

## ICT in Teaching Professional English for Mechanical Engineering

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### Abstract

As the curricula of language courses at the Faculty have been modified in 2005, English teachers were faced with a challenge of bringing all their students, who were sometimes true beginners, to B1 level in technical English within only a few years, being provided with a relatively low number of teaching hours a week. Integrating e-learning into classroom-based teaching, while introducing it as a self-study tool as well, has proved to be the solution to this problem.

The article summarizes Development Projects granted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the Czech Republic within the years 2006 to 2008, the outputs of which enabled interactive e-learning activities to become an essential part of compulsory English courses at the Faculty. Apart from the activities based on the course book (using the university Moodle environment), grammar and pronunciation guides as well as a database of useful links to carefully chosen and well-tested materials on the Internet were created.

Based on this experience, the Institute of Foreign Languages at FME took part in a language project developed within the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme and co-funded by EC, which makes use of similar tools (Moodle, Telos). This unique project focuses on developing specific language skills needed for communication between principals and subcontractors in the automotive and aerospace industries. Several subject-field related modules were created using authentic materials collected in industrial plants and processed into video sequences followed by task-based exercises developed in the Telos Language Partner programme. Learners can work under the teacher's guidance, on their own or in international teams – e.g. networking was carried out in teams of five participants from several European countries in order to provide feedback on materials created.

One area in engineering education that is often neglected is writing skills. In order to help students, especially doctoral students to be able to present their research results more effectively in scientific journals and at conferences, a useful reference handbook and task-based exercises were created within another Leonardo da Vinci international project entitled Writing Professional English. Its self-study, competence-based approach is especially appealing to professionals in the fields of science and technology who need to gain writing skills in English to succeed in the common European market. Especially valuable is the focus on areas specific to the particular nationalities involved in the project, e.g. the use of correct articles or word order for Czechs.