

SCRIPTA MANENT

**Revija Slovenskega društva učiteljev
tujega strokovnega jezika**

**Journal of the Slovene Association
of LSP Teachers**

**Letnik XVIII, številka 2
Volume XVIII, Number 2**

ISSN: 1854-2042

2023

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Revija Slovenskega društva učiteljev tujega strokovnega jezika
Journal of the Slovene Association of LSP Teachers
Letnik XVIII, številka 2/Volume XVIII, Number 2

Založnik/Published by:

Slovensko društvo učiteljev tujega strokovnega jezika/The Slovene Association of LSP Teachers

Glavna in odgovorna urednica/Editor in Chief:

Violeta Jurkovič, Fakulteta za pomorstvo in promet, Univerza v Ljubljani/Faculty of Maritime Studies and
Transport, University of Ljubljana

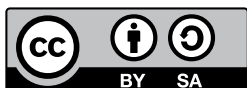
Urednica/Editor:

Stefania M. Maci, Univerza v Bergamu/University of Bergamo

ISSN: 1854-2042

Elektronska revija/Online

<https://journals.uni-lj.si/scriptamanent>



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EDITORIAL

In education, teacher professional development is a cornerstone for enhancing teaching practices and ultimately improving student learning outcomes. It involves structured learning experiences aimed at refining teaching strategies and fostering pedagogical development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This multi-faceted approach includes content-based instruction, active learning, collaboration, coaching, feedback and reflection.

Prior to the pandemic, professional development was often characterised by intensive, episodic events, leaving educators struggling to effectively implement new strategies. Furthermore, the time available for professional development was a point of contention as educators often feel limited in their ability to fully engage in new strategies (Copeland, 2020). The outbreak of the pandemic led to a rapid shift to virtual platforms, resulting in a rise in innovative teaching practices and methods, and a re-evaluation of education as a whole. This is an unprecedented challenge that UNESCO (2021) emphasises, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and innovative approaches to professional development. Indeed, the use of virtual technologies has the potential to transform professional development and promote lasting impact on teaching practice and student learning outcomes worldwide. As we navigate the post-pandemic landscape, it is crucial to reflect on the evolving needs of educators, particularly in specialised areas such as Language for Specific Purposes (LSP).

This special issue of *Scripta Manent* emphasises these needs and their multifaceted expressions. By addressing issues such as new technologies, equity and evidence-based practices, our aim is to chart a course for LSP teacher education and professional development in the future.

The issue begins with Ken Hyland's contribution, "Discipline, culture and community in writing: getting specific with EAP", where he emphasizes the importance of understanding writing within its broader cultural and social contexts, particularly in academic settings. He argues that disciplinary cultures significantly influence writing practices, shaping language choices and communication styles. Through analysing data from his research, Hyland highlights the necessity of identifying specific language features and discourse practices within academic disciplines. This specificity is crucial for effective English teaching in universities.

Marković and Mirković's paper, "Could ESP practitioners have an active role in managing and alleviating students' communication apprehension (CA)?", investigates the role of ESP practitioners in managing students' communication apprehension (CA). By analyzing self-perceived CA scores before and after intervention, the research highlights the effectiveness of anxiety-reduction techniques integrated into ESP curriculum design. It advocates for ESP instructors to play an active role in developing students' communication skills.

In the third contribution, “Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery and reception of ESP education for engineering students in Croatia”, Ferčec and Liermann-Zeljck examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education for engineering students in Croatia. Through surveys of students and instructors, they identify challenges faced during the transition to online teaching and emphasize the importance of training for instructors to adapt effectively to online platforms.

Lamy-Joswiak’s teaching report, “Élaboration d’un cours de français médical et juridique: de l’analyse des besoins à l’évaluation externe de la formation”, focuses on the design of French for specific purposes (FSP) courses, particularly in the fields of law and medicine. The author discusses the methodological framework required for course design, emphasizing the importance of needs analysis, discursive analysis, and the use of authentic materials. The paper also highlights the challenges faced by teachers, such as defining the scope of the course and facilitating understanding of complex concepts in multiple disciplines.

Barić and Hegedüs explore the development of German language teaching curricula in Serbian universities in their paper “Curriculare Entwicklung des studienbegleitenden Deutschunterrichts in Serbien – Rückblick und Ausblick”. Their contribution assesses the implementation of a framework curriculum published in 2010 and identifies challenges in incorporating its principles. The study reveals a focus on professional and subject-relatedness in curricula but indicates a need for further efforts to improve language competencies and alignment with market demands.

The teaching report by Đorović and Stanojević, “Il lessico architettonico nell’italiano delle origini”, explores architectural terminology in early Italian texts. Using the TLIO corpus, the authors analyse morphological, etymological, and semantic aspects of architectural terms. Their findings contribute to understanding the evolution of architectural language, emphasizing the importance of early linguistic influences.

Jurše Potocco’s teaching report, “The use of task-based learning and teaching in ESP courses for tertiary students of kinesiology and dietetics”, discusses the application of task-based learning and teaching in ESP courses for tertiary students of Kinesiology and Dietetics. It outlines various language learning tasks used in these courses and reflects on their effectiveness and challenges from the teacher’s perspective.

The last contribution is by Darja Mertelj, offering a review of the volume *Là dove il ‘sì’ suona: Italicjanski jezik u istoriji umetnosti* written by Danijela Đorović, showing interesting insights about such diachronic analysis of how the Italian artistic language emerged during the Renaissance, both as an elite written language and as a language spoken by artisans. Its evolution was influenced by key figures who recognised the autonomy of the artistic language.

This special issue of Scripta Manent serves as a testament to our commitment to addressing these needs head-on. In essence, the post-pandemic era presents us with an opportunity to redefine teacher professional development. It is a call to action to embrace innovation, foster collaboration, and prioritize the well-being of educators. Only by doing so can we ensure that teachers are equipped with the skills and support they need to navigate the challenges of today and shape the future of education.

Stefania M. Maci

Editor

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