5
Course Design and Implementation

This chapter will:

- Outline the early history of published accounts of LSP course design
- Describe the interplay of course design and organisational structure
- Introduce the issue of specificity in LSP course design
- Describe the interplay of LSP resources and learner participation in course design
- Discuss the role of language analysis in LSP course design

5.1 Course design narratives

In this chapter we progress from issues of planning to explore issues of LSP course design and implementation. We do this by reference to the history of LSP’s contribution to the research literature. (For a more traditional approach to LSP course design, Basturkmen 2010 is an excellent resource for language teachers.)

As we have already pointed out in Chapter 1, the LSP teacher may very often combine the roles of researcher and designer. Although recent emphasis on discourse analysis, genre analysis and corpus analysis may have created research specialisations that have re-established a wedge between professional researcher and classroom practitioner, the very specificity of LSP means that in design and implementation our generalisation about combined roles still stands. Much of the published LSP literature consists of critical (and uncritical) narrations of the genesis and delivery of specific-purpose courses, often with accounts of the many practical and logistical problems to be overcome rather than dealing only with the educational challenges.
Descriptions of materials and how they were designed began, from the 1970s, to appear in journals and books. A number of locally-published journals were founded around the world, devoted to English (mostly) for specific purposes, initially from the local context although they soon began accepting articles from other regions. These included journals such as

- *ESPMENA Bulletin* (ESP in the Middle East and North Africa) (published by Khartoum University, Sudan from 1975 onwards)
- *EST/ESP Chile Newsletter* (published by the University of Santiago, Chile, from 1976 onwards)
- *Al-Manakh* (published by the Language Centre of the University of Kuwait from 1980 onwards)
- *ESSpecialist* (published by the Center of Resources, Research and Information in Applied Linguistics and Instrumental Language Teaching (CEPRIL), the Catholic University of São Paulo, from 1980 onwards)

Other local or regional associations devoted special issues to ESP/EST, such as the Regional Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, which recorded papers from its 1975 seminar on ‘The teaching of English for scientific and technological purposes in Southeast Asia’ in its Anthology Series (Richards 1976) and the Midlands Association for Linguistic Studies in the UK, which produced a dedicated ESP issue of the *MALS Journal* in 1978.

The majority of articles published in these journals and collections are devoted to descriptions of the genesis, development and rationale of materials development projects. In what was virtually a new genre for the academic paper, a ‘warts-and-all’ narrative became common, detailing arguments between team members, struggles with the administration, technical difficulties such as producing physical copies of the materials (this was well before photocopying became widely available and affordable), status of language teachers in relation to the institution and clashes with local examination systems – in short, they covered many of the stakeholder issues that we have already mentioned in Chapter 4. Mackay and Mountford’s influential edited book (1978) contains several such process-focused accounts alongside more traditional analyses of and rationales for courses as finished products. Taken together, these various sources provide a rich resource for anyone who might want to survey the early days of the attempts to institutionalise ‘service’ language courses. Chapter 13 provides lists of currently active international associations and specialist LSP journals.