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## **EDUCATION OF MANAGERS – CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF JOINT INTERNATIONAL TEACHING**

### **Annotation**

The aim of this article is to report the outcomes of a pilot collaborative teaching the students of People's Ukrainian Academy (PUA) and FH Südwestfalen (FH SWF). The project integrated 24 students from Germany and Ukraine, who were taking courses of "Business Creation" and "Economics and Innovative activities organization" in their respective universities. The students and teachers stayed in their home universities and collaborated via email, Skype and the German partner's MOOC platform. The challenges of doing a joint research project during a short collaboration period within the framework of the current courses are discussed. An analysis based on the students' post-project survey is given. Further avenues of the research are discussed and some general recommendations are suggested.

**Key words:** Collaborative Learning, International Collaboration, Joint Students Research Project, Management Education, Remote Collaboration.

## **ОСВІТА МЕНЕДЖЕРІВ – ВИКЛИКИ ТА ДОСЯГНЕННЯ МІЖНАРОДНОГО СПІЛЬНОГО НАВЧАННЯ**

### **Анотація**

Метою статті є викладення висновків, отриманих в ході реалізації пілотного проекту спільного навчання студентів Народної української академії (НУА) та Південно-Вестфальського університету прикладних наук (ПВ УПН). Проект об'єднав 24 студента з Німеччини та України, які вивчали курси «Створення бізнесу» та «Економіка і організація інноваційної діяльності» у своїх вузах. Студенти та викладачі залишалися у своїх університетах, співпрацюючи по електронній пошті, Skype і за допомогою MOOC-платформи німецького партнера. Обговорюються проблеми проведення спільного дослідницького проекту протягом короткочасної студентської взаємодії в рамках існуючих курсів. Наведено аналіз, що ґрунтується на опитуванні студентів, проведеному після проекту. Запропоновано напрямки продовження та вдосконалення такої співпраці, а також дано загальні рекомендації з реалізації подібних проектів.

**Ключові слова:** спільне навчання, міжнародне співробітництво, спільний дослідницький проект студентів, освіта менеджерів, співробітництво на відстані.

## ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ МЕНЕДЖЕРОВ – СЛОЖНОСТИ И ДОСТИЖЕНИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО СОВМЕСТНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

### Аннотация

Целью статьи является изложение выводов, полученных в ходе реализации пилотного проекта совместного обучения студентов Народной украинской академии (НУА) и Южно-Вестфальского университета прикладных наук (ЮВ УПН). Проект объединил 24 студента из Германии и Украины, которые изучали курсы «Создание бизнеса» и «Экономика и организация инновационной деятельности» в своих вузах. Студенты и преподаватели оставались в своих университетах, сотрудничая по электронной почте, Skype и с помощью МООС-платформы немецкого партнера. Обсуждаются проблемы проведения совместного исследовательского проекта в течение краткосрочного студенческого взаимодействия в рамках существующих курсов. Представлен анализ, основанный на опросе студентов, проведенном после проекта. Предложены направления продолжения и совершенствования такого сотрудничества, а также даны общие рекомендации по реализации подобных проектов.

**Ключевые слова:** совместное обучение, международное сотрудничество, совместный исследовательский проект студентов, образование менеджеров, сотрудничество на расстоянии.

In the era of globalization, international cooperation between universities has already become a standard. Another concept – collaborative learning – has become a common feature of effective education practice. Combining international cooperation and collaborative learning can add new features to standard education processes.

Scholars of collaborative learning emphasize that it can help students accomplish tasks that cannot be accomplished individually, by leveraging knowledge, skills, and resources between participants, as well as creating circumstances for participants to help each other [2]. So there is no surprise that collaborative approaches of one form or another have become a

common feature of effective education practice all over the world. In recent years electronic form of collaboration has been being used more and more widely as information technologies evolve. It's important that e-collaboration gives the opportunity to collaborate with students and teachers in other universities and countries to improve intercultural competence as well as knowledge in the field of studying. While argued, e-learning environment is usually considered as a mean of developing intercultural awareness [1].

In Germany, students are required to study at least one semester in another country. In Ukraine, a newly adopted law on Higher Education encourages universities to organize international programs to give students an opportunity of intercultural learning and collaboration. Undoubtedly important, this thesis is quite difficult to pursue in many Ukrainian universities due a number of reasons such as non-inclusion into EU academic exchange programs, short budgets, lack of experience in international collaboration or poor English. At the same time, the elements of international collaborative learning can be implemented into almost each academic course, if teachers and students are enthusiastic enough.

The aim of this article is to present and analyze the challenges and achievements of international collaborative learning on the example of a joint project that was organized by Dr. Ewald Mittelstädt (FH Südwestfalen, Meschede, Germany) and Dr. Oksana Basmanova (People's Ukrainian Academy, Kharkiv, Ukraine) in the spring semester of 2014. The project united 24 students from Germany and Ukraine, who were studying "Business Creation" and "Innovation Management" courses respectively. Students and teachers stayed in their home universities and collaborated via email, Skype and proprietary MOOC platform.

Courses objectives:

1. Provide students with the fundamental understanding of concepts and theories of business creation/ innovation management.
2. Introduce the main aspects of innovation management including organizational and financial issues of business modeling.
3. Develop student's skills of information analysis, decision-making and presentation in an international sphere of business.

4. Reflect on intercultural aspects of collaborative learning.

The collaborative learning consisted of the following activities:

1. Lectures Exchange: Dr. Ewald Mittelstädt held a Skype lecture for Ukrainian students on the “Business Canvas” topic. Dr. Basmanova presented German students a topic “Business-incubators: Ukrainian experience and best practice” via Skype as well.

2. Students’ research papers that were prepared in the small mixed groups: two Ukrainians and two Germans. Presentations were done by each side in the classroom, recorded and shared with foreign partners.

A survey conducted after this project, showed that 87% of respondents were very satisfied with the collaboration while working on joint research papers opposite to 43% of respondents who rated Skype lecture effectiveness as high – they mentioned that Skype sound wasn’t always good enough. At the same time majority of the students said that learning via Skype was an interesting and outstanding experience for them. From an educational perspective this results emphasize that working in small groups might be more preferable for uniting different-place students in collaborative learning project then remote lectures.

When asked to name the challenges of collaboration, students listed the following:

1. Create one document from the four fragments by four group members (33%).
2. Find the information on the research topic (25%).
3. Understand the ideas of foreign colleagues (16%).
4. Create a presentation of the research (8%).
5. Translating into English (8%).
6. No challenges (8%).

The challenges are listed in descending order, and they demonstrate that there were difficulties in intercultural communication, but they were not the main ones – combined 58% cover the challenges #1 and #2 that have nothing to do with intercultural component.

It’s important to mention the only 16% of respondent’s stated that they had troubles finding common ground with their peers from another country and the same percentage of students (16%) said that they became friends

with their foreign partners during the collaboration. And the most important: 100% respondents said that they liked the project and would like participate again if the teacher suggests something similar. The most important positive sides of the collaboration named by the students:

1. International cooperation (83%).
2. Practice English (58%).
3. Experience of working in a group (42%).
4. Making new friends (16%).

Comparing the lists of challenges and achievements, we can conclude, that 1) the number of challenges is less than the number of achievements; 2) international aspect didn't cause many additional challenges but made the project more interesting and useful for students. From an educational perspective this results are very encouraging and should stimulate teachers to broaden horizons of the courses and add international collaboration to as many courses as possible. At the same time, technical side of remote collaboration is the one that needs careful planning and improvement.

As it is stated in [3], "developing a collaborative learning culture is a process, rather than a destination, and one that requires knowledge, skills and persistence". Analyzing the results of this collaboration it's important to emphasize that this project did added value to both Ukrainian and German courses and broaden the horizon of topics that are normally covered by each teacher. Students received more diversified information and had an opportunity to practice their skills of intercultural e-collaboration while preparing the joint research papers. The current challenge is to increase the efficiency of cooperation. While far from a stable or mature product, the presented scheme of collaboration has some worthwhile features that can be used successfully, namely – working on research/seminar paper in small mixed groups of students. Some of the processes and issues are better understood after this trial. The need for reliable and easy to use technologies that enable communication and collaboration is critical, as is the need for some technical institutional support. Establishing a sustainable collaboration, which links different-time, different-place students in a joint course, works better for longer courses when teachers and students have enough time to adjust tasks, schedules and understand each other better.

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