



Cyprus
University of
Technology

Developing transversal skills in ESAP courses through the use of technology

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Aim

1. Development of transversal skills in future graduates, how English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses in higher education can help develop these skills, how technology can facilitate this aim in such courses and in future employees' lives.
2. Demonstration of how a specific ESAP course in a Cyprus Higher Education State institution has been designed, structured and carried out in order to develop transversal skills in undergraduates, through the use of technology.

Introduction

Role of education: preparation of graduates to become employable by meeting employers' requirements
(UNESCO, 2015)

Transversal Skills and Language Learning

Transversal skills (also referred to as soft skills, 21st century skills, etc): “are not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge and that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings” (UNESCO IBE, 2013)

- expansion of how learning takes place and how it is applied across academic and professional disciplines, communities and cultures

Education Research Institutes Network (ERI-Net) working group (six main categories): critical and innovative thinking, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, media and information literacy, global citizenship, and others (UNESCO, 2016)

- problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership

Transversal Skills and Language Learning

- Role of learning foreign (FL) and second languages (L2) in the development of transversal skills, (development of plurilingualism / multilingualism)
- The teaching of FL and L2 allows space to pursue transversality
- Critical role of English (as *Lingua Franca*) in disciplinary learning and intercultural communication, the very bedrock of transdisciplinarity and transversality (Jaganathan et al., 2014)
- Teachers: guides and scaffolders
- Students: strong mindset of self-direction and autonomy

ESAP: transdisciplinary knowledge & development of transversal skills

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses in Higher Education:

- offer cognitive skills in the field of study of the learners in the English language
- need to smoothly blend interpersonal and academic communication skills (opportunities for learning and practising context-specific language - Chalikandy, 2013)

ESAP: transdisciplinary knowledge & development of transversal skills

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses in Higher Education:

- readings (e.g. research, reports, etc.), which which they will need in order to keep up to date (Graddol, 2000) – CEFR C2
- listening comprehension (e.g. understand and evaluate professionally related information - Barančicová & Zerzová, 2015) - CEFR B2
- delivering oral presentations at meetings - CEFR C1

ESAP: transdisciplinary knowledge & development of transversal skills

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses in Higher Education:

- play an important role in the development of teamwork, communication, and problem-solving

Engaging students in collaborative tasks provides them with the opportunity to communicate, collaborate and complete their tasks - learn and share disciplinary information, synthesise and internalise that knowledge, negotiate meaning, critical thinking and disciplinary knowledge acquisition, autonomous and lifelong learning (Sinkus, 2020)

Our Context

Language Centre (LC) of Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

- ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) first-year undergraduate courses aim at B2 CEFR level – 2 semesters
- Challenges faced:
 - difficulty in engaging in collaborative learning and carrying out research
 - lack of critical thinking skills
 - lack of creativity and innovation

A model ESAP course

Language Centre (LC) of Cyprus University of Technology (CUT)

- ESAP courses at LC CUT aim at developing first-year undergraduate students' transversal skills required for ongoing professional development, as part of lifelong learning

A model ESP course

- **Example: English for Rehabilitation course, Health Sciences**
 - Realised in conjunction with faculty members of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences
 - Two-semester compulsory subject for first year students, majoring in Speech and Language Therapy
 - **Goal:** to increase students' linguistic as well as develop their transversal skills to allow them to function professionally in English as independent learners in all four skills at a high intermediate (B2) level
 - Designed in terms of CEFR descriptors, focusing on future professional needs

A model ESP course

- Ongoing contribution of academic faculty members: organized in 7 Thematic Blocks
 - Semester 1: 3 Blocks (B1-B2 CEFR level)
 - Semester 2: 4 Blocks (B2 CEFR level)

Activities and Technologies (1st & 2nd Semester):

Discipline-based lectures (30-45 minutes by a member of the academic staff or an area professional) and observation of cases:

- Collaborative notetaking, paraphrasing, synthesizing summaries
- Negotiation of meaning when discussing the lecture content

Oral Presentations (on a topic related to their field of study)

- Carrying out research
- Critical evaluating sources
- Collaborating to prepare and carry out the presentation
- Being creative and innovative

Disciplinary authentic readings / listening (web-based sources):

- Collaborating
- Negotiation of meaning
- Critical evaluation / thinking

Collaborative web-based research on discipline-related topics (choosing reliable internet sources)

- Collaborating
- Critical evaluation / thinking

Google Drive Applications (Google Docs, Slides, Forms)

WWW – organization, newspaper, magazine, journal articles, YouTube videoclips, TEDTalks

Presentation Tools (Google Slides, Prezi, etc.)

Activities and Technologies (2nd Semester):

Interviews

- Carrying out research on the disorder observed
- Critically evaluating / thinking
- Negotiating meaning
- Collaborating to prepare the interview questions and carrying out the interviews

Google Drive Applications (Google Docs, Slides, Forms)

Essay outlines and argumentative text writing

- Carrying out research on the disorder observed
- Critically evaluating / thinking
- Negotiating meaning

WWW – organization, newspaper, magazine, journal articles, YouTube videoclips, TEDTalks

Mind Mapping Tools (Mindmeister, Miro, etc)

In-class communicative language use

- Collaborating
- Negotiating meaning
- Critical thinking

Conclusion

The development of transversal skills is essential for students to deal with their academic studies and to enter a competitive and demanding market, to maintain employment and aspire to promotion.

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