



## English for Specific Purposes in creative disciplines: Bridging theory and labour market needs

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■ **Abstract.** This study investigated how English for Specific Purposes instruction can be aligned with employability goals in creative disciplines – specifically Digital Art and Design – through the integration of authentic workplace scenarios and micro-credentialing systems. Drawing on a qualitative case study design, data were collected from higher education institutions known for innovation in English for Specific Purposes via document analysis, semi-structured interviews with instructors of English for Specific Purposes and curriculum designers, and surveys from 28 students enrolled in courses incorporating these pedagogical approaches. The study revealed that authentic tasks in English for Specific Purposes – such as client briefings, visual presentations, and project critiques – significantly enhanced student motivation (71.43%) and improved awareness of learning objectives. Additionally, 78.57% of participants stated that earning digital badges for communicative performance helped them better recognise the practical value of their skills. Micro-credentials aligned with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors and embedded in formal assessment frameworks ensured transparent and modular verification of learning outcomes. Despite these benefits, instructors reported challenges such as increased workload and the absence of centralised platforms for issuing credentials. Based on these findings, the study contributes to scientific literature through the introduction of the transferable integration model, which combines authentic communication tasks, skill-specific badges, portfolio development, and industry feedback to support professional readiness in creative disciplines. The transferable integration model offers a replicable structure for English for Specific Purposes curricula that not only fosters but also certifies field-specific communicative competence and is tailored to the needs of the labour market. The effectiveness of this model depends on its careful implementation, verification mechanisms, and ongoing institutional support

■ **Keywords:** English language training; professional communication; micro-credentials; design education; career pathways; educational innovations; employability

### ■ Introduction

The modern global economy places increasing demands on graduates to demonstrate not only linguistic accuracy but also effective communication skills tailored to real-world professional settings. In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this shift requires a pedagogical evolution: away from abstract grammar instruction and toward practical, context-based language use. Many university-level ESP programmes continue

to prioritise traditional academic tasks that bear little resemblance to workplace communication, leading to a disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and what is expected in jobs. As a result, graduates often struggle with professional integration, especially in creative industries where collaboration, pitching, and visual communication are central. To address this, educators and curriculum designers are exploring alternative

### **Suggested Citation:**

Shykhnenko, K. (2025). English for Specific Purposes in creative disciplines: Bridging theory and labour market needs. *Professional Education: Methodology, Theory and Technologies*, 11(2), 37-46. doi: 10.69587/pemtt/2.2025.37.



approaches that embed industry-relevant communication scenarios and assessment strategies into ESP learning environments.

Researchers J.G. Laborda & U.K. Serrouk (2021) explored the evolving role of ESP in both classroom and workplace contexts. They concluded that integrating authentic tasks into ESP instruction significantly enhances learners' meta discursive awareness and engagement with real-world communication practices. Their study emphasised the value of contextually relevant materials in fostering pragmatic competence. T. Golub *et al.* (2024) focused on critical thinking development in ESP through speaking and listening tasks. The authors found that scenario-based speaking activities not only improve language fluency but also promote students' ability to formulate arguments and critique ideas – skills particularly relevant in creative disciplines such as design and digital art. K. Falkner & E.E. Stålbrandt (2023) examined how authentic learning scenarios influence employability perceptions among higher education graduates. According to their findings, students who engaged in workplace simulations and collaborative projects reported stronger confidence in their professional communication skills and a clearer sense of how academic learning connects to job market expectations. Researcher N. Epaphras (2025) analysed the potential of micro-credentials to bridge the skills gap in higher education. The study highlighted that when micro-credentials are tied to specific competencies and integrated into course structures, they not only validate learning outcomes but also enhance motivation and provide tangible evidence of employability-related skills. Scientists H. Pirkkalainen *et al.* (2022) conducted a review on micro-credentials in higher education, concluding that while institutional interest is high, many programmes lack a clear framework for implementation. Their findings pointed to the need for more robust design models that connect credentialing to meaningful learning outcomes and curriculum coherence. According to A. Stamatakis *et al.* (2025), the integration of micro-credentials within digital education offered new opportunities for personalised learning and skill recognition. They also noted that effective implementation requires coordinated infrastructure and clear alignment with instructional goals – challenges that remain unresolved in many ESP programmes.

Despite these promising findings, several aspects remain insufficiently addressed in the literature. First, most studies explore either scenario-based instruction or micro-credentialing in isolation, without examining how the two approaches might complement each other. Second, there is limited evidence on how these practices can be adapted specifically for creative disciplines, where visual storytelling, persuasive communication, and critique-based dialogue are central. Finally, little attention has been given to designing transferable pedagogical models that embed both authenticity

and credentialing into ESP curricula in a cohesive way. This study aimed to fill these gaps by investigating how authentic workplace scenarios and micro-credentialing systems can be jointly used to align ESP instruction with employability goals in creative fields, particularly Digital Art and Design. The objectives were: to describe existing practices of implementing these innovations in ESP programmes; to analyse the synergies and challenges involved in combining them; and to propose a transferable curricular model. The novelty of this research lies in its dual focus on authenticity and modular certification as mutually reinforcing strategies for professional readiness. In doing so, the study contributes a replicable framework for aligning ESP pedagogy with the evolving communicative demands of the creative industries.

## ■ Materials and Methods

To guide this inquiry and structure the comparative case analysis, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: How are authentic workplace scenarios implemented in ESP curricula across different case sites?

RQ2: In what ways are micro-credentials designed and integrated within these programmes?

RQ3: What synergies and challenges emerge when combining scenario-based learning with micro-credentialing toward enhancing employability, and how can these insights be applied to creative education contexts such as Digital Art and Design?

The development of these questions was essential for ensuring conceptual clarity and methodological coherence across diverse case contexts. Given the study's aim it was crucial to define specific priority areas that would enable the systematic data collection, coding, and comparison of different cases. By dividing the study into three main areas (scenario implementation, micro-credential design, and their combined impact), the research questions provided a clear analytical framework that aligned the qualitative tools (interviews, surveys, and document analysis) with the broader objective of identifying transferable pedagogical strategies. This structure also enhanced the study's internal validity by allowing for triangulation of insights across different data sources and participant groups. Ultimately, the research questions served not only as thematic guides but also as a basis for interpreting pedagogical practices in a way that informs both theory and application. This study employed a multiple-case qualitative design (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021) to explore how ESP programmes integrate authentic workplace scenarios and micro-credentialing, with an emphasis on their applicability to Digital Art and Design education. The case study methodology was selected due to its strength in providing in-depth, context-rich insights into complex educational phenomena and its suitability for comparative, exploratory research across diverse institutions.

Two institutions offering ESP instruction were purposively selected as case sites. The selection criteria required the presence of one or both of the following curricular innovations: authentic workplace scenarios (e.g., simulations, project-based tasks), and micro-credentials or digital badges awarded for demonstrated skill mastery. Although the institutions represented varied academic domains, the analysis was guided by a specific interest in evaluating the relevance and transferability of these practices to creative disciplines, particularly Digital Art and Design. Participants included six ESP instructors and curriculum designers with doctoral degrees from the State University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. In addition, students enrolled in relevant ESP programmes were drawn from the latter two institutions. Instructor and designer participants were selected based on their direct involvement in the planning or delivery of ESP content. Student participants were recruited through convenience sampling, specifically via voluntary response, from classes where these curricular innovations were implemented.

Data were collected through a triangulated approach involving three key methods. First, document analysis relying on qualitative data was conducted on ESP syllabi, lesson plans, assessment tools, and micro-credential structures to examine how curricular intentions align with workplace communication and employability goals. This included analysis of materials from two international institutions known for their ESP innovation. Tampere University of Applied Sciences (Finland) offers a course titled Languages for Specific Purposes and Professional Communication, which is aligned with both academic and professional ESP objectives (Tampere University student's guide, 2024). The second institution, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), provides evidence of similar alignment in its subject syllabi, including English Communication for Hospitality and Tourism Management (ELC3721) among undergraduate courses, and also offers a MicroMasters in International Hospitality Management, which provides verified certificates and credit pathways for its modular credentialled courses (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University..., n.d.; MicroMasters in International..., n.d.).

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six ESP instructors and curriculum developers from the State University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts to gather qualitative data on their experiences with implementing authentic workplace scenarios and micro-credentials. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom in the Ukrainian language, each lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. Ethical standards were observed throughout the study: participants were informed about the

purpose of the research, gave voluntary consent, and were assured of confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any stage (Ethics and data protection, 2021). The interview guide focused on questions such as:

1. What types of authentic tasks are integrated into your ESP curriculum?
2. How do students typically respond to these scenario-based tasks?
3. Have you observed any impact on student engagement or skill development?
4. In your experience, what are the benefits of incorporating micro-credentials?
5. What challenges have you encountered in implementing micro-credentialing?
6. How do you assess the effectiveness of these innovations in improving employability?
7. Are the credentials formally recognised by your institution or employers?
8. How do you align task design with industry-specific language demands?
9. What institutional support or limitations affect your use of these practices?
10. How transferable do you think these practices are to other disciplines?

These guiding questions allowed for probing and clarification, ensuring rich, context-sensitive responses from participants. Third, a survey was administered to 28 students from the State University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts and enrolled in ESP courses that included these innovations. Students were asked to provide answers to the questions about the appropriateness of introducing the proposed practices, their usefulness in acquiring the skills necessary for future careers, the practicality of the proposed innovations, etc. The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data, combining Likert-scale items on perceived authenticity, motivation, and employability relevance with open-ended questions to capture student reflections and experiences in greater depth. All instruments were designed to elicit both descriptive and evaluative responses and were reviewed for clarity and alignment with the study's objectives. Prior to their participation, students were informed about the purpose of the study and their role in it, and ethical principles were fully observed, including voluntary participation, anonymity, and the confidentiality of all collected data.

Data analysis followed a thematic coding approach. Interview transcripts and open-ended survey responses were coded inductively using NVivo qualitative software. Codes were grouped into categories such as instructional strategies, learner engagement, skill assessment, and employability perceptions. These categories informed the development of broader themes reflecting effective practices and implementation challenges. A cross-case comparative analysis was then

conducted to identify patterns, divergences, and emerging models across the two case sites. Where appropriate, narrative vignettes were constructed to illustrate context-specific practices, and curricular models were developed to summarise effective integration of authentic tasks and micro-credentials. This rigorous, multi-phase process ensured validity through triangulation, while offering rich insights into practices with potential transferability to creative education. The study's limitations include the use of non-random sampling and a small case set, which may constrain the generalisability of findings; furthermore, the model's scalability in resource-constrained or non-English-speaking contexts remains to be explored, and future longitudinal or employer-validated studies are needed to verify actual professional transfer.

## ■ Results and Discussion

This section presented the findings of the study in alignment with the three research questions, addressing each sequentially. The results are drawn from a thematic analysis of data collected through document review, semi-structured interviews with ESP instructors and curriculum designers, and student surveys. Each subsection synthesises the perspectives of participants and evidence from curricular documents, offering a comparative view across the selected case sites. The discussion integrates these findings with relevant literature to highlight patterns, contextual variations, and implications for ESP instruction – particularly in relation to its applicability within creative disciplines such as Digital Art and Design.

### *RQ1: Authentic scenario implementation*

During the document analysis of the selected institutions, authentic task-based instruction emerged as a prominent feature across the syllabi. The most common practices identified were case studies that simulated real business or design briefs, role-plays and simulations replicating professional communication, and collaborative projects grounded in real-world scenarios.

Thematic analysis of interviews conducted with six ESP instructors and curriculum designers from three Ukrainian institutions revealed three key themes related to the implementation of authentic workplace scenarios in ESP instruction.

First, task realism emerged as a significant source of student motivation. Participants consistently reported that learners showed higher engagement when tasks closely resembled real-world professional activities. One instructor noted that students are “more invested in the learning process when the assignments resemble what they’ll actually do at work,” suggesting that authenticity in task design enhances both motivation and perceived relevance. Second, the interviews highlighted the importance of discipline-specific language demands. Instructors emphasised the need to tailor vocabulary and communicative practices to the specific requirements of each professional field. Within creative disciplines, this meant not only ensuring linguistic accuracy but also enabling students to persuasively articulate concepts, describe visual elements, and explain their design rationale. As one participant remarked, “In art and design, it’s not just about English. It’s about how to describe concepts, mood, and visuals persuasively”.

Third, participants identified several institutional constraints that limited the implementation of authentic scenarios. These included restricted contact hours, rigid curricular structures, and standardised assessment protocols, which collectively hindered the consistent use of immersive workplace simulations. As a result, some instructors were compelled to use simplified or informal scenario-based tasks instead of fully integrated, discipline-specific simulations. The comparative analysis of the two institutional case sites revealed both common strategies and contextual variations in the implementation of authentic workplace scenarios in ESP curricula (Table 1). The institutions incorporated task-based activities aimed at simulating professional communication; however, the type of task, disciplinary alignment, and depth of integration varied considerably.

**Table 1.** Comparison of authentic task integration across three ESP programmes

Institution	Task type	Field focus	Integration depth
Tampere (Finland)	Proposals, team briefings	Engineering	Moderate
PolyU (China)	Role-plays, written reports	Business, hospitality	High

**Source:** designed by the author based on *The Hong Kong Polytechnic University: Subject description form (n.d.)*, *Micro-Masters in International Hospitality Management (Online programme) (n.d.)*, *Tampere University student’s guide (2024)*

As can be seen in Table 1, Tampere University integrated authentic writing tasks, such as technical proposals and team briefings, within engineering contexts but lacked substantial oral communication components or discipline-specific performance criteria. Hong Kong Polytechnic University, while operating in business and hospitality domains, featured robust scenario-based role-plays and workplace writing assignments, demonstrating high task realism and strong alignment with professional communication standards. These

findings suggest that while authentic task design is broadly adopted, its depth and disciplinary specificity vary by institutional context.

The data drawn from 28 students’ survey responses enrolled in ESP courses at Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts offered valuable insights into learner perceptions of scenario-based instruction. Using a Likert-scale questionnaire, students evaluated the authenticity, engagement, and professional relevance

of ESP tasks. The findings indicated that 23 students (82.14%) agreed the instructional activities reflected real-life communication situations, while 21 students (75%) found scenario-based tasks more engaging than traditional grammar-focused exercises. Additionally, 20 students (71.43%) reported that these tasks increased their confidence in professional communication, suggesting a meaningful link between task authenticity and communicative self-efficacy. Open-ended survey responses provided further qualitative context. Students highlighted their appreciation for group critiques, mock client meetings, and design justification presentations, emphasising the relevance of these tasks to their anticipated professional environments. These results reinforce the pedagogical value of authentic scenario-based instruction in ESP, particularly for enhancing student engagement and perceived workplace preparedness in creative disciplines.

In summary, the integration of authentic workplace scenarios across the case institutions demonstrated variation in depth and disciplinary alignment. Programmes that effectively merged real-world task authenticity, field-specific communicative demands, and interactive, performance-based activities emerged as the most pedagogically robust. These findings underscored not only the pedagogical value but also the practical feasibility of adopting such approaches within ESP curricula tailored to creative disciplines. In these creative disciplines, where communication frequently involves visual explanation, client-oriented dialogue, and collaborative critique, scenario-based instruction offers a meaningful pathway to bridge language learning with professional preparedness.

#### *RQ2. Integration and design of micro-credentials in ESP programmes*

An analysis of micro-credential structures and assessment design at the two selected institutions – Tampere University and the PolyU – revealed contrasting approaches to modular certification systems. While both institutions demonstrated an interest in integrating micro-credentials, the degree of formal recognition and structural embedding varied considerably. At Tampere University, micro-credentials were systematically embedded within the Professional Communication in Engineering course. Students earned digital badges upon completing workplace simulations, such as technical writing portfolios and collaborative team briefings. Each badge was aligned with specific

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) descriptors and was supported by instructor feedback. Moreover, badge metadata clearly specified the skill criteria, evidence of achievement, and relevance to real-world applications, making the system transparent and outcome-oriented. In contrast, PolyU adopted a more informal and decentralised approach. Although there was no institutional framework standardising the use of micro-credentials, some instructors independently issued certificates or LinkedIn-compatible badges upon completion of ESP projects. These credentials typically focused on professional writing tasks – such as service emails and workplace reports – and were designed to increase visibility for employers rather than to reflect detailed skill mapping or competency alignment. Interview data from instructors and curriculum developers reflected a range of perspectives on micro-credentialing. Several participants praised the system’s modular flexibility and its ability to clearly communicate learning outcomes to students and external stakeholders. In their view, badges offered learners a sense of progression and clarity, as students could identify exactly which competencies they had demonstrated. However, other interviewees expressed concerns about the lack of institutional support, fragmentation across platforms, and the time-intensive nature of designing rigorous, evidence-based badge criteria. Despite these concerns, there was general consensus that micro-credentials serve as effective motivational tools and hold significant potential for enhancing employability, particularly when integrated with scenario-based tasks that mirror professional communication contexts. The comparative analysis of the two case institutions illustrated distinct models of implementation, each shaped by different levels of policy support, pedagogical coherence, and technological infrastructure (Table 2). Tampere University followed a curriculum-embedded model in which micro-credentials were formally tied to course outcomes, supported by CEFR alignment and guided instructor evaluation. In contrast, PolyU employed a more informal, instructor-led model, where badges were awarded at the discretion of individual faculty members and often lacked unified design standards or institutional endorsement. These differences reflect broader tensions between standardisation and flexibility in the integration of micro-credentials within higher education, particularly in ESP contexts.

**Table 2.** Comparative models of micro-credential integration in ESP programmes

Institution	Integration model	Credential design features	Challenges identified
Tampere (Finland)	Curriculum-embedded	CEFR-aligned, linked to performance tasks, instructor feedback	Platform setup, alignment with formal credits
PolyU (China)	Informal, instructor-led	Badges for task completion (e.g., reports, emails), employer-facing	Fragmentation, lack of standardisation

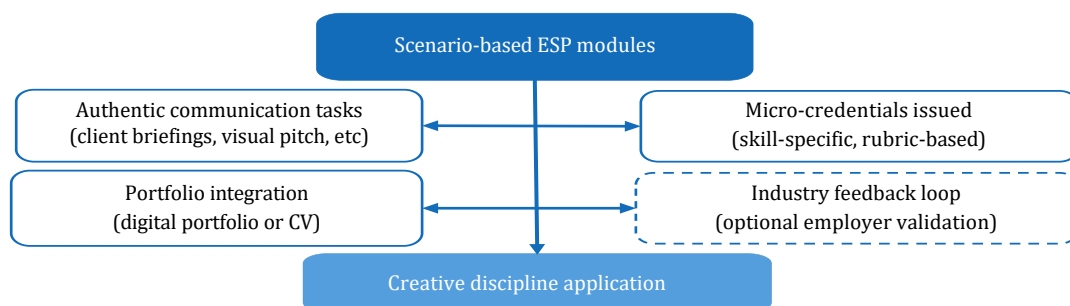
**Note:** the data presented in Table 2 were synthesised from document analysis and interviews with ESP curriculum developers of the selected institutions. These categories are interpretive and reflect recurring structural and pedagogical features observed in each setting

**Source:** designed by the author based on *The Hong Kong Polytechnic University: Subject description form (n.d.)*, *Micro-Masters in International Hospitality Management (Online programme) (n.d.)*, *Tampere University student's guide (2024)*

*RQ3. Synergies and challenges in combining scenario-based learning with micro-credentials for employability in creative education*

Survey findings revealed a strong synergy between scenario-based instruction and the use of micro-credentials, particularly in terms of fostering student engagement, clarifying learning outcomes, and enhancing perceptions of career readiness. Among the 28 student respondents, 71.43% reported that the opportunity to earn digital badges for completing professional tasks made the learning experience more goal-oriented and closely aligned with their future employment aspirations. Furthermore, 78.57% of students indicated that earning micro-credentials helped them better understand the value of specific communication competencies, such as presenting creative concepts, participating in critiques, and writing proposals. Qualitative feedback reinforced these sentiments; students remarked that the badges “broke the course into visible milestones” and “provided something tangible to add to a curriculum vitae (CV) or portfolio”. This perception was particularly notable among students in creative disciplines, who saw scenario-based projects and credentialed presentations as directly applicable to real-world contexts such as client consultations and creative pitching. Despite these benefits, the dual implementation of scenario-based instruction and micro-credentialing also introduced several challenges. Interviewed instructors noted an increase in instructional workload, particularly related to the design and alignment of tasks with badge criteria, the development of detailed rubrics, and the documentation of student performance. Another key issue was

the lack of institutional infrastructure to support credentialing systems. In the absence of centralised platforms or official recognition mechanisms, instructors reported inconsistencies in badge quality, uncertainty regarding their value, and confusion among students about their purpose and relevance. Cross-case analysis further underscored the importance of aligning authentic assessment tasks with skill-specific, transparent credentials. Programmes that achieved this integration – by linking tasks such as client presentations, design critiques, and collaborative projects with targeted badges – tended to produce higher levels of learner motivation and stronger signals of employability. These models showed considerable promise for creative disciplines, where success depends not only on technical proficiency but also on the ability to communicate design rationale, collaborate effectively, and engage in persuasive, reflective dialogue with clients and peers. Drawing on these findings, the study developed the transferable integration model for ESP instruction in creative fields. The model illustrates how scenario-based instruction can be systematically structured to promote professional readiness in disciplines such as Digital Art and Design. It incorporates key components including authentic communication tasks, skill-specific micro-credentials, portfolio-based assessment, and optional feedback from industry professionals. These elements are arranged in a modular format with reciprocal and sequential relationships, enabling flexible curricular alignment while facilitating the transfer of communicative competence from the classroom to workplace settings. The complete model is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Transferable integration model for ESP in creative disciplines

*Source:* designed by the author

As can be seen in Figure 1, the visual framework emphasises both instructional flow and pedagogical reciprocity, which are particularly relevant in creative fields, where communication tasks are both applied and discipline-specific. One of the model’s primary strengths lies in its emphasis on instructional flow and reciprocal pedagogy, reflecting how authentic communicative practices both inform and are shaped by ESP modules. This bidirectional relationship encourages contextual relevance, with tasks such as client briefings

and visual presentations functioning not only as learning tools but also as realistic simulations of professional discourse. The inclusion of micro-credentials represents another benefit, offering modular, skill-specific validation of student performance. This adds a layer of transparency and motivation, particularly valuable in flexible, portfolio-driven fields. The model also supports evidence-based progression, as learners compile scenario outputs into portfolios – an especially meaningful form of assessment in disciplines where creative

communication and design rationale must be explicitly demonstrated. Importantly, the Industry Feedback Loop introduces the potential for external validation, providing a feedback mechanism that can inform curricular revision and strengthen alignment with evolving workplace standards. This positions the model as both adaptive and scalable. However, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the model assumes institutional readiness to implement micro-credentialing, which may be constrained by policy, infrastructure, or faculty workload. Second, while the modular design offers flexibility, it risks fragmentation without unified assessment frameworks. Finally, the model is conceptually transferable, but its operationalisation in specific creative contexts – such as digital media, animation, or game design – requires further contextual tailoring. In summary, the model offers a promising blueprint for bridging language instruction with creative employability, but its effectiveness depends on thoughtful implementation, validation mechanisms, and sustained institutional support. This study advanced the discourse on ESP by comparing pedagogical practices, assessing their transferability to creative education contexts, and anchoring findings within relevant theoretical frameworks and recent empirical research. The comparative case analysis revealed complementary but distinct approaches to ESP implementation across the two institutions. At Tampere University, scenario-based learning and micro-credentialing were integrated into formal curriculum structures, whereas at PolyU, these innovations were adopted more informally by individual instructors.

Research from the OECD (2023) and scientist Y. Ozarslan (2025) have similarly noted that micro-credentials support modular, lifelong learning pathways and can bolster employability if thoughtfully embedded within instructional design. The findings also resonate with M. Chan (2023), who emphasised the pedagogical value of authentic, context-driven ESP tasks for the development of meta-discursive competence in professional settings. In M. Chan's (2023) study, learners engaged with domain-specific scenarios and reported increased confidence in navigating workplace discourse. Similarly, T. Le Van & H. Hai Tien (2021) argued that collaborative ESP tasks grounded in real workplace contexts fostered communicative competence extending beyond textbook genres. The present research built on these findings by demonstrating that when micro-credentials are aligned with CEFR descriptors and embedded into assessment systems – as observed at Tampere – they promote curricular coherence and clearer articulation of learning outcomes. K. Ahsan *et al.* (2023) confirmed that modular micro-credentials significantly contribute to learner motivation and accountability, offering structured validation of skill acquisition. Their systematic review underscored the need for institutional frameworks that support the design and deployment of micro-credentials, an issue mirrored in this study where instructors

cited the lack of centralised platforms as a key implementation challenge. A. Stamatakis *et al.* (2025) likewise emphasised that the integration of micro-credentials within digital education expands opportunities for skill recognition, particularly when aligned with AI-powered and open education ecosystems. Applying these insights to the creative disciplines, the research highlighted how ESP learners in digital art and design must articulate visual reasoning, respond to critiques, and pitch design concepts – skills identified by F. Zhao (2024) as critical yet often missing in traditional ESP syllabi. F. Mao & J. Zhou (2024) also identified this misalignment in their needs analysis, finding that students in art and design colleges often lacked training in field-specific communication genres.

The results suggested that task realism and communication-oriented credentialing can address this gap effectively. Furthermore, the transferable integration model proposed in this study is grounded in constructivist and task-based learning principles, which resonates with the conclusions highlighted by W. Guariento & J. Morley (2001). The authors noted that authentic tasks are genuinely effective only when learners actively construct knowledge in conditions closely replicating real communicative scenarios, as such authenticity supports the transfer of acquired skills into actual language-use situations. Moreover, the model aligns with cyclic curriculum design frameworks, as emphasised in the work of R. Dazeley *et al.* (2025). The authors argued that such cyclicity enables a more organic implementation of models oriented towards transferability, since the curriculum must adapt through repeated iterations in response to learners' needs and learning objectives. Within this structure, authentic communicative tasks build progressively towards professional readiness, supported by skill-specific digital badges and feedback loops involving industry stakeholders.

The present qualitative and quantitative findings reinforce stakeholder perceptions documented in contemporary literature. J. Goulding *et al.* (2024) found that digital badges served not only as motivational tools for students but also as clear signals of achievement for employers. S. Athey & E. Palikot (2024) reported that non-traditional credentials were increasingly valued in labour markets, especially when tied to demonstrable workplace competencies. In this context, students confirmed that micro-credentials offered tangible milestones and made their learning outcomes more visible and professionally relevant. Nevertheless, barriers persist. L. Wheelahan & G. Moodie (2022) warned that micro-credentialing systems risk fragmenting qualifications if not integrated into coherent curricular structures. This study found that such risks materialised in the absence of institutional infrastructure. R.M. Selvaratnam & M. Sankey (2025) proposed incremental piloting of credentialing schemes as a solution – an approach this study supports, particularly in

creative disciplines where curriculum flexibility is essential. Finally, W. Alamri (2025) emphasised that the use of authentic materials in English as a Foreign Language listening instruction notably enhanced learner engagement and comprehension. This aligns with the observation that scenario-based ESP tasks – like client briefings and visual presentations – not only improved motivation but also provided scaffolding for real-world communication tasks. A. Gumartifa *et al.* (2025) further demonstrated that digital tools and culturally relevant ESP materials empower linguistically diverse learners, reinforcing the need for contextually embedded instruction. Taken together, these sources enrich the theoretical grounding and empirical justification for the present model. Programmes targeting creative disciplines should adopt industry-informed badge rubrics that evaluate both linguistic and domain-specific communicative tasks. Modular sequencing should facilitate progression from task execution to portfolio development and include feedback opportunities from creative professionals. While limitations related to sample size and generalisability remain, the model presented here offers a replicable, research-based framework for advancing integrated ESP design in the era of modular and competency-based education.

## ■ Conclusions

The findings of this study offered evidence-based insights into the alignment of ESP instruction with employability outcomes in creative education. By analysing two institutional cases, the research demonstrated that authentic workplace scenarios – such as client simulations and collaborative projects – substantially enhanced student engagement, motivation, and perceived relevance of language learning. Among surveyed students, over 70% indicated that scenario-based tasks increased the realism and applicability of ESP coursework and reported that such activities improved their understanding of workplace communication. Instructors similarly emphasised the value of task realism in fostering professional readiness, particularly in disciplines like Digital Art and Design, where language use is closely tied to describing visuals, narratives, and concepts. Document analysis further confirmed that authentic tasks were integrated into course syllabi through structured activities such as role-plays, design briefs, and industry-style presentations. These strategies helped simulate workplace demands and supported the development of field-specific communicative competencies.

Regarding micro-credentialing, the study confirmed its potential as a mechanism for making skill development transparent and modular. At Tampere University,

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micro-credentials were aligned with CEFR descriptors and embedded into formal assessment frameworks, leading to increased clarity of learning outcomes. In contrast, PolyU implemented badges more informally, which still motivated learners but lacked standardised recognition. Interviewees noted that badges offered students visible milestones and contributed to goal-oriented learning. However, challenges included increased instructional workload and the need for institutional platforms to support badge issuance. The proposed transferable integration model synthesises these practices into a replicable structure applicable to creative disciplines. It highlights the pedagogical synergy between scenario-based instruction and micro-credentialing while acknowledging implementation barriers such as limited contact hours and resource constraints. In conclusion, the study affirms that when ESP modules incorporate discipline-specific authentic tasks and credentialed assessments, they can significantly enhance the transfer of communicative competence to workplace contexts. For creative education, this model represents a viable template for developing instructional designs that not only foster language skills but also validate them through evidence-based, recognisable formats.

## ■ Acknowledgements

The author would like to express their sincere gratitude to the faculty and staff of the State University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, and Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts for their support in facilitating this research. Special thanks are extended to the ESP instructors, curriculum designers, and student participants whose valuable insights and feedback made this study possible. The author also acknowledges the academic guidance and peer feedback received during the conceptualisation and refinement of this study, which significantly contributed to the clarity and depth of the research. Lastly, appreciation is due to the international institutions whose publicly available ESP materials enabled meaningful comparative analysis.

## ■ Funding

This research was conducted as an independent, self-funded study. No external financial support was received from institutions, grants, or funding agencies. The author assumes full responsibility for all aspects of the research process and dissemination.

## ■ Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the conduct, analysis, or publication of this research.

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## Фахова англійська мова для творчих спеціальностей: поєднання теорії та потреб ринку праці

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■ **Анотація.** У даному дослідженні ставилося за мету з'ясувати, яким чином навчання англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням може бути узгоджене з цілями працевлаштування у креативних галузях – зокрема у сфері цифрового мистецтва та дизайну – шляхом інтеграції автентичних професійних сценаріїв і систем мікрокваліфікацій. В межах дослідження було зібрано дані від закладів, що впроваджують інноваційні програми англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням для спеціальних цілей, проаналізовано наявні документи, результати напівструктурованих інтерв'ю з викладачами та розробниками навчальних програм в українських закладах вищої освіти, а також опитування 28 студентів. Результати дослідження свідчать, що автентичні завдання з англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням (брифінги, презентації, рецензії) суттєво підвищують мотивацію студентів (71,43 %) і сприяють розумінню професійної доцільності навчання. Цифрові бейджі за комунікативні досягнення допомогли 78,57 % учасників усвідомити прикладну цінність здобутих навичок. Мікрокваліфікації, узгоджені з дескрипторами Загальноєвропейської системи компетенцій володіння іноземною мовою та включені до систем оцінювання, забезпечили прозору модульну верифікацію результатів навчання. Незважаючи на позитивний вплив, викладачі повідомили про труднощі з їх реалізацією: збільшене навантаження та відсутність єдиної платформи для сертифікації. Дослідження робить внесок у наукову літературу, пропонуючи «модель трансферної інтеграції», що поєднує сценарії, бейджі, портфоліо й галузевий фідбек для розвитку професійної комунікативної компетентності студентів творчих спеціальностей. «Модель трансферної інтеграції» є відтворюваною структурою для програм англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, що не лише формують, а й верифікують професійно орієнтовані комунікативні компетентності та є спрямованими на потреби ринку праці. Ефективність зазначеної моделі залежить від її виваженого впровадження, механізмів перевірки та постійної інституційної підтримки

■ **Ключові слова:** англійська мова; професійна комунікація; мікрокваліфікації; дизайн-освіта; кар'єрні траєкторії; освітні інновації; працевлаштування