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THE EFFICIENCY OF MOODLE PLATFORM IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING PROCESS

***Summary.** It has been established that the Moodle platform is the most convenient system for university teaching process. Among the existing educational electronic programs Moodle has proved to be the most efficient one. Moodle is characterized by user-friendliness, clear course space and context-sensitive help. Moodle makes it possible to quickly integrate materials and learning activities directly into a course date or subject area as well as to support and promote communication and collaboration. Moodle 3.5 is now available with a wider range of options. The role of teachers has completely changed. Nowadays the teachers hardly have still direct influence on the process of knowledge acquisition as the learners acquire the necessary information themselves. The teachers fulfil mainly the role of a learning helper, a learning advisor. Among the disadvantages of the Moodle system have been outlined fears of new technologies or their lack and the fact that relation to the portability of materials through electronic form is usually convenient, but not always 100% better than traditional textbooks. The advantages appeared to be more obvious and claim that the use of the educational Moodle platform promotes the development of positive motivation, cognitivity and enables to be independent on space and time and determine an individual pace of learning.*

The motivating factor has been recognized the fact that learning materials can be uploaded in the form of many media and learners can be directed to the relevant sources, because 'links' can also be embedded. Moodle provides such options

as 'forum', 'wiki', 'chat' and 'glossaries'. These provide deeper interaction between the participants of the educational process.

Key words: chat, distance learning, educational electronic programs, forum, glossary, Moodle platform, wiki.

Introduction The development of information technology has affected all areas of life, including education. Distance learning is becoming more popular as it allows young people to get a college degree, even if you are away from university. This form is already gaining popularity and is being used by many educational institutions in different countries. In Ukraine, distance learning is at the stage of formation and active implementation. Online educational platforms have become the basis of distance learning. They are called Electronic Platform for Education and Research, that means an information platform on the Internet created to place educational content and communication between the educator and the learners, as well as between the learners themselves [1]. Effective organization of work on distance e-education requires educational administration responsible for running the education process and training resources, software that meets the requirements of the educational process and has the necessary functional features, equipment with Internet access, e-learning content. In order to understand which resource to use, it is necessary to know the typology of electronic educational platforms, their capabilities, advantages and disadvantages. These platforms are aimed at the teachers who don't possess profound skills in programming and administratinig databases. Every teacher is able to create an electronic course and run it with the help of referral system. Taking into account its dynamic nature, problems related to the development of theoretical and practical issues in this area appear to be the most relevant. The most convenient and efficient educational program as well as the most wide-spread has become the Moodle system - a modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment.

Higher education institutions develop effective techniques and create their own courses on its basis. At the same time, the Moodle-based distance education system has been created to work on the principles of social and constructive pedagogy, which today attracts the attention of many researchers and teachers of higher education.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. Prospects of distance education and virtual universities in Ukraine are considered by V. Datsyuk, I.V. Forostiuk, T. Poiasok, V. Skrypnyk. The problem of using the latest information technologies in the educational process of higher education is analysed by such domestic and foreign scholars, teachers and methodologists as A.A.Gabidulin, D.Jennings, I. Savvina, Kazunori Nozawa, Y. Youwen. They are engaged in the use of the elements of distance learning of students of higher education institutions.

The aim of the article is to identify the opportunities of using a Moodle e-learning environment in university teaching process.

Computer hardware, a variety of software and the Internet make it possible to increase the amount of material that students are offered to deal with, and enables to become more engaged in learning this material, which affects the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition. Since the 1970s, the paradigm of computer learning has changed to multimedia plus the Internet. The goal of studying has also been expanded and at the beginning of the 21st century effectiveness or practicality has been added [9, c. 909 - 912]. The open source learning management system Moodle is an indispensable part of today's working world. Moodle is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment and was designed and developed by Martin Dougaimas. The concept of distance education is characterized by such features as flexibility, modularity, concurrency, opportunity to attract a large audience at the same time, cost-effectiveness, adaptability, social equality, internationality, positive impact on the student, quality [2]. Teachers see learning as sustainable, constructive and interactive process in which they are quite decisively involved as a learning process arranger so that inevitably affects the

conception and design of the teaching. In the traditional role, the teachers used to be the focus and they mediated the learning material by virtue of its didactic and methodical competences to the learners. In the case of autonomous, self-directed learning, the teachers hardly have still more direct influence on the process of knowledge acquisition and the enhanced competence of the learners. The learners acquire the knowledge themselves. This is not new, that was already the case earlier in learning. But today you must act accordingly as a teacher. But self-directed learning also has a key role for teachers namely the role of a learning helper, a learning advisor.

The new role that the teacher receives while working in this system is the result of the implementation of the concept of social constructivism, according to which the teacher departs from the role of "main actor on the stage", and is transformed into a leader, which provides students with the opportunity to check their understanding of the material on the moment during which the training takes place. The student forms his knowledge through the process of active involvement in learning. To obtain new knowledge the teacher provides the student with the necessary resources, assistance in the assimilation of old and new knowledge. The teacher creates an environment where students are free to ask questions. The training is carried out by creating situations that are as close to life as possible [7]. Therefore, Ukrainian universities are already actively developing courses in the Moodle learning environment to implement the concept of distance education. The main factor in the process of distance learning in the Moodle environment is the interactive activity of the teachers, who involve students in it, using all the opportunities of the platform. For this purpose, teachers need to be knowledgeable about the work of the platform, to use all its possibilities. Consequently, in the Moodle environment, the teacher acts as a course moderator.

The version 1.0 of Moodle was released worldwide in 2002. Computer-aided work has gained immense importance through increasing networking and globalization, so the platform has evolved over the years. So it comes as no surprise

that the tool is now used by more than 100 million people worldwide on more than 99,000 registered sites. The number of registered is shown in the table below.

Moodle is a "virtual learning room". If you are enrolled, you will receive username and password from the presenter of the event so that you can use the online content stored here: PDFs of the table templates or presentations for download, valuable literature tips for your own reading, links for relevant films and music. As a freely available, central learning management system of the Moodle enables students self-directed and cooperative learning as well as their supervision by lecturers and tutors independent of place, space and time. Moodle is characterized by its ease of use, clear course space and context-sensitive help. Moodle makes it possible to quickly integrate materials and learning activities directly into a course date or subject area as well as to support and promote communication and collaboration. For this purpose, such functions as document storage, news area, homework delivery, online task processing and a feedback function are available in a Moodle classroom. Communication tools such as e.g. chat, e-mail, forum and wiki facilitate the exchange between lecturers and students as well as the students among themselves, in order to to clarify open questions about teaching content or to work on tasks together in an online learning group and to submit jointly produced results for evaluation. Moodle also provides the ability to provide students with electronic tests to review individual learning progress and exam preparation. Moodle enables educational institutions and companies to set up their own Moodle systems and to provide learning materials there. Initially, the platform was mainly used in the university learning context to facilitate computer-aided learning. Meanwhile, Moodle is used in almost all occupational fields, especially in online training and education. With Moodle, the realization of online courses is conceivable, but also a classroom lessons can be supported, for example, to upload and edit exercises. In addition, Moodle allows self-study courses and coach feedback courses. Depending on the requirements, the graphical interface can be adapted accordingly. Moodle offers a variety of features for free - the other

tools only for a lot of money - to support the common, but also individual work and learning. Above all, Moodle that it allows users a flexible and versatile use. Learning materials can be uploaded in the form of many media. For example, the module 'Picture gallery' allows the presentation of pictures or ZIP files in a gallery. If a learning material is available as a file, it can just as easily be integrated into the course. Even larger 'documents' or 'books' can be uploaded. If a larger number of files is to be uploaded, it is advisable to structure them in a directory. It is easier to do this by directing learners directly to the relevant sources, because 'links' can also be embedded. In addition, the 'text box function' allows you to add a comment text so that the respective tasks (distributions) are comprehensible to all. Practicality of Moodle is that not only the teacher or the project manager can become active, also the participants of the respective courses can interact with the tool. So it is possible to participate in 'voting' with previously defined answer options. It is also possible to upload your own 'tasks' - for example, exercises that are to be evaluated. If despite explanations things are unclear and questions arise, the integrated 'chat function' can be used. Moodle thus supports the communication of the collaborators, if they work together on projects. However, the group size must not be too large, as this puts too much strain on the web server. Alternatively, a 'forum' is available in which the project members can discuss with each other. Learning-friendly discussions can then lead to a common 'wiki' entry, as Moodle also has this function in stock. A wiki is a cooperative learning platform on which people without much technical knowledge can collaborate on content.

There are two categories of disadvantages that apply to both students and teachers and distance education providers. The first is the lack of social interaction as a consequence of distance learning and technological problems, which most often lie in the following moments: fears of new technologies or their lack and the fact that the portability of materials through electronic form is usually convenient, but not always 100% better than traditional textbooks. The second point is the ability and desire of teachers and students to understand the principles of working

with distance courses, and, especially for teachers, to create these courses independently. Besides, any distance platform, including Moodle, is not an automatically stimulating factor in teaching or learning. If a student is unwilling to succeed in learning, the completing the assignment becomes a formal, routine copying involving the latest technological advances, even if it is limited in time, number of attempts, and so on. The following difficulties in this area can be distinguished at the university: insufficient initial knowledge of university teachers in the field of work with electronic educational platforms, insufficient technical equipment of the personal information space of the teacher; insufficient level of teacher readiness to use the electronic educational platforms. The benefits obviously prevail over the drawbacks of the Moodle. As for advantages of Moodle system, we can point out the fact that the Moodle is an integrated system for creating an online learning environment so that young apprentices can find all the materials needed for a course in one place. It's a good test platform. According to I. Savvina the Moodle system is obviously an efficient way for self-education. The offered model of the organization of self-education of students with the use of the educational Moodle platform promotes the development of positive motivation (due to interest of the modern youth in Information and Communication Technologies), cognitivity (acquiring of knowledge from various informative resources necessary for successful formation of the common cultural and professional competences set by educational standards), activity (ability of dealing with the tasks representing self-educational research), a reflection (ability to organize and control self-study in the electronic Moodle system, ability to an objective assessment of your results) [8]. The advantages of using the system involve the fact that the pace of learning in the eLearning phase may be determined by the learner himself and the repetitions, as often as desired, are possible in the virtual learning room. Learners are independent on space and time, that makes the major convenience of using the Moodle platform.

According to Forostiuk I.V., to work in the distance education system (using any platform) it is necessary to have separate programs. They cannot fully match the programs used for full-time teaching. Obviously, full-time and distance-based teaching will require different approaches, and the best outcome will be if different classes are involved in the future specialization. The load of teachers does not give them the opportunity and time to design a creative distance learning courses. As a result, these courses often look like textbook pages that give a specific task. In addition, if a teacher designs a creative, interesting program, there may be questions about the use of this intellectual product by other teachers in the future [5, c.192]. In practice, creative teachers are finding more and more benefits in the Moodle platform. Moodle is ideal for distance learning as it is a communication platform in a multi-channel environment. Due to the large number of resources, the Moodle system provides an opportunity to organize a full-value educational process. In particular, the process includes training tools, a system of control and evaluation of students' learning activities, as well as other necessary components of the e-learning system [4, c. 6]. The platform provides an individual approach to each student. Course users can work with it anytime and anywhere with Internet access. When creating courses for students of different specialties, the teacher can easily focus on priority activities. For example, for lawyers, it is the ability to speak and read and understand legal texts that directs the work of a teacher to create tasks for mastering a large amount of lexical material. There is a wide range of applications and capabilities available to the instructor for creation of studying courses. They range from regular texts and tasks. The text material today is not difficult to voice in the MP3 format to train your listening skills. Practice shows that presentations created in Power Point are very well-suited to explain grammatical material. They can be shortened using only the usual spreadsheets and therefore psychologically making the material less complicated. At the same time, the large complex topics in the presentation may be provided with the necessary explanations and additional examples. Students may also be attracted in the creation of courses at certain stages. They may be given tasks to submit topic material in the form of their own presentations. These kinds of activities make distance learning fruitful and interesting. After review and correction by the teacher, student

presentations can be used as illustrative material for other students. Such work can be appreciated as an individual task. All teachers understand that distance courses are not automatically a motivating factor for learning, so evaluation acts as an external motivation.

As it was previously said, Moodle provides such options as 'forum', 'wiki', 'chat' and 'glossaries'. Forum enables the project members discuss the learning points. Learning-friendly discussions can then lead to a common 'wiki' entry. Forums are available as a central medium to provide discussion space and opportunities for media and document distribution (via the media filters, attachments or as links). A wiki is a cooperative learning platform on which people without much technical knowledge can collaborate on content. Wiki is a collaboratively created website, useful for group work and negotiations. Glossaries are a collaboratively-created definition list for terms that emerge within the course. Databases extend this approach and allow participants to structure all kinds of file types (e.g., a collection of images and literature reference list). The 'Participants' page lists all enrolled students in the course. It provides a lot of information about the participants and when they were the last time in the course. A block 'Online User' indicates who is still present. The block 'Recent Activities' shows what has happened since the last login in the course and provides a link to a detailed report. This includes not only changes in the course or forum posts, but also task submissions and test attempts. Although the participants do not see the respective results, but the information that someone else has worked on the tasks and tests, may be sufficient. generate the necessary peer pressure for one's own actions. Finally, almost all modules offer the opportunity to track who made what entry. The wiki even provides a detailed version history for each entry. For teachers, forums and chat can be important and useful activities. The Forum module is an activity where students and faculty can exchange ideas by discussing issues. The forum offers non-synchronous communication, gives an opportunity to present in the form of answers to the discussion topic, as well as the presentation of text information (essay) for further evaluation, further explanation of unclear questions and more. The students

themselves can choose topics for discussion. Chat is a kind of activity that is designed for synchronous use. It can be led by a teacher arbitrary. Free use of chat also implies a good command of writing in order to express one's opinion. The chat simulates the real situation of exchanging thoughts and now, a more spontaneous, lively conversation than the exchange of thoughts on the forum. However, thanks to both of these activities, the teacher can clarify unclear questions, receive written answers for evaluation, and stimulate an exchange of views in a real conversation. Last but not least, Moodle offers anonymous evaluation options through the available 'feedback function'. Questionnaires and workshops can be created centrally and used in selected courses or projects. In the course of distance learning, interaction between the subjects of the educational process can be ensured through the use of such forms of learning as lectures and seminars. They are possible using an online service OpenMeetings in Moodle [3, c. 34-42].

The most recent Moodle 3.5, 3.6, 3.7 are now available. The new Moodle version 3.5 adds features that are relevant from the point of view of the General Data Protection Regulation for Europe. So it is now possible to create usage policies and make them available to users. Moodle has its own "Simple search" option which provides for searchers across the Moodle platform immediately. The Moodle Mobile App is due for release. A great new feature for Moodle 3.5 gives users the possibility to record audio or video via Moodle and that is ideal for students submitting assignments. In addition, it is possible for users to request their own data and delete it [6].

Conclusions. Thus, we see that, using the Moodle platform for teaching a foreign language, teachers have at their disposal a modern, powerful resource through which they can present material, monitor and evaluate student performance. There are many tools available to help in this process. This platform is most useful for distance learning, although it can also be successfully used for blended learning. Today, along with the unconditional advantages, there are some disadvantages that are objective and subjective. Therefore, in order to get the best result, teachers and students need to have the desire to learn to work in a given primary environment, not to be afraid and change their perspective on the current

process of teaching and learning. The Moodle learning platform enables students to learn and study in a variety of ways. With versatile activities and facilities, lecturers can design their courses and be in direct contact with the students. Teachers face major challenges: individual media literacy, basic knowledge and skills in dealing with digital media as well as supervising competencies in teaching and learning processes for themselves and the learners.

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