

## **INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME: COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL LEARNING**

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Demands for intercultural communication skills are increasing as more and more businesses go global or international. Nowadays most of the businesses that decide to go international realize that there are barriers and limitations when entering a culturally diverse market. In a mean time local businesses begin to face a more severe competition in their own, local markets due to the entries of new international players. In order to stay competitive they need to critically evaluate their competitor strengths of having a diverse workforce and consider acquiring new intercultural skills. For these intercultural businesses to breach the cultural barriers it is vital to fully understand the cultural differences that exist to prevent damaging business relations due to intercultural communication gaps. Being ready to prepare competitive intercultural skilled workforce becomes a qualifying factor for the universities striving for succeed on global educational arena.

Until recently the idea of providing students, teachers, researchers and other university staff members with an opportunity to travel abroad to visit and work with other higher educational establishments has been one of the main approaches to internationalization strategies and policies in higher education. This approach called for curriculum internationalization, providing internationally mobile students with the possibility to develop universally applicable competencies and attributes, thus, encouraging global citizenship and employability.

However, when going on exchange programs students face the need to adjust to foreign pedagogical practices and unfamiliar socio-cultural environments, which might cause psychological issues and prevent a student from taking a complete benefit from learning. Thus, even though international mobility is considered to be a gold standard of internationalization of curriculum, in reality the share of students who actually take on an international exchange programs is considerably smaller than those who prefer to stay at home due to various reasons, such as physical disabilities or job- or family related responsibilities. One of the main reasons for students to refuse a foreign study experience is mostly due to financial constraints. To provide an illustration of this point, consider the following. Even when the agreements between universities do not require students to pay for their

foreign studies, living expenses is still something to be covered by a student. So, in the end of the day only a few have a chance to take advantage of a foreign exchange experience. And here we have a situation of universities failing to provide all of their students with equal study advantages.

COIL, also referred to as virtual exchange, is a new teaching and learning paradigm that promotes the development of intercultural competence through creation of a mutual learning environments between foreign universities and classrooms. Virtual student exchange suggests a more inclusive approach to internationalization of curriculum becoming internationalization at home. Thus, providing all of the students with vital international experiences, and not only those, who have followed an exchange program. COIL uses interactive technology, such as social media platforms or other means of online communication (eg. Skype) to connect students and staff from different countries and is rapidly developing a format of internationalization at home. COIL offers students an international study experience through virtual collaboration with fellow students from a foreign university. This type of experience also works as a simulation preparing students for a real world working situations they might be facing in their future careers.

A COIL is specifically designed to link students who have different cultural and geographical perspectives and experiences. Students engage in learning both through their own cultural paradigm as well as by exchanging their cultural perceptions as they move through the course content and assignments together with their foreign peers. Students reflect with each other, thereby facilitating a cross-cultural dialogue that brings a global dimension to the course content. As global and international companies continue to expand and look to employ multicultural workforce, intercultural online interactions skills are becoming a part of a job. Students participating in COIL project learn to work in a multicultural team, thus acquiring such vital global skills as cross-cultural collaboration, flexibility and adaptability to working on project with people from various cultural and social backgrounds and achieving mutually beneficial goals. COIL is providing students with enriched study experiences.

The first COIL project happened back in 2014 and has been carried out by the University of Amsterdam and a partner university in Finland [2]. To date with the help and support from the University of Amsterdam dozens COIL projects have happened among the universities around the globe [1].

For the university to take part in a COIL project the format of an internationalization of curriculum through virtual collaborations should be included in policy plans and strategy of faculties. This step is vital to ensure a long-term commitment from staff.

After participating in COIL the partnerships among universities that were previously based only on student mobility are intensified and strengthened. COIL provides a way to internationalize curriculum and enrich student experiences. Another advantage of COIL is that it allows teachers to gain international experience without the necessity to go on international assignments, thus enriching their skills and competencies with no effect on university budget. Even the short introductory e-lectures embedded into COIL project allow teachers to learn from collaborating directly with their foreign colleagues. The project might have a multidisciplinary approach when students from one of the parties study business, whereas students from another party focus, for example, on intercultural communications. However, most COIL projects assume similar learning outcomes. COIL project might last from one week to one semester, with shorter projects focusing more on students training in intercultural competencies development and experiencing virtual collaborative teamwork. The longer projects might result in more content driven outcomes such as marketing communications projects or export plans.

#### LITERATURE

1. **Conference** Proceedings. International conference Professional development of lecturers : The missing link in internationalization, 19–20 September, 2017, The Hague University of Applied sciences, The Hague, Netherlands.
2. **Conference** Proceedings. International conference The Future of Education : 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 8–9 June, 2017, Florence, Italy.

### **БИЗНЕС-АНАЛИЗ КАК ПЕРСПЕКТИВНОЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЕ БИЗНЕС-ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ**

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Дополнительное бизнес-образование ставит перед собой две основные задачи:

1. Научить преуспевать в имеющемся бизнесе, эффективно вести бизнес.
2. Научить совершенствовать имеющийся бизнес – анализировать используемые бизнес-решения и предлагать новые инновационные решения для удовлетворения имеющихся бизнес-потребностей.