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GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR IT ENGLISH: PILOTING EXPERIENCE

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Mobile teaching and learning is accumulating interest in IT English teaching due to the availability of mobile devices, “which provide multimedia tools and enable Internet-facilitated access to structured learning” [4]. All the students of the State University of Telecommunications have a mobile device such as a mobile phone or a laptop as their major disciplines are connected to the IT sphere and they all have hand on experience in using computers professionally. Therefore using their skills for IT English becomes almost a must for a teacher. Furthermore, using IT approaches for arranging study materials is very natural way for such students. What kind of organizing educational process to choose for IT English is the question that the authors of the paper are trying to answer by analyzing and evaluating the efficiency of implementation Google Classroom's active learning activities in the State University of Telecommunications.

Google Classroom is an online platform designed to manage workflow and communication between teachers and students. Teachers can create online classrooms, invite students to attend and create and share resources. Teachers and students can instantly communicate, and teachers can send announcements and start class discussions [5]. Moreover, the information in the Google classroom is well organized by topics and lessons. All documents, links to useful resources, tests, audio and video materials are attached to the particular lesson or topic and it is very easy to find them both for teachers and students.

Though online learning environments such as Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas or Google Classroom are “at times openly introduced for institutions to help in learning management and for providing multimedia materials and flexibility of access to students” [2], the difference between Google classroom and almost similar product Moodle is that the first does not require institutional implementation. It is a free service, available for anyone having a personal Google account for establishing and managing their teaching and learning environments.

With the help of this tool teachers can create as many classes as needed without any permission of authorities. In addition, all connected with the Google Classroom data are stored in tire four Google Data Centers that are among the most secure data centers in the world. The features for the classroom application to be enabled by technology company Google in its web platform, which include the new "Class work" tab, the "People" page and the "quiz assignment" for creating form quizzes in classrooms [1] are being analyzed below. The screenshot of the Google Classroom of one of the pilot first-year students' group (see *figure 1*) shows the window from the special course of *English for IT* which is studied by software developers to be and includes among essential grammar and phonetics also IT terms lexis for their future profession.

For the discussed project it was important that all the students from pilot

groups excitedly adopted such an IT tool to organize their virtual learning environment. In particular, comparative performance is good in the areas of ease of access, perceived usefulness, communication and interaction, instruction delivery and students' satisfaction towards the Google Classroom's active learning activities [3]. The using of the Google Classroom provides the opportunity to organize the study material in units or topics and each of them includes several lessons according to teacher's needs. It is easy to find any Unit part from previous lessons (and the date when each lesson task was assigned (see *figure 1*).

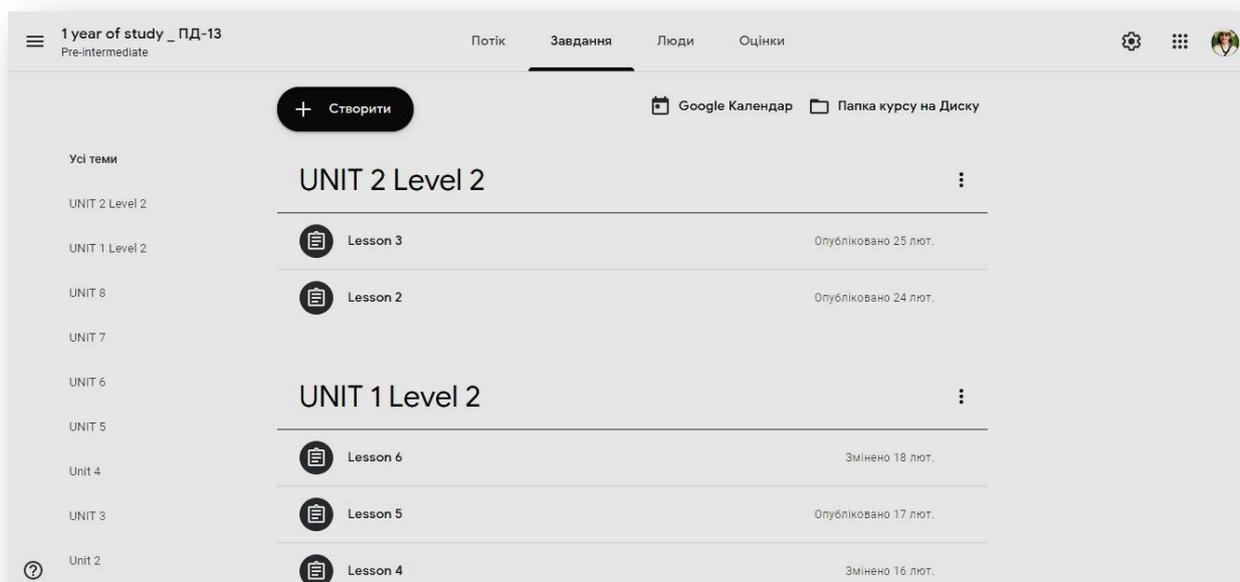


Figure 1

Although students can use different social media to share their home assignments with each other, such type of conveying information is not the best way for finding any information about the home task of a particular lesson or topic. Comparatively, in Google Classroom each lesson includes such points as *Classwork* and *Homework* (see *figure2*). Consequently, students can do the tasks for classroom work and what is more important they find their home work for this lesson. Being a cross-platform product Google Classroom may be run through a browser and/or a mobile app, hence students can use their mobile phones to run it anytime and anywhere, for example, in public transport on their way to classes etc.

Moreover, a teacher has options to attach any kind of useful data that are connected to this topic, e.g. an illustration to grammar rules or a link to a video from the YouTube (see *figure 2*). This also concerns to different types of Google documents or tests in Google Forms etc. due to the teacher's needs. For instance, to practice some grammar points that were covered during this lesson link to the online exercises on topic *Adverbs of Frequency with Present Simple* was attached to this lesson (see *figure 2*).

In Google Classroom students hand in their homework by attaching their document, picture or video file to the lesson. As it is seen at the teacher can see all members of the Google Classroom and check who submitted the homework and

when (see *figure 3*). Furthermore, the teacher can check students' homework and score for the students' completed tasks (see *figure 4*).

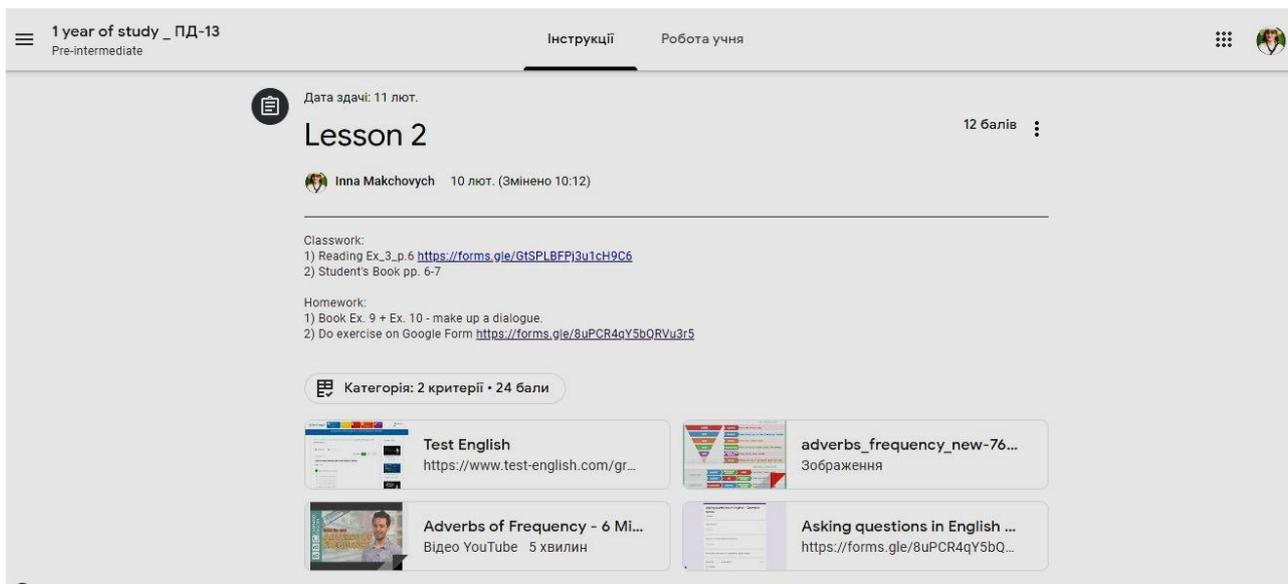


Figure 2

In Google Classroom teachers can highlight mistakes and write comments to each student individually. This helps students improve their writing. Teachers can also leave real-time comments on the work of students while they are writing in both Office 365 and Google Docs. As it is suggested to use a community tool such as Twitter, Edmodo or Google Classroom's stream to provide students a forum to read and respond to the writing and ideas of each other [4], not only teachers but also students can write comments to the lesson, for instance, asking for clarification of some points in the home assignment.

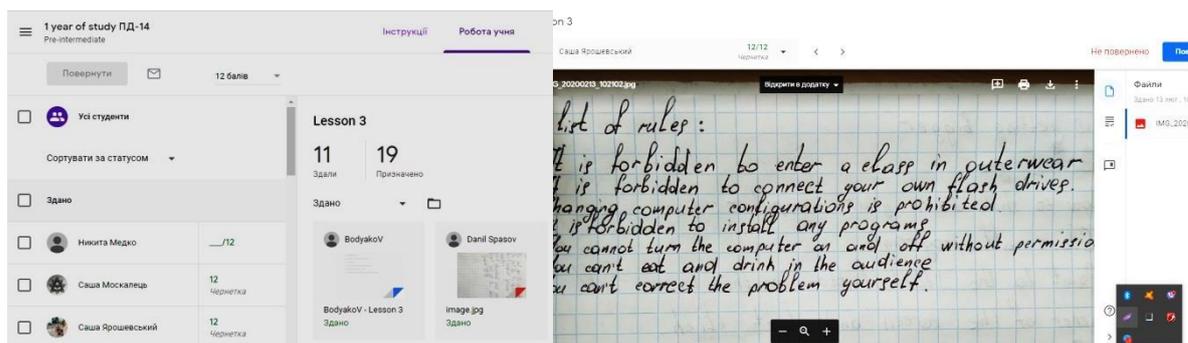


Figure 3

Figure 4

So, while piloting Google Classroom one must admit undoubtedly effectiveness for both the teacher and the student, with its convenient capabilities of submitting multimedia, correction options and especially its mobile app feature. Making it possible to use Google Classroom in any university room, with or without computers, and for the individual learning process turns it also into an inclusive educational tool and/or learning environment for the students with disabilities at the

university.

Thus, a pilot project by the authors of the paper with the IT students in the field of programming revealed the important features of using Google Classroom. They are as follows: a) positive attitudes of students to the organization of the learning environment in Google Classroom; b) time saving instruments, especially Google Forms for testing and quizzes; c) the use of the Google Classroom does not require complicated bureaucratic procedures associated with its implementation, but requires only a personal Google Account. Due to the fact that all data is stored in Google Data Centers, which meet the highest levels of reliability in the world (tire 4), there is no need to use educational servers for this purpose; d) Google Classroom is an effective tool for self-study, especially for learning IT terminology and functional language; e) it is convenient for the study of prolonged projects covering several book Units.

Clear, intuitive, structured interface that gives you quick access to any component of the curriculum: units, lessons, tests, grammar and vocabulary exercises, audio videos and tasks. What is convenient for students during self-preparation for the in-term control by writing the module tests, credits and examinations, and could be recommended for further use and study, alongside with Moodle or other virtual educational environments, as an efficient educational environment for IT English at State University of Telecommunications.

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