

Interdisciplinary-Exploration of 21st Century Skills in ESP Class: Literature as a Medium

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Abstract

With a focus on literature as a medium for the instruction of a multiplicity of skills relevant to the multinational world, this research seeks to understand the potential benefits of an interdisciplinary approach to the future of ESP. It talks about how the Algerian educational institutions are changing to accommodate the growing need for multiple-skill-based education brought about by fast-paced social and economic shifts. As fundamental abilities in today's language classes, the study focuses on the 21st Century skills, mainly the intellectualism and communication. The study's overarching goal is to improve the instruction of these abilities by bridging the gap between classroom theory and practical application via the use of interdisciplinary methodologies within the realm of literature. This is a descriptive and reviewing study. Students were observed, interviewed, and given questionnaires and post-tests as part of a mixed-method approach to data collection. Methodology of analysis deepens the exploratory and explanatory study of previous literature. The results back the incorporation of interdisciplinary literature into ESP classes and highlight the advantages of combining this with abilities needed for the modern world. We support this method since it is an effective teaching tool that improves students' knowledge and abilities.

Keywords: *Differentiated Teaching; Critical Instruction; Multiple Skills; Didactics of Literature; Autonomous Learning*

1. Introduction:

Evidently, the new multinational globe that is requiring new skills has affected the educational system worldwide. Besides, the world of literature includes a vast realm of interconnected fields and subfields for yelling intertwined ideas that are framed within effectively propelling context. As a result, teachers have a responsibility to tailor curricula and lesson plans to meet the requirements of their pupils. Consequently, students are prepared to handle real-life scenarios and overcome obstacles in their future careers, and any knowledge gained may be applied to the varied-topics under study.

2. Background of the Study:

In some fashion or another, educational systems around the world, regardless of ideology or historical period, have striven to address a common, albeit complex, point of reference: that of the ideal citizen. Over the last century, educational institutions have played a significant role in grounding the production of knowledge, skills, and behaviours, exercised by an explicit public purpose or agenda, in preparing youth for personal and communal goals, in giving a sense of or guiding the progress of national and regional identity, and more recently, in honing both the individual and collective adaptability to global needs. It is not surprising, thus, that our current educational institutions reflect a historical model with linear tendencies, reflecting a reductionist, standardized, and universalist line of thought.

Effectively, literature can provide students with varying socioeconomic backgrounds to make them engaged in and leave school with unequal outcomes, exacerbating existing tensions and differences and impairing democratic societal goals. There is a need, therefore, to review and reimagine the aims, curricular objectives, assessment perspectives, government inputs, outcomes, and community relevance of our educational systems. Intersecting, this time of rapid and urgent change in the global political, social, cultural, and economic arena as well as technology, is reconstituting the world.

1. Statement of the Problem

Skills needed to succeed in the contemporary world, especially 21st-century skills, are difficult for traditional, single-discipline educational institutions to integrate into their curricula and pedagogical techniques. If we want students to acquire valuable skills rather than just memorise facts and figures, we need to implement radical changes to our educational system. Due to obstacles like

disengagement, stunted skill development, rigidity of single-discipline approaches, one-size-fits-all approaches, and insufficient employability skills, it is essential to incorporate interdisciplinary approaches to bolster these abilities and link educational practices to real-world contexts. A more effective and relevant learning environment for students may be achieved by addressing these challenges.

1.1. Aims of study

The purpose of this research is to examine how interdisciplinary methods have affected the literature-based instruction of skills relevant to the modern world. It seeks to determine how much students' 21st-century skills are enhanced by interdisciplinary approaches, whether students find interdisciplinary instruction helpful and easier than traditional discipline-based instruction, where students encounter challenges when integrating diverse disciplines, and how third-year students perceive and approach interdisciplinarity. This study has three main objectives: first, to help students become more employable in the modern workforce; second, to determine whether third-year students are adequately prepared to acquire these skills through the interdisciplinary approach; and third, to make teachers more aware of the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in helping students develop these skills. Insights into the possible advantages of interdisciplinary methods to teaching skills relevant to the modern world are the primary goal of the research.

1.2. Significance of the study

Understanding the nature of an interdisciplinary approach and its impact on students' literary proficiency in the modern world is enhanced by the current research. Teachers' understanding of their students' requirements in today's classrooms may also improve as a result. In this way, it may encourage teachers to hone their skills in the field.

It seems that the pertinent ideas have been disregarded due to the lack of comparable studies Algerian institutions. In light of the paucity of relevant literature, this initiative has the potential to provide the groundwork for future research.

In the second strategy, researchers may look for connections between the same variables or narrow the scope of their study to get a better understanding of modern capabilities.

1.3. Statement of the problem

In English for Specific Purposes, the problems of ordinary single-subject schooling systems—specifically, their curricula and teaching methodologies—are often manifested. The problems concerning inadequate participation, inappropriate communication skills preparation, and insufficient readiness for work in a multicultural, multi-competence-deploying society has developed as a consequence to educational systems that neglect 21st century skills. There is a need to change towards multidisciplinary methods that integrate the language learning with the content of English for Specific Purposes and professional disciplines, along with fundamental shifts that ensure proper learning in the teaching of English for specific purposes.

1.4. Research question

How can ESP students be engaged in multi-skill contextualized learning?

1.5. Hypothesis

To incorporate ESP students in interdisciplinary-targeted 21st century-based class, it is vital to expose them to not only pertinent vocabulary, but also to applied usage through discipline-related authorial voices. To this end, interdisciplinary ESP literature tracks what to read, and how the content can provoke a creative response from students, both in and out of class.

2. Definition of ESP

There have been numerous attempts to characterise ESP since its inceptions. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.19), ESP is a technique of teaching languages where all choices about method and content are made with the students' learning objectives in mind. According to Robinson (1980), it is the process of teaching English to students with particular objectives in mind, such as academic, professional, vocational, or scientific ones. According to Makay and Mountford (1987, p.2), ESP is the teaching of English for “clearly utilitarian purposes” and is a movement that aims to equip the learners from different disciplines, such as engineering, mathematics and law, with skills and knowledge they need to communicate effectively in specific academic, professional, or vocational contexts.

4. Scope of 21st Century Skills' Integration with ESP

The 21st century has ushered in profound alterations in the face of education, redefining the very core of the past dominance of teacher-led instruction, where teachers only functioned as information disseminators, today's expectations, as highlighted by Bolat and Deneme-Gencoglu

(2024), portray as a far more intricate and daunting situation. From Scott (2015) and Wang (2012) (cited in Bolat & Deneme-Gençoğlu, 2024), the current paradigm of education requires the teachers to break away from the inherited lecture mode and become the immediate facilitators of learning.

This role change entails that ESP teachers should be individually dedicated to the learning process of their students, offering them not only instruction but also guidance and mentoring. The focus has shifted towards nurturing the holistic development of learners, with a particular emphasis on cultivating essential 21st century skills. These competencies, crucial for navigating the complexities of the multinational world, encompass areas such as critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, effective communication, and creative innovation. Teachers are now asked with fostering these abilities within their students, preparing them to be adaptable to the specific contexts they are engaged in and resourceful individuals.

Moreover, the role of the ESP teachers goes beyond simple instruction; it encompasses the entire educational experience. Nowadays, they are often asked to take part in formulating teaching plans and programs to ensure that learning materials are not only interesting, but also tailored to students' needs and society's expectations. Attached to the acquisition of knowledge is another expectation of modern teachers – equipping learners with the ability to apply what they have learned in real life. This means assisting learners in making relevant and practical connections with theories so that they might be able to harness multiple avenues to their knowledge and skills and ensure that their understanding goes far beyond mere concepts. Essentially, the ESP teacher in the 21st century is described as an active guide, mentor, and collaborator in the learning journey of the students and helps them grow into holistic individuals prepared for the contemporary world.

5. Integrating Interdisciplinary Literature in ESP Classes

Preparing to integrate interdisciplinary literature into ESP classes requires building mutual investment and motivation, selecting some relevant literary excerpts, designing activities around them, and planning their production. Pre-class preparation might include a hands-on workshop to brainstorm possible texts-in-use, activities, and syllabi. Once selected, texts need to be parsed into excerpts and exercises distributed to students prior to class. A careful choice of supporting texts might further enrich class discussion. Activities for pre-answering questions, peer discussions, write-ups, follow-ups, and formal presentation all have their merits and can be mixed, adapted, or omitted, depending on class needs. One important task for professors wanting to adapt pre-assigned literary experiences to ESP classes is to determine its level of difficulty for class processing (Carrick, 2018). Both text and activity need to engage students without too much risk of losing face.

The choices students make while discussing pre-answered questions in groups and subsequent monitoring from the floor focus a lot of interest on what students say and the choices professors make around their dilemmas and exact reservations exclusively on the authors' choices of field, tenor, and mode in designing activities around second-hand literary experiences. Making space in syllabus design to tutor students how to circumvent pragmatic problems in academic discussion is particular food for thought. On the production side of the experiences discussed here, there is still a lot of unexplored that could lead to engaging and rewarding student production of literary-driven ESP experiences (Aguilar Pérez, 2018).

In developing the ESP curriculum, text selection or the choice of suitable texts is a vital consideration. Texts or materials should meet students' needs and expectations and provide positive impacts on learning outcomes (Munir, 2019). Selection and design of texts on disciplinary issues should be based on principles or important considerations. The challenges in creating an effective ESP curriculum design to integrate literature in English for specific disciplines are presented. The first viewpoint is that the information or linguistic features specified as the subjects of the texts should be researched thoroughly. Texts that are relevant to disciplines and instructive to students' lives, teachers' pedagogical practices, and assessment techniques should be taken into account.

A conceptual curriculum framework to integrate literature into EFL classes is proposed. Literature's potential to promote the various aspects of critical thinking skills through deep reading can be effectively realized when appropriate materials are chosen to complement learners' language development needs, so as to set a clear goal for post-reading activities. Proposals on how to effectively integrate literature-related post-reading activities to enhance critical thinking skills in ESP classes are presented. In addition to the text-based discussion, vocabulary development and personalized output fluency tasks can be addressed as promising supporting activities. On the macro level, the integration of literary texts should be carefully designed in a SaaS environment to accommodate learners' exposure to English use in real-life contexts, before, during, and after the reading process. A blend of stand-alone and embedded literature teaching methods can also be beneficial to language and content learning through ESP materials.

Multiple strategies must be applied to assess students' 21st century skills continuously and sequentially. One of the basic assessment strategies is developing rubrics for each skill. Rubrics developed for different skills could be categorized into some common criteria since those skills are interrelated and support each other to some extent. Rubrics could provide students with various assessment scales from scale 4 of 'excellent class' to scale 1 of 'no attempts'. While creating rubrics,

each skill should be considered separately as well as interdependently. In addition, rubrics can facilitate teamwork evaluation for both groups and individuals. These rubrics can easily be refined in line with teachers' and students' needs. These rubrics could also be used across the classes as they can be adapted to different content materials (Ain, 2019). Another assessment strategy is conducting mini-surveys at the end of each lesson to measure students' views on group activities. Conducting simple surveys can reveal whether group activities and implemented classroom tasks are effective or necessary. Moreover, debating questions related to the textual context would also enhance students' critical thinking and speaking skills.

Peer-reviewing tasks could increase students' sense of ownership of the process. Asking peer-reviewers how well feedback is provided, whether suggestions are considered, and whether suggestions are helpful; or requesting anonymity could mitigate constraints (Soler Costa, 2014). Preparing an endorsement rule for positive group evaluation would not only allow negative scorers to practice explaining their ideas but also create more varied results. Debating reviews after group evaluations would also enhance fairness awareness in group assessments. Providing group leaders with group points might give a false impression of variability. On the other hand, providing group scores in a formal way may threaten the comfortable atmosphere. An alternative would be to give individuals a possible group grade with consideration of teamwork. teamwork points could be recorded in a separate document.

6. Recommendations and Future Directions

Interdisciplinary literature is a promising tool for designing ESP classes that address the needs of 21st century language learners. However, ESP teachers in most EFL contexts are not familiar with the interdisciplinary literature approach. As a result, they have difficulty achieving educational goals, such as developing critical thinking and lifelong learning in their students. This might be due to insufficient training sessions on designing ESP classes based on interdisciplinary literature. Moreover, higher educational systems and university managers need to facilitate ESP instructors gaining knowledge about and experience with interdisciplinary literature. Future research can work on incorporating interdisciplinary literature into the curriculum and enhancing teachers' proficiency in this regard.

Future research should concentrate on two main areas to help ESP instructors address ESP class needs. First, the design of teacher training courses can help teachers become familiar with the advantages and processes of using interdisciplinary literature in ESP classes. Next, if teachers receive up-to-date training sessions related to interdisciplinary literature, they will teach better ESP classes

that engage students and help them achieve educational goals. In addition, higher educational systems should help ESP instructors with these resources.

To sum up, integrating interdisciplinary literature into ESP classes is a promising way of addressing the demands of 21st-century language learners. Integrating study skills, moral lessons, linguistic features, and subject-specific vocabularies can help engage today's learners, develop their critical thinking and teamwork skills, and improve their subject knowledge in addition to learning the target language. Therefore, higher educational systems and university managers are highly recommended to approve this method and facilitate its incorporation in ESP classes. However, without sufficient training sessions, ESP instructors will have difficulty creating proper instructional materials for this approach; therefore, educational authorities are encouraged to design up-to-date courses based on the interdisciplinary literature approach for university teachers. Suggested future research on the application of interdisciplinary literature in ESP classes can pave the way for novel ideas to transform language education today (WILLIAMS, 2014).

7. Conclusion

The state of the world and civilizational evolution reshape and influence individuals, communities, and societies. Consequently, higher education must rise to the occasions of continuous economic, social, and political changes. The study attempted to explore why it is high time for educational system, mainly ESP classes, to revise its single-discipline and handout based instruction, and how incorporate a system that takes into consideration multiple skill-based curriculum, making it more engaging. Literature was considered as an approach to realise contextualized learning. It revealed a looming skills gap, missing analytical thinking and innovation, active learning and learning strategies, creativity and originality, reasoning, problem solving, systems analysis and evaluation, in addition to others. These skills were deemed as non-routine cognitive, interpersonal, and technical capabilities. They should widely recognized as key to personal, career, and societal success as dedicated knowledge shapers, transferors, and producers of all kinds of social knowledge, institutions, and practices, must rise to and best themselves to prepare all present knowledge practitioners and lifelong learners for both optimum Performance and Responsible Innovation (Aguilar Pérez, 2018).

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