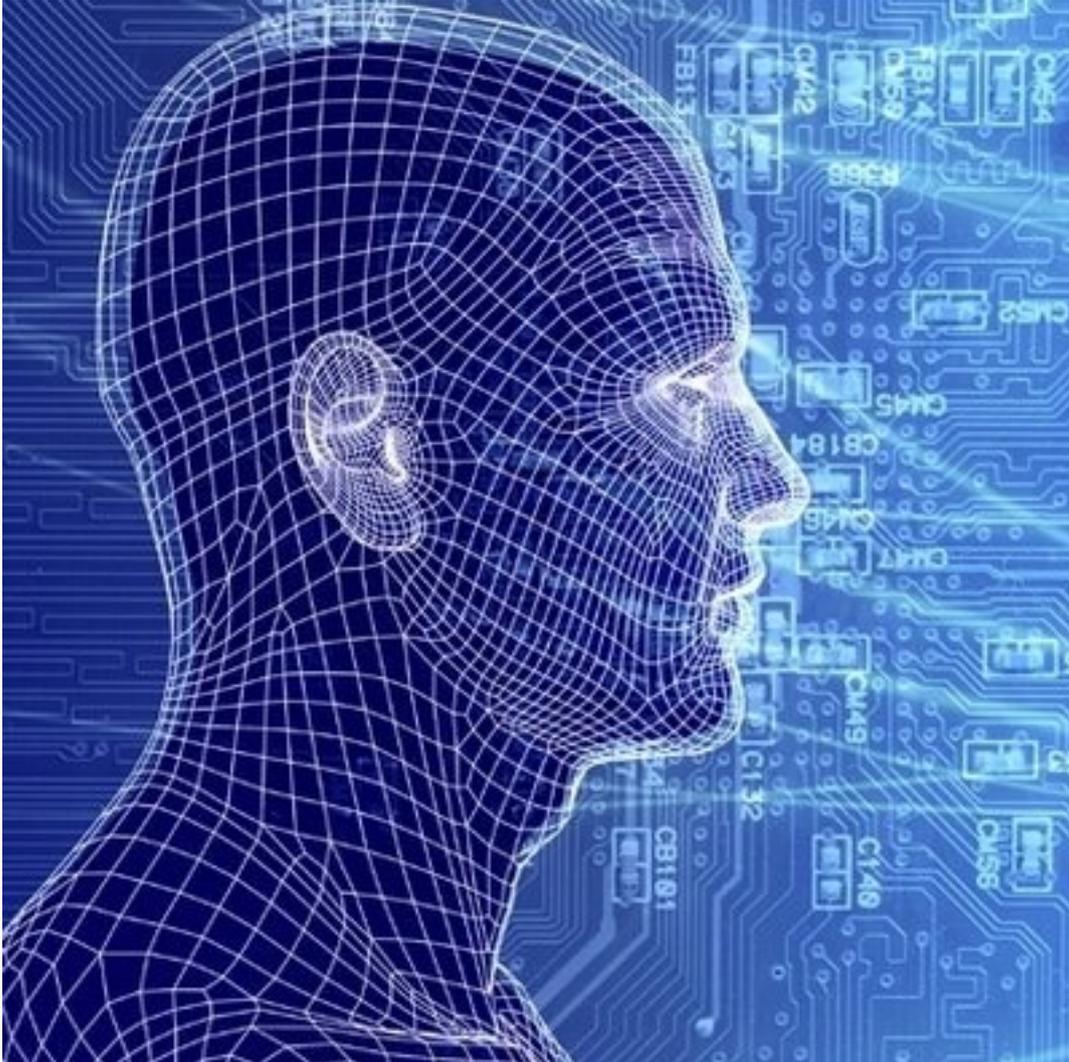


Virtual Court: Innovations in Legal Education



OPEN COURT PROJECT



OPEN COURT

2017

PROBLEM

Project is intended to modernize and innovate the concept and methodology of Ukraine's legal education system, which is based on classic and rather outdated methods of education in law. It does not adequately address the practical needs of law students.

However, as of 2017, legal education in all universities of Ukraine is implemented as the process of acquiring of theoretical knowledge in a field of material and procedural law out of touch with practice.

Current system of legal education may be described as fragmented (usually students are involved in legal practice for short - time periods) and limited to involving students in secondary and subsidiary activities, not connected directly with gaining of practical knowledge and skills of a lawyer (judge, prosecutor, advocate).

It is crucial to admit that such kind of educational practice does not coincides with the time of theoretical education, does not includes the technique of comparison, searching for solutions, developing of strategy, overcoming doubts, and is not supported by visible experience.

Isolation of theory from practice results in predicted consequences. Upon forthcoming graduation, most of students do not understand legal profession, have no basic knowledge of procedural law, are not ready to demonstrate specific spoken communication, have no their own point of view and show the lack of confidence as young professionals.

After all, students experience significant difficulties with getting a position in law firms (first job), are not ready to compete for work and often change profession with a feeling of emptiness and being spirit-drained.

In view of the above it is necessary to add that in the long term it leads to decreasing of level of legal culture in society and negatively impacts the rule of law.

Finally, existing situation creates the conditions for stagnation in a legal education and arises an issue of implementation of innovative concept of education in response to the demands of the time. In other words, ***Innovative Legal Education Model (ILEM)***.

SOLUTION

Legal education should not take place in a vacuum. Existing gap can be filled with the possibility of usage of new technologies which link theory with practice.

In order to address the problem, it is therefore proposed that the educational process in law should be accompanied by successfully implemented model which has been launched within the framework of Open Court Project, and is based of usage of video records of court proceedings in criminal, civil, administrative, economic cases.

Students will be involved in watching and legal analysis of video materials (video clips) produced in advance according to specific subject matter of procedural law in a harmony with acquiring of theoretical knowledge shared by university lecturers and selected experts in a field of law (subject matter experts such as advocates, judges, investigators and prosecutors will be involved).

In addition, to enhance the positive effect of educational process, we have already started filming of court trials in virtual reality 360 degree format, which provides the sense of presence in a courtroom for the viewer (student), the virtual possibility to become a party to a case. VR video may be watched by students with PC or smartphones (such as Iphone, Samsung, others) using or not using VR glasses.

Thus, the project includes implementation of innovative methods of legal education, creation of special video materials intended for remote and full - time study, developing appropriate teaching tools, approving further training programs, testing of students to evaluate the level of practical knowledge, assessing the results and wide discussion.

The success of such an approach is considered as prerequisite for the implementation of a project in all law schools of a country.

A big advantage of a project is that the innovative concept of legal education can be implemented without adopting a whole new piece of legislation, idea can be fully integrated in existing educational process, combining deep theoretical knowledge with vast practical experience in a field of material and procedural law.

GOAL OF A PROJECT

To strengthen the quality of legal education

OBJECTIVE 1

ILEM for remote and full - time education of law students had been developed

Goals:

1. Make video recording of court proceedings in applicable format (HD and VR), to be used for further ILEM implementation.
2. Produce video tutorials according to subject matter (fragmented video records of court trials), to be used for further ILEM implementation.
3. Develop a methodology for ILEM implementation of: 1) remote and 2) full - time education of law students.
4. Develop a methodology for assessment of the level of practical knowledge after ILEM completion.
5. Provide IT solutions for ILEM implementation based on remote education, online communication and distant assessment.
6. Popularize ILEM among students and law schools.

OBJECTIVE 2

ILEM for remote and full - time education of law students had been implemented

Goals:

1. Involve law students from different regions of Ukraine in a process of remote and full - time legal education based on ILEM.
2. Provide law students with a course of remote and full - time legal education based on ILEM.
3. Assess individual results of remote and full - time legal education based on ILEM.
4. Provide students with Assessment Certificate issued on the outcome of the ILEM completion.
5. Prepare a written report on ILEM implementation.
6. Ensure wide-national discussion on results of ILEM implementation.
7. Popularize the outcomes of ILEM implementation to enhance the capacity of a model to be implemented in all law schools of Ukraine; secure a larger opportunities for students to find a first job as a lawyer.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES

Activities to achieve Objective I

1. 15 VR 360 degree video cameras (with accessories) had been bought; 500 court proceedings in criminal, civil, economic, administrative cases had been videotaped, stored, archived, published (250 - videotaped in HD format, 250 - videotaped in VR 360 degree format).
2. 16 video tutorials (video clips) had been produced both in HD and VR 360 degree format according to subject matter: 1) opening of a case; 2) preliminary hearing; 3) submitting evidence; 4) submitting motions; 5) a motion for continuance; 6) a motion on injunctive relief; 7) requesting evidence; 8) a motion requesting examination of the witnesses; 9) request for expertise; 10) ruling on injunctive relief (seizure of property, prohibition on action); 11) plaintiff's position; 12) defendant's position; 13) examination of witnesses; 14) evaluation of the evidence; 15) judgement in a case; 16) model court trial.
3. A methodology for ILEM had been developed on the basis of the following understanding: a) remote (distant) education is an autonomous system of self - education through usage of virtual account and online communication with experts of Open Court Project (OCP); b) full - time education is a part of ongoing educational process which is held in a law school during seminars and workshops. The ILEM includes watching video tutorials and analysis of video records, practical trainings accompanying theoretical knowledge, assistance and consultancy by experts.
4. A methodology of impartial assessment had been developed on the basis of the following understanding: assessment of the level of practical knowledge includes online test and follow-up testing with a SKYPE call.
5. Website OPEN-COURT.ORG had been modernized for implementation of remote and full - time course of ILEM, including option of creation of virtual accounts (workplace) for students.
6. Targeted PR campaign designed to promote ILEM to be used by students and law schools had been launched and then repeated after activities have been completed; 1 national press - conference on ILEM had been held;
7. 10 law firms had been involved in a project implementation; 12 legal practitioners had been included in a list of experts for ILEM implementation (subject matter experts in criminal, civil, economic, administrative cases - judges, advocates, investigators, prosecutors); 1 law school had been officially confirmed as a place for full - time ILEM implementation within existing cooperation between Open Court Project and 19 universities of Ukraine.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES

Activities to achieve Objective II

1. Open competition among law students had been launched; 50 law students with greatest achievements had been invited from all over Ukraine to pass ILEM on a basis of remote guidance of Open Court Project and online support by our team of experts (PILOT GROUP 1).
2. 50 VR glasses had been bought and assigned for the exclusive use during the training period (for Pilot Group 1).
3. 1 group of 25 full - time law students had been organized in 1 law school to pass ILEM on a basis of existing concept of education (PILOT GROUP 2). Students had been provided with the support and guidance of Open Court Project and our team of experts, and additional guidance of law school administration, including well-respected university lecturers.
4. 25 VR glasses had been bought and assigned for the exclusive use during the training period (for Pilot Group 2).
5. ILEM had been implemented on a basis of remote and full - time educational process. Training process included: 1) watching video tutorials; 2) legal analysis of video materials; 3) framing questions; 4) answering questions; 5) questioning of students on the outcomes.
6. Assessment of the results of participants of Pilot Group 1 and Pilot Group 2 had been made through online test and SKYPE calls.
7. 75 Assessment Certificates (ILEM Certificates) had been issued for each student of Pilot Group 1 and Pilot Group 2.
8. 1 roundtable discussion had been held on results of ILEM implementation with participation of law schools, students, law firms, courts, advocates, prosecutors, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, members of government and parliament.
9. Targeted PR campaign designed to promote the results of ILEM implementation had been conducted to enhance the capacity of a model to be implemented in all law schools of Ukraine; secure a larger opportunities for students to find a first job on the outcomes of getting ILEM Assessment Certificate.
10. Analytical note and recommendations on further ILEM integration in a current system of legal education and all law schools of Ukraine had been prepared and sent to Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and Government.

BENEFICIARIES

- Law students (75 - directly; 10 000 - indirectly).
- Law schools (1 - directly; 50 - indirectly).
- Law firms (10 - directly; 100 - indirectly).
- Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Government

There shall be no privileges or restrictions based on race, skin colour, political, religious, and other beliefs, gender, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics.