Intellectual Output 4 - Pilot Reports

SHIFTING FOCUS AND EMBRACING OUR INCLUSIVE DIGITAL CONNECTION | TREVENQUE I.E.S

The progamme is a partnership of the following organisations:

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Cramars società cooperative sociale, Tolmezzo, Italy

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Project Information

Information on the project is available at the project website:

https://www.diversitycapacities.eu//

EU Disclaimer

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Pilot Report: I.E.S TREVENQUE

The Organisation

The image below is of I.E.S Trevenque with the gates closed. The school remained closed from March until July in 2020. This complicated the piloting of the project. The process shifted from a top-down approach to a bottom up where direct contact was made with teachers and students to carry out the piloting with them. For many of the students and the teachers this was the first online piloting that they have ever taken part in.

Illustration 1: Trevenque closed for Covid © Miguel Sarrión

Illustration 2: Working Online © Andrew Sweeney

1. General description I.E.S Trevenque

I.E.S Trevenque is a public school which offers the following courses to students for the local area and beyond. The centre offers E.S.O which is the obligatory education cycle and it also offers F.P.B (which is the lowest level of V.E.T training), Bachillerato, F.P medio y F.P superior. E.S.O as stated above is obligatory until the age of 16. The course that follows E.S.O is Bachillerato and this gives the student different options or branches of education to specialise in before they continue onto third level education. Running parallel to E.S.O is the F.P.B which is vocational training usually in the trades such as plumbing, carpentry, electrician and so on. This education is aimed towards students who have not had academic success and would prefer to prepare themselves for the labour market sooner.

The school has the capacity for 749 students and has 61 teachers.

The centre offers course to students of all different abilities and needs. The centre prepares students for further third level education but also offers more professional based learning which is connected to the job market and subjects which teach students the skills in certain professions.

There are three cycles which are basic F.P (F.P.B) which would be the equivalent to E.S.O level of qualification and then transition F.P (F.P.M) which is below a Bachillerato but would allow students to access higher level courses upon completion and upper F.P (F.P.S) which allows students to access third level courses and it is the equivalent of the Bachillerato/selectividad end of secondary schooling exam and title.

The educational project as determined by both regional and national educational legislation constitutes the hallmarks of the centre and expresses the education they are developing. It contemplates the values, objectives, and priorities of action, not only limited to curricular aspects, but also to those that, from a cultural point of view, make the centre a dynamic element of the area where it is located.

The educational project defines the objectives that the centre intends to achieve, based on its reality and taking as reference the Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, and Law 17/2007, of December 10, on the principles that guide each one of the educational stages that are taught in the centre and the corresponding prescriptions about the curriculum.

The teachers in the school must adhere to both regional and national law and legislation regarding supporting their pupils. There are guidelines for the teachers to follow. The teacher must carry out an initial evaluation and find out if there are students who might need extra help. They can make adaptations to their planning and if the student to teacher ratio is sufficient, they can also ask for external help from social security or care workers.

The school will provide a language adaptation course for those migrants who have not yet mastered the language in which the subjects are being taught.

Importance of the creation of a safe and comfortable space for the interviewee to improve the level of sincerity and honesty in the feedback

2. Diversity and language for I.E.S Trevenque

During the first phase of the project, a case study was conducted to analyse the status of diversity orientation in the school. The process started with individual interviews with all levels of staff from administration to upper management. The interviews were designed to allow the interviewee to feel comfortable and able to express their views clearly and without any fear of offending their colleagues or those in charge of the organisation. These interview techniques were practiced during one of the Transnational Project Meetings for DivCap.

2.1. Key findings from the case study

The findings of the case study show, that there is not a focus on migrants or refugees. According to the head of department, they only view diversity as an issue in academic performance. Ethnicity or background is not a factor that is considered in the enrolment process in this centre.

The attention to diversity is focused on academic performance. The task of attention to diversity is covered in both national and regional legislation. As the school is publicly funded, it must adhere to the national and regional legislation regarding diversity in the classroom.

Each teacher must carry out an initial evaluation, in which they could adapt their own curriculum and/or ask for help from social services. The availability of these services will depend directly on the ratio of students to teacher and secondly if the school is fully public, which it is in this case.

The spoken language at the school is Spanish. Most of the teachers are monolingual. The centre has been deemed a bilingual school in theory. The bilingual status of public schools is somewhat controversial topic. The Andalusian government decided to give the status of bilingualism to many centres that were and are still not able or prepared to give classes through a foreign language such as French, English or German.

The key findings from the case studied highlighted further issues that management agreed needed to be addressed.

In practice this is not the case. Even the English classes are conducted partly in Spanish. There is special room for linguistic adaptation for students who do not have a command over the Spanish language. These courses for linguistic adaptation are protected by and provided by the national and regional legislation for public education. In the public system, there is an allowance for these courses given to each centre and the amount of funding received is related to the ratio of foreign nationals to local residents who could attend.

The Trevenque school is located 10 kms from the city centre and so the issue of ethnic diversity and migration is not a dominant social issue. With regards to diversity, the accessibility of the centre needs to be improved. The centre is not wheelchair friendly.

Impressions from the staff interviewed in the case study were serious and direct. The management would like to implement change and make the centre more accessible for all students, but is constrained by the local authorities. Another important finding is the lack of diversity in terms of staffing. There is only one foreign national working at the centre and after interviews with management some key reasons for this were highlighted. Job vacancies are only offered through the competitive state exam system "opposiciones".

Only after passing this exam one can work at this school. This means that the level of diversity among staff is restricted to age and socio-economic background.

The age profile of the centre averages 40s and upwards. This is even more prevalent now with COVID-19 and the need for digital competences and telematic teaching. The age profile would certainly help with the transition to digital media and teaching methods and eventually when a level of normalcy returns that this important tool of the modern age and the modern workplace is not discarded for more traditional methods.

3. Adapting to Covid and change of paradigms

3.1. From top-down to bottom up approach

Everything was going to plan and then the outbreak of Covid-19 changed the dynamic of how we were going to work with the centre. The managers who had committed to collaborating on the project had been infected with Covid-19 and the replacement also had Covid.

This left us with senior management trying to conduct a piloting in the centre which proved to be difficult. After numerous phone calls, emails and skype sessions, the decision was made to directly contact the teachers themselves as the help from management was not forthcoming due to illness.

The Covid situation completely changed the working relationship with the Trevenque centre. It left us with no other option then to get in contact directly with the teachers there in the centre. The level of uptake was not high due to many teachers being completely overwhelmed with the situation and not willing to make a commitment with us. Teachers who did collaborate had the support and backing of F.D.O staff members via online zoom meetings.

Changing the approach to a bottom-up approach instead of top-down. We worked directly with staff and students instead. After the trainers and teachers had done the piloting with the students, an open forum was held to allow for honest and open conversation about diversity.

This was a change from the original idea of top-down approach. We had planned to collaborate with management to organise the teachers, trainers and students and we found that this option was no longer viable. The new approach was to directly contact the teachers and trainers themselves and try to convince them to collaborate with us on the project.

3.2 Conducting socially distanced piloting with the teachers

The focus on the piloting was changed from manager led to teacher led. This change was forced due to Covid illness. This change was difficult, but we were able to find another way to complete the task set by the project. Direct contact was made with teaching staff, and they were provided the material that had been created by the project plus a user guide and evaluation questions for the post sessions. Online workshops were held with the willing teachers to help them orientate themselves within the material of the project.

The piloting took place over various weeks in December 2020 and January 2021. Both online workshops and face to face meeting were organised when possible as to help orientate the teachers and trainers willing to collaborate on the project. Online assistance was offered to the teachers who had accepted to carry out the piloting with their classes and when any problems arose, they were quickly resolved via email, WhatsApp or video call.

This helped those teachers and trainers work with students on the material created by the project. Face to face meeting also took place when and where possible and abided by Covid protocols.

3.3. Piloting workshops and online connectivity with students

The students who participated in the piloting were social care students they were given the option of participating. The student profile was young adult between 18-25 finishing their diploma in health care and assisted living course. Diversity management is extremely relevant to the students as they will work with marginalized communities, migrants, and people with disabilities. They were doing a module on IT management and the use ICT in centers and so this online piloting was extra relevant to them and what they were covering before starting the piloting.

Reflecting about diversity

The aim of the piloting was to guide the participants through the curriculum "Applied Diversity Workshops (ADA)" and create a feedback link with them on the material covered. In the ADA Workshop theoretical approaches to diversity are covered. Furthermore, through exercises and "diversity walks" (walks in a neighborhood with a subsequent reflection session), personal experiences regarding diversity are explored.

The original idea was to have face to face workshops and seminars and even to have a diversity walk through La Zubia to connect the students with the project and the main aims and goals that it has.

Due to Covid that was not possible, so as mentioned above the aim shifted to conducting an online piloting with them working on the curriculum "Applied Diversity Workshops". Teachers had multiple sessions with the curriculum and the students engaged in debate after each session.

Learning from international examples

The case studies in adult education centers in the other DivCap partner countries where also discussed and debated, and this helped to add an international dimension to the piloting experience for the participants. The students had various sessions on the case studies from the other partners of the consortium. After each session, the teacher responsible for the class would lead a guided debated. The students worked through the material of the DivCap website and went into the case studies. They provided their feedback on the case studies and had online meetings with their teachers to discuss the content and how it was expressed. The students were asked to give their general feedback through google forms at the end of the piloting.

Students reviewed the case studies and debates were carried out in class regarding topics such as diversity and all the different forms and ways that diversity can be expressed. The topic of diversity in southern Spain is popular and that the topic provoked some intense discussion by some of the students who participated. By in large, most of the students participating in the piloting would at least acknowledge that diversity and inclusivity are both important and fundamental concepts in creating a more fair and equal society.

The most common feedback received from the students was the need for improved I.T skills of teaching staff and students. The potential of online learning is great, but systems and training must be put in place to ensure the quality of the education provided. Online teaching is a valuable tool to improve student mobility and allow for the teaching process to continue even in times of an international pandemic. The students expressed both their own doubts about their IT skills and especially about the skills of some of their teachers. The need for IT training for new teachers was highlighted by students.

Students were recommended to use emails to communicate with their trainers and members of the project team to resolve any doubts that arose; this was done in a forum. There were many students who were interested in presential workshops but unfortunately during the time dedicated to the workshops, that was not permitted.

4. Adapting to circumstances

Working with I.E.S Trevenque was a difficult experience. The global pandemic played a massive role in how the centre worked with the project and the level of commitment on the part of the management who had given their word on a full and fruitful collaboration in the project. Finding another solution was of utmost priority. Dealing with teachers and trainers was time consuming and difficult to get a solid commitment from the teachers and trainers. Thanks to many emails, phone calls and favours asked, F.D.O was able to get a group of teachers to collaborate.

The teachers took time during a stressful and intense period to carry out an online piloting with an external project. They had no obligation to do so and did it with enthusiasm and the yearning to become better professionals and engage with their students in a forum that many of them were not used to or did not feel confident about. This allowed for a good practice to come to light which was the honest and open dialogue between teachers and students about how, where and with what means the teaching process can take place and how it can be improved. The pandemic caused many teachers to get out of their comfort zone and a sign of a professional is not too shy away from the challenge and instead take it on and learn and improve your skills through the process.

4.1 Recommendations for educational staff

Firstly, it is important to thank the staff at I.E.S Trevenque for their collaboration and help in such difficult times. Without their help and commitment all the previous work and case studies done would have been in vain.

Important techniques for the creation of a safe and comfortable space for the interviewee were highlighted as it would eventually help to improve the level of sincerity and honesty in the feedback that would be collected through the interview process.

The interviews were held on different days and the whole process took various months as there were follow up interviews with staff that had already give feedback on certain topics.

They were given lists of recommendations developed during the case study and possible improvements from upper management and then asked to discuss the viability and their personal thoughts on the measures. Having a good rapport with the interviewees was crucial to this quality and efficacy of putting new measures into motion. Having support for the process cannot be underestimated in terms of long-term success. Staff were also aware that through this platform their feedback would reach upper management through the filter of the DivCap project.

The interviews of the teaching staff proved more challenging to organise with schedules being tighter and it being problematic for them to be able to dedicate enough time to the interview process allowing for the nature of teaching in the centre. The centre has a dual system that has students working in companies and organisations during a certain number of days and then the other days receiving more theoretical material. The feedback from the teachers was mixed and reflected age groups and teaching preferences.

In general, teachers who worked with students on subjects such as social integration and socio-cultural wanted to have workshops working with diversity training and management. Other teachers were interested in the topic, however, did not wish to participate as they did not see any relevance to their own subject.

The teachers that did participate were very enthusiastic and energetic in working with the material created by the consortium.

The pilotings pointed out the need for modernization in teaching methodology. It also pointed out that students enjoying using the case studies and saw a practical application for them. Having a clear and relatable example of something in a practical setting, really helps to clarify and make theoretical material easier to digest and understand.

"This is a very interesting project and I wish that more of my colleagues would have participated in it"
José Joaquin – I.T Teacher I.E.S Trevenque
"It is important now more than ever to promote and encourage online learning and through that diversify how we as students have access to our education"
Anonymous student I.E.S Trevenque

The management clearly need to work on how they communicate and how they delegate their workload.

4.2 Recommendations for managers

The need for delegation is particularly important. The need for simple communication is also. The communication broke down due to one of the managers becoming sick with Covid. That leads to the first point, the need for delegation and effective communication to pass along the information of any responsibilities to those who will be covering for the person out sick.

5. Good practices

5.1. Build rapport with students and teachers online

Not having the opportunity to meet teachers and students face to face made the task of building a rapport and connection with them more complicated. During the first calls there were a few quick ice breaker games to get everyone on the call involved and have themselves present briefly with their names and one adjective to describe themselves that starts with the first letter of their names. The other students are then asked to recall the adjective and name of the student. With the groups for the piloting the game was not necessary, as the students were familiar with everyone, but it was a good opportunity to get everyone involved and motivated for the next task.

5.2. Teamwork with instant feedback and evaluation

During the many sessions there was a section dedicated to teamworking with the different sections of the material covered, such as the case studies. Each team would be assigned a case study and given fifteen minutes to read, analyse and summarise. This required the groups to delegate between themselves the material that they must work with. At the end of the time allowed the team would be asked for a concise summary and most important lessons to be taken out of the study.

When a team where unable to do so they were asked why? If they answered by saying that they did not have time they were immediately asked "did you communicate with your partners about how to divide the task amongst you?". The point is to highlight good communication as a fundamental basis for dealing with work- and work-related issues. Many parts of the curriculum were done in a similar way and the students gave positive feedback for the process.

5.3. Evaluation questions for the post session

The following were the evaluation questions for the post session, and the summary of the answers given by the students:

Key code of colours for the pie charts:

Level of agreement
Blue: Completely agree
Red: Strongly agree
Yellow: Agree
Green: Do not agree
Purple: Completely disagree

1. Do you think the methodology and case studies are useful and that they can be interesting and useful to help with diversity in the field of work and / or study?

1. ¿Crees que sirve la metodología y los estudios de casos y que pueden ser interesantes y útiles para ayudar con la diversidad en el ámbito de trabajo y/o estudio?
23 responses

- 🔵 Muchísimo
- 🔴 Mucho
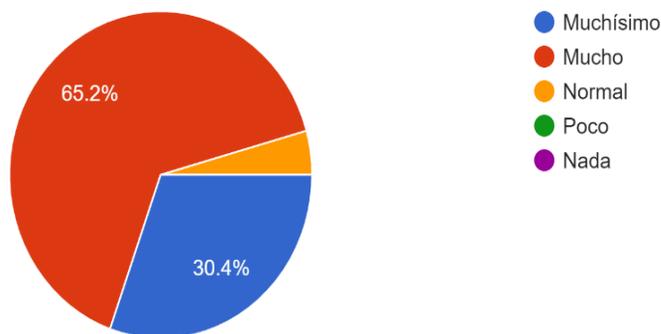- 🟠 Normal
- 🟢 Poco
- 🟣 Nada

65.2%

30.4%

Illustration 3: Analysis of question 1

2. Is there enough information in the "methodology" section and is it easy to understand?

2. ¿En el apartado de "metodología" hay suficiente información y es fácil de entender?
23 responses

- Muchísimo
- Mucho
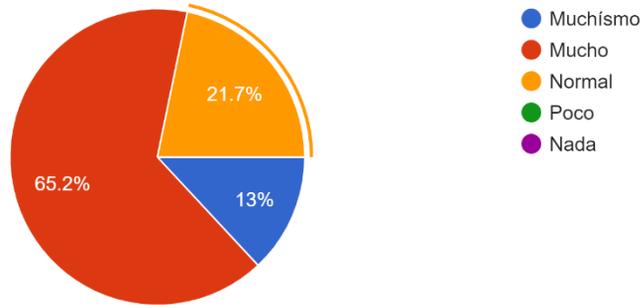- Normal
- Poco
- Nada

21.7%
65.2%
13%

Illustration 4: Analysis of question 2

Do you think it is beneficial to compare good practices and case studies at the European level?

3. ¿Crees que es beneficioso comparar buenas practicas y estudios de casos al nivel europeo?
23 responses

- Muchísimo
- Mucho
- Normal
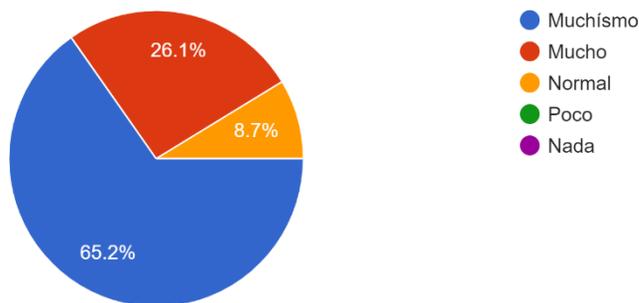- Poco
- Nada

26.1%
8.7%
65.2%

Illustration 5: Analysis of question 3

4. Do you think that the case studies could be applied in different settings and places?

4. ¿Crees que los casos de estudios se podrían aplicar en diferentes ámbitos y sitios?
22 responses

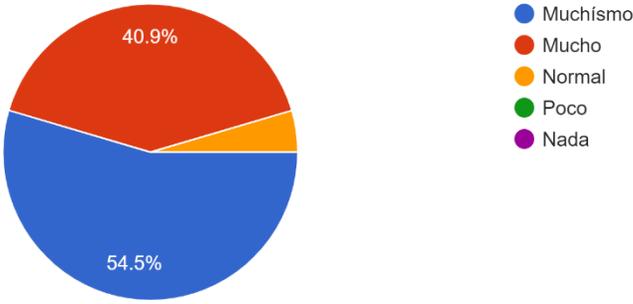- Muchísmo
- Mucho
- Normal
- Poco
- Nada

40.9%

54.5%

Illustration 6: Analysis of question 4

5. Do you think that in your institution there is diversity in this regard, teachers and students?

5. ¿Crees que en vuestro institución hay diversidad al respecto profesorado y alumnado?
23 responses

- Muchísmo
- Mucho
- Normal
- Poco
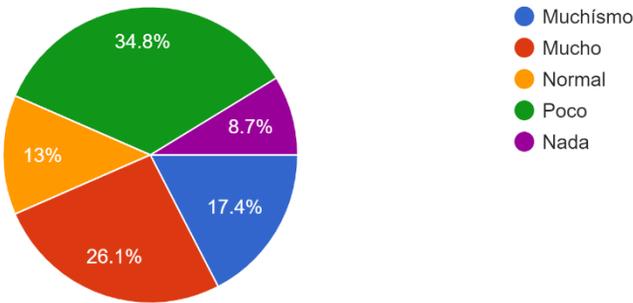- Nada

34.8%

8.7%

13%

17.4%

26.1%

Illustration 7: Analysis of question 5

6. Do you have any emergence or improvement that could be made to the information presented on the website?

6. ¿Tienes algún surgencia o mejoría que se podría hacer a la información presentado en la página web?
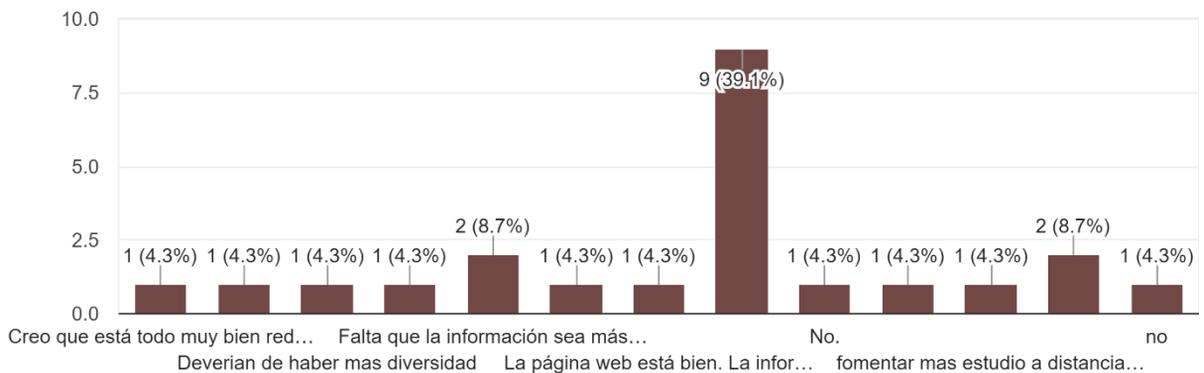
23 responses

Illustration 8: Analysis of question 6

The comments can be summarised into the following themes:

- The curriculum and case studies were well designed and described
"I think everything is very well written and I see that nothing is missing."
- Lack of diversity in the center
"There should be more diversity"
- Suggestion of how to improve the content.
The information needs to be more visual and exemplified.
- Layout and accessibility are good.
The website is fine. The information is clear.
encourage more study at a distance and online

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DivCaP

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