

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: PRACTICING WHAT WE PREACH

Androulla Athanasiou

English Language Instructor
Language Centre
Cyprus University of Technology
androulla.athanasiou@cut.ac.cy

Jack Burston

Honorary Research Fellow
Language Centre
Cyprus University of Technology
jack.burston@cut.ac.cy

TRANSVERSALITY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: THEORY



Critical role of English in disciplinary learning
and intercultural communication

Immediate job training or future
professional development

Jaganathan, P., Pandian, A., & Subramaniam, I. (2014). Language courses, transversal skills and transdisciplinary education: A case study in the Malaysian university. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(2), 1-10.

Knowledge Acquisition

Initial focus on information retrieval
Development of receptive language skills: reading and listening

Longterm goal
Development of a mindset of self-direction and critical thinking skills

Human Interaction Transversal Skills

Understand, empathize, effectively communicate with others

Collaborative task-based communication tasks

i+1 Language Exposure

Grammar & Vocabulary

Sociolinguistic language usage norms

Making requests,

Giving / accepting suggestions,

Agreeing / disagreeing

Disciplinary Knowledge

Through collaborative task-based activities, students not only learn and share disciplinary information but synthesize and internalize that Knowledge.

Collaborative Learning

Negotiation of meaning

Language acquisition

Disciplinary knowledge acquisition

Self-directed, lifelong, learning

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom-left towards the top-right, located on the right side of the slide.

Role of Ubiquitous Digital Technologies



Limited student mastery of technology

Interpersonal communication

Entertainment applications:

Music, videos, games

Acquiring a systematic knowledge of available ubiquitous digital technologies, and how to effectively exploit them for learning purposes, does not come spontaneously.

It has to be taught and learned from experience both in class and out of class.



TRANSVERSALITY AND TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: PRACTICE



Our story - Challenges

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses: transdisciplinary knowledge & development of transversal skills

A collaborative self-directed mindset could facilitate our ESP courses' aims

WORK ON TRANSVERSAL SKILLS AT AN EARLIER STAGE



CHALLENGES:

- Fixed Curriculum
- Engagement and Resistance
- Lack of Collaborative Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Creativity, Confidence

FIXED CURRICULUM

Suggestion:



- use coursebook activities as the basis of collaborative projects
- create related authentic scenarios, in which students can role-play: e.g. a reporter of a news event
- carry out research on the internet, decide which source(s) best suits their purpose, evaluate them and begin the process of critical thinking
- Synthesize information and convey it in a creative way

STUDENT APATHY & RESISTANCE

- collaborative task-based projects
- personally relevant and interesting
- common interests matched with curriculum thematic units

COLLABORATION, CRITICAL THINKING, NEGOTIATION,
CREATIVITY



EXPLOITATION OF UBIQUITOUS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



- Google Drive, Google Slides (used to centrally store resources and produce materials synchronously or asynchronously) – Collaboration
- Viber/WhatsApp/Snapchat (chat) – *Negotiation*
- Mindmeister, Mindmup, Jamboard (online collaborative mind maps) – *Brainstorming & Organising ideas*

EXPLOITATION OF UBIQUITOUS DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



- PowerPoint/Google slides/ Prezi, software that create posters (creative projects/presentations)
- Audio/Video recordings on mobile phones (short skits, e.g. nurse/patient exchange, telling Santa what they want for Christmas) – *Sharing for peer reviewing, discussions, sociolinguistic norms for personal interaction*

CONCLUSION:



- Personalization, creativity and a little fun can do the job
- Not everything has to be done at once
- Small and gradual steps

Gradual change of students' mindset and definitely well worth the effort

BIBLIOGRAPHY:



Jaganathan, P., Pandian, A., & Subramaniam, I. (2014). Language courses, transversal skills and transdisciplinary education: A case study in the Malaysian university. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(2), 1-10.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

