

Videoconferencing and Shared Virtual Learning of English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract

The authors wish to address some issues of enhancing the students' self-motivation and learner autonomy via videoconferencing and virtual learning techniques implemented in ESP courses of English for IT and Business English. They will also present ideas on how to improve the ESP teaching/learning outcomes at middle sized universities in this case the University of Pardubice in the Czech Republic and HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland.

The authors will discuss some e-instruments (Moodle, Facebook groups, shared Google docs and presentations, Google drive) for improving effective language learning and for achieving desired progress in the students' communicative and cross-cultural competences. The discussed instruments are related to raising the students' learner autonomy through the videoconferencing techniques into the everyday learning-teaching process. The authors will present a joint video-conferencing modules used in co-teaching process which started in the spring of 2011 within the course of English for IT and has been extended to the course of Business English in 2013 as a part of the EU-funded Unicom project. The students involved in these joint courses have approximately the same graduate profiles and language competences.

The authors will provide practical insight into the problem issues and SWOT analysis based on hands-on experience. They will also reflect on the intercultural challenges seen through the different approaches of IT and Business English students towards both set and selected topics for VC sessions. Finally they will focus on the shift from the teacher-centered to learner-centered approach.