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Darcy W. Lear
University of Chicago

Verónica Moraga Guerra
University of Chicago

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Darcy W. Lear
University of Chicago

Verónica Moraga Guerra
University of Chicago

Backward Design for LSP: Domain Analysis as a Consistent Research Framework for a Necessarily Decentralized Field

Abstract: This conceptual article examines current approaches to languages for specific purposes (LSP) course design, including the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) backward design model and needs assessments, then explains domain analysis and its history before proceeding with a "how-to" for using domain analysis in backward design for LSP. The authors walk through the process of conducting research using the domain analysis framework that leads to the development of real-world proficiency targets that can be systematically assessed. Once summative proficiency tasks and tests are developed, evidence-centered curricular (re)design can take place. Throughout, the authors will provide illustrative examples from two larger research projects on Spanish for social work and legal Spanish.

Keywords: backward design, domain analysis, legal Spanish, research framework, Spanish for social work

Courses and programs in Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) in the United States are necessarily decentralized due to the fact that their potential audiences vary in the linguistic functions they need to perform and in the knowledge they require to perform those functions in a culturally competent manner in a given environment. For example, a Spanish course for practicing social workers in a rural non-profit setting cannot be the same as one for social work students with internships in an urban school environment—and the needs of both of those are quite different than those of social workers in a context focused on social policy. Designing a one-size-fits-all Spanish course would not meet the needs of any of the three distinct student populations mentioned above even though they all fit within the specific purpose of Spanish for social work. At the same time, it is not feasible to start the process anew for each course taught—or even each cohort. The objective of this article is to present and explicate the processes involved in domain analysis—a framework upon which each necessarily decentralized LSP course and program can be built. For such a framework to be flexible, customizable, and widely deployable, it should be an empirically rigorous and evidence-centered model. The following sections of this conceptual paper describe current approaches to course design and compare them to the domain analysis framework, then detail the steps required to deploy the methodological approach.

Current Approaches to LSP Course Design

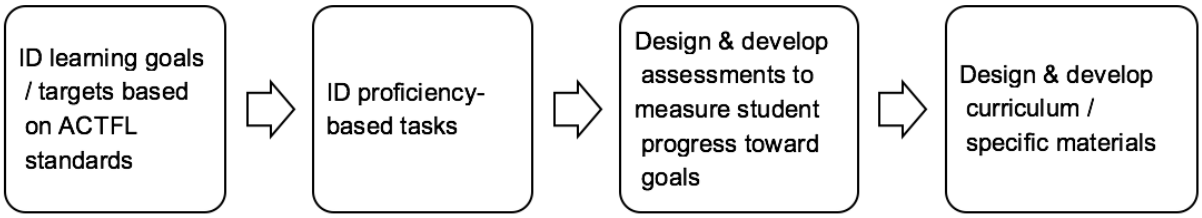
Two prevailing frameworks in use for language program and course design are 1) the backward design model based on ACTFL's National Standards; and 2) needs assessment. The National Standards Collaborative Board (2015) identifies backward design as a core practice of

language education. In the backward design model, practitioners first identify desired learning outcomes and then proceed "backward" to develop proficiency-based tasks that demonstrate progress toward those targets (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017a). Before practitioners' plan for learning experiences and instruction, tests and assessments that constitute acceptable evidence of learning should be in place (see Figure 1).

Through extensive analysis of valid, reliable data, ACTFL developed performance outcomes, proficiency levels, and evaluation standards that make backward design infinitely replicable. While ACTFL's backward design framework focuses on general language courses, LSP by definition emphasizes specific purposes. Consequently, LSP instructors who rely entirely on ACTFL's framework tend to develop survey courses that provide students generalized knowledge centered around vocabulary acquisition rather than a set of functional outcomes (proficiencies / competencies) that answer the question, "what can students *do* with the language?" in the given specific context. In other words, LSP needs a way to identify learning targets appropriate to specific purposes instead of relying entirely on ACTFL's model. Doyle (2012) noted this unmet need within LSP when he proposed "a movement from knowledge of and about (conceptual 'know-what' and 'know-how') to the instrumentality and measurability of practical problem solving and task performance ('do-what' and 'do-how') for specific purposes in particular situations" (p. 109).

Figure 1

Backward Design for General 1st and 2nd Year Language Courses (based on ACTFL's World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements)



The needs assessment (or needs analysis) framework is another consistently used approach to LSP course design. The limitations of needs analysis include that its success is usually measured by student course evaluations (Sönmez, 2019) and the focus almost always remains on the perceived needs of students in their current or future professional situations instead of on the known realities of a given specific purpose context—or domain. Needs analysis often deploys surveys of stakeholders, either asking students what they think they will need in their future careers or employers' opinions of the linguistic and cultural needs of practitioners in a given field, as the primary—or sole—data source. A data collection process that draws from

various sources in a professional domain allows for more rigorous analysis with measurable results.

Domain Analysis Defined

For the purposes of this conceptual paper, the definition of domain analysis comes from the field of testing design and development. In conducting a domain analysis, researchers

> gather substantive information about the target domain, and…identify the [knowledge, skills, and abilities] KSAs about which we will make assessment claims. This information includes the content, concepts, terminology, tools and representational forms that people utilize within the domain. It may include the situations in which people use declarative, procedural, strategic and social knowledge as they interact with others and the environment (Riconscente, et al., 2016, p. 45).

Because domain analysis is just starting to be applied to LSP, this definition was chosen from the field of testing precisely because testing is common to all academic areas, including language education generally and LSP specifically.

For an LSP course, the domain is the real-world context in which students will use their language and cultures skills. For example, one author is working in the domain of Spanish for social work, which is constituted of two subdomains: clinical and administrative. The other author's work is in the domain of legal Spanish. The features of domain analysis that will be explored throughout the rest of this conceptual paper allow researchers and instructors to clearly articulate specific, measurable functional outcomes identified through data collection. Domain analysis also narrows the parameters of a given domain according to actual real-world needs, and the process automatically results in specific-purpose topic areas. In addition, domain analysis helps align expectations among stakeholders while providing empirical, evidence-centered justifications for every methodological design decision.

Domain analysis probes the nuances of what is possible and measurable within the limitations of a single LSP course or program, starting with evidence-centered data collection from multiple points that can be triangulated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), coded, and analyzed to produce measurable results. While needs assessment creates a consistent feedback loop based on course materials produced and end-of-course evaluations, domain analysis has the potential to provide an even more robust framework that produces measurable proficiency outcomes.

Domain analysis freed the authors from trial-and-error guesswork and dependence on students' understanding of their own needs, which is problematic both because students rarely know what they are going to face when they enter their careers and because they are not experts in language pedagogy. It provided an evidence-centered framework that has not been reported on elsewhere in the LSP literature, which allowed instructors to collect and analyze data to derive measurable target outcomes, then re-visit ACTFL's benchmark indicators (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017b) while engaging in backward design based on the empirical results.

Using the measurable goals that result from domain analysis, proficiency tests can be developed that can be used as summative assessments of student progress toward target proficiencies. It should be noted that a resulting course would likely include formative and achievement testing throughout the curriculum that would complement this summative assessment. Finally, there is potential to design course and program materials as the last step in this approach to backward design.

Review of Literature

Noting that LSP courses and programs had become well-established within US universities, Doyle (2012) called for "explicit articulation and evolution" of a theoretical foundation within LSP in order for it to become "a more fully legitimized field of inquiry in US higher education" (p. 107). In 2018, Doyle provided one model that adapted the LSP content and method to "learner and institutional context" (p. 126) so that "the students' actual learning/working context" might become part of a "needs-based learner/context adapted course" (p. 113) at the US Air Force Academy. Bowles (2012) conducted a detailed analysis of the evolution of LSP research with the rise in qualitative methods and interdisciplinarity and included an examination of the following analytical methods used in LSP: lexical and register analysis, genre analysis, conversation analysis, and ethnography and multimethod approaches. This article builds on the practical models and the evolutionary view of LSP research with an exploration of the novel research framework that is domain analysis.

Software engineers were the first to use the qualitative empirical framework known as domain analysis in their interdisciplinary field, as they design software for a wide variety of specific purposes and therefore have to interact with various stakeholders within their own field and throughout the professional areas of their clients (Laganière, n.d.) who might work in service to any field from accounting to language education. Other fields that similarly span disciplines and contexts and therefore use domain analysis include information science (Hjørland & Albrechtsen, 1995; Robinson, 2009; Smiraglia & López-Huertas, 2015), distance education (Bozkurt, 2019), and curriculum analysis and evaluation (White, 2001).

For the purposes of LSP courses and programs within the wider field of language education, domain analysis can be brought to bear to "identify critical skills, knowledge, abilities, and processes as well as possible assessment tasks" (Jun, 2014, p. 67). Testing experts Bachman and Palmer (1996) assert that language assessments should be designed for "a specific language use domain . . . [; a] situation or context in which the test taker will be using the language outside of the test itself" (p. 18). As we will show, the process of domain analysis includes defining the parameters of the specific language use domain; for example, the parameters of a broad domain such as "legal Spanish" might be narrowed to "public interest law in the United States" once the domain analysis framework has been applied. With LSP for professional contexts, test takers will normally use the language in a domain outside of academic environments altogether. This requires a wholesale shift, from tests, courses, and programs that focus on academic contexts and academic uses of language to ones that focus on applied specific contexts outside of academia. Raymond (2016) points out that in order to measure students' proficiency in the kinds of tasks they plan to engage in within a given non-academic domain, the content and testing cannot revolve entirely around academic performance in a classroom context (p. 144). Riconscente et al. (2016) similarly assert that the real-world tasks identified by way of domain analysis have "direct implications for assessment, including how the information is learned and communicated" (p. 45).

Only after empirical research has been conducted on the real-life contexts and situations in a given domain can researchers and practitioners identify the performance outcomes that students will need to deploy in the real-world domains (Messick, 1994). Once the target performance outcomes have been identified, assessments can be designed to measure student progress toward those proficiency targets (Riconscente, et al., 2016). When tests are aligned with domain-specific research results, the outcomes of those tests allow educators to make claims

about students' proficiency in "real-world situations in which people engage in the behaviors and utilize the knowledge key to the domain" (Riconscente, et al., 2016, p. 46) and avoid mismatches between assessments and the LSP domains in which they are used (O'Sullivan, 2012).

Getting Started with Domain Analysis

Before support for research using domain analysis became available through their campus language center, the authors approached LSP course design as most have throughout the history of the field: They gathered existing pedagogical materials and created a course around them. This approach places existing materials at the center of the curriculum without necessarily considering the LSP context, the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) students will need in that context, nor the target functional outcomes that address the alignment between what students can do with the language and what has to be accomplished in the real world.

Without any extant body of pedagogical materials, both authors faced the prospect of developing their curricula based largely on prior knowledge, anecdotal information, syllabi, and secondary literature. This is a common approach in the field of LSP, where there are no graduate programs in LSP and most faculty are therefore self-taught, working in LSP as an add-on to the work to which they are primarily appointed (Long & Uscinski, 2012). When one author designed and taught a Spanish for social workers class for the first time in 2013, she used her and her classmates' personal experiences from graduate school and in the field to identify student needs and design the course. She acquired existing books on the subject and researched syllabi in commonly taught courses, then made changes to the course each year based on experience from previous years. The guess work and trial-and-error ultimately consumed more time and money than would have been necessary had she known about domain analysis at the time.

The authors proceeded with domain analysis in four stages: data collection, data coding and analysis, identification of target participants and the parameters of the domain, and identification of KSAs and functional outcomes.

Stage 1: Data Collection

The first step in using a domain analysis framework is to conduct research to gather fundamental information about the specific domain. Data can include traditional sources, such as academic articles, syllabi, and textbooks, but it can also extend to other non-traditional sources. These other data sources can include trade magazines in the specific purpose area, job ads, podcasts, government and non-profit organizations, businesses and business-interest groups, media, documents, corpora, and websites. Interviews, surveys, field observations, and correspondence with key stakeholders, including students, administrators, colleagues, employers, job placement experts, and community partners also provide rich data for a domain analysis. This list of examples of sources of data is not exhaustive and neither author used all of the data points mentioned because the components vary by domain, but it is essential to include multiple points of data insofar as triangulation is a minimum requirement of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Stage 2: Data Coding and Analysis

Once all the data has been collected, the second stage is data coding and analysis. Each project in qualitative research requires its own coding scheme, developed as the researcher organizes the various data collected (Elliott, 2018). Here, the authors provide two sample coding schemes that were developed as part of larger research projects, one of which has been published (Lear, 2021).

One author designed a coding scheme for social work by starting with a two-column table: what is the data point and what does it mean for the various elements under consideration. The number of columns quickly expanded as "elements under consideration" were identified: content, vocabulary, and four skills. She then applied the coding scheme to the data collected (see Table 1).

Table 1

Example of Coding Scheme for Spanish for Social Work

Stakeholders	**Data**	
	Data Source	**Information Gathered**
Social work students	Survey	Survey about four skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Prospective employers	Survey	Survey about four skills: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing
Administrator at School of Social Work at the University	Stakeholder interviews / meetings Dean of students Deputy Dean for Curriculum Assistant Dean and Director of Career Services Director of Field Education of Social Work	4 skills 11 topic areas within the domain
Documents	Textbooks Syllabi	4 skills 4 topic areas within the domain

The other author, working in the domain of legal Spanish, began by moving all data by hand to index cards, then coding the contents of each card. The subsequent spreadsheet included five tabs that documented stakeholders, curated the codes and calculated the number of occurrences of each code, sorted the data by topic areas relevant to the domain, sorted the data by data source, and sorted the data by skill (see Table 2).

As with any research, the investigators have to determine the best approach to code and analyze the data they collect within their domain. One could use qualitative software to code data, such as NVivo or MAXQDA, or even quantitative tools if there are data of appropriate type and quantity to warrant the application of statistical methods.

Table 2

Example of Coding Scheme Analyzed in Excel Database for Spanish for Public Interest Law in the United States

Stakeholders
Law students
Dean of students
Experts
53 codes
4 skills + culture
34 topic areas within the domain
5 grammar topics
4 strategies (circumlocution, sight translation, pair work, use of interpreters)
Topic areas
Constitutional rights
Client interviews / intakes
Procedural language
Workers' rights
Affordable housing
Domestic violence
Contracts
Registering, licensing, permitting small business
Data sources
Stakeholder interviews / meetings
Stakeholder feedback
Government sources
Non-profit organizations
Textbooks
Media sources
Documents
Skills
Reading
Listening
Speaking
Circumlocution
Sight translation (reading in English, speaking and listening in Spanish with the client, then writing on the form in English)

Stage 3: Identification of Target Participants and Parameters of the Domain

The results of the data analysis allow the researcher to identify the target participants for the course and define the parameters for the domain. For example, in the case of Spanish for social workers, domain analysis revealed that the domain actually consisted of two distinct subdomains with different KSAs—clinical and administrative social workers. Target participants belonged to the former category so that parameters of the domain analysis were limited to clinical social work, with stakeholders indicating that the subdomain involves one-on-one

interactions with clients (i.e., school social workers with parents, school social workers with students, case managers with clients, etc.). In the subdomain of administrative social work, interactions with government agencies and other professionals would be more common than direct interactions with clients.

Target participants for legal Spanish were narrowed to law students with intermediate Spanish and above interested in studying content within the parameters of the sub-domain of public interest (non-corporate) law in the US context. In a needs analysis-type survey, students themselves might express significant interest in corporate law, but the actual data in a domain analysis may reveal those to be beyond the scope of a single ten-week course with a minimum requirement of intermediate level Spanish, as was the case in one study (Lear, 2021). The corporate sub-domain is a high stakes environment where large sums of money and professional reputations are at stake; a practicing attorney's Spanish language and cultures skills would have to be above reproach, something that is not achievable in a single course, especially given the large number of possible regional dialects and the wide variety of corporate contexts at play. Public interest law in the US context, where attorneys often advocate for pro-bono clients in situations related to immigration law, narrowed the topic areas to those described in Table 2 and provided target proficiency outcomes measurable by a summative test after a single course (Lear, 2021).

Stage 4: Identification of KSAs and Functional Outcomes

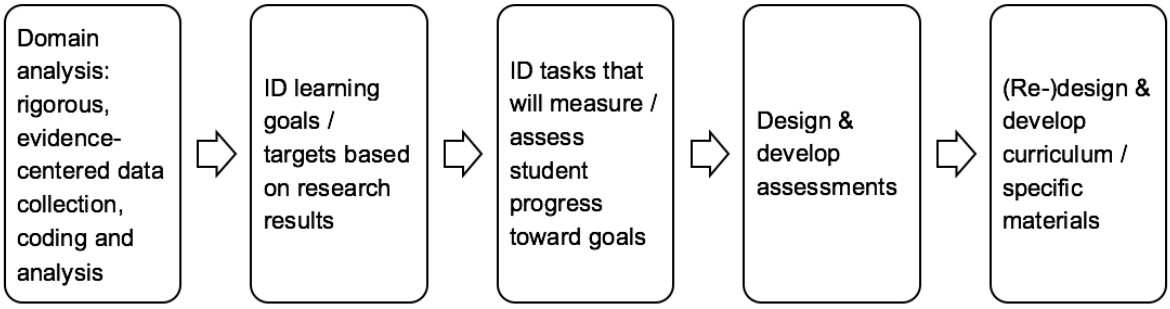
It is essential to define the KSAs students will need to develop so that target functional outcomes can be identified and then measured via testing and assessment. For example, in the domain of Spanish for social workers KSAs included the ability to communicate in Spanish with adults more often than with youth or children, especially in a school environment.

Two findings of the legal Spanish domain analysis related to KSAs were that a Spanish class was not going to provide any new legal content knowledge to law students (as the law school and the faculty therein were already providing that to a level far beyond what a language educator could provide) and that writing is not a necessary skill within the US public interest law context, where all writing would be done in English (Lear, 2021). A domain analysis aimed at legal Spanish for undergraduates who aspire to go to law school would yield entirely different results. For example, legal content knowledge might indeed be part of a course for undergraduates, while working legal professionals in a specific geographic region would have their own set of needs. The fact that there is a wide variety of possible sub-domains, even within a single "specific purpose" like legal Spanish, illustrates the importance of conducting a domain analysis for each and every domain or subdomain in order to narrow the target participants, parameters, and KSAs.

Once measurable functional outcomes have been identified through data coding and analysis, and target participants, parameters, and KSAs have been defined, researchers can frame the LSP proficiency targets as "Can Do" statements (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017a) and then map the target functions derived from domain analysis onto ACTFL's benchmark indicators (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017b). Sample lists of the target functions, topics, and text types from the domains of Spanish for clinical social work and legal Spanish for public interest law in the United States are included as illustrations in Appendices A and B. These should not be adopted by practitioners for use outside of the two specific domains described, as this would imply different functions, topics, and text types than the ones in development in the authors' current contexts.

Here again we see the key role of domain analysis in systematic backward design for LSP. The results that come from the kind of rigorous research that the domain analysis framework could provide allow language educators to then apply ACTFL's extensive research to develop clear, concrete, concise functional outcomes that are proficiency based and therefore *measurable*. It is only once we have research-based target functions that we can design tests that measure to what extent students meet proficiency targets in a given domain (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Riconscente, et al., 2016; Wagner, 2014). Completing test design and development is what allows for the *last* step in backward design: course (re)design and development (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Backward Design Using Domain Analysis Research Framework



From Proficiency Targets to Proficiency Tasks and Assessments

Using the functional outcomes that have been derived from the data, tasks that can be used as proficiency test prompts can be designed for all four skill areas: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The resulting proficiency tests could help measure student performance against the key functions from the target domain as identified through the research. Proficiency tests measure how well learners can use language in real life contexts to accomplish communicative goals by comparing unrehearsed responses to empirically derived criteria (ACTFL, 2012). It is important to note that within an LSP course, many other types of assessments may occur—formative assessment throughout, achievement testing tied to grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics—but because those are not tied to backward design that uses the domain analysis research framework, they are beyond the scope of this article. Below we describe sample tasks in each of the four skill areas for each domain (social work and law) from which the proficiency tasks that lead to test development emerge. Finally, we provide implications for the curricula.

Reading

The reading tasks that LSP students complete must reflect the kind of reading tasks they will have to do in real-world domains. Their performance on proficiency tests have to measure their progress toward functional target outcomes. Examples from the domain analysis of the kind of reading social workers will have to do in the school context include fact sheets on mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, etc.) and text messages from parents of their students. In the therapy context, reading tasks include assessment measures, client intake documentation, and teletherapy paperwork.

Within the legal context covered in the domain analysis—public interest law in the United States for law students—examples of necessary reading skills include case histories and case reports as well as Spanish-language content about topic areas largely to build vocabulary to be able to communicate with clients. These examples illustrate how widely the specific tasks within a given domain can vary and highlight the importance of conducting research to narrow parameters and identify specific topic areas.

Listening

Listening inputs often overlap with reading inputs. One benefit of conducting a domain analysis is that the process reveals distinct listening tasks professionals will need to be proficient in for each domain and sub-domain. Examples of listening tasks in social work domains studied by one author include conducting therapy with Spanish-speaking clients and communicating over the phone to engage in gatekeeping tasks, such as taking messages and directing callers to others. In school contexts, much of the listening occurs in communication with Spanish-speaking parents—both in person and over the phone.

Examples of listening from the legal Spanish domain include client intakes and understanding incident reports as well as Spanish-language content about the topic areas relevant to the practice of Spanish for public interest law in the US context. Were the legal domain broadened beyond public interest law in the United States, the domain analysis would certainly reveal different topic areas, skill requirements, and proficiency levels and therefore different target outcomes that would require their own task types on tests.

Speaking

The speaking portion of summative proficiency tests is an oral interview framed around topic areas identified through the domain analysis. For example, in social work students might be asked to role play a school meeting between a parent and a social worker. In law, students might be asked to describe legal cases that they know of and role play interactions with pro-bono clients. The LSP speaking tests are not OPIs; however, many of the OPIs' assessment principles are deployed, such as level checks, probes, and questioning strategies. To ensure the quality of the test administration, testers are ACTFL certified.

Writing

Within the two domains studied by the authors, writing was the skill area that most diverged from traditional academic writing, though that might not be the case for researchers in other domains where specific purposes can vary widely. For example, our colleague who teaches a classical language is doing domain analysis research for the specific purpose of using Latin in traditional history courses, where writing will likely have a central place in the curriculum.

Examples of writing for social workers that emerged from the domain analysis conducted by one author include writing notes, emails, or text messages to parents and scheduling meetings in a school context.

There were no examples of writing as a skill area in the domain of legal Spanish for law students at the University of Chicago who are interested in public interest law in the United States. Because of the US context, all written paperwork and correspondence is conducted in English, though there is a high demand for sight translation of written language (reading in English, speaking and listening in Spanish with the client, then writing on the form in English). It is important to note, however, that this is not generalizable. A new domain analysis done at another institution with a different demographic group within the field of law might yield different results.

Designing Proficiency Tasks

The above examples point to potentially unexpected results that data analysis reveal. In some cases, translating printed forms to allow for replicability within the agency or organization is the required skill. At other times, the form needs to be filled out in English and the necessary skill is sight translation. Though other types of testing can and should occur within any course, the tasks that appear on a proficiency test must reflect these results and include writing, where applicable, in non-traditional, non-academic genres such as emails, texts, and bureaucratic forms.

The topic areas identified in the domain analysis should be used to frame the search for authentic reading and listening materials that reflect the kind of skills and strategies students will have to deploy in the real world when using the target language and cultures to engage in activities in the specific context. Alternatively, researchers and instructors can design texts at the target proficiency level (see Appendices A and B for examples of the topic areas identified by the authors in the subdomain of Spanish for public interest law and the clinical sub-domain of Spanish for social work). Detailed prompts for each reading and listening task provide not only instructions, but also a rich context that puts students in the frame of the time, place, and circumstances they will be engaging with through the test task (Wagner, 2014). For example, before students read a client testimonial, they would first be presented with a prompt such as:

> Your law firm requires that some of your caseload be pro-bono. One of your clients is threatened with eviction despite the national moratorium due to a pandemic. She thinks she has been targeted because of her immigration status and her friend who recently gave a video / written testimonial recommended that she pursue her case with an attorney.
>
> Listen to [or read] the testimonial three times. You may take notes as you listen. Then fill in the following table, in English.

Task types for proficiency tests include summary protocol (read or listen and take notes, then write main ideas and supporting details for each), recall protocol (read or listen and take notes, then write as many details as you can recall), short answer questions, summary table (read or listen and take notes then fill in table, timeline or other graphic) (Alderson, 1995; Bernhardt, 1983; Buck, 2001; Wagner, 2014).

A summary protocol in which test takers write down a main idea and supporting details in English after having read or heard a text in the target language, aligns with academic discourse, such as lectures or essays. In a domain where case histories and background content in the context of client intakes represent the majority of input, those same discourse models might not apply. A case history is often just a series of occurrences strung together in chronological order without any kind of main idea in the form of a thesis statement followed by supporting details that are commonly found in academic texts. Therefore, appropriate task types for specific purpose proficiency tests might be summary tables, timelines, recall protocols, or short answer tasks. See Appendix C for a sample summary table.

Once a series of 3–4 test tasks have been designed for each of the relevant four skill areas, detailed analytical grading rubrics must be developed so that any grader could evaluate test takers' performance in a consistent manner (see Appendix C for a sample rubric). The rubric is designed to help graders operationalize the construct accessed by a given task; in other words, to measure the ability targeted by the proficiency task. The recall protocol sample task provided in Appendix D requires students to reconstruct all the information they needed to comprehend in order to complete the tasks in five categories in their own words in English. The rubric lists every possible piece of information (i.e., idea units) that comes from the text in each category along with the points available for each response. The order that students reconstruct the information and the word choice they use to do so does not need to match word-for-word to the ones in the rubric. The focus in grading is on the extent to which the students could convey the meaning rather than translating or paraphrasing the input word-for-word. Graders begin grading each recall protocol response from 0 points and award points for each observation of evidence that meets the criteria in the rubric. If a student's response is a close approximation of the content in a particular rubric item, full credit is awarded for that item. Also, graders award partial credit to any evidence of criteria (as specified in the rubric), even if the complete answer is not observable. For example, half a point would be award for a student answer such as "tenants protested" where the rubric states "a group of tenants protested some policy changes" or "no more visitor parking" where the rubric includes more details: "one change: visitor parking became rental parking."

Curricular (Re)Design

Once assessments, including evaluation rubrics, have been developed and designed as part of a backward design, the next step in the process is the design of new courses, re-design of existing ones, or realignment of a course curriculum that was previously developed by way of domain analysis but needs to be updated. Whether design, redesign, or realignment is required depends on the status of a given course or program. In the case of social work for one author, it is a redesign. The course has already been taught for years, so the current analyses of domains allow for possible redesign and realignment. The Legal Spanish course, a new course that has a domain analysis framework leading the entire backward design process, was first offered in spring 2021. Looking to the future, it will be possible that new stakeholders or uncovered data

come to light that require realignment via repeating—or at least revisiting—the entire backward design process.

Curriculum designers should be encouraged to develop a macro level plan for their proficiency-oriented, performance-based curriculum that describes the types of activities, materials, strategies, and resources that will be designed and deployed for each skill area. Then, using that big-picture plan, micro level plans can be prepared in logical chunks, such as by topic, week, or unit.

The in-class and out-of-class activities and formative assessments that move students from where they are to the target proficiencies by equipping them with the KSAs they need must conform to the target functions and topic areas identified through domain analysis as well as the standards of language pedagogy. For example, structured and scaffolded authentic input activities tied to topic areas identified through domain analysis can be used to develop out-of-class activities, such as vocabulary and grammar activities. In-class skills development will always include output practice and formative assessments, such as: end-of-unit grammar and vocabulary tests; in-class presentations or debates; role plays of client interviews; interpretation, sight translation, or circumlocution tasks; in-class reading or listening activities that require students to prepare follow-up questions for clients; and timed reading or listening activities that serve as practice for the final summative proficiency test. After each class, students will need out-of-class opportunities for reinforcement and practice. Throughout the course students are then constantly developing and deploying the skills and strategies they will need for the summative assessment, and therefore for how they will use the language in the real world.

While a comprehensive treatment of course development is beyond the scope of this article, examples from each of the two specific purposes domains studied by the authors might be illustrative. In the sub-domain of Spanish for clinical social workers, activities will be developed around tasks such as making and receiving phone calls, reading and completing intake forms, and corresponding with clients via email and text. Before a domain analysis was conducted, the curriculum for the course, Latinx and Spanish Language for Social Workers, categorized clinical and administration as one domain. There was an awareness of the two fields in the course that had been taught since 2013, but it had not been explicitly defined in the curriculum. Additionally, the course had been designed to help social workers communicate with students, among others, in the proper register in a school environment. Domain analysis revealed that in practice social workers rarely communicated in Spanish with students, who mostly spoke English and only used Spanish in school as a way to speak in code in the presence of monolingual English speakers.

In the subdomain of legal Spanish for public interest law in the United States, sources for course materials that provide authentic content include international government documents, podcasts, testimonials of Spanish-speakers with legal issues, and news reports about cases. In-class activities might include role plays with “clients,” preparing domain-appropriate presentational activities, sight translation, and class discussions. These ecologically valid tasks follow from the course objectives; then the students’ performance on tasks needs to be assessed. This sits in contrast to the author’s previous experience with teaching legal Spanish at other institutions, wherein ACTFL backward design was used as if this LSP course were a general language course in consultation with some undergraduate students interested in future careers in law. The process yielded a series of vocabulary units based on topics like the courtroom, civil and criminal cases, and interacting with authorities, each with vocabulary activities, press clippings to read, and voice recordings of native speakers recounting encounters in those

contexts, but no proficiency targets for what students could do in Spanish in those contexts, nor any way to measure their progress. This approach failed to consider how students would really use that content on the ground in their careers (in the actual "domain" of practice) while also ignoring the pedagogical feasibility of students' expressed needs.

The initial exploration of domain analysis has yielded promising results. If the summative proficiency test has been designed based on the results of a domain analysis, then the course content can parallel test content precisely because they are aligned around how the students are actually going to use the language in the real world. This is quite different from the distinct problem of "teaching to the test" in the context of achievement testing, wherein grammar and translation tasks that appear on tests have not been aligned in any way with the curriculum, yet by default drive the teaching methods in a course or program. It is this misalignment that, in other contexts, leads to a mismatch between a supposed communicative, proficiency-focused curriculum and its actual implementation anchored around achievement testing.

Conclusion

At the outset, we posited the challenge that LSP is a necessarily decentralized field in need of an evidence-centered framework that can serve as a common foundation upon which to build unique LSP courses and programs. The domain analysis framework is proposed as a way to integrate empirical research into the backward design process in LSP contexts that vary based on region, student demographics, subdisciplines, and any other number of unique factors. The process is not prescriptive—domain analysis provides a bottom-up, flexible framework that is applicable to many different contexts. While domain analysis serves as a potential research framework for any LSP course or program context, the two examples of domain analysis procedures presented in this article (Spanish for social work in clinical contexts and Spanish for public interest law in the United States) are not entirely generalizable to other contexts, even within the broader domains of social work and law.

The future of LSP is bright as more and more campuses develop courses and programs with scholars who are attracted to it as a primary or secondary discipline. As the field grows, it will need more and more evidence-centered research. Domain analysis is just one framework that could be applied to a wide variety of LSP domains in order to build a robust body of research for a field that is just starting to come into its own within higher education.

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Appendix A. Target Functions (Can Do Statements), Topics, and Test Types: Spanish for Clinical Social Workers

SPEAKING
Target functions: ● Can serve as an interpreter of both basic and complex information for Spanish-speaking clients in a health institution. ● Can ask questions to elicit details of experiences or a set of feelings and can respond naturally to new and unexpected information in various contexts related to social services. ● Can describe and explain procedures and treatments. ● Can describe in great detail behaviors, situations, and people.
Text Types (Spoken Output) and Topics: ● Sight translate details about processes, treatment plans in various health care scenarios. ● Client interviews for assessment for various health issues. ● Conduct individual, group and family therapy sessions in depression scenarios. ● Conduct individual, group and family counseling in domestic abuse scenarios. ● Conduct meetings with parents about their various kids' school contexts. (e.g., crisis intervention, child behavior, IEP meetings). ● Explain eligibility process regarding social services contexts (hospitalization, therapy, food stamps, etc.). ● Conduct client interviews for assessments for various mental health contexts (e.g., depression, alcohol and drug abuse, PTSD, Bio-psycho-social assessment).
LISTENING
Target functions: ● Can comprehend descriptions and narrations that convey information with some complexity about a therapeutic situation, behavioral issues regarding self and/or family members. ● Can understand answers and the overall message as well as all the details about the client's needs in order to follow-up regarding social services plan/action. (After reading prescriptive set of questions from intake/assessment forms). ● Can understand and interpret community announcements targeted to Latinx population. (e.g., school, church announcements).
Text Types (Listening Input) and Topics: ● Narration of child/student behavior in school. ● Description of family situations regarding domestic violence, domestic abuse, mental health. ● Description of events and dates in the future time frame.
READING
Target functions: ● Can understand details in texts that describe personal/legal information.

- Can understand a variety of commonly used questionnaire forms used in social service contexts.
- Can understand information in reports about social service clients.

Text Types (Reading Input) and Topics:

- Intake/assessment forms in various mental health contexts.
- Formal governmental/institutional documents.
- Texts from parents describing details of their children's behavior in school contexts.
- Can understand email messages explaining details about parents' concerns regarding children's behavior.
- Documents used in mental health screening tests.

WRITING

Target functions:

- Can describe processes and procedures relevant to social service contexts.
- Can narrate client case history in various social services contexts.

Text Types (Written Output) and Topics:

- Create documents relevant to various social services contexts (e.g., flyers, announcements, etc.).
- Generate questions for gathering data in various social services contexts.
- Describe details of therapy and counseling sessions.
- Describe children's behavior in school contexts.

Appendix B. Target Functions (Can-Do Statements), Topics, and Text Types: Legal Spanish for Public Interest Law in the United States

SPEAKING - Intermediate High

Target functions:

- Can explain rights, procedures, legal actions.
- Can provide Do's and Don'ts for local, regional and national contexts.
- Can conduct interviews to elicit incident history in various contexts that might require legal action.

Text Types (Spoken Output) and Topics:

- Explain constitutional rights when interacting with authorities in an immigration context, including Do's and Don'ts.
- Pro-bono client interviews in an immigration context: incident interview (ask what happened).
- Explain procedural language in civil and criminal case contexts so clients know the status of their cases as it proceeds through legal system.
- Explain rights and legal actions to take in different workers' rights scenarios.
- Explain rights and legal actions to take in domestic violence (VAWA) and child protection scenarios.
- Explain rights and legal actions to take in affordable housing and eviction scenarios.
- Explain contract language in various contract contexts.
- Explain entrepreneurial planning and business development (registering and licensing small businesses).

LISTENING – Intermediate High

Target functions:

- Can understand details and relationships as described by clients in incident history in various contexts that might require legal action.
- Can understand details and relationships in descriptions of procedural language related to civil and criminal cases.

Text Types (Listening Input) and Topics:

- Incident histories tied to violation of constitutional rights, employment discrimination, violence against women / child protection, affordable housing & eviction.
- Procedural language describing details of civil and criminal cases.
- Incident histories tied to contractual language/agreements.
- Descriptions of process in licensing and registering small businesses.

READING – Intermediate High

Target functions:

- Can understand details and relationships in texts that describe rights, procedures, legal actions.
- Can understand details and relationships in texts that describe incident history in various contexts that might require legal action.

Text Types (Reading Input) and Topics:

- Incident histories tied to violation of constitutional rights, employment discrimination, violence against women / child protection, affordable housing & eviction.
- Procedural language describing details of civil and criminal cases.
- Incident histories tied to contractual language/agreements.
- Descriptions of process in licensing and registering small business.

Appendix C. Sample Grading Rubric

Task Intermediate High (32 points) (80% is full credit)

Points Awarded (up to 1 each)	
	Description of the family:
	Candelaria Arriaga is 40
	Originally from Mexico
	5 kids
	Kids ages: 7, 12, 17, 19, 21
	Expecting first grandchild
	Current living situation:
	Everyone lives together
	Live in a mobile home park
	Been there 6 years
	Do repairs to keep the home going
	History of conflict with trailer park management:
	Trailer park managed by Starlite Mobile
	No problems until the beginning of the year
	A group of tenants protested some policy changes
	One change: visitor parking became rental parking
	After complaining, management asked tenants to do expensive repairs on their homes
	Tenants think it was retaliation for their complaints
	Tenants complied with repair requests
	Management refused to accept rent & utilities payments ($1,100–$1250)
	Management said tenants hadn't made repairs & therefore wouldn't take rent
	Legal actions taken by trailer park owners and managers:
	Demand letters from management claiming breach of agreement by tenants
	Failure to pay rent letters from management
	Management sued Candelaria for $4000 in past-due rent
	She got a hearing
	Judge decided in favor of company
	Eviction order issued
	Judge granted her an extension (until September 2nd)

	State laws governing this issue (absent a pandemic):
	Stricter eviction laws for trailer parks than apartments
	Owners have right to sell mobile home before they are evicted
	Management must give 60 days' notice with eviction from mobile home
	60 days allows owner to relocate mobile home
	60 days also because high cost to move mobile home
	60 days also because of possibility of damage to mobile home when moving
	Owners have a right to appeal judge's decision

Appendix D. Sample Proficiency Test Prompt & Summary Table Plus Grading Rubric

Your law firm requires that some of your caseload be pro-bono. One of your clients is threatened with eviction despite the national moratorium due to a pandemic. She thinks she has been targeted because of her immigration status and her friend who recently gave a video / written testimonial recommended that she pursue her case with an attorney.

Listen to (or read) the testimonial three times. You may take notes as you listen. Then fill in the following table, in English.

(text based on: https://www.univision.com/noticias/hispanos/la-lucha-de-una-madre-inmigrante-con-8-hijos-para-no-terminar-en-la-calle-por-un-desalojo-injusto)

Description of the family:
Current living situation:
History of conflict with trailer park management:
Legal actions taken by trailer park owners and managers:
State laws governing this issue (absent a pandemic):