

Adapting methodologically to the EHEA: mapping out key references

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As can be gleaned from the monographic section in this volume, language pedagogy is facing urgent challenges in the process of adapting to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). There is a pressing need to start generating change and forge new ground in the creation of a common European project. In order to usher in this new era, it is incumbent upon language teaching professionals to stay abreast of the latest findings in the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and to be fully informed of what it entails in order to dislodge entrenched ideas which might misguide the convergence process. This dossier presents a compilation of 30 key references to attain this goal and to help wedge in new models of thinking and teaching in tertiary education.

1. Internet links

A necessary starting point in understanding the underlying rationale of the EHEA involves tracing the different stages of the so-called Bologna Process. An important set of declarations, communiqués, and reports help us track the changes which have been introduced, the progress which has been made, and where we currently stand at the global, European, and national level. The main documents which have pushed the Bologna Process forward are presented below, classified into Ministerial Declarations and Communiqués, European University Association Trends Reports, European University Association Declarations, and National Reports.

Ministerial Declarations and Communiqués

Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/LRC/Lisbon_Recognition_Convention.pdf

Sorbonne Declaration (1998):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/SORBONNE_DECLARATION1.pdf

Bologna Declaration (1999):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/BOLOGNA_DECLARATION1.pdf

Prague Communiqué (2001):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/PRAGUE_COMMUNIQUE.pdf

Berlin Communiqué (2003):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/Berlin_Communique1.pdf

Bergen Communiqué (2005):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/050520_Bergen_Communique1.pdf

London Communiqué (2007):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/MDC/London_Communique18May2007.pdf

Leuven Communiqué (2009):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/documents/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique%C3%A9_April_2009.pdf

European University Association Trends Reports

The five EUA Trends Reports

(EUA TRENDS I - June 1999; EUA TRENDS II - April 2001; EUA TRENDS III - July 2003; EUA TRENDS IV - April 2005; EUA TRENDS V - May 2007)

can be downloaded from

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/EUA_Trends_Reports.htm.

European University Association Declarations

The five EUA Declarations are available at

<http://www.eua.be/publications/#c398>:

Salamanca Convention (2001), Graz Declaration (2003), Glasgow Declaration (2005), Lisbon Declaration (2007), and Parague Declaration (2009).

National Reports

Spain (2005):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/National-reports-2005/National_Report_Spain_05.pdf

Spain (2007):

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/National-reports-2009/National_Report_Spain_2009.pdf

Since the reconfiguration of tertiary language education is not only affecting Europe, but also the U.S. and Canada, as we contend in the *Introduction* to the monographic section, transcending frontiers is perhaps the most helpful backdrop against which to frame our reform endeavors in Higher Education (HE) language teaching. It is necessary to remain alert to what is being done on the other side of the Atlantic in order to unify efforts, connect initiatives, and ultimately advance in the application of our own HE language policy. The following references help us delve deeper into the changes taking place in the North American continent and ascertain how the same trends are operative across the Atlantic:

Green, M., Eckel, P. and Barblan, A. (2002). *The Brave New (and Smaller) World of Higher Education: A Transatlantic View*.

http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/brave-new-world.1069322743534.pdf

Modern Language Association. (2007). *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*.

http://www.mla.org/pdf/forlang_news_pdf.pdf

On both sides of the Atlantic, the official communiqués and reports have placed the onus on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to introduce innovative methods, student-centred pedagogy, or lifelong learning into the teaching process. The following are key documents in making the required methodological shift a practical reality in post-secondary education. Two of them have been drawn up by the *Junta de Andalucía*:

CIDUA. (2005). *Informe sobre la Innovación de la Docencia en las Universidades Andaluzas*. Sevilla: Consejería de Educación, Junta de Andalucía.

<http://www.uca.es/web/estudios/innovacion/ficheros/informeinnovacinjuntaabril2005.doc>

Pérez Gómez, A., E. Soto Gómez, M. Sola Fernández, and M. J. Serván Núñez. (2009). *La Universidad del Aprendizaje: Orientaciones para el Estudiante* Madrid: Ediciones Akal, S.A.

http://www.uco.es/organizacion/ees/documentos/nuevastitulaciones/reforma/Plan_Bolonia.pdf

The remaining two are proceedings from what have perhaps been the most renowned national conferences on ECTS methodology held thus far in our country:

Actas de las I Jornadas Nacionales de Intercambio de Experiencias Piloto de Implantación de Metodologías ECTS. (2006). Badajoz: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Extremadura.

Actas de las II Jornadas Nacionales de Intercambio de Experiencias Piloto de Implantación de Metodologías ECTS. (2007). Badajoz: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Extremadura.

Both can be found at http://prensa.ugr.es/prensa/expe_ects/index.htm.

2. Articles

Within these new methodological approaches, ICT is acquiring a particularly relevant role. New technologies are having a decisive impact on language teaching and learning, as the articles presented below convincingly claim. They explore the conditions which need to be met for successful incorporation of ICT in language teaching within the EHEA philosophy and craft a powerful argument for the use digital storytelling, virtual forums, podcasting, or blended learning within ECTS pilot programs in language degrees:

Brigido Corachán, A. M. (2008). Collaborative e-Learning in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA): Towards a Peer-assisted Construction of Knowledge, *GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés*, 16, pp. 14-18.

Gregori-Signes, C. (2008). Integrating the Old and the New: Digital Storytelling in the EFL Language Classroom, *GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés*, 16, pp. 43-49.

Pennock-Speck, B. (2008). The implementation of ICT in the Second-Cycle History of the English language Module at the Universitat

de València, *GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés*, 16, pp. 65-70.

Torrallbo Jover, M. (2008). Las Nuevas Tecnologías en el ECTS: El Desarrollo de la Competencia Léxica en Inglés a través de los Podcasts, *GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés*, 16, pp. 71-77.

Zaragoza Ninet, M. G. and B. Clavel Arroitia (2008). ICT Implementation in English Language and English Dialectology, *GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés*, 16, pp. 78-84.

The final article we highlight in this section reports on one of the first studies in Europe to offer empirical data on the functioning of the new credit system. Building on the unique position of the degree in English Philology at the University of Jaén, it presents the results of a quasi-experimental investigation with a pre-test/post-test control group design conducted throughout the course of the academic year 2005-2006 with Spanish university freshmen in order to determine the possible differential effects of the new ECTS methodology. The quantitative data is complemented with qualitative questionnaires which provide interesting insights into the students' perceptions of the implementation of the new system:

Pérez Cañado, M. L. (2010). English Language Teaching in the European Higher Education Area: From Policy to Practice, *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 4, 1, pp. 53-69.

3. Books

Further recommendations on how to implement the ECTS at all curricular and organizational levels are set forth in several manuals and monographs which have become crucial reference books in adapting to the zeitgeist of the EHEA. The first two below provide invaluable guidance to tackle the still largely unfamiliar notion of competencies, their practical incorporation into teaching programmes and their evaluation via rubrics:

Blanco, A. (Coord.). (2009). *Desarrollo y Evaluación de Competencias en Educación Superior*. Madrid: Narcea Ediciones.

Villa Sánchez, A. and M. Poblete Ruiz. (2008). *Aprendizaje Basado en Competencias: Una Propuesta para la Evaluación de las Competencias Genéricas*. Bilbao: Mensajero.

Methodological aspects pertaining to teaching methods, types of groupings, and learning modalities come to the fore in the works carried out by De Miguel Díaz's research team:

- De Miguel Díaz, M. (ed.) (2005). *Modalidades de Enseñanza Centradas en el Desarrollo de Competencias. Orientaciones para Promover el Cambio en el Marco del EEES*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo.
- De Miguel Díaz, M. (ed.) (2006). *Metodologías de Enseñanza y Aprendizaje para el Desarrollo de Competencias. Orientaciones para el Profesorado Universitario ante el Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

In turn, Zabalza Beraza presents and unpacks a clear-cut set of criteria to draw up complete course catalogues in the new Bologna-adapted plans of study:

- Zabalza Beraza, M. A. (2004). *Guía para la Planificación Didáctica de la Docencia Universitaria en el Marco del EEES*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

The final three volumes are collections of articles which present the insights of a prestigious set of scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers from diverse parts of Europe on the adaptation to the EHEA in general teaching, English language teaching, and English for Specific Purposes:

- Fortanet-Gómez, I. and C. A. Räisänen (eds.) (2008). *ESP in European Higher Education. Integrating language and content*. London: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Froment, E. et al. (2006). *EUA Bologna Handbook*. Berlin: Raabe Academic Publishers.
- Pérez Cañado, M. L. (2009). *English Language Teaching in the European Credit Transfer System: Facing the Challenge*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.