

TAILOR-MADE COURSE “PRESENTING IN ENGLISH” FOR THE ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE

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Abstract

The authors are going to provide an insight into a tailor made course Presenting in English. They are going to portray a needs analysis questionnaire that precedes the course, some e-instruments that are used for improving effective language learning and for achieving desired progress in the participants' communicative and cross-cultural competences; the course itself and the feedback form that is utilized to reflect not only the course content but also the self-development of the participants. The authors are going to deal with utilization of e-learning support materials, information and communication technologies, and collaborative learning and teaching methods and techniques in the two-day course that has primarily been created for the academic staff and doctoral and master students of the University of Pardubice.

KURZ „PRESENTING IN ENGLISH“ ŠITÝ NA MÍRU AKADEMICKÝM PRACOVNÍKŮM UNIVERSITY PARDUBICE

Autorky prezentace poskytnou ucelený vhled do kurzu: “Presenting in English“, šitého na míru akademickým zaměstnancům Univerzity Pardubice. Zmapují výsledky dotazníku potřeb, který kurzu předcházela, použité nástroje elektronické podpory kurzu, které byly efektivně použity pro zlepšení jazykových, komunikativních a interkulturních kompetencí účastníků kurzu, stejně jako obsah kurzu samotného a jeho přispění k sebevzdělávání samotných účastníků kurzu prostřednictvím jejich zpětné vazby. Autorky se budou zabývat uceleným pohledem na využití e-learningových podpor, na moderní výukové metody učení jako např. kolaborativní učení nebo sdílená výuka a na použití ICT v daném kurzu vytvořeném především pro akademické pracovníky a studenty v doktorském a magisterském studiu na Univerzitě v Pardubicích.

MASSGESCHNEIDERTER KURS „PRESENTING ENGLISH“ FÜR AKADEMISCHE MITARBEITER DER UNIVERSITÄT PARDUBICE

Die Autorinnen gewähren in ihrem Beitrag einen Gesamteinblick in den Kurs „Presenting in English“, der speziell für die Bedürfnisse der akademischen Mitarbeiter der Universität Pardubice maßgeschneidert wurde. Der Beitrag informiert über die verwendeten elektronischen Hilfsmittel des Kurses, welche zur Verbesserung der sprachlichen,

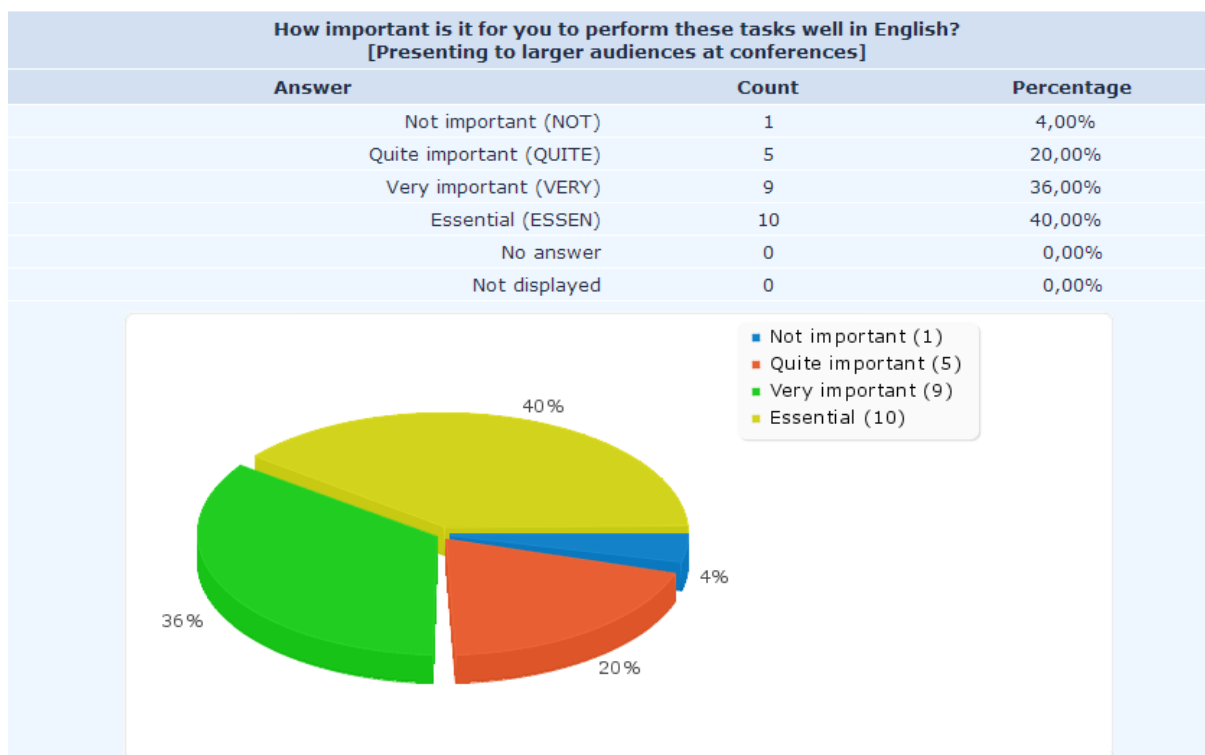
kommunikativen und interkulturellen Kompetenzen der Teilnehmer beitrugen, sowie auch über den Inhalt des Kurses selbst und dessen Beitrag zur Eigenarbeit der einzelnen Kursteilnehmer mit Hilfe von deren Rückmeldungen. Die Autorinnen befassen sich umfassend mit der unterstützenden Nutzung von E-Learning, der Verwendung von ICT im betreffenden Kurs und mit modernen Unterrichts- und Lehrmethoden wie z. B. das kollaborative Lehren oder den geteilten Unterricht.

Introduction

The concept of a tailor made course *Presenting in English* for academic staff of the University of Pardubice was also implemented into the EU-funded Unicom project “*Professionalism in communication, communication in profession*”. The main idea of the Unicom project is the innovation of the language education concept towards the quality assurance and optimization of the conditions for the development of student and academic staff internationalization. Within the three key activities: Excellence and Individuality Sustainment, E-learning Implementation and ICT Utilization the project addresses the needs of talented students and scientists in terms of their further foreign language and intercultural development. The need for improving professional life skills led the authors Mgr. Zuzana Bezdíčková, Mgr. Markéta Denksteinová and Mgr. Irena Podlášková to seek new methods of approach to these requests. The creation of a course based on the needs analysis questionnaire and supported by an e-course focusing on the presentation skills seemed to be one of the possible answers to this issue.

1 Needs analysis questionnaire

The authors decided to use the currently ever present need for improving working life skills of academic staff and doctoral and master students of the University of Pardubice for the creation of the course “Presenting in English”. The pilot module was open to academic and administrative staff of the University of Pardubice. They were offered two days course, twelve ninety minutes long sections each day focusing on different stages of presentations. The course was designed by three co-authors from the Language Centre of the University of Pardubice. It was preceded by need analysis questionnaire and it reflected the requests the recipients had risen in it. As the audience’s needs were reflected in the course the motivation to improve the participants’ skills was a vital demand the authors had to address.



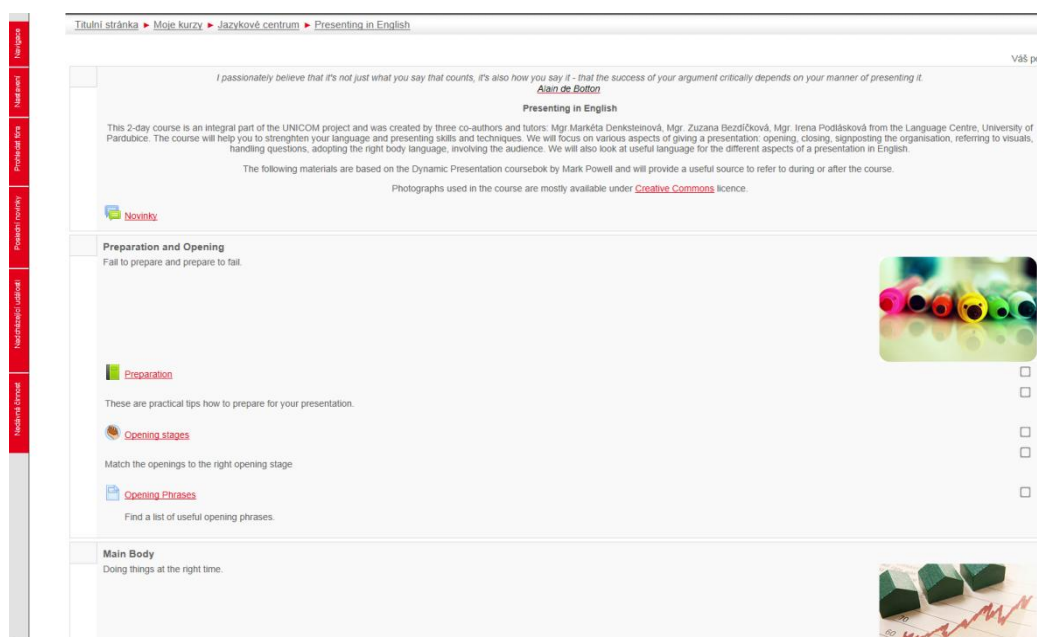
Source: Language Centre, University of Pardubices

Fig. 1: Need analysis questionnaire

The needs analysis questionnaire focused on the fields of interest the academic staff might find appealing stretching from the presentation to scientific audience to participating on poster sections and reflecting thoroughly different stages of a presentation. The respondents could choose from four possible answers and they could also add their comments. The authors used the answers not only for setting the content of the course but also for designing the e-course that was created for the course participants.

2 E-instruments “Presenting in English”

“A virtual learning environment is a web-based communications platform that allows students, without limitation of time and place, to access different learning tools, such as program information, course content, teacher assistance, discussion boards, document sharing systems, and learning resource.” [1]. The rapid development of information technologies allows *e-instruments* to be used more extensively as a tool in language education. The authors decided to design a supportive e-course for the course participants which they could refer to any time needed. LMS moodle platform proved to be the right option. The e-course was divided into four parts resembling the structure of a presentation: opening, main body and closing; and the poster section. While creating the *e-course* the authors utilized different options the LMS provides. The text pages were used to offer some factual information. The quizzes were designed to offer deeper training of language phrases typical for presentations and for improving the listening skills. The Hot Potatoes exercises added even more interesting way of practicing language aspect of presentation skills. *Within the Hot Potatoes three types of exercises were prepared*: JCloze, where the missing parts of the text were supposed to be filled in; JMatch, where the drag and drop parts were written to be matched together; and JCross, where the words definitions were presented to be answered to complete the crossword.



Source: Language Centre, University of Pardubices

Fig. 2: Moodle course

Some of the activities were used during the seminar but most were designed to be used later independently on the course. The main aim of this e-course was to provide the participants with an attractive online material they can come back to anytime when they are getting ready for their presentation.

3 Seminar “Presenting in English”

The authors designed the seminar to six ninety minute sessions within two days. Each session focused on certain parts of the presentation covering not only the structure (opening, main body, closing) but also dealing with different difficult aspects of delivering an excellent presentation such as body language, impact techniques, visual aids, building rapport, dealing with question, voice power to name just some of them. *Each part was also led by one of the three teachers and supported by the two others.* Team teaching proved to be one of the very strong qualities the authors were able to provide the course participants with. The authors wanted to enhance cooperation among the course participants; therefore group work activities as well as different pair work tasks were introduced. The authors aimed at achieving desired progress in the participants’ communicative and cross-cultural competences via raising the students’ learner autonomy through the concept of implementation of multimedia techniques. Nevertheless the participants’ privacy was never questioned or challenged.

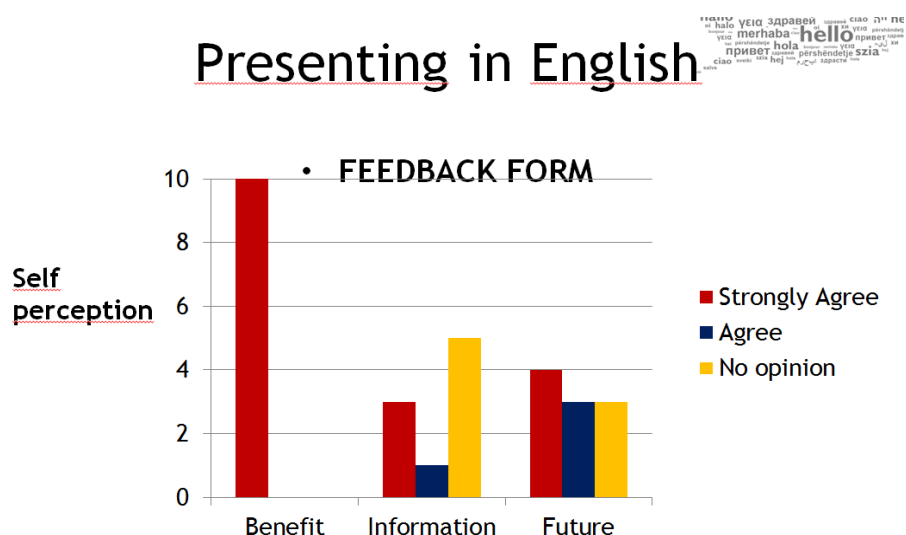


Source: Language Centre, University of Pardubices

Fig. 3: Group work

4 Feedback form

The final seminar part was focused on practice and feedback. The participants were asked in advance to bring their recent presentations to the seminar and they were addressed to it throughout the seminar. In the final part prepared the presentation with implementation of the new acquired abilities in a small group. The presentation was recorded for their own self-evaluation and reflection and the speakers were given an appropriate oral feedback by the teachers and peers if required. The group work was a considerable part of the whole project. It appeared the significant part of the seminar. The lecturers have also been provided by the participants through a feedback form. The actual outcomes can be seen in figure below.



Source: Language Centre, University of Pardubices

Fig. 4: Feedback form

5 SWOT

Within the framework of the basic distinction between the concepts of teacher centeredness and learner centeredness, some specific teacher roles and methods - especially the one of facilitator and collaborative teaching were prioritised within the whole seminar. The authors

see the strength of the seminar mainly in the team teaching method, where each part is given an emphasis with the positive energy of each speaker. The participants also emphasised the group learning and practice, and the exclusive role of a lecturer being the facilitator. The e-support Moodle course and original tailor made materials were among the strong points. An objective for the future remains in widening the scope of possible participants to larger group of PhD. students via direct addressing the courses to them. According to the previous experience the authors dedicated more time for deeper practicing of the onstage presentations and evaluation. The future task remains in creating the advanced course developing presentation skills even further. The only threat the authors can foresee is no audience interested in the course which however seems highly unlikely.

VISUAL AIDS

- 1) The expressions below are all useful when presenting a slide. Complete them using the words in *italics*.

Attention axis notice look talk take point see figures question implications background speak mean put might know suggest

INTRODUCE YOUR SLIDE

- a) Have a at this.
b) The vertical represents ...
c) As you can
d) Let's a closer look

HIGHLIGHT KEY POINTS

- e) You'll
f) I should out ...
g) I'd like to draw your to ...
h) Let me you through ...

GIVE THE CONTEXT

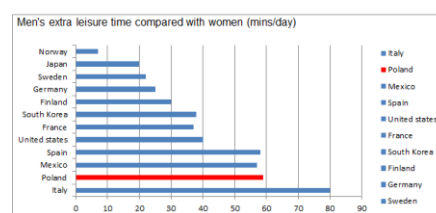
- i) To give you the to that
j) As you know
k) Now, let's that into perspective.

INTERPRET THE DATA

- l) These show ...
m) The figures for themselves.
n) These results
o) We expect ...
p) The real is ...

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 1) Look at the data in the graph, which shows the extra amount of leisure time men have as compared with women in 12 different countries. Imagine you're presenting to an audience of mostly Polish executives. Decide what data to keep in the slide and what to leave for the *handout*.



Source: Language Centre, University of Pardubice

Fig. 5: Handouts

Conclusion

The authors have acquired the hands on experience with team teaching and group learning with the academic staff audience, which appeared a prove of shifting the teacher and learner role significantly. The two-day seminar could be created only thanks to close cooperation of the authors. The collaboration brought many positive aspects as different creative potential or varied language tools during the e-course preparation period or team teaching experience, implementation of multimedia techniques and blended learning during the seminar.

Acknowledgements

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