From International Mobility to Global Employability: Eighteen Years of Developing the BlendEd Pedagogical Paradigm

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Abstract

Preparing higher education students for an increasingly global labour market requires more than disciplinary knowledge. It requires opportunities to develop transversal competences, international awareness and the ability to collaborate across cultural and disciplinary boundaries. Since 2008, the BlendEd initiative has explored how innovative learning environments can integrate these dimensions into regular higher education without requiring major curricular restructuring or extensive additional resources.

This paper presents an 18-year evolution of this pedagogical work, from the initial Multinational Undergraduate Team Work (MUTW) project to the current Africa BlendEd Course (ABC BlendEd) initiative. Across successive editions, the model evolved from homogeneous, teacher-defined projects to international and multidisciplinary teams addressing authentic challenges proposed by companies, with increasing integration of blended mobility, entrepreneurship, intercultural learning and cooperation with external stakeholders. More than 500 students and over 30 companies have participated in the European implementation, while the approach has progressively expanded beyond Europe.

The paper analyses the main pedagogical developments, the rationale behind each evolutionary step, and the lessons emerging from sustained implementation. ABC BlendEd represents the latest stage of this process, adapting the accumulated experience to African higher education and agriculture. The experience suggests that international, challenge-based and multidisciplinary project learning can provide a practical pathway for embedding employability development within existing curricula while simultaneously widening access to meaningful international exposure.