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ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS: STUDENT RESPONSES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS

Abstract

This action research based case study addresses the situation of a first year class of Business English students at Universidad de Alcalá and their attitudes towards using Web 2.0 tools and social media for language learning. During the semester, the students were asked to collaborate in the creation and use of some tools such as blogs, video repositories (YouTube), networking programs (LinkedIn), and communication tools (SlideShare). The data were obtained through an online questionnaire designed after a focus group had been held. The results, which are quantitative, suggest that the use of Web 2.0 tools and social networks for language learning facilitated collaboration within the groups when completing tasks, proved to be motivating, and made a clear distinction from traditional university language courses, often centered on the teacher and the syllabus contents. In addition, the students viewed the tools as being important for their future as professionals in the business world. While the sample in this study is limited and, hence, the results are not universally applicable, there is evidence that this method of learning may work well in a variety of international contexts.

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Key words

ESP, business English, higher education, Web 2.0, social networking, blogs, student perceptions.

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