



PARTNERSHIPS FOR PATHWAYS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL CLUSTERS
OF OPEN SCHOOLING

TEMP Transnational Education
Mentoring Partnerships

Report Focus Group - University of Valladolid



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Project Details

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Context

Introduction	4
Specific objective	4
Methodology	4
Conclusions	5

1. Introduction

This report concerns the implementation of the **Focus Group Activity** performed by the **University of Valladolid** and has been implemented in the framework of the Transnational Education Mentoring Partnerships TEMP Programme under the *Partnerships for pathways to higher education and science engagement in regional clusters of open schooling PHERECLOS* project.

2. Specific objective

The objective of this Focus Group Activity is to identify attitudes, beliefs and practices among **university professors** in Spain in order to develop a documented report concerning their experiences, practices and innovative educational methodologies.

3. Methodology

As a focus group is a qualitative aspect of research, participants were selected taking into account who can best answer the research questions. A list of possible participants was created and the most appropriate were chosen. An invitation was sent by email after ensuring contact information. Finally, **five (5) university professors** were selected to participate in the activity.

The moderator was Dr. Manuel Carabias, a professor of University of Valladolid, himself and has an adequate understanding of the subject in question. He is also a good communicator and he was also in charge of keeping notes.

The questionnaire prepared by the TEMP partners ([SURVEY TARGET GROUP - TEMP \(google.com\)](#)) was sent to the participants via email a week before the activity.

The Focus Group Activity has been conducted through the Skype platform on **Tuesday, March 23, 2021**. At the beginning, participants were informed about issues related to data protection and ethical aspects and were asked for permission to record the Focus Group and take screenshots. The participants discussed openly the topic in question. At the beginning of the meeting, participants were explained a summary of the PHERECLOS project, shown the project website as well as a prepared presentation with the general and specific objectives of our

TEMP. After which, the group was engaged in an entertaining Questions and Answers activity on Google Jamboard. The data collected were analyzed and the moderator reviewed the notes, analyzed and summarized the conclusion of the focus group in a report.

4. Conclusions

After the ideas and opinions shared during the online Focus Group and analyzing the survey which the participants filled, the following results emerged:

1. Education and Training received throughout the entire trajectory

Bachelor degree in the educational field	:	0
Master degree in the educational field	:	0
Phd in the educational field	:	5
Courses on innovation methodologies or resources	:	0

2. Which educational field are you working in?

University : 6

3. Educational methodologies you have knowledge of:

STEM learning	:	3
Placed-based learning:		5
Personalized learning	:	2
Project-based learning	:	5
Real-world learning	:	3
Formative assessment	:	4
Other	:	1

Service and learning

4. Which of the above have you ever used in your classes/courses/training?

STEM learning : 1

Placed-based learning: 2

Personalized learning : 1

Project-based learning: 5

Real-world learning : 4

Formative assessment: 4

Other :

5. What ICT educational resources do you generally have knowledge of?

Information resources :5

Collaboration resources :5

Learning resources :6

6. Which of the previously selected ones has used this course for teaching?

Information resources : 4

Collaboration resources : 3

Learning resources : 5

7. What is the main reason why you apply any of the above mentioned methodologies - STEM Learning, PBL etc. (if you do)

It's comfortable for teaching/training : 1

Students learn more : 5

Students are more motivated : 6

Other :

8. Reasons why you do not apply the above methodologies (if you don't)

Not having the necessary resources : 1

Problems organizing the class : 2

The desired learning objectives would not be met :

The subject taught is incompatible with this type of methodologies : 1

A shortage of time : 1

Other :

9. How would you describe an innovative teacher/trainer?

The desire for change :

The capacity to perform relevant research : 1

Inventiveness	: 1
The ability to implement what planned	: 1
Being a promoter of team and cooperative work	: 2
Other (Flexibility and adaptation according to the level of the students)	: 1
Tries to improve his/her teaching with best practices	

10. Why do you consider it necessary to innovate in class?

There are different reasons why it is considered important to use these methodologies. Two main approaches stand out: a) innovation in class for a more meaningful learning by the student and b) student learning connected to social and work requirements, including the ability to change the world.

a) Regarding student learning, some comments have been:

- "They are considered necessary to generate autonomous thinking, to foster a critical spirit, and introduce creative thinking, putting the student at the center of learning"
- "To promote better and more meaningful student learning"
- "To break the preconceived schemes of the students"
- "To motivate the target group"

b) Regarding the preparation of the student to live, work and transform society, some comments have been:

- "Because it is imperatively necessary to transform reality"
- "For adapting the learning process to the real world (social way of live and labor market). The labor market need competences such as working team, problem solving, digital skills and this competences are not acquired with traditional learning "
- "Breaking the world and transforming society"
- "because it is necessary to transform, facilitate and move towards the practical-real"

11. What do you consider is needed to be developed/changed/ improved in your educational field?

Curricula	:1
Methodologies applied	:3
Resources	:2

Approach towards the student : 6
Other :

12. Why?

Professors consider that changes should be implemented in the different areas, curricula, methodologies, resources and approach towards the students, nevertheless the aspects that should be developed or changed the most would be the perspective of the teacher and that of the student.

The teacher can interfere with the **curriculum** and the **methodology**. A teacher with better training has more resources to implement a methodology different from the traditional one.

The attitude of the professor to implement new methodologies is very important, even if there are small changes that we can do in class. This required more effort from the professor because it required more planning, to invite experts, to find external resources, etc. Some times is the professor the one that thinks that it can not be done, even if he / her doesn't tried.

Professor maybe can not implement a full active methodology but they can include the student in the class. For example, instead of giving the information, make an interactive class with questions.

On the other hand, regarding the **approach towards students**, not all students are used to working actively, there are students who prefer to go to class passively, studying by memory and taking exams in a traditional way. For many students, participate actively in class is an extra task. The process should be created together with the student, sharing the methodology with them.

There should be connection and agreement between the expectation of the student, the professor and the content, so all the parts are agree and have the same attitude.

Regarding the **resources**. It is needed for teacher to have more resources, not only physical but also to know how to develop different methodologies.

There are to many students for implementing active methodologies. There are classes with about 80 students, so it is difficult to implement active methodologies.

Another factor that has been discussed in the focus group has been about the concept of innovation and when a methodology is innovative: when does no one use it? When is it different? When it uses technological elements ... it is It is important that both the professor and the student do not get carried away by fashions or what is apparently "new", moving away from the true content and learning (for example, using Kahoot only for using a ITC tool).

In conclusion, we can say that there is a great variety of methodologies, strategies or actions that can be implemented in the university environment, and at the same time there are multiple factors that act as barriers to their implementation. A greater analysis of the situation, as well as a set of solutions would be a relevant output for the university environment

Below some screenshots of the focus group:



