How Higher Education can promote transferable skills' development: A Portuguese innovative approach

Rita Santos Silva [*+], Inês Nascimento[+]

[*]Catholic University of Portugal - School of Economics and Management, Portugal
[+]Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, Portugal

Email: rssilva@porto.ucp.pt, ines@fpce.up.pt

Abstract

Higher Education Institutions are facing great challenges concerning the creation of innovative training contexts. Therefore, teaching practices that allow students to cope more effectively with social, economic and cultural demands should be adopted (Crespo, Gonçalves & Coimbra, 2001). In this regard it seems important to establish a complementary relation between scientific and technical knowledge and transferable skills' development, so that students can enter the labour market not only with an excellent academic performance but also with a wide range of skills appreciated by employers (Oliveira & Guimarães, 2010; Raybould & Sheedy, 2005). The School of Economics and Management of the Catholic University of Portugal implements an approach that was already recognized by OECD in 2010 as a best practice in curriculum innovation and transferable skills' development. Based on a psychological construtivist and ecological-systemic framework, the office "Strategic Leadership Hub (SLH)" develops an intervention strategy at three different levels: coaching and mentoring with students; cooperation with teachers; proximity with labour market. This communication intends to identify and explain some of the implemented practices, as well as present some results about students, academic and labour market inputs. Despite the success of this approach it is recognized the need to provide a more effective and positive relation between SLH's intervention and the development of transferable skills. As such some guidelines of an ongoing investigation to assess and ameliorate the whole intervention project will also be presented.

Keywords: Higher Education; Transferable skills; Students' development