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E-LEARNING TEACHING: SUPPORTIVE ONLINE COURSE 'ENGLISH FASTPASS'

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ABSTRACT

The **aim** of this paper is to prove the hypothesis that in order to cope with the adversities and hardships and meet the demands of the wartime and pandemic challenges, a complex of tools and techniques has to be applied including new teaching strategies with the use of multimedia, mobile applications and employing learning possibilities of social networking sites, Google classroom tools and other instruments with online course "English Fastpass".

Methodology. In this research theoretical, empirical and statistical methods are used. Theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis) serve to analyze opportunities, advantages and disadvantages of social media as a new tool of teaching. Empirical ones (observation, testing, pedagogical experiment) provide conducting the experiment itself. Statistical methods (one sample t-test) helped make statistical analysis of the pedagogical experimental data.

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Results. *The complex of tools and techniques to teach English is implemented effectively by online course “English Fastpass” aimed at preparing students for passing English Exam. The offered extra-class activities are definitely very successful: daily vocabulary and grammar tasks followed by weekly online analysis; challenges (one-week of three-week activities focused on improving general English proficiency and cultural awareness); exam boosters focused on practicing a particular exam task type; monthly webinars; quizzes and games. The resulting experimental data showed the significant progress in students' performance in both linguistic and intercultural competences, and specifically in use of English tasks. The final assessment in all English language practical skills, including the competence in intercultural communication, confirmed considerable advance of the all-language competences.*

Conclusion. *The effectiveness of applying different unconventional extra-class activities is proven. They are followed by weekly online analysis. The most helpful of them for learning process are exam boosters, monthly webinars, quizzes and games. Using the visualisation techniques, influencing students' emotions and feelings, the abovementioned online course “English Fastpass” facilitates efficient acquisition and better memorizing along with the ability to use the knowledge in the appropriate tasks, which in the long run will help successful intercultural communication. Judging by the comments made by the students they would find such methods of teaching extremely encouraging and stimulating.*

KEYWORDS: *Extra-Class Activity, Google Classroom, M-Learning, Multimedia, Social Networking Site.*

INTRODUCTION

Problems and challenges the national educational system is facing now started long before the pandemic and were drastically aggravated by the Russian-Ukrainian war, on February 24, 2022, when many educational establishments were damaged or even destroyed, and millions of students and educators had to change their place of living and, consequently, the place and mode of studying.

This war, this tragedy has changed everything. After the first shock from the Russian troop attacks, air bombing and shelling, the higher education in Ukraine has stopped, so-called ‘holidays’ were announced. From April 1, 2022, teaching and learning at Ukrainian universities started again. Of course, it was e-learning or online learning.

The Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 is not even an educational disaster, it is planned murders and destructions by Russian troops. This is human (students and teachers) deaths, the destruction of university buildings, faculties, departments.

The tragical situation revealed the inconsistencies of traditional educational patterns and the necessity of creating teaching approaches based on the new frameworks.

In addition to conventional criteria of educational quality such as professional academic staff, effective curriculum, appropriate resources, capable leaders and supportive community, one of the key features of education of nowadays is adaptivity to learners' needs and universality.

More specifically, first and foremost students need to get access to the education in conditions often being far from ideal. Millions of students are either hiding in shelters and basements or have been forced to flee their homes to safer places – with safety being the key point rather than other factors.

Thus, the only way for many to continue their studies is online learning, however, in some cases it might be hindered by poor Internet connection, limited feedback, inappropriate instructional methods, or even lack of motivation from students' side.

Thus, **the aim of this paper** is to prove the hypothesis that in order to cope with these adversities and hardships and meet the demands of the new social circumstances, a complex of tools and techniques has to be applied including new teaching strategies with the use of multimedia, mobile applications and employing learning possibilities of social networking sites, Google classroom tools and other instruments provided by modern technologies with online course “English Fastpass”.

To realize the set aim, we are to fulfill **the following objectives**:

- to explain the strategies of teaching English implemented by online course “English Fastpass”;
- to illustrate the implementation of social media as an effective tool for teaching English speaking;
- to present the results of the experimental research aimed at investigating students' progress in tests due to online course “English Fastpass”.

METHODOLOGY

In this research theoretical, empirical and statistical methods are used. Theoretical methods (analysis and synthesis) serve to

analyze opportunities, advantages and disadvantages of social media as a new tool to teach English speaking as well as their application features and to prepare upper-intermediate students to pass the exam.

Empirical ones (observation, testing, pedagogical experiment) provide conducting the experiment itself, detailed and achievement tests in order to collect data for examining the efficiency of use systematic social media to teach English speaking with upper-intermediate learners.

Statistical methods (one sample t-test) helped make statistical analysis of the pedagogical experimental data; the experiment was conducted during one academic year in four groups of online learners. For one year, during the preparation period before passing the English language exam the advance of the students who were taught with supporting social media speaking activities, students' progress was carefully observed and measured.

RESULTS

IT innovations and the popularity of the Internet (Culp, Honey, Mandinach, 2005) had a profound effect on the forms and methods of instruction in the ESL classroom (Specht, 2022) long before the pandemic by enabling educators and students to overcome barriers of distance and enhance the content of instructional materials as well as to encourage cooperative learning and to stimulate increased teacher – student interaction (Jackson, 2021).

The recent papers describe online teaching and learning issues, namely, the teacher's role in online learning (Popa et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2020), its perspectives (Kalita, 2020; Traxler, 2018), online as a means of life-long learning, online courses

on the basis of different educational platforms and cloud computing (Banča & Tongtep, 2021; Holubnycha et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021).

As well as they define online teaching and learning principles, data analysis of main current educational trends in different countries (Wotto, 2020), students' perception of online learning and teachers' attitude to online teaching (Burac et al., 2019; Coman et al., 2020; Holubnycha et al., 2021; Sadeghi, 2019).

Predictably, the use of Internet, online, multimedia in the learning process has become a must: compared to the traditional teaching methods in which students are usually passively spoon fed with large amount of grammatical rules and vocabulary, digital means have shown their superiority.

Students can be easily exposed to sound, video, and animation of the authentic target language, which can give them the strong visual impact and make them get involved in the authentic language environment more completely. Learners' language acquisition can be improved by means of using the computer's integration of text, sound, graphics and image to present the learning content.

The Internet offers a lot of opportunities for students to interact with native speakers in a convenient way and provides access to the most updated information throughout the world. Also, teachers can present video and audio materials separately or simultaneously to the students according to the teacher's objectives. In this case, not only could the multimedia make the students get more interested in English learning, but also more progress could be made compared with that one in the traditional classroom.

Computers are the main tool used to present multimedia items such as video,

PowerPoint presentations, animation and sound. In the classroom, computers have made a huge impact on the way teachers provide information to their students.

No doubt, using computers, teachers have evolved their teaching methods; instead of lecturing and writing notes on a blackboard, teachers can now show their students visual and audio material to enhance their learning. These methods are much more productive for students who process information visually.

Computer technology has given us the Internet, which is an electronic medium in which both print and visual resources are invariably bound.

At the click of a mouse, text resources present students with a diverse collection of authentic English language texts dealing with a wide variety of interdisciplinary topics, and at each web page link, students have the advantage of reading print texts with the benefit of immediate visual reinforcement provided by pictures and slide shows, facilitating the collaborative effects of print and visual information processing.

Integrating the Internet yields the additional benefit of increased student motivation. Besides, students develop greater confidence in their ability to use English because they need to interact with the Internet entirely through reading and writing.

Using the Internet for focus discipline research facilitates development higher order thinking skills and also promotes critical and social literacy as students encounter a variety of information, synthesizing that information through cooperation and collaboration with their peers.

Regardless all the advantages, the application of multimedia in teaching is not as widely used as it could be expected.

A reason for this could be the underdevelopment of technology and immature pedagogy about using multimedia in teaching foreign languages.

For example, multimedia cost is high and not all educational institutions can make use of this tool. In addition, many teachers are not trained in using multimedia to teach English.

In general, those who use multimedia as a teaching tool find that it adds more interest to the class, and because students become interested in multimedia and computers, they develop more language skills.

We believe, multimedia effectiveness lies in the ability to expose students to real situations, language use and pronunciation through video, sound, graphics and computer interaction.

Incorporating technology into education caused the introduction of innovative methods of teaching that have become a breakthrough in the education industry. Mobile learning (M-learning) that is usually defined as "learning across multiple contexts, through social and content interactions, using personal electronic devices" (Barrs, 2011) has become a new trend in EFL teaching practice.

Mobile devices hold great potential for language learning such as anytime access to an ever-increasing amount of information and resources; sharing learning materials and information through apps and/or social networking sites; the possibility to ask questions via the Internet; the ability to study through games; to keep study records; to create one's own vocabulary lists; using photos on students' phones for introductions, descriptions, telling stories etc.

M-learning method contributes to creation of authentic learning

environment in which learners can work with their mobile devices for audio messaging, voice recording, pronunciation comparison, and audio or video conferencing.

These reasons support the use of smartphones and tablet PCs for foreign language learning and make communication between a teacher and students more efficient and productive.

However, introducing mobile technology into higher education is more than applying technical innovations. It also means providing technical support and learning strategies for students and instructors who wish to implement mobile learning in their particular academic setting as well as developing new apps for educational purposes.

One of the newest instruction approaches that caters to the needs of modern-day learners is Electronic learning (E-Learning). This teaching strategy refers to "the delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means" and involves "the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g. a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, educational or learning material" (Lips, 2010).

In general, e-learning environment includes a virtual classroom with an instructor (tutor) who plans group activity in the virtual class, and students that choose an e-platform to learn, go to a specialized website, register with the personal data and become users.

E-learning education can be delivered in three different ways:

- 1) synchronously, providing the interaction of an instructor and a student at the same time over the Internet;
- 2) asynchronously, giving students the opportunity of the Web based training on his own time and schedule, without live interaction with the instructor;

3) independently, allowing an individual user to download course material from the Internet or use it directly from the site, going through it alone.

In fact, learning process individualization is mentioned as one of the key advantages of e-learning. As for the other benefits, they are as follows: easy accessibility anywhere any time, reduced cost, mobility, improved performance, higher motivation, attractive content package, efficiency of conveyed message etc.

However, scholars also point to some drawbacks of e-learning approach among which there is high cost of technical equipment and software, dependence on the quality of Internet connection, time-consuming for teachers; reducing the ability of verbal expression, lack of familiar educational patterns and learning routines.

Thus, even despite its benefits and attractiveness as well as effectiveness in particular educational environments, E-learning can't totally substitute traditional face-to-face teaching model.

The solution to this problem that allows to combine traditional classroom methods (Oech, 1983) with technology-mediated instructional forms and practices is the so called "blended learning". This teaching technique means a much greater change in basic instruction rather than simply adding computers to classrooms; it represents, in many cases, a fundamental change in the way teachers and students approach the learning.

The efficiency and main benefit of this method is that the online and in-person learning experiences would go side by side and complement one another: students might attend a class taught by a teacher in a traditional classroom setting and later on, independently, complete online components of the course outside the classroom.

Thus, this "hybrid" system enables to incorporate new forms of collaborative and independent learning activities, personalized training experiences and teacher's feedback as well as freedom, convenience and flexibility that are not possible in traditional courses.

Besides implementing blended learning into ESL classroom helps to create an authentic environment that most closely resembles actual use of the target language in that way significantly improving the learning experience.

Blended learning is a mix of three different components:

- traditional classroom instructor-led foreign language teaching;
- synchronous online formats such as live classes, e-Meetings, instant messaging and e-mailing, webinars, online conferences, online quizzes etc.;
- asynchronous self-paced study that can include web/computer-based training modules, challenges, taking online tests or quizzes, gaining access to the variety of reference materials (documents, presentations, web pages, video and audio files, discussion forums etc.).

Compared to traditional education, blended instruction offers teachers the possibility to spend more time with learners in both small groups and individually, create a flexible and active learning environment that has the potential to change students' experiences and outcomes and can allow teachers to monitor their students' progress more closely than traditional methods.

Reasons for using blended instruction include "improved pedagogy, easy access to knowledge, more interaction among learners, personal presence, cost effectiveness, and ease of revision of learning content" (Bañados, 2013).

Additionally, blended learning puts forward new demands for teachers and students: the latter have to be responsible for their own learning process, and teachers need to take on roles as material designers, producers of media resources, managers of the learning environment, and online tutors (Tayebinik, Puteh, 2012).

As a result, when implemented effectively, a blended learning program can make a better use of English language instruction as it allows students to explore and practice new language not only in the classroom, but also in their own time and at their own pace according to their own personal learning needs thus resulting in student success, satisfaction, and retention.

As mentioned above, the complex of tools and techniques to teach English was implemented by online course “English Fastpass” <https://www.englishfastpass.com/> aimed at preparing students for passing English in Unified Entrance Exam as a national exam in Ukraine to become Master students.

The experiment intended to confirm or reject the idea of the plausibility of implementing additional extra-class activities for faster progress in development of students' language skills.

The experimental group included 28 students of year four of different Ukrainian universities who in addition to their compulsory live classes held every week participated in other educational activities including:

- the students were about the same age (from 20 to 21 years old), but different gender (eight boys and twenty girls);
- they were of different occupations majoring in law, psychology, economics, chemistry, programming etc.;
- they were highly motivated and dedicated (in view of the fact that their purpose was admission to the Master's

degree programs based on the results of the Unified Entrance Exam);

- their academic performance in other subjects demonstrated their critical thinking and high learning potential.

The main objective of the course was achieving the linguistic and intercultural competences at level B2-B2+ on Common European Frameworks of Reference known as CEFR which, according to the Association of Language Testers in Europe known as ALTE, means that by the end of the course students have to obtain the real-life language competencies sufficient for successful intercultural assimilation in an English-language environment.

The series of the placement tests taken in the beginning of the course showed that the weak link that impeded efficient performance and fluent communication of the majority of the students was inability to use paraphrasing, to work with key words, to recognize the verb form in the context or tell the difference between the words with similar meaning.

According to the results of the placement test, on average only 35 per cent of the task (15 questions) were covered. In order to solve this particular problem and enhance the students' advance in English, some extra-class activities were offered:

- daily grammar tasks followed by weekly online analysis;
- daily vocabulary tasks followed by weekly online analysis, see Figure 1;
- challenges (one-week of three-week activities focused on improving general English proficiency and cultural awareness), see Figure 2;
- exam boosters focused on practicing a particular exam task type;
- monthly webinars;
- quizzes and games.

Figure 1

Daily Tasks (grammar and vocabulary) at online course “English Fastpass”.

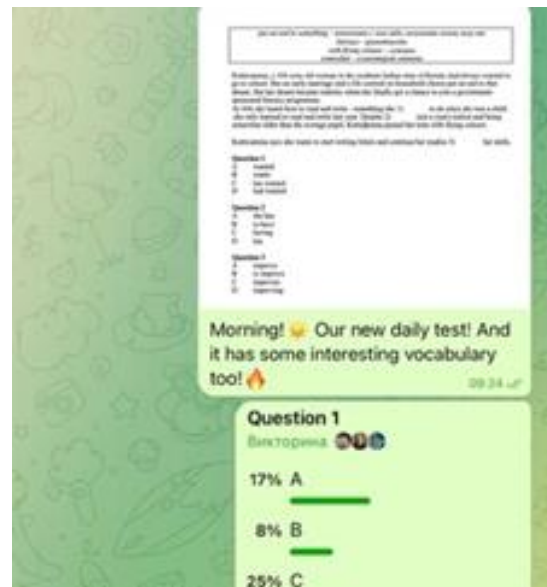
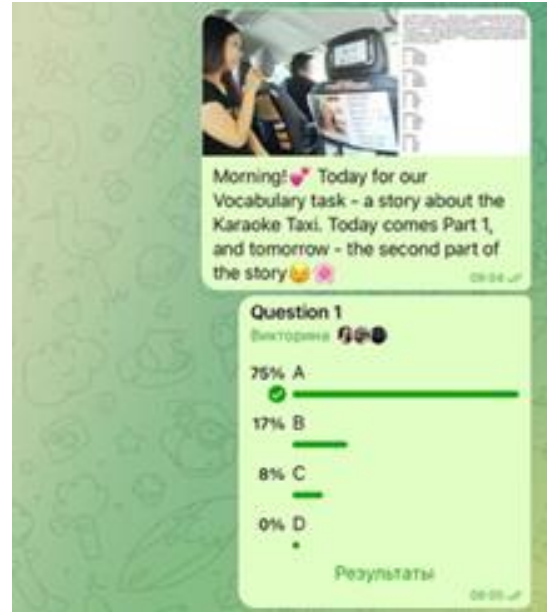
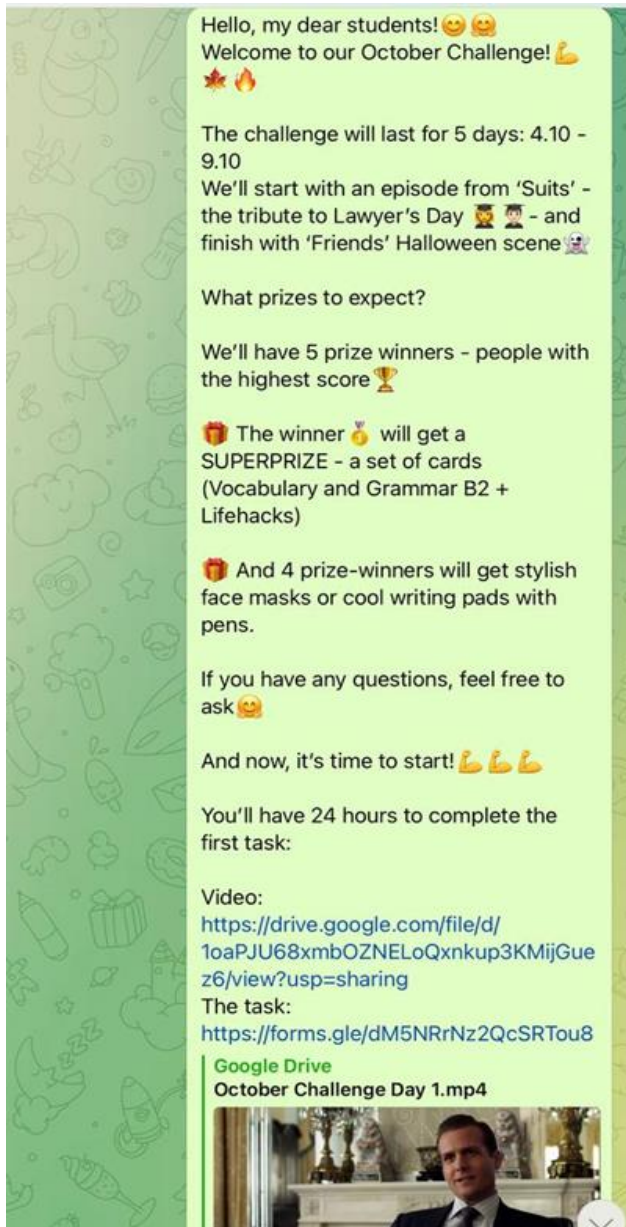


Figure 2.

Challenges at online course “English Fastpass”



In order to provide the credibility of the results, the students were given a mid-term test and final end-of-the-course mock exam which allowed us to define their achievement in the English language competence according to the CEFR as Common European Framework of Reference for Languages scale.

The resulting data showed significant progress in students' performance in both linguistic and intercultural competences, and specifically in use of English tasks (Table 1).

The resulting data prove that students significantly improved their performance in Unified Entrance Exam on average in 15.1% during the first term, and in 20.2% in the second semester, overall progress being 35.3%.

Correspondingly, their final assessment in all English language practical skills,

including the competence in intercultural communication, confirmed considerable advance of the all-language competences of students in the experimental group.

Moreover, as it seemed reasonable to survey the students' attitude to the effectiveness of different types of activities. They were asked to rate these activities from 1 to 5 (1 for being the least effective and 5 for being the most effective).

Table 2 represents students' responses in which the respondents answered that they consider daily grammar and vocabulary tasks followed by weekly online analysis to be the most helpful for their learning process, followed up by exam boosters, monthly webinars, quizzes and games, and challenges being less important in terms of exam preparation.

Table 1

The Results of Students' Progress at the Different Stages of the Course

Test	Results (Mean ± SD)	Average Progress
Placement	35.2 ± 4.68	
Mid-term	50.3 ± 4.72	35,3 %
Final	70.5 ± 4.05	

Table 2

Responses of 28 students of the experimental group to the question: 'Rate these activities in terms of their effectiveness for exam preparation'.

Activity	Average Rate
– daily grammar tasks followed by weekly online analysis	5
– daily vocabulary tasks followed by weekly online analysis	5
– exam booster	4
– challenges	3
– monthly webinars;	4
– quizzes and games.	4

DISCUSSION

To discuss this issue, we should say that extra-class activities are really effective for e-learning. The result comparison shows their positive outcomes in many countries all over the world. They are Turkey (Aksu, 2020), Ukraine (Voloshyna, 2021; Kolbina, Oleksenko, 2020), Philippines (Moralista & Oducado, 2020), India (Dubey & Pandey, 2020)

The majority of researchers (R. Moralista and R. Oducado (2020), S. Seo (2020), U. Kalita (2020), C. Aksu (2020), P. Cabrera-Solano, P. Gonzalez-Torres and C. Ochoa-Cueva (2021), A. Maatuk, E. Elberkawi, S. Aljawarneh, H. Rashaideh, and H. Alharbiet (2021)) underline the advantages of e-teaching so that they could apply online effectively.

CONCLUSION

On balance, the synthesis of the research results allows us to draw the conclusion about the effectiveness of applying of some unconventional extra-class activities, specifically, daily grammar and vocabulary tasks followed by weekly online analysis to be the most helpful for

learning process, exam boosters, monthly webinars, quizzes and games as highly effective tools for teaching students to pass Unified Entrance Exam.

Using the visualisation techniques, influencing students' emotions and feelings, the abovementioned online course "English Fastpass" for all intends and purposes facilitates efficient acquisition and better memorizing along with the ability to use this knowledge in the appropriate tasks, which in the long run will help successful intercultural communication in an authentic English language environment.

Judging by the comments made by the students of the experimental group and the results of the questionnaires filled in by these students, they would find such methods of teaching extremely encouraging and stimulating.

That opens the perspectives for further research of new, unconventional methods of English language instruction that can make learners regard education as an exciting, inspiring and productive process of cognition.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:**ЕЛЕКТРОННЕ НАВЧАННЯ: АЛЬТЕРНАТИВНІ ОНЛАЙН КУРСИ
«ENGLISH FASTPASS»**

Метою цієї роботи є доведення припущення про ефективне подолання викликів воєнного часу та труднощів пандемії завдяки застосуванню комплексу засобів і технологій, включаючи нові стратегії електронного онлайн навчання з використанням мультимедійних засобів, мобільних додатків, навчальних можливостей сайтів соціальних мереж, інструментів Гугл-класу з альтернативним онлайн-курсом «English Fastpass».

Методологія. У цьому дослідженні використовуються теоретичні, емпіричні та статистичні методи. Теоретичні методи (аналіз та синтез) служать для аналізу можливостей, переваг і недоліків соціальних медіа як нового інструменту навчання. Емпіричні (спостереження, тестування, педагогічний експеримент) призначаються для проведення самого педагогічного експерименту. Статистичний аналіз даних педагогічного експерименту здійснено за допомогою статистичних методів (t-тест).

Результати. Комплекс засобів і технологій навчання англійської мови ефективно реалізує альтернативний онлайн-курс «English Fastpass», спрямований на підготовку студентів до складання іспиту з англійської мови. Пропоновані позааудиторні заходи є доволі успішними: це щоденні лексико-граматичні завдання з подальшим щотижневим онлайн-аналізом; мовленнєві вправи (один тиждень із трьох цілеспрямовано на покращення загального рівня володіння англійською мовою та культурного занурення); екзаменаційні бустер-вправи, зосереджені на відпрацювання певного типу екзаменаційного завдання; щомісячні вебіари; вікторини та ігри. Отримані експериментальні дані показали значний прогрес успішності студентів як у лінгвістичній, так і міжкультурній компетентності, і, зокрема, у виконанні лексико-граматичних завдань з англійської мови. Підсумкова оцінка з усіх практичних навичок англійської мови, включаючи компетентність в міжкультурній комунікації, підтвердила значний прогрес усіх мовних компетентностей студентів.

Висновок. Доведено ефективність застосування альтернативних позааудиторних заходів, які мають супроводжуватися щотижневим онлайн-аналізом. Найбільш корисні для процесу навчання наступні: екзаменаційні бустер-вправи, щомісячні вебіари, вікторини, ігри. Використовуючи методи візуалізації, впливаючи на емоції та почуття

студентів, пропонований онлайн-курс «English Fastpass» сприяє ефективному засвоєнню та кращому запам'ятовуванню англійської, а також здатності використовувати набуті знання на практиці у відповідних завданнях, що в довгостроковій перспективі сприятиме успішній міжкультурній комунікації. Судячи з відгуків студентів, вони вважають таке навчання надзвичайно обнадійливим та стимулюючим.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: Гугл-клас, мобільне навчання, мультимедіа, позакласна діяльність, сайт соціальної мережі.

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