



DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDENTS' COLLABORATION SKILLS WORKING IN INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

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Abstract

Collaboration is a form of cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, social interplay of human beings, emerged in joint attempts of work related activities. The foundation of collaboration is composed of the structural interaction. The essence of such – situations of equal communication, where “a human being is free to make own decisions and feel responsible for own made actions; it is an opportunity to be heard, understood and accepted the way you are”. The skills of collaboration are acquired only during a group work. The field of sports is rich in a potential of group collaboration elements. Based on Bennett et al. (2000) cooperative learning model, it is presumed that in a process of development of collaboration skills a tight interaction, positive interdependence should be achieved, skills of joint work developed, direct communication, ability to reflect as well as personal responsibility should be promoted.

The aim of the research is to analyze and assess the cooperation skills of students, participating in an international Erasmus IP project by applying the tourism and sports animation program.

The following research methods were applied: analysis of scientific literature, semi-structured interview, development project (Erasmus Intensive Program's (IP) Project “Sport for tourist animation”, and qualitative data analysis.

Research organization. The research was conducted using case study methodology in January 2015. The semi-structured interview was carried out using the social media (Cooper et al, 2016) and had 6 students (3 females and 3 males).

Research results revealed that during the Erasmus IP (intensive program) project “Sport for tourist animation” a favourable environment for cooperative learning was ensured: a positive psychological climate was established which allowed the project participants to develop skills of self-expression (self-confidence, self-esteem, creativity). Students were able to feel psychologically safe, shared their experience, were which attentive and friendly, supported, and encouraged each other. They were united by a sense of unity and a common goal. Team based and individual collaboration skills of students were developed throughout all of the tourism and sport related activities: beach volleyball and tennis, canoe and kayak, windsurfing, teambuilding, evening animation tasks, and national evening events. Based on the collaboration model, the following skills of students, participating in the Erasmus IP project, were developed: ability to express and accept a verbal and physical emotional support; cooperative learning, listening to others and expression of own ideas; play assigned role; pursue a common goal; be a leader, supervise, organize; actively participate, when activities are organized by others; rate the activities in consideration of their efficiency and values. Results gathered from the interview responses highlighted a specific factor in regards to development of the collaboration skill – a sense of national pride and responsibility for own country and university had influence on students' sense of responsibility.

KEY WORDS: collaboration skills; development; students.

Introduction

Collaboration is a form of cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, social interplay of human beings, emerged in joint attempts of work related activities (Indrašienė 2004; Hoaglund, Birkenfeld, Box, 2014; Care et al, 2015). P. Griffin, E. Care (2015) notes that collaborative problem solving is one of the key 21st century skills that can be taught and learned. The foundation of collaboration is composed of the structural interaction. The essence of such – situations of equal communication, where “a human being is completely free, is free to express his essence, thoughts and intentions. Such are the situations in which each participant feels emphatic towards another person and accepts as he is with all his feelings and thoughts. During such interplay each and everyone is granted an opportunity to feel oneself, make free decisions and feel responsible for own made actions; fundamental needs of a human are being met – to express oneself, be heard, understood and accepted as one is” (Butkienė 1993). An ability of a human to see the best in person achieved in collaboration facilitates a development of self-esteem, helps to remain oneself, create.

The skill of collaboration is acquired only during a group work (Indrašienė 2004, Hoaglund et al, 2014, Care et al, 2015). Collaboration during sport related activities is achieved under more complex conditions as participants are physically active, and the process of collaboration is impeded by such obstructions as noise, lack of attention

and listening skills. However, the field of sports is rich in a potential of group collaboration elements: a group has a very clear objective; group members relate socially and assist each other. They have to analyze their own activities and rate achieved results; seek a benefit for the group first without focusing on a personal advantage. Each member of the group actively participates in activities and reveals his own creativity (Petruitytė et al. 2010; Griffin, McGaw, Care, 2012).

According to A. Hoaglund, K. Birkenfeld, J. Box (2014) “to create a professional learning community, focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively and hold yourself accountable for results.”

Bennett, Rolheiser–Bennett, Stevahn (2000) described the model of cooperative learning. Based on the authors, in development of the collaboration skills, it is obligatory to achieve a tight interaction, positive interdependence, skills of a joint work should be developed, direct communication, ability to reflect as well as a personal responsibility should be promoted.

The aim of the research is to analyze and assess the collaboration skills of students, participating in an international Erasmus IP project by applying the tourism and sports animation program.

Research methodology

The following research methods were applied: analysis of scientific literature, semi-structured interview, development project, qualitative data analysis.

The development project was implemented during the period of: September 2-13 of 2014. During such an implementation of the international Erasmus project an Erasmus IP “Sport for tourist animation” was organized. The project involved 24 students, 72,7 % (n = 16) of which were males and 27,3 % (n = 6) females, from a total of 4 countries (St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria; HU Brussels, Sportcampus Parnas, Belgium; KATHO, campus RENO, Belgium; Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Turkey; University of Klaipeda, Lithuania). Coordinator of the project is St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria. The IP project had the following activities of tourism and sport organized: teambuilding (8 h), beach tennis (10 h), beach volleyball (10 h), evening animation (22 h), simulation training (34 h), windsurfing (10 h), canoe and kayak (10 h), gymnastics with yoga (8 h), gymnastics with panerhythmy (8 h). During the above listed activities, the skills of team (group) and individual cooperation and collaboration were developed.

The research was conducted using case study methodology in January 2015. The semi-structured interview was carried out using the social media (Cooper et al, 2016) Semi-structured interview was composed of questions in respect to developed collaboration skills through the tourism and sport activities implemented throughout the project. Questions and their order of asking were not precisely regulated. The interviewer was allowed to ask additional questions.

The research was as an experience of the Erasmus IP project in application of the tourism and sports animation program is unique. Following such methodology, in order “to summarize the gained experience, people having achieved excellent results during activities were selected” (Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydžiūnaitė 2008). The semi-structured interview had 6 students (3 females and 3 males). Responses of the respondents were recorded and, in compliance with the principles of research ethics, such were coded by composing the code from the name of the country, university, and the respondent’s initials.

Authors of the present article performed a qualitative analysis of the interview content by grouping gathered interview data into categories based on highlighted principal elements of collaboration. The interview results were analyzed by exemplifying the highlighted statements supporting collaboration.

Research results

Interview results, in compliance with the presented model of cooperative learning (Fig.1.), were divided into categories based on the following criteria: interaction, facilitating collaboration, personal responsibility, communicative competence, positive interdependence, and group based collaboration processes.

Stimulating interaction is one of the principal components of the collaboration model. In an attempt to

group the statements of such category, the following two subcategories were excluded: verbal emotional support and physical emotional support, – which reflect collaboration skills of the students. Interview statements substantiating collaboration skills of students, participating in the tourism and sports animation program, to properly express verbal and provide physical positive support, allow to presume that group work in pursuit of a common goal developed an ability of helping each other, encourage, notice and compliment each other’s efforts, actively speak, listen, express not only one’s own feelings, but feel emphatic towards others in explaining the tasks and looking for solutions (Table 1).

Statements substantiating the ability to accept a positive support reveal that reaction of students in accepting such support was adequate: for ex., “I was grateful to them”. This allowed the students to develop such ability and not get arrogant.

Table 1. Interaction stimulating collaboration

Supporting statement	Males	Females
<i>Subcategory: verbal emotional support</i>		
<i>Ability to express and accept verbal emotional support</i>		
During learning process of canoe rowing I encouraged other members of the group, those who did not dare taking a risk, to engage in such activity.	TMBO	LKMES
Encouraged and motivated my team members to engage in new activities (windsurfing), as some of them were afraid and fearful.	TMBO	BKMRV; LKMVG
Even though I was not good at playing beach volleyball, members of my team encouraged and supported me and I was thankful for that.	TMBM	
When I tried windsurfing for the first time other team members, already having experience in such sport, positively encouraged and supported me; I was happy about it.		LKMES
<i>Subcategory: physical emotional support</i>		
<i>Ability to express and accept physical emotional support</i>		
After winning the game, we always hug and dance in a circle.	BVBB	LKMVG
I shook a hand to my competitors.	TMBO	BKMRV
My team members hugged and patted me on the shoulder.	BVBBC	LKMES
I always smile to my team members.	TMBM	
I appreciate that we have a ritual of hugging each other to show that we are one team.		LKMVG
Girls from the other team taught me how to surf, and I am really happy about that.		LKMVG LKMES

An ability to properly express and accept verbal as well as physical support is very significant in developing a positive psychological climate of a team. Existence of a positive psychological climate is substantiated by the students’ statements that during the tourism and sports animation program they were attentive and friendly, supported and encouraged each other (Table 2). A positive psychological environment allowed feeling psychologically safe, developed the students’ ability of self-confidence, self-esteem and creativity.

Statements supporting **personal responsibility** allowed excluding and analyzing students’ ability of being leaders; ability to engage actively in activities, when such activities are organized by others; revealed

organizational skills of students as well as their sense of responsibility.

In organizing the tasks of teambuilding competency demonstration, I assisted my team in providing few tasks; I felt pleased having contributed to such an activity.	TMBO	
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Table 2. Students' ability of self-expression

Supporting statement	Males	Females
Self-confidence		
Beach tennis was a completely new field of sports to me, but I believed I can learn it. It was interesting.	TMBO	LKMES
I learned to play beach volleyball in groups as I believed that one can learn anything with the help of a team work.		BKMRV
Self-esteem		
I felt I was appreciated as the group respected my opinion and ideas in regards to organization of events or matches.		BKMOV
We made a fascinating representation of a group, I had a good time working with my group, and It was an honor working with those people.	BVBB	
Creativity		
I designed a logo of my team for the last night presentation.		BKMRV
I was actively involved in a search of a solution for a creative canoe teaching activity.	TMBM	
I assisted in providing the tasks for demonstration of teambuilding competencies.	TMBM	BKMRV
During the evening of team presentation I helped my team to think of a slogan, select photos, I also helped to introduce my team; we all had our friendly contribution to such activity.	TMBO	
I assisted in thinking of the tasks to perform by the teams during the windsurfing competition.	TMBM	
I offered a variety of tasks and games for the evening animation program.	TMBM	LKMGV

Being a leader means accepting the greatest responsibility for made decision and its implementation. Function of a leader is to supervise and coordinate activities of a group. An ability to take initiative and become a leader was observed when students were asked to find a solution in various problematic situations, make decisions, organize events, competitions, perform assigned tasks (Table 3, Table 4). Leadership skills revealed during teambuilding, animation, national evening and team presentations as well as other activities: "I was a leader in representing my country as I wanted that my country's team would perform as impressive as possible" (3 cases), „In organizing the demonstration of teambuilding competencies I was not the one suggesting a great variety of ideas, however I tried to do my best in supervision, as I enjoy being dominant during collaboration activities“ (1 case). We may conclude that during the IP program excellent conditions were made to develop the skill of leadership, as the group members had to make decisions, they had a common goal and a competitive activity with the other groups.

Analysis of the interview revealed that students of the IP program had a relatively well developed collaboration skill in *active participation* of joint task implementation, when *activities are organized by others*. It is possible to state that at the end of the IP program such ability was evident at a more extensive level compared to the beginning of such program: more responses were obtained during the interview in respect to assistance towards each other in activities, which were implemented at the end of the program as opposed to the beginning.

Table 3. Personal responsibility of students

Supporting statement	Males	Females
Ability of leadership and supervision		
I was a leader in representing my country, as I wanted that my country's team would perform as impressive as possible.	TMBM; BVBBC	LKMES
In organizing the beach tennis competition I was the leader of my group; I supervised my group as to how, what and who should act, as well as I was actively involved in activities.	BVBBC	
I was the host of the evening animation program.	BVBBC	
I was a team leader and a participant during a beach volleyball match; I enjoy being dominant.	BVBBC	
In organizing the evening animation program I felt I was a leader, as I supervised the most in getting ready for the evening, offered a wide variety of great ideas, group members supported me.		LKMES
I offered more than half of the tasks for the canoe competition, therefore I believe I am capable of supervising and I always have plenty of great ideas.		BKMRV
I voluntarily offered my help to other team members in learning a new activity as I was not new at this.		BKMRV
Ability to actively participate when activities are organized by others		
During the beach tennis game all of us managed to referee and we helped each other as much as we could if we saw that a team member falls behind with his tasks.	BVBBC	
I helped other teams to perform their tasks – I was an active participant.	TMBM	
I always supported my team in organizing various activities as I enjoy working in a group	BVBBC	
Organizational skills		
My team organized demonstration of windsurfing competencies and I contributed to such activity.	TMBM	
I assisted in preparing the inventory for the beach tennis match, as my group was in charge for such activity, I was happy having an opportunity to contribute to organization of such task.		LKMES

Table 4. Internal responsibility of students

Supporting statement	Males	Females
<i>Sense of internal responsibility</i>		
I felt responsible for implementation of the assigned task (organization for windsurfing competency demonstration) - I contributed to such activity.	TMBM	
I always feel a sense of personal responsibility for implementation of a task assigned to me, as I wish for my group to show as good and interestingly as possible. Being in this program, we are not only students, but also representatives of our country. Moreover, I wish to feel appreciated by my group.		LKMGV
I feel responsible for an impeccable performance of tasks assigned to my team.		LKMGV
We presented a culture of our country during the national evening (Turkey, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Belgium). I felt responsible to perform as well as I could as I love my country. I felt responsible for an impressive hosting of the nations' evening, as I wanted others to get to know the culture of my country.	TMBM; TMBO; BVBBC	LKMGV; LKMES; BKMRV LKMGV

Responses to the questions about active participation revealed organizational skills of the students. Such skills were developed through various activities, which had to be organized by the students divided into teams: "I helped my team to think of tasks and games in organizing the evening animation program; we all contributed" (1 case), "I provided my assistance in preparing for the beach volleyball competency tasks and holding the match, therefore my team members appreciated my efforts" (1 case), „In preparing for the teambuilding task, I helped my team to gather and prepare all of the inventory on the beach, I felt necessary in the group, and I appreciated hearing compliments for my efforts" (1 case). We may conclude that a feedback (complimenting for efforts) facilitated a development of such ability, as such promotes a wish to be useful and repeat such behavior.

In discussion of the students' internal sense of responsibility, we can conclude that students felt responsible for the tasks assigned to their teams or them individually. This skill was developed throughout an entire IP program and development of such was influenced by the sense of national pride, responsibility for their own country and university.

Communicative competence is an obligatory condition for collaboration. Collaboration skill of the present category revealed through *an ability to listen to the opinion of others, express one's own opinion and an ability to manage conflicts*. Having summarized a communicative competence of the students, involved in the IP program, we may claim that students were able to accept opinion of others and listen actively: "I always listen to the opinion of others, when team members wish to express it, because it is a polite thing to do", "Students from other country accepted me into their team when playing beach volleyball, even though I was not good at playing it, however, they encouraged and told me what I was good at and what I did wrong; I accepted the criticism, because I believe this is normal" (Table 5).

The IP program also developed an ability of debating: "...I actively debated with the team members regarding tasks for the evening animation program; however we managed to avoid an argument". A safe psychological environment allowed to easily express one's opinion.

One of the communicative competencies is an ability to manage conflicts. Responses provided by the students reveal that a number of conflict situations were very low,

even though their opinions diverged on many issues. Such conflict situations that originated were successfully solved: "I managed to solve conflicts originated in my team when organizing the windsurfing competition as the opinions diverged on how to organize it" (1 case). Having summarized we can state that during implementation of the present project there were not many situations for the development of a conflict management skill.

Table 5. Communicative competence of students

Supporting statement	Males	Females
<i>Ability to listen to an opinion of others</i>		
I do not interrupt when team members speak up, because I understand that it is difficult to talk when the audience is inattentive.	TMBM	
I am able to listen actively; interested in tasks.	TMBM ; TMBO	LKMGV;
I always listen to the opinion of others when team members wish to express it, because this is a polite thing to do.		BKMRV; LKMGV
I listen to the opinion of other in regards to an event.		LKMGV
Students from other country accepted me into their team when playing beach volleyball, even though I was not good at playing it, however, they encouraged and told me what I was good at, and what I did wrong; I accepted the criticism, because I believe this is normal.		BKMRV
<i>Ability to express one's opinion</i>		
I expressed my ideas in regards to beach volleyball and demonstration tasks of tennis competency.	TMBM	
I actively discussed with the team members in regards to the tasks for the evening animation; however, we managed to escape an argument.	TMBM	
We expressed our ideas in organizing the demonstration task of team building competency; listened and heard each other.	BVBB C	
<i>Ability to manage conflicts</i>		
I managed to solve conflicts originated in my team when organizing the windsurfing competition as the opinions diverged on how to organize it.	TMBM	
Our group did not have a conflict situation once, as we all managed to communicate well and collaborated throughout an entire period of the program.		LKMES; BKMRV

Positive interdependence is established having identified whether the group members have common goals, whether they are in pursuit of joint results and how they distribute their roles (Indrašienė, 2004). According to the data obtained from a research conducted by Salas et al., (1999), formation of a team improves performance of a team.

Collaboration skill of the present category was revealed through the *ability to pursue a common goal, perform assigned role and a willingness to learn how to perform an activity* (Table 6). A sense of unity experienced by the students, participating in the IP program, had a great influence on an ability to pursue a common goal. Team members attempted to achieve the common goal, win the game, were able to play their role even though they did not approve of certain tasks: “I tried to perform my role as good as I could within the team as I knew that they needed me, despite the fact that I did not really like it”. Students were motivated to act knowing

that they were appreciated and necessary in order to perform the tasks: “I believe we were really necessary to each other in organizing the national evening of our country, – we all contributed as much as we could”. Therefore, we can conclude that a sense of unity and necessity united the students of the IP program.

The IP program had various tasks and activities; therefore, a personal motivation to learn was obligatory. Results of the interview reveal that students were very willing to learn various activities “I happily engaged myself in learning dances, games and songs of different countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Turkey)”, “Beach tennis was a completely new sport to me, therefore I was interested in learning its techniques”. We may conclude that participants of the IP program arrived being prepared for new activities, tasks and were happy to learn them as well as willingly attended the majority of events.

Table 6. Positive interdependence of students

Supporting statement	Males	Females
<i>Ability to pursue a common goal. Sense of unity and necessity.</i>		
We competed in windsurfing groups, therefore I actively participated in them, and we felt we were necessary to each other in order to win the game.		LKMES
I believe we are necessary to each other in order to perform a task.	TMBM;	
I believe we were necessary to each other in organizing the national evening of our country; we all contributed as much as we could.		LKMES
I attempted to perform all of the tasks diligently for which other teams were held in charge in order for them to succeed (teambuilding and other competitions).	TMBM	
I felt appreciated by the team when playing beach volleyball as I am a good player and the team always complimented me.		LKMES
My team had to host the beach volleyball game; I contributed to this because I believe we are necessary to each other in order to complete the tasks successfully.	TMBO	
I felt necessary to the team of my country, in order for the national event to be a success, and thanks to our good collaboration skills, it was successful and we received compliments from the representatives of other countries.		LKMGV
<i>Ability to perform the assigned role</i>		
I tried to perform my role as good as I could within the team, as I knew that they needed me, despite the fact that I did not really like it.		BKMRV
I assisted in preparing the inventory for the beach tennis match, as my group was in charge for such activity; I was happy having an opportunity to contribute to organization of such task.		
<i>Willingness to learn new activities</i>		
I tried to learn playing volleyball, even though this game was new to me. I was happy to learn to play the game.	TMBM TMBO	
I tried to learn playing beach tennis. Beach tennis was a completely new sport to me; therefore, I was interested in learning its techniques.	TMBM BVBBC	
Sometimes we had to play in teams; therefore, a tight teamwork is necessary.		BKMRV
I danced the dances of different nations (Bulgaria, Turkey, and Belgium) as this drew us closer. It was difficult for me to try the national dances of other nations; however, it was interesting to try it out.	BVBBC	LKMGV BKMRV
I happily engaged myself in learning dances, games, and songs of different countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, and Turkey). I tried dancing Bulgarian dances, as it was interesting and new.	TMBM; TMBO; BVBBC	LKMGV; BKMRV; LKMES
I played the games of other nations; it was entertaining and amusing.	BVBBC	
I willingly engaged myself in learning beach tennis, as it was a new sport; therefore, I was interested in learning it.	TMBO	LKMES

Group processes are intended for maintaining good relationships among the team members and self-assessment of performed activities (Teresevičienė, Gedvilienė, 2003). During the research the students were asked to rate their team’s performance and participation at events (Table 6). The Erasmus IP program had specific time intervals dedicated to a teamwork, during which

team members could discuss performed activities or get ready for the new events. An environment in which each team member could speak up in regards to processes happening in the group, was created, as well as students could express their ideas on how to improve, rate the task and anticipate the actions contributing to a better performance.

Group based collaboration processes. Two skills highlighted in the present category: ability to rate the activity, considering its efficiency (result), and ability to rate the activity in consideration of the values (Table 7). Having analyzed the students ability to rate the activities in consideration of their efficiency, we may conclude that at the end of the IP program, students were content with their team members, their joint work and achieved results: “Our collaboration and teamwork won us few victories”, “We all contributed to organizing the national evening of our country, it was entertaining, and I enjoyed cooperating with the people of my country in preparing for the evening. The program was so successful that it could be presented to other audiences as well”, “I appreciate my team, as we did everything we could in organizing teambuilding”. In support of the above statements, we may conclude that achieved great results are emphasized.

An ability of students to rate the activity in consideration of the values reveals that such values as unity (“I helped my team to organize the last night’s

event, we all contributed to organizing the event, we worked very closely. We all gave our contribution to this task (designed the logo, slogan, uploaded photos and information into a computer) and had a very intensive cooperation”), friendship (“I really enjoyed collaborating with the team of my country in getting ready for the national evening; such experience was really entertaining and amusing, as our group was extremely friendly”), honesty (“I observed for the teambuilding tasks to be performed fairly”) were highlighted.

Having generalized the statements provided by the students, involved in the Erasmus IP program, in regards to how they rated themselves and work of their teams, we may conclude that students paid a greater attention to rating the activities in consideration of their efficiency: they willingly collaborated with the members of their own and other countries, appreciated the joint work and achieved results.

Table 7. Group based collaboration processes

Supporting statement	Males	Females
<i>Ability to rate the activity, considering its efficiency (results)</i>		
We have always used the entire time given for the teamwork (discussion), we were all involved pretty well.		LKMGV
From the very first day we attended various events divided into groups, therefore it helped to befriend and get to know each other better.	BVBBC	LKMGV
We all contributed to organizing the team’s presentation, every one offered their ideas, listened to each other and arrived at joint solutions.	BVBBC	
We all contributed to organizing the national evening of our country, it was entertaining, and I enjoyed cooperating with the people of my country in preparing for the evening. The program was so successful that it could be presented to other audiences as well.	TMBO	
The entire group worked very closely in organizing the evening’s animation program; we all had our fair contribution to organization and idea generation; the evening was successful.	TMBM	
Our cooperation and teamwork won us few victories.		
<i>Ability to rate the activity in consideration of values</i>		
I really enjoyed collaborating with the team of my country in getting ready for the national evening; such experience was really entertaining and amusing, as our group was extremely friendly.		LKMES
I observed for the teambuilding tasks to be performed fairly.	TMBM	
I helped my team to organize the last night’s event, we all contributed to organizing the event, and we worked very closely. We all gave our contribution to this task (designed the logo, slogan, uploaded photos and information into a computer) and had a very intensive cooperation.	TMBM	LKMGV
I appreciate my team, as we did everything we could in organizing the teambuilding.		LKMGV

Discussion

Collaboration – interpersonal relationships expressed in joint activities during which the needs of each other are considered. Results obtained from the present research reveal that students, attending the IP project had a perfect sense of when a team member needed help, listening, emotional support or encouragement and the joint activities granted a perfect environment for formation of interpersonal relationships.

E. Care, P. Griffin, P., C. Scoular, N. Awwal, N. Zoanetti, (2015) identifies two distinct types of collaborative problem solving tasks – content-free and content-dependent – each allowing students to apply different strategies to solve problems collaboratively. Content-free tasks were developed to emphasise the enhancement of inductive and deductive thinking skills. Content-dependent tasks allow students to draw on knowledge gained through traditional learning areas or subjects within the curriculum. The collaborative problem solving framework

emphasises communication for the purpose of information gathering, identification of available and required information, identification and analysis of patterns in the data, formulation of contingencies or rules, generalisation of rules, and test hypotheses. Our study found that students used both problem solving pathways.

E. Jensen (1999), P. Griffin, B. McGaw, E. Care (2012) claims that prior to establishing the collaboration atmosphere in a group, first, it is necessary to obtain a positive interdependence and a personal responsibility. Our research results confirm that positive interdependence is a very significant factor in developing collaboration ability. Such allowed experiencing a sense of unity and necessity, which is confirmed by the research of Malinauskas (2010). Team collaboration and inter-team competition increase a sense of unity (Baron, Greenberg, 1990). Personal responsibility also contributed to a development of collaboration, which is confirmed by the research of other authors (Indrašienė, 2004; Teresevičienė, Gedvilienė, 2003; Griffin, McGaw, Care, 2012).

P. Griffin, E. Care (2015) notes that students need to be prepared for new ways of working that will call upon their communication and collaboration skills and need to be able to cross those boundaries to collaborate on shared. As data of research (Barvydienė, Kasiulis, 1998, Hoaglund, Birkenfeld, Box, 2014) confirms a joint work is a basis for the group focus, which determined a psychological climate of a team. According to the information gathered during the present research, the students were mainly united by the interplay stimulating collaboration (ability to express and accept a verbal and physical emotional support), which facilitated a formation of a positive psychological climate, which in its turn allowed to reveal the students creativity and developed an ability of self-confidence and self-esteem. Such is confirmed by the data obtained from the research conducted by Bennett et al (2000) stating that in cooperative learning a tight interaction and emotional support should be achieved. Kontautienė (2000), who claimed that mutual understanding is a foundation of a successful collaboration, made similar conclusions.

The general curriculum framework for Lithuania's secondary education schools (2011) note that collaboration skills: team work, pursuit of common goals, coordination of different opinion, understanding the needs of other people, maintaining benevolent relationships, using the methods of democratic effect develop a social and civil competency. Our research established that students, participating in the international Erasmus IP project, not only developed such skills, but also experienced a sense of national pride being granted an opportunity to represent their country and its culture.

Conclusions

During the Erasmus IP (intensive program) project "Sport for tourist animation at a seaside resort" a favorable environment for cooperative learning was ensured: a positive psychological climate was established which allowed the project participants to develop skills of self-expression (self-confidence, self-esteem, creativity). Students were able to feel psychologically safe, shared their experience, were attentive and friendly, supported, and encouraged each other. They were united by a sense of unity and a common goal.

Team based and individual collaboration skills of students were developed throughout all of the tourism and sport related activities: beach volleyball and tennis, canoe and kayak, windsurfing, teambuilding, evening animation tasks and national evening performances.

Based on the model, the following skills of students, participating in the Erasmus IP project, were developed: ability to express and accept a verbal and physical emotional support; cooperative learning, listening to others and expression of own ideas; play assigned role; pursue a common goal; be a leader, supervise, organize; actively participate, when activities are organized by others; rate the activities in consideration of their efficiency and values. Results gathered from the interview responses highlighted a specific factor in regards to development of the collaboration skill – a sense of national pride and responsibility for own country

and university had influence on students' sense of responsibility.

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