# MASTER'S DISSERTATION

## CREATIVE TEACHING METHODS IN MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF A PORTUGUESE MARKETING SCHOOL

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Dissertation presented to IPAM, to fulfill the requirements needed to obtain the Master's Degree in Marketing, developed under the scientific supervision of Professor Fernando Pinto Santos, Ph.D.

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*It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.*

Mother Teresa

I am not the type of person who spreads rivers of love over someone. My way of loving is by helping, by giving. However, it seems like that I can only use words now.

I want to thank my family for supporting me at every phase of my life. Only you know how hard it is to deal with my complexities and *monster phases.* And you still choose to stay.

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I didn't use the most beautiful or precious words to thank you all.

But I can assure you they are full of my love.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses. Its purpose is to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve the students' learning experience by using creative teaching methods.

A qualitative approach was used, and an exploratory case study was conducted, which contributed to getting a deeper insight into the problem. Data were collected through document analysis, and eleven interviews were conducted with marketing higher education students of IPAM Porto, to understand (1) the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses, (2) the specific application of each method, (3) their influence on the students' learning experience, and (4) the improvement of the learning experience of students by innovating methods' application.

The findings of this study can support marketing higher education institutions and teachers understanding how the application of creative teaching methods improves the students' learning experience. Suitable and contextualized creative teaching methods that promote direct contact with the business world, adaptation to new situations, teamwork, the development of creative skills, and that are seen as a new challenge, enrich the learning experience of students. Due to this study's approach, the number of interviewees, and the fact that interviews were conducted mainly online, these findings may not be generalized.

The high demand for marketers' creative skills, as well as the lack of studies and depthless understanding of the improvement of the students' learning experience through the application of creative teaching methods, reveal the relevance of this research.

**Keywords:** teaching methods, creative teaching methods, creativity, learning experience, marketing, higher education, marketing courses

## RESUMO

Esta dissertação investiga os métodos de ensino criativos aplicados em cursos de marketing. O seu objectivo é compreender como as instituições de ensino superior de marketing podem melhorar a experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes através da utilização de métodos de ensino criativos.

Foi utilizada uma abordagem qualitativa, e foi realizado um estudo de caso exploratório, que contribuiu para obter uma visão mais profunda do problema. Foram recolhidos dados através da análise de documentos, e foram realizadas onze entrevistas a estudantes de marketing do ensino superior do IPAM Porto, a fim de (1) compreender os métodos de ensino criativos aplicados em cursos de marketing, (2) a aplicação específica de cada método, (3) a sua influência na experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes, e (4) a melhoria da experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes através da inovação da aplicação de métodos.

Os resultados deste estudo podem apoiar as instituições de ensino superior de marketing e os professores a compreender como a aplicação de métodos de ensino criativos melhora a experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes. Métodos de ensino criativos adequados e contextualizados que promovem um contacto directo com o mundo empresarial, a adaptação a novas situações, o trabalho de equipa, o desenvolvimento de competências criativas, e que são vistos como um novo desafio para os alunos, enriquecem a experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes. Devido à abordagem deste estudo, ao número de

entrevistados e ao facto de as entrevistas terem sido realizadas principalmente online, estas conclusões não podem ser generalizadas.

A elevada exigência de competências criativas de marketers, assim como a falta de estudos aprofundados acerca da melhoria da experiência de aprendizagem dos estudantes através da aplicação de métodos de ensino criativos, revelam a relevância desta investigação.

**Palavras-chave:** métodos de ensino, métodos de ensino criativos, criatividade, experiência de aprendizagem, marketing, ensino superior, cursos de marketing

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# INTRODUCTION

All humans are born with a creative instinct, which means that all have creative potential (Craft, 2005). As children, one naturally lives involved in creativity, where imagination has no limits. But as one grows, society automatically shapes the thoughts, especially when entering school, the moment when answers prevail over questions (Craft, 2005). While some people encourage the development of creativity as a skill, just like any other habit, others simply do not (Ramocki, 2014). In fact, "many of us have been taught that the best ideas are in someone else's head." (Von Oech, 1998, p. 14), so the nonbelief leads to no action.

Based on the fact everyone has creative potential, whether is more or less developed, using the right teaching method, the expansion of creative skills can be easily and properly boosted (Sirková et al., 2014). Throughout the years, several definitions of creativity emerged. In this research, creativity is taken as the activity that creates solutions that: (a) are original (Amabile, 1983; Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985) and (b) that creates value for the purpose/problem (Lunsford, 1990; Titus, 2000; Anderson, 2006).

Creativity is becoming a crucial keystone of business. Now, more than ever, it is a demanded skill for all business professionals, especially in the marketing field (McCorkle et al., 2007). Progressively, creativity is gaining more

importance in the workplace, as well as in higher education (Ramocki, 2014). In addition, "the education sector has been increasingly criticized for its failure in effectively generating creative people (and creative leaders)." (Taha et al., 2015, p. 1920).

Marketing education should be developing students' creativity skills, to contribute to their creative thinking and problem solving, and for the enrichment of marketing concepts in the classroom (Ramocki, 2014). However, although marketing students perceived themselves as creative, a study found they are no more creative than students in a different study field (McCorkle et al., 2007).

Higher education in marketing must establish a suitable learning environment and adopt new teaching strategies to improve the learning experience (Fullan, 2003). Marketing teachers must understand student's feedback regarding different teaching methods practiced in classes. Because some contribute to a more successful learning experience, engaging learners, and others to a poorly one (Celsi & Wolfinbarger, 2002).

The lack of studies and depthless understanding of the improvement of the students' learning experience when applied creative teaching methods in the marketing field (Philip & Ed, 2015), were the main reasons for this study. Therefore, it became pertinent to evaluate the creative teaching methods applied (Karns, 2005), to improve the learning experience of students in marketing

higher education institutions, in bachelor and master courses. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve students' learning experience, by using creative teaching methods.

Learning experience refers to the perception and meaning that learners attribute to the teaching strategies that occur and to the learning environment created, under the process of learning (Knowles et al., 2005). The teaching strategy refers to the way teachers make learning more exciting and effective, which includes: the teaching methods and the learning activities (NACCCE, 1999). A teaching method is the process of structuring learning, focused on the pedagogical approaches (Samfira & Fărăgău-Dragoș, 2014), and it was the focus of this study. However, the concept was explored from a creative perspective, from which emerged the creative teaching methods, characterized by the disruptive type of approaches (LeFever, 1997).

Not only the teaching method has a direct influence on the students' learning experience, but its application process also has it too (Griffiths, 2011). Consequently, it became relevant to, not only understand how the creative teaching methods are applied, but also how they are applied. To reach the purpose proposed, it is going to be analyzed the innovation on the application of these methods to improve the learning experience of students.

As a result, the research questions of this study are:

RQ#1: What are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education?

RQ#2: How are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses?

RQ#3: How do creative teaching methods influence the students' learning experience?

RQ#4: How can marketing institutions innovate the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience of students?

A qualitative research approach was considered the best option, once it is used when need to answer questions like How? or Why? (Duncan et al., 1994). Furthermore, "qualitative methods take a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behavior." (Black, 1994, p.425). The research strategy chosen is an exploratory single case study, to get an in-depth analysis of the participant's experiences (Shuttleworth, 2008). A case study of IPAM, The Marketing School, in Porto, is also chosen, due to several reasons: it is the market share leading and oldest marketing higher education institution in Portugal, offers diverse level graduated courses, and its pedagogical concept is based on the learning by doing (IPAM Porto - The Marketing School | IPAM Porto, n.d.).

The results of this research contributed to: (1) a better understanding of the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses, (2) their specific

application in marketing courses, (3) to assist marketing institutions administrators and teachers to understand the influence of creative teaching methods on the learning experience of students, and (4) how to improve the learning experience by innovating the application of creative teaching methods.

The data collection process was divided into 3 phases, and were used 2 data collection techniques, interviews, and document analysis:

- In the 1st phase, the researcher proceeded with a document analysis of the institutional official files and archives;
- In the 2nd phase, were conducted three interviews as a pilot study to assess the interview guide;
- And on the 3rd phase, were conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews to 11 students from IPAM Porto.

This research is divided into six chapters. First, it is presented the literature review, where books, articles, and other sources' issues are discussed, providing an overview of the research problem that is being investigated. Then, in the second chapter, the researcher explains what she is going to do and how (data collection techniques), letting readers evaluate the methodological approach used and its reliability (data collection and analysis). The third chapter exposes the research findings, presenting also the contributions of the study. In the fourth chapter, the discussion takes place, where results are analyzed. The fifth chapter presents the conclusions of the study. And, at last, the sixth chapter, is exposed the limitations of the research, as well as potential future research.

# 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1. LEARNING EXPERIENCE

We all have creative potential, as we all have been born with a creative instinct (Craft, 2005). Children's imagination has no limits, but as they enter school, they begin to lose it. In a study conducted regarding education, creativity, and innovation in European member states, it was found that teachers preferred students to be conformed to the knowledge presented in classes, rather than to take the risk and question it (Craft, 2005). Several teachers recognize neither accept students' creativity, as many of them consider the perfect student as the one which does his tasks and work on time and in a standard manner (not a characteristic of a creative person) (Plucker et al., 2011).

By rethinking education in this sense, the educational system transforms itself. It passes from delivering knowledge to delivering information for the students to transform it into knowledge with a useful purpose (Papaleontiou- Louca et al., 2014). To do this, higher education programs must invest in creativity and innovation, supporting the students' learning experience (Papaleontiou- Louca et al., 2014). Learning experience refers to the perception and meaning that learners attribute to the teaching strategies that occur and to the learning environment created, under the process of learning (Knowles et al., 2005).

While some people encourage the development of creativity as a skill, just like any other habit, others simply do not (Ramocki, 2014). Just like any other skill, some students have a higher level of creativity than others do, but all students have a potential creative level, which is combined with nature and nurture (Ramocki, 2014). Therefore, creativity can indeed be developed (Glassman & Opengart, 2016).

During the last part of the 20th century and in the first decade of the 21st century, creativity in education gained more awareness; it started to be used in policies, teaching strategies, and schools' curriculum (Cremin, 2015). Furthermore, different authors (e.g. Craft, 2005; Sawyer, 2006; Sternberg, 2012, etc.) proposed creativity as a significant educational goal, stating that currently in this society, the key mission of the school is to educate for creativity. (Sawyer, 2006).

Some factors have proved to enable the development of creativity in the school curriculum (Dineen et al., 2005): (1) the creation of helpful learning environments, (2) the comprehension of individual differences, (3) teaching without any rank (hierarchy or grades), (4) stimulating students' motivation and (5) providing positive feedback to improve.

Rohnke (cited in Taha et al., 2015) created a model concerning the disposition of students through the learning process, influenced by teachers' approaches (see Figure 1). It is based on three zones (Taha et al., 2015):

1. The **comfort zone** is when teachers use traditional education techniques, where students only work the current knowledge and experience and do not have enough motivation to change their approaches;

2. The **learning zone** is where teachers challenge their students, by allowing a fun and relaxed environment, in which they provide relevant lectures, stimulating students' thoughts, adding value to their existing knowledge and experience. It occurs when teachers make use of creative teaching strategies;

3. The **panic zone** is when teachers push students too much, in which they retract themselves, not achieving a successful learning experience.
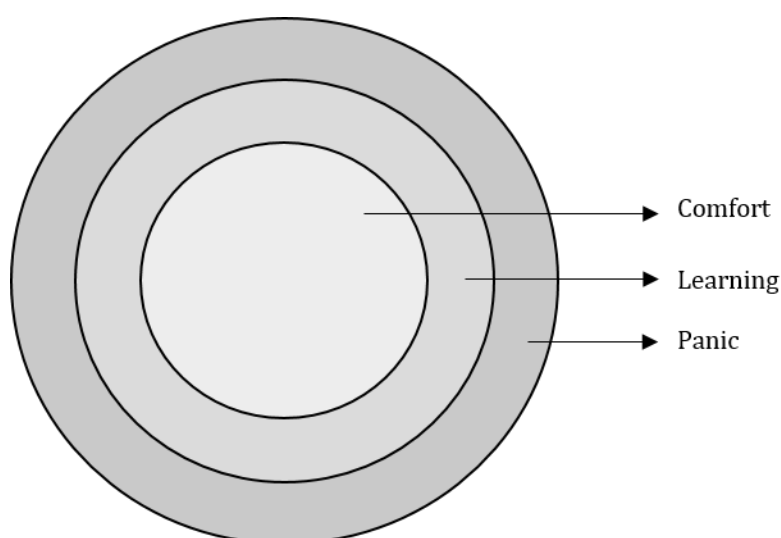


**Figure 1** – Disposition of students through the Learning Process.

**Source:** own elaboration.

Overall, teachers should maintain students in the learning zone, which is the proven zone to provide the best successful learning experience for the students (Taha et al., 2015).

To assure an effective learning experience, the educational system responsible, institutions and teachers must understand (Kampylis & Berki, 2014) (see Figure X):

- **what students learn**: what is their pathway and are they learning relevant subjects that prepare them for the future;

- **how are they learning**: the approaches and techniques used by the teachers are the most appropriated to the discipline and inspire students to add value to their learning experience;

- **where students learn**: are they learning in a relevant place, in a fun and relaxed environment;

- **when do students learn**: are students learning at the right age, the right content;

- **who they learn with**: teachers, class colleagues, professor guests, experts, etc.;

- and **why do students learn**: are they learning for the right reasons: for themselves, for their family, for their country, for the world, etc.

One of the greatest barriers to boost students' creative skills is the curriculum too charged (Kampylis & Berki, 2014). Therefore, the educational system needs to be reorganized, transforming the traditional teaching approaches into modern and demanded ones, to implement strategies that provide, more effectively, a better learning experience for students, focused on the diversity and relevance of curricular activities (Kampylis & Berki, 2014).

Students' learning experience is successful when they are challenged with creative teaching and learning methods, where curiosity is the key core of the processes (Abegglen et al., 2019). Several methods can help to develop creativity in the educational sector (see Table 2): to promote creativity at an individual level (Amabile, 1997), to promote creativity at a group level (Leonard & Swap, 1999), cooperation vs the competition (Adams, 1986), and the environment or place for creativity delivery in Universities (Papaleontiou et al., 2014).

**Table 1 -** Methods to develop Creativity in the Educational Sector.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Methods to develop Creativity | Definition | Author |
|---|---|---|
| To promote creativity at an individual level | Teachers must find out what motivates their students, what are their sources of interest. If they find that information, they can easily plan challenges adequate to the students' purpose. And a person with a purpose is a person that is willing to stand up to adversities. | (Amabile, 1997) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| To promote creativity at a group level | After producing their own ideas and even after passing some time incubating their ideas, it is very important that students share them with a group. This will foment discussion and will provide students another perspectives of the problem. | (Leonard & Swap, 1999) |
| Cooperation vs competition | Both cooperation and competition are necessary to evaluate the implementation of an idea. Cooperation motivates the idea producer to proceed to the idea implementation, while supporting insights regarding the path to choose, based on experience. On one hand, competition stimulates the will of executing, but, on the other hand, it helps to analyse the market gaps as well as the risk to implement the idea. | (Adams, 1986) |
| The environment or place for creativity delivery in Universities | The place where ones works affects directly his mood, his way of thinking and, consequently, the creative process. Everyone have already heard of Goggle offices: they created a fun and relaxed environment, where they allow their employees to feel free. And when one feels free, his mind becomes more open. | (Papaleontiou et al., 2014) |

As Ken Robinson (2016) said: "The core role of a teacher is to facilitate learning" (p.97) and to engage the students' attention, as well as to challenge their rationale. There are 3 types of abilities a person needs to be successful.

They are (Papaleontiou- Louca et al., 2014):  (a) analytic, used to analyze, assess and compare; (b) practical, to apply; and (c) creative, to imagine, create and adapt.

Students also have a role, to improve their learning experience. Their actions might pass by (Jeffrey, B. 2001):

- To use their exclusive life experiences to enrich the learning context;

- To get the most of their rationale and creative thinking to enhance in unique and complex challenges;

- To favor a collaborative approach, helping their peers;

- To provide the most accurate feedback regularly about the classes activities, for teachers to get the chance to improve.

As previously stated, the learning experience is composed of the teaching strategies and the learning environment (Knowles et al., 2005). However, this study is going to focus only on the teaching strategies, and on its creative side (from which emerge the creative teaching strategies).

## 1.2.CREATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

Creativity is a complex concept difficult to define, due to its ambiguity (Andriopoulos, 2000). Consequently, it has been defined in the most different ways by several pieces of research, in a variety of study fields (Runco & Sakamoto, 1999). Therefore, before moving on to the creative teaching strategies, creativity must be defined according to this study's purpose, to assure coherence to all the readers.

### 1.2.1.Defining Creativity

Imagination, creativity, and innovation are concepts that are directly related and can be easily confused. Imagination is the first step to take when the goal is to somehow lead innovation. Imagination is the source of creativity (Robinson, 2011). Thinking about a past real moment is not considered to be an imaginary thought, per instance. What is considered as imaginative is the thought of an unreal and unconventional moment, which was never experienced before (Robinson, 2011). Thinking about the spider saw near the bed is not considered imaginative. But to think about a roller-skating spider is. So, the human mind must make an extra effort and become agile to be able to think of an unusual experience or a moment that never happened (Robinson, 2011).

Imagination is essential when helping to build the future. As it empowers to revisit past moments and to think from different perspectives, imagination allows the thought of original moments, envisioning different future paths (Robinson, 2011). After a bad discussion with the boss, that bad moment can be relived. Then, we can identify what was said and done that might not be the correct attitude, and simply think of various behavior possibilities, creating diverse pathways of the discussion (Robinson, 2011). It can be understood as creating different future universes, just like the chess game: several possible moves can be predicted (Robinson, 2011).

Creativity happens after the imagination process. While imagination is more an internal and private process, creativity is exposing the thoughts, take action in some fields (Robinson, 2011). Creative people are it because they did something, and not just thought of it. Imagination is abstract, creativity is not, and it must be applied to a certain matter. Therefore, creativity is giving Imagination meaning in real life (Robinson, 2011).

Innovation is the final step of this process (Papaleontiou-Louca et al., 2014). The main difference between creativity and innovation is that creativity is the idea, the breakthrough of a solution, and Innovation is the action of implementing that idea successfully (Papaleontiou-Louca et al., 2014). Meaning, once the ideas were produced, and thought on what, why, when, where, and how to be applied, those ideas are put into practice (Robinson, 2011). That is

innovation: despite the challenges, ideas become reality (Robinson, 2011). For this research, the focus will be on creativity.

Throughout the years, many authors defined creativity by their terms. Some of the more relevant definitions are presented below. Creativity was first defined as the imagination high level to recombine known elements into something new (Ciardi, 1956). Twenty years passed, creativity gain another meaning: was declared as an activity intended to solve stimulating problems in a new mode (Amabile, 1983; Isaksen & Treffinger, 1985). At that time, these authors also defined creativity as the birth of imaginative new ideas. Then, creativity "(…) resulted in the generation of new and useful ideas or the combination of existing ideas into new and useful concepts to satisfy a need." (Farid et al., 1993, p.11). Likewise, creativity was also defined as the creation of new products, ideas, processes, and procedures (Woodman et al., 1993).

Creativity was, then, saw as a problem-solving activity (Lunsford, 1990; Titus, 2000; Anderson, 2006). Meanwhile, a different definition of creativity indicated that it was a mixture of elasticity, originality, and sensitivity though, which allowed the individual to think differently (Brennan & Dooley, 2005). But in 2018, Homayoun and Henriksen defined creativity as a mindset (the creative thinking mindset). They stated that it must be a mindset rather than focusing only on the production of novel and perfect solutions. To schematize the creativity concept evolution, Table 1 was created.

**Table 2** – Definition of creativity throughout the years.

**Source:** own elaboration.

| Definition of Creativity | Author(s) | Year(s) |
|---|---|---|
| To transform known elements into something new. | Ciardi | 1956 |
| To solve problems thinking differently (imaginative new ideas). | Amabile<br>Isaksen and Treffinger | 1983<br>1985 |
| To combine or create ideas to satisfy a need. | Farid,<br>El-Sharkawy and<br>Austin | 1993 |
| To be original. | Amabile,<br>Woodman,<br>Sawyer and<br>Griffin | 1993<br>1996 |
| To problem-solve. | Anderson<br>Lunsford<br>Titus | 1990<br>1990<br>2000 |
| To mix elasticity, originality, and sensitive thought. | Brennan and<br>Dooley | 2005 |
| It is a mindset. | Homayoun and<br>Henriksen | 2018 |

In this research, creativity is taken as a mindset, because when understanding and aiming creative habits, boosting creative skills, marketing educators will be more successful in engaging students to think creatively in a long term, fostering creative thinkers in business education (Homayoun & Henriksen, 2018).

## 1.2.2. Creative Teaching

Creative teaching can be defined as an exclusive, personalized, and utile exchange of knowledge between individuals in a learning context (Rinkevich, 2011). Another point of view of the creative teaching is defended by Mayer (2011) (as cited in de Sousa 2011, p. 9-10) that affirmed it is the role of strategies which are produced to help students to learn new materials and to apply their current knowledge to solve upcoming problems.

The main focus of creative teaching is the teacher. He is the responsible agent that must use his imagination to come up with creative teaching strategies to make his students' learning experiences much more interesting and memorable (Futures, 1999). So, teachers cannot develop the creative abilities of their students if their creative abilities are undiscovered or suppressed." (Morris, 2006).

Consequently, students' creativity depends on the creativity of the teacher while producing tasks, questions, and challenges to the students (Cimermanová, 2013). As Ken Robinson (2011) said: "Good teachers know that their role is to engage and inspire their students. This is a creative process in itself." (p. 277). Therefore, by boosting students' creativity, teachers are becoming more creative either (Gibson, 2010).

To enable the creative process, it is required to focus not only on the understanding of the concerned field but also on questioning the existing knowledge (Johnson-Laird, 1988, cited by Sternberg, 2012). Students must question to create their understanding: "one cannot think creatively unless one has the knowledge with which to think creatively. Creativity represents a balance between knowledge and freeing oneself of that knowledge." (Johnson-Laird, 1988, p.207, cited by Sternberg, 2012, p.4).

Creative teaching strategies request learners to creatively judge their prior knowledge, to develop new ideas that will contribute to a better understanding of the concerned concept or phenomenon (Creative Learning Initiative Austin, 2013). Furthermore, creative teaching is mainly cooperative, involving discussions and reflection to develop new ideas that eventually will lead to new solutions (Creative Learning Initiative Austin, 2013).

It was confirmed that creative teaching is most effective in the students' learning experience when the teaching strategy is based on (Creative Learning Initiative Austin, 2013).

- o   Producing various ideas, individually and in a group;

- o   Taking creative decisions to explore the process of learning;

- o   Building psychological and physical models of their understanding;

- o   Analyzing content from different perspectives;

- o   Building up the information received into knowledge and apply it in new contexts.

Creative teaching is reliable on emotional engagement and significance because creativity is bounded with meaning; is the "central source of meaning in our lives" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, p.76). Therefore, teachers should seek to make connections with students, by using innovative teaching strategies (Woods, 1995; Grainger et al., 2004; Heath & Wolf, 2004).

The creative teaching strategy is based on how teachers make learning more exciting and effective by using innovative teaching methods and activities in class (NACCCE, 1999). Therefore, these two concepts will be explored in the following chapters.

### 1.2.3. Creative Teaching Methods

A teaching method is the process of structuring learning, focused on the pedagogical approaches (Samfira & Fărăgău-Dragoş, 2014). Meaning, it is a structured sequence created to stimulate a specific type of thinking or responses to accomplish particular learning outcomes (Faraday et al., 2011). To identify the teaching methods, the LOVE-based teaching and learning method classification model is going to be used. This model (see Figure 2) was recently introduced to the literature for the description of the learning experience. However, given the characteristics of each classification, it is also possible to understand the application of each teaching method and the impact it has on the role of students (Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap, 2019).

**Figure 2–** LOVE model.
**Source:** Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap (2019).

The LOVE model is composed of four classifications: L-Learning, O-Observing, V-Visiting, and E-Experimenting. Each of these classifications is characterized by the nature of learning (absorption or immersion) and student involvement (active or passive) (see Figure 3). Therefore, the student can have four types of learning experiences (Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap, 2019):

- **L-Learning**: the student becomes a learner by actively absorb knowledge;

- **O-Observing**: the student becomes an observer by passively absorbs knowledge;

- **V-Visiting**: the student becomes a visitor by passively immerse into a situation to obtain knowledge;

- **E-Experimenting**: the student becomes an experimenter by actively immerse in a situation to acquire knowledge.
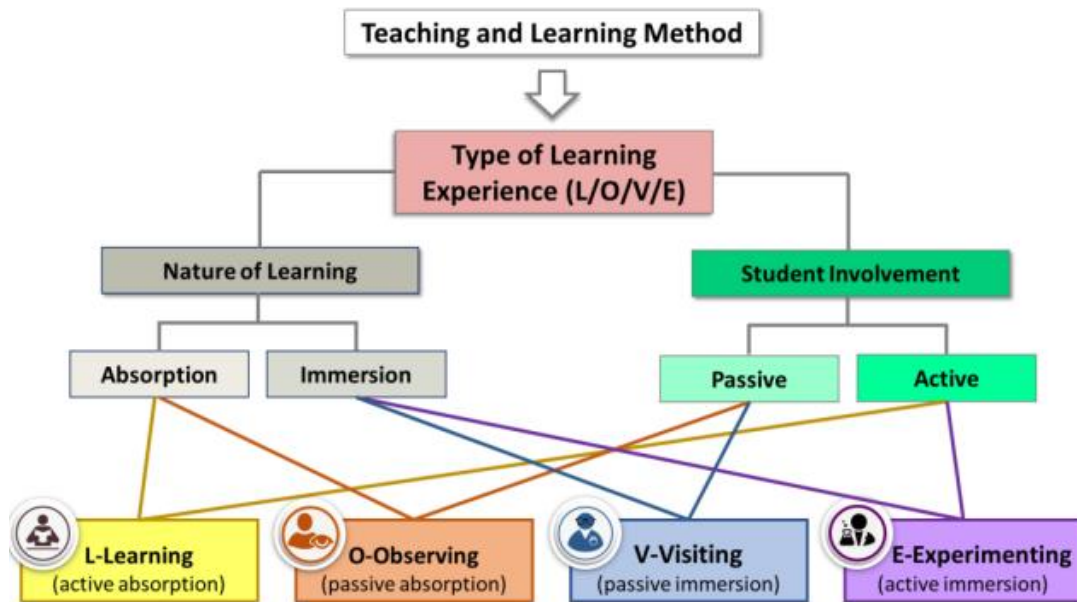
**Figure 3 –** LOVE-based Teaching and Learning Method Classification.
**Source:** Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap (2019).

Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap (2019) identified 28 teaching and learning methods from the literature and applied them to this model. Figure 4 presents the outcome.



**Figure 4 –** Teaching and Learning Methods on LOVE grid.
**Source:** Na Ayutthaya & Koomsap (2019).

Creative teaching focuses on the methods a teacher uses to deliver learning and the effect those methods have on students (Rankin & Brown, 2016). Therefore, not only the teaching method has a direct influence on the students' learning experience, its application process has it too (Griffiths, 2011). Creative teaching methods are characterized by their disruptive type of approaches (LeFever, 1997). In addition, they tend to promote meaningful learning, student engagement, and interaction, because non-traditional ways of learning are viewed as more motivating and inspiring for students (Rankin & Brown, 2016).

Teaching and learning are activities, in which one reflects on the other, so they must not be separated (Tom, 1997). Although this study refers only to "Teaching Methods", the learning is intrinsic.

Learning can be categorized into two opposite types: explicit and implicit learning (Jensen, 2005). The main difference between these two types is the form of achievement in which the learning occurs: while explicit learning is accomplished with basic activities, per instance, by reading, by watching videos or listening to audios, by seeing pictures, etc., the implicit learning is attained through the experience, meaning, it includes every activity which implies hands-on, such as gaming, where the learner is the main role-player (Jensen, 2005).

It is proved that students learn the best when they are doing, instead of observing how it is done (Burke, 2007). When the learning activities are based on more practical activities, students engage better and make the most out of the

learning experience (Burke, 2007, 35). This phenomenon can be called experiential learning, which is characterized by applying real experiences through a learning by doing kind of approach, that engages students, promoting an effective learning experience (Kolb et al., 1984).

However, the perfect teaching method does not exist, as it is dependable on the context (Kampylis & Berki, 2014). The leading factors are the student age, the student motivation, the discipline being taught, the local culture, etc. (Ramocki, 2014). And between the pedagogical tactics that support the development of the creative thinking of students, are included approaches that teachers should use, per instance (Ramocki, 2014): to provide assignments that boost imagination and to invest in the concept of visualization, by supporting drawings, photos, and videos (Anderson, 2006), as well as varying between whole-class instructions, group, and individual works to enrich the students' learning experience (Ramocki, 2014).

On average, a teacher makes 300 to 400 questions a day (Leven & Long, 1981). So, teachers have the unique opportunity to contribute to a better learning experience for students (Rowe, 1986). If teachers carefully plan their questions and how they make them, the learning experience can be boosted, because research proves the quality of a teachers' questions implies the learners' thinking; the higher quality of the questions, the richer becomes the students' thoughts (Rowe, 1986). Also, the use of metaphors has proved to increase

creative thinking when applied to a specific context (e.g.: to present a business challenge in football terms), which engages students and consequently creates a richer learning experience (Weick, 2003).

Teachers must invest in provoking discussion, which allows students, and even the teacher, to share their opinions and to engage while the subject changes, challenging their thinking (Craft, 2005). And to help improve the creative disposition in the educational context, teachers must ask questions without a specific answer, since this approach will support the creation of a relaxed environment where students will feel their opinion and share are meaningful (Ramocki, 2014).

Additionally, it is proven that open questions (e.g.: What if; Why; How) tend to encourage creativity in learning, as it stimulates a more deep type of thought (Kazemi, 1998). While, asking students to make their questions is another level of improving the level of engagement and creativity, as they will not produce ideas from one already created, but will have to organize the information they possess and to produce an initial idea at their rights (Ramocki, 2014).

Encouraging learners to produce questions develops their curiosity, increases their engagement; stimulate their critical thinking skills, consolidates learners' understanding of the matter, allows them to think from different

perspectives, and motivates them to find out the answer, which enriches the learning experience itself (Ramocki, 2014).

## 1.3. CREATIVITY IN MARKETING

### 1.3.1. Creativity in the Marketing Curriculum

As Ken Robinson (2011) affirmed: "The task of education is not to teach subjects: it is to teach students. No school is better than its teachers." (p. 276). Students are changing and with them the role of marketing educators (Karns, 2005). As the demand for marketers' creative skills grows, marketing education has been creating new curricular models (Barber et al., 2001; Koch 1997; Lamont & Friedman, 1997; Pharr & Morris 1997).

Business Week has published a report stating that the "Knowledge Economy" is being exceeded by the "creative economy" (Business, 2005). This means that the marketplace is favoring creative people with ideas that transform processes and build valuable products and services (Florida & Goodnight, 2005).

Creativity is becoming a crucial keystone of business; now, more than ever, it is a demanded skill for all business professionals, especially in the marketing field (McCorkle et al., 2007). More than ever, "it is difficult to identify

any marketing activities in which creativity could not play an important role (…)" (McIntyr, 1993, p.36). After all, marketing is the process of applying creative solutions to solve consumer problems, whether focusing on products development, advertising strategies, or business models. So, creativity is always intrinsic in every stage of the marketing process (Titus, 2000).

At this moment, creativity is seen by researchers and businessmen as the only way of competing in the global market for profit (Jensen, 2005). Additionally, it contributes for the sustainment of economy development, addressing different problems, supports social wellness and shapes productive confidence (Homayoun & Henriksen, 2018). Creativity and innovation are core values of organizations. Therefore, the business world expects that college graduates attain the necessary skills to positively respond to the market demand (Ramocki, 2014).

Progressively, creativity is gaining more importance in the workplace, as well as in higher education (Ramocki, 2014). Furthermore, when focusing on the 4 C's of critical thinking and problem-solving - creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration - students get prepared for the future. (P21 Partnership for 21st Century Student Outcomes, 2002).

Creativity is not the gathering of knowledge, but "what we can do with our knowledge." (Quintin, 2009, p. 3). College students must be flexible and adapt to change, while creating jobs for the future, according to the market

demand (Quintin, 2009). As business and marketing education is becoming a very popular field of study, the connection between business education and creativity must be considered (Homayoun & Henriksen, 2018).

Currently, the level of the creative skills of graduates and the level required by the evolving business world are very divergent (Glassman & Opengart, 2016). Business institutions are being accused of not training students with enough skills to correspond to the market demand. With this in mind, it becomes urgent to evaluate the current practices of business schools (Glassman & Opengart, 2016).

Teaching creativity in higher education institutions has been demonstrated to be scarce (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004). Even with the strongly grounded appeal stated in marketing education literature, along with 1,500 CEOs that claim creativity is one of the core skills in businesses (Ramocki, 2014). In addition, "the education sector has been increasingly criticized for its failure in effectively generating creative people (and creative leaders)." (Taha et al., 2015, p. 1920).

In addition, "in the academic disciplines, a student cannot perform. He can only promise. All he can do is to repeat what somebody has already done or said (…)" (Drucker, 1969, p. 316-317). This is a quote with more than 50 years that still applies to today's reality, according to some authors' opinions (eg.:

Craft, 2005; Sawyer, 2006). This is the breakpoint where students stop question and simply conform to the information they receive; this is the breakpoint where creativity comes to an end (Drucker, 1969).

In 2014, Ramocki studied the reasons why creativity was not included in the marketing curriculum. He found that: (1) teachers do not think/believe creativity can be taught, (2) teachers may believe the traditional marketing teaching methods are enough to develop students' creativity skills, (3) institutions may not consider the costs of creativity development may not be worth to develop creative abilities and (4) marketing institutions may not know how to teach creativity.

Education must be an opportunity for students to develop their skills to consequently improve their professional lives (Fullan, 2003). Therefore, higher education must provide students the tools for them to improve creatively, to be able to positively respond to opportunities in the real world (Fullan, 2003). However, providing those tools is not the only concern. Marketing higher education must establish a suitable learning environment and adopt new teaching methodologies (Fullan, 2003). So, marketing education should be developing students' creativity skills, which goals are: (1) to contribute to their creative thinking and problem-solving skills, and (2) for the enrichment of marketing concepts in the classroom (Ramocki, 2014).

According to recruiters, students are not learning the necessary skills in the classroom to move to the business world (Kelley & Gaedeke 1990; Kelley et al., 1995). And based on the fact everyone has creative potential, whether is more or less developed, using the right teaching methods can enhance the expansion of creative skills (Sirková et al., 2014).

### 1.3.2. Creative Teaching Methods applied in Marketing

Business education is considering the need to transform itself, aiming for the teaching methods that are more successful for the student's experience (Sudhir & Unnithan, 2018). As marketing courses are especially based on applying theory into practice, students are demanded to acquire real-time problem-solving skills to prevail in the business world (Sudhir & Unnithan, 2018). Superior marketing courses develop pedagogical tools to support the enhancement of students' essential skills, and it is required for the students to use their creative skills while performing tasks, once they must provide solutions to unique and complex problems (McCorkle et al., 2007).

The education of future managers must include practices to develop their creative capabilities, such as curiosity, insight, imagination, and improvisation, as well as their life, must include creative habits (Sirková et al., 2014). However, creativity and innovation are phenomena that demand time and space from the learner's perspective. Students need time to be creative, to

think differently, to take risks (Jackson et al., 2006; Johnson, 2010), as well as time to learn from others (Nancy, 2000).

To put the theory into practice regarding the need for creative skills by marketers, through the years, there were developed innovative teaching methods in marketing classrooms, which are currently being used in marketing higher education (Sudhir & Unnithan, 2018). Marketing educators are investing in offering students adequate opportunities to develop the most demanded skills inside the classroom (Barr & McNeilly, 2002).

Consequently, business schools are starting to include in their teaching system, courses that promote team building, public speaking, business writing, and leadership skills (Barr & McNeilly, 2002). One of the strategies faculties are devoting attention to is on business projects, where students work along with companies, promoting the academic-business worlds, as well as student's first contact with the marketplace (Barr & McNeilly, 2002).

Such educational methods were proved its effectiveness by several authors: basing on projects (Browne, 1979; Conant & Mokwa, 1987; Haas & Wotruba, 1990), the use of case studies (Ward & Stasch, 1980; Miller & Hoover, 1999; Henson et al., 2003), simulation games (Mentzer et al., 1983), and scenario planning (Van Doren & Smith, 1999).

There are creative teaching methods demonstrated to follow the philosophy of *learning by doing* and that was applied in the marketing field. They are (see Table 3): (1) **project-based learning,** characterized by having as a central focus a real project, in which students learn actively engaging with the real world and personally meaningful projects or challenges (Bob, 2017; Darren et al., 2017); (2) **scenario-based learning**, in which students involve in a real-life scenario and apply their knowledge, as well as develop their skills (Mallin et al., 2010; Seren Smith, 2018); (3) **game-based learning**, characterized by the use of games to stimulate student learning, developing their problem-solving skills (Whitton, 2011; Silva, R., 2019); and (4) **kinesthetic learning**, in which students are involved in physical activities, providing them a hands-on experience (Kanar, 1995, as cited in Sendra-Pons, P., 2020; Wolfman and Bates, 2005, as cited in Sendra-Pons, P., 2020).

**Table 3 –** Learning by Doing Creative Teaching Methods applied in the Marketing Field.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Creative Teaching Methods | Main Focus | Practical Example |
|---|---|---|
| Project-based Learning | Real projects<br><br>(Bob, 2017; Darren et al., 2017) | Live-case<br><br>(Maher, 2005) |
| Scenario-based Learning | Real-life scenarios<br><br>(Mallin et al., 2010; Seren Smith, 2018) | Simulated marketing project<br><br>(Maher, 2005) |

| | Games | Simulation |
|---|---|---|
| Game-based Learning | (Whitton, 2011; Silva, R., 2019) | (Sajjad, 2010) |
| Kinesthetic Learning | Physical activities<br><br>(Kanar, 1995, as cited in Sendra-Pons, P., 2020; Wolfman and Bates, 2005, as cited in Sendra-Pons, P., 2020) | Field trip<br><br>(Karns, 2005) |

Studies recommend as teaching approaches, active and experiential learning to enhance the students' learning experience (Healey 2005; Shah & Treby 2006). And marketing educators are indeed employing a whole new set of teaching and learning strategies to provide students the best learning experience, promoting active and experiential learning (Frontczak & Kelly, 2000; Gremler et al., 2000; Smith & Van Doren, 2004; and Wright et al., 1994).

Experiential learning can be defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." (Kollb et al., 1984, p. 41). In marketing education, this concept modifies the attitude of the faculty and the students, once the educator transforms its role, changing from a knowledge provider to a knowledge theorist and manager, and the student evolves to an active learner, instead of a passive one (Celsi & Wolfinbarger, 2002).

Marketing teachers must understand students' feedback regarding different teaching and learning methods practiced in classes. Some of them, with the use of specific tools, may contribute to a more successful learning experience,

engaging learners, and others to a poorly one (Celsi & Wolfinbarger, 2002). So, it becomes pertinent to evaluate the students' feedback when it comes to the applied methods and activities in class (Karns, 2005). Various researches were conducted and it was evaluated students' opinions in what concerns the teaching and learning methods and consequent activities used to provide a richer learning experience (Lamb Jr et al., 1995; Clow & Wachter, 1996; Bridges, 1999; Davis et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2004).

Karns (1993) studied the activities that marketing students identified as the best for their learning experience. Students prefer active, applied, and real-world teaching activities. They do not look for challenging and difficult tasks, as they see them as stressful and not fun. Instead, students prefer less challenging activities, such as business plan competitions, case studies, videos exhibition, field trips, and guest speakers (Karns, 2005). According to the same author, real-world activities are very well received by learners, as they see them as fun and stimulating while having a medium level of challenge and effort, for example, role-playing and oral presentations.

Although students favor more fun and less challenging tasks, educators must invest in real-world activities, where learners can comprehend the purpose of the activity and feel they are working with a real goal in real reality. This will make students feel integrated and has proven to be more engaging for students (Karns, 2005). Teachers can accomplish that by supporting, for instance:

internships, live-case projects, student presentations, and student-operated businesses (Karns, 2005).

In marketing education, teaching for creativity was addressed by many researchers through different methods. Activities such as (Gilbert et al., 1992): brainstorming, forced connections, experimental ideation, and fictional, were identified to be included in classes. Moreover, the use of lateral thinking increases the number of associations between two unrelated elements (Gilbert et al., 1992). Therefore, students must be asked to produce ideas and to think of uncommon uses for a product or service, brainstorming in groups at last (Moriarty, 1983).

In addition, creative problem-solving techniques are also supported, because they promote the definition of a problem, the collection of information, the production of ideas, and the creation of connections while allowing to explore students' lateral thinking (Titus, 2000). The Six Thinking Hats exercise is one of the many examples, in which there are 6 hats – logic, emotion, caution, optimism, creativity, and control – and each person or team interprets the role of one hat and discusses a certain issue (Titus, 2000).

It is also fundamental that teachers provide students the openness to understand the course design and its goals and activities, as well as to integrate student's own goals (Karns, 2005). Marketing educators should also allow students to share their opinion regarding the teaching methods they prefer and

to share their comments on what they liked the most, the less and what would they add, during and after the course finishes (Karns, 2005).

In sum, it is essential to understand what motivates students to learn. However, it is as important to find the best paths to provide an effective learning experience, in terms of creativity (Abegglen et al., 2019).

## 2. METHODS

In this chapter, the purpose of the study and the methods to be employed are presented. Therefore, it is divided into 6 sections: (1) the identification of the purpose and the research questions to which this study aims to answer, (2) the choice and justification of the methodological approach, (3) the empirical setting, (4) the techniques used for the data collection, (5) the research process and proceedings, and (6) the data analysis.

## 2.1. RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve students' learning experience, by using creative teaching methods. Below, the research questions are presented:

RQ#1: What are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education?

RQ#2: How are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses?

RQ#3: How do creative teaching methods influence the students' learning experience?

RQ#4: How can marketing institutions innovate the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience of students?

## 2.2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was considered the best option, once it is used when need to answer questions like How? or Why? (Duncan et al., 1994). Furthermore, "qualitative methods take a holistic perspective which preserves the complexities of human behavior." (Black, 1994, p.425). Like qualitative research, it favors induction that explains the particular phenomena as a way of perceiving the general (Black, 1994).

Furthermore, this research addressed the creative teaching methods used and the associated learning experiences. Therefore, it was adopted a subjective approach, which was based on the interpretation of a phenomenon in the context in which they occur (Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, it was more appropriate to study a small number of subjects, through different methods, to get more diverse perspectives of the phenomena (Saunders et al., 2019). However, the reliability of research results may be under question (Baxter et al., 2008).

The research paradigm used was the interpretivist approach, because "interpretivism emphasizes that humans are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings (...) [and] interpretivists study these meanings (...)" (p. 148). Therefore, the researcher interpreted the social roles of others according to her own set of meanings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Especially when analyzed the creative teaching methods employed by marketing higher education institutions, from the students' perspective.

This research proposed to explore the improvement of the marketing students' learning experience by using creative teaching methods, a subject that although it is becoming more prominent in higher education literature, is not enough explored (Philip & Ed, 2015). Therefore, an exploratory case study was conducted, which contributed to getting a deeper insight into the problem (Saunders et al., 2019).

### 2.2.1. Case Study – IPAM Porto

According to Taha et al. (2015), "the education sector has been increasingly criticized for its failure in effectively generating creative people (and creative leaders)." (p. 1920). It was verified a high demand for innovative thinking in companies by creative marketing professionals (Titus, 2007). Moreover, there was a high number of studies that pointed out the need for the integration of creativity (by employing creative teaching methods) in marketing

higher education, as well as the analysis of their effectiveness in the learning experience of students (Homayoun & Henriksen, 2018; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; McCorkle et al., 2007; Ramocki, 2014; Schlee & Harich, 2014; Sudhir & Unnithan, 2018). Therefore, the researcher decided to focus on the matter, but from a students' perspective.

Consequently, the research strategy chosen was an exploratory single case study, to get an in-depth analysis of the participant's experiences (Shuttleworth, 2008). The goal is to understand a phenomenon, where data is used to generate theory, by answering to *How?* and *Why?* type of research questions (Shuttleworth, 2008). It was decided to do a case study of IPAM, The marketing School, in Porto, due to several reasons: it is the market share leading and oldest marketing higher education institution in Portugal, offers diverse level graduated courses, its pedagogical concept is based on the learning by doing (IPAM Porto - The Marketing School | IPAM Porto, n.d.). The case study approach is used in different research fields, including in marketing and management (Gama, 2009), and enables a higher understanding of the phenomena, reducing bias. However, it is difficult to generalize its findings to a large group, because of the limited number of participants studied ("Importance of a Case Study," 2018).

## 2.3. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

For the purpose of this research, was applied the qualitative method, by using two data collection techniques: document analysis and interviews, within the cross-sectional time horizon, given the fact the research is concerned with the study of an exact phenomenon at an explicit time (Flick, 2011).

### 2.3.1. Document Analysis

Document analysis is the process of analyzing and interpreting documents, providing meaning in what concerns a topic (Bowen, 2009). Documents that contain text and/or images, which were recorded without the researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). This study involved document analysis, once it is used in qualitative research to complement other techniques, such as interviews (Yin, 1994). By triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" (p.110), which minimizes bias when combined with the data from those other techniques used (Eisner, 1991).

However, like with any other technique, the document analysis has some limitations (see Table 4), for instance: (L1) documents have been created with an intention that might not respond in detail to the research questions of the study, (L2) some relevant documents might be with access blocked, and (L3) might be verified document incompletion, because organizational documents

may be produced according to the organization's policies and procedures. On the other hand, this technique is (A1) less time-consuming, once it only requires data selection and not collection, (A2) the accessibility to documents is very high, (A3) it is a low-cost technique, (A4) the document analysis isn't affected by the research process (as the observation technique might be, per example, which can happen the behavior of participants to change by knowing they are being observed), and (A5) the documents are also considered exact (Bowen, 2009).

**Table 4 –** Document Analysis' Limitations and Advantages.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Document Analysis | |
|---|---|
| **Limitations** | **Advantages** |
| Not fully compatible with the research questions | Less time-consuming |
| Access blocked | High accessibility |
| Incomplete documents | Low-cost technique |
| — | Isn't affected by the research process |
| — | Exact documents |

Particularly, in this case, it was analyzed official documents of the case study entity, created and provided by it: courses' brochures and units' syllabus. The brochure is used to promote a product or service to potential and/or existing clients (Ladd, 2010). In this case, the university brochures include

information about the institution and the course teaching philosophy, the course units, and testimonials of students. The syllabus is a plan that exposes an overview of the course, the learning objectives, the teaching philosophy and methods, the assessment plan, the intended class sessions, and other pertinent content (Bazyar et al., 2015).

### 2.3.2. Pilot Interview

Questions are the leading element of any interview, which reinforces the role of the interview guide (Majid et al., 2017). It was planned to conduct semi-structured interviews for this study. But given the lack of experience of the researcher in interviewing, a pilot study was conducted.

The pilot interview supports the researcher evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of the interview questions according to the research purpose (Barriball & White, 1994; Castillo-Montoya, 2016), since "it can help identify if there are flaws, or limitations within the interview design that allow necessary modifications to the major study" (Kvale, 2007, p.1074). In this exploratory phase, the aim was to develop an appropriate interview guide, to be used in the next phase.

### 2.3.3. Interview

To collect data, the researcher chose to conduct interviews, once the intention is to get as much information as possible (Yin, 2014). In this study, it was used semi-structured interviews were, once the questions to be asked will be organized in advance. The use of closed questions (mostly used in a quantitative method of data analysis) will be restricted. Therefore, it will be used mainly open-ended questions, allowing the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss some subjects in more detail (Fox, 2006). This way, this qualitative technique will consist in asking open-ended questions to an individual to collect data about a certain subject (Barañano, 2004).

Additionally, interviews are also used "to collect descriptive data on the language of the interviewee, allowing the researcher to develop intuitively an idea of how participants interpret the world aspects." (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1994, p.134). Hence, this technique is considered valuable to this research to better understand the perceptions of interviewees regarding events, situations, and experiences (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2005).

## 2.4. RESEARCH PROCESS AND PROCEEDINGS

As previously stated, although data was collected through two different complementary techniques, for a clearer understanding, the data collection

process was divided into 3 phases. Table 5 presents the associated research phase, the data collection instruments, the participants involved in each phase, and its purpose, as well as the research question(s) it intends to answer.

**Table 5** – Data Collection Techniques, its Purpose and Research Questions.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Phase | Data Collection Instrument | Participants | Purpose | Related Research Question |
|:-----:|:-----|:----:|:----|:----:|
| **1** | Document Analysis (Brochures & Syllabi) | Researcher | - To support the understanding of why participants chose IPAM and their courses' expectations; <br><br> - To examine the courses' main teaching approaches; <br><br> - To enrich the content of the interviews, triangulating data. | RQ#1 |
| 2 | Pilot Interview | 3 Students | - To improve the interview guide and its questions. | — |
| 3 | Interview | 11 Students | - To identify the creative teaching methods practiced in the students' courses and how are they applied; <br><br> - To understand the students' perception of their learning experience when creative teaching methods are applied. | RQ#1 <br><br> RQ#2 <br><br> RQ#3 |

### 2.4.1. 1ˢᵗ Phase: Document Analysis

In this phase, the researcher proceeded with the document analysis, by analyzing official public documents from IPAM Porto. It was collected 15 documents: four courses' brochures in three documents (because two of the brochures were placed in the same document), and 12 units' syllabus (three units for each course). The brochures were available online and were retrieved from the IPAM Porto's website. The syllabi was facilitated by Ph.D. Fernando Pinto Santos, coordinator of the Global Master in Marketing in IPAM Porto. The purpose of the document analysis was to examine the teaching philosophy and methods described for each course, to enrich the content of the interviews, triangulating data.

Although it was collected the brochure of each course, it was not relevant for the study to collect all syllabus of the four courses, as the main teaching philosophy is already presented in the brochure of the course. However, analyzing the syllabi provides the specification of the teaching strategies applied in each unit, and that is relevant for the study itself. Therefore, the researcher chose randomly three syllabi of each course, to use the information described as part of the content for the interviews.

## 2.4.2. 2nd Phase: Pilot Interviews

As the interviews were intended to be semi-structured, was created a guide including questions to ask the participants. The interview guide was

exposed to a pilot study. Questions were presented to three students selected from potential participants for the research (see 3rd phase potential participants profile). The three interviews were conducted online, through Zoom, and last around 40 minutes each. Answers were recorded by note-taking, and the interviews were video and audio recorded (with participants' permission). Each participant signed up, digitally, the informed consent form before the interview (see Appendices Informed Consent Form).

The data collected was analyzed shortly after each interview, and it resulted in empirical data, used to improve the interview guide. Giving the results of the three pilot interviews, some adjustments were made to the interview guide, to guarantee that all concepts were exposed to the participant. Accordingly, a new interview guide was produced and maintained throughout the third phase. Participants' demographics (N=3) are shown below (see Table 6).

**Table 6 –** Participants' Demographics of the Pilot Interviews.

**Source:** own elaboration.

| Course | Year of Course | N | Genre | | Age | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F | M | <=20 | >20 |
| Master in Global Marketing | Last (2nd) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Bachelor in Global Marketing | Last (3rd) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

As Table 6 presents, the interviews were conducted to 1 (33.33%) male and 2 (66.67%) female participants, and all participants were aged greater than 20 years old. The course with the highest number of participants was the Master in Global Marketing (66.67%), followed by the Bachelor in Global Marketing (33.33%). All participants were in their last year of the associated course.

## 2.4.3. 3rd Phase: Interviews

The third phase was based on conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews, based on an interview guide. Table 7 presents the questions, as well as the authors which work has contributed to formulating the questions. The researcher decided to interview only students, because, (1) as stated previously, the learning experience refers to the perception and meaning that learners attribute (Knowles et al., 2005) and (2) there is a lack of studies analyzing the students' perspective regarding creative teaching methods (Philip & Ed, 2015).

**Table 7** – Theoretical basis for the Interview Guide.

**Source:** own elaboration.

| Context | Question | Author | Method or Activity | Author |
|---------|----------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| ID | 1. Gender | — | — | — |
| ID | 2. Age | — | — | — |
| ID | 3. Course and Year | — | — | — |
| Intro | Explanation of the concepts by giving definitions and examples. | — | — | — |
| Intro | 4.1. Why did you decide to apply to this course and why in IPAM Porto? And what were your expectations? | — | — | — |
| RQ#3 RQ#4 | 5.1. Kindly describe your learning experience concerning your course. | Abegglen et al., 2019 | — | — |
| RQ#3 RQ#4 | 5.2. Do you consider you are having a positive learning experience in this course? Why? | Kampylis & Berki, 2014 | — | — |
| RQ#4 | 5.3. Could your current learning experience be better? Why/How? | Abegglen et al., 2019 | — | — |
| RQ#4 | 5.4. How could creativity improve your learning experience? Why? | Abegglen et al., 2019 | — | — |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RQ#1 | 6.1. Was this method applied in your course? In how many disciplines? With what frequency? | University of Central Florida, 2020; Smaldino et al., 2015 | (1) Project-based Learning | (1) Bob (2017); Darren et al. (2017). |
| RQ#1 RQ#2 RQ#3 | 6.2. How did it work, specifically? | University of Central Florida, 2020; Smaldino et al., 2015 | (2) Scenario-based Learning | (2) Mallin et al. (2010); Seren Smith (2018). |
| RQ#3 | 6.3. What do you consider to be the purpose of this method? | University of Central Florida, 2020; Smaldino et al., 2015 | (3) Game-based Learning | (3) Whitton (2011); Silva, R. (2019). |
| RQ#3 RQ#4 | 6.4. Do you consider this method to be positive for your learning experience? Why/How? | Ertl & Wright, 2008 | (4) Kinesthetic Learning | (4) Kanar (1995), as cited in Sendra-Pons, P. (2020); Wolfman and Bates (2005), as cited in Sendra-Pons, P. (2020). |
| RQ#3 RQ#4 | 6.5. Do you consider this method encouraged you to develop your creativity? Why/How? | Sudhir & Unnithan, 2018 | | |
| RQ#4 | 6.6. Which aspects in the application of this method would you change to improve your learning experience? | University of Central Florida, 2020; Smaldino et al., 2015 | | |

| | 6.7. What do you recognize as challenges for teachers and institutions when deciding and applying a teaching method? And what suggestions would you provide them? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RQ#4 | | Kampylis & Berki, 2014; Ramocki, 2014 | _ | _ |

The process of gathering the participants for the interviews started with the production of a relevant profile for the study. Were potential participants: (1) students in a bachelor or master course in IPAM Porto, (2) who were still taking the course or that had finished within this year. The search occurred through LinkedIn, and participants were firstly contacted over that platform. After the first contact, participants decided if they would like to be continued contacted through LinkedIn or Whatsapp.

Informed consent forms (see Appendice Informed Consent Form) were sent to 17 students, from which 11 (64.7%) of the students signed it up and participated in the study. Ten interviews were conducted presidentially and one online, through Zoom, and lasted from 54 minutes to 82 minutes. Four of the interviews were rescheduled due to the participants' convenience. Answers were recorded by note-taking and, as all participants conceived permission, the interviews were video and/or audio recorded. Additionally, all interviews were transcribed and translated into English.

There is a large number of articles and books that recommend interviewing between 5 and 50 participants in qualitative research (Dworkin, 2012). However, Guest et. al (2006) found that 12 is the number of interviews needed to conduct to reach saturation. For this study, it was interviewed, 11 students. By the eleventh interview, the researcher was recognized to have reached the saturation of knowledge. This means the researcher learned a lot from the first few interviews and by the eleventh, she acknowledged patterns in the interviewees' experiences, meaning, more interviews confirm what the researcher has already sensed (Bertaux, 1981). Participants' demographics (N=11) are shown below (see Table 8):

**Table 8 –** Participants' Demographics of the Interviews.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Course | Year of Course | N | Genre | | Age | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F | M | <=20 | >20 |
| Bachelor in Marketing Management | First (1st) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Last (3rd) | 1 | | | | |
| Bachelor in Global Marketing | Second (2nd) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Last (3rd) | 1 | | | | |
| Master in Marketing Management | Last (2nd) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Master in Global Marketing | First (1st) | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | Last (2nd) | 2 | | | | |

As Table 8 presents, the interviews were conducted to 8 (72.73%) female and 3 (27.27%) male participants, which 2 (18.18%) participants were aged less than or equal to age 20, and 9 (81.82%) were aged greater than 20 years old. The course with the highest number of participants was the Master in Global Marketing (36.36%), followed by the Master in Marketing Management (27.27%), and then the Bachelors in Global Marketing and Marketing Management, both with the same number of participants (18.18% each). In what concerns the year of the master courses, 5 (71.43%) participants were in their last year, and 2 (28.57%) were on their first. Regarding the bachelor courses, 2 (50%) participants were in their last year of the course, followed by the same number of participants in their first and second (25%, each).

## 2.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis can be described as "the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data." (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 173). For the data analysis, an inductive type of approach was used, due to the subjectivity of the concepts involved and to the lack of knowledge about the study phenomenon (Burnard et al., 2008): how can creative teaching methods improve the learning experience of students. In the next subchapters, the analysis for each data collection technique is described.

## 2.5.1. Document Analysis

The document analysis process involves findings, selecting, interpreting, and synthesizing data exposed in documents (Bowen, 2009). For the document analysis, the following steps were followed (Yavuz, 2016): (1) it was selected the content for analyzing, (2) categories and units were defined to organize data, (3) it was developed a set of coding rules, and finally (4) the text was coded according to the rules. Below, each step is better explained.

### 1. Sample selection from data set

It was decided to analyze IPAM Porto's brochures and syllabi. As this study focuses on the bachelor and master courses only, these documents only apply to them. While the brochures were of public access and were retrieved from IPAM's website on July 14, 2021, to gather the syllabi needed, a coordinator of one of the masters in IPAM Porto supported the researcher, by providing those private documents. Even if some participants are in a different year of the same course, there is no constraint regarding the retrieved date of the brochures and the syllabi, as the teaching philosophy remains nearly the same through the years.

As previously stated, these documents were relevant because they include information about the teaching approaches of the bachelor and master courses, which supported the researcher when understanding some phenomena, during the interview, as well as adding value to the interview

through questions. This study covered 15 documents: 3 brochures (as the two bachelor's brochures are in the same document) and 12 syllabi.

### 2. Developing categories and units:

For the analysis of the brochures and the syllabi, four categories were developed and the consequent units, according to the categories that would be used on the interviews, for the comparison between the findings of the document analysis and of the interviews to be coherent. They were:

- Project-based Learning: *real project* and *briefings*.

- Scenario-based Learning: *case study* and *fictional project.*

- Game-based Learning: *gamification* and *simulation*.

- Kinesthetic Learning: *team building*, *personal development,* and *field trip*.

### 3. Coding rules:

The level of analysis for both brochures and syllabi was by *word or expression* and based on the existence of the concept, not in its frequency. Table 9 introduces the coding rules, including similar concepts or expressions of the units to have in account when coding the text.

**Table 9** – Categorical system of Document Analysis.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Categories | Units | Similar concepts or expressions |
|---|---|---|
| Project-based Learning | Real Project Briefing | Learning in a real context<br>Real business experiences<br>Real-time projects<br>Real cases<br>Live cases<br>Current cases<br>Problem-solving<br>Projects with companies<br>Work projects with global brands<br>Participation in projects<br>Competitions<br>Industry partnership |
| Scenario-based Learning | Case Study Fictional Project | Experiential Project |
| Game-based Learning | Simulation Gamification | Simulator Applications |
| Kinesthetic Learning | Field Trip Team Building Personal Development | Visit company Role-play |

## 4. Coding Text

In this phase, the researcher carefully read the 15 documents. Then, following the rules previously established, examined each document. This way were recorded the concepts present in each document and associated with a

specific category. The key findings were reported into the categorical system, along with verbatim quotes that represent those findings.

## 2.5.2. Pilot Interviews

The pilot interviews analysis focused on the content of the interviewees' answers, to improve the interview guide (Malmqvist et al., 2019). For the analysis of the pilot interviews, the researcher audio and video recorded each and took hand notes. For the analysis, one matrix was built (see Table 10) to support the researcher while taking notes during the interviews. On the *notes* column, the *checkmarks* indicated the answer to the specific questions was successfully reached, and the *crosses* that did not have success and needed to be adapted. Moreover, whenever the question was not successful, some comments were pointed out.

**Table 10** – Matrix for the Analysis of Pilot Interviews.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| INTERVIEW GUIDE Version 0 | Notes |
| --- | --- |
| Question #1 | ✓ |
| | ✗ |
| Question #2 | To be modified. To explain better and deeper, since participant A did not understand the following questions related to this one. |

On one hand, one of the matrix's focuses was the exposition of the concepts, known as the main themes of the thesis, due to the lack of knowledge of creative specific terms (Philip & Ed, 2015). Therefore, the researcher found it relevant to examine different possibilities of presenting the concepts. On the other hand, another focus was the effectiveness of the questions of the interview guide. Consequently, it was identified which questions needed to be modified, added, or even removed from the interview guide (Malmqvist et al., 2019).

An essential purpose of the research is to generate new knowledge (Watling et al., 2012). To do it, the researcher must generate meaning from the data collected (Vosloo, 2014). The analysis process of this study was extremely focused on examining the behavior of the interviewees, to obtain accurate and real-time feedback (Vosloo, 2014). According to the same author, the researcher must construct an argument based on the findings of what she has done, seen, and heard during the interviews. To do that, each interview was transcribed verbatim and translated to English, manually, by the researcher. Then, for the analysis and creation of the meaning of the data, the thematic content analysis method was used (see Sub-Subchapter 2.5.3. Interviews for more information).

Next, is presented the analysis process of the three pilot interviews, according to the interview guide used and questions asked. Table 11 presents the findings of the first pilot interview when using the first version of the interview guide.

**Table 11** – Analysis of First Pilot Interview.

**Source:** own elaboration.

| Interview Guide Version i | Notes |
|---|---|
| Gender, Age, Course, and Year. | ✓ |
| Explanation of the concepts by reading their definition. | ✗ <br> To be modified. To explain better and deeper, since participant A did not understand the following questions related to this one. |
| Why did you decide to apply to this course and why in IPAM Porto? And what were your expectations? | ✓ |
| Kindly describe your learning experience concerning your course. | ✓ |
| Do you consider you are having a positive learning experience in this course? Why? | ✓ |
| Could your current learning experience be better? Why/How? | ✓ |
| How could creativity improve your learning experience? Why? | ✓ |
| What are the teaching methods adopted in your course? And how do they work? Can you describe? | ✗ <br> Participant A only mentioned a few teaching methods, because he did not know more. |
| Which of the teaching methods adopted do you perceive as positive for your learning experience? Why? | ✓ |
| What do you recognize as challenges for teachers and institutions when deciding and applying a creative teaching method? And what suggestions would you provide them? | ✓ |

When analyzing Table 11, it is possible to conclude that the explanation

of the concepts used was not ideal, as participants, consequently, did not know

what to say when asked about the matter on the following questions. Therefore, the researcher made a single change on the interview guide: it explained the terms of the thesis by providing a definition and some examples at the beginning, and whenever the participant felt lost (see Table X, changes in bold).

**Table 12** – Analysis of Second Pilot Interview.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Interview Guide Version II | Notes |
|---|---|
| Gender, Age, Course, and Year. | ✓ |
| Explanation of the concepts by giving definitions and examples. | ✓ |
| Why did you decide to apply to this course and why in IPAM Porto? And what were your expectations? | ✓ |
| Kindly describe your learning experience concerning your course. | ✓ |
| Do you consider you are having a positive learning experience in this course? Why? | ✓ |
| Could your current learning experience be better? Why/How? | ✓ |
| How could creativity improve your learning experience? Why? | ✓ |
| What are the teaching methods adopted in your course? And how do they work? Can you describe? | ✕ Participant B only referred to the teaching methods mentioned by the researcher as examples, but in a very general way. |
| Which of the teaching methods adopted do you perceive as positive for your learning experience? Why? | ✓ |

| | |
|---|---|
| What do you recognize as challenges for teachers and institutions when deciding and applying a creative teaching method? And what suggestions would you provide them? | ✓ |

Even with the use of the interview guide version 2, when the researcher provided the definition and examples of the concepts, participant B only referred to some of the teaching methods, and he did not go deep about the subject. He did not explain many details, as it was supposed. So, a different type of approach was used, when the researcher decided that, instead of asking broadly about the teaching methods applied in the participant's course, to go method by method and to ask all the questions needed one by one, in-depth. Consequently, emerged the actual interview guide, version three (see Table X, changes in bold).

**Table 13** – Analysis of Third Pilot Interview.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Interview Guide Version III | Notes |
|---|---|
| Gender, Age, Course, and Year. | ✓ |
| Explanation of the concepts by giving definitions and examples. | ✓ |
| Why did you decide to apply to this course and why in IPAM Porto? And what were your expectations? | ✓ |
| Kindly describe your learning experience concerning your course. | ✓ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Do you consider you are having a positive learning experience in this course? Why? | ✓ |
| Could your current learning experience be better? Why/How? | ✓ |
| How could creativity improve your learning experience? Why? | ✓ |
| The researcher asks the following 6 questions, method by method.<br><br>Was this method applied in your course? In how many disciplines? | ✓ |
| With what frequency?<br>And how do they work? Can you describe? | ✓ |
| What do you consider to be the purpose of this method? | ✓ |
| Do you consider this method to be positive for your learning experience? Why/How? | ✓ |
| Do you consider this method encouraged you to develop your creativity? Why/How? | ✓ |
| Which aspects in the application of this method would you change to improve your learning experience? | ✓ |
| What do you recognize as challenges for teachers and institutions when deciding and applying a creative teaching method? And what suggestions would you provide them? | ✓ |

With this new interview guide, participant C was profound on his answers. In contrast, the interview took more time than originally planned, transiting from 30-40 minutes to 50- minutes, due to his detailed answers.

### 2.5.3. Interviews

As the researcher is the responsible agent for making sense of the data collected, it was explored and interpreted data, using the thematic content analysis method for the analysis of interviews. This method is characterized by the identification of themes within the data in documents, as well as combining examples in the documents of those themes (Burnard et al., 2008). The qualitative content analysis compiles eight steps (Vosloo, 2014) (see Figure 5).
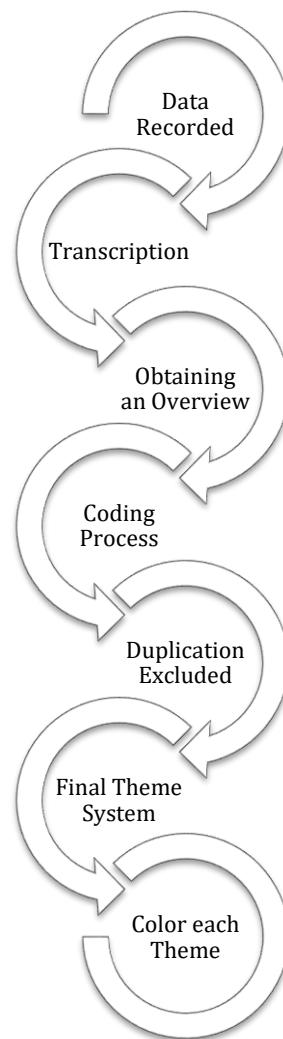


**Figure 5** – Steps of Qualitative Content Analysis.
**Source:** own elaboration.

First, **data was recorded.** As previously stated, the online interviews were audio and video recorded, and the presential was only audio recorded, and the researcher took some hand notes. Then, through audio records, interviews were **transcribed** verbatim and translated to English, manually by the researcher. After, the text transcribed and translated, as well as the notes taken, were carefully read, to acquire a comprehensive impression of the content and context before giving meaning to themes, **obtaining an overview**.

Next, the researcher identified the themes and categories that emerged from the data of the transcripts (Burnard et al., 2008). Consequently, the **coding process** took place. Codes are labels assigned to specific units of related meaning identified within the field notes and transcripts (Hennings et al., 2004; Neuman, 2011). For this study, **open coding** was used. This type of coding is based on the researcher reading the transcripts and taking notes on the margin of the paper related to the text (Vosloo, 2014). The aim was, to sum up, words and statements discussed in the transcripts (Burnard et al., 2008).

The next step taken was to collect all the statements and words from all interviews and to work through and all **duplication excluded**. This process contributed to reducing the number of categories, supporting the researcher to eliminate overlapping and similar categories (Burnard et al., 2008). After that, the reduced list of themes became the **final theme system**, which was used to divide all interviews. Then, it was associated **color to each theme**, and each

transcript was worked through, and data that fit in a specific category, was

marked with the according to color (Burnard et al., 2008). The key findings were

reported into the final theme system, along with verbatim quotes to represent

those findings (Burnard et al., 2008).

# 3. FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher will expose the results, and, for each research question, the key findings will be presented.

## 3.1. CREATIVE TEACHING METHODS APPLIED IN MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

To address this first question, the document analysis was made, and the pilot interviews and the interviews were conducted.

**Document Analysis**

The following Tables 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 present the teaching methods referred on the brochures of the four courses examined and on the syllabus of three units of each course. This data indicates the teaching methods proposed by the institution before starting each course, and it will be useful to compare with the answers given by the participants in the interviews.

Table 14 presents the teaching methods of each course, along with the excerpts of the brochures. The courses with reference to more creative teaching methods were the Bachelor in Marketing Management (with eight mentions) and the Master in Global Marketing (with six), against the Master in Marketing Management (that had three), and the Bachelor in Global Marketing (with two).

In addition, project-based learning was the creative teaching method most referred in all courses' brochures. This method was also the only one identified by the four courses, while scenario-based learning was not mentioned at all by any course.

**Table 14** – Creative Teaching Methods identified in each course through the analysis of the Brochures.

| | Bachelor in Marketing Management | Bachelor in Global Marketing | Master in Marketing Management | Master in Global Marketing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | *1. Participation in internationalization, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social responsibility projects*<br><br>*2. Projects in partnership with companies*<br><br>*3. Real business challenges*<br><br>*4. Solving a case for national or international companies*<br><br>*5. National and international competitions* | *1. Participation in international, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social responsibility projects*<br><br>*2. Participation in competitions* | *1. Solving a case for national or international companies*<br><br>*2. Encouraging participation in national and international university competitions* | *1. Real-time projects*<br><br>*2. Work projects with recognized global brands*<br><br>*3. With hands-on industry partnership*<br><br>*4. Live case studies*<br><br>*5. Real case studies* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Scenario-based Learning** | — | — | — | — |
| **Game-based Learning** | *6. Use of mobile teaching and gamification applications and tools* | — | *3. Use of Management and Marketing simulators for decision support* | — |
| **Kinesthetic Learning** | *7. Field trip*<br><br>*8. Visit some companies* | — | — | *6. Opportunity to visit companies* |

The following Table 15 exposes the teaching methods mentioned on the Bachelor in Marketing Management, specifically in the units of Business Language and Presentation, Product Management, and Dynamics and Group Animation. The unit with reference to more creative teaching methods was the Business Language and Presentation, which mentioned five. Moreover, project-based learning was the creative teaching method most referred concerning all units' syllabus. There was no creative method recognized by all the units.

**Table 15** – Creative Teaching Methods identified on the Bachelor in Marketing Management.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| | Business Language and Presentation | Product Management | Dynamics and Group Animation |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | 1. Laboratory sessions<br><br>2. Work project<br><br>3. Real business experiences | 1. Practical work with a company | — |
| **Scenario-based Learning** | 4. Case studies<br><br>5. Problem-solving | — | — |
| **Game-based Learning** | — | — | 3. Simulation exercises |
| **Kinesthetic Learning** | — | 2. Experiential learning | — |

Next, Table 16 reveals the teaching methods referred on the Bachelor in Global Marketing, specifically in the units of Data Analysis, Digital business Strategy, and Cross-Cultural Negotiation. The unit with more mentions of creative teaching methods on the syllabus was the Digital Business Strategy, with three. It can be also verified that, once more, project-based learning is the most referred method, although it was not recognized by all units. Further, game-based learning was not referred to at all.

**Table 16** – Creative Teaching Methods identified on the Bachelor in Global Marketing. **Source:** own elaboration.

| | Data Analysis | Digital Business Strategy | Cross-Cultural Negotiation |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | 1. Laboratory and real setting | 1. Briefing<br><br>2. Real context of the business environment<br><br>3. Real case | — |
| **Scenario-based Learning** | 2. Lectures by case studies | — | 1. Case studies |
| **Game-based Learning** | — | — | — |
| **Kinesthetic Learning** | — | — | 2. Role-playing scenarios and simulations of real-life negotiations |

Table 17 discloses the teaching methods mentioned on the Master in Marketing Management, specifically of the units of Consumer Economy, Relational Marketing, and Management of Project Investment. The unit with more references to creative teaching methods was Relational Marketing, which identified four. Furthermore, project-based learning was the most referred method, being recognized by all units. The game-based learning and kinesthetic learning were not mentioned by any unit.

**Table 17** – Creative Teaching Methods identified on the Master in Marketing Management.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| | Consumer Economy | Relational Marketing | Management of Project Investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | 1. Laboratory practice<br><br>2. Fieldwork | 1. Laboratory practice<br><br>2. Fieldwork<br><br>3. Business reality and its specific problem<br><br>4. "real and current cases" | 1. Laboratory practice<br><br>2. Fieldwork |
| **Scenario-based Learning** | — | — | 3. Case Studies |
| **Game-based Learning** | — | — | — |
| **Kinesthetic Learning** | — | — | — |

The last table reveals the teaching methods cited on the Master in Global Marketing, retrieved from the syllabus of the units of Global Marketing & Branding, Talent and Change Management, and Global Marketing Strategy. The

unit of the course which identified more creative methods was Global Marketing & Branding, with three mentions. Scenario-based learning was the most recognized creative teaching method in this course. And again, game-based learning and kinesthetic learning were not mentioned by any unit (see Table 18).

Table 18 – Creative Teaching Methods identified on the Master in Global Marketing.
Source: own elaboration.

| | Global Marketing & Branding | Talent and Change Management | Global Marketing Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | — | — | *1. Real case studies* |
| **Scenario-based Learning** | *1. Case studies*<br><br>*2. Present solutions to problems and challenges* | *1. Case study* | — |
| **Game-based Learning** | — | — | — |
| **Kinesthetic Learning** | — | — | — |

To compare later with the interviews' findings, the researcher analyzed the most mentioned creative teaching methods. Therefore, it was counted the number of times each creative teaching method was referred in each document.

It can be concluded that project-based learning was the most mentioned method (with thirty-one mentions), and then it was scenario-based learning (with eight), followed by kinesthetic learning (with five), and finally the game-based learning (with three).

**Interviews**

The following Table 19 exposes the creative teaching methods that marketing students stated to have in their courses in IPAM Porto. Due to the lack of knowledge and subjectivity of creative terms (Philip & Ed, 2015), including the creative teaching methods, the researcher gathered some examples of the methods relevant to the study and asked participants if they had it in their courses, method by method.

**Table 19** – Creative Teaching Methods applied in marketing courses of IPAM Porto.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Teaching Methods | Illustrative Empirical Excerpts |
|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Project-based learning** | **Real Project** | "(…) we had really practical case studies (…)" (Participant F)<br><br>"Yes, we worked with several companies." (Participant G)<br><br>"Some projects with companies were done in some units (…) most of the units, by the way." (Participant I)<br><br>"Yes, we had a lot of contact with companies, not only in one unit (…)" (Participant J)<br><br>"(…) I had at least 3 big real cases (…)" (Participant L)<br><br>"We worked with at least 3 companies during the course, on projects of more or less 1 year." (Participant M)<br><br>"(…) we worked with some companies (…)" (Participant N) |
| | **Briefing** | "We had some briefings from companies, in more than one discipline." (Participant D)<br><br>"Yes, we had [briefings]." (Participant E)<br><br>"(…) we had different real case studies." (Participant H)<br><br>"Okay, I remember a briefing from a company (…)" (Participant K) |
| **Scenario-based Learning** | **Case Study** | "(…) yes, several case studies analyzed in classes." (Participant G)<br><br>"(…) many cases were given in class." (Participant H) |
| | **Fictional Project** | "We had lots of projects: internationalizing a product, launching a new product, etc." (Participant D) |
| **Game-based Learning** | **Gamificatio** | "(…) yes, it was a kind of game to give us extra points in the final grade." Participant J) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Simulation** | "(…) we played a simulation game (…)." (Participant F)<br><br>"Yes, yes, yes, I had that experience." (Participant G)<br><br>"We had a unit that was basically the whole unit playing on the simulator." (Participant I)<br><br>"(…) was the Simulator unit." (Participant L)<br><br>"We had an unit all centered in a simulator game." (Participant M) |
| Kinesthetic Learning | **Team Building** | "It was kind of a team building and ice-breaking exercise." (Participant D)<br><br>"It happened in one unit, in several classes. In one of the classes we played with Legos (…). And not only with Legos, but also with drawings." (Participant F)<br><br>"(…) yes, I had that kind of method in a unit." (Participant E)<br><br>"For example we had just received Erasmus students and, to get to know all the class mates better, we played a creative team building game (…)" (Participant E)<br><br>"(…) there were still quite a few [team building] activities that we did, yes." (Participant J)<br><br>"Yes, it was a session in a unit, where we had to do an activity with straws (…)" (Participant K) |
| | **Personal Development** | "(…) we also did dramatizations to solve problems in a company environment (…)" (Participant G)<br><br>"(…) yes, we did improvisation role-plays but usually in units that are lighter in terms of content." (Participant H)<br><br>"(…) yes, unfortunately we did this kind of activities [laughs]." (Participant I)<br><br>"(…) and I remember us doing the Walk the Talk exercise too." (Participant M) |

| | Field Trip | "We had a field trip, yes." (Participant D)<br><br>"(...) actually, we had some [field trips] (...)" (Participant L)<br><br>"I think we did only once." (Participant N) |
|---|---|---|

The most referred creative teaching method in the interviews was kinesthetic learning (mentioned thirteen times), followed by project-based learning (with eleven mentions), next, it was game-based learning (with six references), and at last the scenario-based learning (with three).

Comparing the findings of the document analysis with the ones from the interviews, although the most referred method was not the same in the two techniques, given the mentions it acquired in both of them, the project-based learning is the most mentioned. Although in some brochures and syllabi of the document analysis, not all methods considered were identified, in the interviews, it has got confirmed that in IPAM Porto is applied project-based learning, scenario-based learning, game-based learning, and kinesthetic learning as creative teaching methods.

## 3.2. APPLICATION OF CREATIVE TEACHING METHODS IN MARKETING COURSES

After confirming which creative teaching methods are applied in IPAM's courses, it is important to understand how each method is applied, as its practice

has a direct influence on the students' learning experience. Therefore, participants explained how each method was applied, according to their own experience. Their answers were classified based on the LOVE-Based Teaching and Learning Method Classification to objectively categorize the nature of learning and the student involvement, the characteristics needed to analyze the employability of the methods (see Table 20).

**Table 20** – Application of the Creative Teaching Methods in marketing courses.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Classification of Teaching Methods | Illustrative Empirical Excerpts |
|---|---|
| **L-Learning** | *Someone from the company would come and give us a briefing for a whole year's work. And then we had a time to ask questions, or if we had any questions, we would send the questions to the teacher and the teacher would send them to the company and get back to us.* (Participant D)<br><br>*He presented the challenge and then we would ask questions about any questions or information. We had a lot of room to discuss* (Participant H)<br><br>*(…) we had to analyse strategies used by different companies in different situations (…). We did it individual and in groups in the class (…) and we had to read the case and to discuss with the class.* (Participant G)<br><br>*The teacher used to read case studies with us and we would analyze them in class.* (Participant H)<br><br>*(…) we laid all the Legos over two or three big tables and professor divided us in groups and we had to come up with some meaningful creation under about 5 to 10 minutes in groups. (…) We had been the all session on this.* (Participant E) |

|  | |
|---|---|
|  | *The teacher asked us how best to act in complicated situations in a work context. (…) we had about 3 minutes to create a speech strategy and prepare ourselves in case the teacher called us to present. At the end of each act, I remember that everyone gave their opinion.* (Participant H) <br><br> *We had several characters that represented various perspectives and we were given a different perspective than ours and had to defend it and come up with arguments.* (Participant I) <br><br> *Every class, the teacher would ask a question and we had until midnight of that day to send the answer by e-mail. The first person to answer correctly would get three extra points in the final unit grade.* (Participant J) <br><br> *(…) the company usually provided a presential briefing and we would work in groups with the supervision of the teacher.* (Participant F) |
| **O-Observing** | *(…) the companies came to us [IPAM Porto] and explained what the company needed from us.* (Participant E) <br><br> *(…) the company briefing was online and I think it was very good. (…) The brand representative started by presenting the brand, exposing some numbers, and then moved on to the objective of the project and the suggestions they had to guide us (…)* (Participant K) |
| **V-Visiting** | *(…) we went in one class (…) to one of the main stores in downtown Porto [of Castelbel] and we were watching the process of how they made the soaps, etc., and then we were also listening to the guide explaining the process and we toured the store.* (Participant D) <br><br> *We visited a business incubator in Porto. (…) and a technological company in Porto too. (…) we had a company guide talking about the company and showing us the facilities.* (Participant N) <br><br> *We went to meet a company that challenged us to launch a new product in the market. (…) we spent the day there.* (Participant L) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **E-Experimenting** | *We worked directly with the owner of the brand (...) [who] wanted to launch a book in the international market, but didn't know which one, so we played consultants. They divided the class and half of the groups got one market and half got another.* (Participant N)<br><br>*(...) companies were very open to hear our strategies and would provide some inputs to improve them. (...) In matter of fact, some of those companies implemented our marketing plans.* (Participant M)<br><br>*We created working groups and the teacher used to give the same challenge to all the groups, but with some different aspect, for example: one group had to plan the entry strategy of a product in Spain and the other one in the UK, etc.* (Participant J)<br><br>*We worked a lot on internationalization of products directly with the companies, with the teacher as a liaison.* (Participant L) |

According to the content of Table 20, the L-Learning is the most current type of learning experience, according to with participants' answers, which means that the nature of learning is by absorption and the student involvement is mostly active. The second higher classification is the E-Experimenting, followed by the V-Visiting classification, and finally the O-Observing. In addition, each creative teaching method referred by the interviewees fits in one of the LOVE-based teaching and learning method classification categories.

## 3.3. CREATIVE TEACHING METHODS INFLUENCE ON THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Next, Table 21 exposes the students' answers in what concerns the influence that creative teaching methods have on their learning experience.

**Table 21** – Influence of Creative Teaching Methods on the Students' Learning Experience.
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Influence of Teaching and Learning Methods | Illustrative Empirical Excerpts |
|---|---|
| **Direct contact with the business world** | *(...) it was important to have company representatives talking directly to us, and it was crucial to hear their proposals at the first hand.* (Participant D) <br><br> *I really like it when people from companies come to talk to us. (...) Because we a company does a briefing it's always a new experience and it's a new company that I got to know, too seeing the face of the people and the identity of the company basically.* (Participant E) <br><br> *I really like the experience of working with some companies, in real life (...) it's important for students to have this first contact with the business environment while still being supervised.* (Participant N) <br><br> *Everything we did was possible to be implemented by companies, so it was a super enriching experience, where we received feedback from the teacher and the companies about our proposals and constructive criticism to improve.* (Participant L) <br><br> *(...) working with companies is a great opportunity for any student. We feel useful, that the work we do will have some purpose, and we grow as professionals.* (Participant M) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *(...) this method can be very relevant for us, because besides meeting companies, we also build our network.* (Participant N) |
| | *(...) allowed us to get involved breathing the culture, environment and values of the brand. (...)* (Participant L) |
| **Adaptation** | *(...) this is where we see if the subject is consolidated or not, because many times we think we understand things, but we can only really prove it when we apply them.* (Participant J) |
| | *(...) I think it is a little bit for us to work on something that's supposed to be applicable. (...) we have to understand the principles that come from behind and how they apply, so I think it's more of a tool.* (Participant H) |
| | *This method is a good attempt to integrate us and put people more at ease. Maybe not so much for learning. But imagine, it was more about learning a life lesson rather than a subject. So in that sense it's good, but if it's for learning material it doesn't always work.* (Participant D) |
| | *I'm not going to lie: at first. I thought it was a joke to discuss some class topic while walking and I thought I would lose my focus. (...) After the exercise, I realized I actually talked more fluently, as well as other classmates (...)* (Participant M) |
| | *(...) it was fun. It actually provided us insights on how to act and persuade people, and in the business world that is necessary.* (Participant G) |
| **Teamwork** | *I really enjoyed working individually to find solutions to some problems that the company I chose presented to me, but maybe I would have preferred to work in groups, to share the work and listen to other perspectives.* (Participant I) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *(...) I think it forces us to interact with our classmates and that is very important to create relationships (...) in a way it makes us feel more comfortable to discuss later in class.* (Participant E) |
| **Development of creative skills** | *The fact that we can put it into practice helps us develop our creativity (...)* (Participant F) |
| | *(...) for the company to enter the market we will be competitive to be different from other groups, better. (...) which develops our critical, analytical and creative sense.* (Participant G) |
| | *I think it developed my creativity because they were very different problems, very different issues.* (Participant D) |
| | *(...) it was an unusual experience, where you must be very creative to be different and better than the others (...). Although it was very competitive, it was a very positive experience, in terms of the game being captivating.* (Participant F) |
| | *(...) and by creating some solution with the little you have, you develop your creativity.* (Participant F) |
| | *This type of activity was challenging but we get to know how to come up with something with what we had, and give it a meaning to explain to others; how to be creative. (...) I really enjoyed it.* (Participant E) |

By fostering the learning by doing philosophy, creative teaching methods provide students with more **direct contact with the business world**, a higher **adaptation** to the challenges presented, better **teamwork** skills, and the development of their **creative skills**, according to to the participants' answers.

## 3.4. Innovation of the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience

The application of the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses can be innovated to generate a better learning experience for students. Table 21 collects the participants' answers regarding the most suitable adaptations to do on the application of the creative teaching methods in marketing courses.

**Table 22** – Innovation of the Application of Creative Teaching Methods to improve the Learning Experience.

| Innovation of the Application of Teaching Methods | Illustrative Empirical Excerpts |
|---|---|
| Suitability | *Case studies being for example more pertinent, more relevant, or the student's choice.* (Participant D)<br><br>*(…) this contact is accompanied by the teacher together with the company, creating coherence between what the company asks and what we are able to do for it.* (Participant J)<br><br>*It also important that the project makes some sense and it is adequate to the unit in cause.* (Participant K)<br><br>*(…) in the simulations, we should be evaluated in another way; it doesn't make much sense for the grade we get in the simulation to translate into the real grade.* (Participant F)<br><br>*I think that before start to work with the simulator, we should really understand the concepts. (…) Moreover, the interface of the simulator was not user-friendly; it was kind of old and outdated.* (Participant M) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Contextualization | *I think sometimes what happened was: okay, this is the problem, but sometimes we didn't really understand why, the context.* (Participant D)<br><br>*I think the concepts could have been better explained, especially to those who don't know anything about economics. (...)* (Participant G)<br><br>*(...) I think that maybe a problem in some activities that we did in this class, the students did not understand very well the main objective (...)* (Participant E)<br><br>*(...) because I didn't understand the purpose of these activities, to be honest...* (Participant I)<br><br>*[Team building activities] They are great, but I often lack the part of combining them with the learning process. Some are more obvious, but I think the goal of the activity should be clear (...)* (Participant J) |
| New Challenges | *(...) it would be really cool to work with small and large companies, and from various sectors (...)* (Participant N)<br><br>*I really like practical work. For me I had more in all the courses! I think we could also focus on what you do in real life when implementing a marketing strategy.* (Participant G)<br><br>*The projects that the students do during the course that involve real companies could be part of the student's portfolio, because when we leave the course and get to the job market, we already have some experience, but it hasn't been verified or signed by anyone; it is as if it didn't exist.* (Participant M)<br><br>*(...) on the analysis of the case study, we could do a quiz and to try to guess what the company did along their journey, instead of just reading the case.* (Participant G) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | *Maybe we could analyze a case study by asking the company questions, like: how did they do this and why? Because that way we study case studies, but we also get to know the company's own version.* (Participant H) *I wish there were more activities [gamification] like this, where our attention in class, interaction, and knowledge are valued.* (Participant J) |

According to Table 22, there are three main aspects participants considered that if improved on the application of the creative teaching methods, it would improve their learning experience. They are: the **suitability** of a method in what concerns the unit and the circumstances, the **contextualization** of a method when applied, and **new challenges** and random ideas about the application of the methods.

# 4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve the learning experience of students by using creative teaching methods. This chapter includes a discussion of major findings related to the literature on the creative teaching methods, their influence on the learning experience, the innovation on their application, and what implications may be valuable for marketing higher education institutions when looking to improve the learning experience of students.

This chapter contains a discussion to help answer the research questions:

RQ#1: What are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education?

RQ#2: How are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses?

RQ#3: How do creative teaching methods influence the students' learning experience?

RQ#4: How can marketing institutions innovate the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience of students?

The findings of this study suggest that: (1) marketing courses apply the project-based, scenario-based, game-based, and kinesthetic learning as creative teaching methods, (2) according to with the application of each method in these courses, marketing students involve in L-Learning, O-Observing, V-Visiting, and E-Experimenting types of the learning experience, (3) creative teaching methods provide students with closer contact with companies, higher adaptation to challenges, teamwork and the enhancement of creative skills, and (4) to improve the learning experience of students the suitability and contextualization of the methods can be clarified, and new challenges can be created.

**Interpretation of the Findings**

Although the creative teaching methods can be the same as used in other schools and/or higher education courses besides marketing, its implementation can be different, which directly influences the learning experience of students. Moreover, interviewees' experiences may include variations for each individual. Still, the findings were prominent aspects of the interviewees' answers, according to their current experience. Each theme of the Findings is described in detail in the following sections.

No study was found that differentiated the creative teaching methods used in marketing courses. Therefore, to compare with the existent literature, there were referred studies that identified teaching methods applied to different types of context. As the concepts used in the literature and this study were

categorized differently, before comparing the findings between studies, when needed, the researcher identified the creative teaching methods of the other studies and considered them only, when comparing.

**Creative Teaching Methods applied in Marketing Higher Education**

This study suggests that marketing courses apply project-based, scenario-based, game-based, and kinesthetic learning as creative teaching methods. This means that the diversity of teaching methods is very broad and rich. In the same course, are applied: (1) practical real-projects with companies, as well as the briefings inherent to each project, (2) case studies discussed in class and fictional projects, (3) gamification exercises and a simulator game, (4) team-building exercises, personal development exercises, and field trips.

It is important to understand which creative teaching methods are applied in marketing courses because each one provides a different learning experience for students. According to with Creative Learning Initiative Austin (2013), the creative teaching methods are most effective in the students' learning experience when encouraging the production of ideas, the analysis of content from different perspectives, the application of knowledge into new contexts, and the creative decisions to explore the process of learning.

Glassman and Opengart (2016) stated that business institutions are being accused of not educating students to prepare them for the professional world. However, Barr and McNeilly (2002) affirmed that faculties were applying real

business projects as a teaching method, to promote the students' first contact with the marketplace, supporting his integrating. And Sudhir and Unnithan (2018) added that to prevail in the business world, marketing students must acquire real-time problem-solving skills by applying theory into practice. Along with these last two mentioned studies, this study findings do not comply with Glassman and Opengart (2016), since project-based and scenario-based learning are being applied in marketing courses, promoting real-world challenges, cases studies, and fictional projects related to the business world.

According to Boluda & López (2007), marketing courses from European universities apply practical exercises, study cases, business games, and role-playing. As the concepts are different from this study, a correlation was done with the findings of both studies (see Table 23).

Table 23 – Correlation between the findings of this study and Boluda & López (2007).
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Boluda & López (2007) Concepts | This Study Concepts | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Project-based learning | Scenario-based learning | Game-based learning | Kinesthetic learning |
| **Practical exercises** | x | | | |
| **Study cases** | | x | | |
| **Business games** | | | x | |
| **Role-playing** | | | | x |

According to the results presented in the table above, the practical exercises are part of the project-based learning, the study cases are included in the scenario-based learning, the business games are contained in the game-based learning, and role-playing is part of the kinesthetic learning. Accordingly, this study's findings confirm the claims of Boluda & López (2007), when demonstrating that marketing courses include all these four creative methods to enrich the learning experience of students. In Table 24 it is possible to analyze the creative teaching methods referred by the interviewees, and the ones identified by Boluda & López (2007).

**Table 24** – Comparison between the findings of this study with Boluda & López (2007).
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Creative Teaching Methods presented by this study | Project-based Learning | Real Project |
|---|---|---|
| | | Briefing |
| | Scenario-based Learning | Case Study |
| | | Fictional Project |
| | Game-based Learning | Gamification |
| | | Simulation (Business Games) |
| | Kinesthetic Learning | Team Building (Role Playing) |
| | | Personal Development |
| | | Field Trips |
| | Project-based Learning | Practical exercises |

| Creative Teaching Methods presented by Boluda & López (2007) | Scenario-based Learning | Study cases |
|---|---|---|
| | Game-based Learning | Business games (Simulation) |
| | Kinesthetic Learning | (Team Building) Role playing |

Analysing Table 24, the main difference relies on the diversity of activities of each method. The results of this study show more diversity and, consequently, richness in the learning experience of students. Moreover, as are used most objective terms for each method in this study, these findings can help institutions and teachers to get a much strong understanding, not only about the purpose of each method but also its suitability according to their learning objectives.

**Application of Creative teaching methods in marketing courses**

Magalhães (2014) stated that all teaching methods possess a unique application, which confers specific characteristics. Consequently, it is essential to understand how creative teaching methods are applied in marketing courses since each one will have a different influence on the students' experience.

Each creative teaching method referred by the interviewees fits in one of the LOVE-based teaching and learning method classification categories, characterized by the nature of learning (absorption or immersion) and the student involvement (passive or active). This study results show that L-Learning

is the most current type of learning experience, in which the student is mostly a learner when actively absorbs knowledge through, for example, team-building exercises or the study of case studies in class. In second, it is the E-Experimenting, in which the student actively immerses into a situation to take action to acquire knowledge by working in projects with companies, per instance. In third, it is the V-Visiting, in which the student is a visitor when passively absorbs knowledge through field trips. And finally, it is the O-Observing, in which the student is an observer when passively absorbs knowledge by assisting to briefings of future projects.

According to Karns (2005), passive and active learning methods were applied in universities. However, the author also found that private universities were more likely to apply active teaching methods in the classroom. As the current study conducted an exploratory single case study of a private institution, it was considered the results of Karns (2005) applied to private universities, meaning only the active teaching methods were considered. Again, to categorize the terms of the findings of the study above to the current study and to compare them, creative teaching methods were identified and Table 25 was created.

**Table 25** – Correlation and Comparison between the findings of this study and Karns (2005).
**Source:** own elaboration.

| Karns (2005) Findings | This study Findings | | | |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| | **L-Learning** | **O-Observing** | **V-Visiting** | **E-Experimenting** |
| **In-class discussions** | x | | | |
| **In-class group exercises** | x | | | |
| **Case studies** | x | | | |
| **Experiential exercises** | x | | | |
| **Simulations** | x | | | |
| **Business design, Marketing plan, etc.** | x | | | |
| **Field trips** | | | x | |

As it is possible to see in the table above, Karns (2005) also suggests that L-Learning (active absorption) is the most present type of learning experience. However, the fact that only the L-Learning and the V-Visiting types of learning were identified in this author study, decreases the richness of the learning experience, since according to Na Ayutthaya and Koomsap (2019), when the four types of experiences are offered to the student, he will have the richest learning experience. In addition, as previously seen, Sudhir and Unnithan (2018) emphasized the need for marketing students to apply theory into practice to succeed in the business world. However, Karns, G. L. (2005) findings do not include creative methods classified as E-Experimenting type of learning, in which the student would take action through real projects.

Therefore, this study findings present a more complete and updated understanding of the application of the creative teaching methods in marketing courses, which supports marketing institutions and teachers understanding the importance of diversifying the creative teaching methods, providing their students the best learning experience possible.

**Creative teaching methods influence on the learning experience**

According to this study findings in what concerns the influence creative teaching methods have on the students' learning experience, it is possible to see that most of the interviewees feel that the direct contact with the business world, their adaption to new situations, their teamwork, and creative skills have increased.

According to Burke (2007), students learn best when they are doing, instead of observing how it is done, and get more involved in practical learning activities. In addition, Kolb et al. (1984) stated that project-based learning, characterized by applying real experiences through a learning by doing kind of approach, promotes an effective learning experience. The findings of this study strengthen this perspective because participants of the interviews demonstrated their high appreciation for the opportunities of putting in practice what they learned while working in projects directly with companies.

Abegglen et al. (2019) affirmed that curiosity must be the key core of the pedagogical approach, to challenge students to be flexible and to adapt to new situations. This study findings confirm it because, in the interviews, students stated different occasions associated with a specific creative teaching method when they had to find a way of adapting, or else, they would neither enjoy the class session nor understanding what they were doing there.

McCorkle et al. (2007) suggest that work in groups allows students to enhance their interpersonal skills, and while students work in group projects, they constantly need to be creative to provide solutions to unique and complex problems. And this study findings approves it, because some interviewees emphasized the importance of teamwork, as an opportunity to reinforce interpersonal relationships, as well as to share ideas and perspectives with others; and also the development of their creative skills, when working on projects where *be bold and different* was the key core.

Consequently, the results of this study emphasize that creative teaching methods can have a positive effect on the closeness with the business world, adaptation capacity, teamwork and creative skills, which allows marketing institutions and teachers to understand the benefits of applying creative teaching methods to improve the students' learning experience.

**Innovation of the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience**

According to with Karns (2005), marketing educators should allow students to provide their feedback in what concerns the teaching methods applied in their course, as well as their suggestions to improve their learning experience. The interviews conducted to students allowed to gather their opinion on the innovation aspects of the application of creative teaching methods in their current course. The students exposed the suitability and contextualization of some methods, and suggested some potential challenges to improve their experience.

According to Kampylis & Berki (2014), one of the greatest barriers to enhance students' creative skills is the curriculum too charged. Therefore, the educational system needs to focus on the diversity and relevance of curricular activities. Also, Magalhães (2014) affirmed that the teacher needs to choose the teaching method, according to the proposed goals for the course unit. The findings of this study reinforce these ideas and show that students appealed for pertinent, relevant, coherent, and sense-making when choosing the teaching methods, the tools used, and the methods of assessment for each unit. All this translates into suitable creative teaching methods.

Karns (2005) stated that teachers should provide students the openness to understand the course design and its goals and activities. The results of this study favor the above statement, as students identified as one of the main

changes the contextualization of the teaching method applied, by stating that, mostly when facing a new creative teaching method, they did not understand what's its purpose or goal, and that demotivated them in engaging.

In what concerns the feedback of students regarding the teaching methods applied, Sajjad (2010) affirmed that most universities ask for the students' opinions anonymously through a questionnaire, including their suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the teaching methods. Still, many students do not usually reply, and only a few reply with in-depth comments and actual potential solutions. On the other hand, when participants were asked about the aspects that could be innovated to improve their own learning experience, the results of this study witnessed students proposing an improvement, in detail.

The outcomes of this research suggest the innovation of relevant aspects in the application of creative teaching methods. It is crucial for marketing institutions and teachers to test and approve the suitability of a method, as well as to assure that all students understood its purpose and context. Moreover, this study suggests higher education institutions interview students, in order to understand how to improve the application of the creative teaching methods through interviews, instead of questionnaires. Students do not write as fast as they think and talk, and by doing interviews, it is less time-consuming for the student, and it will be easier to acquire in-depth and meaningful insights. In the

case of institutions that do not have the time to interview a hand full of students, focus groups can be considered.

**Mains Contributions**

Figure 6 presents the main contributions of this study. Originally, this study's findings allowed to understand what are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education. Next, the application of the creative teaching methods was explored. After that, it was possible to understand the influence of creative teaching methods on the learning experience. Finally, the innovation of the application of creative teaching methods was explored to improve the learning experience of students.

According to Figure 6, the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education are: project-based, scenario-based, game-based and kinesthetic learning. The application of creative teaching methods in marketing courses can lead to L-Learning (active absorption), O-Observing (passive absorption), V-Visiting (passive immersion) and E-Experimenting (active immersion). Creative teaching methods can influence the learning experience of students, with the possibility of increasing the direct contact with the business world, promoting a higher adaptation to challenges, and developing teamwork and creative skills. Finally, the application of creative teaching methods can be innovated through the suitability and contextualization of the methods used, and the creation of new challenges.

This process can be interpreted as a cycle for marketing higher education institutions and teachers to evaluate the creative teaching methods' application, to improve them and to apply them after improved: first, discover the creative teaching methods applied; then, find out how are they applied; next, explore their influence in the students' learning experience; and at last, innovate their application to improve the learning experience of students. Therefore, the cycle begins with improved creative teaching methods' application.
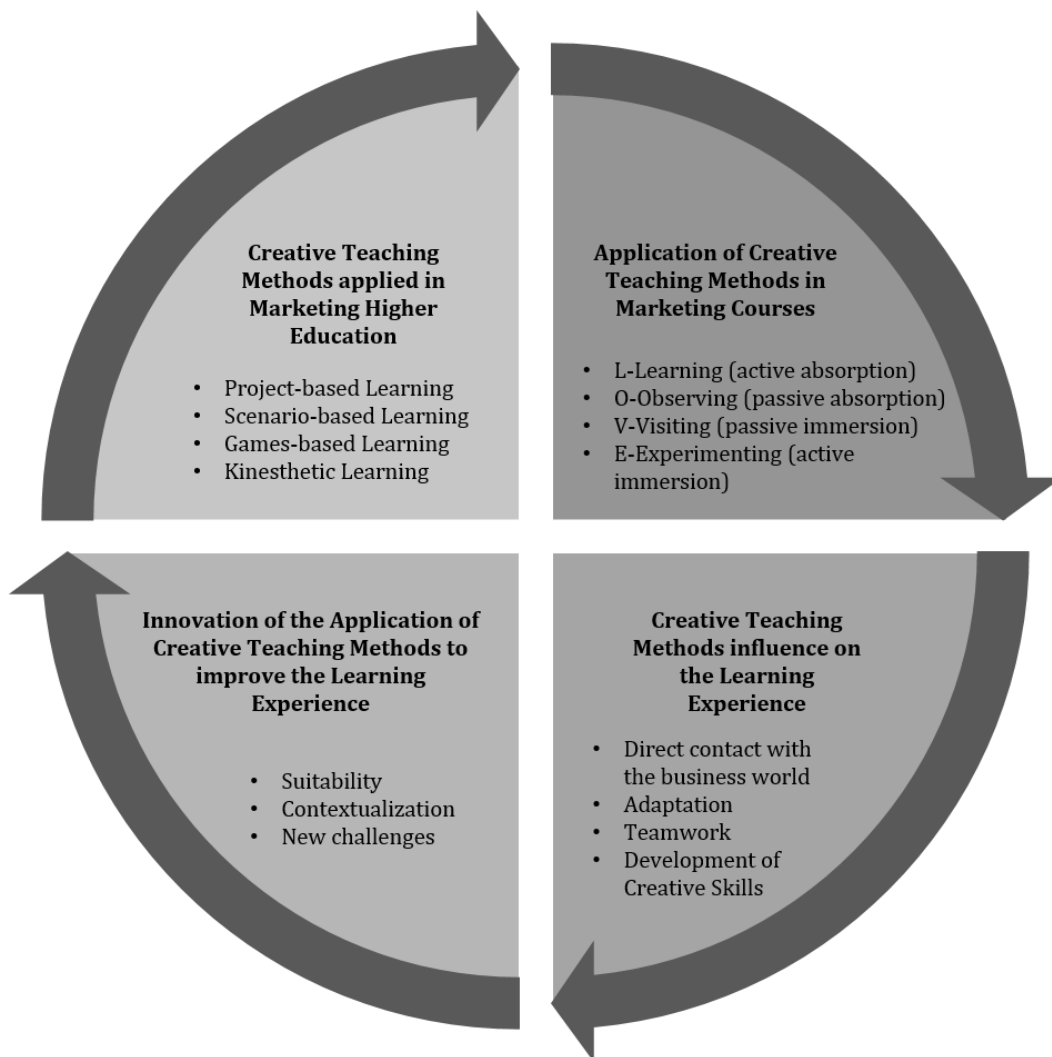


**Figure 6** – Main Contributions of the Study on how to improve the Learning Experience by using Creative Teaching Methods.
**Source:** Own elaboration based on the findings of the study.

In sum, the findings of this study can support marketing higher education institutions and teachers understanding how the application of creative teaching methods improves the students' learning experience. Suitable and contextualized creative teaching methods that promote direct contact with the business world, adaptation to new situations, teamwork, the development of creative skills, and that are seen as a new challenge, enrich the learning experience of students.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation process was based on the purpose and research questions proposed to answer in the early stages of the investigation. The main purpose of this research was to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve the learning experience of students by applying creative teaching methods. To provide an answer to this purpose, four questions were created: (1) what are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing higher education, (2) how are the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses, (3) how do creative teaching methods influence the students' learning experience, and (4) how can marketing institutions innovate the application of creative teaching methods to improve the learning experience of students?

To find answers to those questions, the document analysis of brochures and syllabi was made, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to eleven bachelor or master students of IPAM Porto. In addition, the researcher also conducted pilot interviews to three students. The data collected was analyzed and the answers to those questions emerged.

The findings of this study presented that by using and innovating the application of creative teaching methods, the student's learning experience can be improved. Furthermore, it clarified which creative teaching methods are

applied and how they are applied in marketing courses, their influence on the learning experience of students, as well as the innovation of the application of the creative teaching methods. The student's learning experience can be improved by integrating diverse creative teaching methods in the class, diversifying their application for students to become learners, observers, visitors, and experimenters, and by suiting and contextualizing the creative teaching methods applied, as well as creating new challenges. Moreover, this study's findings strengthened some theories presented by other studies, by reinforcing that the direct contact with the business world, students' adaption to new situations, the development of their teamwork and creative skills have increased, with the application of creative teaching methods.

Considering theoretical implications, with no papers on creative teaching methods applied in the marketing field, this study presented a valuable contribution to the literature on creative teaching methods, because it can support marketing institutions and teachers to understand how to improve the learning experience of students by applying creative teaching methods, especially in the marketing field. Besides, this study also reinforced different theories from past studies.

In what concerns the practical implications, this study provided insights on the improvement of the students' learning experience by applying creative teaching methods. In the form of recommendations, this study suggests:

- To apply different, but relevant creative teaching methods in marketing courses;

- Marketing institutions and teachers to diversify the application of these methods, allowing students to play different roles concerning the nature of learning and their involvement;

- Institutions and teachers to integrate students in the business world, to promote teamwork, and to present students with new challenges, enhancing adaptation, problem-solving and creative skills;

- Teachers to clarify the purpose of the methods applied and its goals, as well as to contextualize them, according to the learning objectives;

- And to offer students the freedom to share their feedback and suggestions regarding the creative teaching methods applied in classes.

In sum, this study can help marketing higher education institutions and teachers to apply creative teaching methods in courses and, consequently, to improve the learning experience of students.

# 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter are presented the limitations of the study, in order to understand the influence of the methodology on the interpretation of the findings. In addition, some recommendations for future research are presented.

The first limitation of this study is the number of interviewees. Dworkin (2012) stated that several articles and books recommended interviewing between 5 and 50 participants in qualitative research, and Guest et. al (2006) found that 12 is the number of interviews needed to conduct to reach saturation. However, this study conducted eleven, which may be acceptable by the literature, but compared with the number of marketing students, it is very low. For future research, a higher number should be considered.

The second limitation is related to this study's approach. As a qualitative research, the findings of this study cannot be directly generalized, since future researchers will have high difficulty replicating the study, as they may not have access to the same interviewees. So, the results may differ.

The third limitation basis on the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2, which made it impossible to conduct physical interviews with all participants. Not being able to conduct physical interviews impacts mostly the opportunity of the interviewer to judge attitudes and behaviors on the interviewer. Accordingly, the

perception of these interviews was based on the participants' verbal communication, and not on their non-verbal communication.

In what concerns the recommendations for future research:

- It should be considered to revise the existent literature and to identify and clarify the creative teaching methods, as well as categorize them;

- It could be relevant to use a quantitative type of approach to understanding what are the most used creative teaching methods in marketing course, as well as identify which types of application of the methods are most current;

- It could also be relevant to study the creative teaching methods applied from a teacher's perspective, in the marketing field;

- It could be interesting to follow a marketing course class and to understand the application of the creative teaching methods, from the student's point of view and compare it with the teacher's;

- A study could be made on the application of digital creative teaching methods applied to marketing courses;

- And it can be made a study comparing the creative teaching methods applied in marketing courses from different institutions;

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# APPENDICES

Dearest,

You are invited to take part in a case study research to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve the students' learning experience, by using creative teaching methods. The researcher is inviting students in the bachelor or master course at IPAM-Porto. This consent form serves to provide you basic information about this study to help you decide whether you want to take part. This study is being conducted by researcher Joana Azinheira, who is a master student at IPAM-Porto.

**Background Information**

The purpose of this study is to understand how marketing higher education institutions can improve students' learning experience, by using creative teaching strategies, in a privately owned institute in Porto, IPAM – The Marketing School.

**Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be requested to:

- Provide the researcher with your email, Zoom identification (if needed), telephone number, and or your Whatsapp identification for ease of communication with you.
- Participate in a face to face or online interview that will last approximately 50 to 60 minutes.
- The venue, date, and time of the interview will be at your discretion.
- You can reschedule the interview at any time to suit your schedule.
- You can withdraw participation from the study at any time without any repercussions.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision whether to participate in the study or not. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time.

**Benefits:**

The potential benefits of this study are:

- A better understanding of the use of creative teaching methods in learning experiences from a students' perspective.
- To assist marketing institutions administrators to understand how creative teaching methods can provide the best learning experience for students.
- To provide data for entrepreneurs that desire to open new marketing higher education institutions.
- Students, since improving their academic experience is the ultimate goal of any pedagogical reform.

**Privacy**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential and the researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Pseudonyms will be used for all study participants and data will be kept secure by the researcher.

2

**Contacts and Questions**

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at azinheirita@gmail.com or by telephone at 931300098.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement.

By replying to this contact with the words "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Date of Consent _____

**Appendix 1** – Informed Consent Form