

## ПОВЫШЕНИЕ ОСВЕДОМЛЕННОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ В ВОПРОСАХ СОХРАНЕНИЯ ЗДОРОВЬЯ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

А. Ю. Мантина, Н. А. Кобзева, М. А. Южакова  
Национальный исследовательский Томский политехнический университет,  
Россия  
[nadiatom@mail.ru](mailto:nadiatom@mail.ru)

## INCORPORATING STUDENTS' HEALTH LITERACY WITHIN EFL CLASSES

A. Y. Mantina, N. A. Kobzeva, M. A. Yuzhakova  
National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk  
[nadiatom@mail.ru](mailto:nadiatom@mail.ru)

***Аннотация.** В данной работе рассматривается важность включения тематики, связанной с повышением осведомленности и грамотности в вопросах здоровья студентов технического университета в процессе их обучения иностранному языку (английский). Студенты всегда более успешны в обучении, если его содержание значимо по отношению к их жизни, так как здоровье имеет отношение к каждому. Студенты на занятиях по дисциплине «Иностранный язык» могут значительно улучшить не только иноязычные коммуникативные навыки, но и получить базовые знания по организации здорового образа жизни, стратегии поиска и оценки информации о здоровье. Кроме того, занятия по иностранному языку могут быть идеальным местом для доверительного обсуждения данной тематики. Повышение осведомленности в вопросах здоровья на занятиях по иностранному языку является многоцелевым инструментом, который может усилить мотивацию студентов к ведению здорового образа жизни и получения удовольствия от процесса обучения.*

***Abstract.** This research describes the importance of incorporating engineering students' health literacy within English foreign language classes (EFL). Students are always more successful at learning if the content is meaningful and relevant to their lives. Health is relevant to everyone. Students can dramatically improve their communication skills, basic health knowledge, and strategies for finding and evaluating health information and the classroom is an ideal place to address these skills and build confidence. The development of students' health literacy within EFL classes is a multi-purpose tool that can help students to increase motivation to lead a healthy life and enjoy the learning process.*

**Introduction.** Health literacy is defined as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health infor-

mation and services needed to make appropriate health decisions" [1]. Health literacy requires a complex group of reading, listening, analytical, and decision-making skills, and the ability to apply these skills to health situations. It includes the ability to understand instructions on prescription drug bottles, appointment slips, medical education brochures, doctor's directions and consent forms, and the ability to negotiate complex health care systems. According to the American Medical Association report, "poor health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person's health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race" [2].

Health literacy skills are equally important as they start early in life. EFL programmes of Tomsk polytechnic university (TPU) recognize the value of teaching those functional health information and skills necessary to adopt, practice and maintain healthy behaviors. Educational orientation in TPU is aimed to build health knowledge and skills that are critical to achieve students' health literacy. All students should graduate with health literacy skills that will help them live healthier lives throughout their lifespan. The strategies and resources of TPU can help students to achieve this goal.

**The aim of the study.** Health literacy is really among the most important life themes. The major reason to integrate students' health literacy within EFL classes is that students make health-related decisions every day, decisions that draw on their experience and knowledge of how to be healthy, how to detect and deal with illnesses, and how to access health care services. Addressing health concerns in the classroom enhances literacy skills and language acquisition. Because health-related issues are connected to their everyday concerns, learners demonstrate high interest in exploring health topics. This high interest, in turn, increases learner motivation to work on reading, writing, critical thinking, and speaking skills. These skills will improve their ability to learn new information, communicate, make decisions, and share their knowledge and experiences. The concepts of staying healthy, dealing with illness, and interacting with health care providers can help students in their everyday lives and motivate them to lead healthier lives. Aside from the direct benefits of educating students how to care for themselves, there are a lot of opportunities for many vocabulary words and phrases to be introduced. Health literacy is especially important for future engineers, as it is not surprising that the majority of professionals suffer from job stress and physiological stress, particularly engineers, who are often driven by the time pressures, uncertainties, crisis-ridden environment, and dynamic social structures that are intrinsic to every construction project.

**The purpose of this paper** is to illustrate some of the advantages of integrating health literacy skills within the EFL classroom, as a multi-purpose tool that can help students to increase motivation to lead a healthy life and enjoy the learning process.

**Methods.** A literacy classroom is an ideal place to give learners the opportunity to explore health issues. When health topics are included in the curriculum, health issues are explored and language competencies are developed at the same time. Integrating health issues into the curriculum is important because literacy students are among those in the greatest need of better health knowledge and health care.

The research herein examines the teaching methodologies in TPU that incorporate health literacy in the classroom. TPU students are taught basic anatomical terms, both external and internal, basic descriptive terms for physical sensations and degree of intensity. Also, students are taught how to ask for help. This includes not only emergency numbers, but also medical terminology and professions of various kinds.

It is especially important that students be prepared to deal with new illnesses that they may not have encountered in their native culture. So, talking about dietary health concerns and allergies can be very important. In addition, students learn to read menus and ingredients that can help them avoid things like allergies. Using role playing and problem solving at the EFL lessons in TPU is also a useful way to integrate all the necessary terms in practical ways. Health lessons are a vital part of well rounded EFL curriculum for TPU students and can be an addition to any classroom. Sometimes students undertake research or survey projects about health to share with other students.

For example, a class might be interested in learning more about healthy way of life. Students might accomplish this through reading, or searching the Internet. They might then decide to develop a brochure for other students. There is a lot of opportunity for reading, writing, speaking and listening in all of these activities. Or they might want to practice writing through developing an essay about a particular health area or a particular health-related experience.

Developing survey questions on the topics such as eating habits, smoking, and exercise habits, carrying out the survey, and presenting results encompasses reading, writing, listening, speaking, public speaking, and technology skill development. Any project-based learning approach is appropriate for health and students of TPU do a lot of projects on health topics. They spend time designing health literacy research projects. Teachers charge them with designing and implementing a small project and writing up the results along with a literature review. These papers are expected to be ready for presentation or publication.

**Results and Conclusions.** To prove the importance of health literacy for students, a lot of TPU students were surveyed on how health literacy influence their healthy habits and enhance their learning skills. The majority of those surveyed highlighted the importance of incorporating health literacy within EFL

classes as health topics are “on target” for their needs and are embedded in their everyday life. Students also explained that health information make them think about their own health and way of life, motivate them to lead a healthier life. Students also benefit from the opportunity to follow the prescriptions, create their own healthy diet, etc. as within EFL classes they have to do the tasks they do not pay much attention to in their real lives. Moreover, relevant EFL health topics provide ample opportunity for skill development in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

### **Reference**

1. Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2004. Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion.
2. Report on the Council of Scientific Affairs, Ad Hoc Committee on Health Literacy for the Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association, JAMA, Feb 10, 1999.