

PEN - I N T E R N A T I O N A L



PEN-INTERNATIONAL TEACHER-TRAINING SEMINAR

TEACHING ENGLISH TO DEAF AND
HARD-OF-HEARING STUDENTS AT SECONDARY
AND TERTIARY LEVELS OF EDUCATION
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC – AUGUST 2004

OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATION REPORT

Conference Web Site: www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/ewc/engcr/schedule.htm

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INTRODUCTION

From 22-27 August 2004, PEN-International partnered with Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Language Resource Center in presenting a week-long series of workshops on teaching English to Deaf Students in the Czech Republic.

The theme of the conference, coordinated by PHDr. Daniela Janáková, CSc. of Charles University and Dr. Gerald P. Berent of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) Department of Research, focused on English skill development and issues related to deafness and the teaching/learning process. The conference was designed primarily for teachers of secondary and tertiary level educational institutions in the Czech Republic who currently teach English to deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The conference was held at Charles University and a total of 66 individuals were in attendance. Conference participants included 18 university teachers, 10 teachers of primary and secondary special schools for the deaf, 16 teachers of the deaf abroad, and 13 deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals.

The conference was comprised of eight lectures and nine seminars. The lectures and seminars were designed and delivered by faculty from NTID, USA; Charles University, Czech Republic; Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Russia; and the University of Wolverhampton, UK.

The format of the conference included morning lectures and afternoon seminars. The morning lectures included formal presentations covering an array of topic areas relating to the conference theme. The afternoon seminars were more informal and provided participants with more interactive opportunities.

Participants were also provided with various networking opportunities. They were able to meet colleagues from different countries and share common experiences and strategies for improving English instruction for deaf students.

LECTURES

- An Introduction to Principles of Language Learning
- Optimizing the Teaching-Learning Experience for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners of English
- Input-Enhancement in Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students
- Reading and Writing English as a Foreign Language: Factors Leading to Success for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults
- Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels
- English Classroom Communication and Management
- Practical Strategies Used for Teaching English to Deaf Students at Bauman
- Learning Strategies of Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students in Higher Education

In addition, each of the presenters prepared a manuscript of their presentation for publication in the conference proceedings. These proceedings are being compiled by Charles University to be published December 2004.

In an effort to continuously improve and provide workshops that best meet the needs of PEN-International partners, PEN-International conducted various evaluations to assess participants' experiences. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation for each of the lectures and seminars that they attended as well as an overall conference evaluation survey that was distributed to participants at the conclusion of the conference. The following report summarizes the overall conference evaluation survey only. Separate detailed evaluation summaries have been generated for each of the individual lectures and seminars. The individual lecture and seminar summary reports are available upon request by contacting E. William Clymer, PEN-International Coordinator, at 585-475-6894 (V/TTY).

SEMINARS

- Assumptions and Expectations Regarding People Who Are Deaf
- Practical Strategies for Teaching English to Deaf Czech Students
- Various Methods Used in EFL Teaching of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in Heterogeneous Classes
- Evaluating English Teaching Materials to Identify Factors That Maximize Deaf Students' Success
- Coding Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students' Successful and Unsuccessful English Productions
- Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management
- Using Rhetorical Modes to Reinforce Deaf Students' Writing Skills at Different English Proficiency Levels
- Creating a Language-Rich Environment for a Deaf Learner: The Experiences of Two Deaf Parents of Deaf Children
- The Challenge and Strategies Involved in Aiding Deaf Students' Retention of Their English Language Learning in Their Undergraduate and Post Graduate Lives



*Presenters and Participants at the Conference on
Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students at
Secondary and Tertiary Levels of Education
In the Czech Republic*

METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Design

The final conference evaluation survey consisted of 10 questions in total. The types of questions included rating scale, rank order, and open-ended formats. Rating scale questions were based on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Respondents were asked to rank the eight conference lectures three times according to a) how well the lecture was organized and presented, b) the degree to which each lecture contributed to their own personal knowledge, and c) the relevance of each lecture to their own program and teaching needs. In addition, respondents were asked to rank the nine conference seminars three times according to a) how beneficial and enjoyable the discussion and activities were, b) the degree to which each seminar contributed to their own personal knowledge, and c) the relevance of each seminar to their own program and teaching needs. Respondents were asked, in open-ended format, what they liked best about the entire conference, and how the conference could have been improved.

A copy of the evaluation form can be viewed at www.pen.ntid.rit.edu/ewc/engcr/schedule.htm.

Sampling

The evaluations were conducted using a self-administered methodology. Although the evaluations were available online, participants were encouraged to complete the evaluations on-site.

All 66 participants, which includes lecture and seminar presenters that participated in other sessions, had the opportunity to complete an overall conference evaluation survey. A total of 30 evaluation forms were returned (9 presenters and 21 non-presenters) resulting in a 45% response rate and a margin of error equal to +/-13% in estimated values of the participant population (based on the finite population correction factor at the 95% confidence level).

Analysis

Data obtained from the evaluation forms were tabulated for the total sample and by participant type (presenter versus non-presenter). Chi-square test was used to determine statistically significant differences in responses. Responses are considered statistically significant when p-values (or attained-significance levels) are equal to or less than 0.05. Any statistically significant differences among presenters and non-presenters are appropriately noted throughout the summary report. SPSS software was used to compile the data.

Most of the findings are presented using percentages. For all rating scale and rank order questions, the total responding to the question was used as the percentage base. For most other types of questions, the total sample was used to compute percentages. The percentages for individual response categories do not always add up to 100%. This results from either rounding factors, a small percentage of no answers, or multiple responses provided by respondents.

In addition, all open-ended questions were coded in an effort to quantify responses. The actual verbatim responses are available at the end of this summary report.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement/disagreement to a series of statements related to their overall conference experience. Although differences in responses occurred between participant type (presenter versus non-presenter), these differences were not considered statistically significant.

All (100%) of the respondents either strongly agreed (61%) or agreed (39%) that the week-long conference was a very positive professional development experience. Three-quarters (75%) of the presenters strongly agreed with this statement. This was the highest rated attribute overall. (Chart Q1).

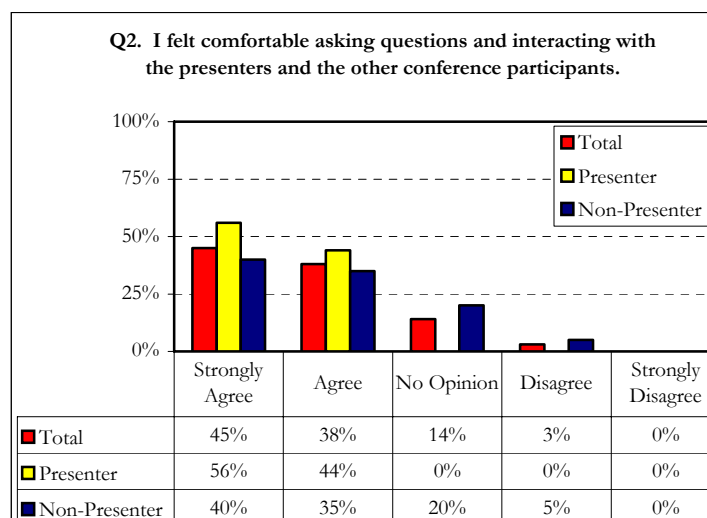
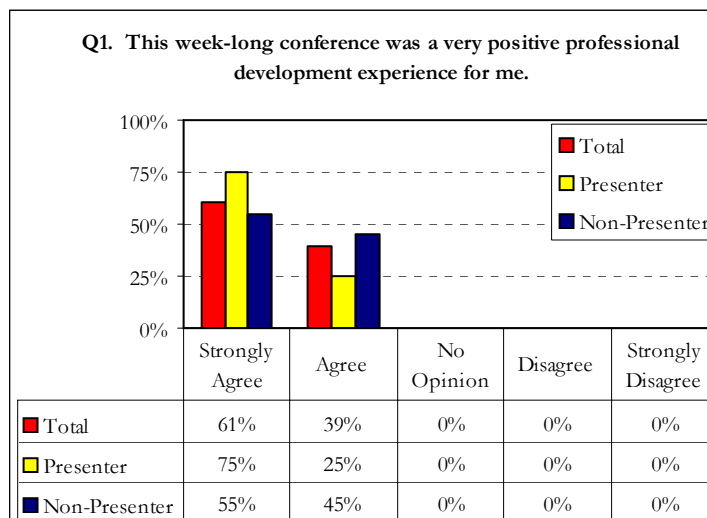
Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents said they felt comfortable (strongly agree/agree net score) asking questions and interacting with the presenters and the other conference participants. (Chart Q2)

Relevance of topics to own needs was the lowest rated attribute overall. Three-quarters (78%) of all respondents either strongly agreed (30%) or agreed (48%) that most of the lecture and seminar topics presented were relevant to their own needs as a teacher of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. However, only 22% of non-presenters strongly agreed with this statement. (Chart Q3)

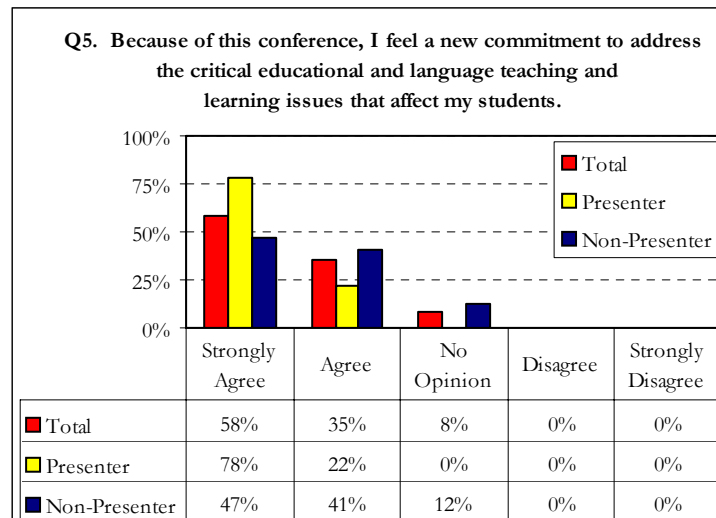
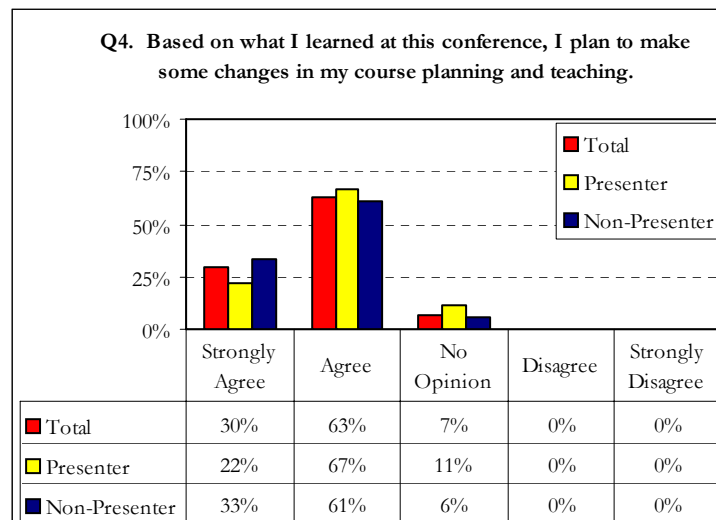
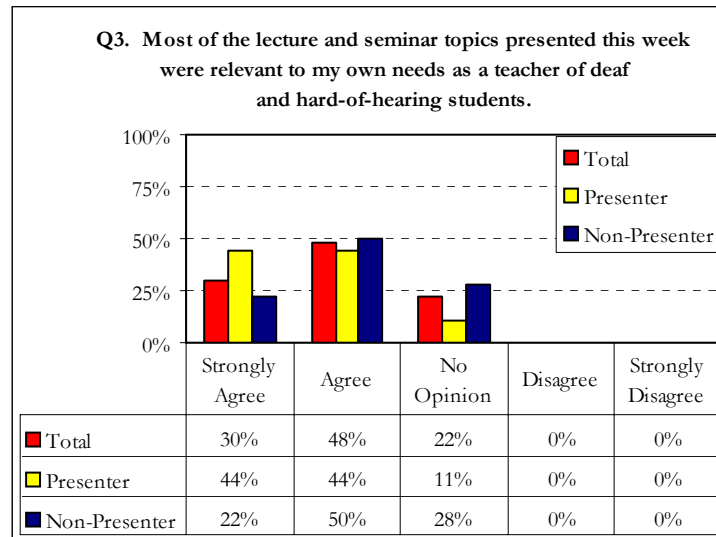
Almost all (93%) respondents said they plan to make some changes in their course planning and teaching as a result of what they learned at the conference (strongly agree/agree net score). Thirty percent (30%) of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. (Chart Q4)

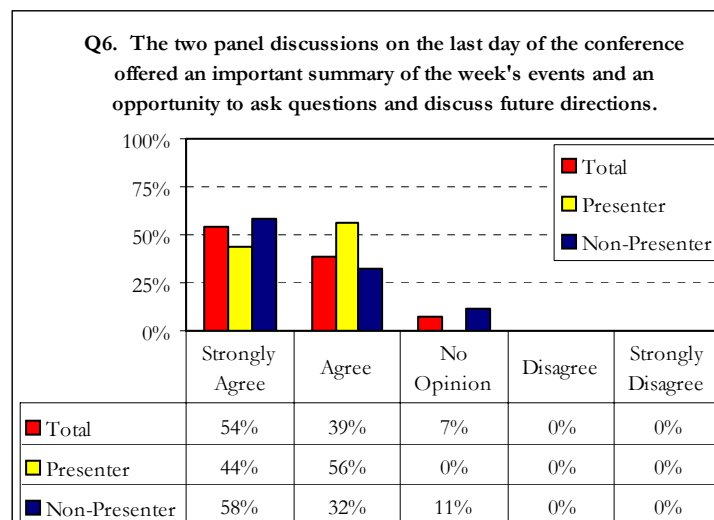
Similarly, 92% either strongly agreed (58%) or agreed (35%), that because of this conference, they have a new commitment to address the critical educational and language teaching and learning issues that affect their students. Three-quarters (78%) of presenters strongly agreed with this statement compared to 47% of non-presenters (non-statistically significant difference). (Chart Q5)

Ninety-three percent (93%) also agreed (strongly agree/agree net score) that the two panel discussions on the last day of the conference offered an important summary of the week's events and an oppor-



tunity to ask questions and discuss future directions. Over half (54%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement. (Chart Q6)





Lecture Evaluations

Respondents were asked to rank the eight conference lectures according to a) how well the lecture was organized and presented, b) the degree to which each lecture contributed to their own personal knowledge, and c) the relevance of each lecture to their own program and teaching needs. Respondents were instructed to use a scale of 8, 7, 6, ...1, where an 8 represented the best organized presentation, the lecture that provided the greatest contribution to knowledge, or the most relevance to program and teaching needs, and a 1 represented the worst organized presentation, the lecture that provided the lowest contribution to knowledge, or the lecture that was least relevant to needs.

A total of 19 out of 30 respondents (or two-thirds, 63%) followed the instructions accurately. A few of the respondents felt that it was not fair to rank the lectures and seminars, while a few others felt the task was just too difficult. One respondent suggested including the presenter name next to the lecture/seminar.

I am not ready to rank the presentations in this way. It does not seem fair, as all of them were relevant and beneficial and enjoyable!

I understand what to do (three different columns), however this is the most difficult task in the whole conference.

Lecture 6: English Classroom Communication and Management was the highest ranked lecture in all three categories: organization/presentation, contribution to personal knowledge, and relevance to program and teaching needs.

Other lectures that were ranked consistently high in all three categories include:

- Lecture 5: Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels;
- Lecture 4: Reading and Writing English as a Foreign Language; and
- Lecture 3: Input-Enhancement in Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students.

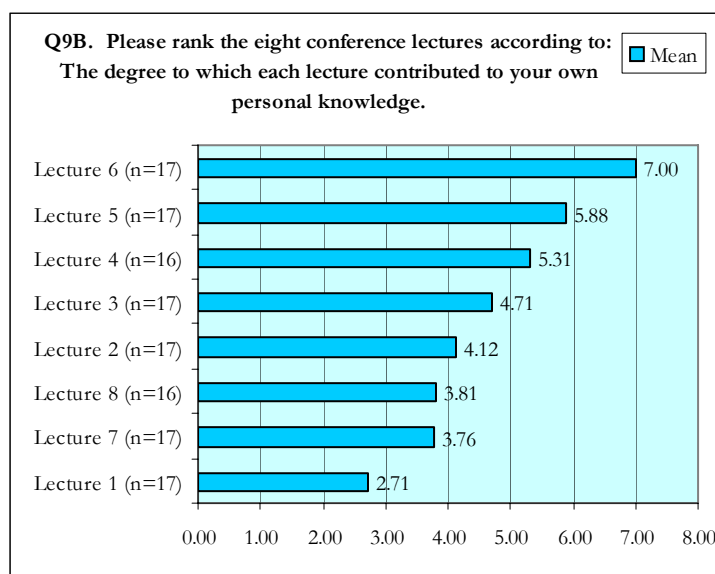
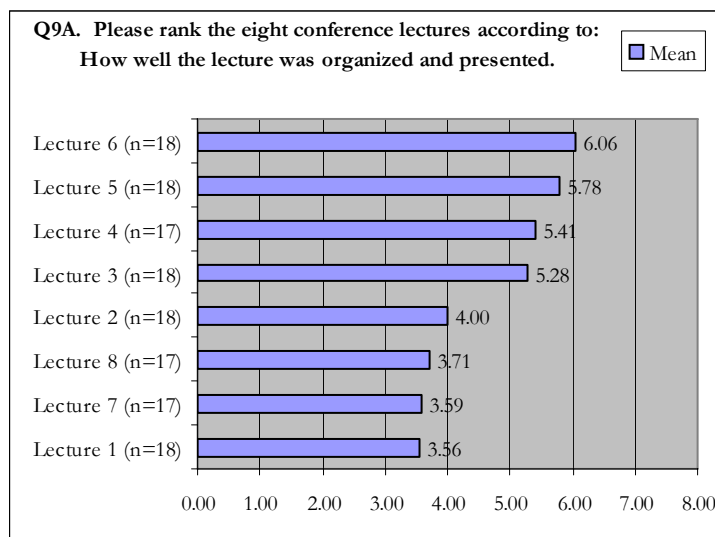
Lecture 6: English Classroom Communication and Management was rated the best organized and presented lecture in the conference, averaging a rank order of 6.06 out of a possible 8.00.

The second highest rated lecture relative to organization and presentation was Lecture 5: Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels (average rank of 5.78) followed by Lectures 4 and 3 (average rank of 5.41 and 5.28, respectively).

Respondents that were non-presenters are less likely, than respondents that were presenters, to feel Lecture 2: Optimizing the Teaching-Learning Experience for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners of English was well organized and presented. This finding represents a statistically significant difference in responses among participant type.

An overwhelming 71% of all respondents ranked Lecture 6: English Classroom Communication and Management either 7 or 8 relative to the degree to which the lecture contributed to their own personal knowledge. This lecture scored an average ranking of 7.00 out of a possible 8.00.

Similar to previous results, the second highest rated lecture was Lecture 5: Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels, averaging a 5.88 ranking relative to the degree to which it contributed to personal knowledge. Lectures 4 and 3 scored an average ranking of 5.31 and 4.71, respectively.



Conference LECTURE Codes	
Lecture 1:	An Introduction to Principles of Language Learning
Lecture 2:	Optimizing the Teaching-Learning Experience for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners of English
Lecture 3:	Input-Enhancement in Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students
Lecture 4:	Reading and Writing English as a Foreign Language: Factors Leading to Success for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults
Lecture 5:	Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels
Lecture 6:	English Classroom Communication and Management
Lecture 7:	Practical Strategies Used for Teaching English to Deaf Students at Bauman Moscow State Technical University
Lecture 8:	Learning Strategies of Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students in Higher Education

Lecture 6: English Classroom Communication and Management was rated most relevant to program and teaching needs. This lecture received a high ranking (7 or 8) by two-thirds (67%) of all respondents.

Consistent to previous results, Lectures 5, 4, and 3 placed second, third, and fourth, respectively.

Seminar Evaluations

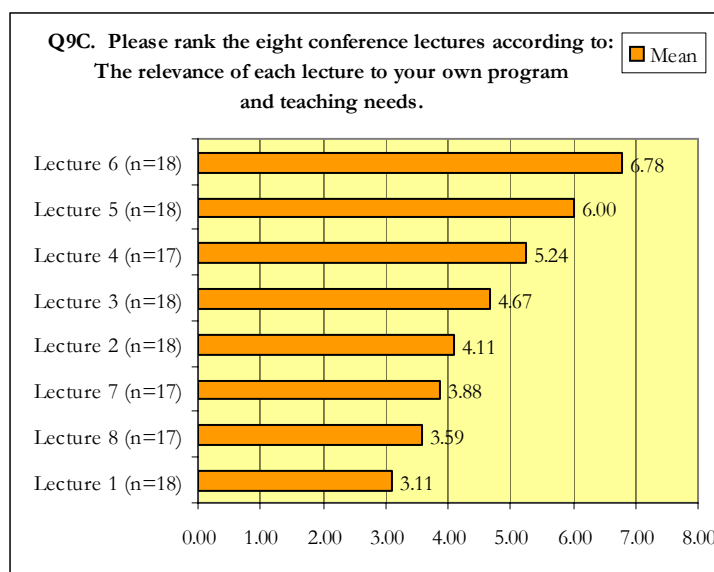
Respondents were then asked to rank the nine conference seminars according to a) how beneficial and enjoyable the discussion and activities were, b) the degree to which each seminar contributed to their own personal knowledge, and c) the relevance of each seminar to their own program and teaching needs. Respondents were instructed to use a scale of 9, 8, 7, ...1, where a 9 represented the most beneficial, the seminar that provided the greatest contribution to knowledge, or the most relevance to program and teaching needs, and a 1 represented the least beneficial, the seminar that provided the lowest contribution to knowledge, or the seminar that was least relevant to needs.

Again, a total of 19 out of 30 respondents (or two-thirds, 63%) followed the rank order instructions accurately.

Seminar F: Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management was the highest ranked seminar in all three categories: beneficial/enjoyable, contribution to personal knowledge, and relevance to program and teaching needs.

Other seminars that were ranked consistently high in all three categories include:

- Seminar D: Evaluating English Teaching Materials to Identify Factors That Maximize Deaf Students' Success; and
- Seminar H: Creating a Language-Rich Environment for a Deaf Learner: The Experiences of Two Deaf Parents of Deaf Children.



Conference LECTURE Codes	
Lecture 1:	An Introduction to Principles of Language Learning
Lecture 2:	Optimizing the Teaching-Learning Experience for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners of English
Lecture 3:	Input-Enhancement in Teaching English to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students
Lecture 4:	Reading and Writing English as a Foreign Language: Factors Leading to Success for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults
Lecture 5:	Addressing the Writing Needs of Deaf Students at Different English Proficiency Levels
Lecture 6:	English Classroom Communication and Management
Lecture 7:	Practical Strategies Used for Teaching English to Deaf Students at Bauman Moscow State Technical University
Lecture 8:	Learning Strategies of Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Students in Higher Education

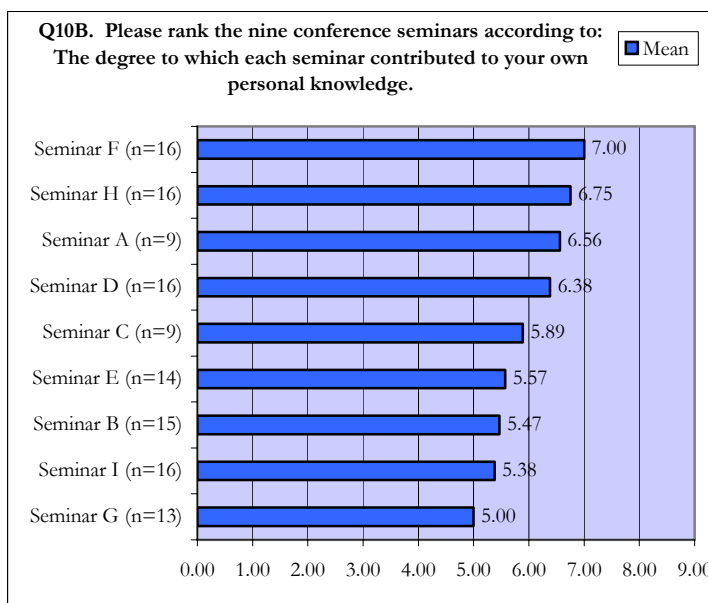
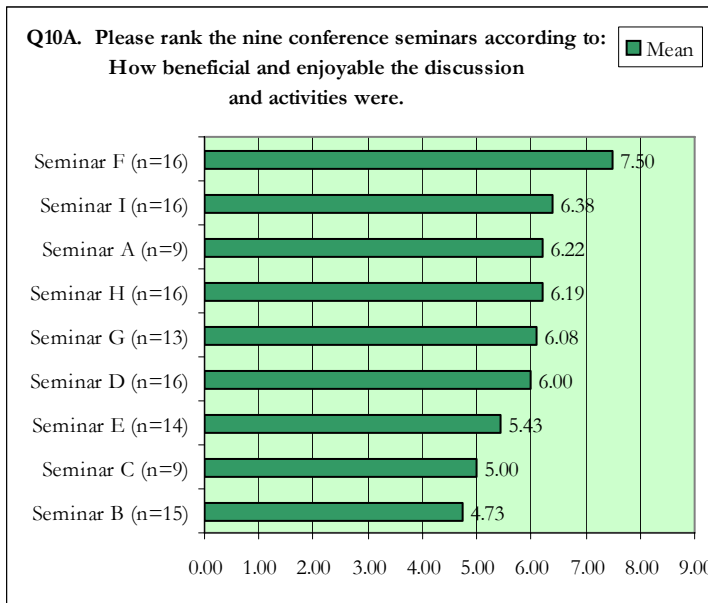
Two-thirds (63%) of all respondents ranked Seminar F: Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management either 7 or 8 relative to how beneficial and enjoyable the discussion and activities were. This seminar scored the highest ranking, averaging 7.50 out of a possible 9.00.

Relative to being beneficial and enjoyable, Seminar I: The Challenge and Strategies Involved in Aiding Deaf Students' Retention of Their English Language Learning in Their Undergraduate and Post Graduate Lives was the second highest rated seminar, averaging 6.38.

Other seminars that scored at least a 6.00 average rating include Seminars A, H, G, and D.

Relative to the degree to which the seminar contributed to personal knowledge, respondents again ranked Seminar F: Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management the highest (7.00).

Averaging 6.75, Seminar H: Creating a Language-Rich Environment for a Deaf Learner was the second highest rated seminar in this category, followed by Seminars A and D with an average rating of 6.56 and 6.38, respectively.



Conference SEMINAR Codes	
Seminar A:	Assumptions and Expectations Regarding People Who Are Deaf
Seminar B:	Practical Strategies for Teaching English to Deaf Czech Students
Seminar C:	Various Methods Used in EFL Teaching of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in Heterogeneous Classes
Seminar D:	Evaluating English Teaching Materials to Identify Factors That Maximize Deaf Students' Success
Seminar E:	Coding Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students' Successful and Unsuccessful English Productions
Seminar F:	Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management
Seminar G:	Using Rhetorical Modes to Reinforce Deaf Students' Writing Skills at Different English Proficiency Levels
Seminar H:	Creating a Language-Rich Environment for a Deaf Learner: The Experiences of Two Deaf Parents of Deaf Children
Seminar I:	The Challenge and Strategies Involved in Aiding Deaf Students' Retention of Their English Language Learning in Their Undergraduate and Post Graduate Lives

Seminar F: Practical Strategies for English Classroom Communication and Management was rated most relevant to program and teaching needs. This seminar received a high ranking (7 or 8) by half (50%) of all respondents.

Other seminars that were rated high within this category include Seminars D, H, C, and G, all scoring at least a 6.08 average rating.

Conference Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

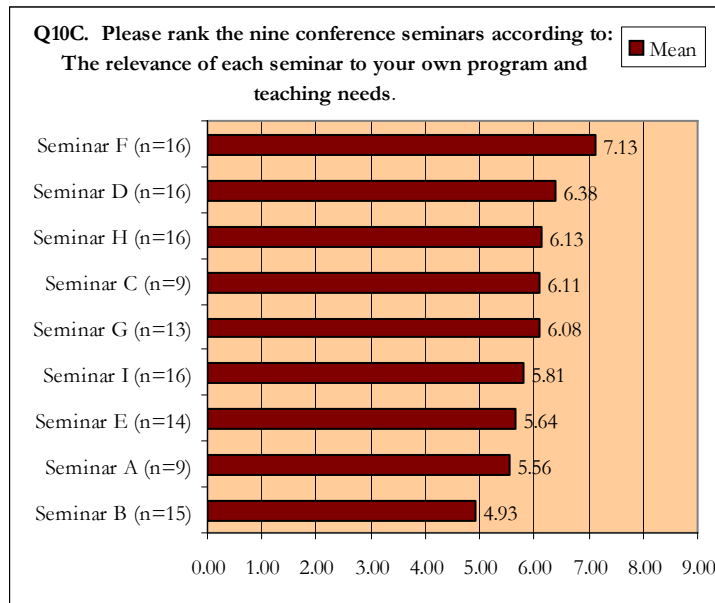
Respondents were asked, in open-ended format, what they liked best about the entire conference.

The responses did not differ significantly by participant type (presenter versus non-presenter).

Almost half (43%) of all respondents said they liked the discussions and sharing of ideas and experiences best. Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents mentioned positive comments about the presenters including knowledge/expertise, openness, and interactive style. Similarly, 23% of respondents said they enjoyed the friendly atmosphere. Other respondents mentioned that they liked networking/meeting new colleagues (20%), the overall organization of the conference (20%), and the good selection of topic areas within an underlying theme (10%).

Sharing ideas and experiences with others. Learning about teachers from other countries and what they are experiencing.

Presenters are the experts in the field of teaching to deaf and they were open to discuss.



Question 7 What did you like best about the entire conference?

- Discussions/Sharing Ideas/Experiences: 43%
- Presenter Style/Expertise: 27%
- Friendly Atmosphere: 23%
- Networking/Meeting New Colleagues: 20%
- Organization of Conference: 17%
- Good Selection of Topics: 10%

Conference SEMINAR Codes

Seminar A:	Assumptions and Expectations Regarding People Who Are Deaf
Seminar B:	Practical Strategies for Teaching English to Deaf Czech Students
Seminar C:	Various Methods Used in EFL Teaching of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in Heterogeneous Classes
Seminar D:	Evaluating English Teaching Materials to Identify Factors That Maximize Deaf Students' Success
Seminar E:	Coding Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students' Successful and Unsuccessful English Productions
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Seminar H:	Creating a Language-Rich Environment for a Deaf Learner: The Experiences of Two Deaf Parents of Deaf Children
Seminar I:	The Challenge and Strategies Involved in Aiding Deaf Students' Retention of Their English Language Learning in Their Undergraduate and Post Graduate Lives

Respondents were asked, in open-ended format, how the conference could have been improved. Again, the responses did not differ significantly by participant type (presenter versus non-presenter).

Thirty percent (30%) of respondents said they were disappointed that there were not any Czech Sign Language interpreters for the deaf Czech participants. (Note: PHDr. Daniela Janáková, CSc. of Charles University and Conference Coordinator, recognized this issue and addressed it in her conference evaluation summary, “unfortunately there is not even one sign language interpreter in the Czech Republic who would be able to interpret directly from ASL, BSL, or English to Czech Sign Language.”)

Question 8	
How could the conference have been improved?	
•	Czech Sign Interpreters: 30%
•	More Deaf/HOH Czech Students to Share Experiences: 10%
•	Provide Tutorial to Teach Basic Signs: 10%
•	Better Time Management: 10%
•	One Venue: 10%
•	Take Less Photographs: 7%
•	More Experience Sharing From Others: 7%

Ten percent (10%) of respondents suggested improving the conference by including more deaf and hard-of-hearing Czech students that would be willing to share their personal experiences. Similarly, 10% of respondents suggested providing respondents with a short tutorial that teaches the basic signs in different languages. Other respondents suggested better time management (i.e., more time off, more time to conduct evaluations) (10%), holding the conference in one venue (10%), taking less photographs (7%), and more sharing of experiences from multiple countries (7%).

For the next time it will be better to use Czech Sign Language for the Czech deaf students in order they will be able to receive all the information comfortable.

Pity was, that Czech deaf and hard-of-hearing students were not provided by translation of the conference into their language in order to understand.

I am not sure whether it was one of the goals of this conference, but more deaf and hard-of-hearing Czech students could have brought their experiences and comments.

This is probably too basic, but may be a few short tutorials teaching the basics of the different sign languages represented. Just a thought.

It would have been wonderful if all the sessions had been limited to one place. It would have been very good if we had been given a little more “time-off.”

Do not take pictures all the time, please!

Ask students and teachers from other countries (EFL!) to come and participate next time, please!

What did you like best about the entire conference?

Meeting all my friends.

Sharing ideas and experiences with others. Learning about teachers from other countries and what they are experiencing.

Most of the presenters, friendly atmosphere, willingness to share experiences, high professional level, time management was perfect (lectures, breaks...).

I like the organization – breaks and refreshments. I think that it's important to share information and I hope that we will stay in touch.

Sharing opinions and experiences during some seminars.

A good selection of diverse topics.

The opportunity to listen to presenters from the USA, Great Britain, Russia, and the Czech Republic, and be exposed to various teaching techniques, strategies, experiences. To be at a place where a range of different educational backgrounds was visible and obvious cultural. To be with very nice people (friends from the USA) in informal sessions.

Organization, a lot of materials, handouts, nice presenters. Keep on making such nice seminars.

Presenters are the experts in the field of teaching to deaf and they were open to discuss. Good organization of sign language interpreters.

To be honest, the whole of it. The quality of presentations, the opportunity to share and ask questions, to meet many nice and devoted people sharing the same goals, the fun.

Perfect knowledge of the theme from presenters.

Meeting interesting, great people.

“Open door.”

Human experiences of teaching and acquiring English very enthralling. Friendly atmosphere maintained through social interaction in spite of smallness of rooms.

Meeting and networking with participants and presenters.

Sharing.

The openness of the presenters to discuss the problems.

Everybody is so nice and supportive.

The proper present (both presenters and audience).

The possibility to meet people (both deaf and hearing) dealing with deaf education.

The diversity of topics within a unified theme.

Informal atmosphere, learning something new, opportunity to share teaching experiences.

The American professors are just great speakers! They really involved the audience.

Perfect summarizing!

How could the conference have been improved? What was your biggest disappointment?

Less photos could have been taken. More emphasis should have been put on teaching English as 3rd language.

It could be probably aimed more at secondary level of teaching. Do not take pictures all the time, please!

I would like to compare experience in Great Britain, America, and more. We talk mostly about English as “language of majority” not foreign language. I also would like to know the level and strategies of English at high school (secondary level).

Where were the Czech sign interpreters for deaf Czech students?

I am not sure whether it was one of the goals of this conference, but more deaf and hard-of-hearing Czech students could have brought their experiences and comments.

For the next time it will be better to use Czech Sign Language for the Czech deaf students in order they will be able to receive all the information comfortable.

It would have been nice to have the interpretation into the Czech Sign Language as well. I would like to thank Paole for his willingness to help out.

I felt that Czech deaf people felt confused. They didn’t understand clearly to presenters. I know it wasn’t your fault. You were great!

This is probably too basic, but may be a few short tutorials teaching the basics of the different sign languages represented. Just a thought.

Missing interpreters into Czech and Czech Sign Language.

Interpreters into the sign and Czech languages are necessary.

Very little contributions were given by Czech participants with guest speakers being seen as “dominant persons.” Need more deaf awareness upheld by host organizer (i.e., provision of interpreters for Czech deaf students). Time management in need of addressing case starts, etc.

Hold the conference in ONE place, please. Less confusing.

EDL differs from ESL just as teaching English in an English-spoken country differs from teaching English in the country where English is not used like in Czech, Poland, Russia. I think we should have concentrated on this issue more.

Some lectures have not clear thesis. Some people weren't well active and it's visible with this number of participants. Why isn't there anything like post-session? I would be interested in work of almost all the members of the audience.

Ask students and teachers from other countries (EFL!) to come and participate next time, please!

Pity was, that Czech deaf and hard-of-hearing students were not provided by translation of the conference into their language in order to understand.

The three different venues to travel between.

It lacked the lectures/seminars on teaching students who are not deaf, but who are hearing-impaired and are integrated into a hearing class where listening skills are required and assessed. (Hard-of-hearing and hearing students in a heterogeneous class.)

It would have been wonderful if all the sessions had been limited to one place. It would have been very good if we had been given a little more "time-off."

I think there should be an interpreter into the Czech Sign Language. You could give some time (5 minutes) for evaluation. We need some time to think about your lectures.

RESPONSES PERTAINING TO RANKING QUESTIONS

To be fair and sincere, personally I am not able to classify lectures and seminars in a range of the best and the worst one. All of them were beneficial and well-organized and at the same time each of them was unique and valuable. Thank you.

I understand what to do (three different columns), however this is the most difficult task in the whole conference.

You should maybe write names of presenters next to the topic of the presentation.

I am not ready to rank the presentations in this way. It does not seem fair, as all of them were relevant and beneficial and enjoyable!

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2004\Evaluations\Overall_Prague_Summary.doc March 15, 2005