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## STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT WORK IN STUDYING FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASED ON LMS MOODLE

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### ABSTRACT

*This article provides an overview of the Moodle learning environment – what it includes and how it can benefit your teaching. The **purpose** of the article is to substantiate the significance and expediency of using electronic educational courses on the LMS MOODLE platform in the context of improving the quality of independent work of students while learning a foreign language.*

*The following **methods** were used: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, generalisation and systematisation of scientific theoretical and methodological literature) – in order to define the concepts of research; empirical-diagnostic (discussions, questioning, testing, pedagogical observation, expert questionnaire) to study the results of educational activities and determine the level of formation of students' independent work; pedagogical experiment (stages of launching, formation, controlling) to check the performance of the system of the corresponding didactic tools based on the LMS MOODLE platform.*

***The results are the following.** Nowadays, universities widely use the e-learning system based on the virtual learning environment Moodle (full name – Modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment). It is focused on learning technologies in cooperation and allows you to organise training in the process of solving educational tasks together, exchange knowledge. A brief analysis of the main directions of distance learning is given; experience in the development and application of electronic educational courses in English. It is concluded that the use of e-learning in the educational process increases the effectiveness of various types of independent activity of*

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students, self-development and formation of their professional competence. The author has developed an electronic course on the discipline "Foreign language of academic and professional communication" using LMS Moodle.

Thus, it is **concluded** that LMS Moodle has increased the effectiveness of learning a foreign language by non-linguistic students. Learning becomes oriented due to the variability and flexibility of learning the learning material at an individual pace. In addition, LMS Moodle allows solving a variety of priority tasks that modern society puts before learning and meets the requirements and capabilities of recent students. However, like any method, distance learning has its strengths and weaknesses..

**KEYWORDS:** LMS Moodle, Electronic Course, E-Learning, Foreign Language, Personal Learning Systems, Distance Learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

The intensive development of modern society requires the higher education system to train independent, competent, proactive, and ready to adapt quickly to new social and economic conditions. The current trend in the educational standards of the new generation is to reduce the hours of practice aimed at studying most disciplines and increase the hours for independent work of students. The role and time of independent work of a student in the process of mastering a foreign language require a significant increase in his productivity.

Independent work is the work of students performed during extracurricular or classroom time according to the instructions and methodological guidance of the teacher, but without his direct participation (with partial direct participation of the teacher, who leaves the leading role in the work of students). The purpose of higher education is not so much to fill the student with a certain amount of information but rather to form cognitive strategies for self-learning and self-education as the basis and component of future professional activity. Independent work of students is an essential type of academic work and plays an important role in the modern teaching

of foreign languages to students of a non-linguistic speciality. The state standard provides, as a rule, more than 50% of study hours for independent work of students (Hontarenko, 2021).

Independent work is a vital element in language learning since the insufficient number of hours allocated to contact work requires a significant amount of independent work from students. Well-organised independent work contributes to achieving educational goals and forms students' skills and abilities to independently organise educational activities, which further gives them the opportunity for self-education and self-improvement.

In teaching foreign languages, the independent work of students plays an exceptional role since the ability to communicate orally and in writing in a foreign language, to solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction cannot be formed only in practical classes, without the additional independent study of a significant part of the educational material, without the ability to independently find information, critically comprehend it.

One of the principal reserves for ensuring the effectiveness of independent work is its intensification. The intensification of independent work as a component of the educational process is an increase in the productivity of the student's independent educational activity. Due to the dual nature of independent work (as a means of organisation and as a specific type of educational activity), its intensification involves the search for such forms of tasks that would ensure maximum productivity of the student's independent academic work.

Among the latest technologies used at the university for the organisation of independent work of students, it is possible to distinguish information and communication technologies that are implemented on the basis of electronic platforms. The introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT), including those implemented on the basis of electronic platforms, in the field of education allowed teachers to qualitatively change the content, methods and organisational forms of education, intensify and individualise the training of students. In recent years, research work has noted the great potential of modern technologies for more effective organisation of independent work of students (Pronczuk-Omiotek, & Skulimowski, 2018).

The theoretical and methodological base of distance learning is based on the psychological theory of activity (Zdanevych, et al., 2019; Nalyvaiko, 2020) and the concept of personal-oriented learning (Biletska, 2014), focus on formation and development of students' subjectivity, taking into account their individual abilities.

Self-organisation always implies the active position of a personality as a subject of his/her activity. An individual work of a

student means purposeful, internally motivated, structured subject activity, which consists of its acts implementation and corrections regarding process and result (Kolbina, Oleksenko, 2020).

Unsupervised work requires from those who study a high level of self-awareness, reflexivity, self-discipline, and responsibility; it should be fun for a student from the process of self-improvement and self-actualisation. So, in this determination, the most important are psychological determinants of personality work: self-regulation, self-actualisation, self-organisation, self-control, etc. (Kolbina et al., 2019)

Self-educational competence creates grounds for flexible reaction to social transformations in society and increasing the personal level of competitiveness in Ukrainian and foreign labour markets (Bodnar, 2020).

The **purpose** of the article is to substantiate the significance and expediency of using electronic educational courses on the LMS MOODLE platform in the context of improving the quality of independent work of students while learning a foreign language.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a systematic approach to the formation and development of digital skills in university education, which involves considering objects, subjects, approaches, and methods as separate elements of the educational process. In this research, the following methods were used: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, generalisation and systematisation of scientific theoretical and methodological literature) in order to define the concepts of research; empirical-diagnostic (discussions, questioning, testing, pedagogical observation, expert questionnaire) to study the results of

educational activities and determine the level of formation of students' independent work; pedagogical experiment (stages of launching, formation, controlling) to check the performance of the system of the corresponding didactic tools based on the LMS MOODLE platform.

## RESULTS

Today in Ukraine, the most common virtual learning platform is Moodle. The Moodle platform is free and available in 75 languages. In addition, it adapts easily to training requirements and is easy to use. Its pedagogical potential is invaluable for creating online communities for cooperation, training and management of educational institutions.

The use of the technologies allows students to form their skills which then help them succeed in any sphere of their activity.

Among these skills are:

- planing activity on one's own;
- taking decisions;
- making a choice;
- working in the net;
- using information technologies.

Distance courses are characterised by:

- flexibility or the ability to present the course material taking into account the preparation and abilities of students. This is achieved by creating alternative sites for obtaining more detailed or additional information on obscure topics, as well as a number of questions with hints, etc.;
- relevance or the possibility of introducing the latest pedagogical, psychological, and methodological developments;
- convenience or the opportunity to study at a convenient time, in a certain place, getting an education on the job,

- no time restrictions on studying the material;
- modularity or division of the material into separate functionally completed topics that are studied as they are mastered and correspond to the abilities of an individual student or a group as a whole;
- economic efficiency or a method of teaching that is cheaper than the traditional one due to the effective use of educational tools, simple configuration of electronic learning materials and multiple access to them;
- the possibility of simultaneous use of a large amount of educational information by any number of students;
- interactivity or active communication between the students of the group and the teacher, which significantly increases the motivation to learn and improves the assimilation of the material;
- wider opportunities for quality control of education, which include discussions, chats, the use of self-control, and the absence of psychological barriers;
- means of consulting students by the program teacher;
- means of interactive cooperation between a teacher and a student;
- the ability to quickly update the course with new information and correct errors. (Kostikova, Holubnycha, Kravchenko, Simonok, & Serheieva, 2019).

In the Moodle environment, students receive:

- 1)** access to basic materials (texts of lectures, seminars, practical, laboratory and self-development works) and additional materials (books, handbooks, manuals) for preparation and testing;
- 2)** joining groups (wiki, forum, chat, seminar, webinar);

- 3) the opportunity to get acquainted with the results of the student's distance learning course;
- 4) the ability to see the test results;
- 5) the ability to communicate with the teacher through an account, forum, or chat;
- 6) the ability to store files with registered users;
- 7) the possibility of reminders about the course activities.

The teacher is capable:

- 1) use tools to develop his/her own distance learning courses;
- 2) distribute basic materials (texts of lectures, preparation for practical/laboratory work and independent work); additional materials (books, manuals, manuals in formats: doc, html, pdf materials and via additional plugins);
- 3) supplement the course with educational elements;
- 4) carry out rapid modification of basic materials;
- 5) apply different types of tests;
- 6) perform automated tests;
- 7) automate the process of transforming the knowledge that students receive during the course and test;
- 8) add various plugins to the course that allow the teacher to use various software for distance learning (Kolbina, Oleksenko, 2019).

There are currently more than 68,000 registered Moodle sites in 235 countries. Among the most famous users of this platform are the London School of Economics, the State University of New York, the Open University of Great Britain and giant Microsoft companies. As of March 2014, 330 Moodles sites were registered in Ukraine, but only some of them provide distance learning. The number of Ukrainian universities offering Moodle training is constantly growing, for

example, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kharkiv National University of Economics, Bukovina State Medical University and many others.

A period of distance learning has begun in connection with the introduction of quarantine around the world. The Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics (KHNEU) was no exception. Its distance learning is supported by PLS (Personal Learning Systems) hosted on the Moodle platform.

PLS was established in 2009 with the aim of monitoring and coordinating the work of students, ensuring the quality content of the educational environment, equal access of participants of the educational environment to high-quality educational and methodological materials (regardless of the place of residence and form of study), creating conditions for the personalisation of learning.

As an example, I have developed a distance learning course at PLS for independent work of students in the discipline "Foreign language of academic and professional communication" for students of the direction 051.090 "Personnel Management and Labor Economics". The course is designed for 1 semester (Hontarenko, 2020).

First of all, in order to log in, the student must enter his/her username and password, which he/she is given by a particular faculty. This makes it possible to exclude non-fulfilment of independent work since the system performs automatic accounting and control.

This course has a thematic structure and includes several blocks.

The instructional block is of an organisational and methodological nature. In this block, there is a news forum (where the teacher informs students about all the events taking place in the

learning process); an explanation of the course (which specifies the goals, objectives and educational results of mastering the discipline); official documents with the discipline's work program, technological map and assessment; various educational materials and tools to optimise the interaction process between the teacher and students; resources for studying the course in the form of reference materials on grammar, vocabulary, etc.; educational, methodological and informational support of the discipline; hyperlinks to open full-text editions of educational and scientific literature, periodicals, Internet resources and other electronic educational resources intended for student self-education.

In the process of developing training modules, we adhered to the goal of organising pedagogical conditions coordinated and managed by independent work. Therefore, it was decided to include both mandatory and additional sections of the training material in each module. As part of the mandatory

topics, there are electronic educational materials for students, training in audiovisual applications. Additional topics are a glossary of terms; additional reading materials focused on materials for independent project work; additional online resources and reference materials.

Each topic of the e-learning course has a clear structure, having in its composition a set of exercises developed following the discipline program and the number of hours allotted for work and independent work on a specific topic of the course. A particular training function when learning a language should be performed by the interface of training programs (Hontarenko, 2020).

The course is divided into three blocks, each containing three topics. The first block is the marketing activity of the company. It is divided into three topics. 1.1. Marketing support. 1.2. The complex of marketing communications. 1.3. Management of product distribution channels. This block contains a glossary, grammar tasks, listening, writing, and speaking (Figure 1).

## Figure 1

*The first block of the course. Marketing activity of the company*

Topic 1. Marketing activity of the company. 1.1. Marketing researches. 1.2. Complex of marketing communications. 1.3. Management of product distribution channels. ✎

- Marketing Mix 4 P's. Business English Vocabulary. ✎ Edit
- What is Digital Marketing? ✎ Edit
- The Importance of Studying Consumer Behaviour. ✎ Edit
- Glossary. Marketing ✎ Edit
- Definitions ✎ Edit
- Text "The art of persuasion" ✎ Edit
- Text "The secret of success for online businesses" ✎ Edit
- Writing 1 ✎ Edit
- Listening I. ✎ Edit
- Listening II. ✎ Edit
- GRAMMAR TENSES ✎ Edit
- Робота на практичних заняттях за темою 1 ✎ Edit
- KEYS LISTENING ✎ Edit

Hidden from students

+ Add an activity or resource

The structural components of each module were a text page with the following types of work – glossary, definitions, text and writing, as well as various types of quizzes with exercises for self-study.

The main types of independent work in a foreign language used in our course are:

- working with lexical material: performing lexical exercises (choosing correct answers, multiple choice questions, etc.);
- working with the text and dialogues: reading and translating professionally oriented texts and dialogues using various dictionaries;
- working with audio materials: listening to texts and situational dialogues;
- work with grammatical material: studying theoretical grammatical materials and doing grammatical exercises (AbdulWahab Mahmoud, 2021).

Thus, independent work covers all aspects of learning a foreign language and largely determines the results and quality of mastering the discipline. It is the organisation of effective independent work using LMS Moodle that provides the necessary conditions for the formation and development of linguistic and communication skills, taking into account the personal needs and characteristics of students.

Let us consider the possibility of using various tools of the course of an electronic learning environment created on the basis of LMS Moodle for organising independent work and its control. In each course topic, we have divided all the material for working with vocabulary, text and dialogue.

Almost all the exercises of our course are performed using the Quiz and Assignment tool, which allows conducting the testing procedure in the training

mode. The systematic use of educational tests in teaching a foreign language allows students to organise independent work, the purpose of which is to assimilate and consolidate the material, deepen and improve knowledge (Chekhratova et al., 2022).

It is crucial and necessary to use tests not only in control but also in the training function in the process of mastering language material and individual skills. Foreign language learning tests in PLS are designed to understand, consolidate and repeat theoretical material and improve students' skills. For example, a student goes through a vocabulary block and does exercises on it.

For educational tests, the authors of the course consider it appropriate to indicate in the settings that the time for passing the test is limited and provide students with one attempt to complete the test. Moreover, students can see their grades in the record book.

Three exercises with different tasks were selected to work with the vocabulary. The first test was conducted using a tool such as "Drag and Drop into text". In the first type of vocabulary exercises, Dragging into text questions requires students to drag text parameters from the answer bank into the question text. For example, you can ask students to complete a sentence or definition (Kazak, Bondaruk, Zabiika, Samsonenko, Ivaniha, Ignatieva, 2021).

These questions can be configured so that possible answers can be used more than once or have additional answers. The second and third types of vocabulary exercises have been done using "Select the missing words". Students must select words or phrases from the drop-down menu embedded in the question text (Fig. 2, 3).

Figure 2

An example of the text exercises «Drag to Text»

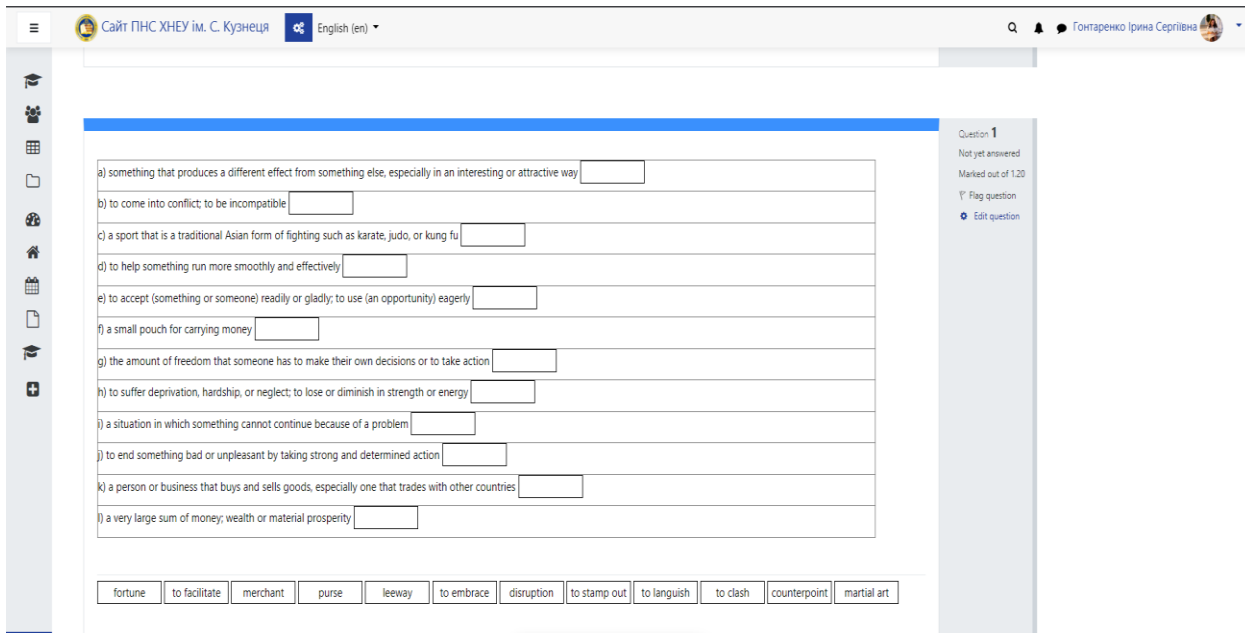
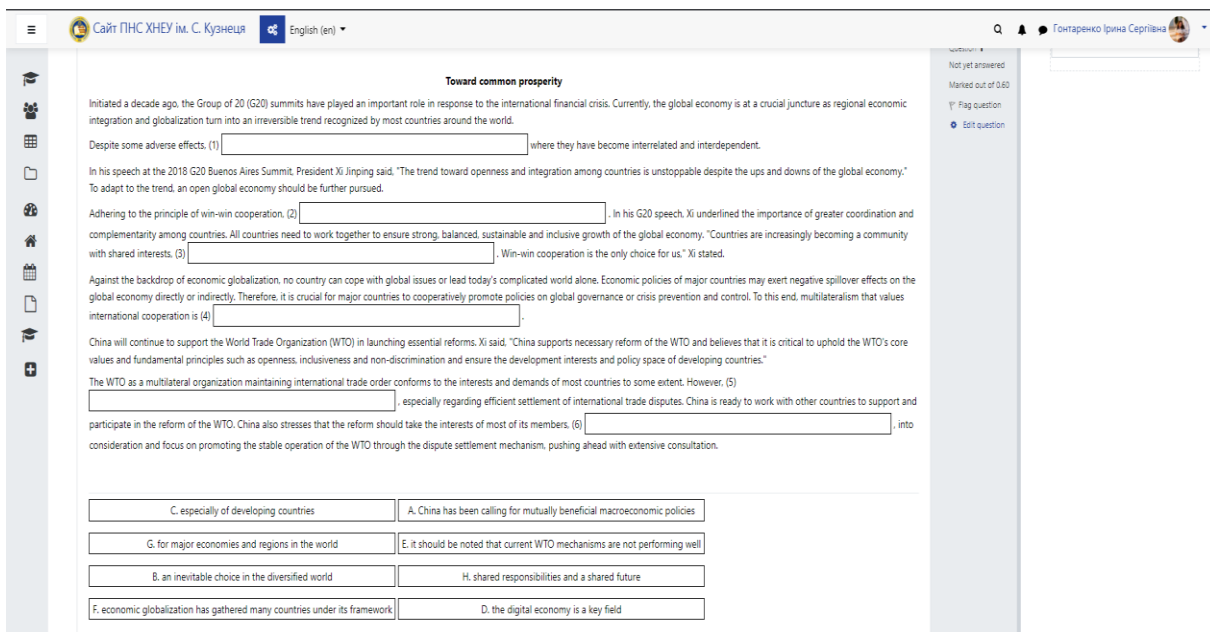


Figure 3

An example of the text exercises «Select missing words»



For tests, we have set a rating scale, the number of attempts, deadlines and a time limit. Students take the final test once in a limited period of 90 minutes. In the settings, we also have made it so that the questions are randomly selected by the computer system from all the exercises of

the module (Hontarenko, 2020). The final testing system allows students to test their knowledge at the end of the topic, and the tests developed by the teacher allow them to check the material's assimilation level quickly. A significant advantage of using the Quiz tool for a



teacher is the fast processing of results since most exercises are processed and evaluated automatically.

All results are saved in the settings of the record book, which allows you to give a fair assessment of the work of students and monitor their educational activities. In our course, we have created a record book configured in such a way that it reflects all types of work performed by students, the maximum number of points for each work and the number of points scored by the student. The record book indicates the final grade for each semester (no more than 100 points).

The assignment allows teachers to collect written or “digital” materials or files from their students. Instead of taking their homework on paper, they can do it digitally. All assignments submitted via Moodle can only be accessed by the teacher and not by other students.

There are various types of tasks in Moodle. Here, we will mainly describe the “online task”. The online assignment allows students to send a text using familiar editing tools. Teachers can evaluate these assignments online and even add online comments or changes, which will then be provided to students for further revision.

The assignment can be used to transmit and comment on any type of written document; but it can also be used to collect other types of materials from students, such as texts, essays, photographs, collages, presentation slides, audio recordings of their own voices or interviews and dialogues, etc.

You can use the Moodle glossary for various purposes: create a glossary yourself so that your students can use it (for example, for a brief introduction); ask students to work on the glossary together (where they are responsible for adding or editing entries; they can also be asked to

rate or comment on entries); make sure that you give clear recommendations on how they should create their new entry and in what order and what details should be included.

Resources are the content of the course. Lecturers may have existing content that they need to include in the course, such as websites, Word documents, etc. Any existing files are often uploaded to the course and stored on the server. While the files are on the server, they will be moved, renamed, edited or deleted. Thus, updating materials is very simple and can be done relatively quickly. The task is usually set with a deadline and a maximum score. Students are ready to upload the necessary files (Hontarenko, 2020).

System maintenance is simplified and easy to perform. Teachers and students enjoy significant rights as participants in the courses in which they participate.

Without a doubt, Moodle can be a powerful and user-friendly system, and it can effectively help teachers organise their teaching materials, improve their communication tools, and get their student interaction records when needed. However, when the Moodle system is used in a writing class, some technical difficulties and pedagogical problems cannot be ignored (Hontarenko, 2021).

We must emphasise that the Moodle platform plays an important role in helping the teaching staff to conduct mixed lessons, making education flexible, creative and accessible to everyone. Moreover, the use of Moodle platform technologies can be helpful as a model for teaching and learning foreign languages during the pandemic, and it can be useful after the pandemic period since it is an effective response to the specific

challenges of the current postmodern educational environment.

## DISCUSSION

The study showed that the stages of pedagogical technology studied in this article could be effectively applied in distance learning. PLS (Personal Learning Systems) hosted on the Moodle platform offer the ability to create tests of various types. Teachers can create interactive web pages with exercises such as dragging and dropping, selecting missing words, true or false, etc. Otherwise, each section might have links to websites with many exercises. The assessment can be carried out using various types of tests. At the end of each test, each student can be assigned a grade or a score, which will be added to the overall grade for the subject. To discuss the obtained results, I must say they are very similar to my colleagues' results (Kolbina, Oleksenko, 2020) and other researchers' results (Biletska, 2014; Chekhratova, et al., 2022).

Thus, the use of the virtual learning environment Moodle for independent work of students provides a number of advantages over traditional forms and methods of organising independent work of students. Among these advantages are the implementation of the principle of individualisation of educational and professional activities; the ability to receive quick feedback; the ability to visualise educational material; variability of independent work; independence and activity. There is no doubt that the Moodle electronic environment contributes to the organisation of active independent cognitive activity of students, its optimisation, increasing the amount of information and increasing interest in learning. All of the above helps to get better results in teaching students compared to the traditional system of higher education. Furthermore, it is safe to say that the use of LMS Moodle for independent work of students contributes to the improvement of the process of training future specialists.

## CONCLUSIONS

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### 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]:

### **САМОСТІЙНА РОБОТА СТУДЕНТІВ ПРИ ВИВЧЕННІ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ З ВИКОРИСТАННЯМ LMS MOODLE**

**Метою** статті є обґрунтування значущості та доцільності використання електронних навчальних курсів на платформі LMS MOODLE у контексті підвищення якості самостійної роботи студентів під час вивчення іноземної мови.

Використовувалися такі **методи**: теоретичний (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення та систематизація наукової теоретико-методичної літератури) з метою визначення понять дослідження; емпірико-діагностичний (бесіди, анкетування, тестування, педагогічне спостереження, експертне анкетування) для вивчення результатів навчальної діяльності та визначення рівня сформованості самостійної роботи студентів; педагогічний експеримент (етапи запуску, формування, контролю) для перевірки працездатності системи відповідних дидактичних засобів на базі платформи LMS MOODLE.

**Результати.** Уточнено поняття електронних навчальних курсів та їх місце в системі змішаного навчання. Висвітлено ключові особливості та можливості для інтенсифікації навчального процесу та активізації самостійної роботи студентів. Онлайн-курси англійської мови в LMS Moodle розроблено на основі аналізу наукових публікацій і досліджень, спостережень, представлено результати навчальної діяльності; розкриваються особливості їх застосування з точки зору підвищення ефективності різних видів самостійної діяльності студентів.

Викладач має унікальну можливість керувати процесом, контролювати його та адаптувати до індивідуальних особливостей учнів. Важливо, щоб використання інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій у навчанні іноземних мов було системним, оскільки процес формування навичок потребує послідовності. Подано короткий аналіз основних напрямів дистанційного навчання; досвід розробки та застосування електронних навчальних курсів англійською мовою.

Автором розроблено електронний курс з дисципліни «Іноземна мова наукового та професійного спілкування» з використанням LMS Moodle. Таким чином, зроблено висновок, що LMS Moodle підвищила ефективність

вивчення іноземної мови нелінгвістичними студентами. Навчання стає орієнтованим завдяки варіативності та гнучкості засвоєння навчального матеріалу в індивідуальному темпі. Крім того, LMS Moodle дозволяє вирішувати різноманітні пріоритетні завдання, які ставить перед навчанням сучасне суспільство, і відповідає вимогам і можливостям студентів.

Зроблено **ВИСНОВОК**, що використання електронного навчання в навчальному процесі підвищує ефективність різноманітних видів самостійної діяльності студентів, саморозвитку та формування їхньої професійної компетентності.

**КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:** LMS Moodle, електронний курс, e-learning, іноземна мова, персональна навчальна система, дистанційне навчання.

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