



University of Maribor

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Faculty of Economics and Business

# **Book of Abstracts of the 1<sup>ST</sup> International Scientific Conference »Teaching Methods for Economics and Business Sciences«**

(8 May 2017, Maribor, Slovenia)

**Editor:**

mag. Nataša Gajšt



University of Maribor Press

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## Foreword

NATAŠA GAJŠT

Teaching is a challenging yet rewarding profession which is underpinned by one essential question: *how do we build a good teaching and learning environment so that our students can acquire professional competences which will enable them to be successful in today's global business environment.*

This book presents the abstracts of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Scientific Conference »Teaching Methods for Economics and Business Sciences« held on 8 May 2017 at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business. I would like to thank all authors who submitted their work for this conference in our common search for the answer to the above question.

**KEYWORDS:** • teaching methods • economics and business  
• international conference • higher education • students

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## The Importance of Relationships and Consistency in Bologna

BOB JOHNSON

*INVITED PLENARY LECTURE*

**Abstract** The various tools of the Bologna process support the changes in the philosophy and pedagogy; generally speaking, a movement from 'inputs' to 'outcomes' which impacts upon curriculum development, the student learning environment, their achievements and the role of faculty.

Fundamental to this process is the definition of level descriptors; leading initially to a description of the intended characteristics, skills and competences of students graduating/qualifying for one of the three degrees; namely bachelor, master and doctorate.

Level descriptors overarch the whole process under which are developed Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for all stages. Student performance is measured by the achievement of ILOs in relation to successful completion of assessment tasks. Assessment tasks and marking/grading schemes must be consistent with the level of demand of the ILOs and clearly identified as being diagnostic, formative or summative.

The movement from inputs to outcomes involves a change in role and responsibilities of faculty/teachers and students within their care; faculty are no longer occupied simply with the transmission of knowledge but involved in supporting student learning to enable them to meet the ILOs.

A student's progress is measured in credits which are defined within a university or by national/state decree, as being 1 credit based upon 'x' Notional Learning Hours. The Bologna process encourages faculty to recognise that NLT includes more than class contact hours (inputs) and that 'all relevant learning' should be considered.

**KEYWORDS:** • level descriptors • intended learning outcomes (ILOs) • notional learning time (NLT) •

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## AOL – The Challenges and the Results of the Assessment of Learning

DARJA BORŠIČ

**Abstract** This paper documents the process of the implementation of Assurance of Learning (AoL) according to AACSB standards within the accreditation process. The aim of a robust AoL system is accountability and continuous improvement of teaching methods and approaches of study process. The construction of the system started with a renewal of the existing programmes' goals and setting appropriate objectives and methods for their measurement. Our system is based on a matrix of rubrics, where criteria for assessment are clearly stated. Each rubric is assigned to specific subjects, paper works or final thesis. After a trial measurement, the rubrics were refined. On the basis of the first official results, improvements were suggested, implemented and checked again during the second official measurement. The evaluation of the results shows if specific objectives and, consequently, the related programme goals are met by closing the loop for all objectives and goals. The major improvements are shown in a number of curricular adjustments related to required literature, including two new texts books written by our professors, changes of subjects' intended learning outcomes, changes in teaching methods, revised marking system and similar.

**KEYWORDS:** • continuous improvement • assessment of learning • programme goals • measurement criteria • curricular adjustments •

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## A Review of Selected Measurement Tools of Transversal Competences in Practical Training in Polish Higher Education

BEATA BUTRYN, ANNA KUROPKA, ROBERT KUČEBA, WALDEMAR  
JĘDRZEJCZYK, EDYTA KULEJ-DUDEK

**Abstract** Competence measurement is related to the problems of assessing the growth of knowledge. Measuring the competence can estimate the level in each competence in relation to the expected requirements. Choosing the right measurement tools allows us to obtain information which competencies expected by employers are the same that alumni have.

This article presents some of the tools of measurement of transversal competences in the practical training of students. The authors have presented the characteristics of measurement tools transversal competences, indicated measurement standards transversal competences. It includes the analysis how selected tools are used to explore transversal competences.

**KEYWORDS:** • transversal competences • growth of knowledge • measurement tools •

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## Field Trip and More – How to Inspire Students to be Creative and Independent (Knowledge Transfer – A Possible Generator of Local Economic Development)

VIKTÓRIA CSIZMADIÁNÉ CZUPPON

**Abstract** Supporting education is the best way to drive the economy out of recession and make the future inclusive. According to classic literature, the universities' first role is to educate, the second one is to research, the third one is to transfer knowledge, and the fourth is to transfer appropriate knowledge. From the aspect of universities, the task is given. At the local level, we have to try to make a sustainable and continuous cooperation between local stakeholders to reach successful, local, value-based economic growth.

At the University of Pannonia, there is a live and active program to involve students in local economic development. Via field trips, we go to settlements which are willing to cooperate with us, and survey them according to the discussed topics of the needs. We combine our theoretical knowledge with local stakeholders' knowledge and share practical knowledge at the University and in settlements as well.

This paper is going to introduce what kind of teaching methods could be successful to develop our students' ability to generate ideas and how we can motivate them to be creative. The paper focuses on this process and shows the possible results of this kind of empirical research from the approach of our students.

**KEYWORDS:** • field trip • knowledge transfer • universities • empirical research •

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# Creative Problem Solving Techniques in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Economics and Business Studies

VESNA ČANČER

**Abstract** This paper seeks to compare the need and the possibility of teaching Creative Problem Solving Techniques to the undergraduate and graduate students in economic and business sciences. To meet the intended learning outcomes for current and potential problem solvers in the economy and business, the syllabus outline can include the phases of the creative problem solving process.

The paper aims to select arrays of techniques appropriate for undergraduate and postgraduate studies. It delineates the performance of the course at the postgraduate study and compares it with the one at the undergraduate study. It suggests that graduate students the use of methodologies known as Problem Structuring Methods to deal with wicked problems or messes, and to raise their experience in the use of multi-methodology.

Reflections on the teaching of the topic let us draw the following conclusion. Since graduate students have an in-depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in their specialized study fields and across them and because they usually have more work experience than their undergraduate colleagues, they can use creative problem solving techniques to solve specialized real-life problems, e.g. the ones that require a problem definition in multi-criteria decision making, and implement the results in practice.

**KEYWORDS:** • creative problem solving • economic and business sciences  
• education • postgraduate studies • undergraduate studies •

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## Action Research as a Tool for the Enhancement of Teachers' Professional Development

NATAŠA GAJŠT

**Abstract** Action research can be defined as a process which helps teachers develop professionally. That is, it is a process during which teachers reflect on their teaching practice by applying various research procedures systematically and comprehensively. When focusing on their teaching, lecturers should consider not only with 'what to teach' but also 'how to teach'. This systematic reflection on one's own teaching practice is useful not only at the start but throughout one's entire teaching career.

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss various approaches used in action research as a method for self-reflection which ultimately helps teachers provide an effective learning environment for their students.

**KEYWORDS:** • action research • self-reflection • educators • economics and business studies •

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## Selected Methods of Practical Teaching in Polish Higher Education

ROBERT KUČĘBA, WALDEMAR JĘDRZEJCZYK, EDYTA KULEJ-DUDEK,  
BEATA BUTRYN, ANNA KUROPKA

**Abstract** The article shows the important role of selecting a proper method of working with students, didactic resources as well as a proper form of student work. The authors present in the paper the application of problem solving and activating methods which activate student activeness and contribute to skills and competencies development.

Several sample practical teaching methods applied while working with students are presented in the paper. Each of the methods has been described with reference to its characteristic features, the implementation stages and the results achieved through its application. The authors have also summarized the application of selected practical teaching methods.

**KEYWORDS:** • skills • competencies • methods of practical teaching • problem solving methods • activating methods •

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## Mindfulness: Does it Influence Students' Academic Success and Personal Wellbeing?

SONJA SIBILA LEBE, HERI ŠPIČKA

**Abstract** Practicing mindfulness has its origins in Eastern philosophical traditions. If used regularly, it helps its practitioners obtain their inner balance. Nowadays, students in higher education are experiencing stress and anxiety. This hinders their academic success as well as their personal wellbeing. The authors of this paper thus decided to test in the field of higher education whether meditation as one of possible kinds of mindfulness practice has the potential to decrease the students' feelings of anxiety and stress, as well as to increase their sense of wellbeing and compassion for self and for others.

This paper shows preliminary results of a research in progress performed at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Maribor, Slovenia during some elected courses in the summer semester of 2017 (the results presented include the results from February and March; final results will be available by the completion of the project, after June 15, 2017).

At the beginning of the research, the students were asked to fill in a questionnaire that was testing their self-respect, self-confidence, the ability to learn, to concentrate, as well as the quality of their (social) life, thus their personal wellbeing. The poll was repeated at the end of March among students who participated at least ten times in the meditation (known as the minimum to induce a change by the practicing person). Parallel, two teachers who initiated this research were observing possible changes in students' behaviour as the result of meditation.

Preliminary results show very encouraging results: more self-confidence by the students, a better communication between the professor and the students, as well as a noticeably higher level of attention/concentration, and higher quality of discussions during the courses.

**KEYWORDS:** • student meditation • mindfulness • higher education •

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## The Good Practices of Developing Student Creativity Using Innovative Methods

MAŁGORZATA MAŁECKA-TOMALA

**Abstract** The main aim of paper is to present the good practices of developing student creativity using innovative methods such as creative thinking techniques and mind mapping. The author of this paper is an experienced trainer in the field of developing personal creativity and creating innovative ideas.

The paper presents diverse practices in this area and the results of the evaluation studies carried out among students who participated in various lectures and workshops organized by the University of Dąbrowa Górnicza. The main conclusion relevant for teaching practice is the need to develop student creativity to get better exam results and learn more effectively.

**KEYWORDS:** • teaching • innovation • creativity • mind mapping • development •

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## Contemporary Dilemmas in Teaching Economics and Business Sciences

FRANJO MLINARIČ

**Abstract** Teaching economics and/or business sciences is probably one of the most challenging occupations. The multidisciplinary nature of economics was best described by Keynes who concluded: “The master-economist ... must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher – in some degree”. Some similarly diverse creature could be demanded to master and teach business sciences.

Fortunately, teachers are only humans, trying to find the right balance between student aspirations, labour market expectations and our own capabilities. Teaching such abstract and predominantly ambiguous concepts also confronts us with the dilemma about the right balance between theory and practice, especially with the younger audience lacking experience. At the same, it is still unclear how to respond to the expectations of potential employer who seem to prefer humble, competent people on a level with dentists, capable of solving pressing problems within their limited areas of expertise.

Education in general has various long-term spill-over effects; hence, it is hard to establish precisely which knowledge, skills and competences will contribute most to an individual’s happiness during her lifetime. Therefore, we should follow Keynes’s ambition by promoting interdisciplinary knowledge and team work, encourage scepticism and demonstrate the benefits of ethical and humble behaviour.

**KEYWORDS:** • knowledge • experience • teaching • ethics •

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## Exam Wrappers: Reflecting on the Study Skills of Freshmen in MIS

BIRGIT OBERER, ALPTEKIN ERKOLLAR

**Abstract** Exam wrappers are a tool geared toward helping students reflect on their approach to studying for exams as well as to discover how effective it was and what might have to be changed for them to maintain their success or be more successful. After an exam, students reflect on their exam preparation, their performance on the exam, and their preparation for future exams. The purpose of this reflection activity is for the students to evaluate what they know, take ownership of what they know and do not know, and examine their exam performance.

In this study, exam wrapper reflection analysis was applied for freshmen in management information systems at a higher education institution. This reflection method was used for two courses offered to MIS students in their first year; exam wrappers were provided for two exams for each course.

The results of the study revealed that exam wrappers could make exams worth more than the grade, transforming how instructors and students use exams as a tool for learning, thereby directly influencing instructors' and students' behaviour.

**KEYWORDS:** • text wrapper • higher education • business management • learning •

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## Participative Approach and Experiential Learning Approaches for the Students of Economics and Business

IGOR PERKO, ZORAIDA MENDIWELSO BENDEK

**Abstract** In the paper, we examine the potentials of the applicability of participative approach and experiential learning concepts and methods in the regular learning process for the students of economics and business. These approaches prove a high success rate in the lifelong learning programmes and the learning of people with disabilities and of those excluded from the society.

In the first step, the desired properties of the learning environment for the students of economics and business found in the literature are examined. Next, the main principles and the results of participative approach and experiential learning are elaborated. In the synthesis, the desired properties are compared with the principles of the proposed methodologies. Last, suggestions to the practitioners are provided including the elements of the proposed methodologies, which can provide value added in a regular learning process for the students of economics and business.

The report provides value added for the lectures in a regular learning process, equipping them with the methods which have proved a positive impact in the lifelong learning process. It also elaborates the gap between the desired properties in the regular learning process and the methodologies, potentially capable of closing this gap.

**KEYWORDS:** • participative approach • experiential learning • regular learning process • lifelong study • disabilities •

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## Simulations as a Teaching Method in Public Economics

JAVIER SIERRA

**Abstract** This paper presents a new teaching method used within the framework of the course on Public Economics and Economics of the European Union in the Grade on Business Administration at the University of Salamanca. The aim of this methodology is to allow students to get a first-hand experience on Public Economics management at three different levels: local, national and international. This method is based on three different simulations through students may apply their knowledge as regards the decision-making process in a practical and innovative way. Public Economics management at the local level is simulated using the SIMCITY computer game; the decision-making process at the national level is experienced by a simulation of the *Congreso de los Diputados* (the Spanish National Parliament); and a simulation of the ECOFIN is organised to offer students a first-hand experience of the mechanisms to manage Public Economics at the international level.

The results of the activities show that this approach contributes to a better learning of Public Economics management. This method has proved its worth as a valuable tool to increase student's interest and knowledge on public economic management at different levels.

**KEYWORDS:** • simulation • teaching • innovation • technology • practical •

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## Innovations in the Sustainable Accounting Teaching Methods in Hungary – Best Practices

ÁGNES SIKLÓSI, KRISZTINA SISA

**Abstract** One has to prepare from time to time for the challenges of teaching accounting in higher education. They include varying expectations in the labour market, different attitudes and motivations of students, professional competence requirements, the legal and the business environments, challenges of globalisation and last but not least the competition between universities. These factors all induce the need to become innovative.

We are set to give an interpretation and a description of the concept of sustainable teaching of accounting in our study. We wish to provide a comprehensive view of teaching accounting in higher education institutions in Hungary with respect to the market share of the participants, and also the contents, forms and structures of the training they provide. We would like to give a summary of the innovation processes going on at BBS relying on empirical research in the mirror of competence requirements of the labour market, students' attitudes and motivations. Our goal is to show the strengths and weaknesses of teaching accounting in higher education institutions of Hungary as well as the opportunities and threats that are found in teaching accounting in higher education institutions in a way that this teaching can innovate from time to time and is sustainable for many years.

**KEYWORDS:** • tertiary sector • accounting education • education methods • innovation • sustainability •

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## Using Business Simulation Methodologies in Higher Education: Lessons Learned

PAULINO SILVA

**Abstract** This paper presents the lessons learned with the inclusion of Business Simulation courses in the Accounting and Administration undergraduate degree at ISCAP – IPP (School of Accounting and Administration of Polytechnic Institute of Porto). These courses were introduced in the beginning of 2003 with a main purpose: to provide students a risk-free simulated business environment to prepare them for a very demanding real business world. Additionally, and for students that aspire to be certified accountants, Business Simulation courses are an alternative to the internship in a real company. During the two semesters in which they have ‘Business Simulation I’ and ‘Business Simulation II’, students perform the role of general managers. Students are divided into companies and each company consists of three students, in average. During the class period, they need to pass an electronic card in every class. A set of diversified and complex activities are performed. Just as an example, to set up a company is the first activity students need to perform. This activity will demand from students a diversified body of knowledge, such as fiscal law, commercial law, financial accounting, just to mention a few. Another important activity is the written annual report and its oral presentation that enables the development of some important and very valued skills in the business world. Besides these activities, human resources management and correspondent payroll activities, commercial, administrative and management activities are also performed. All the activities provided to students have a connection with previous knowledge they had in other courses of the degree, such as tax, commercial and labour law, financial and cost accounting, ethics, financial management, etc. One of the main goals of Business Simulation courses are to overcome the lack of practical education students have in other courses, enabling a smoother transition to the business world, which also demands a more action-based education. In this line, and besides technical skills, some soft skills are also promoted, such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication.

**KEYWORDS:** • Business Simulation • Learning Methodologies • Action-Based Learning •

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## Nonformal Activities for the Improvement of the Development of Vocational Competences– the Polish Example

MACIEJ SZAFRĄŃSKI, MAREK GOLIŃSKI, EWA WIECEK-JANKA,  
MAGDALENA GRACZYK-KUCHARSKA, MAGORZATA SPYCHAŁA

**Abstract** There is a strong need to adjust professional competences to the entrepreneur's needs in the era of the knowledge-based economy. In the opinion of entrepreneurs and specialists on the labour market, people graduating from vocational secondary schools do not have sufficient knowledge and professional competences.

The review of methods and tools of formation of professional competences in Poland is shown in this article. The characteristic of the development of transversal and professional competences are presented in this article as well as the forms of teaching them in formal, nonformal and informal way. Elaborated and developed national and regional policy helps in the acceleration of improving vocational education in Poland. The projects co-financed by the European Union, e.g. under the European Social Fund, are implemented as a part of social investments helping in the development of vocational competences. One of those projects is *Time for Professionals BIS – Professional Wielkopolska Region* that helps in implementing many social innovations in vocational education.

Contributions, idea and also the way of the implementation of that project are shown in this paper, which is the result of previous multiannual activities done in the framework of the *Technical Knowledge Accelerator®* initiative. The model of transforming implemented and multiannual activities in sustainable structure of cooperation in the form of Economic-Educational Network in Wielkopolska Region is presented, which should help in the multiplication in the future the positive effects of improving the development professional competence in Poland.

**KEYWORDS:** • vocational learning • projects • acceleration • knowledge management •

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## Brainstorming Method for Developing Students' Transversal Skills

TJAŠA ŠTRUKELJ

**Abstract** In business practice, employees need several transversal skills, e.g. entrepreneurship, creativity, communicativeness and teamwork. To enhance the development of these skills and thus to assure students to get their first job faster, university teachers may use several teaching methods.

To accelerate transversal skills, the members of the Department of Strategic Management and Company Policy at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business, developed a teaching process model which includes three selected teaching methods. One of them is the *brainstorming method*, which is presented in this article. Although the principles and the processes of method are well known, we have developed it further by including the concepts of synergy, interdependency and by the adoption of a holistic approach. In this paper, the author thus presents this enhanced version of the *brainstorming method* in detail and discusses its relevance and the application in the context of teaching and learning.

**KEYWORDS:** • brainstorming method • transversal skills • transversal competences • students • practical training •

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## Selected Approach to Faculty's Ethical Decision-Making towards Building a Good Student Environment

TJAŠA ŠTRUKELJ

**Abstract** Many human problems nowadays reflect the consequences of unethical and socially irresponsible decision-making in the past and the present. Individuals, groups, enterprises and other organizations as well as governments are responsible for the survival of our society, the animals and plants, and the Earth's natural environment as a whole. Although we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our consciousness still needs the shift from independence to interdependence and towards more requisitely holistic approach.

In this paper, we discuss enterprises in a broader sense (including all organizations) and introduce a selected ethical decision-making approach for them, with the proposed code of ethics to be realized during studentS teaching process. Although enterprises have several possibilities to develop themselves towards being more ethical and socially responsible, we research the mentioned approach that can be a useful tool for building a good student environment. In order to achieve the desired results, this approach must be supported with enterprise governance and resulting enterprise policy, strategic management, operative management, and business practice innovation.

**KEYWORDS:** • enterprise governance • enterprise policy • strategic management • ethical decision-making • social responsibility •

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## Creative Learning through Simulated Firm

AMALIA VENERA TODORUȚ

**Abstract** This paper approaches the aspects regarding creative learning through simulated firm. Creative learning is based on an innovative teaching, which is regarded more as a process that involves implementing new methods, content and tools that would be a benefit for students and, implicitly, for their creative potential. The paper aims at describing the student-centred teaching method called 'simulated firm', like a vector for developing creative learning. The 'simulated firm' is an interplay learning method, a modern concept for an interdisciplinary integration and application of knowledge, an approach of teaching-learning process ensuring proper conditions for probing and practical thorough learning of the abilities achieved by students in the course of professional training.

This method is directed at building the competences, abilities, attitudes and personal capacity by allowing students to act on behalf of being respectful of the environment and, at the same time, identifies and finds solutions for different issues in the context of sustainable development. This method supports the development of a sustainable culture since students learn about values, attitudes, behaviour, mentalities, norms and rules that are relevant to their actions as responsible citizens. At the end, I present a case study referring to how to apply a simulated firm in Romania through a project.

**KEYWORDS:** • creative learning • simulated firm • innovation • values •

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# The Quest for Optimal Fusion of Learning, Teaching and Evaluation for Improving Student Classroom

ANETA VASILJEVIC-SHIKALESKA, MARTIN STOJANOVIKJ, ZANINA  
KIROVSKA, MARTIN KISELICKI, BILJANA GJOZINSKA

**Abstract** This paper presents a comprehensive investigation of the preferred learning styles of students and the manner materials are being presented in the classroom, as one of the most important components in the learning environment. Therefore, a survey of the views of business and management students and their professors on the use of various learning and teaching techniques on respective courses, utilizing two types of questionnaires, was conducted. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to summarize collected data. Findings show that according to the students' opinion, the extensive use of practical exercises with real business data, seminars and case studies during classes is very important and would contribute the most to their acquired knowledge. Teachers' perspective differs only in the employment of problem based learning which they also consider as a very beneficial teaching and learning method. The in-class shift of lectures from professor-to-student interaction to student-to-student interaction, and the team work and group discussions, as outside activities, would greatly foster the active and collaborative instead of the cooperative learning style. The introduction of open-book examination, oral examination and the analysis of cases/data/texts in addition to the commonly practiced assessment methods would contribute towards more accurate evaluation of students' knowledge. Taken together, matching the learning and teaching styles combined with accurate knowledge evaluation would improve overall students' academic achievement.

**KEYWORDS:** • learning style • teaching style • active learning • collaborative learning • business and management •

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## Teaching Methods to Support Creative Environment

ZDENKA ŽENKO

**Abstract** Teaching in economics and business disciplines includes developing creativity. The intercultural dimension, interconnectedness through social networks and accessibility of online courses demands greater adaptability of university teachers to requisitely manage the complexity in more global community. Innovating is the focus of modern societies. Dyer et al. (2011, p.1) discuss the innovation as the strategic priority for virtually every company. Precondition of innovations is creative environment where ideas can develop into useful solutions of meaningful needs. The IBM research (IBM, 2010) of fifteen hundred CEO's recognized that creativity is the number one leadership competency of the future.

For creativity non-conformism, flexibility and originality are important. They can be fostered by encouraging the lateral and divergent way of thinking. These two ways are less common in educational process than convergent and vertical way of thinking. Six thinking hats method of De Bono encourages such thinking and it should be purposefully combined with other methods like USOMID, ABC, Delphi. For ideas to develop into innovations cooperation in groups of versatile specialists assures the requisite variety. Communication among members is vital not only to describe the idea but through the whole invention-innovation diffusion process. Oral presentations as a way to participate in class support the communication among the millennial students more used to short texting on mobile phones than thoroughly express their ideas, beliefs and thoughts. Students' as well as elementary school pupils state stress as an important hindering factor in their learning process as well as life. Therefore, the teacher's role became not only to offer knowledge for their future social or professional roles but also to prepare teaching methods to develop creative environment in the classroom for more international or internationally active millennial students.

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