ИНФОРМАЦИЯ О ПУБЛИКАЦИИ

BENEFITS OF DIGITAL SIMULATION AND GAME-BASED LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:

DIGITAL GAME TECHNOLOGIES, ICIVICS.ORG, ENGLISH IN LEGAL CONTEXT, LEGAL VOCABULARY, LISTENING SKILLS, LAW STUDENTS, ESP CLASSROOM

АННОТАЦИЯ:

Использование цифровых игровых симуляционных технологий становится одной из наиболее эффективных технологий обучения в сфере высшего образования, которая способна повысить вовлеченность и результативность образовательного процесса студентов, изучающих английский язык в юридическом контексте. Исследователя интересовало изучение взаимосвязи между использованием онлайн игровой образовательной платформой iCivics и формированием иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции студентов. В частности, в этом исследовании изучалось влияние игры "Имею ли я право за защиту?" ресурса iCivics.org на совершенствование лингвистической и социокультурной компетенции учащихся и развитие навыков чтения и аудирования. В статье описывается технология формированием коммуникативной компетенции студентов, изучающих английский язык в юридическом контексте. В статье представлена возможность использования онлайн симуляционной игры «Имею ли я право?» в технологии формирования коммуникативной компетенции студентов вуза при изучении английского языка для специальных целей.

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Аннотация

Использование цифровых игровых симуляционных технологий становится одной из наиболее эффективных технологий обучения в сфере высшего образования, которая способна повысить вовлеченность и результативность образовательного процесса студентов, изучающих английский язык в юридическом контексте. Исследователя интересовало изучение взаимосвязи между использованием онлайн игровой образовательной платформой iCivics и формированием иноязычной коммуникативной компетенции студентов. В частности, в этом исследовании изучалось влияние игры "Имею ли я право за защиту?" ресурса iCivics.org на совершенствование лингвистической и социокультурной компетенции учащихся и развитие навыков чтения и аудирования. В статье описывается технология формированием коммуникативной компетенции студентов, изучающих английский язык в юридическом контексте. В статье представлена возможность использования онлайн симуляционной игры «Имею ли я право?» в технологии формирования коммуникативной компетенции студентов вуза при изучении английского языка для специальных целей.

Abstract

A digital simulation and game-based learning tends to become a new concept in the area of higher education increasing encouragement of students who study English in legal context. In this study, the researcher was interested in exploring the relationship between an online simulation and game-based learning platform "iCivics" and the development of law students' foreign language communicative competence. Specifically, this study has investigated the influence of one online gaming resource, iCivics.org, on students' legal vocabulary and listening skills. The author also has presented the benefits of "Do I have a Right?" simulation game in the technology of foreign language communicative competence development by ESP acquisition.

Keywords: digital game technologies; iCivics.org; English in legal context; legal vocabulary; listening skills; law students; ESP classroom.
Ключевые слова: цифровые игровые технологии; сайт iCivics.org; английский язык в юридическом контексте; навыки аудирования; студенты-юристы; занятия по английскому языку для специальных целей.

Global technological progress has almost consumed educational systems. Higher educational institutions tend to face real challenges: traditional approaches, methods, and activities are not always effective; more and more students are uninvolved in the learning environment. More so, a lot of regional universities in Russia are not well-equipped and digitalized. In addition, universities turn young *people* away from a profession because they are attracted by alternative vocational pathways which are short-term, up-to-date, and have positive learning environment.

The new generation of university students are described as digital natives because they are accustomed to technology, which has become a vital element in their daily lives. Having grown up with computers, Internet, and unlimited access to information they have got a diverse learning style, thinking, and cognitive capacity. These create misunderstanding and conflicts in the field of education. It is important to note that there is a connection between student engagement in the educational process and satisfaction with the learning experience [7; 8].

A digital simulation and game-based learning can be described as a teaching strategy that enables students to study different components of games as a means of learning to help them develop their skill set or meet particular learning needs [2]. This can provide some solution to the issue how to reshape teaching methods and adapt digital technology to educational programs and learners' needs and expectations (Bilgiç, Doğan, Seferoğlu, 2016; Saxena, Mishra, 2021). Gamification is an umbrella term applying online gaming, simulation games, role playing, video games, game design, elements, and ideas to non-game environments in an effort to increase user's engagement. A digital simulation and *game*-based learning practices have been used mostly to promote a product or a required life style. Digital game technologies are not a new tool in education. Universities already have several game-like elements. Students receive points for academic or experience activities, research or completed home assignment out-of-class activities (Lee, Hammer, 2011).

A digital simulation and game-based learning serves social needs of achievement, status, and self-esteem of a learner. However, while incorcorating gamification in the educational process, students should be aware of not crossing the line beyond which the game becomes just a means of amusement rather than a method of reaching an end [3; 14].

Some works describe motivation and involvement of students by teaching English through mobile apps, such as Duolingo, Edmodo, Zondle, Socrative, and Brainscape [10; 12]. Usage of multiple digital recourses and online video gaming are presented in the study of N.Belenkova [4]. Tsvetkova paying much attention to significance of gamification trends in education has chosen role play as an effective tool to improve speaking skills of her students [13].

A digital simulation and game-based learning promotes learning through applications or online video gaming, although only a small number of papers discuss its effects on improving speaking and listening skills of law students at ESP classroom.

The course of English in Legal Context has benefited from the use of a digital simulation and game-based educational platform www.icivics.org. Using iCivics in ESP provides additional information about US laws and improves students' professional foreign language competence, advancing vocabulary and listening comprehension skills. While playing, students get to know and discuss various issues related to constitutional law, personal and civil rights and responsibilities of a US citizens, the structure of the US government, executive, judicial and legislative authorities, election procedure, landmark cases, and etc.

ICivics has developed over fifteen games for use in and out of school and accompanying curriculum and resources for teachers to use in their classes and has provided numerous regional professional development opportunities for teachers [11]. We have selected iCivics for our study as it has been so successful at developing games and reaching out to such a broad audience of teachers and students. Users can play the part of a judge, congressman, social activist, or president, participate in news conferences, present laws to the legislature, reject them, choose which court a certain case belongs in, choose jurors, etc. through gaming tools.

We have chosen one game for high school audiences and 1st year bachelor students. "Do I Have a Right?" is a game which highlights constitutional rights, including free speech, the right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure, or the right against self-incrimination [5; 9]. It is also a pool of law-based materials. Moreover, it has a friendly-format for acquiring legal vocabulary and training listening and reading comprehension skills.

The technology of foreign language communicative competence development is a consistently organized pedagogical activity which provides a multidimensional, interconnected system of relations: "student-teacher", "student – student", "student – text", "lawyer – client – lawyer", aimed at mastering the necessary skills and speech aspects of foreign language communicative competence. Technological stages of foreign language communicative competence development can be distinguished:

1. pre-text work:
1.1. warm-up activity;
1.2. introduction of professionally oriented linguistic material;
2. text work:
2.1. reading professionally oriented materials;

3. post-text work:

3.1. simulation or communicative activity;

3.2. independent project activity (post-text work) [1].

Let's consider each stage in detail using the example of studying the topic "The US Constitution and Civil Rights." Pretext-activities are focused on finding out what the students know about the terms: a constitution, an amendment, basic facts about the US Constitution, the Founding Fathers, and the Bill of Rights. Short videos or a web-quest can be proposed to boost students' motivation. At this stage we introduce legal vocabulary based on the US Constitution topic. Students complete vocabulary exercises (e.g. fill in the table according to the given example: constitute -constitution – constitutor – constitutional, etc; choose all that apply or choose the correct word from the list, search for synonyms or antonyms, ranging legal vocabulary into categories, making up glossaries and vocabulary lists, choosing the correct form of the verb, making up statements, solving crosswords, etc.) in their workbooks or using their smart phones. Quizlet is one of the digital tools that converts information into flashcards, quizzes, and games so that users can study the same information in different ways.

Next stage is characterized by studying socio-cultural and legally-based features of the USA (cultural realities, stereotypes, attributive processes, etc.). In our course, we use tasks, aimed at text comprehension: multiple choice, true/false, jigsaw activities, reading and listening comprehension, doing "mind maps"; doing paraphrasing exercises, answering and asking key questions on texts, comparing similarities and contrasting differences in constitutional systems, doing mind-maps, using translation strategies, translating the texts. We do many reading and listening comprehension exercises.

The goal of the third stage is to advance listening and reading comprehension skills. We offer "Do I have a Right" simulation game at this stage to conduct assessment activities. In "Do I Have a Legal Right?" the students run their own law firm that specializes in constitutional amendments to the US Constitution. Every player is in the role of the managing partner, whose job it is to hire defense attorneys and bring each potential client to an attorney who is skilled in the right that matches the client's use. The game lasts for seven "game" days, and each day is limited in time. The game's goal is for the player to learn and apply various civil rights to constitutional amendments (for example, the First Amendment and the Second Amendment) in order to improve the firm's "prestige" score. The player's attorneys win or lose the cases at trials. The more clients you serve, and the more cases you win, the faster your law firm will expand with more lawyers.

The players are asked to put their knowledge to use by determining whether or not potential clients have rights based on their complaints and whether or not there is a partner who is skilled in each conceptual area.

The feedback which the players receive every "day" pushes them toward the correct answers that will help them complete each task successfully, indicating mastery of the game. Each day ends with a news review how many trials you win or lose.

An independent interdisciplinary project is the climax of learning process. Cultural awareness, knowledge of law-based vocabulary and grammar, learning, communication skills and abilities have been already developed, and now it is the time for students to show what they know and can do. Students do their research, do the slides and prepare a written report.

According to research studies and literary resources a digital simulation and game-based learning seems an effective way to learn, train listening and reading skills, support strategic thinking, and motivate and engage students in the acquisition and mastering law-based vocabulary.

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