Abstract
We present a paper on teaching innovation which aims to put into practice some of the trends from the NMC Horizon Report 2018, Higher Education Edition. To be exact, we have carried out an academic initiative for the “Final Year Project” (FYP) corresponding to the subject of “Commercial Law” from the Law Degree.

This has been done through the collaboration between two institutions - the University Miguel Hernández (UMH) and the University Science Park - and by putting into practice one of the key trends for accelerating the use of technology in higher education. In this sense, the completion of the FYP has involved the use of the educational resources available to the student through access to a paradigmatic start-up from the Science Park. A study has been carried out about this start-up in the framework of a Project on teaching innovation corresponding to the “University Educational Innovation Program, UMH” 2018-1019, titled “Corporate Social Responsibility: an analysis of regulations and a study of practices, strategies and management systems that contribute to achieving social, economic and environmental improvements”. The FYP carried out redesigns a new learning space for students, providing them with an authentic learning experience through new teaching methodologies. In addition, it conclusively demonstrates the benefits for both students and businesses and involves a transference of knowledge between the University and the business world.

Keywords: collaboration between institutions, educational resources available, innovative methodologies, learning improvement.

1 INTRODUCTION
“Educational practice encompasses all this: effectiveness, happiness, scientific competence, technical proficiency …”
Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator and philosopher (1921-1997)

The New Media Consortium (NMC) Horizon Report, 2018, Higher Education Edition, published by EDUCASE Learning Initiative [1], which I have read and analysed at length, has led to my academic interest in undertaking a new project of educational innovation in the area of Commercial Law. My work as a university lecturer is wholly dedicated to this discipline, and I consider that the development of this Project would be particularly suited to one of the subjects I teach: “Final Year Project” (FYP).

The European Area of Higher Education establishes the “Degree Final Project” as a compulsory requirement, which is part of the students’ curriculum and one of the subjects needed to obtain a university degree. Likewise, in the Royal Decree 1393/2007, 29th October, which establishes the organization of official university education1, in Chapter III (Art. 12.3), dedicated to official degree studies, it is stated that university education will conclude with the completion and defence of a Degree Final Project. At the University Miguel Hernández (UMH), this subject is included in the last year of the Law Degree Curriculum with six ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System). Its characteristics are defined in general terms, expressing that this assignment will allow students to demonstrate the educational content received and competences acquired in relation to the corresponding Degree qualification, where the demands of an academic maturity can be drawn from the presentation of the knowledge included in this assignment2.

After becoming aware of the new challenges presented in the last HORIZON report, I discovered that there was a new key trend that indicated the importance of involving institutions in the teaching-learning process for my Law students. I then considered that it was necessary to implement a new methodology: “Cross-Institutions & Cross-Sector Collaboration” in the development of a fourth-year subject of the Law Degree: “Final Year Project” (FYP), with six ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer System). To do so, I had to consider a new scenario in the development of the FYP by looking for and studying the new agents involved and structuring a Project through an innovative methodology that would finally allow students to have direct contact with an institution that collaborates with the University and would provide them with new resources and opportunities for acquiring knowledge about the business world. In this sense, the UMH Science Park was an ideal choice and met with my expectations.

This Project was presented in the current academic year 2018/2019 to the “Programa de Innovación Educativa Universitaria” (PIEU) (University Educational Innovation Program) UMH under the title: “Corporate Social Responsibility: legislative analysis, and study of practices, strategies and management systems that contribute to achieving social, economic and environmental improvement”. This program is an initiative of the UMH Vice-Chancellor’s Office for Research and Innovation and the Vice-Chancellor’s Office of Planning which promotes the strategic promotion of innovation and educational improvement within the University through a collaborative approach. Its aim is to promote the generation and implementation of university innovative educational projects based on actions that involve establishing innovative methodologies directed at learning improvements in university degree courses. All of this is in consonance with the trends, challenges and technological developments indicated in the last HORIZON report prepared by the New Media Consortium (NMC) and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI) for Higher Education HORIZON Report 2018-Higher Education edition available at http://www.nmc.org/publication-type/horizon-report/. My Project, accepted by this program in the Resolution PIEU2018/01, was set up in October 2018 and was successfully concluded in April 2019.

This research aims to reflect on the suitability of using a new teaching methodology: collaboration with institutions for the development of the FYP. Once its academic benefits have been verified, it also intends to highlight its appropriateness and suitability for future assignments in the subject of Commercial Law of the Law degree. Due to the interest shown by the university community and the pleasing results obtained by the student as well as the institution at the forefront of this program, the UMH Science Park, I consider it appropriate to share this undertaking through this scientific contribution.

2 METHODOLOGY

The general aim of this study consists of the development of a FYP in the area of Commercial Law by putting into practice an innovative teaching methodology based on the collaboration between two institutions: The University and the UMH Science Park.

2.1 The teacher’s preparation of the FYP about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The initiation of the Project began with an attempt to establish collaboration with different institutions that did not meet the requirements of CSR, although the corporate websites of these entities presented them as such. I contacted several of them and held meetings with them which proved unsuccessful, since they soon declined to collaborate in the development of the FYP, recognizing that in fact they were not real exponents of CSR.

After several failed attempts searching for entities ad hoc, I finally decided that the UMH Science Park could be suited to the proposed Project. A first interview with the director of the Science Park followed by an introductory meeting with the technical representative of the Park led to the likelihood of a collaboration between both institutions and the necessary impetus to initiate this FYP. Under this new methodology, I initiated the Project by selecting a student. The selected student had a good academic record but on becoming aware of what the Project entailed exactly, he became wary and concerned.
2.2 Proposal to the student about the development of the FYP through the use of a new teaching methodology: Collaboration between institutions.

Under this new methodology of collaboration between institutions, the Project was started by the student who, when he initially became aware of the proposal, was initially cautious, wary and concerned about the way this final year subject of the Law degree would be developed.

In our first meeting I explained to the Law student that Cross-institutions is one of the key trends proposed to accelerate technology adoption in Higher Education by the NMC Horizon Project. This methodology involving the collaboration between institutions aims to increase the connection between university reality and institutions in order to be able to work jointly and achieve an improvement in education, learning and research. The union between the institutions is strengthened and increases the individual resources from each party, which benefits them both and combines efforts that are very different: on the one hand, the intellectuals, from the university, and on the other, the professionals from the respective institution.

By using this methodology, students face the real challenges that drive an institution. It brings them closer to its problems, they are in touch with business, industry and finally with society itself. They obtain a preparation that encompasses a more complete reality in pursuit of professional knowledge of the future working world, which can be found on the other side of the university “barriers” and which will soon be a part of their professional life.

2.2.1 A new active learning methodology is promoted through the collaboration between two institutions: The University and the Science Park.

After overcoming the initial problems in my attempts to find an institution suited to the effective development of the Project, I can verify that finally the Science Park was an apt choice. This institution was created in 2008 within the UMH campus in order to boost the creation of innovative companies with a technological basis in order to promote the transference of knowledge between the University and the business world. The Science Park stimulates the generation of start-ups, spin-offs and innovative companies, providing them with different value-added services focused on their growth.

2.3 Development of the FYP through the collaboration between the University and a start-up Company belonging to the Science Park.

I will structure the FYP in two fundamental blocks: in the first part the student should learn about the historical development and significance of CSR, and at the same time, as a student of Commercial Law, he would have to research the legal framework regarding CSR and comprehend it in its different national, community and international scenarios.

Once the student has acquired knowledge of the necessary legal foundations, the Project would continue in its second part, now with the collaboration of the Science Park.

In the second part of the Project, the student is given the opportunity to acquire competences about CSR through studying a start-up: ROIS MEDICAL, S.L. created within the business park. The Science Park stimulates the generation of start-ups, spin-offs and innovative companies, providing them with different added-value services focused on their growth. It boosts the growth of participating companies by offering a Business Orientation and Growth Service that provides personalised and intensive support to fast track innovative companies that have an entrepreneurial and motivated team, which can be launched within a year from the creation of the project. One of the student’s tasks was to become involved in this Company in order to discover and identify the characteristics that constitute ROIS MEDICAL, S.L. as a business model of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, the study focused in detail on the different requirements and accredited certifications of CSR, the analysis of grants and financial aid, and the subsequent recognitions obtained. The student concluded the study, under the new methodology, qualifying ROIS MEDICAL, S.L. as a paradigmatic Company that meets and demonstrates all the necessary requirements of CSR.

2.3.1 Attaining transference of knowledge between the company and the student, achieving in-depth learning.

The student’s learning is evidently deeper considering the practicality and real experience that is provided through direct contact with the Science Park. Through successive interviews and meetings, indicated in the FYP Annexes, the founding partners of ROIS MEDICAL transfer professional
knowledge that surpasses the competences corresponding to the Commercial Law subject in the university system.

Through the start-up, the Science Park gives the student a great opportunity to redesign learning spaces, making them flexible and thereby achieve more active learning. This brings him face to face with new paradigms that surpass the usual commercial issues taught that have not so far been extended beyond the traditional scope of the university classroom and its different subjects. The student’s access to new open educational resources afforded by the institution provide high quality teaching, learning and professional research which is cost free. I consider that a professional collaboration between institutions gives the FYP a greater academic quality thanks to the open resources provided by the Science Park, thereby achieving the excellence aimed for in university studies.

It is fair to add that the transference of knowledge has been developed mutually between both institutions, consisting of a new learning resource. The student has collaborated with the start-up as an advisor in issues related to industrial property rights; in this case, related to patents. When the student joined the Company ROIS MEDICAL, S.L., it had just achieved a European patent in the countries selected for its star product: a transfer wheelchair. This is a product for disabled people which improves their quality of life providing them with greater safety in movement and favouring their user autonomy. This support product, with a recently registered European patent, improves the users' quality of life and that of their careers. The student advised ROIS MEDICAL, SL about the possibility of making an application for an international patent after the manager had made initial contact with future “business angels” in the USA last Christmas. Both possibilities were argued legally by the student and considered by the founding partners, so they could continue with the exponential development that the company was experiencing.

It is necessary to consider that this Project could be re-opened and constituted the following academic year as an interdisciplinary study, given the different implications that it has for other areas of knowledge in the university, such as psychology, medicine, rehabilitation, marketing, etc. In fact, during this academic year, a program is being set up in the university about interdisciplinary studies, which I am participating in, and will become a reality the next academic year 2019/2020. Actions are already foreseen, and a study is being made of the benefits of interdisciplinary studies as an alternative trend for evaluation in contrast to the traditional FYP developed in a determined area of knowledge and corresponding to one degree, as developed by the “traditional” university higher education. This new tendency is highly valued in the HORIZON Report 2018-Higher Education edition, constituting a new learning experience in different disciplines that come together to collaborate with different tools, thereby opening up compartments that have so far been traditionally closed to a great extent in Universities; there being few that undertake these projects.

2.3.2 Teaching innovation acts as a social change strategy: the FYP is not only a theoretical text but contributes to professional development.

An evident example of this is apparent in the transference of knowledge by the student, who provides his knowledge about industrial property and company law to the business community. The student feels useful to the business, to the institution, and to society. His knowledge transcends theory. What has been learnt in the classroom is shown to be human as well as academic [2]. It is valuable to him to do an FYP while occupying an active position in the company itself and being able to share the legal knowledge acquired in the classroom through his opinions and points of view, which finally contributes to the professional improvement of the company.

The student becomes aware that his theoretical university knowledge is directed towards professional perspectives and discovers that he is necessary to the company. What has been learnt in other subjects of Commercial Law, such as “Industrial Property” or “Company Law” acquires greater interest because of the greater professional value that is acquired for the Company. The student is an active subject in the proposed collaboration for the execution of the FYP [3], it is key to achieving academic benefits that the institution, the Science Park, receives. At the same time, the methodology of collaboration gives the student another benefit: a greater responsibility in the management of the FYP [4].

2.3.3 Improving the teaching profession

Putting innovating methodologies into practice undoubtedly means that the traditional functions of the FYP tutor are replaced by the new methods and actions that they must take on. At the same time, they
must withdraw from the usual key role that they acquire throughout their university life. Their role as educators is changing, they need to rethink their functions [5] adapting them to the competences of the 21st century, which is totally coherent with the use of the new methodologies proposed in this work. Before, teachers provided a value of central strength that is now reversed thanks to the more active and participative attitude that the student cultivates in the development of the FYP. The teacher is “separated” from that central position, now occupied by the student through his relations with the institution. The student becomes a fundamental part and leader in establishing relations actively with the start-up, and the new interaction depends on him. The institution provides him with the values and some research resources beyond the education that the teacher can give.

The new needs of university students requires the professional development of teachers, their immersion in digital learning, teaching new active methodologies, renewing their motivation to achieve professional development with the help of institutions - ultimately their generosity.

3 RESULTS
The objective proposed in this Project was developed during this academic year 2018-2019, obtaining the following outstanding results after its completion:

- It redesigns a new learning space for the student, providing an authentic experience in the framework of a Project about teaching innovation.
- It conclusively demonstrates the benefits for both the University and the Institution and entails the mutual transference between institutions.
- It adopts a key trend that accelerates innovation in the European Area of Higher Education through the collaboration between institutions.
- It uses open educational resources that allow the student to have access to a paradigmatic start-up from the UMH Science Park, undertaking a study about its corporate social responsibility.
- The student acquires professional skills through the institution and transference as well as legal knowledge acquired from the university, overcoming the traditional barriers of knowledge.
- The teachers’ role is redirected, modifying and minimizing their presence in the traditional scenario of university learning.
- The teaching-learning methodology is presented and given a key role: The Science Park, as the institution that facilitates the knowledge the student needs to carry out a real study of Corporate Social Responsibility in depth.
- It improves the student’s involvement, interest and responsibility in the development of the FYP. The student interacts with the business agents, not only receiving practical and professional information, but he also occupies an important position in transferring legal knowledge to the business environment, going beyond the traditional university barriers.
- It confirms the need to involve social institutions as necessary agents in the development process of university education.

4 CONCLUSIONS
The Project was completed by the student in April 2019, and presented to the corresponding vice-chancellors, the director of the Science Park, the manager of the Company ROIS Medical and myself, as Project director and tutor. This was done through a power point presentation of the essential ideas, conclusions and proposals for improvement with respect to the study about CSR. The qualification obtained by the student was a distinction³.

In order to know about the student’s satisfaction, a survey was included in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology used. This is the summarised response by the student: “I fully recommend the use of the collaboration methodology between institutions and the subsequent service-learning achieved, which has been a rewarding and useful experience for me, as I have been able to: deal with people who work closely with an area related to Commercial Law; comment on the problems they are faced with to become certified as a socially responsible company; learn about their investment funds, concerns and future aspirations; and build a close relationship with the professionals as a result of successive meetings and interviews. All this was encompassed within a legal environment and although I was external to the company, I was able to provide them with the necessary knowledge as a law student, which the founding partners of the company do not have”.

The Communication Office of the UMH provided internal publicity for this project which was published in the press and via the internet through an important local newspaper in Elche “Diario Información”, appearing in the pages dedicated to the UMH. This news item highlights the Project as an important event within the state university scenario.

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In a well-deserved acknowledgement of the constant development of programs for educational innovation in the UMH, one relevant fact I would like to add is related to a recent joint study by the BBVA Foundation and the Valencian Institute of Economic Research, published in April 2019. This report concludes with the following results: the UMH holds fifth place in the ranking for the best Spanish Universities and ranks third place in the section for innovation and technological development, being placed third in the scales related to teaching^4.

REFERENCES


