UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

CATÓLICA LEARNING INNOVATION LAB | CLIL

TEACHER AGENCY TO A MORE RESPONSIVE AND ADAPTABLE APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Diana Soares, Maitê Gil e Diana Mesquita
Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Portugal

Agenda:

1

Teacher Agency & CoLP

Brief overview of a work aimed at developing an evidence-based model that strengthens communities of learning and practice in promoting teacher agency.

2

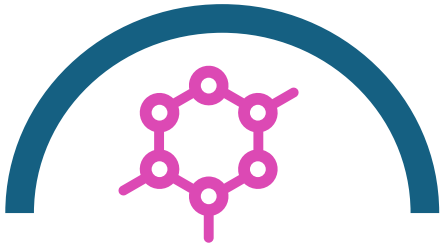
Institutional Experience

Sharing experiences from the first year of implementing the model.

1

From Teacher Agency to CoLP

Teacher **agency** is key to understanding teachers' capacity to make choices, take actions, enact changes, and reflect on their own practices.

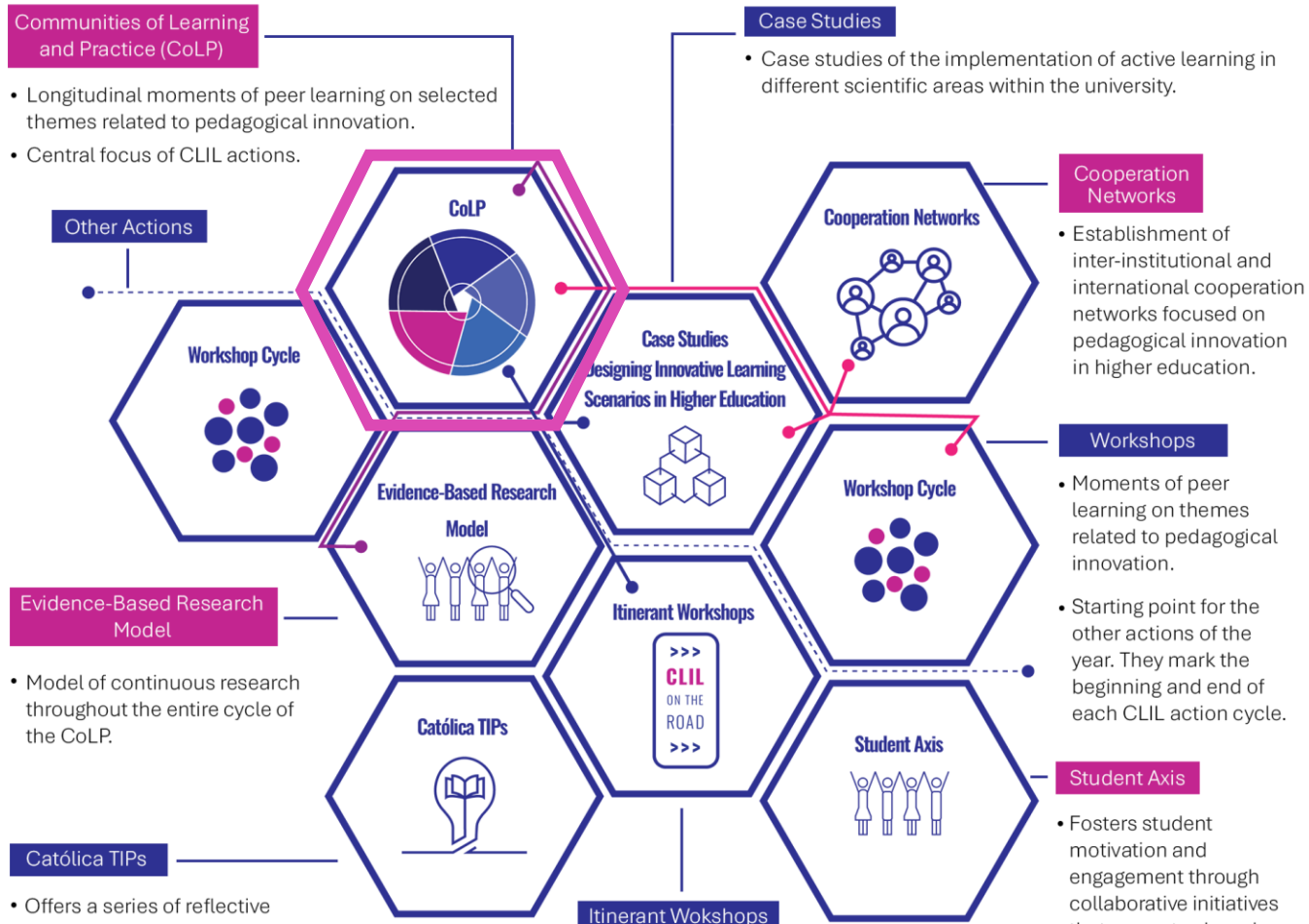


Faculty Professional Development empowers teacher agency, through different models and formats of continuing professional and pedagogical development.

Communities of Learning and Practice are particularly influential in teacher's agency, by fostering peer collaboration, and professional growth in a supportive environment

Brodie (2021)
Felten (2013)
Harvey et al. (2021)
Kennedy (2005)
Molla & Nolan (2020)

CLIL Model of Faculty Professional Development



Communities of Learning and Practice (CoLP)

- Longitudinal moments of peer learning on selected themes related to pedagogical innovation.
- Central focus of CLIL actions.

Other Actions

Case Studies

- Case studies of the implementation of active learning in different scientific areas within the university.

Cooperation Networks

- Establishment of inter-institutional and international cooperation networks focused on pedagogical innovation in higher education.

Workshops

- Moments of peer learning on themes related to pedagogical innovation.
- Starting point for the other actions of the year. They mark the beginning and end of each CLIL action cycle.

Evidence-Based Research Model

- Model of continuous research throughout the entire cycle of the CoLP.

Student Axis

- Fosters student motivation and engagement through collaborative initiatives that promote shared responsibility, recognizing students as essential partners in the educational process.

Católica TIPs

- Offers a series of reflective sessions for Faculty members and researchers to discuss key higher education topics in a collaborative and welcoming environment.

Itinerant Wokshops

- CLIL collaboration with the different Academic Units of UCP, through the organization of itinerant in-person workshops.

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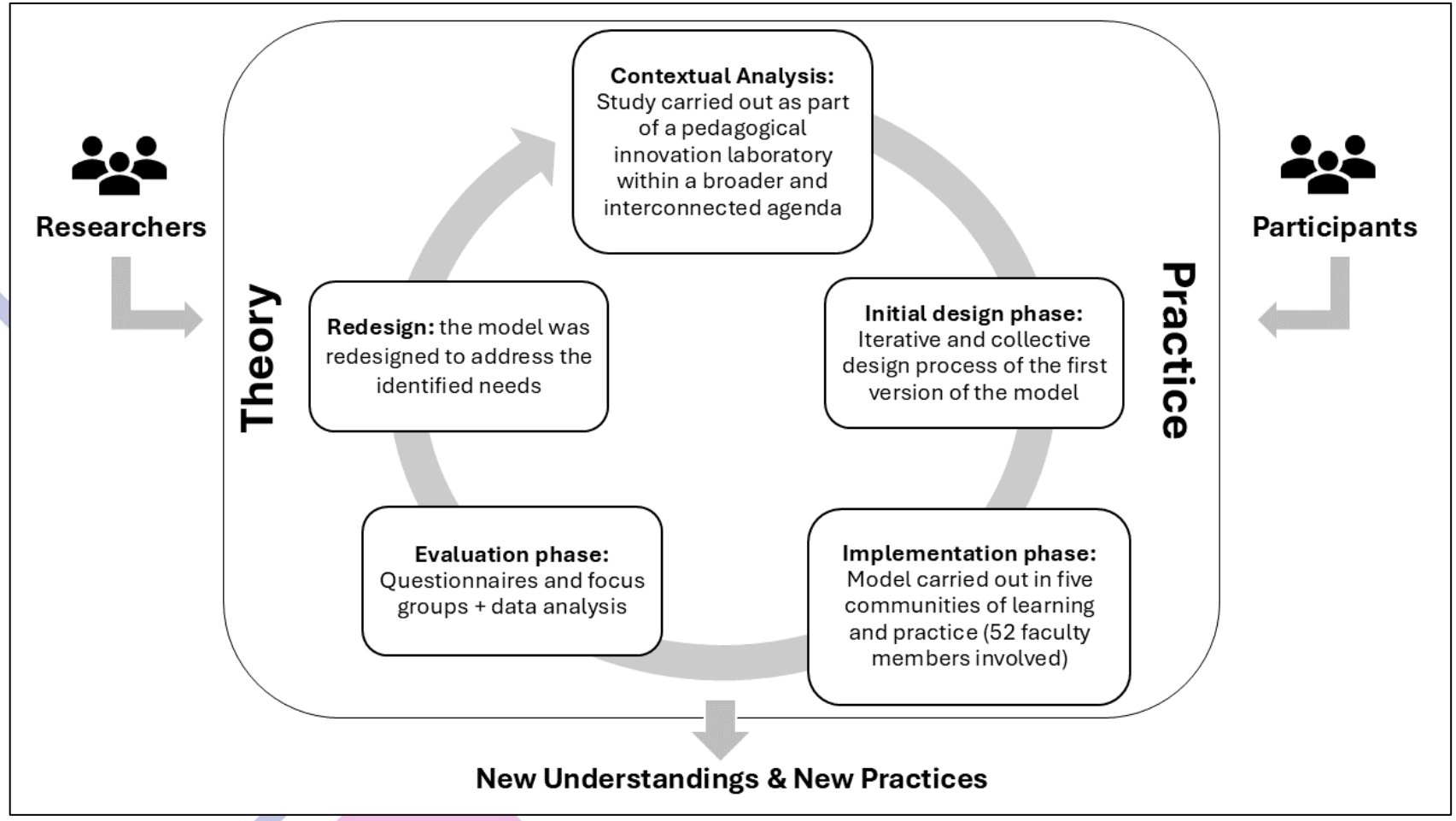
How to develop a model that strengthens communities of learning and practice in promoting **teacher agency**?

2

Our Institutional Experience

Design-based Research

Anderson & Shattuck (2012)
Dunn et al. (2019)
Fowler & Leonard (2024)
Tinoca et al. (2022)



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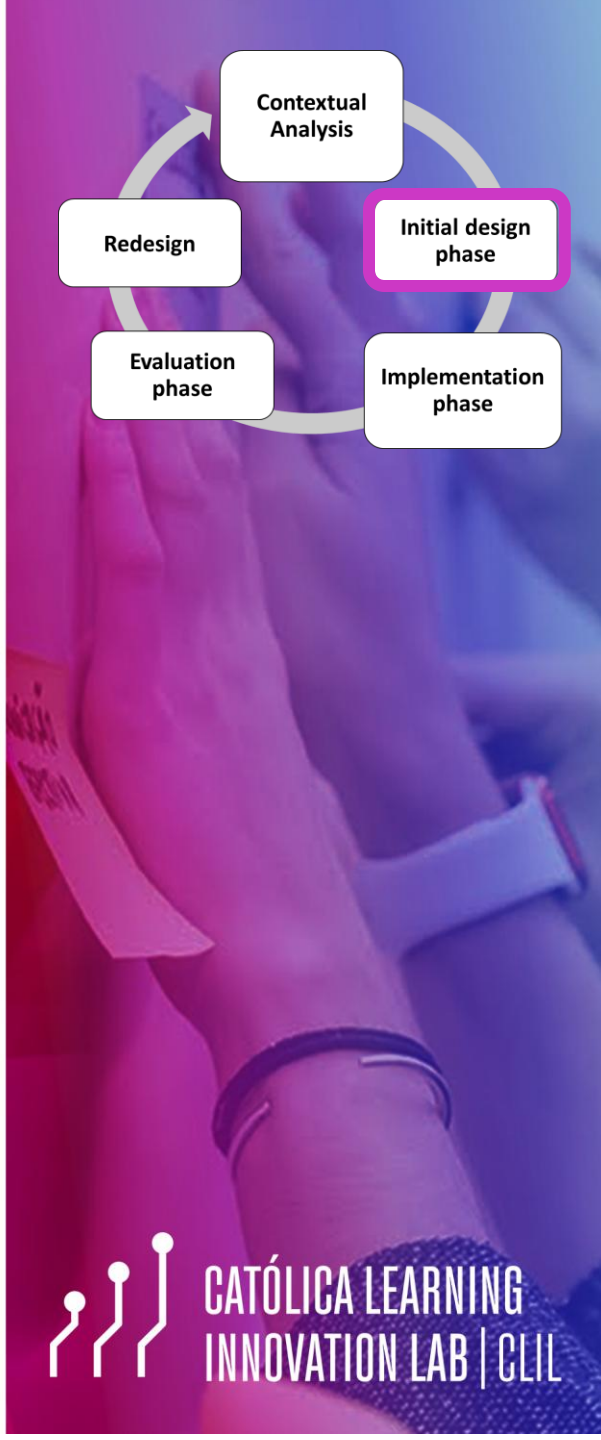
Our initial CoLP model

1st version (2023)

Ten key-features

a. **Focus:** Around clusters of thematic interests, preferentially with inquiry into classroom-based questions.
b. **Definition of themes:** Teaching methodologies or strategies assessed as priorities in a diagnostic study previously carried out in the institution (authors, 2024) and through the participation of faculty members in other training activities promoted at the HEI (e.g., workshop cycles, for instance).
c. **Group composition:** Facilitators and participants
d. **Participants:** A maximum of 10 academic staff voluntary interested in reflecting on, and possibly trying out and implementing, practices aligned with the thematic area.
e. **Facilitators:** A pair or team of facilitators with some experience in the area to be explored in the community, who could guide the work and share their knowledge and experience, in a logic of 'experienced learners'.
f. **Site:** Online meetings.
g. **Life cycle of the communities:** 4 months.
h. **Frequency of meetings:** Defined by each community.
i. **Duration of meetings:** Defined by each community.
j. **CoLP dynamics:** Defined by each community.



Implementation

1st version (2023)

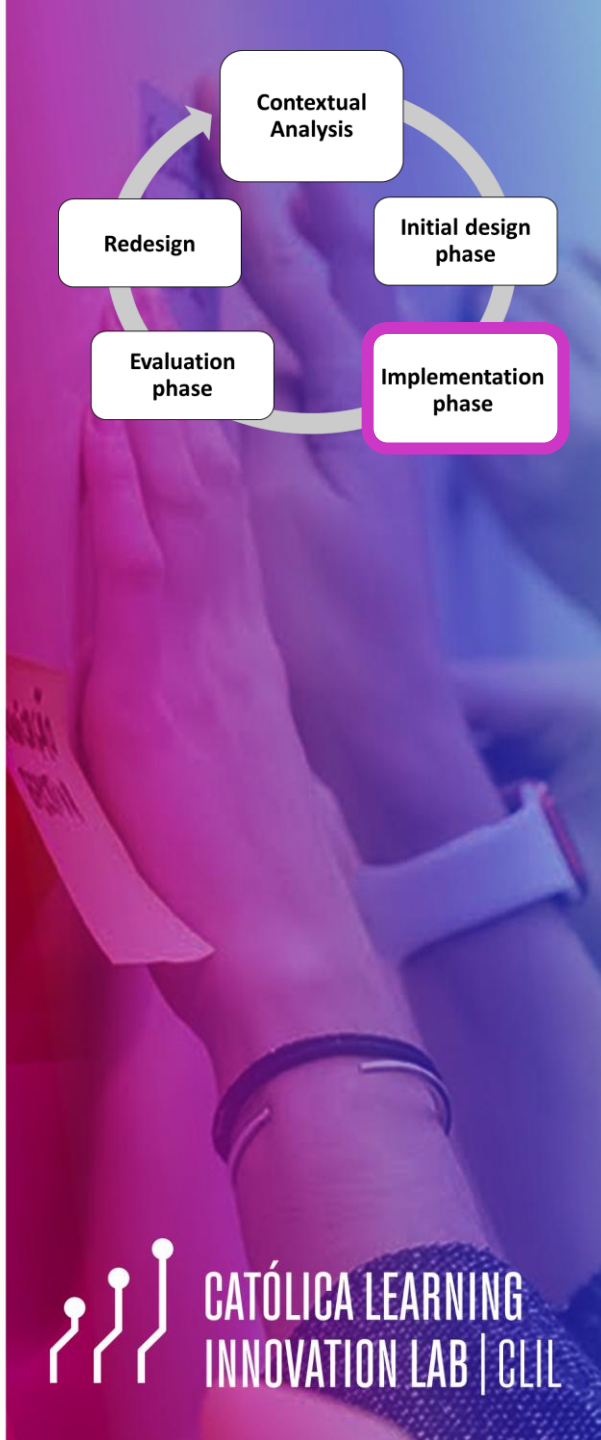
5

Five communities were proposed: Learning through Digital; Problem and Project Based Learning; Peer Learning; Service-Learning; and Transversal Pedagogical Training.

Interdisciplinary communities: 18 facilitators + 34 participants from different departments and campuses

A facilitation team accompanies each CoLP supporting the creation of an environment of knowledge exchange between everyone involved

From March until the end of June 2023, each CoLP established its own frequency, duration and dynamics of meetings.



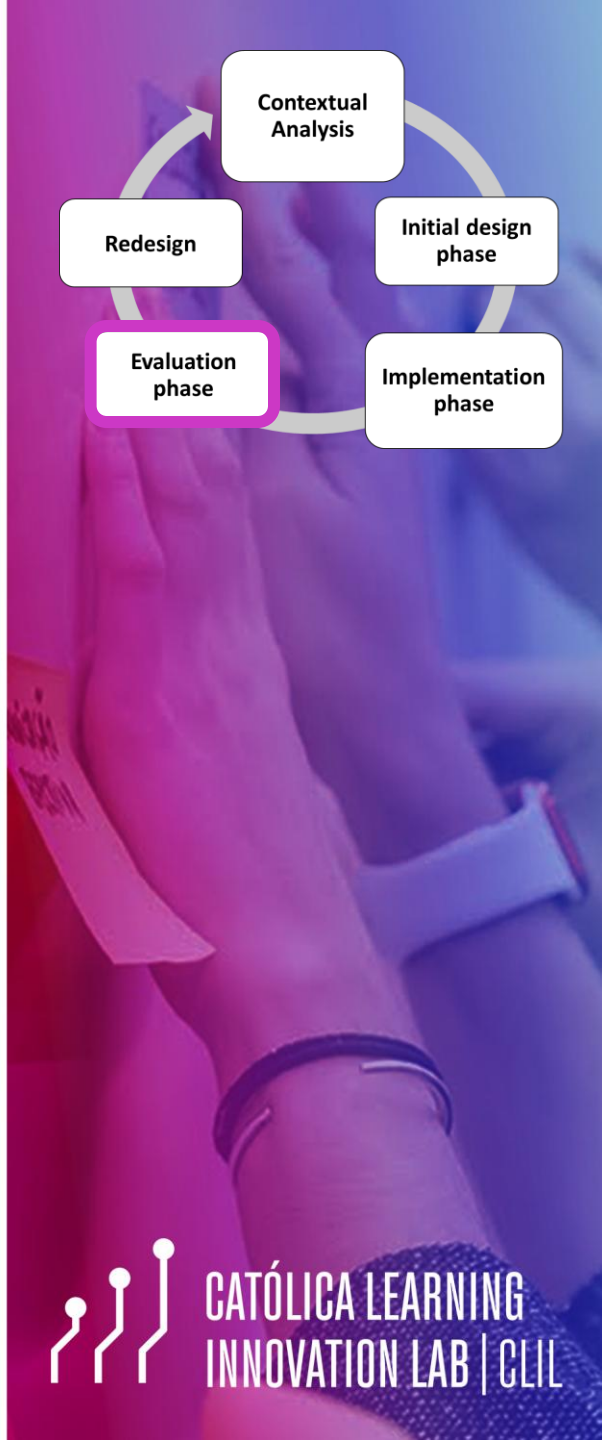
Evaluation – Final Questionnaire

Global satisfaction – M = 5.61 | SD = 2.08 (7-point Likert scale)

Personal involvement of the participants . M = 4,61 | SD = 1,82

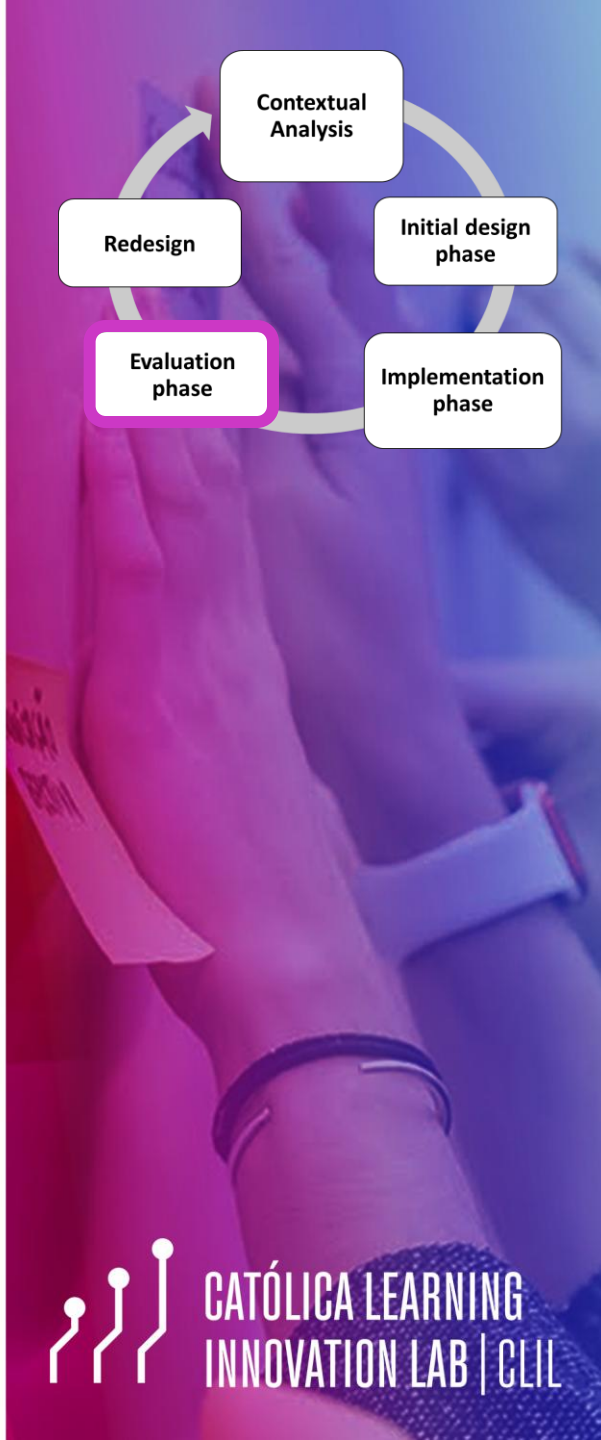
Dynamics of the CoLP – M = 5,39 | SD = 1,77

Skills promoted – M = 5,38 | SD = 1,68



Evaluation – Focus groups

Themes	Level 2 - Categories	Level 1 – subcategories
Reasons to join (41)	Seeking pedagogical training (15)	Recognising the importance of continuous training (9)
		Feeling the need for innovation (6)
	Seeking new learning experiences (26)	Peer learning (10)
		Learn more about the thematic focus (16)
Highlights (73)	Interactions (67)	The organisation and dynamics of the meetings (19)
		Exchanging Experiences (48)
	Resources (6)	Tools and/or strategies explored (3)
		Materials provided (3)
Barriers (89)	Organisational issues (50)	Lack of a structure (25)
		Difficulty in implementing community dynamics (17)
		Difficulty in maintaining regular sessions (4)
		Need for more hands-on time (4)
	Time Issues (28)	Lack of time in general (10)
		Timing of the CoLP (7)
		Life cycle length (11)
	Institutional issues (11)	Need of leadership support (6)
		Need of institutional articulation (3)
		Need to raise awareness among students (2)
Outcomes (26)	Learning outcomes (12)	Knowledge about transposing 'x' into practice (10)
		Theoretical knowledge about 'x' (2)
	Impact on teaching practices (14)	Intention of reformulating future practices (7)
		Interest in developing research on teaching practice (7)



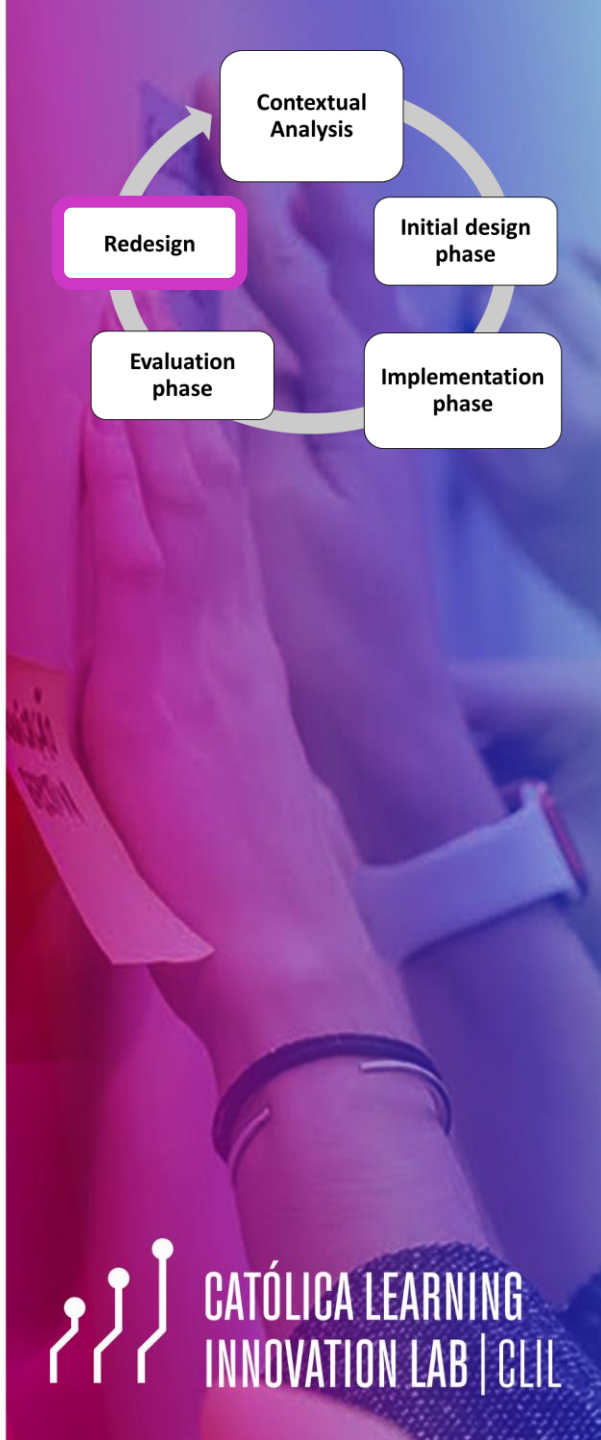
The Final CoLP Model » CLIL + U

(on going - 2024)

NEW:

Introduction of a CoLP global structure

. 5 pre-established (yet flexible) interconnected phases that are at the heart of community dynamics



The Final CoLP Model » CLIL + U

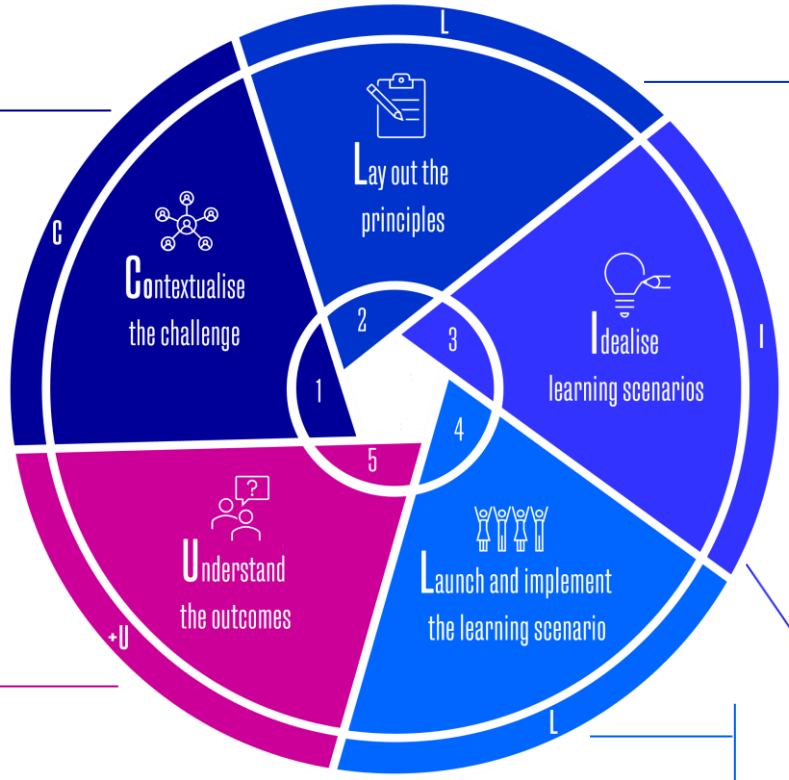
(on going - 2024)

C | Contextualise the challenge

Aim: To define each participant approach to the CAP theme and characterise the pedagogical challenge (related to the CAP theme) that they identify in their practice.

U | Understand the outcomes

Aim: To reflect on their experiences during the implementation of the learning scenarios and get an in-depth understanding of their results.



L | Launch and Implement the Learning Scenario

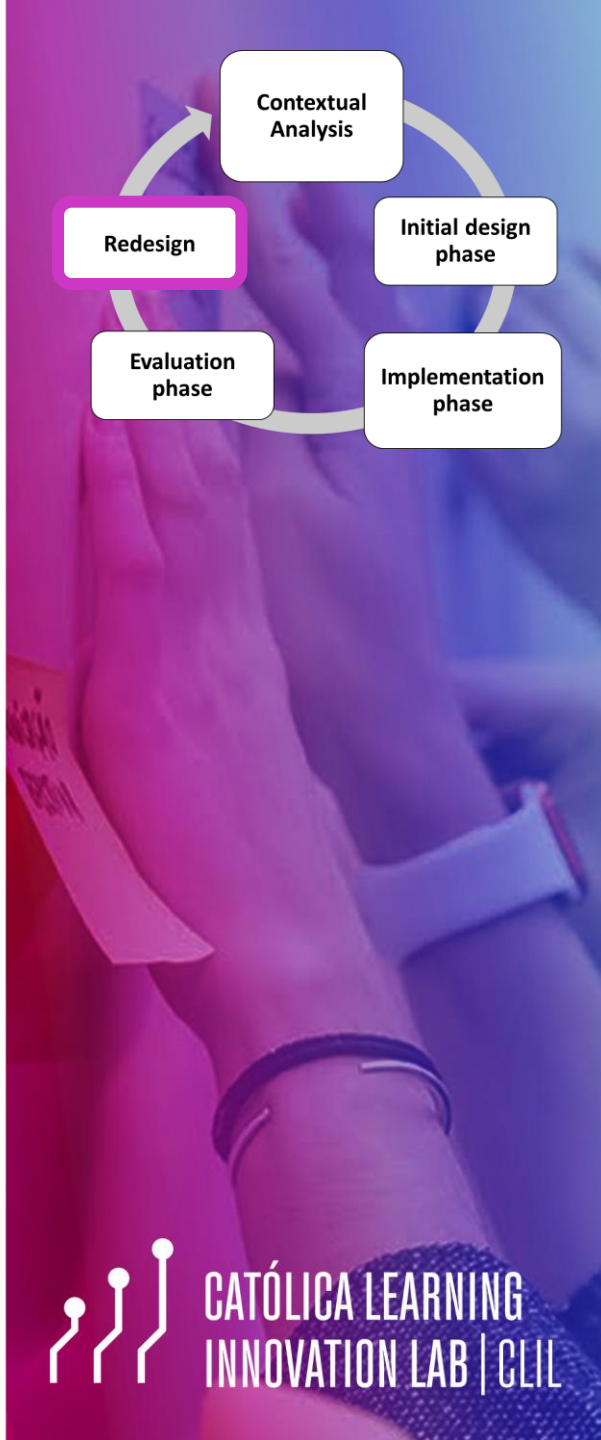
Aim: To implement the learning scenarios developed and share their experiences with other participants.

L | Lay out the principles

Aim: To define the priorities for tackling the challenge, as well as the central aspects to be taken into account when developing new (or renewed) learning scenarios.

I | Idealise Learning Scenarios

Aim: To develop new (or renewed) learning scenarios.



The Final CoLP Model » CLIL + U

4 CoLP are being implemented following this model;

CoLP are being monitored through a research protocol;

The implementation study of the model is in progress;

Data collection regarding teacher agency indicators (both for participants and facilitators)

Are our CoLP enhancing teacher agency?

Nilsen, P., & Birken, S. A. (Eds.). (2020). *Handbook on implementation science*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

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Final remarks

The existence of institutional structures and mechanisms that promote a culture of teacher agency represents a pivotal incentive to raise awareness of the role of teachers in fostering adaptability and responsiveness in higher education.

Peer collaboration boosts teachers' reflexivity about their own practice, strengthening the sense of commitment and deepening the shared reflections among peers.

Strengthening the paradigm of students as partners is fundamental to consolidating the development of teacher agency.

? How can institutional structures and mechanisms promote professional development to mobilise and prepare teachers for the adaptability in HEI?

? What do teachers learn in the context of collaborative peer learning? And to what extent the lessons learned reframe their practices?

? Considering the teacher agency approach, how to promote the students' partnership in teacher professional development?

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UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Católica Learning Innovation Lab (CLIL)

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

Rua Diogo Botelho, 1327

4169 - 005 Porto | Portugal

E-Mail: clil@ucp.pt

Website: www.ucp.pt/clil