

Experiential learning with global virtual teams to enhance international marketing education

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To prepare our students for the global workforce, we have adopted experiential learning methodologies in the international marketing course Consumers Around the World. A vital element of the experiential learning program included participation in X-Culture, a project utilising global virtual teams to solve real international business challenges. This program had improved the students' international and virtual collaboration competencies, cultural intelligence and international business skills. Furthermore, it had increased students' engagement and satisfaction with the course.

The success of the program is dependent on support and guidance from the teaching staff including regular and effective monitoring and feedback, coaching students in managing and resolving conflict, dealing with student complaints, and linking the course content with the program's schedule. Tracking of the students' weekly peer-evaluations and open-comments are critical to predicting which groups are heading into difficulties. Using qualitative analysis techniques utilising NVivo, the students' weekly open-comments (Australian and USA sample) were analysed. Specifically, an examination of keyword usage and its relationship with positive sentiment and successful project completion was conducted. It was found that no comments and short comments were related to negative sentiment and project difficulties. Furthermore, most challenges were related to free-riders as well as differences in time-zones and English proficiency levels. A range of targeted interventions are proposed, as well as further research in the area of supporting experiential learning projects with global virtual teams.