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Unit or project responsible for creating the innovation: Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences
Theme: Innovative student-centered approach to teaching
Title: Teaching European Integration: The Case for Role-playing Games in Economic Curriculum
Summary of the good practice: Our attempt was to improve the way how the courses on European integration look like. To allow students to understand the importance of negotiations in the EU decision making we let them negotiate some of the current problems in the EU. In 2016/2017, students representing various countries and the EU administration negotiated possible resolution of the Italian banking crisis, this year the main topic is the problem of the Irish border in the Brexit negotiations.
Context of the good practice: Although the chosen topic is very specific and narrow, it has provided students an opportunity to get a direct experience with the main EU treaties, regulations and changes to the regulatory framework in response to the Great Recession. In addition, students have had to address the specific impacts of EU-wide rules based on the one-size-fits-all principle on a single country, giving them an additional perspective on EU policies.
Rationale: Standard lecture-based courses on the European economic integration often cover a large number of various EU policies. Current events are sometimes mentioned, but not considered to be a major part of the courses, so the immediate value for students remains limited.
Alignment with program and module learning outcomes: Economics, International relations, Political economy, BA/MA level. Besides expansion of factual knowledge, role-playing game greatly contributes to development of soft skills: Students practice negotiation techniques and they learn the lesson that proposals of resolutions are subjective, depend on party involved in negotiations, and that to succeed in negotiations they need to understand and respect partners motivations and viewpoints.
Resources (time and persons): 12 lectures, 2 lecturers + 1 teaching assistant It took about 4 weeks to understand the technique and to prepare the course, besides time devoted to preparation of introductory lectures aimed to align the knowledge of all courses.
What were the main enabling factors (conditions) in creating and implementing the innovation? Freedom to experiment with different style of teaching.
What were the main challenges in creating or implementing the innovation? Just our willingness to try something new.
What have been the main methods of dissemination so far? In their feedback, students appreciated the contribution of the course to understanding broader context and practical utilization of knowledge, both aspects were valued substantially above average score from other courses. Interestingly, student's subjective evaluation of contribution of the course to expansion of their general knowledge was above average of other courses as well, demonstrating fairly broad potential of role-playing games in education.
With which groups or organizations has the innovation been shared so far? Presentation is being prepared for the conference "Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching: Pedagogy and Practice"
Mainstreaming: What are the possibilities for extending and/or mainstreaming this innovation? Likely a good way how to teach complex problems where a lot of factual knowledge is important for understanding the problem, however such knowledge is relatively easy to obtain using online

materials and thus needs not to be memorized. When usage of knowledge is the main focus of the course.

Sustainability: Please comment on the sustainability of the innovation, including elements which need to be put in place to make this sustainable.

Each year, new game needs to be prepared, but the main structure of the course might remain.

Evaluation: How have the success and impact of the innovation been evaluated? Is there an established way of continuous evaluation?

Students' feedback at the end of the semester administered by the faculty.

Contributor's reflections: Briefly reflect on your innovation from your own perspective including its strengths and limitations/challenges of implementation/potential implication for wider practice.

I can warmly recommend this kind of activity as a way how to engage students.

Does your unit or other units of your university have any plan to further develop this innovation? If yes, please briefly describe the plan.

If available, please provide a link to complete the description of the initiative.

Link to the website of the course:

<https://is.cuni.cz/studium/eng/predmety/index.php?do=predmet&kod=JEM180>.

Attached syllabus describes the game in detail.