

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Space Culture – Public Engagement in Space through Culture (9)

Author: Ms. Ruth McAvinia
ATG Europe B.V., Ireland

Ms. Carol Carnett
International Space University (ISU), United States
Mrs. Philomena Bonis
Waterloo Region District School Board, Canada

THE SPACE ENGLISH ACCESS COURSE – ACCESSING A GLOBAL INDUSTRY THROUGH A
LINGUA FRANCA

Abstract

The Space English Access Course (SEAC) is a tool for non-native English speakers to help with their participation in the International Space University (ISU) intensive space studies programs – the Space Studies Program (SSP) and the Southern Hemisphere Space Studies Program (SH-SSP). Conducted over the course of one week and supplemented with other activities throughout the remaining weeks of the sessions, SEAC combines technical language orientation and instruction with corporate and cultural knowledge to ensure personal and professional success in short intensive courses. The SEAC instructors have developed a form of English for specific purposes (ESP) training that allows those without recent English language instruction to revise their knowledge of the language, while also focusing on vocabulary, jargon, and usage that will help them during the SSP and beyond, whether they seek a career in the space industry or are already working as an established space professional. It introduces the key elements of the ISU ethos, being intercultural, international, and interdisciplinary instruction, as well as raising awareness of language and customs in the host country of the program (a different country each year for SSP, Australia for SH-SSP). There are several benefits to this program: the participants involved in SEAC are better prepared for their ISU programs; their classmates in the SSP at large then have greater access to the knowledge and culture these participants bring to the program; after the SSP national space programs can be enriched and the space industry as a whole enhanced as the SEAC graduates share their strategies and experiences for effective communication in a multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary environment. This paper will introduce the development of the Space English Access Course over the past 17 years, including examples of formal and informal language teaching techniques used and how those techniques have been adapted for use in workshops now provided at the IAC, while also offering lessons learned for those who face similar challenges in using a shared international language.