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):

Sorbonne Declaration (1998):

Bologna Declaration (1999):

Prague Communiqué (2001):

Berlin Communiqué (2003):

Bergen Communiqué (2005):

London Communiqué (2007):

Leuven Communiqué (2009):

European University Association Trends Reports

The five EUA Trends Reports
can be downloaded from
European University Association Declarations

The five EUA Declarations are available at
http://www.eua.be/publications/#c398:

National Reports

Spain (2005):

Spain (2007):

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:


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:

http://www.uco.es/organizacion/eees/documentos/nuevastitulaciones/reforforma/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:


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:


© 2010 SEDLL. *Lenguaje y Textos*, núm. 31, junio, pp. 79-84
de València, GRETA. Revista para Profesores de Inglés, 16, pp. 65-70.


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:


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:


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:


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:


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:

