



ENGLISH AUTONOMOUSLY

OPPORTUNITIES FOR 1 TO 1, PEER AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

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Background and Inspiration

The EA course was inspired by a long tradition of **Autonomous Learning Modules** (ALMS) at Helsinki University Language Centre. With the kind permission and helpful support of our colleagues, we were able to start the course in Spring 2012. Among the keystones of autonomous learning that we share with ALMS, the most important are **reflection, self-evaluation and the social aspect** of learning. This includes letting students plan, set their own goals, make decisions about methodology, work in authentic situations, evaluate their learning process and progress, use language to develop studying skills, and learn in collaboration with others.

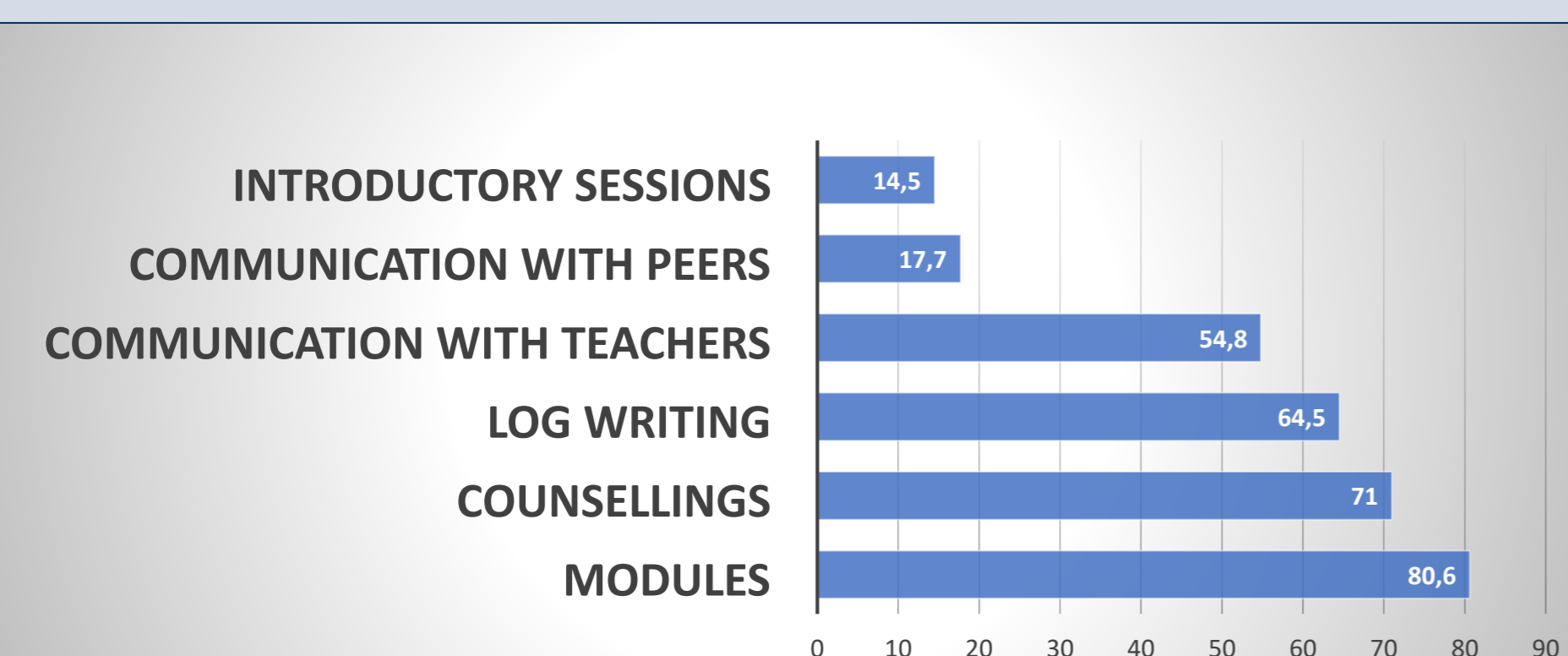
www.helsinki.fi/kksc/alms



Interaction Forms and Roles

Within the EA framework, students can study **individually, in pairs, or in groups**, supported to a greater or lesser degree by the teachers, depending on their individual learning plans. Furthermore, the course challenges the traditional understanding of the **student-teacher relationship**. Based on their reflection, students are considered to be **experts** in their learning. As the course brings together students from **various disciplines** and faculties, students are encouraged to share their different areas of expertise and their different learning experiences with other students and with the teachers. This includes various forms of language exchange.

Student Feedback on EA Component Impact



Peer Learning

The philosophy and the structure of EA provide numerous possibilities for peer learning:

- activities **developing metacognitive and study skills** - EA students share their general learning strategies, study tricks, or working routines (e.g. introductory sessions, Emotional Intelligence module, Thanksgiving shower)
- activities based on **students' expertise** – the students communicate their field-specific knowledge or experience to students from different backgrounds (e.g. Case Studies – Present your Field)

Course Description

English Autonomously (EA) is an elective course offered by Masaryk University Language Centre. It gives students of **all faculties** an opportunity to (re)discover the autonomous way of language learning. The students do not learn English from textbooks or in traditional seminars led by teachers. The course provides them with an **organizational framework** and guarantees them exposure to many various **stimuli** for their learning. The English language becomes a tool for **reflection and for developing** the students' soft skills, study skills, metacognition, and learning attitudes. Thanks to numerous **possibilities to choose** and influence the content of the course, and thanks to various **forms of interaction** between the students and teachers within the course, the students also enjoy the benefits of an individualized, engaging and motivating learning atmosphere and environment.

<https://www.cjv.muni.cz/en/english-autonomously/>

Course Structure and Statistics

Introductory plenary sessions + home preparation	9 hours	Faculty of Arts	37
Individual counsellings	1 hour	School of Social Studies	12
Support groups	10 + 10 hours	Faculty of Informatics	10
Log writing	5 hours	Faculty of Medicine	7
Individual plan (individual, 1 to 1, group or community activities)	15 hours	Faculty of Science	5
Total Number of Hours Required	50 hours	Faculty of Sport Studies	2
		Faculty of Education	2
		Faculty of Economics and Administration	1
		Total Number of Students in Spring 2017	76

1-to-1 Learning

As the EA course has developed, several ways of introducing the 1-to-1 learning mode have been introduced:

- **counsellings** – the individual sessions between a student and a Language Centre professional are a crucial part of the course. The counsellings' design reflects a partner-like learning situation where both the counsellor and the counselee meet to learn new things
- modules based on 1-to-1 **content learning** – many of the support groups rely on pair work as an effective method to learn something new by exchanging knowledge with a partner (e.g. Vocabulary Builder; Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn; International Study Buddies)
- modules using 1-to-1 **feedback** – support groups focusing on productive language skills often employ the Language Centre peer review software to involve the students in providing individualized learning support and advice (e.g. Creative Writing, Presentation Skills)
- **language tandem** – within their individual plans, foreign exchange students as well as language major students tend to include various tandem activities (e.g. teaching their mother tongue in exchange for learning Czech, or teaching their first foreign language in exchange for improving their second foreign language)

EA Learning Community

The structure of the EA course allows each student to create 100% **individualized** content. On the other hand, the course aims at using the learning community potential of having dozens of students from various backgrounds in one course. EA **community activities** are managed and promoted through the course Facebook profile, and include **social events** (board games, X-mas party, BBQ), **cultural events** (gallery tours, theatre nights), and **educational events** (workshops, lectures).