

Integration of foreign teachers and students to the regular teaching and studying process on the VSB-Technical University of Ostrava

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Abstract — The Czech Republic and especially the VŠB -Technical University of Ostrava has a lot of experiences with the exchange of foreign students and teachers. The exchange of the students has a long tradition. The exchange of student started 15 years before and at the start was concentrated on the students from the “East Europe”, it is changed. Presently are on our university mostly the students from the Finland, Germany and France. It has been based on the support within the programmes TEMPUS, SOCRATES, LEONARDO and etc. For better integration of our students to the work in the foreign companies is benefit to integrate the foreign teacher to the regular studying program. Here will be presented some experiences of the Machinery faculty of the VŠB -TU Ostrava.

Index Terms — international collaboration, experience, praxis possibilities

STARTING INFORMATION

The VSB-Technical University of Ostrava has a lot of experiences with the exchange of students and teachers within the regular studying program. We started the collaboration with the “west” countries 15 years ago. In the past was the exchange concerned on the exchange with the “Eastern” Europe, but now we are open for everybody collaboration. The collaboration is supported by the national and international organisation.

The schema of starting of the collaboration is on the following Figure.

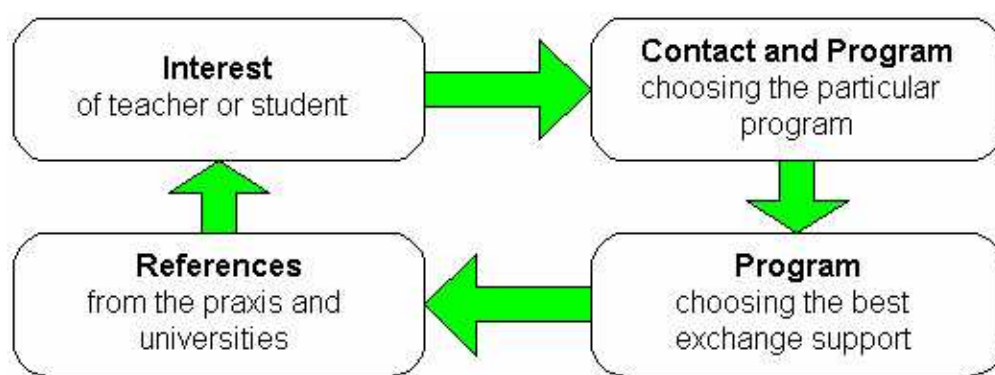


FIGURE 1
SCHEMA OF COLLABORATION CIRCLE

To start and support the collaboration are necessary money. To participate in majority programs is important to prepare project min. one year before. This is a small complication for exactly planning of the exchange (sometime the students change their mind), this is valid especially for the student exchange.

On the other side – for the exchange of the teachers is not the time the limited factor. For the foreign teachers integration is important to adapt teaching program (teaching schedule) of the home university. Very important is to know the schedule of the teachers' home institution.

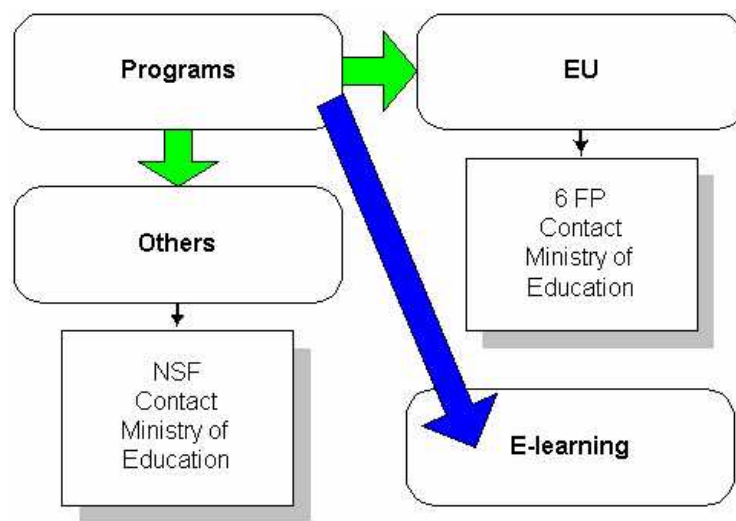


FIGURE 2
SCHEMA OF THE COLLABORATION PROGRAMS

To reduce some problems with integration of teaching professors (teaching on more universities) is possible to use “E-Learning”. You can reduce the travel cost, teach more students, use foreign languages for studying, etc.

One of the Programs supporting this way of teaching is MINERVA. One of such project will be prepared by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering now.

CONCRETE EXAMPLE

This part of paper would like to offer some comment on two of these, namely CONTACT and SOCRATES/ERASMUS programmes.

Currently, our Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (FME), VSB-TUO, has been taking part in the programme SOCRATES/ERASMUS that facilitates mainly student and some staff inter-university exchange programmes. Students of the VŠB-TUO, FME have opportunity to study next school year just based on of the SOCRATES/ERASMUS at 25 universities from EU On the base of programme TEMPUS-EUC M-JEP 11596 - VŠB-TUO, FME had also opportunity to compare credit system and to verify system for the transfer study results from abroad to the study results “at home”.

Within programme SOCRATES, staff visits are short, usually a week, and they comprise about 8 lecture periods. By this date cca 20 students (yearly) went abroad on SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme. To the VSB-TU Ostrava are coming cca 20 foreign students (yearly) from various countries.

In the Program Contact we have collaboration with various countries (Germany, Slovakia, USA, and Austria). This collaboration is supported by the Ministry of education.

Both these projects have enabled mutual exchange of students and staff. Our experience with the implementation of them is as follows:

- The level of education of students from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, VSB-TUO, is on a par with universities of the analogical province. In some cases, their profundity is even superior. On the other hand, it is to be acknowledged that our students lack in some abilities, like team-work, reference and IT research, and have little experience with solving practical problems. They also have some difficulty with foreign language communication.
- These visits abroad develop not only technical but also social abilities of young people. The stays add to the development of their personalities.
- Staff mobilities made the expansion of R&D contacts possible. This mainly concerns the Sixth Framework Programme of EU.



In the program Contact we made already exchanges for about 20 people (Students and teaching staff). We organised a lot of conferences.

One important point of the people exchange is transferring of knowledge, e.g. there are 2 near finished Doctor Work (one with Dresden University and one with the Vienna University).

One of the collaboration possibilities is the EU Project - Maria Curie Fellowships. This type of students stay at the praxis can have a different ways.

One way is to create the Maria Curie Training cities, which mean, the researcher team build fixed stays for student from various countries and the student need to accept the call for these Centres. The centres work at the various fields, e.g. energy, sludge, environment, etc. Very important for the student is that at this centre work specialists, who speak foreign languages (German, English, Spanish, etc.), the communication with the others researchers and students will be very easy.

Czech students studying abroad on the base of the programme SOCRATES/ERASMUS receive financial support. This financial amount consists from 3 parts.

- Subsidy from EU
- Subsidy from Ministry for Education of Czech Republic
- Subsidy from VŠB-TUO, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.

Solution of the foreign teachers stay is mostly solved by the financial support of Czech Ministry of Education or by their home university.

BENEFIT FOR THE STUDENTS

The continually integration process of the Czech Republic to the European Union (EU) shows that the Czech students have to improve their working adaptability and languages practicing for work outside of the Czech Republic. In this case is very important, that the students become the chance to speak with the foreign people and see them “by the work” or better “by the workday life”.

The students have 2 possibilities to improve their experiences:

- Travel within SOCRATES/ERASMUS Projects (exchange with universities) or IASTE (exchange with industries) outside of the Czech Republic (is not possible for everybody – not enough money, social and family condition, etc.)
- Contact the foreign students and teachers at the VŠB-Technical University of Ostrava (useful for more students).

According our experiences seems to be useful also to integrate the foreign teachers without translation direct to the teaching process.

Reasons for integration are caused for:

- the students
 - need to practice their language knowledge in their specialization, express their question,
 - get the possibility to know the situation in the foreign country - at the industry, at the university, etc.
 - to known other teaching methods
- the university
 - to improve their teaching process (make more interesting or various their regular programs)

To choose the best programme and to get the best prospect of the programme is hard work. You have a lot of offers, but not for everybody is each suitable.

This is applicable as well as for the students as for the teachers.



REMARKS

Czech student's knowledge of the English and German language is good. Very small number of the students is able to speak 2 foreign languages. We have not enough students with corresponding knowledge of the French or Spanish language. This un-ability expressively limits co-operation with Spanish and French speaking countries. Study of the foreign languages at technical schools was and in the future will be necessary and urgent part of the education. It is necessary to increase the level of the language education especially at technical schools and universities.

Some our experiences by the foreign teachers and students about their stay at the VSB-TU Ostrava:

- Low know-how about Czech Republic
- Reduced number of person speaking English or German
- Interest to "see" the situation in the former East Countries
- Personal contact between professors necessary

As well is necessary to increase and make better information about VSB-TU Ostrava. The suggested ways are:

- Information on www-sides
- More staff mobility
- Information sending to the foreign universities
- Intensification of personal contacts
- Preparation of E-Learning (English, German, etc.) some special subjects from the faculty regular teaching program

CONCLUSION

The exchange of students in the various programmes should be supported from different parties.

The results of student's exchanges should be presented on various seminars, diploma work, or dissertations. (some results from the Czech and foreign students you can see on the website http://www.fs.vsb.cz/default_en.htm)

After the teaching staff mobilities it would be very helpful to prepare special materials, writing in different languages, for stay preparing our students in the foreign countries.

After all this recommendation can be the stay on the universities abroad more successful.

It should be the interest of every university to execute the exchange of teachers and student, the previous experiences shows very good results.

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