

From the Guest Editor:

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The contemporary world is dialectical: centrifugal and centripetal forces affect it, uniting and at the same time disuniting it, getting it globalized as well as discrete. Vectors representing an enormous array of interests point in different directions. Countries, nations and people must adapt to this to survive. They have to understand each other... Understanding is a way to compromise, to have a thoughtful attitude, and careful thinking.

To reach understanding on a global scale is an impossible mission. But persistent, constant, and multiple efforts can accumulate a big potential. According to logical reasoning quantity will turn into quality.

The Global Understanding program is one such effort. Having been started at the very beginning of the XXI century by East Carolina University, this initiative was first supported by 3-4 like-minded universities. Now, 10 years later, it is Global Partnership in Education, a world-wide association having partner-universities in 30 countries around the world.

Students meet each other in a virtual environment; they talk about their lives and interests, their differences and similarities, their native cultures, traditions and customs. Many of them, "travelling" via telecommunication, for the first time in their life "visit" Africa and Latin America, China and India and, - yes! Russia, and many more "exotic" places about which they frequently have rather limited and stereotypic ideas.

This is just the case with Russian students from Moscow State University's Department of Languages. We have been in the GU program since 2005 and over time our experience has distinctly changed MSU students and teachers. We cannot imagine our academic life without having this course on the curriculum of the Department. The course is a genuine testing ground for communication across cultures. Students learn how to apply their theoretical knowledge in cross-cultural communication in practice, in real communication with their peers from various corners of the world. It gives them competence and confidence, helps overcome anxiety and breaks false stereotypes, a great obstacle to mutual understanding.

We are ardent supporters of the noble idea of the program. It should continue, it should grow. Grow both in the number of participants and in the scope of knowledge acquired by them. It should be strengthened by more creative activities, boosting student interest and motivation to obtain deep knowledge of the world they live in and of each other. This is a true path to global understanding.

From the Editorial Board:

Thank you to all those who continue to support the GPEJ through submitting articles, reviewing, and serving as editors. We especially want to thank Dr. Alla L. Nazarenko who served as our first guest editor. She and her team did an exceptional job. For issue five, we welcome, Dr. Mariko Eguchi from the University of Shimane in Hamada, Japan, as our guest editor. We look forward to working with her.

As GPEJ continues to grow, so must our editorial team. Starting with issue five, we will change the structure of our editorial board and have four new associate editors working with us. We hope that through these changes we will be able to provide better service to the journal and its readers.

Finally, as always, we want to thank all those who have reviewed for the journal over the past two years. Your reviews are an essential component of the final product you see in each and every issue.

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