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## Problem-Based Learning: the i9atlântico experience

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### Abstract

This article presents the “i9Atlântico” project, an innovative educational initiative based on the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) methodology, and implemented at Colégio Atlântico, Portugal. First introduced in the 2013/2014 academic year with 6th and 9th grade classes, the project has progressively expanded and is currently applied to all students from the 6th to the 9th grade, involving approximately 550 students. The main objectives of the project are to promote the development of instrumental, interpersonal, and systemic competences essential for active citizenship, and to enhance school success through meaningful and transformative learning experiences.

Grounded in the theoretical contributions of authors such as John Dewey, Howard Barrows, L. Dee Fink, Jack Mezirow, and Joseph Novak, the project adopts a student-centered approach in which real-world problems function as catalysts for learning. The article describes the structure of the “i9Atlântico Manual – Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship” and explains how the Maastricht “Seven Jump” model was adapted to students aged 11 to 16. Through collaborative work, structured inquiry, individual research, SWOT analysis, and the development of tangible products, students actively construct knowledge while developing critical thinking, autonomy, and problem-solving skills.

The experience highlights the potential of PBL in basic education, demonstrating its contribution to holistic learning and reflecting on its possibilities and limitations within the Portuguese educational context.

**Keywords:** Active citizenship; Competence development; Holistic learning; Student-centered learning; Transformative learning