On Thursday, December 11, 2014, the Center for Language Excellence (CLE) presented the workshop entitled “Canvas is Your Friend: Using Canvas to Create Assessment Activities”. The workshop had 7 attendees including three CLE/CeLT staff and language instructors from three different departments, servicing four different languages (Czech, Norwegian, Ukrainian, and Russian). Another attendee was from CELCAR. The presentation was led by Maria Shardakova, Director of Language Assessment for the Center for Language Excellence.

This workshop was the fifth of a series of workshops offered by CLE.

This workshop briefly outlined the principles of foreign language assessment with appropriate assessment goals and targets at different levels of study - e.g., beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Then, participants discussed types of assessment activities for evaluating students’ productive (speaking/writing) and receptive (reading & listening) skills. Finally, participants decided on the arrangement of assessment activities, so that these activities help students move from the controlled to open-ended production and from the proximal to the target-like performance. Participants were presented with sample assessment activities designed on Canvas. The advantages and disadvantages of various Canvas assessment tools were also discussed. During the second part of the workshop, participants could develop their own sample assessment activities that incorporate various media and a series of tasks ranging in difficulty. Finally, participants shared their experiences and suggestions. A list of suggestions can be compiled to send to CITL for the improvement of Canvas.

The post-workshop survey evaluation showed that overall the participants said the workshop was very helpful.

Below are what some of the participants had to say about the workshop:

“Great discussions – especially the informal ones after or between.”

“A great overview and discussion of challenges.”

“I am currently not using Canvas, so all provided information was very helpful.”