

EFFECTIVE AND ENGAGING DEVICES AT ONLINE ENGLISH LESSONS

Distance education becomes one of the fastest developing approaches in higher education in Ukraine. This trend is bringing various changes and challenges to academic study and educational process. The ongoing efforts made by English teachers and various challenges they face in meeting distance learners' needs are great, however, there are a lot of efficient and engaging devices which are aimed at solving different tasks at English online lessons. In our work the emphasis is laid on researching new methods and devices, which can help English teachers who are oriented to mastering distance education. We analyzed the efficiency of online and blended learning in teaching English, presented effective engaging technologies of conducting English lessons as well as English extra-curriculum activities. Different examples of how various teaching devices and methods may be successfully employed for distance learners in higher educational establishments as well as in secondary schools are offered in this article. The works of the English and American scientists who work in the sphere of education serve as a methodological basis for our paper. We proved that online conversation lessons help students improve their listening and speaking abilities if the teacher provides them with a good listening environment, chooses subjects that interest the students and uses special exercises to develop their skills and motivate students' desire to study English. It is noted that in order to become a successful teacher and to have motivated and successful students, it is necessary to employ modern technologies and methodical recommendations of the Ukrainian and foreign specialists.

Key words: *distance education, distance learners, effective and engaging devices, online and blended learning, extra-curriculum activities, efficient technologies.*

Problem statement. Distance education becomes one of the fastest growing approaches in higher education in Ukraine. This trend brings various changes and challenges to academic study. Moreover, taking into consideration a difficult situation of Covid-19 faced by all the world, new approaches should be considered not only in the economic or political spheres of life, but also in the educational process. The ongoing efforts made by English teachers and various challenges they face in meeting distance learners' needs are great, however, there are a lot of engaging devices which are aimed at solving different tasks at English on-line lessons.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The works of the English and American scientists who work in the sphere of education serve as a methodological basis for our paper. C.J. Bailey and K.A. Card in their work «Effective pedagogical practices for online teaching» share their teaching approaches, devices, which can be used at the English lessons. M.D. Roblyer in his textbook «Integrating educational technology into teaching» analyzes the ways and means of integrating educational technologies into distance teaching. In his research «The effectiveness of online and blended learning», B. Means presents efficient engaging technologies of conducting English lessons as well as English extra-curriculum activities.

Scientific tasks. A great number of educational institutions move to on-line mode functioning or asynchronous form of education, which supposes exploring new approaches in teaching as well as in studying. The emphasis is laid on researching new methods and devices, which can help English teachers oriented to mastering distance education.

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The purpose of the article is to present modern approaches, methods and devices of distance teaching the English language in higher educational establishments as well as in secondary schools.

Different examples of how various teaching devices and methods may be successfully employed for distance learners have been offered in this article.

Presentation of basic material of the research. Most students study English because they believe it will benefit them sooner or later. They see English as a means to earn more money, to fulfill certain education requirements, to travel abroad, to gain access to the culture of English-speaking nations, to meet more people. Although students' initial motivation may be quite strong, under the strain of learning English with all its complexities of pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary, their motivation may fade. That is why a primary responsibility of an English teacher is to revive motivation. Otherwise students will fail in their attempt to bridge the gap in the communicative phase of language learning, and their hopes of speaking English fluently will never be realized.

Important sources of motivation are those, which reinforce the students' desire to learn a foreign language. E. Stevick pointed out four major classroom sources of motivation:

1. *The joy of discovery.* Students find it exciting to discover something about a new language by themselves. If the teacher directs his students to the point where they make a discovery about English rather than having it all explained to them, the benefit is more lasting, as the students are stimulated to make further discoveries.

2. *The satisfaction of control.* Mastering new language material provides the students with a feeling of confidence and accomplishment, which sustains their enthusiasm.

3. *The joy of remembrance.* When the students sometimes return to some material from an earlier stage of their language program, they have a chance to do something they already know well, and in this case to have some psychological rewards. Moreover, they realize how much progress they have made.

4. *The elation of use.* If the teacher can provide some way for students to use English outside the classroom, whether through the contact with native speakers or writing to a pen pal in English, then they are provided with the best source of motivation – the elation that comes from truly communicating with native speakers.

Motivation is crucial to the success of directed conversation practice where students are involved into true communication. Motivation makes the students want to converse. W. Rivers underlines the fact that motivation to communicate should be aroused and fostered by the interest of the task proposed for the students concerned. Such interest is followed by a genuine communication from one person to another, that is conversation, which can be defined as the informal interchange of thoughts and information by spoken words.

Any conversation is composed of two activities: speaking and listening, when the interlocutor listens carefully to the speaker and makes a coherent response to the speaker's utterance. He/she also fixes in his mind the information he/she considers useful to remember. An English conversation practice should be a time when everyone has a chance to talk, and also to master his/her listening skills.

There are a lot of popular activities which stimulate students to use their newly acquired English. Dialogues, improvisations, plays – are forms of role-playing, which is an engaging device involving students into conversation. All these devices can be employed at on-line English lessons too. For example, students have a task to create **dialogues** on the definite topic – a short conversation between two people- where they can improve not only pronunciation, grammar and memorization practice, but also communicative skills.

The teacher's task is to turn this task into free communication, bringing more reality by introducing variations on specific dialogue lines. Students may give an answer consistent with reality or sharing their own experience. The teacher may have his students suggest different exchanges, which would be a logical addition to the conversation. It can also be the task to paraphrase some lines of the dialogue, or to have two students perform the conversation on their own. For instance, these may be dialogues, focused on everyday situations (going shopping, discussing hobbies, visiting popular places), or based on a specific grammar point : – *Have you ever been to ... ? – Yes, I have been there many times./ – No, I have never been to... .* The task may be to clarify the meaning of a specific word or expression: - *What do you call the place where you can borrow books? – A library. – Who works there? – A librarian)* You may ask students to express very strong emotions, for example to discuss successful passing the examination and express your elation, or to apologize to your friend for having lost his expensive book. Students may highlight specific cultural traditions and customs of a definite country, or suggest humorous riddles.

Jokes and riddles can serve as short, simple dialogues for listening and speaking practice at on-line lessons with students of different ages and proficiency levels. They are highly motivating because they give students a reason to listen, guess and laugh:

-What question can't be answered by you? – Are you asleep? However, when presenting humorous material, the items with universally known elements should be chosen: - How does an elephant get out of a telephone booth? – I don't know. – The same way he got in.

Also teachers can help their students by presenting key words or phrases on the screen, or to explain that some words or phrases sound the same (or almost the same) but have different meanings: - *How can you tell when an elephant is going on vacation? – I don't know. How? – He packs his trunk. ("Trunk" has two meanings: 1) the long nose-like part of an elephant; 2) a large rigid piece of luggage).*

Certainly, students should not use puns or riddles offensive to anybody (riddles, concerning appearance, nation or religion). This kind of exercises challenges the students to express themselves in an imaginative way while remaining within the general form of the dialogue.

Improvisation is also a very good conversational technique in distance learning. It is a dramatic hypothetical situation in which two speakers interact without any special preparation. English students working with improvisations use the language in an inventive and entertaining form. However, improvisations demand a high degree of language proficiency and imagination, they should be used with advanced-level students. The situation should be clearly stated, easy to act out, and to have a dramatic story twist. When students are fairly fluent in English, they are able to create an interesting conversation around the situation and even complete it with appropriate facial expressions and gestures. This kind of conversation practice is fun for the participants and entertains the rest of the group who serve as the audience.

These situations should be simply stated and challenging to the students' creativity. The teacher may select the ones he thinks his students would enjoy acting out. For example:

1). *Your friend asks you to return the book that you borrowed from him several months ago. At first you cannot remember what you did with it. Then you explain why you kept the book for so long.*

2). *You are walking downtown with a friend of yours. Suddenly you remember that you have left some meat cooking on the stove at home.*

3). *You have bought a sweater and left it in the store by mistake. When you discover it is missing, you return to the store and ask the clerk if he has seen it.*

4). *You bought a lottery ticket and left it in your coat pocket. Your wife doesn't know the ticket is there and she gives the coat away because it is so old. Later on you learn that you have a winning number. You ask your wife for the coat.*

5). *Your house has been robbed. You call the police. When the policeman comes, he asks you a number of questions.*

The teacher may also ask his students to create their own situations and suggest the enactment to their fellow students. The performers should begin the improvisation immediately. The students may want to have time to prepare for the improvisation, but the teacher should explain the benefits of working out the conversation in a spontaneous manner, with no rehearsal, which is the main purpose of the improvisation exercise.

The students will probably be surprised by how well the conversation turns out. Even though a few pronunciation and grammar errors may occur, the conversation will most likely be coherent and entertaining with appropriate emotions and gestures. Certainly, the teacher should not interrupt or correct a student when he is involved in the improvisation, otherwise he may become unable to proceed with his spontaneous speech. Instead, the teacher can take notes during the performance and discuss the mistakes afterwards, pointing out the correct forms that were to be used.

Due to such improvisations, students will soon be able to create more meaningful, natural conversation in English. This device is also helpful to get over their shyness in speaking English, besides providing rewarding communication activity for speakers and listeners.

Dialogues and improvisations are communication activities involving two students only, however, several people can also interact in a role-playing situation. In this matter, **plays** are especially popular activities in so-called English clubs – the conversation clubs, where the group has enough time to devote to the study, practice and staging of a play. Such practice is also beneficial and entertaining, moreover, it establishes good group spirit and turns into a great source of satisfaction for everyone, because, besides useful English conversation activities, students may reveal unsuspected talents in drama. The role-playing helps to overcome students' self-consciousness, which is the major obstacle in conversation practice.

Students may also enjoy participating in **debates**. They speak more fluently during a debate if they can represent their true feelings on an issue, speaking either on the «pro» side of an issue or on the «con» one. Teachers should have his students defend their actual opinions on an issue, this way the debate will be more satisfying and entertaining for learners. After the teacher describes the debate topic, he asks which students would like to be «pro» and which «cons» and then selects an equal number of students to speak on each of the two debate «teams». The students should have sufficient time to prepare their arguments, then they speak from their notes, but they should not read their presentation. After every member has presented his point of view and the team has summed up the opinion, class members in the audience can ask questions people on either team.

In choosing a debate topic for English conversation practice the teacher should find a subject that has elements of controversy but does not arouse uncontrollable emotions. For example, the following topics may suit to conversation practice:

- 1) *All schools should be co-educational.*
- 2) *A universal language is possible.*
- 3) *Distance education versus usual one.*
- 4) *Childhood is the happiest time of life.*
- 5) *It is better to marry for love than for money.*
- 6) *The younger generation knows best.*
- 7) *Television does children more harm than good.*

8) *Civilization brings happiness.*

9) *The educational system should be reformed.*

10) *Man should continue space exploration.*

Some other tasks can be suggested for mastering communicative skills, for example, **making questions**. First, the teacher prepares short-form answers for five questions that can be answered by listening to the recording of a short audio or video recording of factual nature. S/he presents on the screen the answers to questions that can be asked concerning the listening task, e.g.: *It's quite possible; That seems very unlikely; Definitely not; It may sometimes happen, etc.* After listening for the first time, the students are informed that they must make up questions for the answers on the screen. The students have some time to write down their questions and then listen to the recording once more in order to check their questions and correct them if necessary. Then individual students are asked to read his/her question that corresponds to an answer on the screen. In such way the students revise grammar and active vocabulary, master listening and speaking skills.

Another task is also very entertaining for students who study the topical vocabulary «Students' Holidays». They are asked to recall their favourite holiday through their five senses: the smells, the sounds, etc. Then they recollect the location of their holidays: at the seaside, in the mountains, in the countryside, in the city or in the village. They should state several necessary conditions for a perfect holiday in such a location. For example, a holiday in the mountains may require: *dry snow, no ice, blue skies, good boots and sunglasses, good companions*. Then students take it in turn to point out the possible dangers or pitfalls of their partner's holiday, using their «necessary conditions» as a guide. The other person has to suggest precautions they would take to avoid these problems. E.g.: «- *What if you break your leg while you are skiing? – I'll make sure I have full insurance before I go*». Any unresolved problems can be discussed with other precautions being suggested.

This activity can be also used as a grammar exercise by giving a model before they start discussing possible dangers. For example, the teacher may ask them to make exchanges using first conditionals: «- *What will you do if the snow is horrible and wet? It will be impossible to ski! – No problem, I'll take lots of different waxes with me*».

One more useful activity is «*Emotions Task*». The teacher asks his students if they know the meaning of the words describing emotions (both positive and negative), for example: *joy, fear, excitement, hate, affection, grief, sadness, triumph, passion, shame, terror, worry, relief, love, pity* and s. o., which are presented on the screen. Then the teacher has the students think of different events from the first ten years of their life. They are asked to divide these memories into pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral ones. The words from the above list can help to describe these experiences. Students ask each other questions on these events from their childhood and share their emotions.

Later, the teacher may continue the discussion by getting the students to identify the emotions felt by people in news photographs (these photos should be prepared beforehand and shown on the screen): the sportsman's joy winning at the competition or someone's sorrow when being defeated, or the grief of an earthquake victim, and students share their suggestions.

The next activity is «*Nice People*». First, the students see on the screen the adjectives with positive connotations are given, e.g.: *artistic, capable, cheerful, dependable, easygoing, efficient, flexible, generous, happy, intelligent, loyal, outgoing, perceptive, rational, sensible, sensitive, thoughtful, unselfish, versatile, witty*. Then, the unknown words (if any) are explained by the teacher and the students start working. The task is to choose three adjectives for each person in class, for themselves, or for the teacher (if he likes). The students give their impressions of one

of the students. After that, the teacher asks the students who were described what they think about their classmates' choice of adjectives.

Similarly, «*Man's Character and Mood*» can be discussed. The students get the task to discuss what factors can cause a person's mood to change. One of the factors may be weather. Students are asked to discuss the preferences with their partners: what is their general mood, what they like or don't like to do in this or that kind of weather. For example, in rainy weather, one student is lazy and relaxed, he likes to read a good book and doesn't like go shopping. His partner may disagree with him, stating that he is usually calm and happy in rainy weather and likes to walk in the park but he doesn't like to go to his studies. If the weather is windy, one student may report that his mood is adventurous and he likes to fly kites but he doesn't like to be in a plane in such kind of weather. The partner may agree with him, or may present his preferences, stating, that he feels creative and is fond of watching the sea and painting the nature, however, he hates going on picnics.

When the conversational topic of the lesson is «*Good Teacher*», the teacher can use the following activity. On the screen the students see ten qualities of a good teacher. The task is to rank them in order of importance. For example, while discussing *Maintaining Discipline*, some feel that this quality is the most important and it is in the first place, others are sure that discipline occupies the second place, and so on. The final result shows the spread of opinion and clusters of similar rankings.

At the next stage each quality is discussed in turn and students who give it a high or a very low ranking are called to explain why. The teacher asks them to be able to prove their point of view and to give examples to back up their statements.

Here are the ten qualities of a good teacher, which should be ranked by students:

1. *Keeps in contact with the parents of his/her pupils & lets them participate in the life of the school (primary or secondary school);*
2. *Is able to maintain discipline & order;*
3. *Allows the students share his/her own life with all its ups & downs;*
4. *Works hard to remain up-to-date in his/her subject;*
5. *Openly admits when s/he has made a mistake or does not know something;*
6. *Is interested in his/her students, asks them about their homes, and tries to help where possible;*
7. *Makes the students work hard & sets high standards;*
8. *Is friendly & helpful to his/her colleagues;*
9. *Uses a lot of different materials, equipment & teaching methods to make his/her lessons interesting & useful;*
10. *Helps the students become independent & organize their own learning.*

This is a very valuable activity for students who are training to be teachers as it stimulates discussion about their expectations and self-image connected with their future profession.

Conclusions and research perspectives. These on-line conversation lessons help students improve their listening and speaking abilities if the teacher provides them a good listening environment, chooses subjects that interest the students and uses special exercises to develop their skills and motivate their desire to study English. In order to become a successful teacher and to have motivated and successful students, it is necessary to employ modern technologies and methodical recommendations of the Ukrainian and foreign specialists. Really, success in our life a lot depends on how well we can listen and respond to it.

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Ткаченко Л. Використання ефективних і цікавих прийомів на он-лайн уроках з англійської мови.

Дистанційна освіта стає однією з найважливіших форм вищої освіти в Україні, яка швидко розвивається в даний час. Ця тенденція вносить різні зміни та труднощі в академічне навчання та навчальний процес. Постійні зусилля Вчителі англійської мови постійно стикаються з різноманітними проблемами і витрачають багато зусиль, щоб задовольнити потреби учнів, які навчаються дистанційно. Однак існує безліч цікавих прийомів, спрямованих на вирішення різних завдань на он-лайн уроках з англійської мови. У нашій роботі акцент робиться на дослідженні нових методів та прийомів, які можуть допомогти викладачам англійської мови, орієнтованим на оволодіння ефективними і водночас цікавими методами і прийомами в дистанційній освіті. Ми проаналізували ефективність он-лайн та змішаного навчання у викладанні англійської мови, описали ефективні технології проведення он-лайн уроків з англійської мови, а також для позакласних заходів з англійської мови. У цій статті пропонуються приклади того, як різноманітні навчальні методи можуть бути успішно використані для дистанційних студентів у вищих навчальних закладах, а також у середніх школах. Методологічною основою нашої статті є роботи англійських та американських вчених, які працюють у сфері освіти. Ми довели, що дистанційні уроки-бесіди допомагають учням покращити свої здібності до слухання та мовлення, за умови, що вчитель англійської мови забезпечує їм гарне середовище для прослуховування, обирає теми, які цікавлять учнів та використовує спеціальні вправи для розвитку своїх навичок та сприяє мотивації здобувачів вищої освіти вивчати англійську мову. Зазначається, що для того, щоб стати успішним викладачем та мати мотивованих та успішних учнів, необхідно застосовувати сучасні технології та методичні рекомендації українських та зарубіжних фахівців.

Ключові слова: *дистанційна освіта, дистанційне та змішане навчання, ефективні і цікаві прийоми, он-лайн навчання, позакласна робота, ефективні технології.*