

Technical English an a US – Slovak Collaboration

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Abstract

Described is a project between students in Slovakia and the United States aimed at improving both technical communications and cultural understanding between the two groups. The Slovak students were Ph.D. candidates from the Faculty of Materials Science (MtF) at the Slovak University of Technology (SUT) studying Material Science, Plant Management, Automation and Control, and Machine Technologies. The students in the United States were seniors in a two-semester capstone design sequence in Electrical Engineering Technology (EET) at Purdue University. The MtF students were enrolled in a course entitled "English for Specific Purposes", allowing all communications to be in English. The students were paired and exchanged resumes (CVs), biographies, and technical works such as research abstracts and design proposals. Internet cameras facilitated on-line meetings throughout the yearlong project. The two groups were from different disciplines, thereby requiring clear English communications. Both groups benefited by practicing reading, writing and speaking in English through their correspondence and online meetings. One advantage of this collaboration is that it is not constrained by curricular discipline, making it easily adaptable by other disciplines. Although we did hold a one-week student exchange, a secondary advantage of the project is that the students gain international experience while avoiding the travel expense.

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Kevin Taylor is an Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering Technology at Purdue - Kokomo. He received his BSEE from Iowa State University and his MSEE from Southern Methodist University. Prior to his academic career, he was an integrated circuit designer at Texas Instruments, Inc. Kevin is currently the SAE representative on the Technology Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (TAC/ABET).

EMÍLIA MIRONOVOVÁ

Emília Mironovová graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University with the degree in Russian and English Language and Literature. Since 1986 she has taught English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at the Faculty of Materials Science and Technology, Slovak University of Technology. She has participated in the British Council/Slovakia/ESP projects and has lead several ESP courses in Slovakia and abroad as a teacher-trainer.