

FREE ONLINE RESOURCES AS EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR ESL/EFL TEACHING AND LEARNING

БЕЗКОШТОВНІ ОНЛАЙН-РЕСУРСИ ЯК ЕФЕКТИВНИЙ ІНСТРУМЕНТ ДЛЯ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ТА НАВЧАННЯ ESL/EFL

The article assesses the educational challenges of the war period in Ukraine and analyzes free online ESL / EFL teaching and learning resources that provide students with better opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning. In addition, the article discusses incorporating inspirational and cutting-edge topics in the classroom. The suggestions on how to deliver and master successfully the learning material are developed. The paper offers blended learning and flipped classrooms as effective approaches to teaching and learning in conditions of war. It was the pandemic that made online classes a necessity and blended learning became a new norm. Blended learning involves combining online and in-person teaching methods, making it a flexible approach that allows for customization. The paper highlights the benefits of a flipped classroom where students engage with materials outside of class to prepare for active learning experiences in the classroom. Thus, learners can develop their individual mode of studying, get used to practicing English outside the classroom, and acquire confidence in language production. Therefore, a number of free digital resources are analyzed in terms of their use for mastering language skills and fostering critical thinking. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of introducing creative activities that are different from traditional exercises to make classes more engaging and to boost students' learning opportunities. Every presented resource is considered from the standpoint of its suitability for developing four language skills. The authors draw attention to the current authentic materials and a variety of activities provided by the resources under study. The emphasis is laid on facilitating the presentation of new vocabulary in different contexts, allowing students to hear a word not in isolation, but among other words, giving grammar recommendations and providing lesson content-based tests.

Key words: *blended learning, flipped classroom, online ESL/EFL resources, synchronous and asynchronous learning, teaching in war conditions.*

У статті оцінюються освітні виклики періоду війни в Україні та аналізуються безкоштовні онлайн-ресурси для викладання

*та навчання англійської мови як іноземної, які надають студентам кращі можливості для синхронного та асинхронного навчання. Наголошено важливість використання сучасних захоплюючих тем для вивчення, запропоновано способи успішної подачі та засвоєння навчального матеріалу. Змішане навчання та перевернуті класи розглядаються як ефективні підходи до викладання та навчання в умовах війни. Онлайн-навчання стало необхідністю ще з часів пандемії, а змішане навчання стало новою нормою. Змішане навчання передбачає поєднання методів онлайн- та традиційного навчання, що робить його гнучким підходом, який дозволяє підлаштовувати заняття під потреби студентів. У дослідженні висвітлюються переваги перевернутого класу, де студенти працюють з матеріалами поза заняттями, щоб підготуватися до активного навчання в класі. Таким чином, учні можуть виробити свій індивідуальний спосіб навчання, звикнути до практикування англійської мови поза аудиторією та набутти мовленнєвої впевненості. Низка безкоштовних цифрових ресурсів аналізується з точки зору їх використання для оволодіння мовними навичками та розвитку критичного мислення. Дослідження підкреслює важливість виконання творчих активностей, які відрізняються від традиційних вправ, щоб зробити заняття більш захоплюючими та підвищити можливості для навчання студентів. Кожен представлений ресурс розглядається з точки зору його придатності для розвитку чотирьох мовних навичок. Автори звертають увагу на сучасні автентичні матеріали та різноманітність завдань, що містять досліджувані ресурси. Основна цінність аналізованих ресурсів убачається в полегшенні представлення нової лексики в різних контекстах, можливості прослухати словникову одиницю у зв'язному мовленні, наявності граматичного довідника та тестів, розроблених на основі змісту уроку. **Ключові слова:** змішане навчання, перевернутий клас, онлайн-ресурси ESL/EFL, синхронне та асинхронне навчання, навчання в умовах війни.*

УДК 372.881.111.1
DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/56.1.18>

Mohelnyska L.F.,
PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
Head of the Theoretical and Applied
Linguistics Department
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University

Shadura V.A.,
Senior Lecturer at the Theoretical
and Applied Linguistics Department,
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University

The Internet provides ESL / EFL teachers and learners with a diverse range of educational resources such as podcasts, videos, self-guided courses, articles, quizzes etc. Therefore, teachers are constantly challenged with how to tackle up-to-date and thought-provoking topics to implement in the classroom.

The pandemic trained all of us much and educator community is not an exception. Having been forced to introduce the transition, currently we have to admit that online classes are here to stay. The educators of Ukraine have to work in specific conditions due to Russian invasion and occupation. Not only are we to apply technology to classrooms, but also ESL / EFL teachers

have to develop their teacher imagination skills which can help bridge the gap between offline and online worlds, as well as to help learners get distracted from stress caused by this awful war. The **relevance** of the suggested study is grounded in the necessity to deliver and master successfully the learning material in conditions of war and to search for approaches targeted at embedding various elements into classes through the successful use of digital learning resources. The **aim** of the paper is to analyze the most appropriate learning digital resources to be used in blended teaching and learning. The **tasks** to be solved are as follows: to define and justify blended learning and flipped

classrooms as effective approaches to teaching and learning in conditions of war; to develop a tool kit of free Internet resources that increase students' learning opportunities; to analyze the pros and cons of the suggested resources.

The COVID pandemic and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine forced the educators to adjust the educational process to new extreme conditions. Theoretical and practical experts from Ukraine and abroad have been contributing to assisting teachers and learners in handling the challenges of crisis times. O. Buinytska, O. Vaskiv investigated information and technology environment for distant learning; K. Buhaichuk, C. Dziuban, C. Graham, J. Rivera, C. Tucker, T. Wycoff, G. Green devoted their works to blended learning issues. The particular focus of this paper is to share the ideas and expertise on how to deliver the ESL / EFL learning material in conditions of war and how to provide students with better opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning in times of war.

Blended learning is commonly referred to as technology-mediated instruction, web-enhanced instruction, or mix-mode instruction. It is an approach to education that combines online teaching materials and opportunities for interaction via the Internet applying physical place-based classroom methods. There cannot be only one model of blended learning, since the instruction developer is able to choose remote or in-person mix that he or she feels is the most relevant and best suited to the training program. Thus, the definition of blended learning gets far broader than just classrooms with videos or podcasts on the top [5, 6].

It is unlikely to tailor a class that will fit all students' needs as well as will be able to reach many of them. The challenges that an ESL/EFL teacher has to be prepared to face are as follows:

- some really smart students;
- some sleepy students;
- students with learning difficulties;
- reluctant students;
- classrooms with only a whiteboard;
- multimedia classroom;
- outdoor classroom;
- different learning paces and places;
- other.

One of the ways to handle the challenges is a flipped classroom, where students engage with materials outside of class to get prepared for an active learning experience when having the class. During the class, the focus is on getting semi-controlled and improvisation practice, utilizing the new language patterns and discussing the topic of the video to watch or the article to read assigned. In other words, the classroom is more about production rather than passive learning and ultimately, the classroom time is used far more effectively [7]. There is a number of activities to be implemented into a flipped class such as: problem-solving tasks,

debates, discussions, brainstorming, peer tutoring and feedback, and role playing, which contribute to the development of divergent thinking. Here why, while planning to flip a class, ESL /EFL teachers concentrate their attention on planning the activities that the students are supposed to do in class and on what they will have to do to prepare for that active learning in classroom. However, there are two other aspects to be taken into consideration while designing flipped classes that require planning as well: how the activities will be introduced and how the teacher and the students will be aware of having been adequately prepared for in-class practice [8].

There appears a moment in every educator's career when they feel like getting away from traditional sets of text books and bring a little spark and creative atmosphere into the classroom. Most of our students have already become bored with traditional activities practiced. They have seen tons of printable worksheets and they have played considerable number of interactive language games. However, apart from the typical teaching websites, the Internet offers an infinite collection of resources which, when used in a creative way, can serve as useful tools to significantly increase our students' learning opportunities. Let us share the so-called tool kit of free Internet resources that would entail benefiting from an array of online teaching and learning resources.

YouGlish [<https://youglish.com/>] is a free online platform that allows you to exemplify a new language unit in an authentic setting, searching for specific words and phrases in a database of video clips from popular films, TV shows, TEDx presentations, etc. Apart from facilitating the presentation of new vocabulary by demonstrating more than one context, it also allows students to hear how a word is pronounced, not in isolation like in most online dictionaries, but among other words. Students can hear it in conversations, highlighting such features of natural speech as contractions, ellipses or linking sounds.

Presentation – practice – production is a model to deliver most of EFL /ESL classes. It can be possible to cover all these stages by selecting proper lesson having explored *Engvid* resource [<https://www.engvid.com/>] that offers about 2000 video lessons created by experienced native-speaker teachers. It suggests grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, as well as exam preparation recommendations and training for IELTS and TOEFL. Each video is categorized by level – beginner, intermediate or advanced – so, both teachers and learners find a video that suits them the most. The lessons are followed with the option 'quiz', therefore, users can see how well they have perceived the material and whether there is a need to watch the lesson again. The results of student survey have demonstrated that in spite of conventional teaching approach dominating in terms of 'talk and chalk', EngVid occupies one of the top positions of learners' likes.

ESL Brains [<https://eslbrains.com>] focuses on suggestive and fresh topics in teaching English and implements diverse activities based on real-life problems and solutions. It is a platform developed for English teachers who teach adult learners and it provides you with teaching materials that include thought-provoking topics, stimulate critical thinking and spark discussions about the modern world. Authentic videos are incorporated into most of the lessons and show the variety of real life. The introduction of catchy and up-to-date content engages learners more effectively and boosts their language skills, while making the lessons interesting and insightful.

When teaching the course of English for specific purposes (ESP), it is crucial to give response to the needs of students who, beyond the learning of the common language, require a practice regarding certain professional areas. *Hello World Bloomberg* [<https://www.bloomberg.com/qt/series/hello-world>] equips you with a valuable collection of the latest articles on Markets, Economics, Industries, Technology, Politics, etc. It can be of a great help while designing an ESP lesson plan aimed at introducing new vocabulary, developing the tasks on reading comprehension and working out discussion sets.

Ashlee Vance, a reporter for Bloomberg, the host of *Hello world* invites you to set off for a journey that stretches across the globe to get acquainted with the so-called 'tech-freaks' among inventors, scientists and technologists shaping our future. Each episode uncovers the ways in which the local culture and communities have influenced their approach to technology; therefore, it can contribute much not only to ESP classes, but also to Country Study courses.

Language is taught in different approaches. Some teachers prefer the whole-language approach, while others prefer to separate skill training based on listening, speaking, reading and writing. *English Club* [www.englishclub.com] can provide you with the most appropriate for your style of teaching. Students will be more encouraged to learn English with songs, jokes, puns, riddles and games.

Implementing the flipped classroom approach incorporating the recommended resources has reflected in the following advantages. Students

- take control of their learning process and become more autonomous;
- are able to study on their own pace;
- are exposed to practice English outside the classroom, which helps create a habit of doing it more often;
- become more confident and prepared for language production;
- acquire more independent learning culture.
- The disadvantages are:
- poor or no Internet connection;
- teacher anticipation issue on how well the students are prepared for the classroom.

To sum up it should be mentioned that ever-changing and rapidly changing world poses new challenges for ESL/EFL teachers and learners thus requiring a high degree of flexibility, creativity and adaptation. Covid 19 pandemic and war in Ukraine caused transition of the educational process from face-to-face to online mode. It intensified the use of digital resources to provide students with better opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning in times of war. Blended learning is considered as technology-mediated and web-enhanced instruction. It combines online teaching materials and in-class methods of interaction via the Internet. Flipped learning means students work with materials outside of class to get ready for active learning when having the class. The article suggests a tool kit of free Internet resources that increase students' learning opportunities and equip educators with the ideas and expertise on how to best deliver the learning material in conditions of war. The analyzed resources allow educators to get away from traditional sets of textbooks and bring a creative atmosphere into the classroom. The authors single out the pluses and minuses of incorporating the analyzed resources in the educational process. In the future, the carried-out research enables educators to develop tasks and activities based on authentic materials suggested in the analyzed resources.

REFERENCES:

1. Бугайчук К.Л. Змішане навчання: теоретичний аналіз та стратегія впровадження в освітній процес вищих навчальних закладів: електронне наукове фахове видання. Ін-т інформ. технологій і засобів навчання АПН України, Ун-т менеджменту освіти України, 2016. Т. 54, № 4. URL: <http://journal.iitta.gov.ua/index.php/itlt/article/view/1434>
2. Буйницька О.П. Система педагогічного проектування інформаційно-освітнього середовища для здійснення підготовки майбутніх соціальних педагогів : монографія. Київ : Ун-т ім. Б. Грінченка, 2021. С. 40–41.
3. Васьків О.М. Дистанційне навчання в умовах пандемії COVID-19. *Дистанційне навчання у ЗВО: моделі, технології, перспективи* : матеріали круглого столу. Львів: ЛНУ ім. І. Франка, 2021. С. 11.
4. Закон України «Про вищу освіту». *Відомості Верховної ради України*. 2019. № 243-VIII. 2300-VIII. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-19>.
5. Dziuban C., Graham C.R., Moskal P.D. et al. Blended learning: the new normal and emerging technologies. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ* 15, 3 2018. URL: <https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/>
6. Rivera, J.L. Blended Learning – Effectiveness and Application in Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages: *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*. Vol. 9, № 2, April 2019. URL: [https://www.scirp.org/\(S\(czeh2tfqw2orz553k1w0r45\)\)/journal/journalarticles.aspx?journalid=742](https://www.scirp.org/(S(czeh2tfqw2orz553k1w0r45))/journal/journalarticles.aspx?journalid=742)
7. Tucker C.R., Wycoff T., Green G.T. *Blended Learning in Action: A Practical Guide Toward Sustainable Change*: USA: Corvin, 2017. 10 p.
8. Uhler J. *Essentials for the Teacher's Toolbox*: English Teaching Forum. Vol. 5. № 4. 2012. 32 p.