

# eLearning and Presentation Techniques

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***Abstract:** Nowadays we speak about digital communication several times. But what is the core meaning of that? How can we influence? Which are the main elements? Is it impacted by the ages or gender? The author had a teaching experiment at Obuda University in Hungary, in the first semester of 2009-10 school year in English subject titled „eLearning and presentation techniques“. There were three main areas to study: the knowledge of English language, digital communication and competences of students' presentation techniques.*

***Keywords:** digital communication; digital literacy; eLearning; presentation techniques; competencies; transfer of information*

## 1 Knowledge of English Language

It is compulsory for students of engineer education at Obuda University to select one subject in foreign language before finishing their studies. In the first semester of 2009-10 school year I invited students for my English subject titled „eLearning and presentation techniques“. There were 12 students in the group from Faculty of Informatics. It was a challenge to teach that subject. It was important what to teach, how to select the topics helping students to understand the core of eLearning and presentation techniques. In the other hand how can we communicate in English which is a second language for them?

It was easy to recognize the students' knowledge of English language. It was higher than the average of engineer students. Probably this is why they selected the subject in English. They could communicate easy, were keen to answer the questions and enjoyed the listened presentation of mine. On the first lesson I asked them how could learn English, have they ever been to English speaking countries to practice their foreign language knowledge. Only three students had English language exam recognised nationally or internationally. Generally they learn and improve their English with collecting information surfing on Internet. From 12 students, there were four who had never been abroad, three have been more

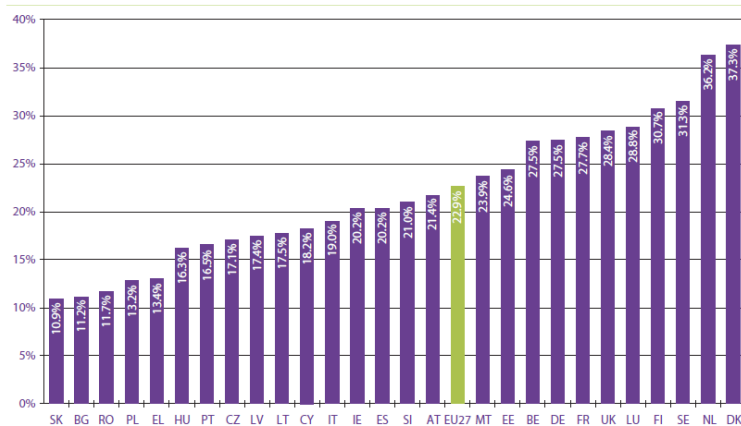
than five European countries and two were in United States in Youth Camp did voluntary work. Both of them could travel some states and visited cities in the USA. Verbally every student could present their thoughts. But there were problems with written English knowledge. Their vocabulary was too weak concentrated to their profession of Informatics. Generally they did not use well the grammatical rules made several mistakes. When I tried to analyze the problem found two reasons. Their English lessons were not successful and effective enough in secondary school. In the other hand their generation doesn't learn in traditional language school they prefer info-communication technologies (ICT) mainly Internet and try to improve their foreign language knowledge themselves. They are practice-oriented, concentrate on direct information transfer and effective conversation. These students enrich their vocabulary with reading professional literacy generally via Internet. They are digital aborigines who were born in the ubiquitous ICT Century. Writing SMSs and Blogs does not support the right English grammar and vocabulary, because they are used to write with acronyms and shorten words, the transfer of digital information is expensive, they try to communicate quickly and short. There are special on-line dictionary services of Hungarian and English abbreviations for SMS applications: [http://www.telefonguru.hu/tanacsado/sms\\_roviditesek.asp](http://www.telefonguru.hu/tanacsado/sms_roviditesek.asp). The other reason is not to spend too much time with language learning the access of on-line translation services, just like <http://smobiles.com/SMSszotar/> or <http://szotar.sztaki.hu/index.hu.jhtml>. The SZTAKI Dictionary provides translation in English, German, French, Italian, Dutch and Polish and can use Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary as well. They have special service e.g. loud speaking dictionary to practice pronunciation based on IPA (International Pronunciation Association).

Nevertheless students can communicate with foreign colleagues, but writing an English paper, study or theses causes a serious problem. In Hungary students can receive their higher education diploma when they have a foreign language certificate recognised nationally or internationally. In the foreign language exam they can not ignore the grammar rules! The lucky situation when students prepare themselves in secondary schools for foreign language exam, because in this case they learn thematically grammar rules in their young ages. When students learn informal foreign language the grammar rules can be fixed bad and to change and repair of them much more difficult. This is why several student can not pass the foreign language exam and can finish the study only with final state exam and without higher education diploma. There are 20% of diplomas stored in Educational Department of Obuda University, waiting for the foreign language certificate.

## 2 Digital Communication

The Internet penetration is increasing in Hungary continuously. But let's see this result in European context. The Figure 1 shows EU Fixed broadband penetration in 2009. Hungary is only 21<sup>st</sup> in order with the result of 16.3%. Only Greek, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia are behind us. From the 10 countries joined to European Union in 2004, Estonia is on position 10 exceeding the EU average, because of intensive ICT policy.

Figure 1: EU Fixed broadband penetration, January 2009



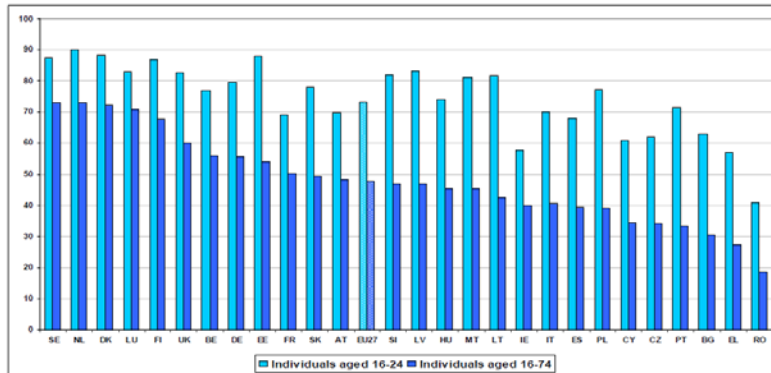
Source: Communication Committee (CoCom)

Figure 1  
EU Fixed broadband penetration

Increasing Internet penetration is balancing the gender of users, but still nowadays 55% of man and 48% of woman use Internet daily. But there is a bigger difference among ages of individuals who used the Internet on average every day. Internet is more or less for youngsters indicated by statistical date. 84% of 15-24 ages used the Internet on average every day or almost every day. For the 25-34 ages the ratio is decreased: 67%. There is a dramatically change for people above 50, only 21% is the Internet penetration of daily users. The Figure 2 shows Individuals used the Internet on average every day or almost every day in European Union.

In this comparison we have better position. Hungarians are in a middle there are 12 countries behind us e.g. Italy and Ireland as well.

Figure 3: Individuals who used the internet on average every day or almost every day, 2009 (%)



Source: Eurostat ([isoc.ci.ifp.fu](http://isoc.ci.ifp.fu))

Figure 2

Individuals used the Internet on average every day or almost every day in European Union

Our students are in the preferred ages and generally they can use Internet at home also. Several students use mobile Internet on their portable notebook at our University, because of campuses provided wireless connections for students and staffs.

So the constrain and the source of problems are not technical. Most important question is how they can apply and use their digital communication and literacy, solving daily problems? They could provide showing of their digital communication with giving live presentation on lesson. When I analyzed their software knowledge based on their self evaluation there was no any problem with user programs, so we did not focus on programming problems.

They could select any kind of topic e.g. relating to subject, their profession or hobby. They received this freedom to motivate the easier implementation and overcome dread and press.

Three students dealt with the topic related the subject. We could see presentations about History of eLearning and Internet (Figure 3). Communication via Internet, and Development of 3D film technology.

Four students had presentations related to their profession Informatics. We could see interesting details about Web programming, Microsoft Silverlight, LINUX and Windows7 operating systems.



Figure 3  
History of Internet

Four students gave presentations about hobby or favourite topics, so there were Sport, Roller Coaster, Planet system (Figure 4) and Blood donating.

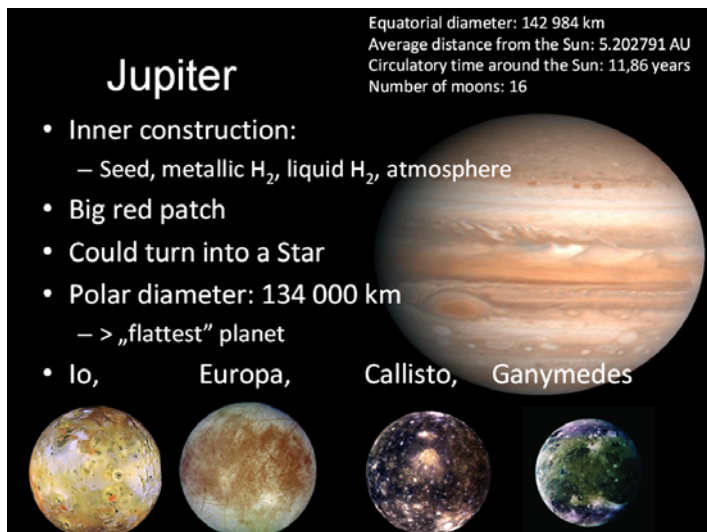


Figure 4  
Planet system

One student resigned he did not finish the semester. Nevertheless they reported no any problem of using PowerPoint or Flash software there were technical weaknesses in their presentations.

Only half of students could plan their presentation according to the technical requirements, containing statistical data and embedded video. They had several technical problems with multimedia elements: measures, colours, visibility etc. When we evaluated the presentations, they had to recognise the over estimation of their technical knowledge and preparation. But these negative experience was useful also for them inspiring the improvement of programming, design and digital literacy.

### **3 Communication and Presentation Competencies**

It was a big challenge for students to develop communication abilities and presentation competences. They were happy to give oral presentation, because they had to pass several written exams, but generally in mass education teachers are rarely interested in their verbal opinion. It is a big weakness in teaching process, because in engineering work from planning to management there are several tasks when they have to present effectively the results or products. For that presentation tasks we have to prepare our students similarly just like we do professional theory and practice.

They prepared themselves very well. Three students gave their first presentation! They received information about tips and tricks for planning and preparation of presentation on field of Pedagogy, Psychology and Methodology. They were interested in these topics because receiving explanation of problems they did intuitively until that time. We have discussed about the role of colours, importance of multimedia elements and impacts of voice and movements.

It was a good feedback my stuffs of methodological, pedagogical and psychological guidance were useful and immediately could use and apply. But there were several problems with content and quality of slides, time management, behaviour, loudness of voice etc. Several times they were shy and whisper. We have discussed about the optimal amount of information but they had time management problem. It was difficult to use effectively the 15 minutes! There was a problem how to focus and point the most important elements. There were several mistyping on slides. I had to raise their attention to be more careful and doing better work, checking the slides before presentation!

After presentations there was a common and frank evaluation process. Several times they could smile because the most important was to give them a positive experience. Finally they could overcome themselves gave a right answer to the challenge, transferred their messages, gave an enjoyable presentation in English.

## Conclusions

When we are speaking about digital communication generally we think about only use of ICT equipment and software. We have to take into account more complex elements using mother tongue and foreign languages, right way of thinking, emotional reactions, methodology of information transfer and all competences support to improve them.

In conference there will be presented the best examples of students' presentations.

## Acknowledgement

I have to acknowledge the leadership of Trefort Ágoston Centre for Engineer Education for giving possibility to organize these English speaking lessons. It was a good possibility for me to share my experiences on eLearning and presentation techniques and for students to try their English knowledge and communication skills.

It would be a better idea not to keep only professional content subjects related to students' engineering studies for compulsory selection in foreign language but giving bigger freedom and recognize subjects provided on other professional fields.

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