Designing a multilingual course to support second and third language acquisition

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The university is a multilingual environment

University languages: English, French, German

BA: bi- or multilingual
MA: c. 60% bi- or multilingual
Doctoral schools: mainly English
The university is a multilingual environment

- English: 23%
- French: 22%
- German: 16%
- Luxemburgish: 38%
- Portuguese: 7%
- Other: 5%
Pilot ‘Multilingual presentation skills’: why?

‘MA in Learning and Communication in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts’
Multilingual resources
Demand for presentation skills
Key learning outcomes

Clear, well-structured, context-appropriate, engaging presentation
Increased confidence to present and discuss in L2/L3
Course organization

Elective, 2 ECTS, 18 participants
Five sessions of 3 hours

Three content sessions and teachers EN/FR/GE
Group & individual presentation
Support

Slides in other language
Presentation phrases in all languages
Feedback checklist in all languages
Presentations recorded and sent
Evaluation

Group and individual presentation
Written post-presentation reflection
Findings
Data sources

Pre-and post-course questionnaires
Presentation sign-up sheet
The students

Interest in multilingual communication

This type of course seems to be typically Luxembourgish to me (any language is welcome and you are expected to use the language you know in all circumstances) and that is also a reason for me to sign up.

Varied L1; L2/L3 level: English > German > French
Previous presentation training & experience
Aim: presentation skills & confidence
Multilingual aims were achieved

Group presentations encourage L3
Sufficient support from group members

Individual presentations encourage L2 (English)
Students benefited from and coped with multilingual input

‘Did the alternation between teaching languages (EN/FR/GE) stimulate your learning of these languages?’

Yes

‘Did you use the translated PowerPoint slides when you didn't really understand something because of the language?’

Most didn’t
Effects on confidence and insight were limited

‘Did the course increase your confidence in presenting in your third (or other) language?’

Lukewarm response

‘Did the course help you identify what you need to improve in your third (or other) language to improve your presentation?’

Mixed response
How could the course be improved?

Course organization & communication
More practice

The system of less and most confident languages doesn't work in a proper way because for people who studies 2-3 languages from their childhood it doesn't make great effect.
What did you like about the course?

Presentation feedback
Slide design
Multilingual format
Lessons learnt

Works from A2 upwards
Only group presentations encourage L3
Small group sessions needed for individualized support

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