

USING PRESENTATIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF LEGAL ENGLISH LEARNING AND ACTIVATION OF ALL LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Listening, speaking and writing skills in English are essential for professional communication. As a result, even though we focus on reading legal literature and basic legal documents, we consciously introduce tasks that activate all four language skills. "The fact that the learner will eventually use the knowledge gained only for reading is largely irrelevant. What is of most concern is how the learner can learn that knowledge most effectively. If the effectiveness of the process can be enriched by the use of other skills, then that is what should be done." (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) The use of presentation in a friendly, non-threatening classroom atmosphere encourages use of all four language skills.

- **Reading** - Students first read a number of legal articles on a topic of their choice, knowing that they will have to present their conclusions in class. They analyze the articles critically, compare and contrast the ideas presented, synthesize and evaluate. Finally, they select highlights for inclusion in their presentations. This process is comparable to the process students go through when reading in order to write a paper. In both cases, reading for the purpose of transmitting information requires clarification of ideas and expression of those ideas in such a way that others will understand.
- **Writing** - When composing slides, students have to condense the information they have gathered so as to present only the main points. This information reduction process is in itself a difficult but very profitable language task. While writing a minimal list of points on the screen, students can organize a suitable sequence for the points and divide the points into slides. At the same time, students need to take into consideration slide layout. A slide cannot be too cluttered, the size of the font has to be large enough, and the location of the elements on the screen has to be balanced. All this forces students to re-read, re-evaluate and re-write what they have written again and again.

- **Speaking** - The material that students have read, organized and summarized now has to be presented orally so as to convey a clear message to an audience of peers. Just as they would in a purely oral presentation, students have to 'rehearse' the pronunciation of difficult words, time themselves, and make sure that they have all the Legal English lexicon needed for their speech. The added value of computer presentations is that the repeated revisions of their slides (to be seen by all of their peers) give students extensive exposure to the content of their 'talk', helping them remember what they want to say and giving them more self-confidence. After making presentations students ask and answer questions and can discuss the most interesting and important points on the topic.
- **Listening** -The class now listens to the oral presentation. Listening to a non-native speaker is not easy, and visual elements facilitate comprehension. The student functions as a researcher, developer and presenter, while the whole class functions as an audience in an academic lecture. The teacher functions as a facilitator, teaching students how to use the tool, guiding them in the choice of topic, providing guidelines for preparing and giving the presentations, selecting and explaining the criteria for evaluating the presentations, guiding students in the process of preparation, and helping them with revision. The teacher also evaluates the presentations and gives a grade.

Presentation combined with integrated content based tasks provide opportunities for meaningful communication in the classroom and additional motivation to learn and use Legal English in practice.

References

- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-centred Approach*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.
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