

Facilitate transversal learning spaces

UNIVERSITY



Resources

HUMAN



TIME



COSTS



What was the intervention about?

The intervention consists of a training course on the ecosocial crisis, designed as a transversal teaching space, open to students from all backgrounds, and also to teachers, which allows for dealing with issues related to sustainability from a social science perspective, and which also allows for various activities to collect and analyse environmental data from the campus, to be debated and interpreted in accordance with the contents of the course. The training cycle consisted of five lectures, five workshops, and a final discussion session.

The topics were:

- a) Ecological crisis, environmental justice, and ecofeminism;
- b) Future scenarios for the ecosocial transition;
- c) The sustainability of the agri-food system;
- d) Global extractivism and climate migration;
- e) The sustainability of e-waste. The lectures were given by specialists in the respective topics (some from the university and others from outside). After each lecture, a workshop on the same topic was held with data from the campus.

Challenges

- » There were no particular difficulties with this intervention, beyond the work involved in organizing it (requesting permission from the university, securing two credits for students, advertising the series on campus, contacting speakers and agreeing on dates, moderating debates, coordinating workshops and parallel activities, summarizing the debates on the series' website, keeping track of students attending each session, issuing attendance certificates, etc.).
- » Otherwise, we have had significant support from various university services (rector's office, faculty dean's office, Autonomous Solidarity Foundation, sustainability office, etc.).

Sustainability competences in place in the intervention



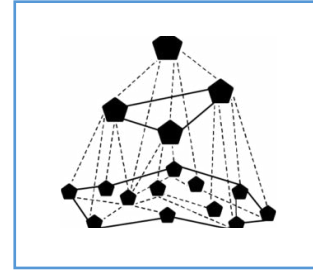
Engagement

- » The training cycle was open to students and faculty.
- » In the case of students, we persuaded the university to award 2 ECTS credits to those who completed the full cycle.
- » This was very helpful in convincing students to sign up (more than 50 signed up for each cycle, of which between 30 and 40 actively participated).
- » As for faculty, it was more difficult to involve them, although we managed to have a few professors at each conference, who actively participated in the discussions.
- » Faculty engagement seems to be more difficult because they do not feel challenged, tend to consider these topics unfamiliar to them, and rarely have time to participate.
- » The few who attended did so because they were specifically invited.



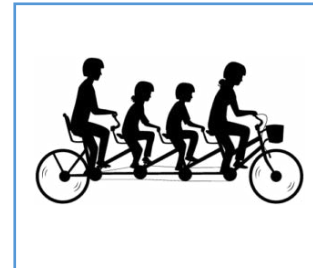
Change

- » The course has not generated immediate changes.
- » At most, it has helped some people imagine other future scenarios (in terms of ecological modernization, degrowth, etc.), and thus reduce certain attitudes of fatalism and passivity.
- » It also seems to have served to reduce some eco-anxiety among the students.
- » The participatory and deliberative design of the workshops and activities has helped achieve this.



Connections

- » Since this is a series on sustainability and climate change designed from a social science perspective, it has been very useful for all types of students.
- » According to the brief survey we conducted, science and engineering students found it very interesting because it opened their interpretive field by making them aware of the social and political consequences of technological and market decisions.
- » Furthermore, for humanities and social sciences students, the training series was also interesting in connecting their theories and concepts with environmental issues.
- » Ultimately, the intervention helped students understand how seemingly separate things are part of a single system.



Action

- » The training cycle has not led to any concrete actions, either individual or collective.
- » However, it has allowed for the establishment of a nascent network of students and professors interested in sustainability issues, which could be used in the future to demand further action from the rector's office. However, this has not yet materialised.

Analytical framework

Individual Competences

- » In this case, the students themselves responded (through the brief survey given at the end of the activity) that they had learned much knowledge that they considered useful. Ultimately, this was one of the objectives of this intervention: to provide information, data, and theories to interpret the ecosocial crisis from a constructive perspective.
- » In addition to knowledge, as the intervention included several voluntary group activities, the students also learned certain skills (calculating with the collected data, preparing presentations, organising collectively, performing group work, etc.).

Collective Competences

- » This intervention, which consisted of a training cycle aimed at students from across the campus, served to introduce teaching on sustainability and climate change (from an eco-social crisis perspective) at the university. It has been repeated twice and is expected to continue in the future with the support of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology. Furthermore, the Rector's Office is designing a future cross-curricular course on sustainability and climate change, which will be offered to students across all degrees, and this intervention served as a pilot test for how to organise it.
- » In terms of collective competencies, this intervention, in addition to a series of lectures, provided students with a participatory space in which to deliberate and participate in data collection on campus sustainability. This participatory space is unprecedented and should be taken into account.

Technical-material Competences

- » In this case, no new equipment or infrastructure was installed to improve sustainability. The only thing worth noting in this regard is that one of the groups of student volunteers participating in the cycle analysed data from air pollution sensors (PM2.5) that we distributed throughout the campus. The sensors were loaned to us by CIEMAT and were returned to them after the activity.

