



Knowledge Construction and Knowledge Transfer in Technical Writing

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Abstract

Modern research and practice reveal that writing in a foreign language in both learning and professional settings has become a major means of international communication. The focus of this paper is the process of integrated and purposeful teaching and learning to undergraduate students of engineering sciences such aspects of technical writing as knowledge construction and knowledge transfer. These two key aspects form the concept of technical writing and are of major importance in the process of teaching and learning English for Engineering. The paper provides a comparative analysis of the two aspects with the purpose to evaluate their roles in the process of teaching and learning technical writing. Special emphasis is put on the importance of integrated use of both techniques in the classroom, where technical writing is viewed not only as a purely 'mechanical' process, but also as a means of communication. A case study was carried out in two undergraduate student groups at the Latvia University of Agriculture that revealed the following: a) classroom instruction is most effective if supported by authentic examples; b) practice and theory should permanently overlap; c) exposure to authentic settings and out-of-class practice is more effective than fixed classroom procedure.