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TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE: ENCOUNTERED CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The purpose of the present paper is to show the necessity to develop and enhance online teaching techniques, help students obtain knowledge via online platforms and acquire skills essential for the pursuit of academic and career objectives. The paper targets meeting methodological and methodical problems of teaching via online teaching techniques in order to envision the outcomes of the efficacy of technology-enabled studying. The shift from on-site to remote teaching forced the instructors to introduce new methods of online teaching and assessment techniques to rise to the challenge posed by the necessity of new teaching modality. It is evident that online teaching has both merits and demerits. By teaching online, we enter into a different teaching and learning modality, so the instructors should acquire skills to use online resources, websites, LMSs (Learning Management Systems) to prepare effective lessons, organize the work of students effectively, digitize their teaching materials, prepare specially designed lessons, quizzes and tests and lead debates using online tools and websites. All the online resources, websites and activities introduced in the paper were extensively used during my lessons and proved to be very efficient and successful in online teaching process.

Key words: *mode of teaching, online teaching, content, online resources, online platforms.*

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Introduction. Online learning or Web-based Instruction (WBI) has been around but has become popular after the spread of virus Covid-19 throughout

the world in 2020. Online resources are miscellaneous, but the paper will concentrate on English language teaching issues. These new teaching techniques (remote teaching model) and media of online collaboration have led us to new issues and challenges to be embraced by educators and lecturers throughout the web and in the entire world. The issues include but are not limited to methodology choice, instructional continuity, behavioral issues, choice of educational materials etc. This shift to remote teaching, the necessity to translate the teaching expertise into a new teaching modality, the forced immersion and resistance of some educators to use technological advances has its own effect on the ways the online learning in HEIs will develop.

The results of my research enable me to introduce new methods of online teaching and evaluation techniques of students after converting to an online system of education, meanwhile leaving behind the model of offline education. This is a watershed moment for higher educational institutions to start building technological backbone, computer literacy and digital expertise to overcome this critical situation.

Literature review. When we consider formal education, we should take into account the curricula which should be taught and learnt by students. The dual process of studying and teaching is called the method which can be in the form of lectures, project-based learning, case studies or problem-based learning. All these methods have both advantages and disadvantages. Lecturing is usually conducted from teacher to students and makes students bored thus leading to the decrease of motivation to study.

This type of formal education is based upon a paradigm generally called 'knowledge reproduction model', which includes verbal lectures, printed handouts, drills and practice lessons[1]. The goal of teaching is to convey knowledge from the sources (like instructors and books) to students. At the same time, the research indicates that learning is incentivized when teaching methods are favorable for active learning process. For example, Merill identified that learning is promoted only when learners are engaged in solving real-world problems, when new knowledge is demonstrated to the learner, and when new knowledge is applied by the learner0[2].

Online communication via computer and online studying usually assist this type of active learning. According to Imel[3], the most important distinguishing characteristic of WBI is the emphasis on instruction and not just on information delivery. Taking into account this theory, WBI should concentrate on cognitive-based methods, where students interact with the online environment, solve real-world issues or practice the acquired knowledge thus becoming an active learner.

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[1] **Lightfoot J.M.,** Designing and Implementing a "Full-service" Class Page on the Internet, Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 2000, 9(1), pp. 19-33.

[2] **Merill D.,** First Principles of Instruction. Educational Technology Research and Development 2002, 50 (3), pp. 43-59.

[3] **Imel S.,** Web-based Training: Trends and Issues Alerts. ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1997.

The online learning environments afford the opportunity to shift the role of instructors from "delivering" to "listening and supporting"[4].

Instructors nowadays have to adapt their teaching materials for online education as they have faced the problems of digitization of textbooks, printed handouts or tests. Siemens[5] encourages teachers to consider what elements are required in any learning environment and what corollary tools exist online:

- Have a place for learner expression (blog/portfolio/emails).
- Have a place for content interaction (which LMSs/Learning Management Systems have).
- Have a place to connect with other learners (discussion forums and LMSs have this).

All these tools have been studied to identify their advantages and disadvantages and introduce solutions how to turn drawbacks into advantages.

Email communication has been thoroughly studied and some advantages have been identified, namely:

- Email is asynchronous and one advantage as a learning tool is that it offers a communication medium that avoids scheduling conflicts[6].
- Yet another documented benefit of using email is quick response time for students' inquiries[7].

E-mail communication, being a useful tool, has its drawbacks too, namely:

- Online courses are documented to take more instructor time per week than a live class, and e-mail is one of the major contributing factors in that time[8].
- Students report becoming frustrated, depressed or disconnected when e-mail answers are slow or nonexistent[9].

Next, discussion forums were closely studied and the following advantages and disadvantages have been identified, namely the advantages are:

- Discussion forums can be used for asynchronous whole class or small group discussions. Asynchronous discussion gives students time to reflect on their answers and edit their work before posting[10].

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[4] **Doubler S.J. Grisham L., Paget K.F.,** Emerging Faculty Role: Teaching for Deep Understanding Online. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans, L.A., 2003.

[5] **Siemens G.,** Learning Management Systems: The Wrong Place to Start Learning, 2004. Retrieved June 22, 2006 from www.elearnspace.org/Articles/lms/htm.

[6] **Thorsen C.,** TechTactics: Instructional Models for Educational Computing, 2003. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

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[8] **Cavanaugh J.,** Teaching Online: A Time Comparison. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 2005, Spring 3(1). Retrieved June 23, 2006 from, www.westga.edu/distance/ojdla/spring81/cavanaugh81.htm.

[9] **Woods R. and Keeler J.,** The Effect of Instructor's Use of Audio Email Messages on Student Participation in and Perceptions of Online Learning: A Preliminary Case Study. Open Learning, 2001, 16/3, pp. 263-278.

[10] **Sherer P. and Shea T.,** Designing Courses outside the Classroom: New Opportunities with the Electronic Delivery Toolkit. College Teaching, 2002, 50, pp. 15-20.

- Empowering feature of discussion boards is the students' ability to create their own forums on given topics of interest. Pelz[11] states that student led discussions allow students to ask more thought provoking questions, although some instructors might initially be uncomfortable with giving up "teacher control".

The following drawbacks of the discussion forums have been identified, namely:

- Students unfamiliar with the operations of discussion boards often report an initial frustration with the lack of immediate feedback to their posting, sometimes logging in several times a day to see who has responded to their work[12].
- There is the idea of some students feeling "exposed" by presenting their work and thoughts to the entire class and resenting the lack of privacy[13].

Research Methodology. To address the main objectives, this research applied the following:

- statistical analysis,
- methodological research, and
- a combination of descriptive and comparative analyses.

The requirement to analyze online teaching methodologies throughout the existence of online teaching worldwide was of utmost importance. These analyses facilitated the shift to 100% online mode of teaching due to the force majeure situation in the world. It led to the research on theories developed by prominent methodologists, linguists and teachers, new and relevant approaches and methods of English language teaching, namely communicative language teaching (CLT), web-based language teaching (WBLT) and content-based teaching (CBT) which were developed and advocated by famous methodologists and linguists including Noam Chomsky, Sherer P. and Shea T, Pelz B., Tu C., Thorsen C., Robertson T., Cavanaugh J., Lightfoot J.M., Siemens G. etc.

Being a practicing instructor, I taught both on-site and online, thus implementing different methods and modes of teaching according to the classroom setting.

Methodological and descriptive analyses assisted me in organizing and managing my classroom efficiently and to the best benefit of my students. I immersed myself in finding the most useful websites for online resource collections and authoring my personal materials for the further usage in the teaching process.

Statistical and comparative analyses enabled me to compare the online platforms and make an efficient usage of online LMSs for my teaching, and while

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[11] **Pelz B.,** (My) Three Principles of Effective Online Pedagogy. Journal of Asynchronous Learning Network, 2004. 8. Retrieved June 24. 2006 from,
www.sloan-c.org /publications/jaln/v8n3/v8n3_pelz.asp.

[12] **Sherer P. and Shea T.,** Designing Courses outside the Classroom: New Opportunities with the Electronic Delivery Toolkit. College Teaching, 2002, 50, pp. 15-20.

[13] **Tu C.,** The Impacts of Text-based CMC on Online Social Presence. Journal of Interactive Online Learning, 1, 2002. Retrieved June 24, 2006 from,
www.ncolr.org/jiol/archives/2002/fall/06/index.html

using statistical research tools, feedback was collected from my students on online lessons that proved to be effective and successful.

Materials developed by me through these online resources, tests and quizzes were extensively used during my online teaching process.

Analysis. 2020 has become the year of great challenges and posed new issues for the educational sphere worldwide. The overwhelming spread of the virus shocked many educational organizations in the world and the Armenian HEIs have risen to the challenge of shifting to entirely online mode of teaching.

The teaching staff and top management directed all their efforts at the continual functioning of universities of Armenia, especially ASUE (Armenian state university of economics) despite force majeure situation. University staff had to transform their instructional materials into online resources in the shrinking time frame.

Many lecturers have never taught online and the challenge was to acquire both computer skills and find the best solutions for lecture deliveries via video conferences or platforms and how to adapt to the new horizons of the digital world. HEIs that previously invested in faculty training for remote and online teaching as well as development of web-based courses, would adapt easier to new conditions.

I had an experience of online teaching back in 2018-2019 at Skyeng, the biggest online school teaching English, before the shift to online education in 2020 due to coronavirus pandemics.

The online school Skyeng specializes in English language teaching entirely online and the lessons are developed and organized by experienced methodologists and are delivered by teachers specializing in different spheres and having different levels of English proficiency. The higher the level of the teacher (CEFR 'The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' level exam results), the higher the salary and opportunities are. The platform is interactive; teachers and students see each other, see the lesson plans and the lessons simultaneously as well as all the lessons are interactive, with lots of different assignments to do. When the student writes the answers to the exercises or does any action, types the words, writes an essay or a letter, the teacher sees it simultaneously as the student types it and the teacher can guide the learner in the right direction. All the lessons contain all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening as well as interactive dictionary which adds new words to a specially designed application and the learner later can memorize the words using different types of drills and memorization techniques. There are videos to watch and discuss, movie extracts for the discussion of specific topics and overall understanding as well as special tools to use for the improvement of every skill being taught. Homework is being checked automatically by the platform which facilitates the work of the teacher. Duration of the lesson is 60 minutes, one-to-one or can be organized as group lessons, which proved to be not very demanded by the learners. I managed to teach one unit during that class (60 minutes), starting with discussion and warm-up activities, then reading and grammar exercises, followed by listening activities. Writing strategies and

structures were being discussed during those 60 minutes and I gave writing some letters as homework.

My Skyeng experience assisted me a lot when we had to transfer to online education and I had no difficulty in adapting to online teaching. I used different platforms, LMSs and websites for my teaching to make the lessons more enriched and fascinating for the students and I would like to share that my students were highly motivated by online games and tests and were very active during those 20-30 minutes. This assisted me in organizing lessons correctly and minimizing the inappropriate behavior of students. I also authored some digital content to enrich the lessons delivered online as additional materials together with their textbooks. I cobbled together my developed materials and tests for specific purposes, according to the topics being covered during the lessons and organized them for the benefit of the learners. The lessons' duration is 80 minutes and I managed to cover both the compulsory materials and additional tests, quizzes, games, presentations and discussions.

I was simultaneously teaching online classes at a joint project organized between NPUA (National polytechnic university of Armenia) and the British Council within the framework of Creative Spark program. While teaching at ASUE and NPUA, in the pursuit of making my lessons more competitive and engaging for my students, I researched and compared many online platforms and LMSs using the online service https://elearningindustry.com/ to identify strengths and weaknesses of these online tools and I have come up with the following conclusions and choice of online platforms and resources, which I widely used during my online teaching process. Some websites are free to use, while others charge lecturers fees for the delivery of their services. I researched and later used the following platforms for the English language teaching:

1. www.OnestopEnglish.com – this online resource is famous around the world as well as its special section Staff Room. This platform is constantly being enriched with new materials and resources thus enabling teachers to use the new developments of English language teaching namely in the spheres of Business English, English for Specific Purposes, preparations for the international exams (CEFR level exams and tests), General English and so on. The section Staff Room contains the methodological guidelines and ready-to-use lessons of the leading methodologists in the sphere of English language teaching.

Having read their methodological guides on blogging, video sharing, social-bookmarking, digital images and different types of classrooms- flipped learning, digital literacy, blended learning, I used it in designing my own methodology in online teaching. I used sample worksheets to prepare my own ones according to the level of my students, their specialty and developed the materials specifically designed for accountants, financiers, statisticians as well as entrepreneurial worksheets and General English worksheets. This website also has the buttons e-mail, + share and comment which facilitated the sharing process of these materials to students. This can seem like a stop-gap measure, but everything proved to be successful according to the final feedback from the students gathered using Survey Monkey service.

2. www.ESLprintables.com – this is a very useful platform of resources, where teachers worldwide can share and upload their own resources in different categories. The website is aimed at exchange of resources, so the users should upload their prepared materials to be able to use other users' resources. Therefore, you should register and share your own prepared materials. Registered teachers can use the ready-to-use reading, writing, speaking and listening worksheets or use it as a template to create their own ones for their specific classrooms. I am a registered teacher on this website and I made online exercises using their tools, sent the printable materials to my groups of students, mainly using a specially designed group in the social media Facebook, as well as sent the PowerPoint presentations made on the website by me to teach them the main strategy of preparing presentations and delivering them. Here I saw the benefits of learning communities because learners had a chance to use digital options and during the synchronous communication to share their thoughts and exchange ideas.

3. www.ToolsforEducators.com – this website enables the educators to create their own crosswords, word search puzzles, board-games, flashcards as well as issue certificates for the participants. I used this website to create crosswords for my lessons according to the topics to check their knowledge of unit vocabulary. This is one of the examples of crosswords created for my lesson, which is shared[14].

4.
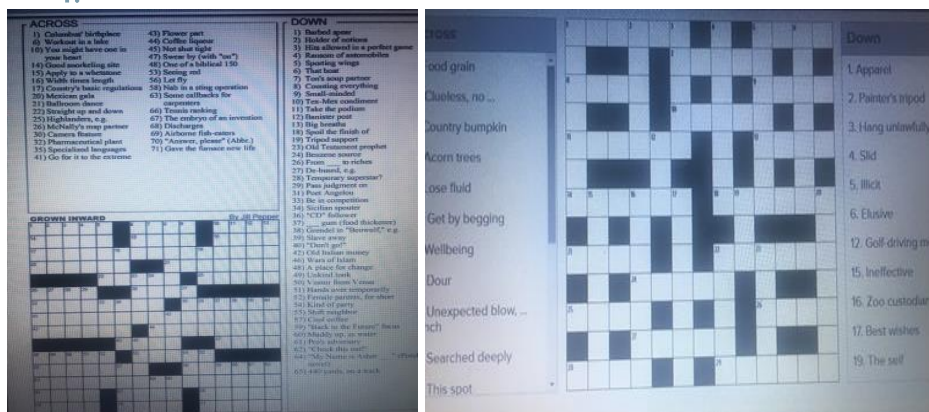
5. www.wiziq.com is a universal platform for teaching and studying. One can create your virtual and interactive classroom as a teacher or a coach. Every registered user gets 24/7 online support from a specially trained consultant on the problems of the website or content. The teachers can create and sell online courses, create MOOCs[15] (Massive Online Open Courses) easily, deliver learning on the go and create beautiful learning portals. It is a very good LMS for educators and learners. I tried www.wiziq.com free as a trial to understand its advantages and drawbacks and use it later in my lessons, but after that trial

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[14] C:\Users\Admin\Desktop\Tools for Educators - free printable word search maker.pdf
[15] MOOCs - MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES is an Online Course Aimed at Unlimited Participation and Open Access via the Web, Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_open_online_course

period its drawback was that it charges fee for the continual usage of its services. The platform is great for organizing your lessons in interactive settings, use it on the go and control the work of your students to check it on the constant basis. I used it during the trial period and organized beautifully designed learning platforms which proved to be beneficial for the delivery of English lessons to my group of financiers.

6. www.quizizz.com – here teachers can find a great collection of online tests on different topics with a wide collection of tests on Business English, English for Specific Purposes to be used both online and for organizing games and tournaments for students who can collect points, gain boosters, use them during the tests and compete with other students. Teachers put a time limit for the tests. Educators can create their own quizzes and organize games and quests in English. I widely used this website and these tools for both online lessons and as a homework challenge. The students were competing with each other by collecting points, boosters and final scores. The student with the highest score was the winner and I encouraged them by assessing their work, adding points to their marks to instigate their pursuit of knowledge and future desire to participate aiming at winning the quiz. One quiz prepared by me is introduced here and by the hyperlink[16] entitled Financial Markets.
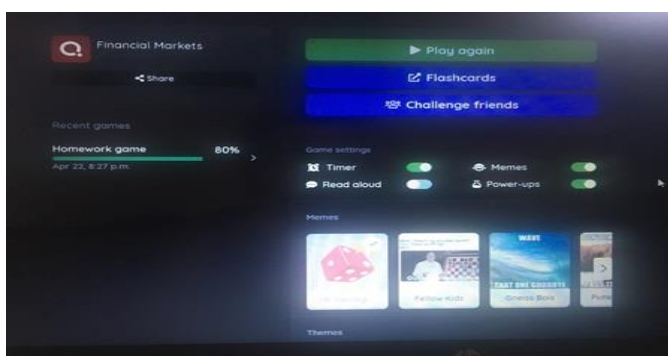
7. www.kahoot.com – this is an online website to create tests, interactive lessons, slides, discussions and organize online tests and games with students. Every teacher can create tests and lessons with time limits as well as interactive games. I used this resource during all my online lessons and if I did not offer the students this test, they reminded me about it. I can state that this sign shows how interactive lessons and test-games can motivate students to attend online lessons and wait for their favorite 25 minutes of the lesson. Students had to download the application from Play Market or App Store and then I started the test on the screen, sent them the code for the test and they had to choose the correct answer for any type of question. I mainly used tests with multiple choice options, true or false statements and gap fills. Every question has the option of getting points and the quicker the participant answers, the higher the score will be and, in the end, the program showed the runners on the podium with the fanfares and confetti. This was the most exciting moment for the participants. Another option of the program is to prepare flashcards for the new vocabulary and

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[16] https://quizizz.com/join/quiz/5c91128653a72e001b06122b/start

practice it with the students online. After every unit I prepared my own flashcards and the group had to guess the word on the flashcards by reading the definition. This is a valuable resource for vocabulary memorization which I extensively used during the lessons. Here are the presentations for the tests and podium[17]:
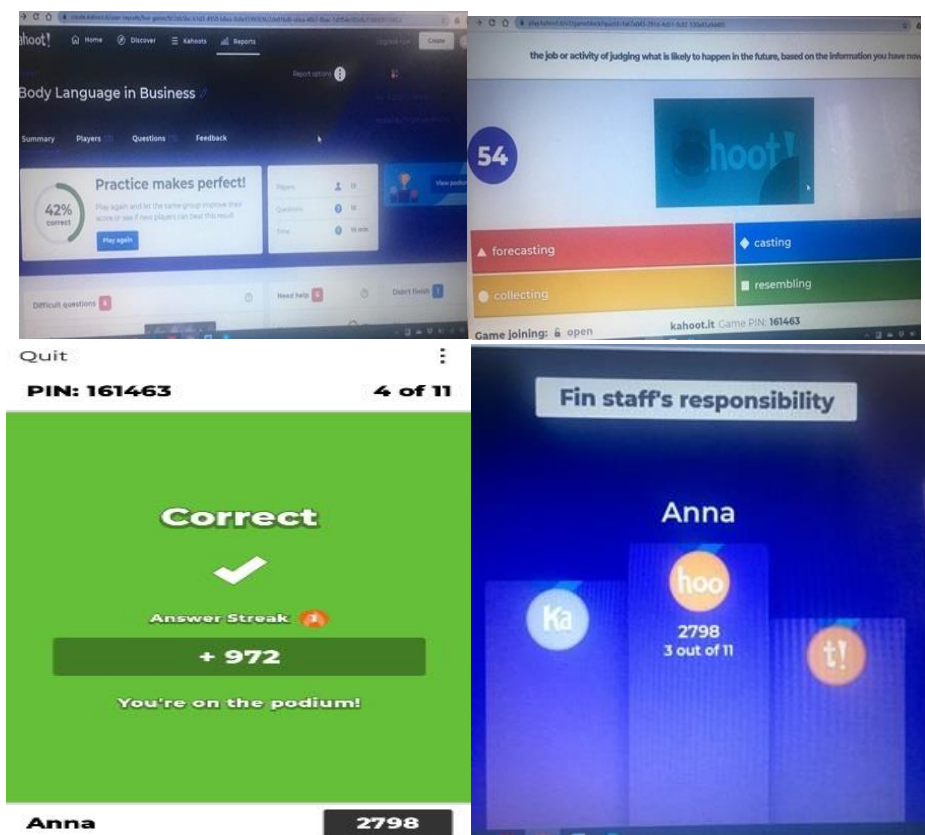
8. www.quizlet.com – this is a perfect website for the preparation of flashcards, organizing interactive games with the flashcards and checking the meaning of the new vocabulary. Another option of the program is to prepare flashcards for the new vocabulary and practice it with the students online. After every unit I prepared flashcards for the newly-obtained vocabulary and the groups had to guess the word presented on the flashcards by reading the definition and explanation. This is one of the best techniques for vocabulary memorization to be extensively used during the lessons and as homework assignments. Here is the link to one of the exercises I used[18]:

9. www.wordcloud.com – this is the best editor and creator for vocabulary exercises and memorizing techniques and games. In order to commit new vocabulary to long-term memory, a student must be exposed to some repetitive

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[17] https://create.kahoot.it/user-reports/live-game/fa67e043-291d-4d51-8c82-530e83a9d485
/2de016d0-e6ba-4867-8bac-1d0f54e183d6/1587557751818, https://create.kahoot.it/user-reports/live-game/fa67e043-291d-4d51-8c82-530e83a9d485/2de016d0-e6ba-4867-8bac-1d0f54e183d6/1587557751818/podium
[18] https://quizlet.com/257994177/economics-flash-cards/

actions and word cloud is the best choice to assist students to learn it. I used this technique during my online lessons, devoted some 5-7 minutes to such drills and results were greater than expected. The teacher should address the skills gap and vocabulary acquisition as a great skill connected with memory capacity of learners. Learners can encounter difficulties with remembering the words and the teacher should offer a timely response by facilitating the acquisition of new business vocabulary. Here is one of the word clouds prepared by me for my online lessons:

    10. Zoom video communications was one of the most frequently used tools for my lessons. Classroom activities that encourage active learning are: online discussions, when I wrote a topic or a statement on the whiteboard in Zoom to encourage the discussion for about 10-15 minutes. I also used Zoom whiteboard for the creation of mind maps. Here are some mind maps done by me as a sample and the students created their own ones.
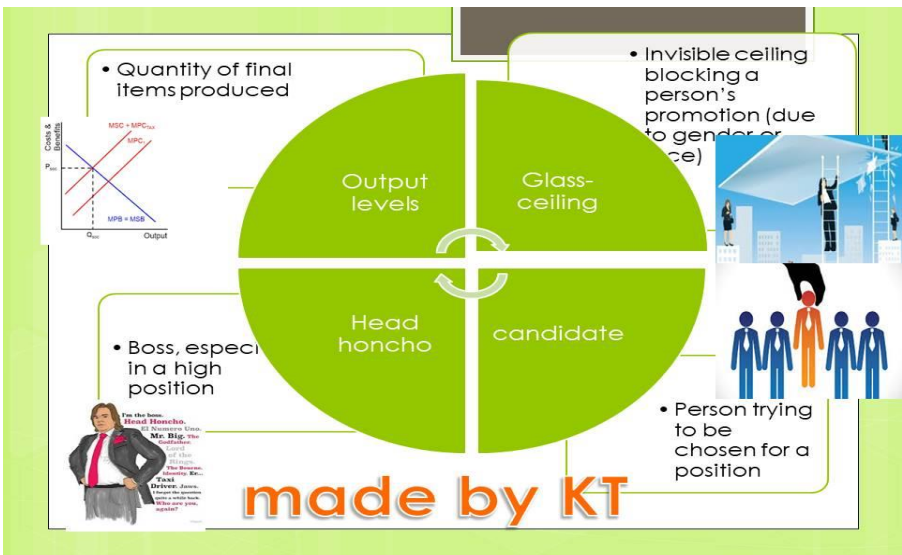
11. One more online platform www.distance-educator.com has been thoroughly studied, which presents news in online education, offers online resources for teaching, opportunities to create the augmented reality, which depicts the moving reality though 3D images and animation. I used this website for preparing some lessons using augmented reality which is a sophisticated tool to be used and needs more practice to create interesting animations.

I also integrated the students' work and life experiences into their program of study, sent specific materials for them to use in the presentation of their individual works and envisioned the excellent learning outcomes by further acquiring the skills necessary in their future work and career.

Conclusion. One of the merits of Web-based instruction and online education is that it can be organized from home or any other convenient place and active learning strategies should be instigated by online teaching.

1. Online education should not only consider formal education but also the use of different online platforms, LMSs, websites to motivate the active learning process, involvement of every student in the learning process. All these lead to the better organization of Web-based instruction with the following acquisition of language and content.

2. We recommend using the website Skyeng as a model for the creation of online classrooms and platforms for teaching not only languages but also other disciplines. Skyeng is completely interactive, and real-life settings with live lessons make the interaction and communication more valuable. The lecturers should get familiar with online teaching techniques and become more experienced in delivering online lessons, through conferences or websites to improve their online teaching skills.

3. The watershed moment of the shift from on-site to online teaching should become a trigger for better management of online classrooms and lessons, application of prior knowledge for the improvement of delivered lessons and the new teaching modality should become the main reason for the excellence in teaching and education.

Instructors should face the challenge, adapt to the new era, use their communication skills, study different websites or use the online resources meticulously analyzed and presented in the paper.

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13. https://elearningindustry.com/
14. https://create.kahoot.it/user-reports/live-game/fa67e043-291d-4d51-8c82-530e83a9d485/2de016d0-e6ba-4867-8bac-1d0f54e183d6/1587557751818, https://create.kahoot.it/user-reports/live-game/fa67e043-291d-4d51-8c82-530e83a9d485/2de016d0-e6ba-4867-8bac-1d0f54e183d6/1587557751818/podium
15. https://quizizz.com/join/quiz/5c91128653a72e001b06122b/start
16. https://quizlet.com/257994177/economics-flash-cards/
17. www.wordcloud.com

КРИСТИНА ТОРГОМЯН

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Онлайн-преподавание английского языка: возникшие вызовы и решения.– Настоящая статья посвящена необходимости совершенствования методов преподавания английского языка посредством применения онлайн-платформ и ресурсов обучения. Переход на дистанционное обучение заставил преподавателей ввести новые методы онлайн-преподавания и методы оценивания студентов с целью преодоления всех трудностей при переходе на новую модальность. Очевидно, что онлайн-обучение имеет свои преимущества и недостатки. Посредством онлайн-преподавания языков преподаватели совершенствуют навыки использования онлайн-ресурсов, веб-страниц, онлайн обучающих платформ для разработки эффективных уроков, продуктивной организации работы студентов, оцифровки материалов, подготовки специально составленных уроков, тестов и проведения дебатов с применением онлайн-инструментов.

Все онлайн-ресурсы и веб-страницы, представленные в статье, были широко использованы нами в процессе преподавательской деятельности и оказались довольно эффективными и успешными.

Ключевые слова: *метод преподавания, онлайн-преподавание, контент, онлайн-ресурсы, онлайн-платформы.*
JEL: D83, I23

ՔՐԻՍՏԻՆԱ ԹՈՐԳՈՄՅԱՆ

ՀՊՏՀ լեզուների ամբիոնի դասախոս

Անգլերենի առցանց դասավանդումը. առաջացած մարտահրավերներ և լուծումներ.– Սույն հոդվածը ներկայացնում է առցանց դասավանդման մեթոդների մշակման և բարելավման անհրաժեշտությունը՝ առցանց հարթակում դասախոսների ուսումնամեթոդական հմտությունների ձեռք բերման ու զարգացման ճանապարհով։ Անցումը հեռավար կրթությանը դասախոսներին հարկադրեց ներկայացնել և կիրառել դասավանդման նոր մեթոդներ և գնահատման ձևեր՝ որպես պատշաճ արձագանք նոր իրողությանը և ի պատասխան առկա մարտահրավերներին։ Առցանց ուսուցման գործընթացն ունի իր առավելություններն և թերությունները։ Լեզուների առցանց դասավանդման անհրաժեշտությամբ պայմանավորված՝ դասախոսները ձեռք են բերում առցանց ռեսուրսներից և էլեկտրոնային կայքերից օգտվելու, ուսանողների արդյունավետ աշխատանքը կազմակերպելու, դասավանդվող նյութերը թվայնացնելու, թեստեր կազմելու և

քննարկումներ կազմակերպելու հմտություններ՝ լայնորեն կի-
րառելով համապատասխան գործիքակազմ:

Հոդվածում ներկայացված բոլոր առցանց ռեսուրսները և
էլեկտրոնային կայքերը մեր կողմից կիրառվել են հեռավար
դասավանդման ընթացքում՝ արձանագրելով գործընթացի
արդյունավետություն և բարձր որակ:

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