EVALUATING SL EXPERIENCES

una europa

UNIVERSITAS COMPLVTENSIS MATRITENSIS

UNIVERSITAS CATHOLICA LOVANIENSIS SEDES SAPIENTIAE 1425
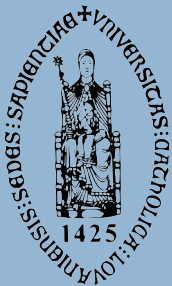
ALMA MATER STUDIORUM · UNIVERSITA DI BOLOGNA · A.D. 1088

UNAEUROPA

Una Europa is an alliance of eight European universities.

Freie Universität Berlin

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna

University of Edinburgh

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Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

KU Leuven

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

The Unaeuropa manifesto for a university created by and for society

THE UNAEUROPA SEED FUND PROJECT

The aim of the seed funding initiative is to support the initiation of long-term collaborative activities between the partner universities. The idea is to "plant a seed" that can eventually attract external funding.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

The UNAEUROPA SL network in the short term could:

- foster mobility of academics and staff interested in SL within the UNAEUROPA SL network;

- establish relationships with National, European and International organizations aimed at promoting SL;

- participate in Erasmus+ programs and COST actions to further develop networking, collaboration and training.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

The UNAEUROPA SL network in the long term could:

- formalize high-quality standards for SL courses implementation, based on the evidence collected through agreed research within the UNAEUROPA SL network;
- facilitate students mobility within the UNAEUROPA SL network, based on the common understanding of quality standard and best practices for SL courses implementation;
- support the implementation of SL courses within UNAEUROPA alliance
- promote the adoption of the quality standard for SL courses implementation,
- within the UNAEUROPA alliance.

OUR UNAEUROPA SEEDFUND PROJECT

- A collaborative UNAEUROPA service-learning network to transform teaching and learning in the European Space of Higher Education

- Founded by Unaeuropa seed fund in 2019

- Challenged by the pandemic

Summer school → **Pandemic** → **Participatory action research**

METHODOLOGY

- We conducted three focus groups (2 Italy, 1 Spain), and three interviews (Spain). Focus groups and interviews were conducted with FACULTY members and COMMUNITY partners.

- The focus groups aimed at exploring 5 dimensions of evaluation:

  – Function of evaluation;

  – Relevance, what is important to assess;

  – Typology, what kind of instruments to evaluate;

  – Timing, when to evaluate;

  – Role, who should evaluate.

PARTICIPANTS

FACULTY MEMBERS

Italy

- 10 faculty members from 4 different university departments:
  - 2 men;
  - 8 women.

Spain

- 5 faculty member from Education department:
  - 2 men;
  - 3 women.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Italy

- 11 site supervisors from 10 different community organizations:
  - 1 man;
  - 10 women.

Spain

- 1 site supervisor of a community organization:
  - 1 woman.

FUNCTION OF EVALUATION

UNIVERSITY

- A means to provide feedback to students;
- A way to recognize students' work;
- A tool to value the experience (what works and what doesn't)

COMMUNITY

- A tool to start the reflection on the experience (pros and cons);
- A way to provide evidence of the work accomplished to the local stakeholders;
- A way to collect data about the impact of the SL experience on the community.

Scholars are more student-centered, while community partners are more interested in understanding the impact of the experience on the community

RELEVANCE: WHAT TO ASSESS

UNIVERSITY

- Students' competencies (less relevant);
- Students' academic learning;
- Impact of the experiences (more relevant):

"We evaluate the impact. I think it's not related to students' evaluation, but to the work and the impact the experience had on the community context"

COMMUNITY

- Students' knowledge of the community organizations;
- Developed professional competencies;
- The impact of students' service on the organizations.

Scholars are more concerned to understand the impact of the experience, while community partners are also interested in understanding the students' acquirement of professional competencies

TIMING: WHEN TO EVALUATE

UNIVERSITY

- Pre/post evaluation - usually quantitative;
- In itinere -ongoing- evaluation of the process (perceived as more relevant);
- Possibility to include a follow up moment.

COMMUNITY

- Pre/post evaluation;
- In itinere –ongoing.

Scholars and community partners agree on the timing of the evaluation. Some participants already implemented evaluation strategies that include pre, post, and ongoing evaluation.

TYPE: WHAT KIND OF INSTRUMENTS

UNIVERSITY

- Qualitative instruments to collect students' perspectives of the experience (interviews, field notes);
- Quantitative instruments to testify change produced by the experience –mainly competencies (survey).

COMMUNITY

- Informal reflexive sessions to gather students' initial and final expectations;
- Informal moments with colleagues to reflect on the experience.

Scholars use more structured instruments and dedicated moments to evaluate the experience, while community partners use more informal strategies to reflect on the experience and discuss about it with students

ROLE: WHO SHOULD EVALUATE

UNIVERSITY

- University staff;
- Students (more control over their learning when participating in the evaluation process);
- Community partners.

  "In Service-Learning, I think we should have a cooperative methodology to evaluate the experience together"

COMMUNITY

- Students;
- University staff;
- Community partners (just informal evaluation).

Scholars and community partners considerations seem to converge. Nevertheless, community partners remark that their role in evaluation should be more informal and not systematic.

MAIN CHALLENGES OF EVALUATION

UNIVERSITY

- To go beyond results and pay attention to the learning process;
- To let students understand that their evaluation is not referred to the effort but to the actual learning and level of participation;
- To include the civic competencies dimension;
- Evaluating students with the grades logic:

"we evaluate students because we have to, we are forced to align innovative education with the university individual and numeric frame"

COMMUNITY

- To be formal evaluator of students' experience:

"It would not be appropriate to add official evaluation tools here [in the organization], it would be invasive. Besides, we would probably detect the same information that the university already collects. It would be more interesting to share information than to collect more. The relationship we establish with students is equal and informal. Asking to administer a questionnaire would be excessive."

GROUP SESSION

➢ **Function**
You may want to start by sharing your own experiences reflecting on the value and role of evaluation. **There are any differences with the presented findings regarding the impact on students and community partners?** Besides the impact on students and community (partners and members), **Can the function of evaluation also be to detect the impact on the faculty members and the university context?**

➢ **Relevance**
You may want to start by sharing your own experiences selecting aspects/dimensions to evaluate in your academic course. Besides identifying objectives and expectations, **What kind of impact is more relevant to evaluate first, and why?** [competencies, community, academic learning]

➢ **Typology**
You may want to start by sharing your own experiences assessing Service-Learning and the kind of instruments used for evaluation (strengths and weaknesses). Besides the qualitative-quantitative dualism and their possible integration, **Is it necessary to evaluate every SL experience independently? How can (or should) evaluation tools be shared across experiences?**

➢ **Timing**
You may want to start by sharing your own experiences designing your pre/post and ongoing evaluation strategies. **How can post-experience (follow-up) evaluation take place? Identify challenges and useful strategies.**

➢ **Roles**
You may want to start by sharing your own experiences evaluating SL with the help of community partners and students. (**How) Do community partners want to be involved in the evaluation? How can you support them to structure informal evaluation activities? What do students evaluate, and to whom their evaluation is useful?**