

# Supporting Development of Academic and Professional Identity in Undergraduate Programmes

MGR. IVANA MIČÍNOVÁ  
LANGUAGE CENTRE  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
CHARLES UNIVERSITY



**FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA**  
Univerzita Karlova

# Academic and Professional Identity

Academic identity – process of professional identification within the social, institutional and cultural context leading to the acquisition of a social role (Holden, 2003)

= continuum parallel with personal and professional growth

In interaction with university teachers, fellow students, subject matter, context of the field of study, teaching methods, teaching skills and interpersonal relationships  
(McNamara et al, 2011)

# Factors contributing to development of Academic Identity

- ▶ Content and structure of curriculum → appreciation of quality and alignment with academic and professional life
- ▶ Positive, supportive, and constant interaction between students and teachers, students and students
- ▶ Excellent teaching, presentation and interpersonal skills
- ▶ Opportunity to confirm/refute and develop previous knowledge
- ▶ Opportunity to support personal growth and self-reflection

# Benefits of developing academic and professional identity in students



- ▶ better integration of first year students into academic community
- ▶ understanding core paradigms of particular disciplines
- ▶ identifying with core academic (ethical) values
- ▶ seeing themselves as future specialists
- ▶ recognizing one's potential (strengths)
- ▶ Increasing motivation

(Žydžiūnaitė, Crisafullio, 2013: 6)

# Academic identity – Autonomy Common Ground

- ▶ Adhering to academic values and norms (Becher and Trowler 2001)
- ▶ Academic skills and critical thinking skills (Cotrell 2017)
- ▶ Ability to work in teams
- ▶ Contributing to progress and inspiring others (de Chazal, 2014)
- ▶ Taking initiative
- ▶ Making one's choice
- ▶ Controlling one's learning
- ▶ Developing prior knowledge (action knowledge – Barnes, 1976 In Little, 2017)

**Language as a means of learning (Little et al 2017)**  
**Language as a means of communication and interaction**

# Back to developing curriculum around academic in language course - learning about intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines

- ▶ Cultivating a sense of belonging to the academic and scientific community
- ▶ Understanding how knowledge is made and promoted
- ▶ Understanding how science has been evolving

(Becher, Trowler, 2001)

# ELT applications – 3MP – Three Minute Presentations

- ▶ Academic tasks and situations with the potential of developing academic/disciplinary identity
- ▶ Types of coursework: essays, summaries, presentations, projects, conferences
- ▶ Three Minute Theses (University of Queensland, 2008) – PhD students
- ▶ Science Slam – undergraduate students
- ▶ <https://vimeo.com/185893047>

# 3MP – Three Minute Presentations

Audience: mixed specialization undergraduates

Length: 3 minutes, 5 – 7 slides max.

- ▶ Goals:
- ▶ Improve presentation skills + controlling body language
- ▶ Improve giving feedback
- ▶ Improve self-reflective practices
- ▶ Learning how to speak to non specialists
- ▶ Learning how to show enthusiasm about one's topic
- ▶ Improve teamwork and rapport (mutual trust)
- ▶ Develop disciplinary identity
- ▶ Improve learning from others



# Choice of topics

- ▶ An eye-opening /influential book in your field of study
- ▶ An amazing scientific breakthrough/discovery/study
- ▶ A revolutionary theory
- ▶ A controversial experiment
- ▶ A popular scientific myth



Formal 3MT genre requirements:

**entertaining (popularising science)**

- ▶ **academic norms** (researching topic thoroughly, using scientific sources, correct referencing, bibliography)

# Classroom procedure

Every lesson 2 presentations (twice a week)

Continous and graded practice with phased attention to the goals

- ▶ Step 1 Giving a presentation
- ▶ Step 2 Group discussions - positive features first– learning to appreciate – and to develop criteria how to assess a presentation
  - + Getting feedback (the presenter circulating among groups, listening, or answering questions)
- ▶ Step 3 Commenting on what could be done differently
- ▶ Class summary given by groups
- ▶ Step 4 Presenter: What I would do differently if I gave the presentation again...

# Developed criteria

- ▶ Quality of the topic (interesting, current, deep, relevant)
- ▶ Presentation skills (slides, fonts, images, body language, voice, controlling nerves etc.)
- ▶ Academic skills (logical ordering, clear outline, persuasive examples, well worded arguments, impressive conclusions)
- ▶ Academic norms (researching the topic, bibliography, quality and range of sources)
- ▶ Creativity + innovation in conveying the topics
- ▶ Language (grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, style)

# Examples of improvements - opening with the first slide to attract attention

- ▶ Edward Lee Thorndike  
(1874 – 1949)



**You can't teach old dogs new tricks, right?**

**Or can you?**

# Improvements of genre moves to attract attention

## General – Specific Strategy or Specific to General Strategy

Linear exposition vs Assymmetric exposition (Hu;, Liu, 2018)

Max Weber and his book „The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism“

O. N. (Department of Sociology,  
Faculty of Arts, Charles University)

Capitalism Today?

- ▶ Asceticism?
- ▶ Religion?
- ▶ Utilitarianism?



# Deleting specialised words, improving dense bullet points

Max Weber (1864 – 1920)

- ▶ one of the founding thinkers of sociology – with Marx and Durkheim probably one of the most influential classical sociologists
- ▶ Known for his **methodological antipositivism**, polemics with Max Scheler, his interpretation of **class structure**, **sociological analysis of religions**



Max Weber (1864 – 1920), a sociologist

- ▶ Calvinist ethic and ideas influenced the development of capitalism
- ▶ Protestant value is constant labour as a sign of personal salvation



# Improvements in clarity of the message



Are you an introvert, or an extrovert?

Is it good news, or bad news?

The MBTI knows better.

# Reported outcomes

- ▶ **Debunking popular beliefs**
- ▶ Learning about other disciplines and how they overlap
- ▶ Improving presentations skills – better communication of ideas
- ▶ Feeling more confident as a student
- ▶ Overcoming stereotypes about presentation skills
- ▶ Feeling proud about the choice of their studies



# Other applications

- ▶ Learning how to write an academic summary
- ▶ Learning how to take part in group discussions

# Bibliography

- ▶ Becher, Tony and Trowler, Paul, R. 2001. *Academic Tribes and Territories . Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*.
- ▶ Cotrell, Stella. 2017. *Critical Thinking Skills: Effective Analysis, Argument and Reflection*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- ▶ De Chazal. 2014. *Academic English*. CUP.
- ▶ Hu, Guagwei; Liu Yanhu. 2018. Three minute thesis presentations as an academic genre: A cross-dsciplinary study of genre moves. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. Vol. 35. Pages 16 – 30.
- ▶ Little, David; Dam, Leni; Legenhausen, Lienhard. 2017. *Language Learner Autonomy (Theory, Practice and Research)*.
- ▶ Renner, J. 2018. Cultivating a sense of belonging in first-year seminars. *Academic Advising Today*, 41 (3). Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/Cultivating-a-Sense-of-Belonging-in-First-Year-Seminars.aspx>
- ▶ Žydžiūnaitė, Vilma; Crisafulli, Simona. 2013. Interakce mezi vysokoškolskými studenty a vyučujícími jako nástroj rozvoje profesní identity studentů. *Aula*. Vol. 21, No. 1. S. 5-19. ISSN 1210-6658.

# Thank you for your attention

- ▶ Ivana Mičínová
- ▶ Jazykové centrum
- ▶ Filozofická fakulta Karlovy univerzity
  
- ▶ E-mail: [ivana.micinova@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:ivana.micinova@ff.cuni.cz)