

Content-based Aviation English for multi-disciplines

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This workshop outlines the design of a new content-based Aviation English course for the Embry-Riddle Language Institute (ERLI), an Intensive English Program which prepares international students for success in an American university. After completing the ERLI program, students will pursue a variety of majors such as Aeronautical Science, Aviation Maintenance Science, and Aerospace Engineering. This course will enhance ERLI's curriculum by reinforcing existing outcomes and capitalizing on students' intrinsic motivation to study aviation-related topics. Through a hybrid of three teaching frameworks used in English-language teaching, English for Academic Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, and Content-Based Instruction, students will meet outcomes related to reading, writing, structure, listening, and speaking.

The workshop challenges participants to brainstorm potential language learning activities for the above-mentioned skills based on a piece of authentic content from Flight Safety Foundation's journal AeroSafety World¹. An integrated skill approach is encouraged, building a more complete language competency which will enhance performances both in the classroom and in the aviation field.

The ultimate goal is for students to be able to comprehend, interact with, and analyze the authentic content presented in the course. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary for the instructor to provide ample scaffolding by way of pedagogic tasks (e.g. role-plays, discussions, outlining, information gaps). Before creating these tasks, instructors can utilize corpus tools to analyze the specific lexical items of a piece of content by identifying frequent and discipline-specific words and phrases. The workshop demonstrates the utility of a free corpus tool² created by researchers at Brigham Young University which allows instructors to make principled curricular decisions by performing an automated analysis of inputted language.

The classroom pedagogic tasks should be designed to lead students toward their final target tasks. In the case of the ERLI course, target tasks include university demands such as reading authentic texts, listening to lectures, and participating in academic discourse on the subject of aviation. Instructors are encouraged to consider their own learners when determining both target and pedagogic tasks, as these will differ based on individual and specific needs of target populations.

¹ <http://flightsafety.org/aerosafety-world-magazine/november-2014/survival-factors>

² <http://www.wordandphrase.info/>