected to the work in practice (Peleman et al., 2018; Teaching Council of Ireland, 2016). Professional development is an ongoing process, through which professionals are active participants in their own learning process, which pinpoints the importance

of experiencing authentic and meaningful activities (Desimone, 2011). Professionals' learning is socially constructed in close links between ongoing practices and theory, creating opportunities for reflection that is embedded in the work itself (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2016). Therefore, as starting points for inspiration and reflection, visits to schools were organized, allowing participants to observe, interact, and discuss about practices, pedagogical frameworks of each particular setting.

Openness and provocation:

It has been highlighted that taking people out of their normal environments can lead to new insights into their practices, providing them with opportunities to contest existing thinking and beliefs (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2016). Thus, the practice exchanges across countries were seen as powerful moments for getting new insights that invite for reflection and challenge existing thinking and practice.

Holistic approach that engages all participants cognitively and emotionally:

Personal, interpersonal and professional development are inextricably linked. Therefore, a holistic approach to professional development is important and contributes to creating new vision of educational reality.

COLLABORATION & SHARING

It has been stated that professional learning is most effective when supports interdependency (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2016). Collaborative learning has been considered one of the most important professional learning processes. Possibilities for extending collaborative learning opportunities, by inviting professionals to share their own views and experiences, and develop work collaboratively, are highly welcomed by professionals themselves and creates opportunities for new knowledge.

Furthermore, in Bridging, collaboration goes beyond professional boundaries so that the blend of diversity in disciplinary backgrounds can lead to the development of fresh insights and ideas (Rond, 2014). Interdisciplinary collaboration between the different international partners can support the cross-fertilization of different discourses (education, arts, music, sociology, psychology and architecture) that can allow a rich, effective, and intentional operationalization of the educational process of all those involved, leading to high-quality practices. In Bridging, we recognize and emphasize the knowledge and experience each one brings to the professional development activities.

PROJECT-BASED APPROACH

In Bridging, the process through which professionals work together and learn from each other mirrors the learning processes of children. A project-based approach – that involves several interconnected steps of generating questions, developing research, and sharing new insights and products – correspond to means of learning important both for adults and children (Knap, 2003).

LEARNING GOALS

Based on the three key principles, the learning activities for professionals, organized at each country, aimed at fostering:

- > **Openness** to new experiences: get to know new realities that challenge existing thinking and practice
- > **Relationship-building** and improvement of collaborative spirit
- > **Self-Confidence** and self-efficacy
- > **New content knowledge** on citizenship, architecture, arts education, inclusion, and digital literacy

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