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PADLET AND OTHER INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TOOLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The paper considers the necessity of the computerization of the education sphere. Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools and services of Google, blended learning techniques help to enhance autonomous education and answer the training needs of future specialists. The paper describes the Padlet (Google application) and provides with its practical usage in language classroom. The authors come to the following conclusions: improving Internet and computer technology competence through mastering various Internet tools and applications can be traced. Besides, the introduction of IT into traditional classroom intensifies the process of cognitive development and mental activities, forming the high level of students' motivation and interest. For students the usage of IT proves the positive dynamics of their accomplishments in the field of selecting, organizing and dealing with information provided in various forms. It enhances students' opportunities in creating, designing and performing their works and achievements.

Keywords: *ICT tools; Padlet; Google application for language learning; blended learning; assessment; autonomous learning; language skills.*

ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ PADLET И ДРУГИЕ ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-КОММУНИКАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ В ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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В статье рассматривается необходимость компьютеризации сферы образования. Авторы доказывают, что инструменты информационно-коммуникационных технологий (ИКТ), сервисы Google и технологии смешанного обучения отвечают потребностям подготовки будущего специалиста и способствуют формированию навыков

автономного обучения. Описывая приложение Padlet (сервис Google) и приводя примеры его практического использования на уроке английского языка, авторы приходят к выводу, что отмечается значительный прирост компетенций в сфере применения компьютерных технологий через освоение различных инструментов интернет-приложений. Кроме того, интеграция ИКТ в традиционный урок способствует процессу развитию познавательной и умственной деятельности, формированию высокого уровня мотивации и интереса обучающихся. Для студентов использование ИКТ показывает положительную динамику достижений в области выбора, организации и работы с информацией, представленной в различных формах, что расширяет их возможности в создании, проектировании и выполнении поставленных задач.

Ключевые слова: инструменты информационно-коммуникационных технологий; Padlet приложение Google для обучения языкам; смешанное обучение; оценивание; автономное обучение; языковые навыки.

The introduction of new state educational standards, computerization of the educational sphere and enhancing of autonomous education and responsibility for the results of education – these developments highlight the need to change the training of future specialists. With the decrease in the amount of hours devoted to the discipline (foreign language) and the increase in the share of students' responsibility the implementation of new education technologies, the use of the Internet, e-learning, educational computer programs is becoming one of the solutions to educational challenges. Besides, to deal with these issues one can use blended learning techniques and a variety of tools and services of Google.

Under these circumstances, blended learning can be regarded as one of the forms of educational process organization. For the Russian educational system, this is a relatively new approach to training, which is designed to combine the advantages of teaching in the classroom (face-to-face learning) and aspects of interactive (online learning) or distance learning. Taking advantage of Google computer tools allows to make full use the allocated time, contributes to the formation of student's independent studies skills and prepares him for autonomous learning. This way education becomes more personalized, that caters student learning needs and is tailored to student learning preferences and interests. Objectives, content, pace, and method of instruction may vary from student to student, and the focus is to help students achieve success. The main characteristics of blended learning are considered to be the following: the individual student path, speed, the personification of the educational process, and the student's choice of the most appropriate place of study. Blended learning im-

plies that for some time the student is working at a computer online controlling his learning path, time and speed of learning, and another part of his study time is devoted to individual and group work at the university under the teacher's command and control. According to European scientists Blending in education may take 100 % of the process (thus education on-line only) up to less than 10 % (using some tools of computer assisted language learning). [1] This also leaves time for different elective learning activities to be undertaken according to the student's educational trajectory.

The use of Internet resources does not lose its relevance due to the fact that its tools that can be used for learning and teaching languages are being constantly updated. Educational process based on the properly organized use of Internet resources contributes to:

- 1) formation of a new attitude of students: focus on independent cognitive search, setting learning goals, the development and implementation of self-monitoring and evaluation of action and initiative in organizing the educational cooperation;
- 2) formation of a scientific way of thinking.

Practicing educational tools of the Internet in the language classroom allows to develop:

- a) the skills of various techniques of reading (skimming, scanning, for details), using the network materials of various levels of difficulty;
- b) the listening comprehension skills;
- c) the monologue and dialogue skills on the basis of the discussion topic proposed by the teacher, a group mate or taken from the Internet;
- d) the writing skills in various genres;
- e) both active and passive vocabulary of the English language, reflecting a certain stage of development of the national culture, social and political structure of society;
- f) a stable motivation of foreign language learners in the classroom activities based on the systematic use of authentic materials.

Among the most powerful tech-based tools used in the foreign language classroom are [2]:

1. Educational Websites that provide authentic sources of information and a great amount of practice activities. Quizlet can serve as an example of a flexible online learning platform designed to explore the benefits of the flash card usage in the classroom. Vocabulary and grammar material can be drilled with the help of the sets of digital cards. The collection of cards is due to the teacher's understating to cater the needs of the given group, moreover students' activity and progress can be measured and assessed meanwhile. Having access to a huge archive of vocabulary and grammar sets,

students can easily search for topics, build up their vocabulary list and brush up their grammar. Foreign Language News Sources can serve as a modern and most relevant source of authentic information offering students the idea of everyday life of native speakers. The advantages of some national news sources, such as BBC and Deutsche Welle, are slowly-spoken news and supplementary activities designed specifically for language learners.

2. Skype, an application software providing video chat and voice calls from computers and other electronic devices via the Internet to other devices or telephones/smartphones across the globe, gives students the opportunity to communicate with a native speaker in the target language. This is the source to develop the skills of monological and polylogical unprepared speech and a good feel for the target language in a cultural context.

3. Apps for smartphones and tablets, such as FluentU, DuoLingo, Memrise, etc., motivate learners to have an access to supplementary materials that will help them acquire their language-learning experience. They contain videos, trailers, quizzes, carefully selected words and other authentic language learning materials to be practiced any time any place.

4. Music and Videos, combining audio and video stimuli, pictures, intonations and gestures, grammar and vocabulary patterns, constitute a true picture of authentic language environment, thus helping students better understand how to bring their language lessons knowledge to life.

5. Collaborative computer-supported tools combine the use of technology and group interactions in a language classroom in a learning context. These technologies allow to regulate interactions, to set tasks, rules, and define roles, and to assess the results of new knowledge acquisition. For example, Google Docs are helpful while creating a group assignment either in class or out, making the process of acquiring knowledge more meaningful and enjoyable. Besides, it is perfect for a draft creation and correction. Facebook allows to keep in touch with current information in the target language fulfilling the aim of communicating and searching the necessary material. Alternatively, you can make up a Facebook group for your students to hold casual conversations with each other and native speakers of the target language. More advanced students may try blogging using platforms like Google Blogger, Tumblr and WordPress to demonstrate the achievements in language learning.

In our paper, we would like to dwell on the implementation of the Padlet application. In fact, we can call it an online ‘wall’ open to students to answer questions, post comments, make their own projects, and have a voice in discussions. Actually, the possibilities are endless and very convenient since the link can be shared with students who can easily access the wall electronically at any time they like.

The teacher can upload and display videos, photos or documents for the students to see and respond to. This way all students get involved in the learning process and can comment on the same photos, videos or contribute other relevant sources they find, and everyone can see the responses of the groupmates (each comment begins with the student's name so that everyone knows, who the author of the comment is). So Padlet is used to collaborate in collecting ideas, brainstorming, and more. Besides that, Padlet allows to collect web quest links and information by leaving the wall open to comments, solicit input, discussions, or viewpoints from students. In case when a project is assigned, students choose their theme and design a wall around it themselves, that evidently awakes a flare of students' creativity and enthusiasm. Moreover, this application provides opportunities to save and store brainstorming and discussion sessions online for later review and assessment for teachers. Padlet can be used in real time in class with all students entering the board at the same time, or be implemented as means for self-study assignments and projects. [3]

To sum it up, we can draw a conclusion that Padlet is a remarkably intuitive, user-friendly and feature packed online interactive tool, which can be regarded as a collaboration, presentation, lesson management system with massive possibilities for teaching and learning.

This year we have taken a hand in teaching some modules with the use of this service. The group of graduates, major Region Studies (Asian-Pacific Region), was chosen to participate in this experiment and be taught on the basis of Google app Padlet with the weekly English learning load of 10 hours (twice a week they had four hours classes that allowed to conduct a lesson with tech tools). The level of language proficiency was upper-intermediate that allowed us to use a wide range of computer-based activities. The topic of the module was 'Battles of the World War I', and students were supposed to learn about the major battles, be able to describe them, analyze causes and effects, and produce a presentation and a piece of writing on the topic given. The module consisted of three lessons (lesson 1-2 hours, lesson 2-4 hours, lesson 3-4 hours) each followed by a home-task [4].

Uses for Padlet in the classroom could be endless, but we have chosen a few ideas to suit the purpose of the module.

Table 1

Uses of Padlet in the classroom

Stage of the lesson	Task format	Task description
Warming-up Activity	Collecting ideas for exploration	Create a Wallwisher with the title of the themed work 'The main battles of the WWI'. Work as individuals or groups.
Training Activity	Gap-filling	Within the group decide upon the missing information to fit the context (date/location/participants).

Training Activity	Cause-effect line creating	Post your point of view on the short-term and long-term aftermaths of the battle given.
Checking Understanding	Note writing to peer presentations	Look at the groupmates' presentations and post a sticky note on the wallwisher whenever you spot a date/location/participants/details/etc. to take shared notes about the topic created by other members of the class.
Summarizing	Review of the topic	Use wallwisher for a review of WWI battles.
Assessment	Summarizing student learning	Summarize the information you have learned of one of the battles in 50-70 words.
Assessment	Independent writing	Write an essay on the topic given, attach any necessary information from the web (links, videos, pictures, etc.)
Feedback	Self-evaluating	Post feedback, evaluating the topic learned. E.g. <i>What activities did you find useful? What activities would you add? What information do you find relevant to your future career?</i>

The plan of the module is given to your consideration. The aims of the modules are:

- to develop writing skills in summarizing information, essay writing, peer reviewing, and self-assessing;
- to facilitate teamwork;
- to form reflexive abilities and professional competence.

We started the first lesson with doing a warming-up activity, which involved collecting ideas for exploration the topic of main battles of the WWI. Students placed their ideas onto the wall and afterwards held a discussion and dwelt upon the ideas mentioned. Then they read a text from the course book, answered the questions checking the information understanding, then the work on enriching vocabulary followed. Further students were asked to get back to Padlet, where the teacher had previously placed the table with the following headings: date, location, battle, and participants for the students to enter the missing parts of the content. Internet and other sources of information were at their disposal. While completing the task students shared their ideas, proofread each other's works carefully and gave their opinions on the most disputed questions. As a home assignment, they got a task to create in Padlet a cause-effect line concerning one of the battles learned.

At the next lesson, we recollected the major battles assessing the home task. Then we divide the group into teams that are to choose the battle, find additional material (files, links, videos, photos, etc.), make a plan, and place the chosen supporting information on the wall and present the project. While listening to the groupmates' projects, students are taking notes and getting ready for the next task, which lies in summarizing the key ideas on one project in 50-70 words using Padlet. At home,

they are to write an essay developing their ideas of the beginning, cause-effect and aftermaths of the battles having been discussed. At the beginning of the third lesson students receive the essays for peer reviewing – they read and mark their groupmates' works according to the following criteria and fill in the chart keeping in mind that criterion ranges from 1 to 5:

- Task completion (major content points inclusion, their expansion; register and format appropriacy to purpose and audience).
- Text organization (effective organisation, a variety of suitable linking devices, paragraphing).
- Vocabulary (wide range of vocabulary within the task set).
- Grammar (wide range of grammar structures within the task set).
- Spelling and Punctuation (control of language).

The following stage of the lesson is given to the authors to make comments, express their agreement or disagreement to the given reviews. The final stage of the lesson (and module in general) is devoted to self-assessment, when students are to evaluate the significance of the topic learned, assess self-progress and the place of the topic in the world history.

Regarding the use of the Padlet in the language classroom, we can draw the following conclusions. As for the teacher's role, we can trace the improving Internet and computer technology competence through mastering various Internet tools and applications. Besides, the introduction of IT into traditional classroom intensifies the process of cognitive development and mental activities, forming the high level of students' motivation and interest. IT influences positively on the teacher's professional development encouraging him to summarize and share the experience.

For students the usage of IT proves the positive dynamics of their accomplishments in the field of selecting, organizing and dealing with information provided in various forms. It enhances students' opportunities in creating, designing and performing their works and achievements.

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