

Designing and evaluating ESP courses on Moodle for enhancing language skills in online learning

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Abstract

Moodle is a widely used platform for delivering online courses in various domains, including English for specific purposes (ESP). However, designing effective ESP courses on Moodle requires careful consideration of the learning objectives, the content, the layout, and the tools that can support the development of language skills relevant to the learners' professional activities. In this paper, we present our experience of creating and testing two ESP courses on Moodle: "Business Communication Technology for Law Students" and "Business English" (for Computer Engineering). We describe the principles and methods we followed to tailor the courses to the learners' needs and preferences, and to provide them with interactive and engaging activities that foster their speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills. We also discuss the challenges and limitations we faced in the course design process, such as the lack of background knowledge in the specific domains or the heterogeneity of the learners' language proficiency levels. We report on the results of an ongoing evaluation of the courses involving more than 300 students from Kryvyi Rih Educational & Scientific Institute of Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs and Kryvyi Rih National University. We analyze the feedback from the students and the instructors, and the learning outcomes achieved by the students. We conclude with some implications and recommendations for future work on ESP course design and evaluation on Moodle.

Keywords

language skills, business communication, online learning, Moodle, ESP

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to the educational system and forced many scholars to adapt to new modes of teaching and learning [1, 2, 3]. One of the main solutions that emerged was the use of online platforms and resources to deliver courses and engage students remotely. In this paper, we focus on the design and evaluation of e-based courses for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of distant learning. We aim to address the following research questions:

1. How can ESP e-based courses be integrated into the Concept of English Language Development at Universities established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [4]?
2. What are the content features and pedagogical principles of ESP e-based courses “Business Communication Technology for Law Students” (KESI) and “Business English” (for Computer Engineering) (KNU)?
3. How effective are these courses in enhancing the four fundamental language skills (speaking, reading, listening, writing) of ESP learners under distant teaching-learning conditions?

Our work builds on previous studies that have explored various online platforms and resources for ESP teaching and learning, such as MOOCs [5, 6], SWAYAM [7], Moodle [8], Google Classroom, Zoom, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram. We also extend our own previous work [9], where we developed and tested a special course “English for Mining Mechanical Engineers” based on Moodle platform for mining mechanical engineering students. In this paper, we present two new ESP e-based courses for law and computer engineering students, respectively, and report on their implementation and evaluation. We hope that our findings will contribute to the advancement of ESP e-based course design and delivery in the era of COVID-19 and beyond.

2. Literature review

We have analyzed and consolidated existing experience and practices at the initial stage of the study. Latest studies describe the use of Moodle as a suitable platform to support distance learning courses, assess its functionality and potential [10]. Al Nadabi’s study focuses on the use of technology in assessment, and contributes some guidelines that can be useful for creating, developing, implementing, and researching large-scale high-stakes tests on Moodle. According to his research, “Moodle activities are used in a blended learning approach either as practice materials or as informal assessment tools for some course components” [11]. Liu [12] investigates the factors influencing ESL college students’ acceptance and use of Moodle in their English classes. Al-An [13] identifies factors behind the usage of a blended learning approach that could have an effect on students’ achievement, motivation, collaboration and communication as perceived by students, analyzes obstacles faced by students in using Moodle in blended learning. Rudnitska and Drozdova [14] analyze the problem of first-year students’ of economic specialties self-study organization by means of Moodle system in the process of foreign

language learning. Yurzhenko [15] describes and analyses the work of the future maritime specialists in the e-course. Ziyad [16] examines tertiary education students' acceptance of and engagement in a Moodle-hosted writing course, measures time spent in activities, number of downloads from the platform and number of online feedback comments. Zainuddin et al. [17] analyses the main tools available on the online platform, and concludes that Moodle is mainly used as a repository for materials. Doctoral thesis by del Mar Camacho Martí [18] provides an on-line instructional model to train English Language Teachers in the use of ICT, a general vision on the new instructional modalities from blended learning to distance learning, and deals with the difficulties of including ICT into educational management, such as need to catch-up and update their equipment and training programs for their teachers and students.

Hutchinson and Waters [19] suggest that the teaching of English for Specific Purposes was born as an evolution that responded to the needs and focused on the learners. Instead of learning English for prestige, they learned it for work reasons. Hutchinson and Waters [19] determine the guiding principle of ESP: "Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need". Anwar [20] notices that "...the success of the ESP learning process does not only depend on the teaching method of the teacher-designed but also the acceptance of student learning methods as well". With regard to ESP teacher's tasks they are similar to any language teacher's the main one is to encourage the student to attend the classes, be active, to make students interested in writing by involving them in real-world and interesting activities, provide them with the opportunity to interact in groups, to share their ideas, and to help each other deal with specific problems [21].

Business English or English for Business Purposes is a part of teaching English for a Specific Purpose. According to Fitria [22], "the goal of any Business English Course is to allow its users to effectively communicate with others in a business environment, whether that communication is in correspondence, face to face meetings, or other methods". In this course, students have particular purpose and focus for learning the language as they study English not only to understand everyday speech, but also use the language in a special context for future career opportunities and needs [22].

Akyel and Yalcin [23] are engaged in tailoring ESP textbooks for policemen based on learning needs analyses. They have identified the following components of the target needs analyses: 1) specification of the situations in which target learners will need English; 2) division of the situations into communicative activities (understanding complaints, instructing, asking for clarification etc.); 3) division of the communicative activities into communicative functions and micro-skill for ESP situations; 4) determining what language structures and lexical items the learner needs for target situation.

In 2010 Day [24] introduced two approaches to ESP course design: English-through and English-for. With English-for approach, we are teaching learners the specific language and skills they need in order to function effectively at work in English. The starting point is the needs analysis. Therefore it focuses on very special functional language. For example, a policeman is not expected to take part in scientific conferences and write research reports during his/her professional activity so it does not need to be in his/her course. English-for provides the language that a learner needs to be efficient at his working place. There's a strong emphasis on functional language presented in context and skills work, especially role-plays, to practise it. English-for courses are challenging enough and time-consuming, teachers have to be not

only language-experts but clearly understand the learners' career needs and nuances. With English-through approach, on the other hand, the focus is on developing learners' level of English, and the ESP field simply provides the context. There's a strong emphasis on learning vocabulary and reading articles about the ESP field. English-through courses are easier to create as an educator can follow the approved syllabus and fill it with professional relevant materials. But experience confirms that in teaching practice these two approaches are closely interrelated.

However, notwithstanding the emphasis on specific language use in ESP, it should be noted that some students have a low overall level of English in non-English speaking countries. In these cases, some of the course content must be General English and a course syllabus might include a combination of language points such as a review of the basic grammar alongside such job-specific situations, participating in meetings, discussing different products and etc. Also the different students in one group may have different levels of language proficiency, but they will have similar jobs in future. These two factors should be taken into account by the educator when designing ESP courses and activities.

In most cases, ESP educators are not experts and do not have some background knowledge of the technical, commercial and scientific areas. Nevertheless, in recent years the Internet has become an authentic materials' source for almost any specialism in ESP; textbooks often provide additional materials for both teachers and students such as workbooks, photocopiable activities, grammar booklets, the extra materials include texts, audios, videos, etc. all combine can be easily adapted for student's needs. Understanding their expectations helps teacher to determine the appropriateness of the materials under consideration and chose the best solution and activities. The vital role in efficient learning ESP plays correspondence between what learners wish to get out of the studying and what the textbook has to offer. Despite there being previous research about the subject of teaching English for Specific Purposes, there is a lack of actual change that has been made to the approaches of teaching English for business and career promoting purposes.

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, based on the previous study's results and on the teaching experience of Kryvyi Rih National University (KNU) and Kryvyi Rih Educational & Scientific Institute of Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs (KESI) we may suppose that narrowly targeted English for specific purposes (ESP) courses on Moodle platform could be an effective approach to organize distant educating process in the context of the prolonged lockdown.

3. Methods

During the preparatory phase of the study in the non-quarantine period of 2019–2020 years we cooperated with the teachers of KESI and KNU to observe students' activity at classes of Foreign Language, Philosophy of Law, Professional Psychological Training of Policemen, Conflictology etc. It sought to examine learners' needs and the relevant situations in which English becomes necessary, to assess the level of communicative competencies and English language proficiency of the students of law and IT engineers. We have resorted to technological cards to make it possible to be accurate. Let us not dwell on the intermediate methods, instead, focus on the objectives of the article.

The experimental experience in our previous research helped to identify the benefits of e-learning approach to teaching and self-tuition based on ESP Moodle course. These are [9]:

- *technological flexibility*: the e-platform provides easy-to-use, affordable and diverse teaching toolkit; it allows learners to reach the course content as many times as they need so they get a deeper understanding of the educational material; the special course assignments have contributed to improve English language proficiency in reading, listening, writing and speaking stemming from complex approach: glossary, texts depository and databases provide access to a vast range of information and allow students to develop skimming and scanning techniques in reading; authentic materials and communication via discussion forums facilitate foreign language fluency; word-processing applications allow students to prepare and edit the writing assignments and then upload them on the e-platform; multimedia and flash-based presentations enables to practice technological skills along with foreign language skills; on the other hand, Moodle supports the lectures to design author's courses to be fully online, to focus on learning outcomes but not on seeking for appropriate textbooks, printing out and replication materials; in addition, content of courses can be updated easily;
- *adaptability to student's individual aptitude and abilities*: each learner has his own pace of understanding and remembering of the language materials and Moodle based course makes available to follow it; students are not limited in number of attempts, there is no time restrictions if only it is not a reading or listening comprehension test; video clips can be slowed and replayed repeatedly according to student's individual needs and enhance their listening skills;
- *preventing from premonition of failure*: individual work combined with ongoing online support to assist the students in his education and to avoid mishaps and criticism from other group mates makes it possible to succeed in achieving the anticipated outcome;
- *impartial assessment*: Moodle grounded course makes available quick feedback on learner's activity and clear-eyed evaluation; offered tools ensure quality of assessment and prevent from cheating; there are self-check, machine check and tutor's assessment at participants' disposal; besides, the course can provide groupmates' feedback exchange; as we have seen from experience, the last way of control motivates students to advance their language skills as they have not only produce own outcome but be an expert;
- *differentiation*: Moodle offers some ability to differentiate tasks and assignments according to learners' needs and pace of studying. Multimedia resources enrich the content and make the learning environment more interesting and appealing to the learners.

Two newly designed ESP Moodle-based courses for prospective IT engineers and police officers on Moodle platform have been developed and piloted in Kryvyi Rih Educational & Scientific Institute of Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs and Kryvyi Rih National University. The ESP courses testing was carried out with the primary objective of meeting learner's needs and enhancing of four language skills. Selection and analysis of practical assignments, texts, video and audio podcasts were premised on the conceptual framework proposed by Day [24]. The author of several ESP textbooks, he has tended to stay around the English for ... side [24]. At the same time he recognizes that both approaches are finding their

rightful place at creating ESP courses, it depends on ad hoc features of a specialism. For example, IT engineers do not need to come in contact with many unfamiliar people so it is difficult to imagine a lot of communicative situations with their participation; hence it appears that the need to learn functional vocabulary and reading authentic professional texts is a starting point for ESP designers. On the other hand, police officers contact lots of people every day, so it is to be taken into consideration in drawing up the special course syllabus.

Accordingly, based on the results of theoretical scientific treatises and practical analyses of our previous research we have designed the special courses “Business Communication Technology for Law Students” and “Business English” (for Computer Engineering).

Let us consider their syllabus in terms of the compatibility with four language domains (speaking, reading, listening and writing). The course “Business English” is an optional discipline in the second year of studying a foreign language in the field of “Computer Engineering” in Kryvyi Rih National University, after studying the one-year basic course “English language”. The structure of the course “Business English” includes different components that are used both independently and as successive parts within the course. Each element of the course is aimed at achieving a specific target level of proficiency in professional English. The main goal of the discipline is the formation of students’ professional language competencies that will contribute to their efficient functioning in the cultural diversity of educational and professional environments.

ESP syllabus for department of Computer Engineering includes four content modules such as:

1. Work, employees and organizations;
2. Production. Marketing. E-commerce;
3. Finance. Business etiquette. Personal qualities;
4. Culture. Telephone conversations and e-mails. Business skills.

The first content module considers Business English topics such as types of jobs and types of work, recruitment and selection, ways to improve job opportunities and elaborate a personal plan for lifelong career success in IT, people and workplaces, problems at work, managers, executives and directors, career advice and stories from information technology experts, organizations. The second content module of the syllabus deals with manufacturing and services, competitors and competition, e-commerce, profitability and unprofitability, success and failure, startup success: how to launch a Technology Company. The third content module deals with personal finance, inflation and unemployment, wrongdoing and corruption, business ethics, projects and project management, leadership and management styles. The fourth content module concerns business across cultures, cross-culture communication, telephoning, business communication, curriculum vitae (CV) and job applications, meetings, effective conversation, oral presentation, agreement and disagreement, e-communication. All content modules are partially based on the units from the book series “Business Vocabulary in Use” and include revision of grammar topics such as tenses, time clauses, modal verbs, infinitive, gerund, conditional sentences, passive, reported speech, etc.

In developing the Business English course we used authentic texts related to employee motivation, effective leadership, competitive advantage, and a series of professional topics. The

professional representative topics for an ESP syllabus focus on functional areas – language for recommending, expressing opinions, giving advice, showing agreement, etc. The tasks and activities were selected for the purpose to satisfy the emerging need for enhancing such skills as presentation techniques, negotiating, meeting skills of future specialists. The time allotted to Business English (one class per two weeks) is not enough for teachers to cover the whole content. As a result, some points are left uncovered. To overcome this problem, we suggest using Moodle course and where possible, leave reading and writing tasks (individual and collaborative work) for self-study or homework on this platform. According to quarantine requirements student talking time is organized on Google Meet, which ensures plenty of opportunities for speaking practice and discussion PowerPoint presentations.

Accordingly, based on the results of the observation, students' and tutors' interviews we have designed another special course "Business Communication Technology for Law Students" (<https://elearning.dli.donetsk.ua/course/view.php?id=516#section-0>). The course is represented on the e-learning site of Kryvyi Rih Educational & Scientific Institute of Donetsk State University of Internal Affairs on Moodle platform. 258 students of different legal specialisms are engaged in its approbation. It is intended for advanced students specializing in criminal police, preventive activities, pre-trial investigation, law enforcement activity and other related specialisms. The purposes of the course have been established in accordance with the criteria of authenticity, purposiveness of the language, and professional appropriateness of the content. This therefore corresponds fully to English-through and English-for approaches. The program of the course is targeted at the wide range of students of legal specialisms of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years of studying. It stems from their willingness and readiness to adopt learning material and to understand its applicability in their career context. We have in mind the proper level of professional knowledge and also their level of language proficiency. Besides, the ESP course demands motivation, dedication and responsiveness from the students. The main objective of the special course is to improve students' reading, listening, writing and speaking skills within professional context. The course is structured at different levels of proficiency and our program integrates the skills in the professional area into foreign language proficiency.

Let us detail the learning outcomes according to the language domains. By the end of the course students should:

- reveal subject-specific language from a range of authentic sources;
- communicate about legal topics;
- read and comprehend specific legal texts, course brochures and job advertisements;
- differentiate and exploit various sources of information (written, spoken and video);
- be aware of principles of writing study- and work-related letters;

The special course "Business Communication Technology for Law Students" consists of ten topical units, which are summarized here.

Syllabus of special course "Business Communication Technology for Law Students":

Topical unit 1 "Importance of Communications Skills for Police Officer's Career"; by the end of this unit students will be able to: acknowledge the need to apply effective communication in practice of law enforcement activities; understand topical vocabulary and learn to use it in an appropriate context; support topical discussion.

- Topical unit 2 “Technique of Oral and Written Professional Communication”; learning outcomes: to get acquainted with communicative techniques, identify the key sentence (topic sentence) in a paragraph, write an appropriate CV.
- Topical unit 3 “Conflict Resolution Technics for Dealing with Conflicts”; learning outcomes: to collect and organize information, develop an understanding of authentic topical video and carry out practical activity in accordance with a current legislation.
- Topical unit 4 “Technique of Business Discussion with a View to Get Necessary Information”; learning outcomes: to master the information of the topical text, make up a plan using the keywords and phrases, annotate the texts.
- Topical unit 5 “Etiquette and Code of Ethics for law officers”; learning outcomes: expound critical thinking abilities and cultivate work ethics, improve listening skills; select and summarize the important information.
- Topical unit 6 “Interrogation of Witnesses and Suspects”; learning outcomes: exercise skills of summing up the video information, summarize the information, and make up constructive dialogues.
- Topical unit 7 “Collaboration with Civil Society and Preventive communication”; learning outcomes: to be aware of exploiting iron in the modern world, creation and excavation of iron ore deposits, adopt the information from video, draft the report of the survey.
- Topical unit 8 “Law officer’s positive image formation”; learning outcomes: to analyze the information of the video, speak confidently about the key terms connected with positive image of law officers; plan a presentation on the topical video.
- Topical unit 9 “Intercultural Business Communication Technique”; learning outcomes: to understand the elements of culture and intercultural communication that impact business interactions (based on the video), analyze a written text in terms of layout, genre, functional types, to enhance your skills in the dimensions of intercultural competence.
- Topical unit 10 “Communication with Mass Media”; learning outcomes: to discuss the political, legal, and economic influence of media industries and the balance between business interests and serving the public, analyze media messages and their impact on society and the individual through a critical lens and recognize the purpose and influence of different media messages on diverse audiences.

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in ESP courses. It is important to prepare the word-list of target vocabulary previously and add to about 25-30% of non-target lexis that is in the text or video. Ready-made vocabulary provides a good basis from which to further refine the text / video and makes it possible to understand clearly (to select) what new words to focus on. The ESP course “Business Communication Technology for Law Students” on Moodle platform provides an opportunity to enrich topical vocabulary of the students drawing up Glossary. All the stakeholders are free to add new items, whether they are target, non-target or emergent vocabulary items (emergent vocabulary occurs unplanned during the lesson or working with the text). Each topic of the course contains Glossary, its core part is prepared beforehand by the tutor and experience has shown that about 40-50% of new words are added by trainees.

The Business English course for Computer Engineers also includes Glossary on the main page which is called “Business English Vocabulary”. Student can easily add to and find in this Glossary the most common words and Business phrases, with definitions. In the process of creating an entry, they have to find the definition of a new word on the Internet and give an example of using it in an article or a living conversation. Each entry appears with the author’s name and the teacher can rate it. The work on creating a common glossary of the student group supports collaborative work, expands business vocabulary, develops the ability to analyze data, highlight the main thing, sort information, also enhances proficiency in reading and writing. This Glossary combines and links two approaches English-through and English-for since the dictionary can contain not only professionally-oriented vocabulary but also words that are found outside the future work environment.

Designing practical video and reading exercises is fully in line with the English-for approach. The source of vocabulary in the course is the authentic reading and listening texts given from real police experiences and training courses for policemen in Canada. As regards the assignments to test understanding of those videos and texts, their wording comply with English-through approach, for example, watch the video and complete the notes below with the appropriate words; put these terms in the order they appear in the video; match the words to their meanings etc. One of the exercises there is on figure 1.

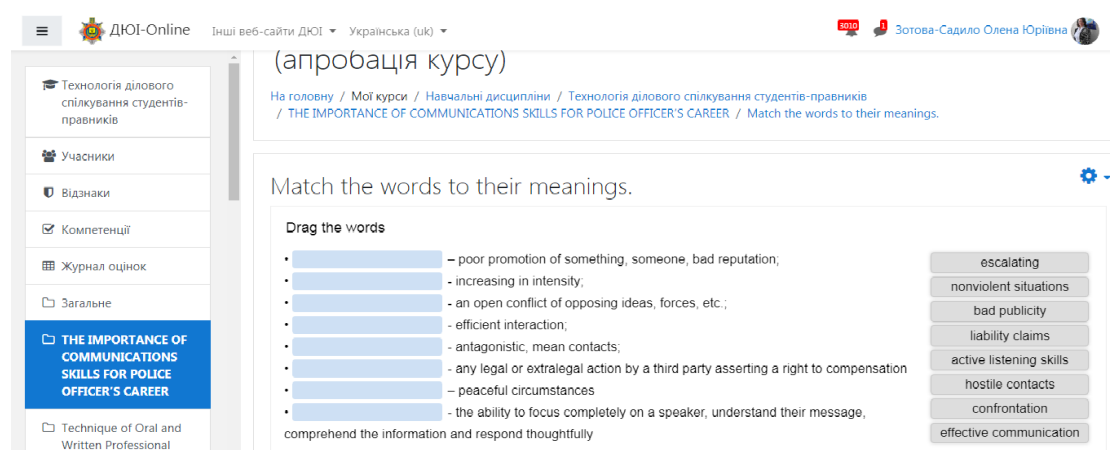


Figure 1: Example of Exercise based on English-through approach.

We are working on listening skills based on authentic professional oriented material. This approach works well with drilling exercises aimed to remember the words, collocations or constructions. At the next stage students need to exploit the collocation in real communication. So it makes sense that each unit of the course concludes with a communicative task. Taking into account opportunities which Moodle provides and specific circumstances of e-learning we have developed the communicative situations on the basis of Forum module (figure 2), which makes it possible to organize asynchronous discussions lasting for limited by the teacher period of time.

It is really convenient for learners because they do not have to write their view at once, there is some time to think about and frame their thoughts. Successful online interaction on Moodle

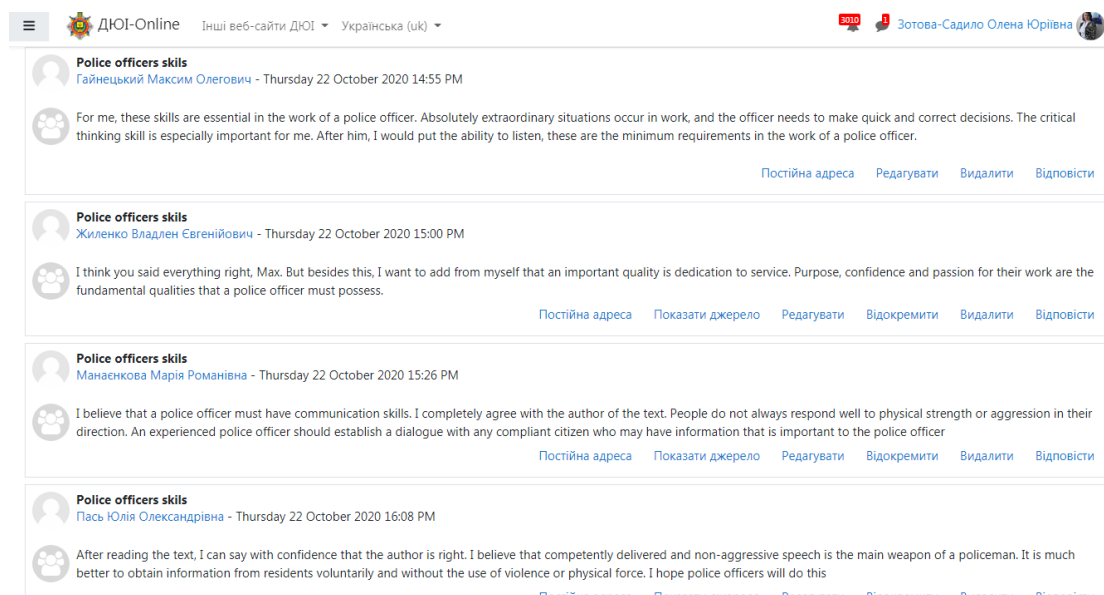


Figure 2: Forum on the theme of “Importance of Communication Skills for Police Officer’s career”.

forums allows students to drill not just writing skills but the ability to incorporate content into higher levels of thinking, namely critical thinking. There are a few types of forums, for example standard one – every participant is able to start his/her own discussion or otherwise continue someone else discussion, another type – the tutor can limit the time of debates, the number of replies, can allow to upload the files if it supports the learner’s point of view. By and large, experience supports this method. It motivates students to communicate with each other, they do not pay attention if the opponent is the 4th or the 2nd year student, they tolerate any other distinctions and the only thing that makes sense is to find support for their position and find the right words to defend their point of view. The role of a tutor is to come up with the suitable career oriented topic to discuss, to frame the task clearly and facilitate the learners’ discussion in the proper context. For example, the topic is: How Soft Skills in Police Can Help Win the Day; the offered communicative situation is: Did you know that some of the skills demanded of police officers from society include critical thinking, conflict resolution, trust-building, adaptability and active listening?; the instruction is: How does communicative approach affect community relations? Write 3–5 sentences. Try to reply to your group mates’ ideas (<https://elearning.dli.donetsk.ua/mod/forum/view.php?id=20499>). English-for approach is appropriate to make up such tasks. It is all needs-based. It focuses on the language and communicative skills that are relevant to the learner’s prospective career situations. Different types of forums can compensate a lack of live communication, to a certain extent.

Each discussion topic introduced in the course Business English for Computer Engineers (figure 3) includes a video clip selected by the teacher and several questions for students (<http://mlib.knu.edu.ua/course/view.php?id=20507>). We use the standard forum for general use with open discussion. The teacher and manager have permission to rate student replies. This activity created according to the English-for approach and promotes effective written

communication, drills reading and listening skills.

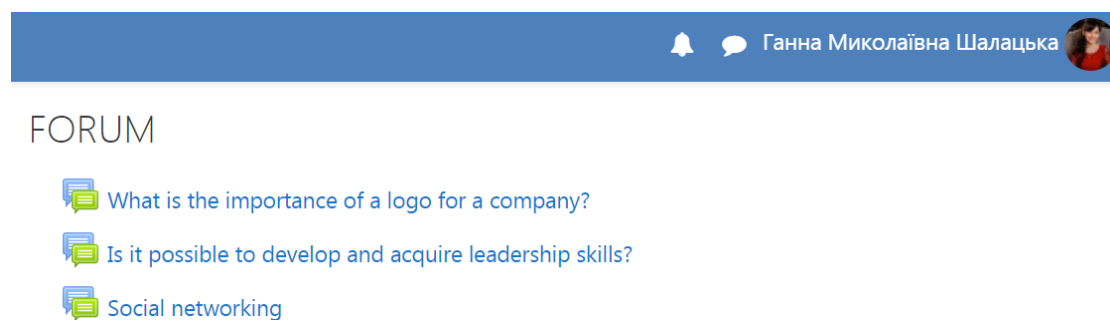


Figure 3: Forums on the course Business English for Computer Engineers.

A wiki is a very popular and fast method for creating content or documents as a group. Teachers can post new assignments for students to submit and has editorial control. Wiki tool is used in Business English course for the following purposes:

- students' collaboration; Wikis provide inter-classroom collaboration, cross-classroom collaboration, i.e. students can work collaboratively on projects, creating a class product;
- audience extension; work can be organized in different ways, it can be done individually (everyone has their own wiki which only they can edit) or collaboratively (everyone being able to edit it). A teacher can give a task to one or two students, engage all group in work or even several groups the same specialty;
- facilitation of student work, i.e. they can easily distribute work between group mates. The wiki enables editing of an existing document in a really meaningful way, get feedback and allows integration with the work of others;
- practice and improvement of writing skills; Wikis enhance the process of student writing by allowing them to post as much, and as often as needed. It enables teachers to view drafts contributes to effectively assessing student development in writing;
- reflection and generalization of knowledge; Wikis also provides a space for students to construct and reconstruct knowledge.

The assignments are posted on Moodle using the Wiki tool for course Business English for Computer Engineers. Students have to find out differences between Resume, CV and Bio-Data, complete the chart (figure 4), list types of resume, and prepare tips for making an effective Resume, CV and Bio-Data (<http://mlib.knu.edu.ua/mod/wiki/view.php?id=16201>). These papers are the most typical documents to use in the hiring process, possess their own importance and specialty, most of the students are confused with what is the difference between them. This assignment is an example of cross-classroom collaboration, everyone being able to edit this chart, fill empty cells, in this way students from two groups have opportunities to work together.

Wiki Jobs in IT is posted on Moodle within studying the first content module “Work, employees, and organizations”. IT professionals help companies maintain their digital infrastructure,

Resume vs CV

RESUME	CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)	BIO-DATA
"Resume" is a French word meaning "summary".	"Curriculum Vitae" is a Latin word meaning "course of life".	"Bio Data" is the short form for Biographical Data and is an archaic terminology for Resume or C.V.
Education, skills & employment. Showcases specific skills customized to the target job.	Education and life with details in a chronological order.	The focus is on personal particulars like date of birth, gender, religion, race, nationality, residence, marital status etc.
A resume provides a summary of your education, work history, credentials, and other accomplishments and skills.	A curriculum vitae (CV) provides a summary of your experience and skills.	BIO-DATA is factual kinds of questions about life and work experiences, as well as items involving opinions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that reflect a historical perspective.
A resume should be as concise as possible. Typically, a resume is one page long, although sometimes it can be as long as two pages.	Typically, CVs for entry-level candidates are longer than resumes—at least two or three pages.	Typically, a BIO-DATA is one page long, although sometimes it can be as long as two pages, like a Resume.

Figure 4: Example of Wiki assignment.

provide troubleshooting assistance to technology consumers, keep data security procedures. Students have to provide examples of IT jobs that help them find the right career path that suits their interests, skills, and goals. The assignment involves searching for information on average salaries, typical duties, and requirements for IT professionals. In the process of completing this assignment or any other Wiki, students create multiple drafts while improving their writing, because of the way multiple authors' comment and change texts. In the Wiki, multiple drafts can be easily viewed through the revision cycle in the page history (<http://mlib.knu.edu.ua/mod/wiki/history.php?pageid=53&page=0>). Figure 5 provides a guide to changes the student made, a record of time and date, the process of writing that students undertook, and a history of all versions.

Another Wiki assignment deals with the topic Job Interview (<http://mlib.knu.edu.ua/mod/wiki/view.php?id=16205>). Students have to know its types, how to handle a job interview, which is an important part of employment, what tips they should have in mind when they apply for a particular job, peculiarities of job interview etiquette, and be ready for the most common questions. This assignment is an example of English-for approach and online inter-classroom collaboration, students edit this online document, distribute work between group mates, make a table of content, then look for the necessary information, place it according to sections, and finally create a class product.

The database activity (figure 6) on Moodle platform allows students to independently build a bank of record entries about topics of the Business English course for Computer Engineers (<http://mlib.knu.edu.ua/mod/data/view.php?id=16210>). The structure of the entry is defined by the teacher and include text, slide, URL with useful resource, and chart. This activity allows students to search the collection of records within the course, evaluate them and left their comments on entries. Efficient use of this activity in the context of the English-for approach promotes developing student reading and writing skills. Also, these assignments develops critical thinking and initiative, the ability to search and analyze data, facilitate collaboration, and provide access to a piece of new information.

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<input type="radio"/>	20	Alamy Prosser	12:15 PM	8 December 2020
<input type="radio"/>	19	Alamy Prosser	5:27 PM	7 December 2020
<input type="radio"/>	18	Daniela Zabotani	10:25 AM	6 December 2020
<input type="radio"/>	17	Vlad Hordenko	11:10 PM	5 December 2020

Figure 5: Revisions on the page History.

On the other hand, English-through approach is equally efficient. Let us consider the example of that, while policemen are fighting crime and handling emergencies they probably come across many English speakers. Some may commit crimes, while others may be victims of crime. In both cases, police officers need to ask and answer questions in English. Their job may also require them to speak to English speaking witnesses (<https://elearning.dli.donetsk.ua/mod/quiz>). In the course “Business Communication Technology for Law Students” the trainees are offered to put the words in the right order to get the question or replies necessary to provide some information for English speaking tourists, ask for some identification or pull people over. This type of tasks includes three exercises from 8 to 10 questions and replies each. While the learners are putting the words in the right order, they are learning important career oriented phrases and collocation. We have used English-through approach to revise the grammar rules but used functional lexis. This proves once again that combining and mixing of English-for and English-through approaches are efficient in teaching ESP courses.

Another tool Moodle provides to teach ESP courses effectively is Interactive content (H5P). It enables the tutor to create interactive videos, question sets, drag and drop questions and many others. In addition to diversifying and makes bright the process of learning, interactive activities emphasize the relevance of professional lexis, videos and texts the teachers have selected for ESP course (figure 7).

We are working on listening skills by giving the students enough challenging things to do; they cannot listen to the text again and again but have to catch the point at once. All of these things could conceivably be done if the learners are prepared and familiar with the lexis. In interactive content activities ESP language are professional oriented. They will apply this knowledge in the future career (<https://elearning.dli.donetsk.ua/mod/hvp/view.php?id=33168>); everyone will take a job interview. In addition listening exercises are appropriate in both


Ганна Миколаївна Шалацька

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Database for Business Language Course ⚙



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DB: **The phone etiquette.**
The phone etiquette is not a big deal when it comes to everyday calls we all make. The things are different when on the other end of the call happens to be a customer or another important person with whom you have no close relationship. In such a situation, you have to follow certain rules to make sure your call is a standard one.

Figure 6: Database for Business Language Course. The entry “The phone etiquette”.

teaching-learning models (online or in-class). If the listening exercises are targeted on the more detailed learning the lexis and text analysis, the students can access to the listening and video material without limitation, they can control the mode of playback – pause, stop, or use rewinds the video. Different forms of learning, remembering and recalling are at teacher’s and student’s disposal due to applying of Moodle.

In addition, there are other options of online learning run on the Moodle platform. We have worked out assignments, quizzes and exercises for the Moodle course, which are available to the students online, and can be accessed from anywhere. The participants of the experiment have completed the same tasks during blended and traditional classes that have shown the difference between paper and computerized tests. When completing a quiz or assignment on Moodle platform, the students receive immediate feedback on their answers, identify their mistakes, re-attempt quizzes (pass the test once more time) or resubmit the assignment. The special course includes a great variety of activities. The exercises have been categorized according to English-for and English-through approaches and they have positive influence on English language proficiency.

Video conferencing helps compensate for the lack of live communication during a lockdown and we use it as an additional tool to Moodle within complex training Computer Engineers on Business English course. Due to Google Meet educators can see on the screen the whole student group, conduct discussions, and develop speaking skills. When doing distance learning video conferencing helps us to check student’s pronunciation and communicate with them more

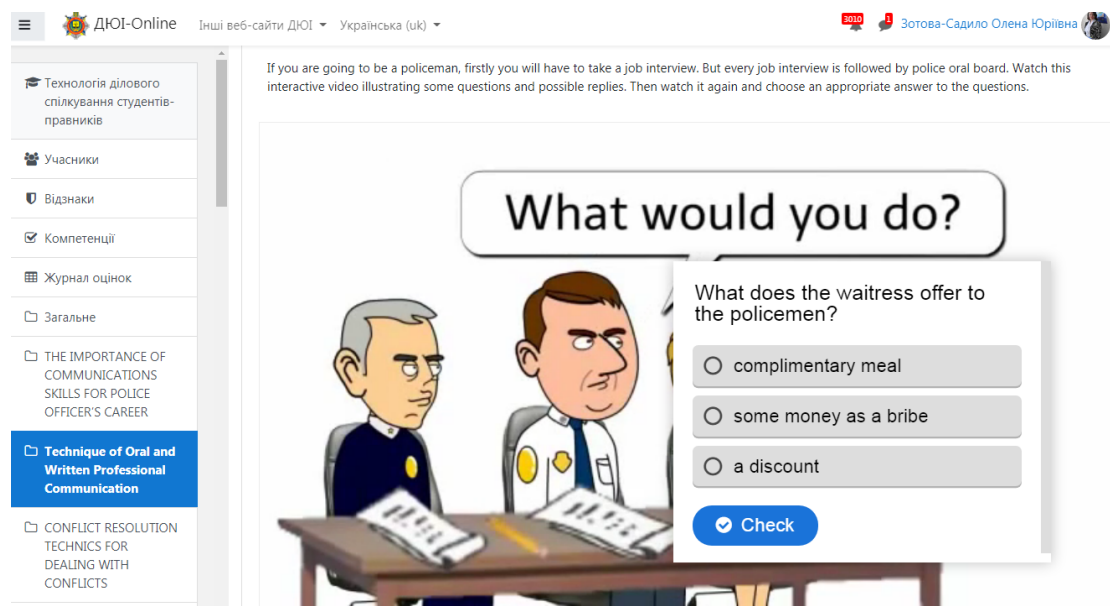


Figure 7: Interactive video; the topic “Police interview questions and answers” (Interactive Content).

clearly with facial expressions, and intonation. Educators or students can present their screen or a specific window in Google meet, share information such as documents, charts, tables, photos and etc.

Figure 8 provides one of the examples of Google Meet implementation in online teaching Business English course for Computer Engineers. The student shares his screen with the PowerPoint presentation on the topic “The Essential Rules of Phone Etiquette”. The process of preparing slides increases the visual impact of information, helps students to focus on a particular topic, analyze and synthesize the material. The question and answer session begins after the student’s public presentation of the slides. Such activities are proposed in relation to the English-for approach facilitate to evolve self-confidence, creativity, listening and speaking skills.

BigBlueButton makes it possible to design the links on video online classes in real time in the Moodle course immediately. The web-conferences create an illusion of real presence in the classroom which has a positive impact on the learners’ attitude to educational process, they expand bilateral cooperation of students and tutors giving the opportunity to ask for clear explanations and getting feedback. BigBlueButton offers some ad hoc options, for example, the teacher can determine the time range of joining the BigBlueButton conference beforehand and note it into the students’ timetable (calendar), note the name and description of a coming lesson. Moodle service sends messages to every student enrolled the course automatically. The learners accede to the web-class easily with no special links or invitations. The only thing they need to do is to enter the course and press the BigBlueButton. One more feature of this Moodle tool is capability to facilitate two or even more conference halls simultaneously.

Taken together, these results suggest that Moodle can be an ideal platform for promoting

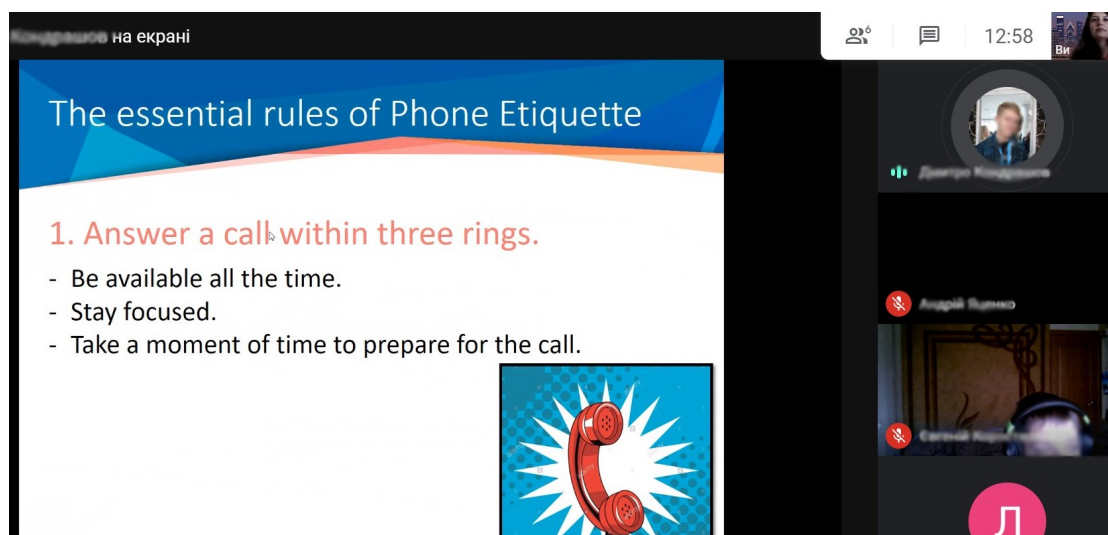


Figure 8: PowerPoint presentation on Google Meet.

efficient distant studying and improving language skills because it creates multi-tool learning environment that is convenient to use by teachers and students as well.

4. Conclusions and prospects for further research

The objective of this study was to explore the effectiveness of ESP e-based courses, specifically “Business Communication Technology for Law Students” (KESI) and “Business English” (KNU), delivered through the Moodle platform. Our research delved into the potential of this approach in improving the English language proficiency of prospective law enforcement officers and IT engineers. The data we gathered through this study vividly demonstrate that specialized courses on Moodle offer a powerful means to teach and enhance all four language skills—speaking, writing, listening, and reading—both during the lockdown period and beyond.

Our investigation went further by scrutinizing the relationship between the advancement of these language skills and the educational tools provided by Moodle and other resources, such as Google. In this context, video conferences, particularly those facilitated by BigBlueButton within the Moodle environment, emerged as a game-changer, offering a wide array of opportunities for oral communication in remote teaching and learning settings. Interactive content, notably the use of H5P, empowers course designers to create engaging and interactive multimedia resources, enriching the learning experience and significantly impacting listening, reading, and writing skills.

Moreover, the strategic deployment of various Moodle features like forums, wikis, and database activities in the context of an English-for-specific-purposes (ESP) approach proved instrumental in enhancing reading and writing skills. The collaborative nature of WIKI and forum services fostered a free exchange of thoughts and ideas, aiding students in overcoming language learning barriers and uncertainties.

In sum, our results strongly affirm that Moodle-based special courses provide a robust alternative to in-person instruction. These courses enable learners to develop and advance their speaking, listening, writing, and reading skills across the four essential language domains. The guidelines established in our study underscore the importance of:

- *Outcome-Oriented Approach*: Prioritizing real-world applicability over form, with a focus on authentic and career-relevant materials. Practicality serves as a powerful motivator for language learning.
- *Functional Language Integration*: Embedding language elements, such as lexical sets, collocations, and grammar structures, into career-relevant contexts, making language phenomena easier to remember.
- *Speaking and Listening Emphasis*: Placing greater emphasis on speaking and listening skills, aligning with the needs of professionals in training.
- *Learner-Centered Approach*: Involving learners in content creation and interactive communication, fostering their active participation in the learning process.
- *Teacher Facilitation*: Transforming the role of the teacher from a lecturer to a co-facilitator, thus reducing teacher explanations and promoting clear and meaningful guidance.

Our research contributes to the ever-expanding field of e-learning on the Moodle platform. The empirical findings shed new light on the design and implementation of ESP Moodle-based courses in the context of remote learning during pandemic-related disruptions. The wealth of features and activities offered by Moodle and other online resources allow ESP courses to partially bridge the gap left by traditional in-person education.

It's important to note that this paper presents the intermediate results of our experiment. We anticipate a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' language proficiency by the end of this year. This analysis will provide valuable insights into the impact of the lockdowns on education, comparing student performance in 2018-2019 with that in 2020-2021. This area of research promises to be a fertile ground for future investigations.

In conclusion, Moodle proves to be an invaluable platform for effective distance education and self-paced learning, empowering both educators and students with a multifaceted learning environment. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, exploring new pedagogical avenues and leveraging the capabilities of platforms like Moodle remains a compelling prospect for further research in the field of computer-assisted language learning.

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