

Innovating English Teaching: Arguments For Specific Courses

English for Specific Purposes distinguishes itself from more general language study through a focus on particular, purposeful uses of language. A commitment to teaching that attends to students' specific purposes for learning English has given ESP a unique place in the development of both theory and innovative practice in language instruction since the term first emerged in the 1960s. In the last 20 years, one of the key developments in the field has been the increase of more specific courses, informed by a growing awareness of community differences in language use. Because the conventions of academic communication differ considerably across disciplines, identifying the particular language features, discourse practices, and communicative skills of target groups becomes central to our work. Focusing on EAP, I discuss the importance of this focus, drawing on my research over the last decade to highlight the disciplinary-specific nature of writing and argue for a specific view of teaching EAP.