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Abstract

This study examines the impact of different metaphors on the process of hypertext construction. Two groups of 20 college students with no experience in hypertext construction received introductory explanations on the text format "hypertext" based on either a book or a space metaphor. Then they had to construct hypertexts by linking prepared nodes on the topic of the "Internet". The different metaphors had significant effects on the constructed hypertexts, the construction process, and knowledge acquisition. The book metaphor encouraged a more linear way of viewing hypertexts that conflicted with the complexity of the contents to be processed. The space metaphor permitted a correspondence between complex semantic structures and complex hypertext structures. Hence, the space metaphor seems to be more appropriate for explaining the text format hypertext to students.



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Keywords

Teaching/learning strategies; Media in education; Pedagogical issues;
Multimedia/hypermedia systems

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Prof. Dr. Rainer Bromme Studied psychology at the University of Muenster, was awarded his doctorate at the University of Oldenburg, and his postdoctoral habilitation (the second doctorate necessary for a professorship in Germany) at the University of Bielefeld.

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Research interests: Cognition and teaching/learning processes, especially related to

communication and cooperation between experts and laypersons, to the development of professional expertise, learning with new media, and to the development of knowledge and understanding in science and mathematics.

Dr. Elmar Stahl Elmar Stahl is an assistant professor at the University of Muenster, Germany, Department for Educational Psychology. He gained his diploma in psychology with a thesis on binocular rivalry (visual perception) in 1995. In 2001 he received his Ph.D. with a thesis on knowledge acquisition and learning processes through writing hypertexts. His research interests include learning with new and old media. Currently, he is working with Prof. Rainer Bromme and biologists from five German universities on a cooperative project to develop an online-learning environment for botanical classification.

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