

English for Education: An ESP workshop approach for teacher trainees

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Experts and teachers alike agree on language proficiency as one of the most important factors that prepares them for their position as English or CLIL teachers (Amengual-Pizarro, 2013; Durán-Martínez, et al., 2020; Richards, 2017). Yet, Spanish universities dedicate fewer credit hours to the development of English language skills and specific pedagogy since the changes that came with the Bologna process (Amengual-Pizarro, 2013; De la Maya Retamar & Luengo González, 2015). There is also great diversity among universities in the balance between the number of hours dedicated to language improvement and foreign language pedagogy in the initial teacher training programs available in Madrid (López-Hernández, 2021). At the same time, upon graduation, teacher trainees in Spain identify the importance of English language skills for their future (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007 and 2013; Fernández-Viciano & Fernández-Costales, 2017), and identify specific sub-skills (such as storytelling, giving instructions and classroom management) that ought to be developed (López-Hernández & Buckingham, 2021).

With this context in mind, this presentation describes the design and implementation of an ESP English course for teacher trainees that is structured as a series of workshops that, moving away from textbook-centered general English, focuses instead on the language skills that students will need as future EFL or CLIL practitioners. After three years, student feedback suggests that this approach is motivating and viewed as useful for their future practice. Most students prefer the workshop approach to following an EFL textbook, though some missed the focus on lexis and grammar.

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