

LSP Teacher Training in Europe and the United States: Trends, Challenges, Solutions, and Future Directions

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LSP Teacher Training in Europe and the United States: Trends, Challenges, Solutions, and Future Directions

Abstract: Current research in the domain of languages for specific purposes (LSP) reveals an increasing need for enhanced collaboration and knowledge sharing among LSP scholars and practitioners across diverse geographic areas. This article addresses this need in the context of LSP teacher education training by examining the similarities and differences between LSP teacher training in Europe and the United States, and by suggesting training practices that can be adapted to diverse educational and cultural contexts. Throughout the article, the authors explore specific trends, challenges, and solutions for LSP teacher training from both European and US perspectives. The conclusion identifies future research directions to ensure that LSP teachers are better equipped to meet diverse, evolving linguistic professional needs in specific contexts.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, languages for specific purposes (LSP), professional development, teacher needs, teacher training

Introduction

Currently, languages for specific purposes (LSP) literature suggests a significant need for increased communication among LSP scholars and practitioners from various geographical regions to share ideas and collaborate on innovative LSP projects (Basturkmen, 2024; John et al., 2023; Kic-Drgas & Jurkovič, 2024; Ruggiero, 2018). Recently, Lafford, Ferreira Cabrera and Arnó Macià (2025) have noted that LSP has developed differently in distinct regions due to:

- the distinct academic profiles of LSP practitioners in various regions (more tenure-track LSP faculty in Europe, Latin America and Asia vs. more contract LSP faculty in the United States);
- the use of different theoretical frameworks in various regions (e.g., a focus on discourse/genre/corpus studies in Europe, Latin America and Asia vs. a pedagogical focus in the United States);
- a variety of themes and professional domains (e.g., business, tourism, and law in Europe vs. business and medical in the United States); and
- LSP Communities of Practice (CoPs) (Lave & Wenger, 1991), that mostly contain members from the same geographic region.

As a result of these differences, Lafford, Ferreira Cabrera and Arnó Macià (2025) propose that it is necessary for LSP scholars and practitioners in different geographical areas to increase connections, communication and collaboration with their counterparts across the globe in order to expand the quantity and quality of LSP research and practice through peer learning.

One area that merits increased collaboration across borders concerns the training of LSP teachers, who help prepare language students to interact in various workplace contexts and develop the professional skills most in demand, including communicative and intercultural

competences, as well as community collaboration (King Ramírez & Bocanegra-Valle, 2025). In addition, Lafford (2024) has noted the importance of increased communication, contact, and collaboration among those who train current and future LSP teachers around the globe in order to move the field forward.

This article will review the trends, challenges, and solutions in LSP faculty training, with a focus on initiatives in Europe and the United States. First, European LSP teacher training projects will be discussed, followed by trends, challenges, and potential solutions for training US-based LSP teachers. The important role of technology in supporting continuous LSP self-development through collaboration and autonomous learning is also examined. The article concludes by exploring future research directions for improving LSP pedagogy and professional development.

LSP Teacher Training in Europe

This section will explore trends, challenges, and solutions for LSP teacher training that have been either adopted or developed within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The EHEA is comprised of 49 countries and was created in 2010 with the aim of harmonizing higher education systems in Europe. According to the Council of Europe (2025), the primary objective of EHEA is “to create more comparable, compatible and coherent higher education systems in Europe.” The following discussion explores progress being made in EHEA countries towards creating a coherent framework for the training of LSP teachers.

Trends

Courses for LSP teachers are largely absent from language teacher education programs across the EHEA (John et al., 2023; Zourou & Torresin, 2019). Moreover, those that do exist often fail to adequately prepare language teachers for the specialized demands of teaching a language for specific purposes (Bocanegra-Valle & Basturkmen, 2019; Turula & Gajewska, 2019); this is due to the fact that the focus of teacher education programs tends to be on general language teaching methodologies rather than on the specific needs associated with LSP teaching (Jurkovič, Mertelj, & Podgoršek, 2024). Many studies indicate that the majority of language teachers within the EHEA (70% according to Zourou and Torresin [2019]; and 75% according to John et al. [2023]) have not received specialized training prior to teaching LSP. Consequently, language teachers often enter the profession without the specific knowledge, skills, or training needed to effectively teach students who require language proficiency for specialized fields (Kelly et al., 2004; Tano, 2020).

European LSP teachers generally fall into one of the two following groups:

- language teachers initially trained to teach language for general communicative purposes, who transition to LSP teaching due to job demands, institutional needs, or personal career interests, and very often without specific training in LSP pedagogy;
- content or subject-matter experts, like economists or engineers, who are proficient in a language but often lack qualification or formal training in language pedagogy in general and LSP in particular, making it difficult for them to effectively integrate language instruction into their content teaching.

Studies in LSP teaching and professional development have reported a dearth of training regardless of the group to which teachers belong (Bocanegra-Valle & Perea-Barberá, 2023; John et al., 2023; Jurković et al., 2024; Zourou & Torresin, 2019).

Challenges

The absence of a well-defined pathway for training LSP teachers creates significant challenges in developing effective teaching practices tailored to students' language needs (Bocanegra-Valle, 2012). This highlights a pressing need for higher education programs to offer specialized training in LSP that equips teachers with the tools and knowledge required to bridge the gap between language and discipline content teaching. Addressing this need reveals three major challenges in training and professional development, discussed below.

Scarcity of LSP Teachers' Specific Knowledge and Training

As noted above, LSP teachers in Europe normally do not receive specialized LSP teacher training beyond the generalized pedagogical formation they receive as language practitioners. According to King Ramírez and Bocanegra-Valle (2025), existing courses for training LSP faculty in Europe are very scarce or non-existent in many European countries. As a result, LSP teachers may begin to teach these specialized language courses without the specific knowledge and training needed to successfully impart a professionally-focused language course, such as the ability to carry out a needs analysis in a given professional field, to apply design principles for LSP curricular design, to adhere to standards for LSP teachers, and to be evaluated by those standards.

In order to close this gap in LSP teachers' specific knowledge and training, there is a need to carry out a large-scale study to identify faculty needs and required skills that should be expected of LSP teachers in Europe. This type of study is also needed to inform the subsequent development of LSP teacher competence standards and specialized curricula. The data from such a study would help identify the resources needed for pre- and in-service training, as well as for ongoing learning and the upgrading of LSP faculty skills (Chateaufreynaud & Deyrich, 2023).

Lack of a Range of Skills Crucial for LSP Teachers

In addition to acquiring specific knowledge and training, LSP teachers must develop a range of "soft skills" (such as problem-solving, critical thinking, intercultural communicative competence, collaboration, community engagement, and metacognitive reflection on their own learning [Breka et al., 2023]), as well as technological competencies that are fundamental in modern education settings and that extend beyond content knowledge (Arnó-Macià, 2025). LSP teacher technological competencies would need to include not only the mastery of the use of technological tools to enhance teaching (e.g., virtual/remote exchange tools, digital resources, Collaborative Online International Learning [COIL], and virtual reality tools [Arnó-Macià et al., 2024; Arnó-Macià et al., 2021]), but also the ability to use technology to enhance LSP research in Europe, which is often based on discourse, genre, and corpus analysis (Sánchez-López et al., 2025; Tano, 2021). The development of both "soft" and technological skills needs to be addressed by the creation of LSP teacher standards informed by the aforementioned needs analyses of LSP professionals.

Underdeveloped International Collaboration

Not only are LSP teacher training courses scarce in Europe, there is a lack of international collaboration in the creation of such training that would benefit faculty teaching LSP courses in different languages in various geographic areas. As LSP courses in EHEA countries are taught in several different languages, European LSP teacher training materials and programs need to be available online in multiple languages. In order to facilitate ongoing support among LSP teachers imparting courses in the same (or different) target languages, online CoPs can be formed that help connect experienced and novice LSP practitioners from various countries with common interests and challenges (King Ramírez & Bocanegra-Valle, 2025). These CoPs also need to provide mentoring opportunities to help future and early-career LSP faculty integrate practitioner communities. Additionally, this training needs to be interdisciplinary in nature, involving increased communication between LSP teachers and experts in different professional fields (e.g., healthcare, business, tourism, law, maritime studies, engineering [Lockwood, 2019]). Kakoulli Constantinou and Papadima-Sophocleous (2023) and Bocanegra-Valle (2023) propose that this type of multilingual and interdisciplinary contact, communication, and collaboration results in mutual learning and cooperative professional development among LSP professionals at all stages of their careers from different international contexts.

In addition, effective LSP teacher training needs to recognize and take into account the diversity of LSP teacher backgrounds and current circumstances. Moreover, as LSP faculty in some European countries do not have the financial resources to travel to LSP conferences or training workshops, free online training resources would allow more LSP professionals to receive such training. As LSP faculty vary in their work schedules and their training needs, LSP teacher training should consist of individual thematic modules (covering needs analysis, assessment, and LSP course design, for example) and be offered in an asynchronous format to allow teachers to choose their training topics and self-pace their progress. These features would allow for maximum flexibility so that the LSP teacher training could meet the needs of a large number of faculty.

Facilitating international networking and large-scale collaboration across Europe and beyond would allow LSP teachers around the globe to share best practices, exchange knowledge, develop collaborative research and innovative teaching methods, foster mutual learning, and promote continuous professional growth.

Solutions

In an effort to provide LSP teacher training and address these challenges, three courses were developed with funding from the European Commission under the framework of the Erasmus+ program.¹ These are discussed below.

¹ The Erasmus+ program funds projects that promote education and cooperation between universities and higher education institutions across Europe. For details and outcomes of past and current projects, consult <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>.

TRAILS Project

The LSP Teacher Training Summer School (TRAILS) project was developed between 2018 and 2021 by seven European universities.² The project stemmed from the observed lack of comprehensive LSP teacher education courses in the EU that suggested a gap between the LSP teachers' professional knowledge and competencies and the demands of their roles. To fill this gap, a course was designed and held online in February 2021. The course content and expected learning outcomes were developed following a needs analysis conducted across Europe, which involved a survey and interviews (Bocanegra-Valle & Perea-Barberá, 2023). The survey contained a list of skills needed by LSP teachers from which respondents could choose; participants could also add other LSP teacher needs that they felt were missing from the list. Interviews helped to refine the list of needs. The data from 621 responses gathered from a survey of pre- and in-service teachers across 33 EHEA countries and 29 interviews of pre- and in-service teachers from 13 EHEA countries led to the identification of 45 knowledge and training needs, together with other 17 additional needs. The top ten knowledge and training needs most often identified by these data were, in order of relevance: needs analysis, vocabulary teaching, materials design, disciplinary awareness, course design, lesson planning, LSP general principles, disciplinary genres, task-based teaching, and materials evaluation. This needs analysis was relevant to the project because the identified needs were key for the design and development of the contents that were delivered in the course.³

CATAPULT Project

The Computer Assisted Training Platform to Upskill LSP Teachers (CATAPULT) was a project developed by six European universities over the same time span as TRAILS and aimed to meet the needs of 21st-century LSP teachers.⁴ A massive open online course (MOOC) was developed to offer training in LSP pedagogies and information and communication technology (ICT) through a combination of videos, written texts, and quizzes. This project also provided LSP teachers with lifelong learning opportunities by means of three levels of engagement and opportunities for interaction with other course participants. This MOOC builds on a set of key competences identified as part of an “LSP Teacher Common Competence Framework” (CCF)⁵. This CCF was developed through document analysis using articles from two international journals, a survey, and interviews conducted among LSP teachers in Europe (Turula & Gajewska, 2019). As shown in Figure 1 below, the CCF contains five comprehensive groups of competences essential for LSP teaching.

² See project website for more details: <https://trails.hypotheses.org>.

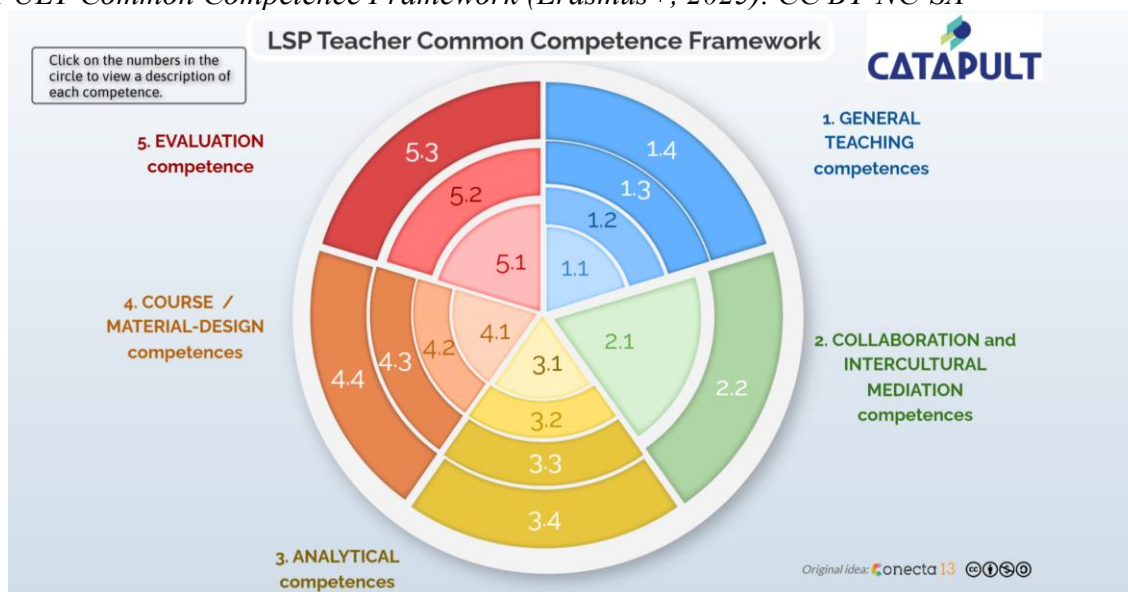
³ For more information about the course content, see Kic-Drgas & Jurkovič (2024: 91-95).

⁴ See project website for more details: <https://catapult-project.eu/overview/>.

⁵ The LSP Competence Framework is available at https://catapult-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CATAPULT_LSP_Teacher_CCF_v12.pdf.

Figure 1

CATAPULT Common Competence Framework (Erasmus+, 2025). CC BY-NC-SA



Each competence group is further subdivided into specific sub-competences, which are then broken down into detailed descriptors or indicators. For instance, the evaluation competence includes three distinct sub-competences: “know-how of course evaluation,” “LSP-focused search and information literacies,” and “assessment and evaluation skills.” Given its detailed structure, this competence framework can provide a robust foundation for the design and development of LSP teacher education courses that can be adapted to local contexts.

Two innovative platforms were developed to support LSP teachers and facilitate networking and collaboration through CoPs such as *LiguaCoP* and *LinguaClick* (CATAPULT, n.d.). *LiguaCoP* is the CATAPULT CoP that provides LSP teachers from anywhere in the world with forums, blogs, and a shared teaching resource repository (lesson plans and teaching materials). *LinguaClick* is a matching tool for LSP teachers to advertise their expertise as well as to connect with students and employers around the world for face-to-face and online LSP classes.

LSP-TEOC.Pro Project

LSP Teacher Education Online Course for Professional Development (LSP-TEOC.Pro) is a project developed between 2020 and 2023 by nine European universities.⁶ The course offers pre-service and in-service LSP teachers a free, multilingual, self-directed, online platform to develop the competencies necessary for effectively teaching languages within specific contexts. While the learning outcomes closely align with the LSP Teacher Common Competence Framework established by the CATAPULT project, they have been independently developed based on the needs analysis findings from the TRAILS project. This course is expected to be completed by participants in 48 hours, and comprises eight modules: “Introduction to LSP,” “Needs analysis,” “LSP course and syllabus design,” “LSP communities, genres, and corpora,”

⁶ See project website (<https://lsp-teoc-pro.de/>), Bocanegra-Valle (2023), and Kic-Drgas and Jurkovič (2024) for more details. The course will be available until September 2028 via: <https://moodle.lsp-teoc-pro.de/login/index.php>.

“LSP teaching skills,” “LSP materials evaluation and design,” “Task-/project-/problem-based LSP teaching/learning,” and “LSP assessment.” Each module (except for “Introduction to LSP”) is divided into three sections, and these sections are followed by a series of quizzes to test the participants’ understanding of the topics, the activities, and the materials:

Section 1: This section introduces participants to the theoretical concepts underpinning each topic within a specific content module. It includes an input segment featuring video lessons, an activity where experienced LSP teachers provide insights and share their experiences related to the topic, as well as activities for self-assessment.

Section 2: This section focuses on practical application as it guides participants through the content from the perspectives of both LSP users and pre-service LSP teachers. Participants are required to engage in a series of receptive, productive, and cognitive tasks.

Section 3: In this section, participants assume the role of an in-service LSP teacher to design a lesson plan, complete a teacher cognition task, and undertake a final assessment activity.

As a self-regulated online course, flexibility is a fundamental feature, allowing students to choose and complete as many modules as they wish, in any order they prefer. Alternatively, students may opt to complete the entire course. The course is offered in nine languages (English, Spanish, Slovenian, French, German, Italian, Croatian, Turkish, and Polish) making it both multilingual and accessible to diverse language speakers. Additionally, it is interdisciplinary, with materials and activities spanning various fields such as engineering, business, maritime studies, tourism, law, and medicine. The course is also credentialled: Upon completing each module, course participants receive a badge as recognition of their achievement, and a final badge is awarded upon the successful completion of the entire course. Despite the course’s accessibility to an international audience, enrollment figures to date (March 2025) attest that the great majority (98%) of participants in this online course are from Europe, with little participation from LSP scholars and practitioners from other regions (such as South America, the United States, or Asia).

LSP Teacher Training in the United States

This section will explore trends, challenges, and possible solutions for the training of LSP faculty in the United States. In this discussion, comparisons will be made between LSP teacher training projects developed in Europe and extant training in the United States for LSP practitioners. However, the advances in teacher training programs in Europe cannot simply be applied to a US context. In fact, notable differences between LSP scholars and practitioners in various geographic areas (e.g., faculty profiles, research requirements, theoretical underpinnings and research themes [Lafford, 2024]) require that the pedagogical training LSP professionals receive be responsive to local needs and contexts.

Trends

Similar to the situation in Europe, there is evidence that over the past few decades, LSP teacher training in the United States has largely been ignored in language teacher education programs. Results from a recent survey of LSP teachers in the United States indicate that about three-quarters (76%) of respondents had not had any specific LSP training prior to their teaching of professional language courses, and 69% of those respondents noted they had not received any

in-service LSP professional development/training (Chery, 2024). As LSP teachers require the development of specialized knowledge and skills beyond those required by teachers of languages for general purposes, there is a recognized obligation to provide more professional development programs grounded in LSP research that specifically focus on the needs of LSP professionals (King Ramírez & Bocanegra-Valle, 2025). In addition, due to the increased number of Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States in recent years, most LSP research there has focused on the teaching of Spanish for specific purposes (SSP) to help meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking community, especially their need to understand and be understood in healthcare settings (Martínez, 2022). However, recent work by Bouche and Reisinger (2021) also demonstrates the need for more programs and research in the field of French for specific purposes (FSP) in the United States.

LSP Teacher Training Resources in the United States

Over the last four decades, US universities and professional organizations have sponsored LSP teacher training opportunities that focus primarily on LSP curriculum development and pedagogical approaches and techniques (e.g., Eastern Michigan University [1980s-1990s]; the Centers for Business Education and Research [CIBERs] Business Language conferences [early 2000s-2014] and the International Symposium for Languages for Specific Purposes [est. 2012] that have combined their conferences since 2016; the American Translators Association [ATA]; and the National Center of Interpretation [NCI]). Medical Spanish training and resources are offered by the National Association of Medical Spanish (NAMS, est. 2020), the only LSP-focused professional organization in the United States. Resources for LSP teachers in the United States also include the Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE) (est. 2009) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) LSP Special Interest Group (SIG) (est. 2022), which serves as a CoP for US LSP professionals and offers webinars on LSP topics. Despite the access that international LSP professionals have to the US-based ACTFL LSP SIG, the SIG membership list shows that 96% of the 229 participants in this group are affiliated with US educational institutions (ACTFL, 2024).

Despite these initiatives, access to formal university-level LSP teacher training in graduate curricula is limited in the United States. For instance, King Ramírez and Bocanegra-Valle (2025) note that only a handful of Spanish graduate programs have offered graduate-level courses in SSP research/pedagogy; however, the recent creation of SSP graduate assistant positions (for example, at Colorado State University) and other graduate training opportunities will help prepare those students for the increasing number of SSP/LSP tenure-track jobs at US universities (Lafford, 2017; Chery, 2024).

Challenges

In spite of the availability of the resources, workshops, and conference sessions to upgrade the skills of LSP faculty in the United States, major challenges to LSP teacher training still exist. Three of these challenges are discussed below.

Lack of Administrative Support in the United States

Lafford's (2017) survey data of US Spanish-language academics showed that the field of SSP lacks the institutional respect and prestige that has traditionally been accorded to Spanish-language literature, cultural studies, and linguistics. In addition, Sánchez-López, Long and Lafford's (2017) survey of US SSP professionals demonstrated that resistance to change by university administrators and by language faculty teaching in traditional fields has led to a lack of support for the creation of SSP tenure-track lines, which would lead to the expansion of SSP research and to the offering of career-focused SSP courses by tenure-track faculty. As a result of this lack of support, the majority of LSP courses in the United States are being taught by non-tenure-track faculty (Lafford, 2024). This stands in contrast to the situation in Europe, in which most SSP faculty are tenure-track faculty (Lafford, 2024).

Chery (2024) notes several factors arising from a lack of administrative support that pose a challenge to the creation of accessible LSP teacher training in the United States. First, as the majority of US LSP teachers are contract faculty without research expectations (Lafford, 2024), they do not normally receive institutional funding for attending LSP training sessions at language conferences. In addition, due to the small numbers of LSP professionals at any given institution, administrators may not consider it cost-effective to spend resources to train only a few LSP faculty members.

Absence of Standards for US-based LSP Teachers

Despite the existence of ACTFL foreign language teacher standards (ACTFL/CAEP 2013), standards specifically for US-based LSP teachers have yet to be established; this contrasts with the creation of the CCF for LSP practitioners in Europe. Although US LSP teacher training could modify some of the LSP teacher competences established by CATAPULT's CCF in Europe, it is preferable to create US standards from a needs analysis carried out on data from current LSP professionals in the United States in order to address specific local or regional needs of that faculty. As noted by King Ramírez, Lafford, and Wermers (2021) for the training and evaluation of online language teachers, locally determined specific standards and appropriate assessment tools need to be created for faculty who are required to possess knowledge and abilities that go beyond those of traditional language instructors. Before Chery's (2024) study (explained below), the establishment of specific knowledge and skill sets for LSP faculty in the United States had not been explored.

Need for a Wider Application of Critical Pedagogical Approaches to LSP Teacher Training in the United States

The rise in the number of Spanish-speakers immigrating to the United States has led to an increased demand for individuals who are able to communicate effectively with this immigrant population in professional settings in various domains (e.g., healthcare, legal, business). As a result, the SSP literature has noted the need to expand the linguistic skills of bilingual US heritage learners of Spanish, who already possess a great deal of sociolinguistic competence to communicate effectively in workplace settings with other Spanish speakers (Abbott & Martínez, 2018). Through their participation in community service learning and internships, SSP students become aware of the diversity present within the US Spanish-speaking community and come to

understand first-hand the challenges facing immigrants within that community and their first-generation children. If they are required to critically reflect on their experiences, students can become aware of how to use their agency to help address these issues for their careers and beyond. Likewise, US LSP instructors in languages other than Spanish need to be taught to create curricular offerings that highlight challenges to local linguistically-marginalized communities. Such an effort can be seen in the creation of a new FSP course offered at Princeton University with the purpose of increasing interest in the French language, promoting awareness of challenges facing US Francophone communities, and enacting social change (Blaise, 2023).

In order to teach their students how to be effective agents for social change in their target linguistic communities, US LSP faculty need more training in pedagogical approaches that raise their own *critical consciousness* (*conscientização*, Freire 1970) so that they can facilitate this development in their students. This critical pedagogical approach to LSP teacher training is intended to make teachers more aware of challenges faced by linguistically marginalized communities often served by LSP programs via community service learning (CSL)/internships, and projects funded by interdisciplinary collaborative grants.

Solutions

In contrast to the significant concrete solutions to European challenges to LSP teacher training that have already been implemented (e.g., TRAILS, CATAPULT, LSP-TEOC.Pro), in the United States, many solutions have been proposed, some have been actualized, but most have yet to be fully realized.

Increased Administrative Support for LSP in the United States

In order for LSP to take its place in academia as a recognized professional field in the United States, administrators need to understand the benefits that LSP programs can have for departments (such as increased enrollments via student matriculation in LSP courses that match their interests and benefit their careers) and the institutions that house them (like meeting university community-focused goals through CSL/internships, or attracting outside funding via interdisciplinary grant collaborations with other units). Experienced LSP professionals can be invited to campus to meet with department faculty and administrators to explain these benefits. Once these colleagues and departmental leaders become allies, they can help convince upper administrators of the value of LSP contributions to the curricula and students' educational options.

Chery (2024) proposed a set of strategies for obtaining administrative support for the expansion of LSP programs and LSP teacher training. Her plan was devised by drawing on Muhammad and Cruz's (2019) framework for the use of cognitive (establishing communication, e.g., appeals to reason and practicality), emotional (establishing trust, e.g., publicly valuing teachers) and functional (capacity building, e.g., training opportunities) investments for effecting change in higher education. The qualitative data from her study showed that US LSP faculty and programs were in need of cognitive, emotional, and functional investments by university administrators. Cognitive investments could include administrator explanations of the importance of LSP for departmental growth to all faculty members. Emotional investments by administrators could include the creation of mentoring programs so that LSP teachers feel supported. Finally, functional investments could involve administrators obtaining funding for

training in current LSP pedagogy and support for LSP faculty applications for grant-funding opportunities.

Creation of Standards for US-based LSP Teachers

In contrast to the situation in Europe with the CCF standards for LSP teaching, there is a lack of established standards for US LSP faculty. The notable exception to this is the creation of the Physician Oral Language Observation Matrix (POLOM) exam by NAMS (2022). According to De Rutté, Galarreta-Aima, and Nate (2024) this assessment tool provides an evaluation of contextualized Spanish speaking skills that is holistic and detailed and allows for reliable ratings of the Spanish oral proficiency of healthcare workers. However, as this assessment tool was uniquely crafted to measure the necessary Spanish oral communication skills of US SSP faculty, there is still a need to develop additional standards for US LSP faculty addressing key requisite facets of their work like oral communication skills in languages other than Spanish, curricular development skills, workplace professional skills, and the ability to create and sustain community partnerships.

The establishment of US LSP faculty knowledge and competence standards should be gleaned from a needs analysis carried out with US LSP professionals and not be based on LSP teacher competencies established in other regions (e.g., CCF). To this end, Chery (2024) collected data from 46 surveys of 26 questions each and 20 semi-structured interviews with US LSP faculty to elicit their opinions on the importance of the development of certain skills in LSP teacher-training programs. The primary languages taught by these study participants were as follows: Spanish (53.33%), French (24.44%), Chinese (2.22%), German (2.22%), Japanese (2.22%) and Other (15.56%). The results were subjected to a mixed-methods analytic approach involving descriptive statistics to report survey findings and a reflexive thematic analysis to interpret open-ended survey and interview data. Table 1 compares the survey findings of Chery's US study with those of the TRAILS project (Bocanegra-Valle & Perea-Barberá, 2023).

Table 1

Ranked Comparison of Most Important Knowledge and Training Needs, Based on Surveys of LSP teachers in Europe and the United States

Europe	United States
1. Analysis of target and learner needs	1. LSP curricular (backwards) design and materials design and development
2. LSP vocabulary teaching	2. Critical cultural awareness (CCA) and Critical language awareness (CLA)
3. Materials design and development	3. Task-based teaching and learning
4. Disciplinary context awareness	4. Content-based instruction (CBI)
5. Course design and development	5. How to carry out a needs analysis
6. Lesson planning	6. LSP vocabulary acquisition
7. General principles about LSP	7. CSL/Internships
8. Disciplinary genres	8. Case-based pedagogy
9. Task-based teaching	9. Discourse/genre/corpus-based teaching
10. Materials evaluation	10. CALL (including collaborative online international learning [COIL])

Although these two studies differed by region, the total number of needs identified, and in the number of participants, both were focused on having LSP professionals identify knowledge and training needs of LSP teachers. In these two studies, the participants were able to choose LSP teacher needs from a list, as well as add other responses. The data show that both participant groups concurred on the need for the following knowledge and skills: needs analysis, vocabulary teaching/acquisition, curricular and materials design and development, and task-based teaching. However, the two groups differed in their focus on other skills needed for LSP teachers. While the LSP faculty in Europe highlighted the need for theoretical knowledge (general principles about LSP, disciplinary knowledge, disciplinary genres) and pedagogical issues (lesson planning and materials evaluation), LSP faculty in the United States identified the need for LSP teachers to develop concrete pedagogical strategies, specifically content-based instruction (CBI), case-based pedagogy, discourse/genre/corpus-based teaching, computer assisted language learning (CALL)/collaborative online international learning (COIL), and community engagement (CSL/internships). Furthermore, US-based LSP faculty also identified the need to incorporate two important constructs into LSP curricula: *critical cultural awareness* (CCA) (Byram, 1997), i.e., the ability to evaluate products, practices, and perspectives in one's native and target cultures, and *critical language awareness* (CLA), i.e., knowledge of linguistic practices and awareness of how social relationships of power shape (and are shaped by) these practices (Clark et al., 1990). The identification of community engagement and critical pedagogical approaches to be part of US-based LSP teachers' knowledge and training highlights the need to identify skills that will enhance an LSP instructor's chances for success in their work within particular US contexts. These locally determined standards, which recognize the need to ascertain and meet the needs of particular linguistically marginalized communities (e.g., the Spanish-speaking Latinx population, and French-speaking Haitians in the United States), form part of a critical pedagogical approach to LSP teacher training in the United States.

Implementation of a Critical Pedagogical Approach to LSP Teacher Training

Critical approaches to language teaching in the United States have gained currency in recent pedagogically focused works. Randolph and Clemons (2024) proposed incorporating into language curricula a social justice focus that integrates the four domains comprising the Social Justice Standards framework: identity, diversity, justice, and action (Learning for Justice, 2022). In addition, Loza and Beaudrie (2021) proposed the application of critical constructs (CCA/CLA) in the development of Spanish heritage learner (SHL) curricula. The incorporation of these constructs into the creation of LSP course curricula then is encouraged, because (as mentioned earlier) Abbott and Martínez (2018) have pointed out the advantages to SHLs for their participation in US CSL/internship opportunities. Moreover, Lafford (2024) proposed a focus on the development of *transformative authenticity* (TA), which comprises “the quality of both providing a balanced view of all perspectives and values and especially also giving back to individuals (and communities) and stimulating positive action or change” (Plews, Misfeldt, & Feddersen, 2023, p. 123) for students involved in LSP experiential learning opportunities, such as domestic and study abroad service learning/internships.

Despite these proposals to develop critical awareness among US language students, the literature on the incorporation of critical approaches to the pedagogical training of US language practitioners is scarce. Examples of such proposals include King Ramírez, Lafford, and Wermers' (2021) volume on the training and assessment of online language teachers and Chery's

(2024) proposal for the design and implementation of LSP teacher education programming in the United States. Both studies utilize a *critical ecological approach* (CEA) for the creation of teacher standards and instruments for instructor assessment. According to Muñoz-Basols et al. (2023), a CEA integrates the development of critical consciousness in language students and practitioners with an ecological approach to language pedagogy, which “views learners as interconnected in dynamic relationships within an ecosystem with other learners, and all elements of the environment” (van Lier, 2004, p.183). Chery (2024) contends that this approach requires infusing the concepts of CCA, CLA, and TA into LSP teacher training and recognizing the need to develop LSP teacher standards along with assessment tools and processes that take into account local ecologies with their affordances and limitations.

According to Chery (2024), one of the ways to accomplish this focus on general professional development while also prioritizing local community needs is to create a hybrid LSP teacher training model. In such a model, webinars given by national LSP organizations, such as the ACTFL LSP SIG, would be coordinated with local, face-to-face workshops sponsored by organizations like ACTFL regional affiliates. State organizations affiliated with the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP), or the American Association of Teachers of French/German (AATF/AATG) could also be involved, as they may understand the needs of local groups of LSP faculty and the linguistic communities served by their institutions.

Conclusions and Future Directions for LSP Teacher Training

This overview of LSP teacher education in Europe and the United States has shown that pre- and in-service training is perceived as lacking by approximately three-quarters of surveyed LSP instructors in both regions. In addition, this review has shown that between 96% and 98% of the enrollments in US and European (respectively) online LSP training resources (ACTFL LSP SIG; LSP-TEOC.Pro) come from the same region as the affordance being offered. Therefore, there is a pressing need for more professional development training for LSP professionals, as well as increased access to training opportunities in these geographic areas and beyond. To meet this challenge, several future directions for continuous LSP professional development are proposed here.

Increase Support and Access to LSP Teacher-Training Opportunities

Basturkmen (2025) has recently noted that only a limited number of teachers may have received support to undertake the teaching of specialized languages, or had the chance to take part in LSP teacher education programs. Therefore, in order to increase access to LSP professional development opportunities, teacher training sessions need to be offered in different formats, ranging from face-to-face workshops at professional conferences to webinars and online courses; these training opportunities should be available throughout the year to provide maximum scheduling flexibility for the trainees. In addition, LSP conferences and professional organizations should create more virtual teacher-training sessions in order to increase contact, communication, and collaboration among LSP teacher-trainers and practitioners from different geographical areas. To encourage more international use of US and European online teacher-training resources by LSP professionals in those (and other) geographic areas, US LSP teacher training could draw upon modules from programs like LSP-TEOC.Pro to promote greater

communication and collaboration with European LSP teacher trainers (as well as with LSP teachers from other areas) and to introduce LSP teachers to modules for autonomous self-development. Mutually beneficial increased collaboration among these LSP teacher trainers can also be affected through the creation of blended projects, virtual CoPs, and digital databases as open educational resources to share LSP teacher-training materials, such as needs analysis surveys, interview questions, and training videos.

Create Locally Determined Standards for LSP Teacher Performance and Evaluation

One of the most important steps toward the creation of evidence-based LSP training involves the creation of locally determined standards of practice for LSP teachers. Once local LSP teacher benchmarks are established through needs analyses, the best ways to evaluate LSP faculty knowledge and achievement of those skills can be explored. For instance, future LSP researchers could investigate how to apply Muñoz-Basols et al.'s (2023) critical ecological approach to the evaluation of LSP teacher performance in a given geographical region, which would call for strategies to carry out holistic evaluations of these faculty by taking into account a teacher's background, local teaching conditions, employment of self-development resources to which they have access, experience teaching LSP and designing LSP curricula, technological expertise, and experience with CSL/internships (see King Ramírez, Lafford & Wermers [2021] for a critical ecological approach to online language teacher assessment).

Expand Critical Approaches to LSP Teacher Training

There is a need to adopt critical pedagogical approaches to the training of LSP teachers in various geographical regions. LSP teacher trainers also need to teach LSP faculty how to create and sustain community partnerships that lead to more CSL/internship opportunities, so that LSP students can discover the needs of linguistically-marginalized communities and learn how to take an interventionist approach to working with community members to address those needs (Abbott & Martínez [2018] and Ruggiero [2018] for US Spanish-speaking communities; Clifford & Reisinger [2019] for US French-speaking communities; Relinque & Vigier-Moreno [2023] for non-Spanish-speaking immigrants in Spain). In addition, LSP faculty can be taught strategies to encourage students to carry out critical reflections via social media and blogs, student journals and digital stories during their experiential learning projects in the community.

Although recent initiatives in Europe and the United States have made important strides in LSP teacher training and professional development, and technology has helped to bridge gaps in the access to collaboration, training, and self-development opportunities, the continuous expansion of these efforts with a critical focus at a global level is necessary to ensure the quality of future LSP teaching and the recognition of the importance of this field to strengthening ties between academic institutions and the communities they serve.

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