

5th World Conference on Teaching and Education



WORLDCTE
World Conference on
TEACHING & EDUCATION

08-10 December 2022

Berlin, Germany

How cognitive load theory impacts learning ESP

Irina Ioana Bocianu

University of Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

The present paper approaches English for Specific Purposes from John Sweller's cognitive load theory perspective. The approach is especially useful when teaching specialized vocabulary and important grammar aspects as it establishes the balance between the right amount of information which can be taught so that students do not become exposed to an information overload. The activities designed for the English for Specific Purposes have had as main focus the limits represented by the long term memory and how the learner is presented this information. The study focuses on the adaption of specific terminology and means of introducing new concepts to the students from the Chemistry and Biology faculties within the University of Bucharest and it was oriented towards the particularities represented by the Greek and Latin words, the conditional, the modals and specific vocabulary. The creation of new materials is quite a challenge for the instructors and the right balance should be found for syllabus design with the different levels of language acquisition command (A2-C1) which the students possess having in view the mixed levels of the students who enroll in the English course. Besides the differentiated level of language knowledge, all competences have to be equally adapted to find the right balance for efficient learning process. Cognitive load theory proves to be a useful tool for instructors especially during the continuous assessment activities as it reveals the accurate level of knowledge the students have at a certain point during the learning process. As a result, having these principles in mind when designing English for Specific Purposes as well as students' particular knowledge levels, represents a significant advantage for successful language courses and well trained students.

Keywords: long term memory, short term memory, specialised vocabulary, syllabus