

Eglė Selevičienė, Nijolė Burkšaitienė. Web-based Learning Technologies in the Studies of English for Specific Purposes in Higher Education

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The book presents results of research on the use of web-based learning technologies in ESP studies in two higher education institutions in Lithuania in the fields of Law and Customs Activities (university studies) and Computer Systems (college).

The quasi-experimental research involved 107 students, divided into four groups. The authors conducted an in-depth theoretical analysis of literature on the subject, identifying relevant pedagogical concepts and learning theories. These were supplemented with numerous online learning concepts, with particular emphasis on Cmap Tools, which were subsequently used in the research.

The most relevant concepts discussed in the theoretical part of the book include those which could also be applied to adult education: tailored education, student needs as a starting point for designing educational goals, social learning, peer learning, and constructivism. All together, they provide a strong justification for the authors' research. In the presented approach authors emphasise the importance of the learning process itself, on which the proper effect will depend.

The authors examined changes in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. The obtained results allow us to conclude that Cmap Tools were more effective in acquiring specialised vocabulary and key concepts.

Reading comprehension scores did not indicate significant differences between the study groups. The authors also noted that a lack of teacher support caused lower results of the performance on one of the tasks.

The authors recommend that the use of technology should always be carefully considered – it is worth using tutorials beforehand. The study also revealed that mapping concepts could be difficult to understand for less advanced students. In such cases, it would be advisable to discuss the mapping process in advance.

Another problem pointed out by the authors might be the lack of experience in using new technologies by teachers with little professional experience at all, as planning of the educational work would be time-consuming.

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This monograph expands our knowledge about the effectiveness of new technologies in education. In today's internet-based world, using new information and communication technologies is becoming for teachers as well as for students as natural as breathing.

It is also important to be aware that students currently taking up education are also becoming more and more proficient in new technologies, which poses a huge challenge for modern teachers. The internet and communication could become a real problem if teachers themselves are unable to utilise this additional power. However, they can also become a platform for understanding and a new common language connecting generations. Therefore, each study on the usability of web-based learning technologies brings us closer to the wise use of the new opportunities.

The presented monograph will be particularly useful for teachers who want to expand their knowledge about the possibilities of using new information and communication technologies in their educational practices and are looking for inspiration to enrich their competences with new, effective educational tools. The results of the presented research will also be in the area of interest of education providers at all levels, including continuing and adult education. The insights contained in the monograph will allow for more informed lesson planning and the conscious integration of new forms of learning into existing schedules.

Additionally, it is supposed that the theoretical analyses included in the first chapters and the additional remarks in the discussion part of the book will be particularly useful to scholars and policy makers who are responsible for designing the educational systems in specific regions.

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