
THE INTERUNIVERSITY STUDY IN THE NETWORK OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Petra Poulová University of Hradec Kralove, Hana Šrámková University of Hradec Kralove

Introduction

Present time which is characterized by fast developing business and technological environment places new and new requirements on personnel of each company or organization. In strong competition only such an organization can succeed which in addition to other competitive advantages gains the advantage of educated and permanently trained workers at all levels of the company hierarchy. It is clear that time and expenses spent on education have to be reflected in a corresponding way in the final results.

Traditional ways of education are currently supported by new forms of education utilizing modern technology. These days e-learning is a largely discussed and highly perspective way of education. Among obvious advantages the financial ones rank predominantly, including travel expenses, accommodation, also saving money on rent of training venue and hiring a lecturer, etc. On the other hand it is necessary to mention quite high costs of designing, implementation and running e-courses. Now we can find a wide range of educational activities, information portals, and virtual pedagogical and student communities, and of course an abundant offer of various educational programmes both in our country and abroad. Market with the offer of educational activities is very large and that is why providers of these services must be resourceful and have to offer new approaches and methods to future clients.

eLearning at the University of Hradec Kralove

Over previous years the offer of e-learning courses has developed into a large scale covering most of the specializations (informatics, management, languages, science).

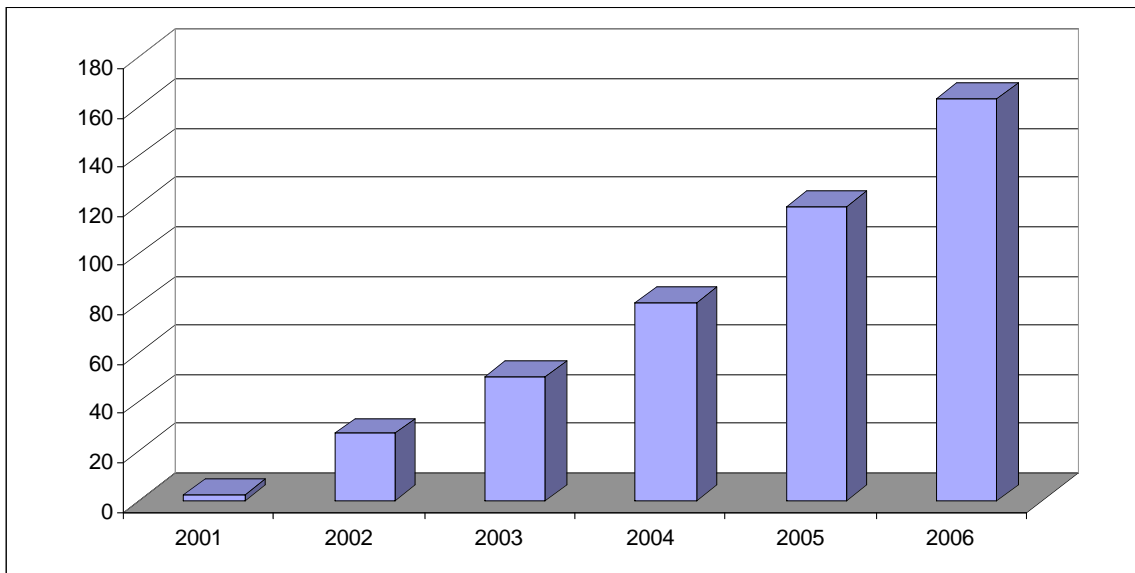
The contribution deals with experience and results that were collected during creation, implementation and evaluation of eLearning at the University of Hradec Kralove.

Like most universities, the University Hradec Kralove and especially the Faculty of Informatics and Management has been using e-learning courses intensively for several years. First fully distance courses, which were formed in 1997, were based upon WWW pages. A tutor placed study materials, tasks or assignments there. An e-mail tool served as a means of communication.

In the following years the Faculty started to use a virtual platform LearningSpace for distribution of e-learning courses. Later the WebCT virtual environment replaced it and is currently being used. They both offer necessary and helpful tools and services to ensure e-learning courses of high quality.

The Faculty organizes a number of study specializations, therefore it was necessary to prepare courses from various areas and of course in various ways. At the faculty we prepare a wide range of e-learning courses from fully distance applications to just those which support a blended learning method.

Thanks to the above mentioned measures it was possible to implement eLearning in large numbers into graduate studies as well as life-long education. In 2006 curricula included more than 150 e-subjects altogether.



Graph Yearly Increase in e-subjects

The Interuniversity Study

The term Interuniversity Study means network of several universities and virtual inter-university space where blended and distance form of study can be run via eLearning. The Interuniversity Study has a positive and beneficial impact on students from participating universities.

Students will have an opportunity to take part in educational activities guaranteed by prominent experts with great pedagogical skills from various universities. Logically priority will be given to educational activities corresponding to demanding expectations and needs of students.

Mutual benefit of sharing study subjects offered by particular universities will enable students to widen a spectrum of individual study plans and tailor them according their individual professional needs (where the set limits of accredited study programmers are secured).

Blended and distance form of study by means of eLearning facilitates larger time flexibility of study. Students can study chosen subjects at the time that suits them depending on their individual time option.

Project RIUS

The success in implementing e-learning courses in the undergraduate and life-long education motivated the Faculty leaders to decide on cooperation with another educational institution. Since 2005/06 University of West Bohemia, Plzen, Faculty of Informatics and Management, Hradec Králové and Faculty of Management and Economics, Tomas Bata University, Zlín have participated in the project RIUS (Initiation of the Inter-university Study in the Network of Selected Universities in the Czech Republic). The project belongs to those which are supported by European social funds.

The main objective of the RIUS project is to build a substructure in the framework of selected universities in the Czech Republic and thus enable to create virtual inter-university space where blended and distance form of study could be run via eLearning. When the project is finished, desired infrastructure that is essential for inter-university study should be completed and tested. All necessary procedures should be checked and set to facilitate activities related to inter-university study. [1]

Project EVENE

On the basis of the RIUS project experience, another one, called EVENE, arose. The EVENE project creates a core network of traditional European higher education institutions operating in the field of Economics and Management study. [2]

Both of them – RIUS and EVENE projects - operate with the expression of virtual mobility. It represents the use of information and communication technologies to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility but without the need to travel [3].

These are several examples of Virtual Mobility projects in the European area – VENUS – Virtual and E-mobility for Networking Universities in Society, EVICAB – European Virtual Campus for Biomedical Engineering, REVE – Real Virtual Erasmus, ...).

Approach to Virtual Mobility in Higher Education

Virtual Mobility at Higher Education Institutions can be divided into four basic categories [4]:

- a virtual course or seminar
- a virtual study programme
- a virtual students placement
- a virtual support activity to physical exchange.

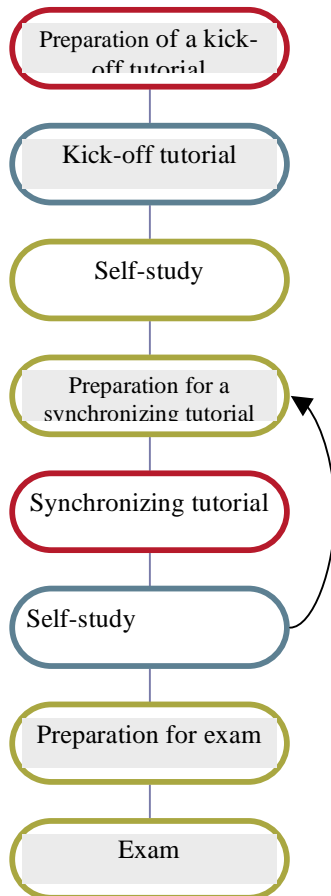
The RIUS and the EVENE projects work on model a).

It is advisable to introduce a business process model to succeed in the project. It differs from the functional system. At the beginning it is necessary to realize that neither functional nor procedural ways have strict or clear borders. Not everything is always functional or procedural. Generally speaking we can see in the models both elements procedural and functional. The ratio of these two aspects is of highest importance.

The system must be ready for changes that are going to come, which results in the need of much wider flexibility in project management. As for project management, it means to work with more versions and be ready for unpredictable changes. Different scenarios/versions are much more demanding than functional processes with one unambiguous solution, that is why they quite often bring misunderstanding and reluctance of involved people. When process management is being introduced, changes in several cardinal areas come into existence:

- Changes in organizational area
- Changes in the area of information systems and technologies
- Changes in personnel area

The whole process model of interuniversity study is of wide comprehension, to illustrate it we are going to show only a process model of the incident study of e-subject with the detail “Preparation of kick off tutorial”.



Picture no. 1
Study of e-learning subjects

Conclusion

The business process management represents a way of comprehension of the role of personnel, working teams, organizational units and their share in the outcomes made by particular processes. It is clear that each change should aim at improving the whole system; making it more effective and of higher quality. Process management is only the first step out of many changes. Work experience proves that without clear strategy and defining targets (economic that can be quantified) any change is doomed to failure.

Most of well-known definitions were acknowledged after the implementation of business process model into the project management. The model was useful when searching for project weaknesses and their consecutive solutions. Project management made a complex view of the project possible. Problems emerged especially in communication among participants and in the area of administrative processes.

Working on the gained experience we can recommend this system of management also for other projects.

References

1. POULOVÁ, P, ČERNÁ, M., HÁN, J. - ZIMOLA-B. (2006) INITIATION OF THE INTER-UNIVERSITY STUDY IN THE NETWORK OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC. VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY. E-ACADEMIA BRATISLAVA, PP. 115-9.
2. ZIMOLA, B., POULOVÁ, P., HÁN, J. (2006) eLEARNING PROJECT EVENE - ERASMUS VIRTUAL ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT STUDIES EXCHANGE . VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY. E-ACADEMIA BRATISLAVA, PP. 98-100.
3. [HTTP://ELEARNINGEUROPA.INFO](http://elearningeuropa.info)

4. BIJNENS, H. BOUSSEMAERE, M. (2006) EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN EDUCATION THROUGH VIRTUAL MOBILITY – A BEST-PRACTICE MANUAL

The contribution arises from the projects RIUS - *Rozběh interuniverzitního studia v síti vybraných univerzit ČR, CZ.04.1.03/3.2.15.1/0067 (The Initiation of the Interuniversity Study in the Network of Selected Universities in the Czech Republic)* and *EVENE - Erasmus Virtual Economics & Management Studies Exchange, 2005 – 3837 / 001 - 001 ELE-ELEB 12*

Author(s)

RNDr. Petra Poulová, Ph.D
University of Hradec Kralove, Faculty of Informatics and Management
Rokitanského 62, Hradec Králové 3, 500 03
petra.poulova@uhk.cz

Ing. Hana Šrámková
University of Hradec Kralove, Faculty of Informatics and Management
Rokitanského 62, Hradec Králové 3, 500 03
hana.sramkova@uhk.cz