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PROMOTING ACTIVE LEARNING BY MEANS OF EFL ONLINE ACTIVITIES

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine has significantly impacted higher education, demanding educators adapt their pedagogy to diverse learning modalities (online, blended, face-to-face). Active learning (AL) is crucial for effective student engagement and improved learning outcomes, particularly in online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, which presents unique challenges like reduced interaction and potential student isolation. While research highlights AL's benefits, practical guidance for its online implementation in EFL higher education remains limited.

This study analyzes existing research on AL, its application in various disciplines (STEM, EFL), and the challenges of online EFL instruction. It explores definitions of AL, its core characteristics, and practical strategies for implementation. The analysis synthesizes key findings from prominent researchers like Lombardi, Yuretich, and Salmon, focusing on student agency, engagement, and knowledge co-construction. The study also examines the design and implementation of e-tivities and discussion forums within Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle, drawing on established frameworks and guidelines. Practical examples of designed e-tivities and discussion forums for pre-service EFL teachers are presented.

The study identifies key characteristics of AL, including student agency, active participation, collaborative learning, and metacognition. It highlights effective AL strategies applicable to EFL contexts, such as think-pair-share, group discussions, role-playing, and problem-based learning. The research demonstrates how these strategies can be adapted for online delivery through e-tivities and discussion forums, emphasizing the importance of clear instructions, purposeful tasks, and structured interaction. Specific examples of e-tivities and discussion forums designed for pre-service EFL teachers are provided, showcasing practical applications of the discussed frameworks. These examples integrate various EFL skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) and promote peer interaction and feedback.

This study contributes by providing practical guidance for designing and implementing AL in online EFL higher education, specifically through e-tivities and discussion forums. It synthesizes existing research on AL and adapts it to the unique context of online EFL

instruction, offering concrete examples of how to create engaging and effective learning experiences for pre-service teachers. The focus on integrating various EFL skills and fostering peer interaction within online activities is a novel contribution.

The findings of this study are directly applicable to EFL instructors in higher education seeking to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in online and blended learning environments. The provided examples of e-tivities and discussion forums can be readily adapted and implemented in EFL courses. The study's emphasis on clear guidelines, structured interaction, and purposeful tasks offers valuable insights for designing effective online AL experiences.

Key words: active learning, online learning, English as a foreign language, e-tivities, discussion forums, higher education, student engagement, teacher and philology training, Moodle.

Problem statement. The recent emergency contexts in Ukraine have altered higher education pedagogy. Educators seeking to engage students effectively must adapt their teaching practices to various learning modalities, including online/ distance, blended, and traditional face-to-face instruction. A key element in this adaptation is the implementation of active learning (AL).

Research indicates that AL can significantly boost student engagement and learning outcomes. Studies have shown that AL improves academic performance, fosters crucial skills, and promotes a more inclusive learning environment for undergraduates [10]. R. Yuretich et al. [20] emphasize its effectiveness in cultivating deeper understanding, sparking interest, and enriching educational experiences across disciplines, including science courses. AL is particularly beneficial in large classes and is relatively easy to implement. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that AL leads to deeper conceptual understanding, improved grades, lower failure rates, and a substantial and consistent positive impact, irrespective of the instructor [18; 3].

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) online, particularly in higher education, presents distinct challenges compared to in-person classes. The reduced interaction, especially peer-to-peer, can lead to student isolation and dissatisfaction with online learning [12]. Nevertheless, online and distance learning should strive for the same level of interactivity and collaboration as traditional classrooms, using AL strategies. Online education offers innovative possibilities for fostering interactive learning through tools like learning management systems (LMSs), video conferencing, discussion forums, etc. These resources enable instructors to transition their courses effectively to online and blended formats, incorporating AL techniques into these modalities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. On the one hand, the study has explored various aspects of interpersonal interaction in online learning, including effective online teaching techniques that promote interaction through technology [12] and the integration of learner-content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner interaction [12]. The features of effective e-tivities (electronic/ online activities) on discussion forums promoting learner-learner interaction [6; 8] in EFL courses have been outlined. On the other hand, many articles are also devoted to AL. The researchers report on the successful implementation of AL strategies in a large introductory oceanography course, significantly improving student engagement, performance, and interest in science [20]. They aimed to determine whether these teaching strategies could enhance learning outcomes in a large-class setting, mainly focusing on improvements in information recall, analytical skills, and students' enthusiasm for the science subject. Their investigation included redesigning instructional methods and assessments and collecting student feedback to evaluate the impact of these changes on the overall learning experience. Besides, D. Lombardi et al. conducted a comprehensive review of AL in undergraduate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. They clarified the concept of AL, assessed its

efficacy, and guided future research and practice in undergraduate STEM instruction through a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach. The effective ELT Methodology session design to enhance AL has been presented [17], approaching methods session design from active involvement in learning, following the key principles behind teacher training activities [19], Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives and backward design approach. Tips and techniques for EFL pre-service and in-service teachers to promote AL in EFL classrooms have been researched [13].

Identifying previously unresolved parts of the overall problem. However, practical guidance on implementing AL online, establishing interactive EFL learning environments, and designing effective e-tivities [16] remains limited, particularly within higher language education.

Formulating the aim of the article. Therefore, this study aims to investigate e-tivities to promote AL online, which instructors can implement in EFL online/ blended courses.

Presentation of the leading research material. AL, as defined for tertiary STEM, is nested within the pedagogical approaches of student-centred and inquiry-based learning [10]; aims to support students in gaining a deep understanding of concepts in the given field and developing related competencies [5; 14]; aims to create an understanding of the given field's generally accepted knowledge base, regulatory documents and other requirements [1]; expects students to actively co-construct knowledge and understandings through discussion, receiving and applying feedback and undertaking research); consists of activities that increase student engagement in learning [7].

R. Yuretich et al. [20] state that AL is an instructional approach that actively engages students in the learning process, encouraging them to participate directly in their education through various interactive methods. This approach often involves group discussions, collaborative projects, problem-solving exercises, and hands-on experiences, allowing students to apply concepts and think critically rather than passively receiving information through lectures alone. AL aims to promote deeper understanding, retention of knowledge, and the development of critical thinking and communication skills by fostering an environment where students take responsibility for their learning and engage in meaningful interactions with content and peers.

AL is defined in the article "The Curious Construct of Active Learning" as "a classroom situation in which the instructor and instructional activities explicitly afford students agency for their learning." [5, p. 16]. In the context of undergraduate STEM instruction, AL involves higher levels of engagement through 1) direct experiences of phenomena; 2) use of scientific data providing evidence about phenomena; 3) interaction with scientific models that represent phenomena; 3) participation in domain-specific practices that guide the scientific interpretation of observations, analysis of data, and construction and application of models. This definition emphasizes that AL is not just about the activities themselves but also about students' increased involvement and responsibility in the learning process, thereby facilitating deeper understanding and engagement with the material.

As P. Mehisto noted in his lecture "Lecturing vs active learning" in the International micro-degree program "Educational Innovation and Leadership" at Tallinn University in 2024, not all student activity and engagement effectively enhance AL. To support deep learning, it is suggested that engagement can take place at four levels: 1) emotional [4], 2) cognitive [2], 3) social-behavioural [9; 4) agentic [15]. 'Agentic' involves the student being a self-directed and capable learner who takes responsibility for their learning and is intrinsically motivated. Agency is not a personality trait but is reflected in action [10].

D. Lombardi et al. [10] and R. Yuretich et al. [20] have significantly contributed to our understanding of AL, highlighting its multifaceted nature and impact on student learning. Synthesising their work reveals a comprehensive picture of AL's core characteristics. A central tenet is student agency, empowering learners to take ownership of their educational journey through choice and autonomy. This agency is fostered through engagement, direct experiences, collaborative work, and interactive discussions with peers and instructors. AL

thrives on cognitive and social interaction, recognising that knowledge construction is enhanced by individual reflection and collaborative learning. This is supported by diverse methods, incorporating instructional strategies like group work, peer instruction, case studies, problem-based learning, and technology integration (e.g., student response systems). Formative assessment is integral, providing students with ongoing feedback to monitor their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, AL cultivates metacognition, encouraging students to reflect on their learning processes and understand their individual learning styles. The focus shifts from rote memorisation to developing higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Importantly, AL is adaptable to flexible contexts, encompassing lectures, labs, field experiences, and online environments, as long as active participation is facilitated. As identified by D. Lombardi et al., such characteristics represent a departure from traditional passive learning models, promoting a more interactive and student-centered approach.

R. Yuretich et al. [20] elaborate on the features of AL activities that promote engagement and enhance the learning experience. These activities require student engagement rather than passive reception of information. Collaboration is often a key component, with group work and peer interaction fostering shared learning. Problem-solving is emphasised, challenging students to analyse, discuss, and solve real-world problems, thus developing critical thinking. Open dialogue, discussion, and communication are encouraged, allowing students to express ideas, ask questions, and engage in discourse. Hands-on experience through practical applications and tasks allows students to learn by doing. Immediate feedback from peers and instructors enables students to address misconceptions and adjust their understanding in real time. Reflection on learning processes promotes a more profound understanding. A variety of learning modalities caters to diverse learning styles through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches. Connecting course material to real-world contexts enhances relevance and engagement. Finally, an emphasis on inquiry encourages students to ask questions, explore concepts, and conduct investigations, fostering curiosity and ownership of learning. These interwoven characteristics, described by D. Lombardi et al. [10] and R. Yuretich et al. [20], create a dynamic learning environment that enhances student motivation and achievement.

R. Pektaş, in the article "Active learning in EFL classroom: Tips and techniques for EFL pre-service and in-service teachers" [13], highlights the necessity of adapting teaching techniques to meet the evolving educational demands of the 21st century. With a focus on student-centred learning, the researcher emphasises the importance of engaging students through AL techniques that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and real-life application of knowledge. By moving beyond traditional passive learning methods, educators can foster an environment where learners actively participate and grow in various skills crucial for today's knowledge economy. The article outlines several AL activities tailored for EFL classrooms. For example, the "Me Too" activity aims to create groups based on similar characteristics among learners. It incorporates physical activity to energise the class and helps students get acquainted with each other. Warm-up activities engage students with icebreakers or thought-provoking activities at the beginning of lessons to activate their interest and participation. Group activities involving speaking group activities have been noted to enhance students' confidence and participation while lowering shyness. Retention activities reinforce learning at the end of lessons, ensuring students can recall and apply what they have learned. These activities are designed to make the learning experience more interactive and engaging, allowing educators to adapt their methods based on the learners' needs and varying proficiency levels.

However, AL activities can take many forms. Some common types of AL activities summarised by R. Yuretich et al. [20] and D. Lombardi et al. [10] can be easily implemented in EFL lessons. Several AL strategies are particularly effective for foreign language learning, fostering engagement and deeper understanding. These strategies, drawn from a broader range of pedagogical approaches, emphasise interaction:

1. Think-pair-share: Students individually consider a question related to the language or culture, discuss it with a partner, and then share their insights with the larger group, which encourages reflection and provides opportunities for peer learning.

2. Group discussions: Small group discussions on specific topics or questions related to the target language and culture promote collaboration and expose students to diverse perspectives.

3. Interactive lectures: Instructors can integrate questions, polls, and brief discussions throughout lectures to maintain student engagement and encourage active participation. It could include responding to comprehension questions about a text or discussing cultural nuances.

4. Peer teaching: Students take turns explaining grammatical concepts, vocabulary, or cultural aspects to each other, reinforcing their understanding and developing communication skills.

5. Role-playing or simulations: Students assume roles in simulated real-life scenarios, practising language skills in context and exploring different cultural perspectives, which might involve ordering food, asking for directions, or participating in a job interview.

6. Jigsaw: Each group member learns a different aspect of a topic (e.g., different verb tenses, different regions within a country) and then teaches it to their peers, promoting interdependence and collaborative learning.

The following strategies emphasise communication and practical application:

7. Case studies: Students analyse real-life situations related to the target language and culture, discussing implications and potential solutions. It can mean analysing a cultural misunderstanding or a business negotiation scenario.

8. Problem-based learning: Students work in groups to solve problems related to the target language and culture, applying their knowledge and research skills. For example, it involves planning a trip to a country where the language is spoken or creating a presentation about a specific cultural event.

9. Concept mapping: Students create visual diagrams to represent vocabulary, grammatical relationships, or cultural concepts, aiding in the organisation and synthesis of information.

10. Clicker questions or polls: Instructors use technology to ask questions during class that students respond to in real time, facilitating discussion based on the results.

11. Reflection exercises: Students reflect on their language learning experiences, identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning strategies. It might be journaling or short written reflections.

12. Online learning platforms: Utilizing interactive online tools and discussions, such as collaborative documents or discussion forums, encourages participation and allows students to practice language skills outside the classroom.

13. Active learning exam: Two-stage examinations/ tests. Stage 1: Students take the exam individually, answering the questions on an answer sheet accompanying the exam paper. This is 75% of their mark. Stage 2: Immediately after handing in the individual exam answer sheet, students form groups to redo the exam as a group. In addition to discussion, books and notes are allowed. The group mark makes up 25% of each individual student's mark. R. Yuritch et al. [20] suggest using this strategy 5 times a semester. If a group mark is lower than an individual student's mark, only the individual mark is counted.

Thus, based on a meta-analysis of 225 papers in undergraduate STEM education, presented by P. Mehisto in the lecture "Lecturing vs active learning", AL strategies involve having students summarise in pairs at any point during a talk what a lecturer has said; class discussions (including online); students designing their own experiments; pair, group and teamwork activities; group work analysis of case studies; student presentations; self- and peer-assessment, which are traditional activities in EFL lessons.

Such EFL activities could be moved online to foster a more participatory and engaging learning environment on LMSs. The design of effective e-tivities must enhance

active online learning. The term "e-tivity" was introduced by G. Salmon (2002) to define a framework for facilitating AL online. E-tivities involve students' interaction with other group/course members and the e-moderator (their online course teacher, tutor, trainer) in an online communication environment (e.g. Moodle forum) to complete a particular task, which can be one-off or built into a programme. Thus, e-tivities are based on the interaction between students and their active contribution. One highlighted feature of e-tivities is that they usually occur asynchronously, on or offsite, blended or online only [16]. As for EFL online learning, they can aim at accuracy and fluency practice, integrating EFL reading, listening, writing and speaking [6].

Designing e-tivities typically consists of several stages: 1) the e-moderator presents a small piece of information (simple text based on bulletin boards or forums), stimulus or challenge, defined as the "spark"; 2) students take part in an online discussion or activity responding to the "spark", providing an individual response (the "invitation") and commenting on that presented by other group/course members; 3) a summary, feedback given by the e-moderator or by the students themselves [16]. G. Salmon suggests providing one instructional message on the bulletin board or forum for students to participate in the e-tivity. It includes the following: 1) the purpose of the e-tivity; 2) if the e-tivity is assessed, indicate what might indicate success and how they can achieve it; 3) what students are to do and how they can go about doing it; 4) how long it should take in minutes or hours when the e-tivity starts and finishes; 5) how the students work together; 6) what the e-moderator's role is and when s/he will post [16].

Following the suggested framework and the required characteristics of AL, the e-tivity was designed in the second year of studies at university on EFL Moodle course for pre-service teachers and future philologists [6].

Sample e-tivity 1. "The most impressive journey/holiday you have ever had"

Type: Peer assessment

Due date XX.YY.ZZ by 6 p.m.

Topic: Travelling

Purpose: to develop EFL speaking skills before the oral credit through peer correction.

Instructions: 1. Listen to the text "What a journey!" Put the pictures in the correct order, check with the keys. 2. Describe the most impressive journey/ holiday you have ever had (as if for your oral credit); follow the model of the listening text. 3. Record your speech for peer checking and post it on this forum. 4. Assess your appointed peer's work (XX points) using the suggested criteria and reply to their post with recommendations to improve their speech. 5. If you meet the deadline and follow the instructions you will get "competent" in the gradebook from the tutor.

In short, in online learning e-tivities provide engaging and purposeful structured participative group/pair work online, build students' communities of practice, particularly allow grammar and vocabulary recycling, integrated EFL skill practice (listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills) in online EFL / Grammar courses [6].

In the context of EFL teaching in higher education, discussion forums are one of the tools to present interactive e-tivities, aiming at accuracy and fluency practice and integrating EFL reading, listening, writing, and speaking [8]. In addition, e-tivities involve students' interaction with other group/course members and the e-moderator (their online course teacher, tutor, and trainer) in an online communication environment (e.g. Moodle forum) to complete a specific task, which can be a one-off or built into a programme. Thus, e-tivities are based on the interaction between students and their active contribution [16].

R. Moore offers guidelines for designing discussion forums: 1. Create clear guidelines for posting requirements (how often to post, what specific questions or concepts to address, how many words are expected in the post) and the rules of etiquette that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of course concepts. 2. Provide modelling to demonstrate the desired format and style and show students that the instructor-facilitator is paying attention to their posts. 3. Add a graded component to the discussion forum postings. 4.

Employ other activities in the forum (sharing videos and presentations to boost students' creativity). 5. Create a rubric outlining what to include in the initial post and provide ample opportunities for learner-to-learner interaction by requiring them to provide feedback and comments on their peers' postings. 6. Provide helpful and evaluative feedback [12].

However, it is necessary to keep in mind that «the most powerful and effective way an online instructor can impact students and the learning experience is to foster a sense of community» [12, p. 421], and the EFL objectives to achieve the appropriate level of foreign language communicative competence. Our evidence suggests that to make the most of discussion forums in the EFL teaching context; instructors should design activities providing engaging and purposeful structured participative group/ pair work online, building students' communities of practice to provide grammar and vocabulary recycling, integrated EFL skill practice in online EFL courses [6].

Following the suggested guidelines, a discussion forum was designed in the second year of studies in EFL Grammar Moodle course for pre-service EFL teachers and future philologists at the university [8].

Sample discussion forum 2 "Grammar expert forum"

Type: A case study

Due date XX.YY.ZZ by 6 p.m.

Topic: The Oblique Moods

Purpose: to notice and define the Oblique Moods in online resources (One-minute English, Breaking news, News in levels, Words in the News, etc.) through written production and interaction.

Instructions: 1. Find an online resource (One-minute English, Breaking news, News in levels, Words in the News, etc.) where the Oblique Moods are used, point out the sentences with the Oblique Moods, define their forms and make up your examples with them.

Model: Online resource: One-minute English: I wouldn't dream of ... available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBYqjNSNJpw&t=4s>

Grammar in context: If I was a leader, I wouldn't dream of doing something like that.

Recognition practice: was – Subjunctive II Present in the Subordinate clause of unreal condition, wouldn't dream – the Conditional Mood Present in the main clause

My example: If I were Boris Johnson, I wouldn't dream of partying on the lockdown.

2. Comment on two of your peers' posts. If they are right or wrong, add your examples. 3. The accuracy is assessed. The maximum rating is 5 points.

Grading Criteria: To earn the full credit for this assignment, you should be accurate and meet the requirements: add a post according to the instructions and model (3 points); post a reply to at least two peers with a thoughtful comment about their post (2 points).

Conclusions of the study and directions for future research. This study has explored the multifaceted nature of active learning (AL), particularly within tertiary STEM and EFL contexts. AL, rooted in student-centred and inquiry-based learning, emphasises deep conceptual understanding, competency development, and critical thinking. It prioritises student agency, engagement, and the co-construction of knowledge through interaction, feedback, and research. Various strategies, including think-pair-share, group discussions, problem-based learning, case studies, role-playing, peer teaching, and project-based learning, are adaptable to diverse learning environments, including online settings. These strategies can be tailored to focus on EFL communicative competence development in EFL. Integrating technology through e-tivities and discussion forums on LMSs like Moodle provides new opportunities for engaging students in meaningful online interactions and extending active language learning beyond the traditional classroom.

G. Salmon's e-tivity framework, emphasising clear instructions, purposeful tasks, and structured interaction, and R. Moore's guidelines for discussion forums, focusing on clear expectations, modelling, grading, and community building, are particularly relevant for designing compelling online AL experiences. The research also demonstrates the potential

of e-tivities and discussion forums to promote specific language skills (e.g., speaking, grammar), cultural understanding, and peer feedback in EFL online courses. The sample e-tivities and discussion forums designed for pre-service EFL teachers and future philologists illustrate practical applications of these frameworks. Future research could compare the effectiveness of different AL strategies in EFL contexts, examining their impact on specific language skills, learner motivation, and critical thinking. Such studies help identify best practices for different learning objectives and student populations.

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СПРИЯННЯ АКТИВНОМУ НАВЧАННЮ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ОНЛАЙН-АКТИВНОСТЕЙ З АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

Сучасні суспільно-політичні обставини, зокрема війна в Україні, спричинили трансформацію системи вищої освіти, актуалізувавши потребу в адаптації педагогічних технологій до різноманітних освітніх форматів (дистанційний,

змішаний, очний). Активне навчання (АН) є ключовим фактором ефективного залучення здобувачів освіти та досягнення позитивних результатів навчання, особливо в контексті викладання англійської мови як іноземної (АМІ). Останнє характеризується специфічними викликами, такими як обмеження міжособистісного спілкування та ризик соціальної ізоляції студентів. Констатуючи значний потенціал АН, слід зазначити недостатню розробленість методичного забезпечення його впровадження в онлайн-форматі у закладах вищої освіти, що зумовлює актуальність дослідження.

Для досягнення мети дослідження застосовано комплекс наукових методів, а саме: аналіз та синтез наукової літератури з проблем активізації навчально-пізнавальної діяльності студентів, застосування інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій в освітньому процесі, а також особливостей навчання АМІ в онлайн-середовищі; системний підхід для розгляду педагогічних явищ; моделювання для розробки ефективних форм організації АН в онлайн-форматі. Досліджено теоретичні засади АН, його сутність, характерні ознаки та ефективні методи і прийоми активізації пізнавальної діяльності. Окреслено коло наукових праць провідних дослідників, що дозволило сформулювати власне бачення проблеми. Розглянуто педагогічні умови організації е-активностей та дискусійних форумів в середовищі Moodle на основі існуючих методичних рекомендацій. Наведено приклад розроблених е-активностей та дискусійних форумів для студентів, які вивчають АМІ.

Уточнено дефініцію поняття «активне навчання» в контексті дистанційного навчання АМІ. Виокремлено провідні характеристики АН, серед яких особливе місце відведено студентській агентності, активній участі в освітньому процесі, співпраці та розвитку рефлексивних компетентностей. Запропоновано класифікацію ефективних методів і прийомів активізації навчально-пізнавальної діяльності, які можуть бути застосовані в процесі фахової підготовки майбутніх викладачів АМІ, зокрема: "подумай-поділись", групові дискусії, рольові ігри, проблемно-орієнтоване навчання. Доведено ефективність адаптації зазначених методів до умов онлайн-навчання за допомогою е-активностей та дискусійних форумів. Наголошено на важливості чіткого формулювання навчальних цілей, структурування змісту навчального матеріалу, забезпечення системної взаємодії між учасниками освітнього процесу. Наведено конкретні приклади е-активностей та дискусійних форумів, спрямованих на формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності студентів.

Вперше запропоновано методичне обґрунтування активізації навчально-пізнавальної діяльності студентів в онлайн-форматі навчання ІМ засобами е-активностей та дискусійних форумів. Розроблено і апробовано модель організації ефективного освітнього процесу з АМІ для студентів закладів вищої освіти з використанням інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій.

Результати дослідження можуть бути використані викладачами АМІ закладів вищої освіти для підвищення ефективності навчального процесу в дистанційному форматі. Запропоновані методичні рекомендації сприятимуть активізації навчально-пізнавальної діяльності студентів, формуванню їх фахових компетентностей та розвитку життєвих навичок.

Ключові слова: активне навчання, онлайн-навчання, англійська мова як іноземна, е-активність, дискусійні форуми, вища освіта, залучення студентів, підготовка вчителів та філологів, Moodle.