

## **Go the Distance**

### **Student life**

#### **Episode 3: Academic talk - Marcin EXTRA**

At the moment I'm studying business in context, which covers marketing, accounting, productions, information systems, so functional areas of any business.

We've got lots of visual materials. They're always adjusted to the student's level. Usually it's kind of like clips like you can see on YouTube. I'm a visual learner. When you see audio-visual material, you can see for yourself, you can listen for yourself. You cannot learn everything from the books, from just reading about it: when you see some clip on YouTube, when actually it shows you what's happening, so it gives you much better idea than just reading about it.

Sometimes I've got a problem with understanding of spoken language. They always have a transcript so it's much, much easier than just following the audio material. I can get the sense, the meaning of that word better than just by listening to it. Usually, I'm trying to watch the clip first to get the gist and then I'm following the transcript independently just to get into more details. I've got my phone always at hand, so any word I don't understand, I can always check it.

As part of my course for the university, we've got chat rooms available, so that's pretty much sessions with other students and tutor, just to have that direct conversations face to face... well via the cameras and microphones... but live sessions. Each chatroom is designed to last for an hour, up to two hours, but again it could be flexible if the topic is interesting for all of the students and they're really engaged in that conversation. Usually there are like five, six people – it's not like a big group but the software is very good – you can see the names, who's attending the chat rooms, who's not. It's moderated by the tutor, so it works very, very well. It's always very good to share the opinions with others and communicate face to face directly and not just through the emails or written words.

Some people, they have strange, different accents, so that could be challenging for non-native speakers, but again there is very good understanding of each other. We know that everyone is from different backgrounds and there is no problem with asking to repeat the question, repeat the answer and clarify whatever someone else is talking about.

There's a topic specific chart. The tutor sends the list of topics that will be covered during – within that conversations. If you're not feeling familiarised with that topics, you can do some preparations, but it's not demanded. Another options are day tutorials, so that's face-to-face meetings. So, for example, we're meeting in Edinburgh with a tutor and we're just having three, four hours sessions and after some activities, some exchange of opinions. As part of the university programme we have to – that's obligatory – to work through the students' forum, where tutors send some activities and then we have to collaborate with each other and then find solution for a given problem Usually the forums consist of ten, twenty students. Every part of the module has that kind of programme. It's mainly once a month there's a problem, activities, some conversations to do, and then we're pretty much posting our ideas online, reading the response of other students and then answering to that responses. The collaborations work pretty good and it's always good to share the ideas – you can always find something new, some different point of views– the law could be different in different countries.

The experience of people definitely is different because of the different country of origin so that's really, really helpful and beneficial. That's huge advantage of having that multicultural group and then trying to find a proper solution within a different framework. All of the students are on certain level of English. We can communicate and understand each other with no problems. There's always support from the tutor so you can ask directly a question to your tutor or you can post the question in general forum and the other students can participate and help, help you as much as they can.