CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COOPERATION IN TEACHING ESP

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Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a platform for cross-disciplinary studies. The teaching and learning environment at tertiary level embraces more specific demands, techniques and approaches. Crossing disciplines and examining how they intersect is a great way to see the "big picture perspectives needed to deal with complex problems and issues that resist standard disciplinary resolutions" [1] .

Crossing English with another discipline within bachelor and master's degree programs must have carefully structured curriculum and entirely satisfy students' professional needs. Consequently, such cross-disciplinary subject opens new horizons for students' mobility, notably gives them equal opportunities for acquiring and sharing their professional knowledge abroad. Educational institutions and professional organizations offer a wide range of grants, research programs for undergraduate students. Some professional organizations open their international branches, give students equal opportunities to become their members and bring their research to the international level, whereas lecturers and English language teachers benefit from having motivating content for their courses. Let us consider an example of cross-disciplinary course developed by the Ukrainian branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) based in the National Technical University of Ukraine "KPI".

IEEE is the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation. IEEE's publications are highly cited, the Institute sets technology standards, organizes conferences, professional and educational activities. IEEE offers a wide range of learning, career enhancement, and employment opportunities for students within the engineering sciences, research, and other technology areas. Since IEEE has branches in countries where English is not a native language, the association requires its members to have special knowledge of both professional subjects and English. Students' ability to speak, read, and write technical English has great value to nearly all engineering, computing, and technology professionals [2].

A pilot cross-disciplinary course developed by Ukrainian branch of IEEE is oriented on undergraduates who will participate in a semester-long course focused on the creation of the professional portfolio presentation in English and will be expected to take part in lectures, seminars and practical studies. The course goals include solidifying students' understanding of the competency areas, refining their work on key skills and creating a professional portfolio presentation that can be tailored to their career needs. Faculty members that teach ESP and specific subjects to engineering, computing and technology students have developed cross-disciplinary teaching materials and corresponding instructional strategies. The curriculum integrates career-themed subject matter with ESP. The curriculum also employs cutting-edge methods of increasing literacy and uses cross-disciplinary teaching strategies that weave career themes across core subjects such as Engineering and English. English language teachers and lecturers will work both independently and collaborate in teams. At the first stage of the course (first three months of the semester) much of the teaching is focused on practical ESP classes where students will learn to speak, read, and write technical English. The ESP course will contain original IEEE material and lectures provided by the faculty members. At the second level of the course (the last month of the semester), undergraduates will be expected to take part in lectures, seminars and more theoretical studies that will be conducted by the faculty lecturers in English. The third stage includes students' presentation of their professional portfolio at the annual IEEE international conference in Ukraine.

The designed cross-disciplinary course qualifies students with a set of skills and knowledge that relates to the speciality they have chosen. The course gives a lot of practice in ESP, provides students with a broad theoretical grounding in their specialism and develops students' ability to successfully integrate their language and professional skills.

References

1. Golding, C. (2011). Positioning cross-disciplinary graduate research: (or how to avoid painful misunderstandings with your supervisors and examiners). Traffic [Parkville] 12 (2010): 17+Academic OneFile. Web. 2 Feb. 2011.
2. IEEE http://www.ieee.org/about/index.html