
ASPECTS OF MEDICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS' OPINIONS OF THE ROLE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Mariya Saykova

Medical University - Plovdiv, Medical College, Bulgaria, Mariya.Saykova@mu-plovdiv.bg

Abstract: The use of new equipment in the classroom, such as the Internet, interactive boards, multimedia and virtual learning platforms, sets the stage for a multiplicity of new opportunities in teaching ESP. Unlike the old reproductive methods, relying on one-way directionality, the new means of teaching call for novel approaches, necessitating a high level of teacher-student interaction, an unchartered method of classroom management and a completely different ethos. Through technology, students' attention can be targeted towards activities raising their learning awareness and inducing greater involvement in the wake of substantially increased degrees of interest. Furthermore, the use of technology is conducive to altering teaching status, commanding a change of paradigm in terms of communicative strategies. Digital platforms like Moodle are crucial for improving English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction by creating a learner-centered atmosphere, encouraging collaborative learning, and incorporating technology tailored to the specific needs of learners in various professions. The use of Moodle and similar Learning Management Systems (LMS) has been shown to promote interactive online learning strategies that are vital for effective language acquisition. Features such as forums, wikis, and glossaries not only engage students but also enable educators to customize their teaching to meet the diverse requirements of ESP learners across fields like business and engineering. This adaptability in course design is linked to better academic performance, with research indicating that technology-enhanced ESP instruction boosts students' motivation and outcomes. Furthermore, the integration of digital platforms supports differentiated instruction, which is essential for addressing the varying proficiency levels among ESP students. Studies demonstrate that digital resources significantly influence students' self-perception and academic success in ESP contexts, with personalized learning paths leading to notable improvements in language skills, particularly in writing, which is vital for professional success. Additionally, the use of digital literacy tools equips ESP learners with the competencies necessary to meet the demands of their respective industries, thereby improving their employability and readiness for the workforce. The present article sets itself a far more humble task to gauge, based on a questionnaire, students propensity to technology, through their experience of electronic platforms. The students from three specialties at the Medical College, Medical University – Plovdiv do a questionnaire to share their views on the use of digital platforms in their case – Moodle. The results show that the students approve of the use of digital platforms, but still regard the role of the teacher as indispensable. These results are true encouragement for teachers to step into their new roles as mentors and mediators in the classroom of English for Academic Purposes.

Keywords: technology, bachelors, medicine, questionnaire, expectations, ESP

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a frequently discussed observation that foreign language learning is a complex process that requires time and effort (Richard-Amato, 1988; Dagnev, 2023). In a non-native language environment, ease of communication is difficult, and therefore, many approaches are applied in foreign language teaching that aim to facilitate mastery of the foreign language. Moreover, with the changing socio-cultural, economic and educational realities, new working methods are required (Canale & Swain, 1980), which imply a more active role of the students and more individual work. This in turn affects the process of communication between teacher and student, as the former is perceived much more as a manager of the training relationship than as a last resort, especially in a situation of oversaturated information (Breen, 1986). Another very significant moment in modern training in general is the technological-information boom, which has made access to knowledge easy, and with it has changed the paradigm of knowledge itself. There are already many technological "gadgets" on the education market, which by definition can make the training process much easier and more interesting. Internet platforms, interactive whiteboards, distance learning - these are just some of the myriad of new training tools that are available. However, as is well known, education is a conservative system (Nickerson and Zodiates, 1988) and this applies mostly to its participants - trainers and trainees. New technological tools are perceived only at first glance with enthusiasm - in reality, when things come down to practice, both of the above-mentioned parties are not always inclined to change their old habits. However, the new generation is much more technology-oriented and therefore perceives the idea of the technologization of education much more warmly.

Digital platforms such as Moodle play a pivotal role in enhancing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction by facilitating a learner-centered environment, promoting collaborative learning, and integrating technology that aligns

with learners' specific professional needs. The utilization of Moodle and similar Learning Management Systems (LMS) has been observed to foster interactive and collaborative online learning methodologies, essential for effective language education (Prasetya et al., 2022, Dagnev, 2025). The collaborative features provided by Moodle, such as forums, wikis, and glossaries, not only engage learners but also allow educators to tailor instruction according to the diverse needs of ESP students in various fields, ranging from business to engineering (Rachmawati & Irawan, 2024). This flexibility in course design directly correlates with improved academic outcomes, as evidenced by studies indicating that technology integrated into ESP instruction enhances students' learning motivation and performance (Chaves & Álvarez, 2025).

Moreover, the incorporation of digital platforms facilitates differentiated instruction, an aspect essential for catering to the varying levels of proficiency found in ESP learners. Research highlights the significant impact of digital resources on students' self-perception and academic performance in ESP contexts. Students who experience personalized learning paths through digital platforms tend to show marked improvements in their language competencies, particularly in writing skills, which are critical for success in specific professional environments (Jaborova, 2024). Additionally, the deployment of digital literacy tools ensures that ESP learners acquire relevant competencies that align with the demands of their respective fields, thereby enhancing their employability and professional readiness (Dewi et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Moodle's interactive capacities enable the implementation of various instructional strategies that can accommodate both synchronous and asynchronous learning formats. This adaptability is particularly advantageous for in-service training programs, where teachers and professionals can engage in self-directed learning at their convenience (Chen & Huang, 2022). The ongoing feedback mechanisms embedded within such platforms are instrumental in monitoring learner progress and adjusting instructional approaches in real time, thereby enriching the educational experience (Qin et al., 2022).

Despite the evident advantages, challenges exist in the effective utilization of digital platforms for ESP instruction. It has been noted that some educators encounter difficulties in mastering the technological tools available, which can impede the full realization of the potential benefits offered by platforms like Moodle. Addressing these challenges through professional development and training can markedly improve the efficacy of digital tools in ESP classrooms (Kuzmina et al., 2022). Insights from studies indicate that while students are generally receptive to digital learning tools, there remains a need for supportive structures to enhance their learning experience (Masitoh et al., 2024).

The aim of the study is to determine the readiness of students from the Medical College at the Medical University of Plovdiv to use new technological tools in learning a foreign language by conducting a survey regarding the use of an electronic learning platform.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research sample encompasses three groups of students in the specialties of “Medical Laboratory Technician”, “Assistant-Pharmacist” and “Public Health Inspector” in their first year at the Medical College at the Medical University in Plovdiv. The total number of respondents is 40 students – 15 from the specialty of “Medical Laboratory Technician”, 12 from the specialty of “Assistant-Pharmacist” and 13 from the specialty of “Public Health Inspector”. The total number of academic hours is 30 per semester and the students learn EAP in their first and second semester. All have undergone a training course using the Moodle electronic platform in IT classes. The analysis of students' propensity to work with electronic platforms is based on conducting a survey that includes the following questions.

Q1: Do you think that using the Internet would help you learn English?

Q2: Do you think that electronic platforms like Moodle can be useful in learning a foreign language during your studies at college??

Q3: In what aspect can platforms like Moodle be most useful?

Q4: What is the biggest advantage of electronic platforms? (more than one answer is possible)

Q5: Do you think that the foreign language exam should be taken using an electronic platform like Moodle?

Q6: If possible, would you study a foreign language using only electronic platforms at college, i.e. remotely?

The possible answers are in the following order:

For questions one and two, there are three alternatives: a) Yes, a lot. b) To some extent, yes. c) Hardly.

For question three, the possible answers are: a) In learning grammar. b) In learning words. c) It is not useful at all.

For question four, four possible options are given (students can give more than one answer): a) In learning grammar. b) Free up time in class for more discussions. c) It is easier to learn, as the new generation is more accustomed to technology than the old. d) They do not have great advantages.

For question five, there are three options: a) Yes, the exam should be only through Moodle or similar platforms. b) The written part - yes, but the oral part - through an interview with the teacher. c) No, the paper version is better. The last question, six, also provides three possible answers: a) Yes, this will bring less stress and tension. b) Yes, but they cannot completely replace teachers. c) No, the current format (as is the case with classes with a teacher) is the most suitable.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 through 5 present the results from the respondents' answers to the questions in the questionnaire..

Table1. Students' responses to questions one and two.

	A. Yes, a lot	B. Yes, to some extent	C. Hardly
Q1: Do you think that using the Internet would help you learn English?	14	24	2
Q2: Do you think that electronic platforms like Moodle can be useful in learning a foreign language during your studies at college?	7	30	3

Source: The Author

As can be seen from Table 1 the students are positive about the use of the Internet and digital platforms but do not overstate their importance.

Table 2. Students' responses to question three.

	A. In learning grammar	B. In learning words	C. It is not useful at all
Q3: In what aspect can platforms like Moodle be most useful?	11	29	0

Source: The Author

The preference for specialized vocabulary acquisition is obvious from the students' responses to Q3, while it is noteworthy that they are unanimous about the importance of Moodle.

Table 3. Students' responses to question four.

	A. In learning grammar.	B. Free up time in class for more discussions.	C. It is easier to learn, as the new generation is more accustomed to technology than the old.	D. They do not have great advantages.
Q4: What is the biggest advantage of electronic platforms? (more than one answer is possible)	8	16	16	0

Source: The Author

The students' answers to question four ultimately reveal the greatest advantage of digital platforms from the students' perspectives, which is their desire to conduct more discussions and their conviction that using online platforms makes language learning easier.

Table 4. Students' responses to question five.

	A. Yes, the exam should be only through Moodle or similar platforms	B. The written part - yes, but the oral part - through an interview with the teacher	C. No, the paper version is better
Q5: Do you think that the foreign language exam should be taken using an electronic platform like Moodle?	13	15	12

Source: The Author

This question directly addresses one very important factor regarding students' motivation – the exam format. As it is obvious the answers are divided and nuanced.

Table 5. Students' responses to question six.

	A. Yes, this will bring less stress and tension	B Yes, but they cannot completely replace teachers	C. No, the current format is the most suitable.
Q6: If possible, would you study a foreign language using only electronic platforms at college, i.e. remotely?	10	23	7

Source: The Author

Question six provides an indirect answer to a very pertinent question – what is the role of the teacher in the age of digital education and AI. As can be seen from the answers, most students are still of the opinion that teacher are in one way or another indispensable to learning a foreign language.

4. DISCUSSION

Since the number of respondents is too small, and the study is not longitudinal, no general conclusions can be drawn about the students' preferences, but some consequences are undeniable. First of all, all students confirm the need for a decisive introduction of new technological means in education, and in particular electronic platforms. Without a doubt, we can logically conclude that this could also apply to other similar means, such as interactive whiteboards, Internet databases, etc. Most students are very well acquainted with the possibilities of electronic platforms, which is also confirmed by the answers to Q 2. Regarding Q 3, students are categorical that the greatest benefit for them would be to facilitate the learning of new words using an electronic platform. As for Q4, the answers focus on two aspects (here marking more than one answer is possible) – platforms save valuable time, giving more opportunities for discussions, as well as the fact that the younger generation is more receptive to technology, so they should be used more in education. Question six makes it clear that the role of the teacher is very important and is not diminishing, but it is shifting towards the essence of the teacher as an expert and mediator.

The results from this survey align to a great extent with the results from similar studies. Ninsiana and Yulianingsih (2025) demonstrated that their Moodle-based blended learning model significantly improves students' speaking abilities, establishing it as an effective resource for both junior and senior high school learners. This finding highlights Moodle's adaptability across various educational levels and language proficiency stages. Additionally, Dagnev's (2019) analysis of innovative strategies in EAP and Ja'Aslan's (2024) mixed-methods research on Yemeni English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers confirmed that Moodle activities lead to better learning outcomes compared to traditional methods, emphasizing the factors that influence its implementation and success. During the COVID-19 pandemic, studies revealed a notable change in students' willingness to utilize online learning tools, with Dagnev (2021) and Simamora et al. (2022) and noting that while students encountered difficulties in transitioning to online formats, they found Moodle to be a valuable learning platform. This perspective aligns with findings in EFL contexts, indicating that although initial adjustments may be tough, students eventually recognize the benefits and support provided by Moodle (Hassan et al., 2022; Kurniawan & Septiana, 2021). Furthermore, research by Septyani et al. revealed that English Language Education students expressed high satisfaction with their experiences on Moodle, affirming its effectiveness in pedagogical courses (Septyani et al., 2021). This is consistent with other studies that highlight overall contentment with the platform's user-friendly features, which promote independent learning and engagement with course materials (Apoko, 2022; Dagnev, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, digital platforms like Moodle significantly enhance English for Specific Purposes education by providing flexible, engaging, and customized learning experiences that cater to the specific needs of diverse professional fields. As educators continue to navigate the intersection of technology and pedagogy in ESP, embracing these digital tools will be essential for developing skilled language users prepared to meet the demands of contemporary workplaces. Without a doubt, the results of the study, no matter how representative it may be, show that students from the Medical College, Plovdiv, have both the desire and the ability to work with new electronic tools in their foreign language studies. They do not belittle the role of the teacher, but they see him in a new role. The students are of the opinion that new technologies can only help the learning process and would make it easier and more interesting.

REFERENCES

- Apoko, T. (2022). The students' perceptions of Moodle-based LMS in English learning. *Edumaspul - Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(1), 163-168. <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3021>
- Breen, M. (1986). The social context for language learning – a neglected situation? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 7: 135-158.
- Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1-47.
- Chaves, B. & Alvarez, C. (2025). Evaluating the impact of digital resources on university students' self-perception and academic performance in esp learning. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6503341/v1> 02 May 2025, PREPRINT (Version 1) available at Research Square [<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-6503341/v1>]
- Chen, J. & Huang, R. (2022). Providing in-service online language training for primary teachers of english as a foreign language. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, 4(1), 171-183. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ltyl.20001.hua>
- Dagnev, I. (2019). Strategies and Innovations in Teaching EAP to Medical Bachelors, ICTTE, International Conference on Technics, Technologies and Education ICTTE 2019, October 16-18, 2019, Yambol, Bulgaria, p. 179 – 183, www.ictte.eu, 2603-445X (online), 1314-9474 (CD/DVD), DOI: 10.15547/ictte.2019.03.065
- Dagnev, I. (2021). ATTITUDES OF MEDICAL BACHELORS IN COVID-INDUCED ONLINE LEARNING OF ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES. *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 46(6), p. 987–991. Retrieved from <https://ikm.mk/ojs/index.php/kij/article/view/133>, Будва 2021, ISSN: 2545-4439 (Online)
- Dagnev, I. (2022). NEEDS ANALYSIS OF FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL BACHELORS' OPINIONS OF ESP COURSE DESIGN. *KNOWLEDGE - International Journal*, 55(4), 845–848. Retrieved from <https://ikm.mk/ojs/index.php/kij/article/view/5839>
- Dagnev, I. (2023). ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES: NEW CHALLENGES. In Proceedings of the International scientific and practical conference “Bulgaria of regions” (Vol. 4, No. 1).
- Dagnev, I. (2025). Does interactive lecturing streamline or complicate EAP? A case study of healthcare students. Scientific researches of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria-Plovdiv, series B. Natural Sciences and the Humanities, Vol. XXVI, ISSN 1311-9192 (Print), ISSN 2534-9376 (On-line), 2025.
- Dewi, L, Utami, I., & Santosa, M. (2024). The importance of digital literacy skills in the context of learning english for specific purposes: a systematic review. *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi*, 5(8), 3006-3015. <https://doi.org/10.59141/jist.v5i8.1291>
- Hassan, M., Ginting, D., Napoli, F., & Rosmen, R. (2022). Perceptions of students of English education study program towards LMS implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic era. *Jurnal Mutiara Pendidikan, Indonesia*, 7(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.51544/mutiara Pendidikan.v7i1.2853>
- Ja'ashan, M. (2024). Exploring the effectiveness of Moodle activities in enhancing EFL learning for Yemeni teachers. *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 8(07), 4177-4187. <https://doi.org/10.18535/sshj.v8i07.1183>
- Jabborova, D. (2024). The impact of digital technologies on the development of esp students' writing competence. *Actual Problems of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(S/8), 203-206. <https://doi.org/10.47390/spr1342v4si8y2024n27>
- Kurniawan, B. & Septiana, A. (2021). An analysis of students' experience in the use of Moodle in writing class during pandemic Covid-19. *Linguists Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 7(2), 16. <https://doi.org/10.29300/ling.v7i2.5318>
- Kuzmina, N., Kochkina, D., & Kuzmin, M. (2022). Digital distance learning tools in academics' esp training. *Bulletin of the South Ural State University Education Sciences*, 14(2), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.14529/ped220208>

- Masitoh, F., Fitriyah, I., & Mumtaza, I. (2024). EFL teachers' perceived efficacy of digital platforms in varied online English classes in a higher education. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1), 463. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9298>
- Nickerson and Zodiates, 1988 Nickerson R. & Zodiates P. (1988). *Technology in Education: Looking Toward 2020*. London, UK, Routledge
- Ninsiana, W. & Yulianingsih, L. (2025). Implementing blended learning model in teaching English in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0". *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i3.6406>
- Prasetya, R., Pradipta, A., & Suratno, G. (2022). Implementation interactive and collaborative online learning English for foreign language Moodle-based. *Eternal (English Teaching Learning and Research Journal)*, 8(02), 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.24252/eternal.v8i2.2022.a2>
- Rachmawati, D. and Irawan, N. (2024). Integrating digital technologies in ESP classroom: a comprehensive overview of current practices and pedagogical implications. *IP*, 1(3), 27-35. <https://doi.org/10.63011/ip.v1i3.23>
- Richard-Amato, P. A. (1988). *Making it happen: Interaction in the second language classroom: From theory to practice*. New York: Longman
- Qin, S., Orchakova, L., Liu, Z., Smirnova, Y., & Tokareva, E. (2022). Using the learning management system "modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment" in multilingual education. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (Ijet)*, 17(03), 173-191. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v17i03.25851>
- Septyani, N., Purnamika, I., & Wedhanti, N. (2021). A study of ELE students' perception of undiksha Moodle e-learning in pedagogical courses. *Metathesis Journal of English Language Literature and Teaching*, 5(2), 120. <https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v5i2.3949>
- Simamora, M., Wahyudin, A., & Utami, A. (2022). Students' readiness in using technology during covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, 3(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jorle.v3i1.1892>