

Improving Research and Language Skills

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Abstract

The need for general language skills, on the one hand, is widespread in many different jobs today where oral and/or written communication play an important role. Language specialists, on the other hand, work in a wide range of jobs, such as translators, interpreters, terminology experts, lexicographers, technical or medical writers, software localizers or subtitlers, to name just a few. In most cases it is considered part of the professional competence to have sound research skills at one's disposal. This is, however, an area that often does not receive enough attention in academic environments. It proves particularly beneficial to combine studies enhancing both linguistic competence and special research skills making use of Information and Communication Technologies.

This paper will show an approach to teaching these subjects by providing a case study, namely a terminology workshop focusing both on linguistic and on research issues. The course is designed to give students both a sound theoretical background and the incentive to apply their knowledge in a meaningful way. Students work in small groups making it necessary to negotiate with their fellow students the methods and strategies used for each task as well as the presentation mode. By exchanging the results of their work with other groups they will gain a broader range of methods they start feeling familiar with. Also, the workshop is geared in such a way as to increase the students' motivation to refine their research strategies and improve their language skills.

The paper will focus on the targets of the workshop and the practical steps used to have the students reach the targets. Students' performance is measured not only by assessing the output of the group but also by offering independent study projects which aim at delving deeper into certain areas connected with the issues of research and language skills.