

# Editorial

The innovative educational approaches to teaching languages for specific purposes (LSP) presented in this issue of *Scripta Manent* evolved in different geographical and institutional contexts supporting different language learning needs. They cover a topic that has not received substantial coverage in mainstream academic journals (Hewings 2002, Master 2005), i.e. LSP program descriptions. These are often believed to lack the potential for universal application and therefore deemed less suitable for inclusion in academic journals (Hewings 2002, Master 2005). However, since universal application is rarely at the heart of teaching LSP, innovativeness of approach to teaching LSP should probably be examined based on different merits.

If we accept that specificity is at the heart of LSP (Hyland 2002), and that putting it into practice involves "balancing students' needs (assessed in terms of the specific discursive practices of their fields) with competing departmental demands (particularly as to time and learning priorities), and with institutional constraints (often ultimately specified in terms of a viable group size)" (Hyland 2002: 392), then innovative educational approaches to teaching LSP should be about successful applications of specificity in pedagogic practices.

Innovation in LSP, therefore, involves understanding language teaching and learning and the institutional context in which they take place, as well as the specifics of the target community's communication needs, values and practices. Pedagogical decisions have to be grounded in research that addresses these issues. Only then will our choices in implementing that understanding in LSP teaching practice have the potential for innovativeness. And this potential has been recognized in the contributions of Cianflone and Lindner.

Cianflone raises the issue of specificity in the context of an Italian university's innovative interdisciplinary course in food-and-wine sciences and health. Beside the specificity of the interdisciplinary content of the course, the English for specific purposes (ESP) course syllabus that the article describes also caters for the specificity of the teaching and learning situation.

Specificity in the context of English for students of sociology in Germany provides challenges that are altogether different. Lindner takes them head on and proposes an approach to ESP syllabus design that also considers the linguistic and cultural contexts that her German students will need to face in their future careers. The article therefore presents a detailed explanation of the rationale for the inclusion of the intercultural dimension into the syllabus and the means of developing students' intercultural competence through a combination of pedagogical approaches.

Whether LSP syllabus solutions in our own specific situations are transferable to other LSP syllabi is something we can find out only if these are shared and discussed critically among peers. Just like knowledge, LSP syllabus solutions too need to be shared.

Enjoy the articles.

Šarolta Godnič Vičič  
Editor

## References

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