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**Bottom-Up Diversity of Foreign Language Courses  
as a Key Strategy in a Competitive University**

As Ukraine has declared its intention to become an equal partner within the Bologna Process framework, Ukrainian universities are expected to confront the European standards in language proficiency. Following the recent national ELT reform at secondary level and taking into account international practices in language education at tertiary level, the ESP Curriculum (Kiev 2005) has stated that the minimal acceptable English language proficiency level to qualify for a Bachelor's degree is B2 (Independent User). For a Master's degree it is C1 (Proficient User). Only this level could open up the opportunity for Ukrainian universities to join the European Higher Education Area as a strong and equal partner and ensure that universities in Ukraine further develop as international educational centres. To move from one level to another requires a minimum of 270 contact academic hours and 126 more hours for self-study. However, shrinking by the Ministry of Education and Science of Foreign Language (further Fl) courses in 2008 from 10 credits to 5 credits where 102 hours are contact hours and 78 hours are for self-study has made Ukrainian students incompetent and definitely has not facilitated their mobility within Europe. So shrinking of Fl courses is a way to nowhere.

Now the question arises what to do to minimize the negative consequences of the top-down Ministry decision. One of the suggestions is bottom-up diversity of Fl courses. Here there are some options. The first is self-contained modules, e.g. "Socializing", "Telephoning", "Presentations", "Meetings" and others. Another is an integrated course. However, within the allotted time these two options could become an acute challenge for Fl teachers. The third and fourth options seem to be more reasonable here. The third one is

suggesting “author” courses which are peculiar only for your university, e.g. “Gender discourse”, “Cultural Awareness”.

The fourth option is interdisciplinary teamwork where FI teachers can provide language expertise and subject teachers provide subject expertise. A FI here is a means of communication. The product here is a project. Unlike traditional language learning, where all tasks were designed by the teacher, project work places responsibility for learning on the students themselves.

Project work, in its various guises, has a number of characteristic features, namely:

- focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets. Real-world subject matter and topics of professional interest to students can become central to projects
- is student-centred, though the teacher plays a major role in offering support and guidance throughout the process
- is cooperative rather than competitive. Students can work on their own, in pairs or small groups, or as a class to complete a project, sharing resources, ideas, and expertise along the way
- leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from various sources, mirroring real-life tasks which students will encounter in their future jobs
- culminates in an end product (e.g. an oral presentation, a poster session, a bulletin board display, a report, or a stage performance) that can be shared with others, giving the project a real purpose
- is potentially motivating, empowering, and challenging. It usually results in building student confidence, self-esteem and autonomy, as well as improving students’ language skills, content learning, and cognitive abilities.

The value of work lies not just in the final product but in the process of working itself. Thus, project work has both a process and product orientation,

and provides students with opportunities to focus on fluency and accuracy at different stages of the project.

To sum up, all these options require piloting, either in isolation or in integration. At the same time, looking for new options and initiating these options from departments (bottom-up approach) is the only way not just to compete but even to survive in the competitive academic world.

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