

Designing a multi-cultural, multi-purpose videoconferencing learning programme

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Theme: Usage of Video Technology in Everyday Teaching

The introduction and use of videoconferencing and other information and communication technologies in education at university level have accelerated the interest in changes of traditional teaching methods and learning processes. Masaryk University in Brno (Czech Republic) is the promoter of the European INVITE (<http://invite.lingua.muni.cz/>) project (Leonardo da Vinci Programme), whose aim is to facilitate programmes of cooperation between learning groups from different professional and educational environments, cultures and disciplines with multi-purpose teaching objectives. One of the goals of the project is to create a teaching material that covers key videoconferencing skills, namely operational and technical skills, functional language and cultural competencies.

Masaryk University Brno (MU) and University of Wales in Aberystwyth (UWA) implemented videoconferencing technology into some of their joint programmes that were generally focused on English as a second language (none of the students involved in the programmes were native English speakers) but were diverse in their concrete module aims. The interactive cooperation between the groups of learners included both synchronous (videoconferencing) and asynchronous (e-mail, blog, web-pages) technologies.

An overview of designs and methods used in the joint MU-UWA videoconferencing programmes will be presented and discussed with regards to those areas that may enhance or limit the successful implementation of new technical and pedagogical practices. In the context of the successful practices, a basic structure of the INVITE teaching material will be introduced as a clear link to the experimental outcomes of the MU-UWA videoconferencing cooperation.