



European labour mobility-led Career and Service-Learning System in Higher Education

Toolkit Guidance for HEI Educators on Career Development through CSL Practices

Project Number: 2024-1-SI01-KA220-HED-000252281

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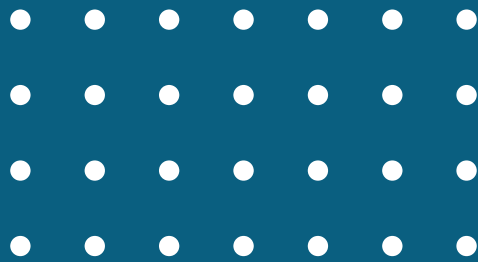


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Structure of the chapter



From concept to pedagogy and finally to curriculum implementation

What this chapter covers



What is CSL? Defining Career Service-Learning.



Theoretical foundations: experiential learning, reflection, design thinking, agile and adaptive learning.



Models for including CSL in the HE curriculum: integration, project-based, community-based.

Guiding logic



The chapter moves from concept to pedagogy and finally to curriculum implementation.



Each model is presented with its features, competence effects and main challenge.

What is Career Service-Learning?



CSL connects academic learning with real-world service and professional experience.



Students apply academic knowledge and critical thinking to genuine community or organisational needs.



CSL combines service activity, structured reflection and career readiness development.



It supports both employability and civic responsibility.

Experiential learning as the foundation



CSL is grounded in experiential learning theory.



Learning becomes most effective when connected to direct real-world experience.

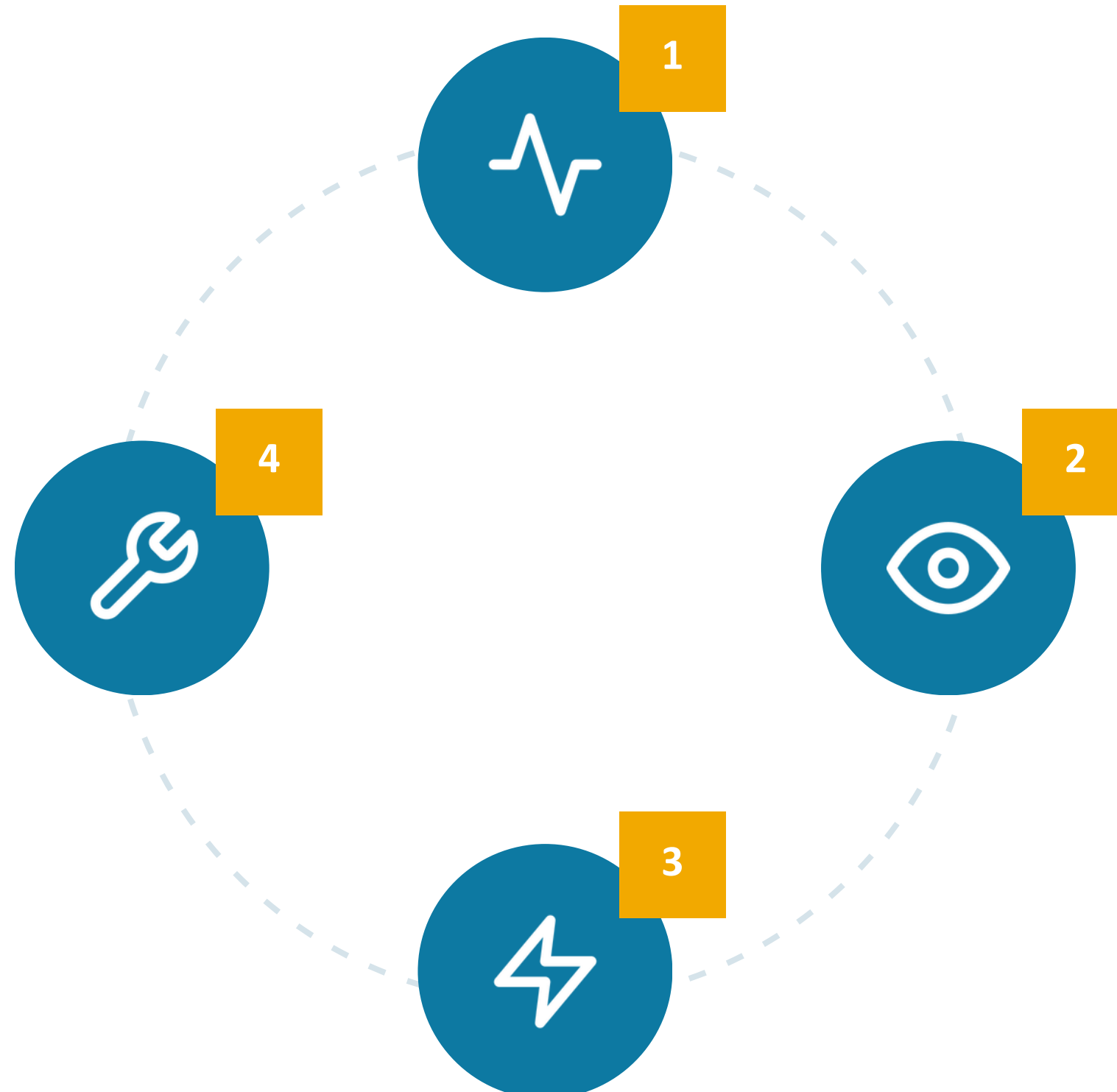


Students bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application.



Experience becomes educational when it is supported by reflection and conceptualisation.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle



1

Concrete experience

Students engage in a meaningful real-world activity.

2

Reflective observation

They reflect on what happened and why it mattered.

3

Abstract conceptualisation

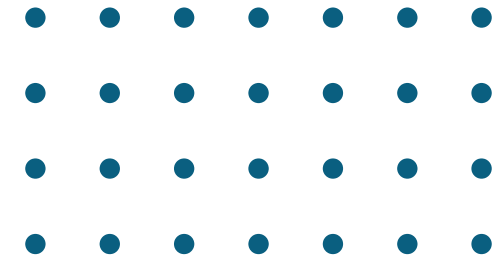
They connect the experience with academic theory.

4

Active experimentation

They test improved approaches in new situations.

Experience becomes learning through a continuous four-stage cycle.



Evolution and scope of CSL



Service learning emerged in the United States in the 1960s and expanded through the 1990s.



It has since become part of higher education systems in many countries.



CSL may be organised as short-term projects or as longer course-based activities.



It may be individual, team-based or classroom-oriented.

Career-based service learning



Combines community service with structured school- and work-based learning.



Links service experiences with career exploration and career readiness skills.



Connects projects to relevant industry, public-sector or community partners.



Helps students understand professional roles while contributing to real needs.

Benefits for students and communities



Students acquire career-related skills and knowledge.



They strengthen communication, teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking.



They develop habits and attitudes needed for career success.



They gain insight into local business, non-profit and community needs.



Communities benefit from student engagement, analysis and practical solutions.

Key theories and pedagogical approaches



Experiential learning & reflective practice

Learning through direct engagement, supported by structured reflection.



Integrated curriculum design & design thinking

Connecting academic theory with real societal and professional problems.



Agile & adaptive learning environments

Flexible, iterative and student-centred learning approaches.



Digital transformation & micro-credentialing

Digital tools and verifiable evidence of skills acquired through CSL.

Experiential learning and reflective practice



Students learn through direct engagement in real-world projects, internships or community activities.



Reflection journals, guided discussions and feedback sessions transform experience into learning.



Reflection strengthens self-awareness, decision-making and professional identity.



Experiential CSL can develop leadership, teamwork, ethical reasoning and social awareness.

Integrated curriculum design and design thinking



In CSL, design thinking helps students understand community needs and create innovative solutions.



Iterative feedback improves the relevance and sustainability of student projects.



Integrated curriculum design connects academic theories with real-world societal and professional issues.



Design thinking is human-centred and emphasises empathy, ideation, prototyping and testing.

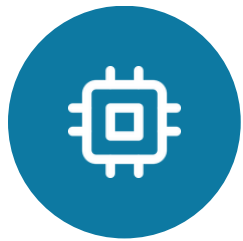
Agile and adaptive learning environments



Agile learning emphasises flexibility, collaboration, feedback and iterative improvement.



It fits CSL because real-world projects often require adjustment and problem-solving.



Adaptive learning uses technology and analytics to tailor learning to individual needs.



Together, these approaches make CSL more dynamic, responsive and student-centred.

Digital transformation and micro-credentialing



Digital tools support online, hybrid and international CSL collaboration.



Platforms such as Moodle, Canvas, Microsoft Teams, Slack or Trello can facilitate teamwork and reflection.



Digital badges and micro-credentials provide verifiable evidence of skills acquired through CSL.



Micro-credentials help bridge academic learning and professional recognition.

Models for including CSL in the HE curriculum



Model 1

Integration of CSL into the curriculum.



Model 2

Project-based CSL.



Model 3

Community-based practice.



Choosing a model

The choice depends on learning objectives, resources and partner availability.

MODEL 1

Integration into the curriculum



Service activities are mandatory parts of the course curriculum.



They are linked to learning outcomes and assessment.



Students collaborate with organisations or companies in real environments.



Reflection reports and presentations connect practice with academic theory.



Develops analytical skills, communication, problem-solving, autonomy and responsibility.

MODEL 2

Project-based CSL



Students work in interdisciplinary teams on real business or social challenges.



They analyse data, develop strategies and propose solutions for external partners.



Project results are presented and may be implemented by partner organisations.



Develops teamwork, project management, innovation and negotiation skills.



Requires coordination with partners and constructive feedback mechanisms.

MODEL 3

Community-based practice



Students collaborate directly with public-sector, municipal or non-governmental organisations.



Projects may include advisory, analytical or development activities.



Reflection focuses on social and economic impact as well as academic learning.



Develops empathy, adaptability, civic responsibility and employability.



Requires long-term partnerships and equal learning opportunities for students.

Comparative view of CSL models

Model	Key features	Competence effects	Main challenge
Model 1: Integration into curriculum	Service activity is a required, assessed part of the course	Analytical skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility	Embedding service within existing assessment
Model 2: Project-based CSL	Interdisciplinary teams solve real partner challenges	Teamwork, project management, innovation and negotiation	Partner coordination and feedback
Model 3: Community-based practice	Direct work with public, municipal or non-governmental partners	Empathy, adaptability, civic responsibility, employability	Long-term partnerships and equity

Key message



CSL is a structured pedagogical approach linking service, academic learning, reflection and career development.



It is grounded in experiential learning and strengthened by modern student-centred pedagogies.



Reflection is essential for transforming experience into knowledge and professional growth.



Successful CSL requires clear learning outcomes, meaningful partner collaboration and appropriate assessment.



CSL helps higher education prepare students as competent professionals and engaged citizens.



THANK YOU

For exploring Career Service-Learning with ELIX



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