

Relevant Skills and Competences Development Delivering Study Courses English for Dentistry and Medical Terminology in English

Tatjana Zakutajeva

Rīga Stradiņš University, Language Centre, Latvia

Introduction. In modern world characterised by a fast pace of change, students are willing to be sure that skills and competences developed doing a study course match skills and competences demanded in their future career. Teaching medical personnel by reading textbooks and watching videos is certainly not enough to prepare them for real life situations. This presents a new challenge for universities to ensure that courses being delivered meet professional needs of students. What is a competence? That is “when students are capable of functioning independently with a degree of contingency solving in realistic practice” (Chambers & Gerrow, 1994).

Aim, Materials and Methods. The aim of the research was to study whether throughout the delivery of study course English for Dentistry to students of the Faculty of Dentistry and Medical Terminology in English to students of the Faculty of Medicine at RSU they acquire skills and competences demanded by an employer; whether the assessment matches learning objectives; student satisfaction level with the study course being delivered. Data were collected during academic years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 from the 1st year students at the Faculty of Dentistry at RSU and 2nd year students at the Faculty of Medicine at RSU, who were taking part in a cross-sectional study.

Results. Study courses Medical Terminology in English and English for Dentistry focus on building professional competences essential for medical and dental practice:

- 1) capability to communicate in English with a patient, his family and relatives as well as with other professionals involved in patient treatment;
- 2) capability to deliver information and professional knowledge to a patient as well as to other professionals involved in patient treatment both orally and in a written form;
- 3) capability to enhance professional competence studying recent publications;
- 4) capability to conduct scientific research.

Skills development reflected in learning outcomes: to develop students' communication skills for use in academic and professional settings and to facilitate the acquisition of professional terminology for productive use, e.g. to explain the importance of balanced diet and healthy lifestyle; to educate a patient on disease etiology and prophylaxes; to inform about harmful habits that endanger patient's health; to use professional terminology. Assessment tasks must match the course objectives, which in turn must be reflected in the course content. Video coverage of dentist-patient interviews performed by dental students in the professional environment of a preclinical room proved to be evidence-based summative assessment testing communication skills of students in professional setting. Student research skills were developed studying recent publications, research questionnaire design and data collection. Doctor-doctor interviews based on case studies analysed during the course and performed at Medical Education Technology Center with patient care manikins involved make students demonstrate their communication skills in English working with lifelike patient that really extends their experience.

Conclusions. When defining learning outcomes, it is necessary to relate them to the standard of profession where skills and competences demanded in the job market are listed. Study course evaluation questionnaire survey provides a constructive feedback on student satisfaction level with the study course. There is no doubt that alignment with the standard of profession throughout course delivery contributes to the professional development of students and enhances overall competitiveness of the university.