

Spearheading Digital Age Training Consultancy - A Case Study from Cape Verde

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Abstract: *This study examines a digital training consultancy initiative implemented in Cape Verde, focusing on e-training for trainers. Employing an action research approach, the study engaged 24 professionals in digital training sessions. The results underline the efficacy of digital resources and the positive reception of training modules. The study advocates for training consultancies that embrace digital technologies, emphasizing their role in knowledge democratization and cost reduction, and highlights the importance of contextual sociocultural understanding in training delivery. We assume that the importance of this study lies, above all, in demonstrating how digital technologies can revolutionize training consultancies, offering insights into cost-effective, inclusive, and resource-efficient approaches, suitable for diverse sociocultural contexts.*

Keywords: Cape Verde, consultancy, e-learning, digital age, e-trainers

1. Introduction

As the years pass, our appreciation for the insights of Sim-Sim (2005) increases, when she argues that progress in the quality of education, as in any other domain, requires updated knowledge, constantly fed by relevant research and challenging the *status quo* that often characterizes the educational reality. In this decade, the watchword has been the development of digital skills and, as always, education professionals are required to have exceptional mastery in this matter to enable training initiatives involving virtual learning environments (VLE). Training offers using VLEs, along with the transversal skills defined by the European Commission (EC, 2019), require technological skills that support active methodologies, self-directed learning, and a wealth of content. The watchword has been innovation, especially in e-learning or b-learning contexts, today marked by digital natives (Prensky, 2001), but which in a few years will be led by the alpha generation (McCrindle, 2020).

Nunes (2009, p. 2) describes this generation as one that, “[...] having high quality teaching material at hand, can study from beginning to end all the material of each program, carrying out successive self-evaluations, until they feel if you are in a position to take proficiency exams.” This is reinforced by Lagarto et al. (2020 p. 9), when they admit that “the use of diversity of activities in teaching allows students to use different skills in learning knowledge and also minimizes the demotivation of solitary study”. It's not enough to want to do it; It is necessary to know how to do it, assuming that learning and practicing are complementary tasks and act as allies for those who aim for excellence in performance.

Alongside this attitude must be an understanding of how important it is to know the profile of “new audiences”, including “digital natives” and “digital emigrants” (Prensky, 2001) and, especially the “alpha generation” (McCrindle, 2020), who see digital technologies as indispensable in everything they do. It means corroborating the perspective of Brasil&Osterne (2018, p. 43), when they advocate that “there

is a need for competence (s) to design quality teaching, whether at a distance or not, so as not to just offer cheap 'perfumes' to be commercialized [...]”.

Self-assessment is essential, as it positively impacts commitment to ongoing training. In addition, it is necessary to assume that the greater the coordination between those who define the guidelines and those who materialize them, the greater the harmony between the classifications obtained and the skills developed.

This investment in the development of skills must already be present in the consultancy design phase and be assumed by the financiers, responsible for preparing the Terms of Reference (ToR), as well as the consultant, although it is expected that the latter will be more committed to this challenge. The consultant is recognized as having the legitimacy to promote changes within organizations (Valverde & Oliveira, 2023, p. 4). This understanding contributes to the success of the training and the consequent knowledge of the Return on Investment (ROI), using models such as Donald Kirkpatrick's, according to various studies (Brinkerhof, 2006; Contrera et al, 2013; Kidder & Rouiller, 1997; Nascimento, 2015; Noe, 2010; Pineda, 2010).

These imperatives are discussed at the level of four of the six successful proposals for this 21st century presented by Calvino (1990); It is an attitude that chooses speed in actions and highlights the need for these actions to be guided by consistency, multiplicity, and visibility. This means that in distance learning (EaD) there is little room for improvisation and *ad hoc* and reactive initiatives, as happens naturally and spontaneously in face-to-face teaching (Ainscow, 1997, apud Sanches and Teodoro, 2006; Altet, 1997; Day, 2001). It is expected that teachers or trainers will invest in their self-training, assuming this commitment as one of the paths to professional growth. When this happens, the results of the investments are projected for the advanced and pioneer levels (Al Rawashdeh, et al., 2021; Carvalho, et al., 2021). Feng&Xue, 2023; Figueira & Doroteia, 2022; Furtado, 2023; Lucas & Moreira, 2018; Sousa, et al., 2022; Wilson et al.,

2013).

According to the Innovation Centre for Brazilian Education (2019), to have transformation at all levels of training, it is necessary to change the vision of the education paradigm, the roles of the teacher and/or trainer and the student or trainee. To corroborate this understanding, we report a training experience that involved the Online Live Training regime supported by the Zoom Cloud Meetings communication platform, and the tailored e-learning regime, supported by Moodle, assuming them as means of communication and sharing of knowledge and resources in different formats (script, audio, video, ...), carrying out activities, assessments, among other tasks that can be implemented in e-learning, as an alternative to in-person teaching, circumventing the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. 19 and responding to the needs of a large proportion of professionals who live outside urban centres (Organização Internacional do Trabalho – OIT – 2020).

Along with the concern to systematize the theoretical contributions of scientific literature focused on training in distance learning contexts, especially those made possible through e-learning or b-learning, our main objective in this article is to analyze the implementation and outcomes of a digital training consultancy program in Cape Verde, highlighting the integration of digital tools in enhancing training efficacy and promoting knowledge democratization. A consultancy that begins with the elaboration of the technical-financial assistance to respond to a request made to us in June 2020, within the scope of the Employment, Employability and Insertion Support Program, financed by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in Cape Verde, trainers with which culminated in two e-training sessions for trainers, from July to August of the same year. We must emphasize that we assume that the importance of this study lies, above all, in demonstrating how digital technologies can revolutionize training consultancies, offering insights into cost-effective, inclusive and resource-efficient approaches, suitable for different sociocultural contexts.

2. Consultancy in the context of education

The definition of the concept of ‘consulting’, which interests us, is not limited to advice and the provision of practical assistance, however important these tasks may be. We see consultancy in education as an activity or process that requires consultants to have a set of skills, combined with a predisposition to study, reflect, plan and prepare; an investment that begins with the identification of the needs of the requesting entity and recipients, the conditions for enabling consultancy within the time horizon established in the Term of References (ToR) and that extends to monitoring the materialization and assessment of impact, including the preparation of the action plan, its implementation. In the literature we find several types of consultancies, with the most recent formats relying on digital platforms, including technology consultancy, assisted distance collaborative consultancy for teachers (Cabo Verde & OIT/PNUD, 2020; Calheiros & Mendes, 2016; Fernández González, 2022). The most recent consultancy approaches take advantage of digital technologies to increase efficiency, reduce the

ecological footprint (sending proposals and training plans as well as final reports to the requesting entity, use of a single digital platform to assess the prerequisites of candidates, provision of content and support materials, assessment of trainees' skills, and verification of their degree of satisfaction with the training and/or performance of the trainer/consultant). Among other benefits, there is a reduction in travel costs, in some cases including stays (Erchul & Sheridan, 2014; Gonçalves, 1991; Martins, 2019; Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas, 2012, 2019; Sousa, et al, 2022). This is the view of Stoel and van Leeuwen (2007), when they argue that the best consultancy is the one that results in a tripartite gain – the win-win-win.

3. The training of e-trainers in Cape Verde “think global and act local”

Cape Verde is a very small country in terms of territory and population, with respectively 4,033 km² of surface (land) and 556,857 inhabitants (National Institute of Statistics of Cape Verde – INE, 2022), highly vulnerable for reasons such as the absence of natural resources, dependence on the outside world, frequent cycles of prolonged drought, high levels of unemployment, regional asymmetries. It is also true that our country is a reference in Africa in terms of democracy, freedoms and guarantees, and gender parity. However, what really makes the difference is the level of demand that our own situation imposes on us to be increasingly resilient and restrained in terms of consumption so that we can invest in our education and that of our children.

We can question whether investments in basic and/or ongoing training, as well as the respective models, have resulted in better decisions. On the one hand, we have seen an exaggerated increase in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and schools or professional training departments, with the aggravating factor of providing, if not the same, similar training offers. On the other hand, almost all of these institutions remain faithful to tradition, offering courses or training in person, at similar times and using teaching methodologies that Altet (1999) calls “magistro centric”, instead of privileging active and inclusive, which were encouraged for a little over a century by thinkers linked to the “Escola Nova” movement (Célestin Freinet, Maria Montessori, Ovide Decroly...) and by the (socio)constructivists and humanists John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Paulo Freire.

This scenario has contributed to the increase in unemployment (from 12.2% in 2018 to 14.5% in 2020, INE, 2022) and to the frustration of qualified professionals with higher education degrees. A consensus is more than urgent that providing the country with the capacity to respond to current challenges such as inclusion involves a strong commitment to distance learning. We are harming the new generations in terms of exploring their infinite abilities to take on the challenges of this Digital Era, despite this being something that has been reiterated over time (Correia and Góes, 2013; de Oliveira, 2002; Organization for Food and Agriculture – FAO, 2014).

Oliveira (2002, p. 6) challenges us to reflect on the choices

of technologies and the purposes that dictate the choices, as well as on the elements that can emerge from distinctions between modernizing development and authentic development, and between advanced technology and appropriate technology.

FAO (2014) challenges us to question whether e-learning and b-learning are useful alternatives for the training institution and whether they are as effective as face-to-face teaching. We chose e-learning as it is the modality that does not compromise the purpose of reinforcing the inclusive concern that is the basis of the Employment, Employability, and Insertion Support Program in Cape Verde, started in September 2017, with the support from the ILO, as well as from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), with financing from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

At the beginning of 2020, we saw a reinforcement of the recognition of distance learning by the international community, considering it as an alternative to face-to-face teaching. This decision is slow and reflects a reductive vision of EaD, given what it represents for humanity in terms of defending the right to equal opportunity and the consequent fight against info-exclusion. We recognize that it is an extraordinary gain for education. We know that the acceleration is based on the outbreak of pneumonia caused by the new Coronavirus (SARS-CoV2), forcing governments to adopt alternative measures to keep vital sectors of society functional. Studies admit that Covid-19 exposed the weaknesses of the systems (Amarilla Filho, 2021; Iorio, Silva, and Fonseca, 2020; ILO, 2020).

The literature has reiterated the need for teachers and/or trainers to be trained in teaching methodologies that involve digital technologies to overcome geographic, temporal, ideological and attitudinal barriers. However, we admit that the success of this bet depends on the knowledge we have of distance learning modalities, the technological infrastructure they require, and the technical skills that those involved have or should develop. Therefore, it is essential to diagnose the situation of the country and the institution that proposes to carry out the training, involving the concern of ensuring, for example, the assessment of the needs and prerequisites of the training recipients, the quality of the Internet, finally, the availability in the job market of teachers or trainers duly equipped with digital skills.

4. Why a consultancy based on research-design-training?

The consultancy proposal based on the research-design-training triad and anchored in digital technological artefacts, has two reasons, which stems from our understanding that it is an approach that best suits the characteristics of Cape Verde, an archipelago composed of ten islands (nine inhabited and one not) and equipped with a Constitution that, since Independence in July 1975 to this point (the last revision took place on February 5, 2010) assumes the Right to Education as one of the main paths promoting “d) [...] equality of opportunity in access to material, social and cultural goods” (number 2 of article 78 of the Constitution). More than a right, it is an obligation to demand equal treatment when it comes to opportunities to access education

and continuing training.

Public policies aimed at education in Cape Verde have not responded in a balanced way to the demands of the populations, due to the lack of resources, but also to the fact that, linked to the natural asymmetries between the islands, are those of access to continuous training inherited from colonial times and reinforced by successive governments.

One of the alternatives that populations have resorted to has been traveling to islands where, as a rule, the response capacity is greater. Without a doubt, astronomical investments in physical structures are not necessary to guarantee the right to continuous training, considering the small population size of islands such as Brava, Boavista, Maio, and São Nicolau (INE, 2022). This fact reinforces the need to invest in more viable training alternatives because, in addition to the benefits we have already mentioned, distance learning modalities contribute to autonomy in learning, increased efficiency and effectiveness, flexibility, in short, opportunities for updating.

The second order of reasons has to do with more personal aspects, we refer to our experience as an education professional with several records of participation in training actions, including situations in which experts greatly exceeded our expectations, as well as some in which we witnessed experts with weaknesses in terms of knowledge of Cape Verdean culture and legislation and a lack of commitment to praxis and participant involvement.

5. Methodological procedures

We are forced to subdivide the methodological aspects into two aspects, one that has to do with the didactic sequences or didactic-pedagogical methodologies that served to support the action or consultancy in training (Altet, 1999; Casagrande & Costa, 2019; Castellar & Machado, 2016; Day, 2001; Libânio, 1994), another focus on aspects involving the description of the investigation into this action research (carried out), including the socialization of the results. In the first case, the procedures range from those linked to the planning stage and extend to carrying out the training, including the constitution of the first class, according to the criteria defined by the entity responsible for the training, the “Jov@EmpregoPrograma” (Cabo Verde & OIT/PNUD, 2020). In the second case, we relied on a quantitative approach, especially in the empirical part.

This part involved the development and application of a questionnaire survey, an instrument that included eight questions, two of which focused on sociodemographic variables (gender and island of residence) and the other six focused on aspects related to training. The sample consists of participants, as it was necessary to evaluate the perception of all graduates. The data was collected with a questionnaire survey prepared in Google Forms, exported to the Excel tool for processing and analysis purposes.

6. Results and their discussion

6.1 Descriptive data of participants

Table 1: Descriptive data of respondents

		N	%
Trained according to gender	Man	13	59.1
	Woman	9	40.9
Distribution depending on the island where the e-Training was attended	Santo Antão	3	13.6
	São Vicente	2	9.1
	São Nicolau	2	9.1
	Sal	2	9.1
	Maio	1	4.5
	Santiago	7	31.8
	Fogo	4	18.2
Place where you attended the e-training	Brava	1	4.5
	At home	15	68.2
	At my workplace	7	31.8
Device you used frequently in training	Personal computer	18	81.8
	Mobile phone/tablet and/or other	4	18.2

According to Table 1, Boavista was the only island that did not have participants in this training action for trainers who have been providing training on their respective islands. The data shows that when it comes to the islands where e-training was attended, Santiago leads the list with seven cases (31.8%), contrasting with the scenarios on the islands of Maio and Brava (with one case each). The islands of Fogo, and Santo Antão occupy the second and third position with, respectively, four cases (18.2%), and three cases (13.6%). This scenario does not contribute to equality of opportunity in relation to the right to education, especially from an ongoing perspective, as very few opportunities are available to people who live far from urban centres, and/or on islands that are less favoured at various levels. We just need to look at the data from the 2020 Statistical Yearbook, in which the National Institute of Statistics (INE – Cape Verde, 2022) reports on the evolution of the population's education levels,

broken down according to residence and in the period from 2015 to 2019 as , the proportion of the population in urban areas that reached Higher Education (12.2%) is approximately four times higher than that recorded in urban areas (3.5%).

Another fact is that a considerable portion of the population finds itself in a situation of digital exclusion, without enjoying the communicational advantages associated with the Digital Era, referred to by Peruzzo (2023). According to this author, the current era

- a) Enables the opening of new channels to communicate;
- b) Democratizes access to media communication historically concentrated in economic conglomerates;
- c) Benefits from simultaneity in the dissemination of content;
- d) Enables the creation of new, more interactive communicative environments (Peruzzo, 2023, p. 26).

Our positioning is due to two reasons. On the one hand, there are problems with Internet access; It is very common that there is a failure (or lack of) connection, signal instability, causing successive cuts in communication when streaming video, slowing down the speed, making it impossible to carry out tasks such as accessing and/or downloading content, or high cost associated with a certain type of personal investment in this service, with the aggravating factor that the amounts to be paid at the end of the month are always the same, in short, the State's incipient offer in terms of wireless Internet access points (WI- FI), including in educational institutions.

This scenario is confirmed by INE (2022), when it states that, in 2019 and across the country, only 18% of schools made the Internet available for teaching purposes. On the other hand, there is the problem of the lack of digital skills and the low incidence of digital literacy.

6.2 Satisfaction with modules and e-training globally

Table 2: Level of satisfaction of participants with the training modules taught

The six training modules taught, and the respective levels of satisfaction recorded		
Module 0: Opening and getting acquainted with AVA Moodle	Absolutes	Percentages
Indifferent	2	9,1
Satisfied	14	63,6
Very satisfied	6	27,3
Module 1: Introduction to Distance Learning		
Satisfied(a)	14	63,6
Very satisfied	8	36,4
Module 2: Trainer performance throughout training		
Satisfied	13	59,1
Very satisfied	9	40,9
Module 3: Distance learning platforms used in training		
Unsatisfied(a)	1	4,5
Satisfied	9	40,9
Very satisfied	12	54,5
Module 4: Design and dynamization of e-learning training		
Indifferent	1	4,5
Satisfied	13	59,1
Very satisfied	8	36,4
Module 5: Digital tools for producing Learning Objects for Distance Learning		
Satisfied	12	54,5
Very satisfied	10	45,5

Table 2 gives us others important information: (i) the most used device was the personal computer (81.8 per cent); (ii) the two places chosen to attend the e-training (home = 68.2 per cent; workplace = 31.8 per cent); (iii) the respondents were satisfied with the e-training, and all five modules. The appraisal of the overwhelming majority is between satisfied, and very satisfied; in individual terms, we see that 19 graduates (86.4%) rated the content as very good, and excellent, and 21 graduates (95.4%) rated the activities developed on a scale ranging from good to excellent.

6.3 E-training: content, activities, resources, and time

Table 3: Satisfaction with content, activities, resources, including training time

Dimensions		N	%
Quality and quantity of content and topics covered	Good	3	13,6
	Very good	15	68,2
	Excellent	4	18,2
Quality and quantity of activities carried out	Fair	1	4,5
	Good	9	40,9
	Very good	9	40,9
	Excellent	3	13,6
Quality and quantity of resources made available	Good	8	36,4
	Very good	12	54,5
	Excellent	2	9,1
Time used to address the themes and their topics	Insufficient	5	22,7
	Fair	5	22,7
	Good	6	27,3
	Very good	5	22,7
	Excellent	1	4,5

Table 3 focuses on how satisfied the respondents were with the content, activities, and resources, including in relation to the training time. However, if, on the one hand, we see that the respondents were very satisfied with the content, activities, and resources – in all three cases they were practically unanimous in their assessment of a range from “good” to “excellent”, on the other hand, opinions differed regarding the length of the training.

The satisfaction of the trainees with the content is partly due to our concern to reduce the possibility of criticism by making a choice based on the principle of usefulness for the trainer's day-to-day life, since we take into account the contribution of Rodrigues and Baptista (2007), who agree with Dobson, LeBlanc and Burgoyne (2004) that e-trainers often do not pay enough attention to social factors when choosing content.

In the case reported here, one of the first steps was to parameterise the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and its subsequent hosting on the server of the American company Digital Ocean, which allowed us to use various resources to support learning management, including attendance and punctuality control, integrated into a single repository (Figure 1).

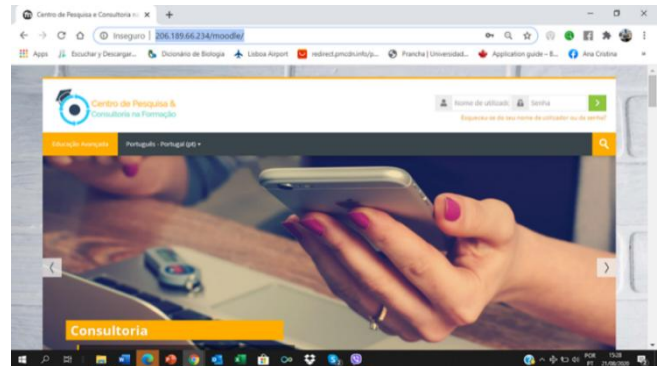


Figure 1: Moodle access page layout parameterised in 2020

Although 17 trainees rated the time resource in a range from sufficient (5 cases) to excellent (1 case), five trainees (22.7%) considered it to be insufficient. We know that e-training of this nature, involving the same number of modules, and similar objectives, is delivered elsewhere with a minimum workload of 50 or more hours.

6.4 Evaluation of the e-Trainer in its different dimensions

Table 4: Evaluation of the Trainer's performance in the different dimensions

Dimensions	Levels	N	%
Methods and techniques used (training strategies)	Fair	1	4,5
	Good	7	31,8
	Very good	9	40,9
	Excellent	5	22,7
Ability to manage learning and communication platforms	Fair	1	4,5
	Good	7	31,8
	Very good	10	45,5
Quality of work monitoring	Excellent	4	18,2
	Good	6	27,3
	Very good	9	40,9
Quality of trainees' involvement in training	Excellent	7	31,8
	Good	4	18,2
	Very good	12	54,5
	Excellent	6	27,3

In the light of Table 4, the trainees rated the trainer's performance positively when it came to using active methodologies such as videoconferences, discussion forums, the inverted classroom, project-based learning, and peer learning. These methodologies were present from the beginning to the end of the training, particularly when discussing models, designing, drawing up and carrying out training projects. In other words, it shows that all these tasks were designed and programmed in the light of the concept of “didactic sequence” (DS) presented by Castellar and Machado (2016), when they explain that

[...] in a DS we try to minimise the occurrence of improvisation in lessons, except when strictly necessary or desirable during its application, as well as conflicts between students and between teacher-students, in view of the established contract, the awareness of all those involved with the established end and how this end will be reached (p. 20).

Also, in relation to the data in Table 4, the trainees gave a positive assessment of the trainer's ability to monitor the work and the involvement of the trainees, since in both situations the trainees were unanimous in their assessment of the trainer in a range from Good to Excellent.

6.5 What to improve in future actions

Table 5: Suggestions for improvement for the next actions

Contributions to improve future actions	N	%
Focus more on the essentials of the platform(s)	1	4,5
Enlarge the field where suggestions are entered	1	4,5
Nothing to suggest	1	4,5
Reduce the number of trainees per class	1	4,5
Increase training hours	11	50,0
Improve coexistence and respect	2	9,1
Make more use of e-learning tools	1	4,5
Reduce session time, increase the number of breaks	4	18,2

Table 5 shows suggestions for improvement for future training sessions; there are eight different suggestions, but the one calling for an increase in the workload stands out (11 entries). This data emphasises that there is always room for improvement. It is worth noting that the parameters that the trainees had the opportunity to evaluate are in line with the

model for evaluating online training proposed by Huang (2023). This shows the universal nature of science, as the model includes 16 items subdivided into six factors, involving the trainer's performance at three different times:

- The «before», which has to do with the way in which, on the one hand, the platform(s) chosen to support communication and/or management of content and knowledge-building tasks is or are organised and, on the other hand, the degree of difficulty or ease that the trainer and trainees experience in using these platform(s);
- the «during» which, in turn, involves the degree of preparation for the session, reflected in the trainer's concern to organise the trainees' self-learning tasks in advance, the mastery of the themes and their respective topics, the diversification and suitability of the teaching strategies, the involvement of the trainees using active methodologies, the guidance and control of the discussions, stimulating enthusiasm and mutual respect;
- the «after?» includes the task of the trainees self-evaluating, comparing their initial expectations with what they have learnt, highlighting the training and the functioning of logistics, as well as the trainer overseeing evaluating the trainees' performance, as shown in Figure 2.

	Formanda A	Formanda B	Formanda C	Formando A	Formando B	Formanda D	Formanda E	Formanda F	Formanda G	Formanda H	Formanda I	Formanda J	Formanda K	Formando C	Formanda L	Formanda M
A: Conceção do Plano	17	17	15	17	17	16	17	16	16	17	17	17	17	17	16	17
B: Materialização do Plano nos AVAs	17	17	16	17	17	15	17	16	16	17	17	16	17	16	15	17
C: Assiduidade e participação	19	18	15	19	17	16	18	18	19	19	18	18	17	18	15	18
Nota final (A+B+C)/3	17,7	17,3	15,3	17,7	17,0	15,7	17,3	16,7	17,0	17,7	17,3	17,0	17,0	17,0	15,3	17,3
Apreciação qualitativa	MB	MB	Bom	MB	MB	Bom	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Bom	MB

Figure 2: Performance of the trainees in the three assessment elements, and overall

Figure 1 shows the trainees' performance and the parameters involved in arriving at each trainee's result; it shows that we used a scale of 0 (zero) to 20 (twenty) values to assess the trainee's ability to design the training plan for a target audience, materialise the plan in the Moodle, and Google Classroom; displays the quantitative assessment with values ranging from 15.3 to 17.7, corresponding to “Good” (B), and “Very Good” (MB) respectively, on a qualitative scale ranging from Very Good to Insufficient. This scenario allows us to conclude that the trainees were excellent in delivering all tasks, which means, therefore, that they made very good use of the opportunity to reinforce their knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding the use of digital resources in training.

This scenario shows that the participants are aware that it is essential to develop knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies that allow the adoption of social practices consistent with this new ecology of *modus operandi* in the training context (Europe Union, 2015). This warning had already been made by Antoni Zabala, and Laia Arnou, in the book *Como aprender e ensinar competências*, translated by Carlos Lima, made available in electronic version by Editora Artes Médicas, when they argue that it is not enough to know or master a technique, nor is its understanding and functionality sufficient, it is necessary that what is learned

serves to be able to act efficiently and determinedly in the face of a real situation (Zabala & Arnou, 2010, p. 10).

7. Final thoughts

This study allows us to challenge the institutions that request training consultancies, the consultants, and the recipients to adopt a more attentive, responsible, and committed attitude towards the materialisation of good practices, incorporating a pedagogical approach focused on the research-design-training triad and taking on digital technologies as their main allies.

The discussion reinforced our conviction that carrying out consultancy in this way brings many benefits to the recipients and to the country. The contributions of this article will resonate if we accept that the difficulties Cape Verde is currently experiencing in terms of materialising public training policies are due more to the skills deficits of professionals in terms of digital literacy than to other factors.

Training today should prioritise the use of active learning methodologies, as the results tend to be rewarding for the e-students/trainees. This is the view of Maia et al. (2020, p. 20), when they state that active methodologies contribute to greater engagement and active participation by the student; strengthening collaborative work; a sensitising and

motivating environment for learning; continuous feedback and quality in learning management.

We see training consultancy as an activity that recognizes “error” as an event whose causes may lie in the trainee or the trainer and anchored in humanist principles. The results show that the training was a success, based, for example, on two arguments: (i) the achievement of the training objective in the order of 96%; (ii) training response to the challenge of meeting trainees’ expectations. Obviously, part of this success is due to the right choice of digital resources such as VLE Moodle and Google Classroom and Zoom – in the paid version – as they contributed greatly to promoting a feeling of belonging. We reiterate the position we outlined in the Introduction, as we believe that investing in self-assessment of digital competences is a task that should precede the provision of consultancy in education or training, especially when we corroborate Stoel and Van Leeuwen's (2007) view that we should endeavour to ensure that the results result in a tripartite gain, and we take the opportunity to suggest that this self-assessment be done using, for example, *DigCompEdu Check-In* (Lucas & Moreira, 2018). This is a tool developed in Europe based on two references for encouraging teachers and trainers to use digital technologies that contribute to the innovation of educational/training practices.

Its structure comprises two sections – the first is based on *DigCompEdu* and includes 22 competences grouped into six areas that relate to the different domains of teaching activity (professional involvement, digital resources, teaching and learning, assessment, learner empowerment); the second includes three competences that reflect a firm commitment to the guiding principles of open science discussed in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (UNESCO, 2022) and, in particular, to the concept of Open Education (Furtado & Amiel, 2013).

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