PROMOTING INCLUSION TO COMBAT EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING PICESL

Overview of the project

The PICESL project aims to bring together teachers and researchers to address the issues of early school leaving in Europe. Despite setting the goal of less than 10% school leavers by 2020, the EU still has many countries which exceed this percentage. PICESL aims to address the socio-emotional aspect of students experience a school by ensuring each students'difference and diversity is catered for and that they view school as a 'safe' place.

The specific objectives of the project are to:
1) Map and provide a selection of effective intercultural/inclusive education practices carried out in the EU that to combat early school leaving of students at risk of social exclusion.
2) Develop, test and propose a system of indicators to identify effective intercultural/inclusive practices.
3) Design and implement a systematic teacher training programme that enables teachers to employ and further develop these intercultural/inclusive practices.
4) Disseminate a set of effective intercultural/educational practices in schools across Europe, as well the system of indicators so that teachers can diagnose their own practices; sharing these indicators with international institutions and Ministries of Education.

The project will run over two years and researchers and teachers will work together on all stages of the project. Already a literature review on determinants of ESL and prevention mechanisms has been developed and the teachers have shared their current practices with researchers. As we move on to work on a list of best practice, indicators will be developed and as we move into the second year of the project, work on the teacher training will commence.

Both researchers, but particularly teachers have had dynamic changes to their work lives by the Covid-19 situation and are incorporating learnings about moving to distance-learning for children into their project work.

PICESL
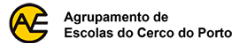
Many refugees have no shelter.

This picture is from a primary school student involved in the project who has been researching refugee experiences during the pandemic

PICESL Project hosts our second meeting on-line !

The PICESL project is well underway as our vibrant meeting held on-line on the 15th of May demonstrated. Through sharing experiences of the school closures beforehand and during the meeting we learned some of the issues at stake in this Covid-19 period. More importantly we heard from all the teachers how heart-warmed they felt at reading and hearing other teachers' testimony of their experience during these challenging times. All of a sudden, coming together to work on this issue of early school leaving seems ever more important than ever. Top messages we heard about from the teachers include: 1) Transmitting calm and offering a space and communication channel for students to talk about the challenges of being at home in these times.

2) Providing devices and internet connections to students.

3) Slowing down - taking time to choose a singular communication method and not expecting students or families to be constantly accessing different tools (remembering that families often have more than one child!) and

PICESL

PICELS is an Erasmus+ project that aims to promote intercultural learning for student engagement with the ultimate goal of decreasing early school leaving. Our innovation is that we bring together teachers and researchers on an equal footing to create materials which empower teachers to analyse their current practice and integrate new ones.

Top messages we heard from our teachers [during our first meeting] include:

1) Transmitting calm and offering a space and communication channel for students to talk about the challenges of being at home in these times.
2) Providing devices and internet connections to students.
3) Slow down and take time to choose a singular communication method (remember that families often have more than one child!)
4) Linking the curriculum to our current situation - in one school where elementary children were doing a project on refugees, they began to look more about the specific vulnerabilities this group are experiencing now.

4) Linking the curriculum to our current situation - in one school where elementary children were doing a project on refugees, they began to look more about the specific vulnerabilities this group are experiencing now.

The meeting was a great opportunity for our researchers to present a review of the current academic understanding of both the determinants and current practice in the prevention of early school leaving in intercultural contexts. Dr. Martha Montero-Sieburth Amsterdam University College, DomizianaTurcatti (Dphil candidate at Oxford University and Rabiya Chaudry MSc student at the Unviersity of Amsterdam dug deep into this topic and showed how the literature echoed the practical experience of teachers. Practice was divided into institutional practice, instructional practice and interpersonal practice.

We saw in line with our teachers' experience above that socio-emotional learning is an essential instructional practice to foster students resilience echoing our teachers efforts to open and keep open channels of communication for students to integrate their experiences of the school closures (echoing top message 1). Another instructional practice : the ability to shape the curriculum around students and families identities and interests, which corresponds with our teachers current practice of linking curriculum with students current understanding and experience of the pandemic was offered as another tool to keep students engaged (echoing top message 4). Fostering relationships between parents and school was offered as an interpersonal practice, which our teachers are already engaging in by empathising and taking feedback from parents in order to provide a simple communication method for work to be done at home during the school closures (echoing top message 3) Finally, we saw that under institutional practice, the need to "Provide students with the means to be successful, which includes closing the digital divide so that they can effectively perform." has been taken seriously by the teachers and schools in our team already (echoing top message 2).

The natural fit between presentations of teachers and researchers sowed the seeds for what will become some truly inclusive building of positive practices in the field of inclusive education. We look forward to working together and sharing our experiences with you!

PICESL

A brief Interview with our Project Director Rosa Rodríguez-Izquierdo Professor at the Department of Education and Social Psychology of the Universidad
Pablo Olavide Sevilla and leader of the project

1) Tell us what led you to develop this project? *There are several reasons First, I believe in the internationalization of education. I promote a multitude of Erasmus + agreements so that my students can move around Europe and I have carried out a number of Erasmus + stays. Second is that Erasmus + Ka201 allows for the building of "communities of practice" among teachers, researchers and NGO professionals. Finally, we need European cooperation to give meaningful answers to the issues that affect us today.*
2) What excites you most about the project? *School dropout has become a huge problem that fundamentally affects students from the most disadvantaged sectors. I am a believer in the crucial role of the school. Teachers are very creative professionals and collaborating together with other professionals we can create proposals for innovation that, at least, alleviate this enormous challenge.*
3) What are your thoughts about the Covid-19 situation occurring during the project time-frame? In particular, do you think we will learn more or less and why? *Everything indicates that the most vulnerable sectors are the ones that will be most affected. Educational inequalities have always worried me and now we have another opportunity to move schools forward towards greater equity. I am a rational optimist and I hope we learn that less is more. We do not need more decontextualized content but more situated practices. Learning moves from school to school but we need to advocate for it to be transferred to all schools. Especially those found in poorer areas.*
 4) Any last thoughts you wish to share? *This project is a growth opportunity for all partners. I hope that it will also bear fruit for other schools that do not participate directly. I believe that the school needs to change and that we make it possible for all of us to change. I thank SEPIE (Spanish agency Erasmus +) for the opportunity to collaborate and learn together creating value for school improvement in an issue as relevant as early school leaving.*

To stay tuned to developments check out

our website
https://www.upo.es/picsel
our twitter
@picelserasmus
on facebook
https://www.facebook.com/siriuspolicynetwork