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Одержано статтю: 7.02.2019

Прийнято до друку: 28.02.2019

УДК 372.881.111.1

DOI: 10.15330/esu.15.255-261

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## МІЖДИСЦИПЛІНАРНЕ НАВЧАННЯ: ПОЧАТКОВІ ЗУСИЛЛЯ І РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ

### CROSS-CURRICULAR LEARNING: INITIAL EFFORTS AND RESULTS

*Поточне вивчення присвячене необхідності впровадження міждисциплінарного навчання, яке може бути реалізоване через виділення більшої кількості годин в навчальній*

програмі. Результати показують, що такі ініціативи можуть бути реалізовані спільними зусиллями педагогічного колективу, розуміючи цінність міждисциплінарного навчання та навчання для економії часу студентів до освоєння академічного змісту і, водночас, розвитку мислення і навчання на вищому рівні, необхідному для професійного успіху. Дослідження продемонструвало те, що інституційні зусилля, спрямовані на адаптацію навчальних програм і послідовність дисциплін, які викладаються у міждисциплінарному проекті, ще не були успішними. Результати показують, що для подолання розбіжностей, що виникають через специфіку неанглійського середовища в країні, а отже, і в навчальному закладі, є міждисциплінарне навчання, а саме співпраця викладачів-переметників у більш вузькому масштабі.

**Ключові слова:** навчальна програма, неанглійське середовище, морська англійська мова, викладання морської англійської мови, викладачі англійської мови спеціального призначення у вищих навчальних закладах.

*The current study investigates the cross-curricular teaching that implemented due to the necessity of spending more time on implementing this innovation. The results indicate that it can't be permanent due to changes in the curricula, content, faculty members etc., that's why the traditional approach of separately taught disciplines is dominant as more convenient unless the institutional management or regional leaders in higher education are willing and open to such cross-curricular developments. The results indicate that such initiatives can be realized through joint efforts of the teaching staff understanding the value of cross-curricular teaching and learning for economizing students' time to master the academic content and, at the same time, develop higher-order thinking and learning skills necessary for professional success. The study demonstrated the institutional efforts to tailor the curriculum and sequence of disciplines taught into the cross-curricular design have not been a success yet, the challenges being too numerous. The results indicate that to overcome the discrepancies occurring due to the specifics of the non-English environment in the country and, consequently, at the educational establishment, there's a real chance to set an example by collaborating at a narrower scale.*

**Key words:** the cross-curricular teaching, the non-English environment, Maritime English, teaching Maritime English, teachers of English for Specific Purposes at higher educational establishments.

**Introduction** In Ukraine, most teachers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at higher educational establishments, including Maritime English, are not holders of certificates stating they have completed a full course for a bachelor degree in their students' specialization, this being navigation in our case. This, therefore, makes it possible to state that their knowledge of the necessary professional content grows by self-education on the lesson-to-lesson basis. Most innovations implemented in the process of our previous research concerned methods of teaching and learning: communicative and competency-based approaches, approved and tested lesson structure for PPP, EASA and Patchwork strategies, implementation of Bloom's taxonomy into communicative lesson planning, task-based teaching, content and language integrated learning (CLIL), deeper learning technologies, electronic testing etc. The efficiency of mastering all the aforementioned aspects by the Maritime English teachers of our department has been proved at various interviews by crewing agencies and shipping companies.

The time has come to focus our research on fostering joint efforts in improving the English teachers' knowledge of the core modular content they have to teach to comply with the approved Maritime English syllabus based on the guidelines presented by IMO in Model Course 3.17 Maritime English. It declares that the instructor should be trained in content-based instruction and also have "broad understanding of maritime subjects" [1, p. 6].

**The purpose of the article** is to summarize the initial steps of the research on featuring the basic maritime content in the syllabi of Maritime English course and that of specialized navigation disciplines through cross-curricular collaboration.

**Review of Related Literature.** Over recent years, cross-curricular teaching and learning has been one of the most appealing approaches for research and implementation into the training process of educational institutions mostly in European countries and the USA.

A most noticeable project entitled CROSSCUT (cross-curricular teaching) was launched back in September 2016 with the first output a year later concerning the situational survey about interdisciplinary in five European countries. The project was grounded on the working definition that cross-curricular teaching involves “a conscious effort to apply knowledge, skills and competences to more than one subject area simultaneously with the rationale of forming autonomous citizens, solidary and responsible, intended for a democratic, inclusive and fair society” [5, p. 2] which seems to be deliberated and applicable to multiple aims and uses.

Summarizing our first efforts in implementing cross-curricular teaching, we completely support the project organizers’ point of view the teaching staff involved should have: “individual motivation for cross-curricular teaching; insight into other disciplines; curiosity and broad intellectual interests; management skills and project competences; good relations among colleagues; broad life experience” [5, p. 1] as no formal pressure can produce bright outcomes without individual enthusiasm.

Presenting four ways to integrate lessons, among them parallel integration, infusion integration, multi-disciplinary integration, and trans-disciplinary integration, another researcher defines cross-curricular instruction in the same way as above just adding that “the disciplines may be related through a central theme, issue, problem, process, topic, or experience” [2, p. 1].

Jonathan Savage approaches the cross-curricular approach to teaching as ‘sensitivity towards, and a synthesis of, knowledge, skills and understandings from various subject areas’ [4, p. 2] which is perceived lacking the purpose of introducing it, but later, beyond the definition, he dwells on its purposes, one of which is shared by us: “draw on similarities in and between individual subjects (in terms of subject content, pedagogical devices and learning processes) and make these links explicit in various ways”.

Instead of giving definitions, Ben Johnson views teachers’ collaboration as a necessary tool for implementing deeper learning technologies to unlock students’ potential. As he puts it, “this is difficult for a single teacher to be an expert in two subjects, so the solution is to combine forces and team teach” [2, p. 2].

Commenting on the advantages of cross-curricular teaching Olyzko Y. points out that “preparing a new topic fosters collaboration between teachers of humanitarian and technical disciplines, unites their efforts, helps consider similar topics from different points of view avoiding sheer replicating of the material in teaching different disciplines” [1, p. 163]

We have come to define cross-curricular teaching and learning as ‘joint perception and purposeful actions by teachers of related disciplines to help students acquire transferable knowledge and skills for applying them in new learning contexts’. In future, such skills can be a key to graduates’ professional success.

As we have by now our point of view on what cross-curricular teaching and learning is, we would also like to outline that the focus of our research lies within the

boundaries of the Maritime English for Deck Officers and specialized disciplines positioned in the curriculum of the navigation faculty.

The institutional efforts to tailor the curriculum and sequence of disciplines taught into the cross-curricular design have not been a success yet, the challenges being too numerous. To overcome the discrepancies occurring due to the specifics of the non-English environment in the country and, consequently, at the educational establishment, there's a real chance to set an example by collaborating at a narrower scale.

In our research, the initial step was seen in organizing a non-formal group of enthusiastic representatives of Maritime English teachers, captains, chief mates and lecturers on navigation, ship handling and some other specialized disciplines. By scrutinizing the curriculum and brainstorming a list of possible disciplines to work on cross-curricular collaboration, we came to the conclusion of the obvious necessity to get Maritime English teachers' opinion on it.

The survey embraced twenty-four teachers of Maritime English giving answers to the following questions:

*List 1*

**The survey of teachers Maritime English teachers**

Question	Most frequent answers
1. What disciplines in the curriculum for the Navigation Faculty are mostly referred to in teaching Maritime English?	Bridge Procedures COLREG Communication at sea Geography of Shipping IMO International Conventions Ship Handling Ship Theory and Construction
2. What Maritime English core competencies specified in the IMO Model Course need to be mastered by you?	COLREG Communication at sea Meteorology Ship Handling Ship Theory and Construction
3. What is the content area in which you would prefer to collaborate with colleagues of other departments to introduce cross-curricular teaching and learning?	Geography of Shipping Bridge Procedures Meteorology Ship Theory and Construction

To compare the teachers' ideas with the real state of students' knowledge and skills as perceived by our major industry employer, we analysed the outcomes of a crewing company interviews of the second-year students conducted on the annual basis. The students' basic failures were in answering the questions and performing practical tasks concerning geography, mathematics, physics, meteorology, emergency situations, navigational lights, and life-saving appliances.

The comparison brought us to the decision of forming two cross-curricular groups of the teachers and lecturers engaged in teaching Geography and Meteorology as the easiest by content to set a model of cross-curricular collaboration. Needless to say, Geography of Shipping and Meteorology are taught through a semester, while the duration of the selected modules – “Around the World” and “Meteorology” – in the Maritime English course is about three weeks only. Another difference lies in the methods and language of teaching: mostly lectures in Ukrainian at specialized disciplines

as opposed to communicative teaching in the framework of competency-based approach at Maritime English lessons where English is taught through English as one of the basic principles presented in IMO Model Course 3.17 “Maritime English”.

Next, we were exposed to the dilemma of what goes first: a) whether to teach the content in Ukrainian followed by English; b) or teach the content in English first, followed by Ukrainian afterwards; c) or to teach the content simultaneously. As contrary to the widespread acknowledgement of the importance to understand things in the native language initially, our experience prompts it's more difficult to learn the same professional content by non-native speakers after they do it in Ukrainian as they are inclined to start comparing and kind of translating. In our circumstances when students can communicate in English freely due to the successful communicative teaching implementation and because they are trained to work internationally aboard vessels with multinational crews, it is deemed by the students to plunge naturally into English as their professional means of communication. Another crucial aspect to consider is the volume of theoretical presentation and practical learning of the language (content and language integrated learning) which is narrower and of more applied character.

Once settled the English part of cross-curricular teaching and learning goes first, the organizational effort to follow was as simple as to have the lessons schedule be tailored for our needs.

One more step to be made is to determine the scope of the learning material to be present in both syllabi. The consensus was easy to come to as it is obvious that the agreed content of the English syllabus for a certain module should become an obligatory part of a corresponding specialized discipline as the topics in English are learned in more detail but they are of narrower coverage. As an example, the analysis of both syllabi for the first-year cadets – “Around the World” taught by our department in English and “Geography of Shipping” taught by lecturers of Humanities Department in Ukrainian made us shift the topic “Elements of Navigation” to another module as this content is not covered in the latter discipline. Thus, we narrowed the geographical content in our Maritime English course to two areas – “Maritime Geography Basics” and “Geography of Merchant Shipping”.

It was decided that by learning “Maritime Geography Basics” students develop their communicative skills: 1) to describe location of continents, countries, oceans, canals, straits and ports; 2) to compare shipping routes with the final competency being “speak about water bodies, ports and shipping routes in terms of their geographical location, main characteristics and importance for maritime industry”.

The same procedure was followed by a cross-curricular working group on teaching “Meteorology” to the second-year students.

A semester long research resulted in a list of organizational and contextual steps to organize effective cross-curricular teaching and learning process between teachers of two departments, those being:

1. Make a list of modules in the Maritime English syllabus and the names of departments teaching the corresponding disciplines
2. Select the module you need to start teaching with cross-curricular involvement
3. Get together a group of enthusiastic teachers of English and lecturers engaged in teaching a certain module and discipline
4. Present the needs analysis
5. Outline and discuss the basic content of the selected modular content
6. Come to a consensus of what is a mutually obligatory part of the syllabi

7. Nominate heads of working groups
8. Stream the organizational efforts of the departments involved and the dean's office of your faculty subdivision (sequence of the disciplines participating in the developing the project design, lessons schedule, an order issued by the dean's office or rector, information on the institution's website etc.)
9. Inform the students about the forthcoming efforts
10. Design guidelines for the teachers and lecturers involved
11. Have the guidelines approved by members of the academic council sitting
12. Strictly follow the approved guidelines
13. Get together, at least, two times per semester to discuss and introduce necessary alterations into the training process
14. Periodically, once a month conduct a lesson by a teacher and a lecturer designed by mutual efforts making use of IT resources (tasks and tests on Moodle; such deeper learning technologies as flipped class, inquiry approach; blended learning and the like).
15. Organize expert classes on specific content areas for teachers of Maritime English by their colleagues from other departments involved in the informal project on cross-curricular teaching.

**Conclusion and suggestion.** Cross-curricular teaching and learning is an issue much discussed but rarely implemented due to the necessity of spending more time on implementing this innovation that can't be permanent due to changes in the curricula, content, faculty members etc., that's why the traditional approach of separately taught disciplines is dominant as more convenient unless the institutional management or regional leaders in higher education are willing and open to such cross-curricular developments.

At present, such initiatives can be realized through joint efforts of the teaching staff understanding the value of cross-curricular teaching and learning for economizing students' time to master the academic content and, at the same time, develop higher-order thinking and learning skills necessary for professional success.

Our next step is presumably designing a list of competences which are common, to some extent, in teaching English and specialized disciplines covering navigation content areas. Cross-curricular teaching and learning might become the research goal of the Maritime English teachers for a couple of years ahead.

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Одержано статтю: 5.02.2019

Прийнято до друку: 19.02.2019

УДК: 378:621.007.2

DOI: 10.15330/esu.15.261-268

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## КОМУНІКАТИВНИЙ ПІДХІД У ВИКЛАДАННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ СТУДЕНТАМ

### COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS

*У статті розглядається комунікативний підхід як один із найуспішніших методів викладання англійської мови на сьогоднішній день. Досліджуються головні принципи застосування цього методу як з боку викладачів, так і з боку студентів. Надаються певні рекомендації для викладачів, наводяться приклади видів діяльності студентів на заняттях, розглядаються типи навчання іноземної мови, що асоціюються з комунікативним підходом. Стаття містить навіть критику та недоліки такого підходу. Організації ефективної мовленнєвої діяльності на уроці сприяє комунікативний підхід у навчанні, що передбачає необхідність побудови навчального процесу як моделі спілкування. Суть даного підходу в тому, що правила, слова і вирази не вивчаються через спеціальні вправи, а засвоюються в процесі комунікативної діяльності. Тут одночасно розвивається швидкість мовлення і відпрацьовуються мовленнєві зразки і структури. Комунікативний метод, в першу чергу, потрібен для того, щоб зняти страх перед живим спілкуванням. Людина, у якої відсутні побоювання з приводу того, що його не зрозуміють, легко зможе знайти спільну мову в чужій країні, володіючи стандартним набором граматичних конструкцій і маючи словниковий запас до 1000 слів. Сучасні вимоги до підготовки кваліфікованого спеціаліста перш за все потребують від нього бути учасником міжкультурної комунікації та мати необхідні комунікативні спроможності в сферах професійного та ситуативного спілкування в усній і письмовій формах, навички практичного володіння іноземною мовою в різних видах мовленнєвої діяльності в обсязі тематики, що обумовлена професійними потребами; та бути спроможним оволодіти*