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Lifelong Learning Programme

TALK-IT Newsletter



GEMS Northern Ireland Limited, lead partner
in the Talk-IT Leonardo Da Vinci project.

October 2009–October 2011

Overview

TALK-IT is a flexible English Language Programme tailored to respond to the needs of businesses that want to support employees who do not have English as their first language by increasing their understanding and application of English in the workplace.



Lead Partner -

GEMS NI Ltd
www.gemsni.org.uk

Partners
Ballymun Job Centre
www.bmunjob.ie

Center for Advanced Technologies (CTANM)
www.ctanm.pub.ro

Euregio Qualifizierungs-und Technologieforum (EQT)
www.eqt-ahaus.de

Supra Vita Language Studio (SVLS)
www.supravita.hu

Nauczycielskie Kolegium
Języków Obcych (NJKO)
www.nkjo.kalisz.pl

TALK IT – Pilots are in Progress

The TALK-IT pilots are in progress and the initial feedback is that employers involved are very impressed by the impact of the programme and the contribution it is making to staff development. Feedback from participants has also been positive. At the recent fourth transnational meeting held in Munster, Germany all partners had the opportunity to provide feedback on progress. We have a brief overview on each partner's progress to date.



TALK-IT partners with Mr Boertz (back left) Business Development Manager of LVM who kindly hosted the first day of the Fourth Transnational meeting

Website: www.talk-it.eu

Hungary

SVLS have managed to successfully engage with two companies to take part in the pilot programme

Flott-Trans Ltd. and Modine Hungária Ltd. Their project team found the initial materials to be short, concise and flexible containing a range of exercises that gave participants numerous opportunities to enhance

communication skills. Also as elements were easy to adapt, they felt this could increase the potential of future sustainability of the programme across other organisations and sectors. However four tutors looked at the

materials in detail giving their opinions on how to make the programme as effective as possible to meet the needs of each organisation and the participants. As a result some topics were re-organised with more

emphasis placed on hardware themes with specific vocabulary lessons integrated as a result of the needs analysis on participant's. The programme has begun with Judit finding that she is continually modifying plans

for future sessions based on these needs and participants progression. Eight participants are taking part in the

programme and fourteen sessions have been completed to date. Initial feedback is very positive from various department managers, with the programmes

flexibility to meet specific needs highlighted as a major benefit. Judit feels that this feedback can only be positive for engaging with other organisations in the future.



Pilot participants, Hungary

Ireland

BJC contacted a number of IT companies and key stakeholder organisations in the Irish IT sector such as FIT and Skillsnet to assist them in the distribution of a questionnaire survey to assess needs relating to the

language skills in IT companies. Overall the response and feedback was very disappointing and a change of strategy was required. In light of this BJC took the decision to contact local organisations outside of the IT sector in retail, customer service and hospitality. There then followed a number of fruitful meetings with IKEA the

major 'Home Furnishing' retailer, who subsequently agreed to take part in the pilot programme. Although delayed BJC are confident that the programme will begin mid April and will be completed by the end of June

2011. This gives enough time to pilot, evaluate and analyse the programme to meet deadlines of the TALK-IT Project.

Romania

After developing a database of potential pilot employers CTANM formed a partnership with SIVECO, a major Romanian IT company with headquarters in Bucharest, to take part in the pilot of TALK-IT. Following a meeting SIVECO needs were established and the TALK-IT materials were adapted accordingly, with emphasis being placed on using actual examples from the company's everyday business activities. It is very much a priority of CTANM to implement e-learning provision and identify topics that are suitable for this type of learning. All participants were registered and are involved in activities on to a Moodle platform with additional face-to-face activities carried out with the tutor. To date there has been 30 hours of face-to-face teaching and 30 hours e-learning activities. CTANM are hoping that this pilot process can help them define clear steps for an effective and efficient e-learning provision.

Poland

Although NJKO experienced initial frustration relating to how they had many positive meetings with a number of organisations who for various reasons subsequently withdrew their commitment before the pilot began, they managed to get three companies involved Paula, Jutrzenka and Big Star, who each put forward employees to make up 10 participants in total. The group made up of mixed ability from the IT, Sales and Marketing departments required the programme to cover e-mailing, presentations, telephone techniques, technical documentation and IT graphics amongst others. They also required assistance to improve pronunciation and fluency to improve their competency when video conferencing, using business protocols and familiarity with contracts and formal language with professional staff. Training began on the 11th of January 2011 and participants seem very satisfied with how the course is being coordinated and taught. They are currently three-quarters of the way through (having completed 30 hours) with all employees willing to do extra work and receive exercises by e-mail.

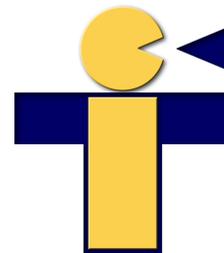
Germany

EQT have established and developed a partnership with LVM, a major insurance company and employer who currently have over 500 people working in their IT department. They committed to the pilot as a way of helping IT staff familiarise themselves with English language for technical support. The participants in LVM are a mixed group in terms of language ability and even though they work in the same IT department they all have different roles. When developing the programme the tutor started with a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and found that the first ten sessions were similar to the original TALK-IT programme developed in Belfast with AllState NI. This included modules on IT hardware/software, skills chapters and grammar. The development of the second part of the programme was focused on learner emancipation through a needs analysis that involved sessions relating to reading, presentations using different learning methods such as "real-time" phases where Google was used to search topics, to translate and facilitate image searches. The flexible session plans were developed involving changing scripts and introducing the new topics. 12 individuals are involved in the pilot with the tutor pointing out that all participants have made progress from their starting level.

Partners participate in German TALK-IT Programme

During the 4th transnational meeting the partners got the opportunity to participate in an actual session in LVM, the partner organisation of our hosts EQT. The session was attended by 9 participants from different departments involved a question and answer session with participants asking TALK-IT partners a wide range of questions about their countries of origin and discuss their experiences of English speaking

environments. The session was highly interactive supported by live Internet that used Google search engine to familiarise all with information and images. We would like to take this opportunity to thank LVM for facilitating our visit and their hospitality throughout the whole day. We would also like to thank Edward the tutor for letting us join his class and also the employees who participated so willingly.



Key Steps Still to do

The project is still on schedule with all partners still involved and 24 of the 28 results have commenced or been completed. Once the pilots are completed and evaluated we will share the outcomes and plans for the next stage through a wide range of dissemination activities. These will include:

- a conference in September 2011 in Belfast celebrating the success of the TALK-IT project
- attendance at a number conference in the partner countries and others.

In addition we aim to gain further recognition for Talk-IT as a quality assured programme. This will be supported through the feedback from employers who participated in the pilots, highlighting the Economic Impacts and the Competitive edge gained by their involvement in Talk-IT.



Lifelong Learning Programme



If you would like to know more about Talk-IT

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