E-learning advancements in the academic foreign language teaching

Anna Pacholak, Monika Galbarczyk

University of Warsaw,
Centre for Open and Multimedia Education

Beginning of the story: 2006

On-line foreign language teaching project was launched at the University of Warsaw.

10 years later…

14 languages   37 000 participants

The concept of online foreign language teaching has been expanding and growing. Progressively, multi-level and multi-purpose e-courses together with on-line placement tests were created.

Background

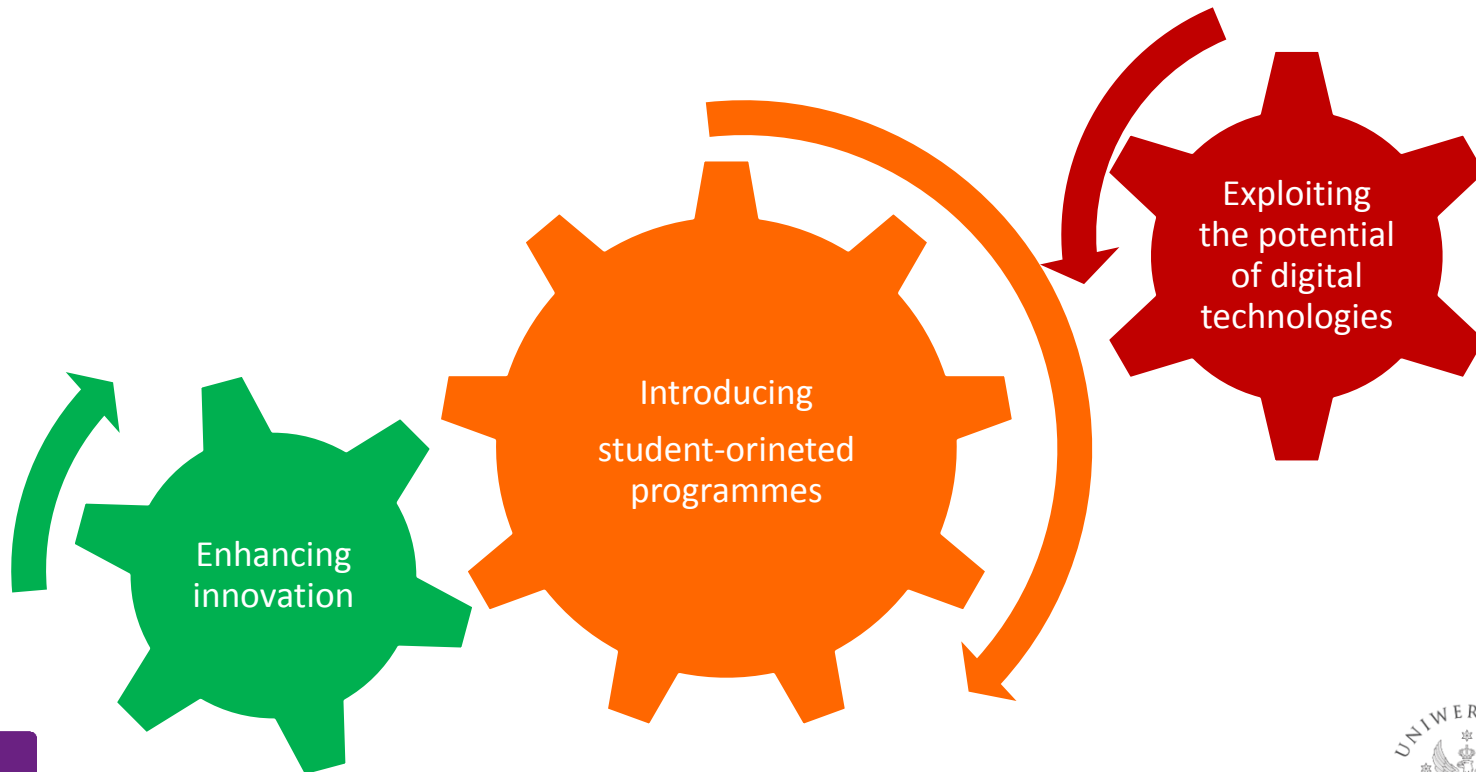EU strategy: ICT-skilled and knowledge-based society

EU 2015 Joint Report on Education and Training (ET 2020),
25% of adult EU citizens still represent **low** levels of digital skills
and **only** 10.7% take part in life-long learning process.

2020 Bologna Process for the European Universities

- empowering of the mobility, multilingualism and employability;

- the development of life-long learning systems;

- improvement of the learning environment and removal of the study barriers;

2020 Bologna Process for the European Universities

Improvement of the learning environment and removal of the study barriers (among others) by:

Enhancing innovation

Introducing student-orineted programmes

Exploiting the potential of digital technologies

Innovation obstacles

Bottom-up need

2005: the Senate of the University of Warsaw issued a Resolution on equal access to the languages didactic offer for both stationary and extramural students.

BUT

- the number of students was increasing
- the access to classrooms was insufficient
- shortage of teachers and lecturers

organizational changes indispensable

Solution?

2006: steps were taken to introduce e-learning within the field of foreign language teaching at the University, with a particular focus on the English language.

Joint effort of the university units

Main agents: Centre for Foreign Language Teaching and COME UW (within the University System of Language Provision)

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

- the tool used: **Moodle platform** (already developed for on-line teaching at UW);
- all necessary sorts of language teaching materials (audio, video, graphics, and text files) in one environment;
- on-line materials easily combined with in-class teaching via blended learning;
- diverse testing ways & immediate automatic feedback for tests;
- platform integrated with students' management system (USOS): enrollment, marks' migration.
- time and costs reduction

Language on-line services developed

- placement tests

- general language e-courses

- mock language certification e-courses

- remedial language e-courses

Online placement tests

Testing and assessment of the students' level of advancement in foreign languages and ways of group assignment became of importance due to the increasing number of students.

PLACEMENT TESTS
in **6** languages - over **5 400** attempts

English   French   German
Russian   Spanish   Italian

Number of placement tests attempts in 2015.

Placement tests
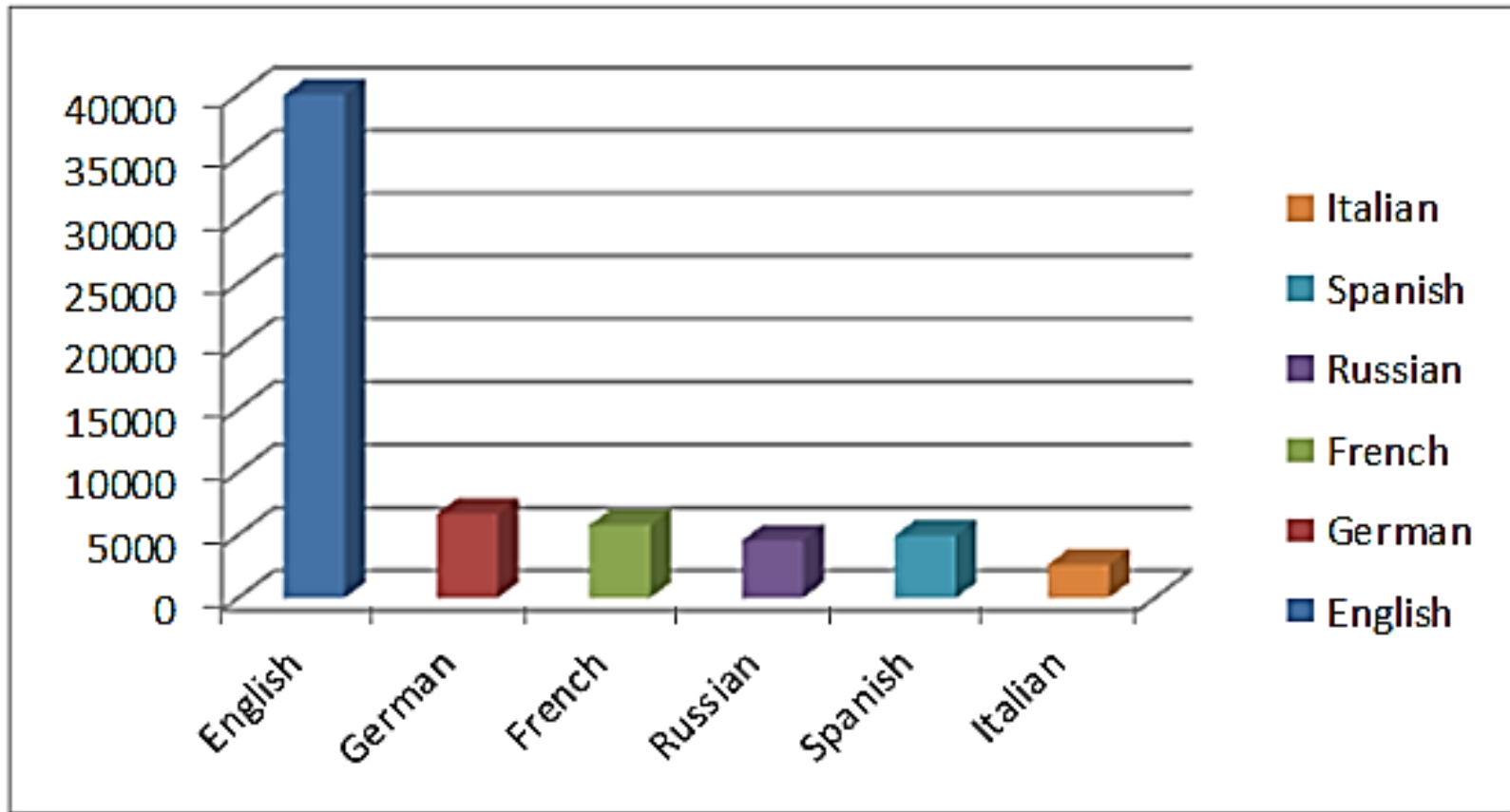
The quantitative participation of students in the placement tests in the chosen languages in the years 2006-2015.

General language e-courses

GENERAL LANGUAGE E-COURSES-
228 virtual classes-
over **5 000** students

English (B1-C1)   Russian (B2)   German (B1)

Number of virtual classes and students for General Language e-courses in 2015.

E-course structure

- 60 hrs in the form of blended learning (45 hrs on the educational platform and 15 hrs – in a classroom)
- 4 modules with 10 thematic chapters each
- every chapter contains interactive exercises developing language skills:
  - listening, reading, writing
  - language sub-systems: grammar, vocabulary, functions and pronunciation

An example of an on-line module structure in a general English

2   Unit 2: Geography

📄 2 Contents
📝 2 Warm-up (10 pts)
    ▦ 2 Listening (29 pts)
    ▦ 2 Functions (10 pts)
    ▦ 2 Pronunciation (34 pts)
    ▦ 2 Vocabulary (23 pts)
    ▦ 2 Reading (10 pts)
    ▦ 2 Grammar (54 pts)
    ▦ 2 Writing (50 pts)
📝 2 Follow-up a (15 pts)
📄 2 Follow-up b (30 pts)
    ▦ Revision: Units 1-2 (48 pts)
    ▦ Test: Units 1-2 (40 pts)

An example of an on-line listening task in a general English language e-course

An example of an interactive assignment in a general English

Follow-up 3

MY FAVOURITE PAINTING

In this forum, **place a photograph of your favourite painting and describe it briefly.**

Provide the following information about the painting:
- the painter's name
- when the picture was painted (the date/the period in the history of art)
- what technique the artist used to paint it
- what the painting depicts
- where (in which art gallery or museum) one can admire this painting

Source: http://media.mike.nmspace.net/tourism/ltbt/Harris-25-07-08-178.jpg

Write your answer in about **100-120 words.**

You can score up to **15 points** for your entry.

Below your answer write **the number of words in brackets.**

E-teachers training

As for **the e-teacher** preparation and responsibility for the courses they run, COME UW offers them:

- **free trainings** provided by experts, developing the e-teachers' ICT didactic and technical skills;

- **online guide books** placed in a separate course for e-teachers;

- online courses **helpdesks**.

Mock language certification e-courses…

…prepare to take an obligatory certification exam in a chosen foreign language at B2 level.

MOCK LANGUAGE
CERTIFICATION COURSES

English

French

Italian

Spanish

German

Russian

Remedial language e-courses

If a student fails a certification exam twice, they are required to take a remedial course in a foreign language. COME UW offers remedial 10 hour e-courses in 14 languages (A2 - B2).

REMEDIAL LANGUAGE COURSES
in 14 languages

English — Italian — French — German — Greek — Japanese — Turkish — Hindi — Spanish — Russian — Georgian — Chinese — Persian — Croatian

Examples:

Repetytoryjny e-kurs języka chińskiego na poziomie A2

汉语A2级复习课程

Examples:

Repetytoryjny e-kurs języka perskiego na poziomie A2

دوره آموزش زبان فارسی سطح مقدماتی۲

Examples:

Repetytoryjny e-kurs języka greckiego na poziomie B1

Πρόσθετα μαθήματα ελληνικών στο επίπεδο B1

Challenges

- **special sort of fonts** (like **Hindi, Georgian, Japanese, Chinese**) was necessary to be applied for the students to be able to read the texts in these languages
- some of the **languages are read and written from the right to the left** (like **Persian, Hebrew, Arabic**)**.** This imposed the need of adding new functionalities and advancements to the platform.

Tricks

;

,

but in Greek it's
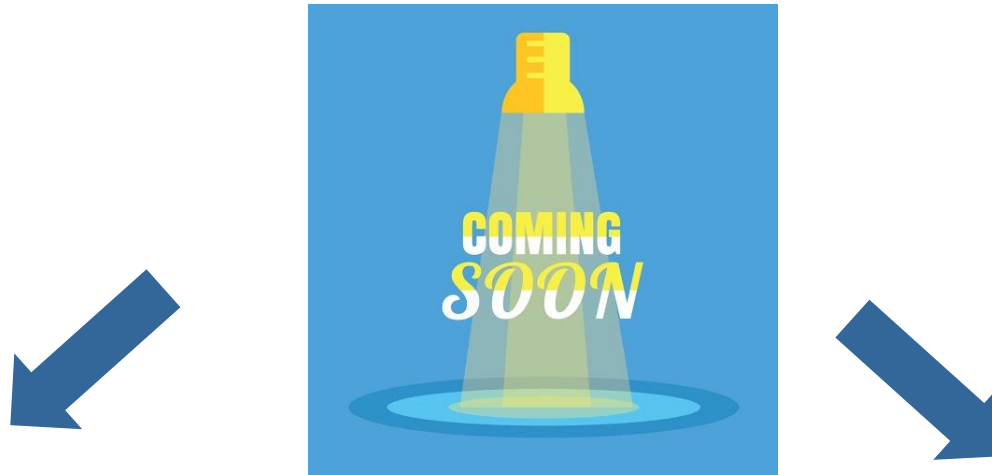
?

Language e-courses benefits

- ICT skills increase of UW teachers and students
- Advancement in student-oriented methodology of language teaching
- Save of time & costs
- Happy & well educated students

Summary

Further directions

E-course on Polish for Erasmus students (to prepare themselves for studying in Poland beforehand, while still in their own countries) in preparation;

A tool for recorded speech submission is being tested;

Language teaching service for other univerities (???)

Thank you for your attention!
ευχαριστώ για την προσοχή σας

शुक्रिया

grazie

tack

ありがとう

dziękuję

يُخَلِّيكَ الله

спасибо

kiitos

谢谢你

e-mail: a.pacholak@uw.edu.pl, m.galbarczyk@uw.edu.pl