

Creating a profile for Italian users of legal English in a perspective of lifelong learning.

The EFLIT experience

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In 2006 the Faculty of Law of the University of Parma (Italy) launched EFLIT (English for Law and International Transactions), a postgraduate training project aimed at offering professionals and graduates in the fields of Law and Economics a course combining a linguistic focus (i.e. English for Law, at B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference) and a content focus (i.e. Law in English) in order to improve both their language and legal skills. Thanks to its unique format, EFLIT has since then developed from a local project to a national project and has obtained the official recognition of professional associations of both lawyers and chartered accountants for accreditation purposes in continuous education. This greater scope has called for a course which focalises on the actual needs for English of professionals working in Italy, whilst maintaining an international outlook. In order to design a course tailored to the real requirements and expectations of Italian professionals in the fields of law and economics, an online survey was specifically devised for EFLIT participants and alumni and posted on the website of the Parma University Language Centre. The feedback provided led to the creation of an "EFLIT participant profile" to be used as reference when planning the course, i.e. the actual needs and interests of participants are to be the guiding parameters in devising the course syllabus, and ultimately in the choice and weighting of the class activities with the dual aim of meeting expectations and developing the specific skills and competencies required by

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their profession. This study reveals the results of the survey and the criteria to be taken into consideration when designing the format of future courses for these professionals.