Testing English for Specific Purposes in Science (TESPIS)

Walter Zeller
Email: w.zeller@aon.at
astyle linguistic competence (Austria)

Abstract

The former Leonardo-da-Vinci project “English for Specific Purposes: Chemistry” (ESP:C), a language course for chemists, also created examinations to evaluate the students' performance of those who completed the course. These examinations, however, do neither reliably distinguish between the language levels B2 and C, nor do they reflect the needs of linguistic skills in industry to the extent that they should.

With all these ideas and experiences as the background, the idea of “Testing English for Specific Purposes in Science” (TESPIS) came into existence. The main steps of this project can now be described as follows:

- Definitions of the language levels based on the Common European Framework must be created for the language as needed in the respective professions.
- Assessing the difficulty of a text is usually a rather subjective approach. So methods must be developed to create simple, (electronic) tools to filter authentic language material tested at the examination for quickly defining language levels.
- The framework of our TESPIS examinations is based on already existing international examinations for general English.
- Each examination will contain a reading, a listening, a writing and a speaking part.
- Guidelines for developing B2 and C1 ESP examinations will be provided for future examiners.
- The creation of a short (web-based) course for new examiners is a further feature of this project.

eChemTest Centres

European Testing Centres for evaluating knowledge and skills in chemistry

eChemTest is an electronic test developed by the European Chemistry Thematic Network Association, and aimed at evaluating knowledge and skills in chemistry.

It has a wide-ranging impact over chemistry-related studies, both formal and informal, in Europe and outside its borders.

eChemTest banks of questions are covering the European core chemistry programme at three different levels.

EChemTest sessions are offered under controlled conditions in fully equipped Testing Centres. The Centres are monitoring EChemTest delivery; are carrying out translation activities; and are awarding the relevant ECTN European Chemistry Certificate.

Testing Centres are already established at the following institutions:

- Technical University of Vienna, Austria
- University of Helsinki, Finland
A project, titled Valorisation of EChemTest Testing Centres, funded under Lifelong Learning Programme / Erasmus / Dissemination and Exploitation of Results / Multilateral Projects, and coordinated by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, is enhancing the various types of initiatives taken by the Testing Centres, and is monitoring the creation of new Examination Units in further countries.

For further information on the EChemTest Centres please consult http://echemtc.net