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Special Issue: Global Advances in Business Communication - WLSP World Languages for Specific Purposes: The Future is Blended

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Special Issue: Global Advances in Business Communication

WLSP World Languages for Specific Purposes: The Future is Blended

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Unlike any time in modern history, the global pandemic has disrupted and rattled traditional language learning and teaching, including the teaching of world languages for specific purposes (WLSP). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the suspension of the dominant delivery system, i.e., face-to-face (f2f) teaching and learning in favor of hybrid systems and the adoption of synchronous and asynchronous online teaching. Obviously, this period has led to immense hardships and challenges for teachers, students, and parents alike, but it has also provided educators with unique unintended consequences: we language educators get to rethink, re-evaluate, and reshape WLSP instruction. We are free to infuse creativity and audacity in WLSP instruction unlike any time in our careers. This volume will describe examples of both in each chapter.

In addition to hybrid systems and the adoption of synchronous and asynchronous online teaching, BLENDED refers to four other critical factors:

1. We have blended non-U.S. and U.S. educators to present their ideas in teaching world languages as well as English as a second language. To highlight the global nature of WLSP, we invited experts from Serbia, Switzerland, France, Korea, and other countries to participate in the special issue. Their insights and classroom practices will make this volume richer to all educators worldwide.
2. We have included fields such as biotechnology and agribusiness to join the traditional slate of business, engineering, healthcare, and law enforcement. Biotechnology and agribusiness, necessary fields to fulfill the interdisciplinary nature of WLSP, are key disciplines as they include key topics of interest to the general public: sustainable agricultural production, the post-harvest handling of agricultural products, and food safety standards. Milevica Bojović, a professor of ESL at the University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Agronomy in Serbia shares the first course of its type: English for biotechnology purposes.
3. The special issue is BLENDED because we have invited military and corporate WLSP experts to share their unique insights in curriculum design with their academic counterparts. ACTFL's Farid Saydee shared his challenges in getting U.S. special forces combat-ready in "Languages for specific purposes: Best practices in teaching and learning South Asian and Middle Eastern languages to military personnel" while Florina

Matu shared her insights in preparing future officers in “Inclusive teaching practices in a French for professional purposes course at the U.S. Air Force Academy”;

4. Finally, BLENDED means bringing together diversity, equity, and inclusion to make them a permanent part of WLSP in a pandemic and post-pandemic world. To illustrate, two authors in this volume are developing an industrial safety course in English, Spanish, and French via self-paced, mastery-based instruction. The course will be designed for students anywhere in the world and for engineers working in dangerous industrial settings.

This GABC special issue aims to provide relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical research findings in the field of WLSP, especially in relation to online education and the pandemic impact on higher education. It is written for professionals inside and outside of academia seeking to improve their and others’ understanding of the strategic future of WLSP language teaching. This includes considerations of WLSP within global contexts as well as the numerous ways our professional practices have had to adjust to current times.

Table of contents for the December issue:

- “Any time, any place, any path, any pace:” A curricular design for the teaching of languages for special purposes in the Pandemic era and beyond” (Steven J. Sacco, Professor Emeritus of French & Italian, San Diego State University, Martha Pereszlényi-Pinter, Associate Professor Emerita of French, John Carroll University); Diana Ruggiero, Associate Professor, University of Memphis;
- “Online intercultural exchanges in a French for the professions course” (Deborah S. Reisinger, Duke University);
- Grit and resilience in WLSPs: The potential of blending translation and indirect service learning (Isabelle Drewelow, Associate Professor of French & Xabier Granja Ibarreche, Assistant Professor of Spanish, The University of Alabama.
- “English for biotechnology purposes: The blend” (Milevica Bojović, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Agronomy, Serbia);

Table of contents for our next issue:

- “Languages for specific purposes: Best practices in teaching and learning South Asian and Middle Eastern languages to military personnel.” (Farid Saydee, ACTFL);
- “Inclusive teaching practices in a French for professional purposes course at the U.S. Air Force Academy.” (Florina Matu, U.S. Air Force Academy);
- “Service-learning in language for specific purposes: A case of Korean language practicum.” Seung-Eun Chang, Georgia Tech;

- “Open architecture curricular design and the teaching of corporate English” (Steven J. Sacco, Professor Emeritus of French & Italian, San Diego State University and Leonilda Renaldo (LeoDynamics, Geneva, Switzerland);

Our volume predicts the innovative delivery systems and course development that will emerge and thrive globally in the post-pandemic era. For example, our chapter “Any time, any place, any path, any pace”) describes how students and faculty, victimized by language program elimination or cuts, can complete LSP coursework worldwide ranging from healthcare to industrial safety through a for-credit self-paced, mastery-based platform. “Any time” enhances inclusion for students enrolled at universities where budget cuts have eliminated WLSP courses and for students enrolled at universities worldwide who do not have access to WLSP courses. Inclusion in the pandemic era and beyond is a major core value in our volume along with diversity and equity. The chapter includes the development of a re-design of a medical interpreting course by Dr. Diana Ruggiero, who received a significant grant to create Open Educational Materials. The grant was awarded by the Office of Academic Affairs and Organizational Effectiveness and the Tennessee Board of Regents to increase equity in access and student success. Open Educational Resources are the future. Educators can create and share students’ materials at low or no cost. This model also serves faculty scholarship, which can be open access and easy to collaborate, and engaged in the creative commons copyright ways to share: retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute.

At a time when study abroad was under scrutiny due to the pandemic era, **Deborah S. Reisinger**, in her article, “Online intercultural exchanges in a French for the professions course” describes the process of designing and executing video exchanges in a French for the Professions course. In her empirical study, U.S. and French students faced off synchronously outside of class time on Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Facetime to discuss five-to-eight questions on business and cultural issues, half of the time in French and half in English. After each discussion, students were asked “to complete a short reflection of their experience in an online forum, citing any shifts in their perspectives, any knowledge gains, and any changes in perception of the other culture.” Reisinger analyzed the results using qualitative and quantitative surveys to discuss her findings. The study explored the experiences of post-secondary students in the United States and France (n=28) who participated together in synchronous online intercultural exchanges (OIE) in the context of two distinct World Languages for Specific Purposes (WLSP) courses. The study design draws on research in OIE and WLSP, as well as on the researcher’s experience conducting a pilot OIE during the pandemic (spring 2021).

In “Grit and resilience in WLSPs: The potential of blending translation and indirect service learning,” **Isabelle Drewelow & Xabier Granja Ibarreche** focus on designing “sustainable curricula sufficiently flexible and adaptable to be used in a constellation of contexts and environments.” They propose joining translation and indirect service learning to equip students with “the resilience and perseverance to face possible challenges in any academic and professional setting.” The course under investigation in this study offered students the opportunity to collaborate on translating documents from English to Spanish for local non-profit

organizations. The findings show that coping with challenges through mediation and problem-solving underlined the value of the translations for the community and for students themselves, supporting the development of adaptability, resilience, and grit. Overall, this study shows that blending translation and indirect service learning can offer teachers flexible options to develop valuable and enriching WLSLP learning experiences.

In a unique LSP course, “English for biotechnology purposes: The blend,” **Milevica Bojović** describes the challenges of teaching English to Serbian science and engineering students. Bojović brings industrial experience to her course. The course includes key information such as “sustainable agricultural production, the environmental impacts of intensive agriculture, the post-harvest handling of agricultural products, food safety standards, and the processing of raw food to obtain the desired food product.” In 2020, Bojović was forced to design a blended course in lieu of her f2f course. She describes the “pains and gains” from the newly designed blended course. Additionally, she studied student performance involving 70 undergraduate students using the communicative language ability scale. She analyzed the impact of her course using data measuring for descriptive and ANOVA statistics to describe the strengths and weaknesses of student performance. Bojović’s course is a model for American WLSP programs, especially those located in agricultural regions. The course would be great addition to WLSP programs serving agriculture, engineering, and biotechnology majors studying Spanish. It also has potential relevance to agribusinesses with large numbers of Hispanic workers.