

UFPEL'S INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES

Helena Vitalina Selbach*

Márcia Morales Klee**

Eriovan Toledo de Moraes***

ABSTRACT

This paper builds on the concept of Internationalization at Home (IaH) to describe five initiatives implemented at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPEl) from 2021 to 2022. Aligned with UFPEl's Strategic Plan for Internationalization (2018) and the institutional Language Policy (2020), these initiatives were conceived and implemented by the International Office's Language Policy Team seeking to create an academic environment that promotes international and intercultural understanding. The work offers an analysis of the challenges and outcomes of these initiatives, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data. The results highlight the impact of these initiatives in terms of improved language skills, enhanced academic literacy, and the integration of languages into curricula.

Keywords: Linguistic Policy, Initiatives, Academic Practices.

¹ Doutora em Letras pela Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (2018), mestre em Linguística Aplicada pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (2014), bacharel em Letras (Português-Inglês) pela mesma universidade (2000) e licenciada em Letras (Português-Inglês) pela Universidade Franciscana (2017). Professora da Universidade Federal de Pelotas e membro da Equipe de Políticas Linguísticas para internacionalização da instituição. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9957-8328>. E-mail: helena.selbach@ufpel.edu.br

² Mestre em História da Literatura pela Fundação Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (2008) e licenciada em Língua Inglesa e Literaturas de Língua Inglesa pela Universidade Federal de Pelotas (2003). Tradutora e intérprete de língua inglesa da Universidade Federal de Pelotas e membro da Equipe de Políticas Linguísticas para internacionalização da instituição. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6251-7887>. E-mail: marciaklee@gmail.com

³ Graduado em Relações Internacionais pela Universidade Federal de Pelotas (2023) e graduando em Letras Português e Francês pela mesma instituição. Bolsista de Desenvolvimento Institucional na Coordenação de Relações Internacionais. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2954-2190>. E-mail: eriovan.toledo@gmail.com

INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO EM CASA DA UFPel: EXPLORANDO DESAFIOS E RESULTADOS

RESUMO

Este artigo baseia-se no conceito de Internacionalização em Casa (IaH) para descrever cinco iniciativas implementadas na Universidade Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel) de 2021 a 2022. Alinhadas com o Plano Estratégico de Internacionalização de UFPel (2018) e a Política Linguística institucional (2020), essas iniciativas foram idealizadas e implementadas pela Equipe de Política Linguística da Coordenação de Relações Internacionais buscando criar um ambiente acadêmico que promova a compreensão internacional e intercultural. O trabalho oferece uma análise dos desafios e resultados destas iniciativas, com base em dados qualitativos e quantitativos. Os resultados destacam o impacto destas iniciativas em termos de melhoria das competências linguísticas, melhoria da literacia acadêmica e integração das línguas nos currículos.

Palavras-chave: Política Linguística, Iniciativas, Práticas Acadêmicas.

LA INTERNACIONALIZACIÓN DE LA UFPel EN CASA: EXPLORANDO DESAFÍOS Y RESULTADOS

RESUMEN

Este artículo se basa en el concepto de Internacionalización en Casa (IaH) para describir cinco iniciativas implementadas en la Universidad Universidad Federal de Pelotas (UFPel) de 2021 a 2022. Alineadas con el Plan Estratégico de Internacionalización de UFPel (2018) y la Política Lingüística institucional (2020), estas Las iniciativas fueron concebidas e implementadas por el Equipo de Política Lingüística de la Oficina Internacional buscando crear un entorno académico que promueva el entendimiento internacional e intercultural. El trabajo ofrece un análisis de los desafíos y resultados de estas iniciativas, basándose en datos tanto cualitativos como cuantitativos. Los resultados resaltan el impacto de estas iniciativas en términos de mejora de las habilidades lingüísticas, mejora de la alfabetización académica y la integración de idiomas en los planes de estudio.

Palabras clave: Política Lingüística, Iniciativas, Práticas Académicas.

INTRODUCTION

Internationalization at home (IaH) constitutes a dynamic process centered on cultivating a campus environment that actively fosters and sustains international and intercultural understanding (Knight, 2004). IaH seeks to shape a cultural and social landscape within the academic institution that encourages and supports the development of international and intercultural competencies, going beyond the traditional boundaries of academia and nurturing a broader global perspective among students and faculty. (Knight, 2004).

In alignment with Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPeL)'s commitment to internationalization and its plan for promoting IaH (UFPeL, 2018), a milestone was reached in 2020 when the university introduced its Linguistic Policy. This initiative is designed not only to make language learning more accessible to the academic community but also to enhance the quality of language education and promote linguistic and cultural diversity within the institution. An objective of the Policy is to provide guidelines for integrating languages into both undergraduate and graduate curricula to further internationalization goals (UFPeL, 2020).

The Coordination of International Relations (CRInter), formerly known as the Department of Exchange and International Programs (DIPI) at UFPeL, has been instrumental in carrying out these internationalization efforts since its establishment in 1993 through Resolution No. 01/1993 of the University Council. Operating under the purview of the Rector's Office, it comprises five distinct departments, each led by three administrative staff members, one educational technical staff member, and one Portuguese as an Additional Language professor. These departments include the Center for Academic Cooperation and Internationalization, International Mobility, Diploma Recognition and Project Administration, Institutional Translation Services, and the Language Policy for Internationalization.

As part of its responsibilities, CRInter focuses on collaboration in international relations, evaluating and forwarding proposals to international funding organizations, and collaborating with university departments to secure funding from national and international sources for projects and studies across various knowledge domains. Consistent with these initiatives, in 2018, CRInter developed a Strategic Internationalization Plan for UFPeL. This plan laid the foundation for enhancing internationalization efforts, benefiting both the local community and international students and professors. The actions discussed in this document align with the plan's objectives, with a particular emphasis on language policies for internationalization. This emphasis includes promoting and expanding the study and use of additional languages within the university, faculty training for additional language instruction, and increasing the availability of language courses in undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

UFPeL's IaH initiatives are based on the university's Language Policy as they address the principles and objectives related to improving academic literacy practices within the university community, promoting academic literacy, and linguistic education for university members. It also aligns with UFPeL's Internationalization Strategic Plan, which aims to disseminate internationalization culture, organize events related to internationalization, expand additional language study and usage, and provide continuous training in additional language academic presentations at the university. The initiatives encom-

pass various courses and workshops designed to cater to the diverse needs of the academic community. The primary goals of these initiatives are to: a) familiarize participants with the objectives, challenges, and teaching methods of academic courses in English, with a focus on active methodologies; b) identify and address the needs of students as they learn disciplinary content in English; c) equip professors with effective approaches and techniques for non-native English-speaking students; d) enable the development of classes that support both English language skills and the learning of disciplinary content; and e) encourage the development and revision of study programs and evaluation methods tailored to teaching in English.

This work discusses the development of five internationalization initiatives implemented from 2021 to 2022. They are: “Workshop EMI”, “EMI Consulting”, “Workshop on Academic Presentations in English” and the transversal graduate courses “Academic Reading and Writing in English”, and “Academic Presentations in English”. In the following sections, we provide an overview of these initiatives, including their objectives, theoretical foundations, and organization, and examine their challenges and results through qualitative and quantitative analysis.

WORKSHOP EMI - ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

“Workshop EMI” (English as a Medium of Instruction) is an instructional program initially intended for the CAPES/PrInt graduate professors but recently expanded to other graduate and undergraduate educators at UFPel. It consists of specifically tailored training to introduce them to the theory and practical application of instructing academic subjects in English. Conceived and planned as one of the actions outlined in the internationalization strategic plan, this initiative is managed jointly by CRInter and the Office of Human Resource Management. It is implemented through the engagement of an external professional who is an expert in the field, specifically contracted for this purpose¹.

This annual workshop equips professors with the necessary tools to either restructure their existing courses or create new academic ones. It does so by employing active learning methodologies and adhering to the Backward Design Model (as conceived by Wiggins and McTighe, 2005), in which the structuring of students’ learning is based on assessments intentionally designed to provide evidence that they have achieved the course goals. The program is divided into two components, amounting to 20 hours: 10 asynchronous hours conducted on the E-project platform and 10 in-person hours.

Throughout the program, participants engage in a variety of activities that include watching informative and engaging videos, reading relevant supporting materials that can be applied in practice, and seizing opportunities for collaborative learning within the course community. Upon completing the workshop, they are expected to comprehensively understand the objectives, key concepts, challenges, benefits, and contemporary teaching and evaluation methods of delivering academic content in English within the perspective of active teaching methodologies. Furthermore, they are better prepared to identify and cater to the unique needs of students engaging with academic material in English.

¹ Professor Simone Sarmento from Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) has been responsible for designing and conducting all the editions of the Workshop EMI at UFPel since 2018.

Participants are also expected to develop the skills to implement effective teaching approaches tailored to non-native English speakers, ensuring an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Additionally, they will be capable of designing and delivering lessons that facilitate the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge, fostering the students' English language proficiency development, and adapting curricula and assessment methods to instruct their respective academic content in English.

In sum, though short-term, this program equips educators with the essential skills and knowledge required to excel in the dynamic and challenging realm of teaching academic subjects in English while embracing the principles of active learning and pedagogical excellence.

EMI CONSULTING

“EMI Consulting” is a personalized guidance dedicated to providing tailored support to undergraduate and graduate professors who have previously participated in EMI workshops at UFPel, aiding them in crafting and executing English-language courses within their academic programs. Recognizing that every educator and academic context is unique, this online assistance blends synchronous and asynchronous interactions, centering on essential elements like course design, curriculum development, lesson plan creation, and rubrics intended for course evaluation.

Typically offered in the semester immediately following the EMI Workshop for motivation and consolidation purposes, EMI Consulting is a CRInter initiative conceived, implemented, and conducted by its Language Policy Team, comprised of a professor and a technical education staff member. Participants in EMI Consulting are selected through a widely advertised internal call for applications across all official university platforms, with particular support from the offices of undergraduate and graduate studies. This ensures that all the four available slots are effectively filled every year.

EMI Consulting participants develop a robust course structure that aligns with the EMI and active methodology principles. The course unfolds over seven synchronous meetings, each lasting 30 minutes. In the 23 hours of asynchronous meetings, participants delve into proposals and materials uniquely customized to their specific, individual teaching contexts. These materials are then thoroughly discussed and refined during the synchronous sessions, allowing educators to apply their newfound knowledge and strategies effectively and practice their English written and oral skills.

The Consultancy equips participants with a comprehensive skill set, enabling them to design or revamp course structures with clear objectives, key concepts, and assessments for teaching graduate and undergraduate content in English. They also learn to create engaging lessons that promote the acquisition of subject-specific knowledge and enhance students' English language proficiency. In addition, participants gain the expertise to employ suitable approaches and techniques tailored to non-native English-speaking students within a disciplinary context. The conclusion of the consultancy, following 30 hours of individual and personalized work, is marked by all participating professors presenting their course syllabus for a course designed to be conducted in English in accordance with the EMI principles.

WORKSHOP ON ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS IN ENGLISH

Conceived, planned, and implemented as an educational project by the CRInter Language Policy team, “Workshop on Academic Presentations in English” aims to advance internationalization within the UFPel community and includes faculty, students, and interested administrative staff. Its primary focus lies in the development and practice of academic oral presentations in the English language, fostering the development of language skills that cater to the specific needs of each participant. Participants in this workshop are selected through a widely advertised internal call for applications across all official university platforms, with specific support from the offices of Student Affairs, Undergraduate Studies, and Graduate Studies, to ensure the twenty-five spots available are effectively filled up in every edition.

This hybrid 30-hour course, comprising 12 in-person and 18 asynchronous hours, was designed to offer a blend of theoretical insights and practical experience in delivering academic presentations in English employing active methodologies. Participants in the course benefit from support in enhancing their existing oral presentations or developing new ones tailored to their unique professional contexts. The course materials include video resources, practical readings, and collaborative opportunities integrated within the course.

After completing this course, participants acquire a range of practical skills and competencies as they are then a) be able to distinguish between written and oral language effectively, b) have the capability to navigate different types of academic presentations, including seminars and oral communication, c) become more proficient in assuming various social roles essential for successful oral communication, enhancing their ability to deliver presentations that cater to their specific professional contexts, and d) refine their pronunciation, particularly in the use of specialized terminology within their respective fields. This course also enables them to develop a professional attitude suited for oral presentations and teach them the art of effectively organizing slides. Furthermore, participants become proficient in accessing image databases for compelling visual aids, ultimately equipping them to create and deliver high-quality academic oral presentations.

After two highly successful editions, the Workshop on Academic Presentations in English was transformed into a cross-disciplinary course entitled “Academic Presentations in English” for graduate students, which we present in the next section.

THE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY GRADUATE COURSES: “ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING IN ENGLISH” AND “ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS IN ENGLISH”

UFPel offers two comprehensive, 68-hour cross-disciplinary courses: “Academic Reading and Writing in English” and “Academic Presentations in English”, specifically designed for graduate students. These courses are customized to provide students with the essential reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills necessary for success in English-language academic pursuits.

In both courses, students engage in individual projects that require them to produce oral or written texts, which are integral to their academic requirements. This includes delivering presentations about

their projects and crafting papers as part of their assignments. The texts and tasks students work on are authentic and extend beyond the confines of the classroom, connecting directly with the demands of their respective academic courses and fields. Notably, both courses present a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary conversation among students, as participants hail from diverse fields and disciplines, allowing them to learn about each other's practices, fields, and disciplinary communities.

The primary objective of the Academic Reading and Writing in English course is to develop comprehensive strategies for written academic genres in English. This course is designed to enhance students' proficiency in reading and writing within various academic genres, including but not limited to reviews, scientific articles, abstracts, and chapters. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for the practical application of common linguistic resources. The overarching goal of the course is to increase international publications from the university's graduate programs by nurturing students' self-sufficiency in crafting English articles. Upon successful completion, students do not only acquire a firm command of English academic writing but also contribute effectively to the production of knowledge in their fields.

Conversely, Academic Presentations in English aims to foster the development of both comprehension and production strategies for oral academic genres in English. This course is structured to develop comprehension and production strategies for oral academic genres in English, including presentations for events and internal seminars while facilitating the practice of linguistic resources commonly employed in these contexts. The course covers an array of topics, such as scientific communication encompassing written and oral aspects, strategies for comprehending and delivering oral academic genres, and the revision and effective delivery of two oral presentations in English. The overarching goal of this course is to empower students to actively engage in English academic practices by proficiently and autonomously creating oral genres. The course is presently being offered for the first time in the academic term 2023/2.

METHODOLOGY

In our methodology, we employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data sources. Data from questionnaires, assessments, and self-assessments were collected and analyzed to capture the quantitative aspects of the study. Simultaneously, throughout and after each initiative, participants responded to these questionnaires and assessments. These responses were instrumental in guiding our qualitative analysis, which focused on the concepts that emerged from examining the participants' feedback and insights. This holistic approach allowed us to comprehensively explore the research topic, providing a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the initiatives from the participants' perspective.

RESULTS

The IaH initiatives have seen participation from a growing number of individuals. Participants report increased confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and improved critical thinking, oral and writing skills. The experiences shared highlight the significance of these initiatives in empowering individuals

to engage in academic practices in English effectively. Tables 1 through 4 indicate the quantitative data from the four implemented initiatives.

THE WORKSHOP EMI AND EMI CONSULTING

Table 1 – Data from Workshop EMI

Edition	Seats offered	Participants	Certified participants
1 st (2018)	20	17	16
2 nd (2021)	40	28	12
3 rd (2022)	30	14	05

Source: The authors.

The Workshop EMI has shown varying levels of participation and completion across its three editions. In the inaugural edition, taking place in 2018, twenty seats were available, attracting seventeen participants, with sixteen participants completing the course. The second edition in 2021 expanded its capacity to forty seats, engaging twenty-eight participants and certifying twelve participants. In its most recent iteration in 2022, thirty seats were offered, with fourteen participants attending the workshop and only five completing the training.

Due to internal organizational procedures, participants' quantitative assessment was only conducted in the third edition of the workshop, with the following results: all participants considered the topic of the workshop very relevant, 75% of participants expressed full satisfaction with the workshop, indicating its effectiveness in meeting their needs and expectations while 62,5% reported that the workshop exceeded their expectations, highlighting its quality and value.

Table 2 – Data from EMI Consulting

Edition	Seats offered	Participants	Certified participants
1 st (2022/1)	05	03	03
2 nd (2022/2)	04	02	01

Source: The authors.

The EMI Consulting initiative, first implemented in 2022, showed variations in participation and completion. In the first edition (2022/1), five seats were available, attracting three participants, all of whom completed the program and received certification. However, in the second semester of 2022 (2022/2), four seats were offered, with two participants attending the training, but only one completed the program and received certification. These figures underscore the fluctuations in participation and completion rates during the two editions of the EMI Consulting program.

Participants in EMI Consulting were invited to reflect on the impact of the consultancy on their ability to design lesson plans and activities for their courses. The feedback revealed a notable increase in participants' confidence, emphasizing the effectiveness of EMI Consulting in enhancing their pedagogical skills. Consultant 2 from the first edition described their experience as 'very satisfactory'. Prior to engaging with the EMI consultancy, they admitted to lacking a clear understanding of the broader nuances

involved in course creation. However, after they consulted with EMI, Consultant 2 noted a significant transformation in their perception: “I didn’t have a clear idea about the construction of the course in general terms. After the consultancy, the process became clearer to me and I feel more confident”. This transformation in confidence reflects a core objective of EMI Consulting – to empower educators and provide them with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of incorporating EMI into their teaching methods effectively.

In evaluating the participants’ responses about their expectations and needs, it is noticeable that the EMI Consulting sessions exceeded their professional needs, fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-assurance. As evidence of this, all consultants in the first edition stated that their expectations and needs were fully met, with each expressing confidence in employing EMI in their respective courses. Consultant 3 from the first edition expressed a multi-faceted growth in their pedagogical approach:

I learned more about how to implement active methodologies; I better understood the need to plan each activity and the entire course very well and the importance of rubrics. I appreciated the corrections of my English errors. I like being corrected when I’m not doing something right, as it helps me to reinforce my learning. Besides teaching something in English to my students, it was also important for me to refresh my memory and push myself to speak English again. (Consultant 3).

The participant highlighted a newfound knowledge of implementing active teaching methodologies, an understanding of the necessity for thorough activity and course planning, an appreciation for the importance of rubrics, and a valuable aspect of the consultancy: receiving feedback on the English language. The consultant stated that they appreciate corrections as a means of reinforcing their learning emphasizes their commitment to continuous improvement and the sense of accomplishment derived from addressing these challenges.

Consultant 2 from the first edition provided another feedback that also embodies a high level of confidence and accomplishment: “I can summarize it as follows: I simply wouldn’t offer this subject if it weren’t for the consultancy we received.” Their succinct declaration that they wouldn’t have undertaken the subject if not for the consultancy underscores the transformative effect of EMI Consulting on their teaching career. This statement encapsulates the impact of the consultancy, not only in addressing needs and expectations but in fostering the self-assuredness and accomplishment required to embark on new pedagogical endeavors.

Similarly, the certified participant in the second edition reported feeling confident in implementing EMI and acknowledged that the consultancy provided them with the necessary support to integrate EMI into their courses in the future. The participant stated that the experience was challenging yet exciting, also stating that they appreciated the biweekly consultancy sessions because “they allowed me to dedicate time to work on the proposed activities during the alternate weeks.” By spacing out the sessions every other week, it provided them with valuable time and flexibility to reflect on the content and progress, and actively work on implementing the suggestions. Overall, the approach underscores the importance of well-paced support mechanisms in maximizing the participants’ learning outcomes.

WORKSHOP ON ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING IN ENGLISH

Table 3 – Data from Workshop on Academic Presentations

Edition	Seats offered	Participants	Certified participants
1 st (2022/1)	25	25	07
2 nd (2022/2)	25	25	10

Source: The authors.

“Workshop on Academic Presentations in English” was conducted in two editions in 2022: one in the first semester and the other in the second semester. In the first edition, twenty-five seats were offered, attracting twenty-five participants, but only seven participants completed the workshop and received certification. In the second edition, another twenty-five seats were available, with twenty-five participants taking part, and ten participants completing the program and receiving certification. These figures illustrate the consistent enrollment in both editions, with more participants completing the workshop in the second semester.

Participants were assessed in terms of their confidence levels in giving presentations in English before and after attending the workshop. The responses highlight a significant increase in confidence and a notable improvement in critical thinking skills. In the first edition of the workshop, participant assessments revealed a balanced response, with 50% acknowledging that the workshop surpassed their expectations, while the remaining 50% affirmed that the workshop completely fulfilled their needs. Moving forward to the second edition, the feedback was more positive, with 83.33% indicating that their expectations were met and their needs were fulfilled. Additionally, a significant portion, 55.5%, expressed increased self-confidence in delivering presentations in English in the future. These assessments underscore the value of the workshops in meeting participants’ expectations and enhancing their skills and confidence in English presentations.

Participant 1 from the first edition provided feedback that reflects a substantial boost in confidence: “I am much more confident in building a presentation with structure and visually appealing design. These were important lessons, as the structure of presentations abroad differs slightly from those we do in Brazil.” They noted that they now feel much more self-assured when creating a presentation, particularly in terms of structuring it effectively and designing visually appealing slides. This newfound confidence is especially noteworthy as it extends beyond merely linguistic elements. The participant observed that the workshop equipped them with important insights into the structural nuances of presentations, emphasizing that international presentation standards differ slightly from those practiced in Brazil. This suggests that the workshop not only enhanced language skills but also imbued participants with a deeper understanding of the cultural and structural aspects of presentations, contributing to their overall confidence in this context.

Participant 1’s feedback also underscores the importance of the workshop’s two-phase approach: “I believe that dividing the workshop into two moments was extremely important. The fact that I could

make mistakes and revise - from design to the topics of the presentation - helped to close a “presentation path” in my mind, which made it easier to articulate ideas in English.” This feedback was also shared by participant 5 from the first edition and others from the second edition:

I consider that my experience evolved from one presentation to another. I had some difficulty in summarizing the content I addressed, as well as in organizing it. In the second round, based on the comments and questions from my colleagues, I was able to better organize my presentation, and the nervousness decreased significantly, which greatly helped in the delivery. (Participant 5).

The participants from both editions found the division into two distinct moments, which allowed for mistakes and revisions in both design and content, to be particularly valuable. Beyond boosting confidence, the observations highlight the development of critical thinking skills. Participants comments suggest that the workshop fostered an environment where they could engage in iterative thinking and problem-solving, thus enhancing their ability to construct coherent and meaningful presentations.

Participant 3 from the first edition shared their experience of assuming the role of interlocutors and evaluators during their colleagues’ oral presentations, shedding light on the broader benefits of this aspect of the workshop:

I found it important to be able to take on the role of an interlocutor and evaluator, considering that we may be invited to be part of committees abroad or national events in English. Additionally, I believe it was an immense opportunity to learn and gain new vocabulary related to other areas of science. (Participant 3).

The participant emphasizes the importance of these roles by recognizing the potential for their future involvement in international or national academic committees, events, and discussions conducted in English. This experience served not only to enhance their own presentation skills but also provided an opportunity for learning and expanding their vocabulary in various scientific domains. Participant’s remarks underscore the dual value of this exercise: not only does it prepare participants for real-world scenarios in which they may need to evaluate or engage in academic discourse in English, but it also contributes to their academic and professional growth by broadening their knowledge base and language proficiency in diverse scientific fields.

The experiential learning approach within the workshop appears to be a valuable element in equipping participants with the skills and confidence necessary for international academic engagement. Feedback provided by participants from the second edition corroborates the importance of the approach: “I started from scratch in terms of knowledge of academic presentations in English, understanding that it can greatly improve as I continue to train. This also applies to presentations in Portuguese.” (Participant 6).

Taken together, the participants’ responses demonstrate a dual impact of the workshop. It not only elevated their confidence levels when presenting in English but also nurtured critical thinking skills, enabling them to craft more effective and culturally appropriate presentations.

Table 4 – Data from Academic Reading and Writing in English

Edition	Seats offered	Participants	Certified participants
1 st (2022/1 - online)	16	16	14
2 nd (2022/2 – class 1)	15	12	11
3 rd (2022/2 -class 2)	15	10	10

Source: The authors.

The Academic Reading and Writing in English course was offered three times in 2022. In the first class, held online in the first semester, twenty seats were available, attracting sixteen students, with fourteen students completing the course and obtaining certification. The second class, which took place in the second semester, offered fifteen seats and engaged twelve participants, with eleven participants completing the course and receiving certification. The third class, also in the second semester, offered fifteen seats, engaging ten participants, all of whom completed the course and were certified. These statistics demonstrate a consistent level of interest and participation across the classes, with a high completion rate in the third class.

The participants' feedback from the three editions about their experience with Academic Reading and Writing in English reveals a multifaceted impact on their language proficiency, critical thinking, and overall confidence in academic writing within their research field. Student 4 from the third edition indicates a significant transformation in their academic writing skills:

By reading and analyzing papers in my research field, I was able to increase my knowledge related to scientific writing, being able to identify the differences between tenses, use of passive voice, and writing styles. I changed my “glasses” of how I read and write the sentences, and how I recognize linking words, verbs, tenses, and other grammatical elements. When I analyzed my own introduction, I found out that academic writing is always on continuous improvement, even thinking that I’m actually a better writer compared to the beginning of the semester. I think my critical thinking in academic writing in my area is better than it was before, and I can contribute to improving the academic texts of my research area. Given these points, I intend to be constantly up to date about the topics approached in class. (Student 4).

Through reading and analyzing papers in their research field, Student 4 not only improved their understanding of scientific writing but also developed a keen eye for grammatical nuances, such as verb tenses and passive voice usage. This experience enabled them to see their own writing with new perspective, fostering a sense of continuous improvement. The development of critical thinking skills and the ability to contribute to the enhancement of academic texts in their research area highlight the broader impact of the course on their academic growth. This feedback reflects a blend of confidence, a sense of accomplishment, critical thinking, and improved writing skills, underscoring the comprehensive benefits of the program.

Student 6 from the second edition noted the fascinating discovery of differing writing styles within their field, even among papers from the same domain: “It was interesting to analyze and observe the difference in the writing styles even though the papers are from the same field. I almost always used

the impersonal style. In addition, the analyses helped me to improve the vocabulary of my field.” This observation not only expanded their awareness of writing styles but also led to a preference for the impersonal style, enhancing their writing skills and vocabulary. The explicit emphasis on improving their field-specific terminology underscores the practical skills gained in the course. The same student highlighted the positive impact of the course on their writing abilities, particularly in the context of crafting an introduction: “Writing my introduction was a challenge, but it was good to try to put into practice what I learned from the analyses of other papers and especially what I learned in the subject. Analyzing my own introduction was interesting and I could see a certain evolution in my writing skills.” The challenge of putting into practice what they learned from analyzing other papers and their coursework is indicative of the program’s practicality. The observed evolution in their writing skills underscores the program’s ability to promote self-improvement and practical application of knowledge.

Student 7 from the second edition emphasized the novelty and productivity of the experience:

It was a very interesting and productive experience. I have never done this before, and I believe that this kind of activity gave me explicit guidelines to write articles in English (and even in Portuguese). Now, I feel more comfortable and confident to face this task, and I think I won't procrastinate so much anymore. (Student 7).

The student found the guidelines provided during the course particularly useful, instilling them with the confidence to tackle English and Portuguese article writing tasks. This newfound confidence is expected to mitigate procrastination, further accentuating the program’s positive influence on their motivation and productivity.

In sum, the participants’ feedback on Academic Reading and Writing in English underscores the diverse ways in which the program has impacted their language proficiency, critical thinking, and overall confidence in academic writing within their research field. These reflections highlight the value of the course in nurturing essential skills for academic and professional success.

All the IaH initiatives share a unified theoretical foundation rooted in active learning methodologies and the Backward Design Model. This pedagogical approach places the learner at the center of the educational experience, emphasizing skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. The “flipped classroom” model, where course content is delivered outside of formal learning spaces, encourages self-directed learning. The Backward Course Design model, which aligns assessments with course objectives, ensures that participants are guided by clear learning outcomes. The initiatives collectively emphasize student-centered learning and align assessments with course objectives, promoting a holistic approach to academic development. Moreover, they all share a common overarching goal: to enhance the participation of UFPel community members in a diverse range of academic practices in English, fostering autonomy and efficiency in both written and oral genres tailored to the specific needs and contexts of each participant.

In terms of organization, the initiatives are marked by their structured approach, encompassing both onsite and online meetings, individual and group sessions, and a varied audience. This multifac-

ted organizational design ensures that the programs cater to diverse learning preferences and contexts. The combination of these elements provides participants with a flexible and inclusive learning environment.

The results of these initiatives have been consistently positive, as highlighted by feedback that underscores the improvement of participants' confidence, sense of accomplishment, critical thinking, and writing and oral skills when engaging in academic practices. However, it is essential to acknowledge and address the challenges that persist. These challenges encompass the multifaceted tasks of delivering and evaluating talks/papers, structuring authorial texts, and the continuous efforts required to attract and retain participants. The positive feedback indicates that these initiatives are achieving their intended outcomes and making a substantial impact on the participants' academic growth and professional development.

While the initiatives have been successful, they are not without challenges. These challenges include the multifaceted tasks of delivering and evaluating talks/papers, structuring authorial texts, and the effort required to attract and retain participants. Our results are similar to Amorim and Finardi (2017)'s study which investigated "the internationalization process of Brazilian universities and the role of foreign languages in general, and English in particular, in this process" by means of "micro, meso, and macro aspects of the internationalization of a higher education institution within three concentric spheres: the academic community, the institution itself, and the government" (p. 630) and indicated that

[...] internationalization affects and is affected by globalization where English has a distinctive role in regards to other foreign languages. Results of the meso analysis suggest that the institution investigated aims at internationalization that is still incipient and marked by challenges. Finally, results of the micro level analysis suggest that the academic community is interested in the process, but not yet fully engaged, perhaps due to the lack of convergence between the three levels of policies and internationalization programs and actions. (Amorim & Finardi, 2017, p. 614).

At UFPel, the engagement of other professors to actively participate in and contribute to the initiatives remains an ongoing challenge, necessitating a continued commitment to promoting and expanding the programs. These initiatives have yielded positive outcomes while simultaneously facing and addressing the challenges inherent to their continued success and growth.

FINAL REMARKS

UFPel's IaH initiatives have demonstrated significant benefits for the participants, including enhanced international and intercultural competencies, language skills, confidence, and awareness of their role as responsible professionals and global citizens. However, stronger and broader institutional and governmental support is necessary to foster and multiply these initiatives so that they reach out to more members of the university who may engage, commit, and participate in the co-construction and implementation of the international strategies by perceiving IaH as a means to promote inclusion in the academic practices and help bridge language inequality.

We align with Knight (2004) in underscoring the importance of internationalization, particularly at the institutional level. As Knight (2004, p. 6-7) indicates, “[t]he national/sector level has an important influence on the international dimension through policy, funding, programs, and regulatory frameworks. Yet it is usually at the institutional level that the real internationalization process is taking place”. This emphasizes the critical role that institutional-level internationalization plays in shaping the university’s global outlook and in nurturing a culture of internationalization that extends beyond policies to become an integral part of the academic community.

REFERENCES

- Amorim, G. B., & Finardi, K. R. (2017). Internacionalização do ensino superior e línguas estrangeiras: evidências de um estudo de caso nos níveis micro, meso e macro. *Avaliação*, 22(3), 614-632. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1414-40772017000300003>
- Beichner, R. J. (2014). History and Evolution of Active Learning Spaces. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, Special Issue: Active Learning Spaces, 2014(137), 9-16. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20081>
- Knight, J. (2004). Internationalization remodeled: definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8(1), 5-31. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315303260832>
- Universidade Federal de Pelotas. Conselho Coordenador do Ensino, da Pesquisa e da Extensão. (2018). *Resolução n. 06/2018, de 21 de abril de 2018*. Aprova o plano de planejamento estratégico de internacionalização da UFPel. Pelotas: Conselho Coordenador do Ensino, da Pesquisa e da Extensão. Retrieved October 30, 2023, from <https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/crinter/files/2018/07/Planejamento-Estrat%C3%A9gico-de-Internacionaliza%C3%A7%C3%A3o-da-UFPel-vers%C3%A3o-final.pdf>
- Universidade Federal de Pelotas. Conselho Coordenador do Ensino, da Pesquisa e da Extensão. (2020). *Resolução n. 01/2020, de 20 de fevereiro de 2020*. Institui a política linguística da Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel). Pelotas: Conselho Coordenador do Ensino, da Pesquisa e da Extensão. Retrieved October 30, 2023, from <https://wp.ufpel.edu.br/scs/files/2020/03/Res.-01.2020-Pol%C3%ADtica-Lingu%C3%ADstica-Institucional-da-UFPel.pdf>
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

