

Learning Beyond Borders: *Pedagogical Innovation and Student Co-Creation in an International Community of Practice*

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Abstract

This pedagogical experience was developed within the Educational Policies and Organisation of Education course, taught by Professor Cristiana Pizarro Madureira at the University of Beira Interior (UBI), and implemented as part of the EPIC UBI Advanced Pedagogical Transformation Pathway, with the support of the Pedagogical Innovation Office (GIP-UBI). Bringing together students from Portugal, Mozambique, and Kosovo, the initiative promoted collaborative internationalisation, intercultural dialogue, and the co-creation of knowledge within an international learning community.

Grounded in the principles of the Pedagogy of Dignity (Madureira et al., 2024; Madureira & Viché, 2026), the experience valued students as active contributors to educational transformation, fostering participation, inclusion, mutual recognition, and social responsibility. Through collaborative activities, students engaged with diverse perspectives and cultural contexts, strengthening intercultural understanding and collective learning. Aligned with the OECD Learning Compass 2030 and UNESCO's vision in Reimagining Our Futures Together (2021), the project highlights the potential of co-creative and intercultural pedagogies to develop global citizenship, collaborative competencies, and ethical engagement, contributing to more inclusive and sustainable educational futures.

Objectives

- To promote intercultural and collaborative learning in international contexts.
- To develop students' critical analysis skills regarding educational systems.
- To foster students' active participation as co-creators of knowledge.
- To encourage academic cooperation practices oriented towards the common good.
- To contribute to pedagogical innovation in higher education.

Methodological approach

The initiative consisted of the design and facilitation of the international online seminar "Bridging Education Systems: Connecting Ideas, Educational Systems and Cultures", bringing together 55 participants from Portugal, Mozambique, and Kosovo within an international Community of Practice.

The pedagogical approach combined international collaborative learning, knowledge co-creation, and intercultural dialogue, enabling students to critically explore and compare different educational systems and sociocultural realities. The learning ecosystem was designed according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensuring multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression, while proactively reducing barriers to participation and learning.

Participants: 55

Countries: Portugal, Mozambique, Kosovo

Format: International online seminar
Pedagogical Frameworks: UDL, Pedagogy of Dignity, Learning Compass 2030, Reimagining Our Futures Together.

Access the Seminar Recording
Bridging Education Systems:
Connecting Ideas, Educational Systems and Cultures

Results

The results highlight the potential of international co-creation as an innovative pedagogical approach in higher education. The participation of students from Portugal, Mozambique, and Kosovo in an international Community of Practice fostered intercultural dialogue, collaborative learning, and the collective construction of knowledge, strengthening students' active engagement in the educational process. Students' involvement in designing and implementing the seminar promoted ownership, participation, and shared responsibility. These findings align with contemporary higher education pedagogies that position students as partners and co-creators of learning. They also reflect the principles of student agency and co-agency proposed by the OECD Learning Compass 2030, enabling learners to actively shape their learning experiences while contributing to collective goals.

Learning Beyond Borders: The Pedagogy of Dignity in Higher Education

Developed by the University of Beira Interior (UBI), this project integrates the "Pedagogy of Dignity" with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), transforming higher education into a collaborative international ecosystem for co-creating knowledge.

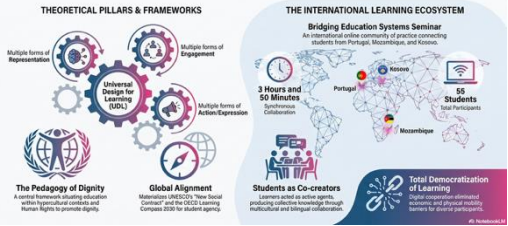


Fig.1 Overview of the "Learning Beyond Borders" pedagogical innovation project, developed within the EPIC UBI Advanced Pedagogical Transformation Pathway, illustrating student co-creation, intercultural collaboration, and the development of a transformative competence aligned with the OECD Learning Compass 2030 and the Pedagogy of Dignity.

The experience supported the development of key transformative competencies identified by the OECD, creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility, through intercultural collaboration, shared decision-making, and collective knowledge production. Students also strengthened communication, critical thinking, collaboration, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship skills.

Furthermore, the initiative resonates with the principles of the Pedagogy of Dignity (Madureira et al., 2024; Madureira & Viché, 2026), which emphasise participation, recognition, inclusion, and respect for human diversity. By valuing each student as a legitimate contributor to knowledge construction, the experience fostered belonging, mutual recognition, and ethical engagement. Overall, the findings suggest that international Communities of Practice provide powerful environments for pedagogical innovation in higher education, promoting curriculum internationalisation, student partnership, and the development of responsible citizens committed to the common good.

Link to the seminar recording:
<https://canva.link/kxz92t6bqj6ocj>

Conclusions

The students adapted easily to this type of pedagogical approach, and some of them experienced it as a playful and good-humored way of knowing more about what matters to them within the scope of the taught contents. However, based on observations and evaluation of submitted work it is wise to advance the supposition that the kind of assessment to be implemented depends greatly on the students' profile which, in this case, was extremely aligned with the technical aspects of AI and, to some extent, could easily fall within the "early adapters" category, given AI's novelty.

References

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