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### **The Student - Teacher Collaboration in the English for Academic Purposes Classroom**

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The present paper deals with the impact of the student-teacher relationship on teaching / learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) with exclusive reference to a Sri Lankan higher educational institution which offers a B.Sc. degree in Engineering. Since the selected institution's medium of instruction is English, two EAP courses have been incorporated into the curriculum in order to help the undergraduates enhance their English language skills and complete the degree programme successfully. This research project explores the following research problem: Why is the student-teacher collaboration considered as an important aspect of the process of learning / teaching EAP? As part and parcel of the methodology, unstructured interviews were conducted with twenty five Engineering students who could be regarded as intermediate learners of English and five EAP instructors who are responsible for teaching these students. Having analysed the transcribed interviews, the paper substantiates the argument that there is a symbiotic relationship between the EAP teacher and the learner. Reflecting on their extensive experience as EAP teachers, the respondents claim that, although the teaching materials utilised in the EAP classroom are purely based on scientific discourse, their lack of knowledge of the same does not always act as a buffer against the teaching / learning process because of the support extended by some of their students. That is to say that, at times the students themselves help teachers clarify their doubts related to the technical content of the teaching materials. Similarly, most of the student respondents assert that their teachers play a crucial role in improving their knowledge of English and transforming them into competent users of the language. Hence, it becomes evident that the EAP teacher and the student are dependent upon each other, and that this symbiotic relationship facilitates the process of teaching / learning English for Academic Purposes.

**Key words:** EAP, engineering, student, symbiotic relationship, teacher