

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS  
OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

»»TEACHING METHODS FOR  
ECONOMICS AND  
BUSINESS SCIENCES««

**Editor:**  
**lect. Nataša GAJŠT M.Sc.**



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of the 2<sup>ND</sup> International Scientific Conference  
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# Foreword

NATAŠA GAJŠT

**Abstract** Today's global business environment is faced with complex and multidisciplinary issues. As business schools educate new generations of business people who will need to deal with these issues, the teachers at these institutions need to constantly innovate their teaching methods and approaches in order to pass relevant knowledge about business practices, processes and environments to their students. New, innovative approaches to teaching economics- and business-related subjects are thus essential to spark our students' curiosity and innovativeness and to develop their professional competences and skills so that our graduates, once employed, will have a positive impact on the economy as well as on the society.

This book presents the abstracts of the 2nd International Scientific Conference »Teaching Methods for Economics and Business Sciences« held on 7 May 2018 at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Economics and Business. I would like to express my thanks to all authors who submitted their work for this conference in our common response to the above challenges.

**Keywords:** • higher education • teaching practice • teaching methods • economics and business studies • students •

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# Interactions and Learning about Organisational Complexity

PROFESSOR RAUL ESPEJO  
*INVITED KEYNOTE SPEECH*

**Abstract** In this presentation I want to support the appreciation of learning processes about organisations in academic environments. The aim is showing how to create a realistic environment for participants to work out necessary interactions to develop communications and relationships for the viability of an organisational system such as a school, hospital, company or any other type of enterprise. This realistic environment starts from agreeing a collective purpose for this organisational system, such as providing health, educational or information services. In these contexts a wide variety of possible problems may emerge from the interactions of organisational actors.

From the perspective of a learning programme at a university I visualise a variety of problematic situations in any organisational system. I suggest that these situations can be simulated in advance for this system, based on existing contacts with an organisation's personnel and also on the availability of data in public sources. In this presentation I want to illustrate a possible way to do this modelling of an organisational system.

For discussion purposes I will assume one small local enterprise anywhere, say in Slovenia, with among others a general management and multiple functions, such as information and communications, marketing, finance and production. I will illustrate, from a cyber-systemic perspective, how this enterprise emerges from key interactions among these functional roles as well as with environmental agents. I will illustrate alternative communications and relationships to improve the organisation's capacity to create, regulate and implement its products and services. My proposal is that students, to support their local curriculum in management and innovation, may simulate such an enterprise with the support of local knowledge and available information technologies.

**Keywords:** • interactions • modelling for learning • organisation notional • complexity • invited keynote speech •

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## Development of Case Studies Proposed by Students as a Strategy in Teaching Corporate Finance

BEGOÑA ÁLVAREZ-GARCÍA, JOAQUÍN ENRÍQUEZ-DÍAZ &  
FÉLIX PUIME-GUILLÉN

**Abstract** Corporate finance is an area of knowledge related to business decisions concerning investments, funding, capital structure and distribution of dividends. This means that usually real-world examples of companies, or very close to real companies, are used to teach finance subjects and to discuss the decisions that managers must face in their daily activity. The case studies and examples of companies are normally chosen by the teacher to ensure that all the students learn on a common ground that includes every caseload shown in the master lectures. However this work presents a teaching experience based on the contrary: students (in groups of 3-4 people) shape and propose their own business project at the beginning of the course and each group develop independently its business idea throughout the academic semester, dealing with its own decisions and translating into the project the concepts they are learning. This way of working, based on case studies proposed by the students, aims (i) to increase student motivation and implication in the subject, (ii) to improve the development of social skills related to group working environments, and, consequently, (iii) to improve academic performance. Nonetheless, it is important to continuously monitor the working groups to prevent that students feel lost, have sensation of chaos or focus on aspects of the business far from the subject matter being studied.

**Keywords:** • case studies proposed by students • case studies in corporate finance • teaching experience • student motivation • academic performance

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# Practical Knowledge Transfer in Quality Management Lectures – The »Peanut Chocolate Candy«-Case

STEFAN BONGARD

**Abstract** Students of Bachelor's degree in logistics join a lecture "Quality Management" in their fourth semester. In this lecture logistic quality is defined as "the degree of performance between the customer's expectation and the suppliers performance". This generic definition leaves much space for interpretation. In order to convey practical knowledge concerning this definition, the "Peanut Chocolate Candy-Case" was developed based on the methodology of Action Based Teaching.

Following steps were conducted: 1. Definition of various quality criteria, such as "Full Nut Quote" or "No-Nut-Quote". 2. Practical examination of 869 pieces of Peanut Chocolate Candy (three different brands) with pincers to determine supplier performance. 3. Design and conduction of an online survey to research customer's expectations with 270 valid answers. 4. Data Analysis and interpretation of results.

The paper describes comprehensible all necessary processes, learnings and interesting results of this empiric case study and wants to encourage others to create comparable cases.

**Keywords:** • action based teaching • empiric case study • logistics • online survey • quality management •

# Didactical Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Modern Teaching Practices (MTP) in Higher Education

KATJA BREZNIK, NATALIJA ŠPUR, ALASTAIR CREELMAN &  
SEBASTIJAN FRUMEN

**Abstract** Along with the development of information communication technology (ICT) came modern teaching practices (MTP) which provide opportunities for effective transfer of knowledge from university teachers (UT) to students.

However, the use of ICT can only be effective when used didactically appropriate. The newly established Centre for Teaching Support at University of Maribor (UM) provides didactical and technical support to UT for appropriate didactical use of ICT through MTP. This paper presents results of the analysis on didactical use of ICT and MTP, conducted with the online survey, answered by 217 university teachers.

The results indicate that problem and project based learning are most present. The majority of teachers plan the didactical use of ICT in written communication and written materials, presentations and learning management system. Results revealed the gaps, where ICT and MTP should be encouraged and disclose, in which fields UT need support to improve their pedagogical process.

**Keywords:** • didactics • higher education, • ICT • modern teaching • support

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# Teaching Instruments: Wolfram Mathematica and EViews

ARUNAS BURINSKAS

**Abstract** It is well known that there are the three main types of learners – visual, audio and kinaesthetic. The ideal learning environment is when Students see, hear and feel the material themselves.

In quantitative analysis, Wolfram Mathematica could be used as an instrument useful to present the main principles. Wolfram Mathematica interactive manipulation tool helps students that learn various subjects of economics getting to the ideal learning environment: having heard the material, they can see how it works and even try it themselves. It is useful in providing simplified versions of various econometric models implemented in programs designed for econometric analysis such as, for example, EViews. Students immediately feel benefits of the content they are thought.

The author investigates ways how both instruments are compatible for teaching purposes. Numerous examples, that are presented, illustrate the advantages it brings on the table of a teacher. The article is based on comparative and scientific literature analysis.

**Keywords:** • teaching • instruments • Wolfram Mathematica • EViews • compatibility •

## E-Learning: Theory and Practice

AURELIJA BURINSKIENE

**Abstract** It is not easy to find out when e-learning concept was started. Apparently, it began from development of the first learning tools. In long term, tools that are more sophisticated emerged and brought advance e-learning systems. This also involved understanding that e-learning means much more than just organisation of a course. In the beginning of popularity of the topic, e-learning was called just as interaction with students. Development processes helped workout platforms, which delivered great e-learning results. The author collected requirements for virtual environment, also presented the variety of e-learning platforms and their specifics.

The author of the article investigated e-learning, its static and dynamic approach, and main principles. As a result, learning pyramid was identified, for which construction, scientific literature analysis and synthesis methods were used in the paper.

The author presented learning pyramid with creates new education model. Its theoretical and practical aspects are revised to prove new teaching practices.

**Keywords:** • e-learning • platforms • learning pyramid • principles • terminology •

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## Active Learning Successful Case Studies

ISABEL FERREIRA, PAULA LOUREIRO & TERESA DIEGUEZ

**Abstract** Complexity, unpredictability and interdependence are some of the 21st century's characteristics. Students must be prepared for this environment and a focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare them for the future.

In an era dominated by digital transformation, active learning is a key aspect of the flipped classroom and can be applied to any learning environment from online to standard lectures or as a blend of these. The aim of active learning is to provide opportunities for learners to think critically about content through a range of activities that help prepare learners for the challenges of professional situations.

This paper aims to present and describe some active learning strategies implemented by the authors, teachers at the Management School of Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave (IPCA), in Portugal.

The expected result of this article is sharing successful case studies in Higher Education Institutions.

**Keywords:** • active learning • critical thinking • learning skills • innovation skills • higher education •

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## Visual Ethnography as the Teaching Method. The Case of »The Coaching Maps«

ROBERT GEISLER

**Abstract** “The Coaching Maps” was created as the tool for improvement, development as well for shaping management skills. Based on scientific research, key thematic fields were defined, which could and should be the part of the management/entrepreneurial personality. Due to postmodern times, characterized by visual culture and self-reflection, two important issues were selected: visual ethnography and coaching philosophy. The aim of the tool and afterwards developing methodology is creating managers’ and entrepreneurs’ consciousness as base for activity in organizations.

The paper will focus on the origin of the tool, the application opportunities and results of learning process. The paper will be based on autoethnography methodology, which assumes that the author and his activity would be the object of the research. The author as co-founder of the tool “The Coaching Maps” and entrepreneur, during practicing business start-up aiming distribution of the tool, had done permanent ethnographic study in business environment. It brings him to new knowledge, which would be presented during the conference.

**KEYWORDS:** • visual ethnography • “The Coaching Maps” • learning management • entrepreneurs • business environment •

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# Specifics of Teaching Economics Courses in Textile Engineers and Fashion Designers Education at University of Zagreb Faculty of Textile-Technology

ALICA GRILEC & IVAN NOVAK

**Abstract** In European countries, fashion design is respectable part of growing and fast developing creative industry in contrary to textile engineering whose employment potential has been reduced by the decline in the number of textile and garment companies in Europe. At the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Textile Technology we educate fashion designers that have dominantly artistic courses in their programme and textile technologists with dominantly technical courses. Although we educate also industrial designers, in this paper we will focus only at fashion designers and textile technologists and the main differences in approaching the economics knowledge's through economic courses to those two different groups of students.

This paper is a discussion paper about different needs and different approaches in teaching fashion designers and textile engineers and presenting economic courses together with teaching methods and techniques we use in educating our students.

**Keywords:** • fashion designers • textile engineers • economic courses • economic knowledge • teaching methods •

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## Power-Up with PowerApps

SOREN HANSEN

**Abstract** How can student motivation be increased? As teacher in business economics, I regularly face students who are struggling with the calculations and in some cases it seems to pull down their motivation. My approach is involving the students in making calculation tools in Excel and, since recently, PowerApps. PowerApps is a platform available in Office 365, which is used as standard in the Danish education system. The nice part here is that the platform is already available at your hand. Using apps opens up for a digital dimension of your teaching that fuels the students' creativity. For example, now, the students are keen to show each other what they have developed, as it simply looks much more exciting when running as an app on their mobile phones.

The aim of my paper is to share my experiences of using PowerApps as part of my teaching.

**Keywords:** • apps • digital • motivation • teaching methods • business education •

## Experiments in Marketing Research: Reviewing Price Promotions in Complementary Products

SANDRA LIZZETH HERNANDEZ ZELAYA

**Abstract** The use of experiments in marketing research is increasingly popular due to its proven efficiency but is still relegated in relation to other more widely used tools such as surveys. Using a practical example, the experiment applied focuses on analyzing the relationship between brands, price promotion, and complementarities between product categories. Utilizing social network platforms and e-mail, the experiment is carried out with more than 100 participants. The study provides relevant information for distributors and manufacturers about the promotion of complementary products. The use of experiments is important for current research as it allows real simulation and can increase the chances to get information in the design of marketing strategies. This tool helps when conducting market research as it is an alternative way to get in touch with the target audience in a more interactive manner and helps obtain precise results. As such, this tool / method can be beneficial in the context of teaching research methods in economics and business sciences.

**Keywords:** • experiment • price promotion • complementary products • brand • research tool •

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## **Job Satisfaction of the Teaching Staff in Higher Education Institutions as a Factor Which Affects the Teaching Staff Performance with Students**

MAJA IVANOVIC-DJUKIC & NEMANJA VESELINOVIC

**Abstract** Content teaching staff strive to motivate their students to engage in active learning and this results in an enhanced student performance. Such employees build team dynamics, use modern teaching methods and focus on the process of learning. The subject of the paper is to examine whether job satisfaction affects differences in the teaching staff performance and to identify dimensions of job satisfaction which are the most important to academics. The aim of the paper is to propose measures to the management, whose implementation may contribute to an increase of job satisfaction among employees in the higher education institutions. The initial hypothesis of the paper is that academics, who are more satisfied with their jobs, perform better in their work with students. Statistical methods will be used in order to check this assumption. The analysis will be based on data obtained by primary research at universities in the Republic of Serbia.

**Keywords:** • job satisfaction • teaching staff • performance • higher education • management •

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## Conflicts Arise – ADR Alternative Dispute Resolution – Levels and Methods

CSILLA KOHLHOFFER-MIZSER

**Abstract** Conflicts arise in every space of our lives, in the life of natural persons and of legal entities. Companies, enterprises, organizations, corporations have to manage their conflicts. Mediation is a voluntary process in which an impartial person helps with communication and promotes reconciliation between the parties which will allow them to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. With this background, the knowledge about process and methods of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) can help students to be able to solve conflicts with their own competences.

During the teaching process we solve a conflict together with the students, from the beginning until the end of the case, so we finish with a binding agreement -the method shows step by step how to reach reorganization, a resolution in legal relationships. The pedagogical aspect of the paper is to broaden and deepen the use of mediation –develop all the fields of application.

**Keywords:** • dispute resolution in the structure • organized ADR • choice of decision-maker • conflict management • rebuild the conflict •

# Developing and Assessing Twenty-First Century Competencies of Economics and Business Disciplines Students

ROMANA KOREZ-VIDE

**Abstract** This paper aims to introduce a holistic perspective upon the requisite competencies of economics and business disciplines students in highly interrelated world economy, characterised by complex, volatile and uncertain business environment. The conceptualisation of twenty-first century competencies is followed by the examination of the key 2.0 pedagogy's features. We argue the relevance of student-centred learning experiences based on various forms of participatory learning methods. Approaches towards the assessment of students' requisite competencies are discussed as mechanisms for the development of qualitative learning environments with broader socio-economic implications.

**Keywords:** • twenty-first century competencies • economics • business • 2.0 pedagogy • student-centred learning • participatory learning methods •

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# The Experience of a Financial Mathematics Flipped Classroom

ANA PAULA LOPES & FILOMENA SOARES

**Abstract** Student-centered learning environments are gaining popularity in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The flipped classroom or inverted classroom model shifts the lecture-centered instruction's approach to a student-centered learning methodology that strongly stimulates a training design involving interactive pedagogy and technology. Several authors describe flipped classroom as a type of blended learning, a fusion between "online learning" and "in-class face to face learning" activities, by adding it some important differences. Teaching students who are prepared for class encourages student engagement and active learning and this could be the main reasons of flipped classroom success.

The authors will show a flipped classroom model implemented in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 in a Financial Mathematics Course, at the Institute of Accounting and Administration of Porto (ISCAP). In this methodology, there was pedagogical switch of the traditional academic procedure as students' first contact with the topics and themes was made outside the "four wall classroom bounds" and lecturers' role was reversed into a kind of guide and facilitator, indicating the way to go, motivating students in their own knowledge construction, letting them lead the way, only interfering when they seem to deviate from the predefined learning goals. In a collaborative environment, classroom time was consumed with open debates, solving problems, making clear the supporting fundamentals, in order to improve students' engagement into their learning process. In addition, the procedures will be described and will be presented some results obtained with this experience.

**Keywords:** • financial mathematics • flipped classroom • higher education • blended learning • video lectures •

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# The Impact of Radio in Business and Economics Students' Consolidation of Theoretical and Practical Learning

MARINA MATTERA & RAQUEL UREÑA

**Abstract** Experiential learning and challenge based learning are two of the most impactful methods to improve learning outcomes in higher education. In order to increase student engagement and improve their knowledge acquisition, as well as influencing their self-learning and motivation, the radio show was created. Students from any academic year signed up to participate in a news and tech news radio show, the first one being in English and the second one being in Spanish, bringing topics related to current business, economics and technological events. The students themselves had to prepare the topic, content, include experts to call, as well as calling peers who were studying abroad in the city where the event is developing in case of world economic news. Results show that by actively involving and empowering students, their learning experience became much richer, as well as the actual outcome of their knowledge-acquisition process.

**Keywords:** • challenge based learning • experiential learning • knowledge-acquisition • business • economics •

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## Participative Approaches and Experiential Learning in Higher Education

ZORAIDA MENDIWELSO-BENDEK, RAUL ESPEJO & IGOR PERKO

**Abstract** Citizens develop identity in their communities as they construct boundaries among themselves through recurrent interactions, and they construct citizenship by strengthening stable interactions (Mendiwolso-Bendek 2002, 2015). Students in those communities develop knowledge as an outcome of processes of knowledge acquisition that they embody through their daily experiences. This paper is the follow-up of summer schools carried out in different communities which explored participative approaches and experiential learning. It is underpinned by a systemic perspective to analyse the process of learning, trying to identify the common and sustainable elements in these processes and also the effects they had in the learners. It explores those systemic considerations that enable students to increase individual and collective actions in social and organizational spaces. It also explores the processes and structures of the learning spaces in which they take place. In particular it talks about the learning processes enriching the mutual constitution of knowledge between learners and trainers/facilitators/teachers. The theoretical perspective developed in the paper is enriched by previous summer schools.

**Keywords:** • systemic analysis • participative approach • experiential learning • learning spaces • higher education •

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## Digital Storytelling in Education Shown in the Example of an MIS Course at the Bachelor's Degree Level

BIRGIT OBERER, ALPTEKIN ERKOLLAR, SIEGFRIED BEGUN &  
NICO LOWRY

**Abstract** Digital storytelling is the practice of using computer-based tools to tell stories, by combining narrative and digital content, including images, video, and sound, to create a short movie. The education use of digital stories can be divided into the categories (1) personal narratives, (2) stories to instruct or inform, (3) reflective stories, and (4) stories that examine historical events. This study is a pilot in storytelling between senior students and first-year students of a management information systems program at the Bachelor's degree level. Senior students work together with first-year students to mentor them in the art of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling substitutes the project work for the course 'introduction to management information systems'. In groups of 3 students, first-year students worked on preparing stories to instruct other teams on essential MIS related topics. Morra's Framework for developing digital stories was applied, focusing on storyboarding and the use of story maps. The results of the study revealed that this type of activity generated interest, attention, and motivation for the 'digital generation' first year's students. Storytelling can capitalize on creative talents of students, as they begin to research, use the library, search for in-depth content on the Internet and could improve students' knowledge on the topic they focused on their digital storytelling project. In a further study, it will be analyzed if and how digital storytelling might develop enhanced communication skills by learning to organize ideas, ask questions, construct digital stories and express opinions.

**Keywords:** • digital storytelling • education • MIS • digital generation • motivation •

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## Back to Stone Age. Creative Education Shown in the Example of a Business Course on Innovation

BIRGIT OBERER, ALPTEKIN ERKOLLAR & ANNA STEIN

**Abstract** Creativity stands for the ability to identify and trial new solutions to problems within one's specific context. Skills associated with creativity include convergent and divergent thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. Creativity is becoming increasingly important for education. Educators should support students in learning how to make use of their creative potential in integrating creative learning modules in course designs and the instructor-student interaction.

This study, conducted in 2017, focuses on the implementation of creative learning elements within a university, integrating aspects of creative education in teaching and student learning. The results of this study revealed that the integration of Lego learning modules (LLM) for the course improved the students' performance significantly (considering the dimensions of quality, participation, grade, and student to analyze the outcome of student projects, the overall course results, and student satisfaction). Based on these findings and the conclusions of previous studies a roadmap for the needed adaptation of curricula was designed.

**Keywords:** • creative learning • learning module • Lego • student performance • higher education •

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# Supporting the Creation and Use of E-Learning Tools

IGOR PERKO & SONJA SIBILA LEBE

**Abstract** The e-learning development is extremely rapid. It is nearly impossible for the students, the teachers and the educational organisations to exploit all available services; additionally, the effects on the learning process are often not (yet) clearly / sufficiently elaborated.

The e-learning tools can be clustered into: learning management systems (LMS), virtual classrooms, massive (open) online courses (M(O)OCs), independent tools and communication support. In this paper, we perform a state-of-the-art analysis for every group of the above-listed e-learning tools, whereby we are focusing especially on the new challenges the teachers are confronted with. Additionally, an example of organisational support, helping the teachers to use these resources to improve the teaching methods to a new quality level is elaborated.

The state-of-the-art analysis and the posted challenges were determined by examining the published research reports on e-learning tools, while the properties of organisational support are elaborated using semi-structured interviews.

The paper provides helping information for teachers faced with challenges of the rapidly developing e-teaching environment by offering an overview on existing tools and organisational support they may expect.

**Keywords:** • e-learning • learning management systems (LMS) • virtual classrooms • massive (open) online courses (M(O)OP) • independent tools and communication support • organisational support •

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# Entrepreneurship Education and Integration of Entrepreneurship Competencies to the University Studies – The Example from Estonian University of Life-Sciences

ANNE PÖDER

**Abstract** The aim of the paper is to study the challenges associated with the integration of entrepreneurship competencies into the university curricula in Estonia and the impact of entrepreneurship education in the development of those competencies using the example of Estonian University of Life-Sciences, the 4th largest public university in Estonia. Firstly, data collected from alumni is analysed to assess the role of university studies and entrepreneurship education in attainment of different entrepreneurship competencies. ANOVA is used to compare the assessments in 6 different curricula groups: agriculture, forestry and fisheries; life-sciences; veterinary science; business and administration; architecture and construction; engineering, manufacturing and technology. Secondly, document analysis of the 6 curricula is conducted to assess if entrepreneurship competencies are integrated into the learning outcomes. The results show that the attainment and integration of entrepreneurship competencies to the curricula is highly inconsistent across the fields of studies.

**Keywords:** • entrepreneurship education • entrepreneurship competencies • Estonia • higher education • curricula development •

## The Perception and Opinion of Non-Economic Majors on Economics

MARCUS SIDKI & DAVID BOLL

**Abstract** We investigate whether the common factors that motivate economic majors to study also hold for non-economic majors. Using data from a survey among 252 business majors, we explore the reasons for increased interests in economics based on the perception of and opinion on economic studies. Results from ordered logistic regression analysis show the influence of opinions on economics to be in line with related research, i.e. future income and job expectations are relevant motivational factors also for non-economic majors. This is also true for the students' perception of economic teaching. The calculation of marginal effects allows to gain additional insights into the interdependencies of the identified factors. The influences do not only hold on average but also show a predominantly consistent pattern when moving by one point on the Likert-scale.

**Keywords:** • non-economic majors • opinion • perception • economic studies • survey •

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## Diversity and Adaptation in Mathematics Teaching – An Experience in an Accounting and Management Degree

FILOMENA SOARES, ANA PAULA LOPES & MARIA PAULA NUNES

**Abstract** This paper presents an educational experience developed in a basic and general Mathematic Course in an Accounting and Management degree in the Polytechnic of Porto. The main goal of this plan was to minimize the impact of differentiated Math backgrounds of freshmen students, in particular, to combat dropout and failure high rates in this curricular unit and, in a more general way, to level up students' Math literacy and skills.

The strategic plan was introduced in 2012, with registered results between 2013 and 2016, and had a corresponding "target audience" of all students enrolled at Math Curricular Unit of Accounting and Management Degree. The methodological steps connected to the project development, implementation, maintenance and transferability will be described, ranging from its scientific and pedagogical structural design – going through boards' submission and approval, to student's background analysis, quantification and characterisation, among others. The results achieved over the last three years of its implementation will be presented, as well as its real and tested pros and cons and transferability to other courses and/or subjects.

**Keywords:** • active learning • student engagement • (un)success • teaching methods • educational experiences • higher education • mathematics curricula •

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## Mindfulness Meditation in Higher Education: Case of FEB

HERI ŠPIČKA & SONJA SIBILA LEBE

**Abstract** This paper is based on a case study performed at the Faculty of Economics and Business - FEB, University of Maribor during two semesters (from February 2017 till January 2018). Two teachers initiated a 10-minutes mindfulness meditation prior to their courses. The purpose of this practice (and of this paper as well) was to find out whether meditating influences positively the students' learning abilities and their personal wellbeing.

**Methodology:** To test possible changes in students' attitudes (among others: their self-esteem, learning abilities, quality of communication with teachers and peers) induced through the meditation practice, we asked them to fill-in a questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of each semester, and compared both results. They showed a considerable raise in self-esteem in students, and thus an improvement in students' personal wellbeing.

Parallel, the authors/teachers checked the learning results of the participating students by comparing the exam grades in their courses during the last three years. Here, too, the results show an improvement in learning abilities (less failed exams, slightly better average grades than in years before the mindfulness meditation has been introduced as part of the tuition process).

**Keywords:** • higher education • mindfulness meditation • student opinion poll • self-esteem • wellbeing •

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## **Blended Learning for Entrepreneurs: SIMbyCID Methodology**

BISTRA VASSILEVA

**Abstract** This paper begins by outlining the importance of business-oriented education through experience- and result-based learning implemented in a combination of formal, non-formal and informal settings. The author's primary goal is to develop a methodology providing students the opportunity to experience different professional skills as data collectors, researchers, communicators, and decision-makers. The overall intention is to offer a coherent blended framework that is student-oriented and makes use of active-based learning to support academics in encouraging student active participation and stimulating their entrepreneurial skills. To meet these goals, SIMbyCID methodology is developed and experimented in different academic programmes and degrees. It could be implemented through an interactive online platform designed as a simulator (SIM) for developing innovative entrepreneurial thinking combined with responsible mind-set. SIMbyCID platform is planned as a fully interactive online simulator of the process of innovative (starting from an idea to the final project completion) entrepreneurship process which enables HEIs to apply a step-by-step approach (mission-based learning) in user-friendly environment.

**Keywords:** • blended education • entrepreneurship • competences • active-based learning • higher education •

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## The Place and the Importance of Community Service Practices Course in Public Relations Bachelor's Degree Program

NURAY YILMAZ SERT & TUBA ÇEVİK ERGIN

**Abstract** The purpose of this study is to display the importance of "community service applications" course, not only for education faculties but also for communication faculties. In this study, the place and the importance of "community service applications" course in public relations bachelor's degree program were examined through the example of the new media literacy project. Two different focus groups study was undertaken on May 9th and May 16th, 2017 as a research method. Team leaders of 15 different study groups, were formed for community service applications course new media literacy project in the spring semester of the 2016-2017 education year, participated in the focus group study. In addition, all other students in the same project were asked to report their opinions on the course and the project. All students who participated in the research stated that "community service applications" course is an educatory course that should be included in the curriculum of the public relations bachelor's degree. The results of the study show that this course enhances the professional knowledge and skills of the students. Because this course provides students with the opportunity to practice what they learn in theory on the other hand it allows them to recognize their deficiencies in the field. Therefore, it was concluded that the course of "community service applications" is important in public relations bachelor's degree programs.

**Keywords:** • community service practices • public relations • media literacy • professional knowledge and skills • higher education •

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## Action Research Approach to Problem Solving: Implications for Creative Thinking of Students

DEJANA ZLATANOVIĆ & JELENA NIKOLIĆ

**Abstract** As an approach to creative problem solving, action research emphasizes the importance of practice which means that both researchers and practitioners must redefine their roles. In fact, action research is a learning cycle starting from identifying the problem where researchers actively participate and develop a set of common values, norms, terminology and procedures. Knowledge acquired in that process is applied in practice that leads to redefining the problem and the process continues until the problem is resolved. Accordingly, action research has proved to be a central approach to the investigation, reflection and improvement of practice. The paper considers the use of action research in higher education with the focus on studying action research as a tool to encourage creative thinking of students and their critical reflection. The purpose of the paper is to reflect on action research from different perspectives and to consider its implications for innovative teaching practice in higher education.

**Keywords:** • action research • creative problem solving • higher education  
• innovative teaching • creative thinking of students •

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mag. Nataša Gajšt

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