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DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/64-2-52>**Yuliya TALALAY,***orcid.org/0000-0003-3134-2030*

*Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Head of the English Language and Translation Department
Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University
(Drohobych, Lviv region, Ukraine) jutal@dspu.edu.ua*

MY ENGLISH LAB – A HELPING TOOL FOR BLENDED LEARNING AND E-LEARNING

*After the outbreak of the Covid-19, we all had to face tough and challenging times. Everything has changed, including the process of education and accruing knowledge. There was the need to find efficient, informative and innovative methods of teaching, helping tools for blended learning. **The purpose of the research** is to elucidate the essence of My English Lab as a helping tool for blended learning and e-learning. Different scholars focused on the importance of blended learning and how to apply advanced learning technologies and methods in practice. For instance, M. Hastie, I. Hung, N. Chen. According to Cambridge Dictionary, electronic learning (e-learning) is learning done by studying at home using computers and course provided on the Internet. Under the term “flipped classroom” there is meant “a pedagogical approach in which a direct instruction moves from a group learning space to an individual learning space, and a resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment in which an educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage in the subject matter creatively”. Under the conditions of the Covid-19 outbreak My English Lab (MEL) was the solution and salvation. My English Lab is the online platform, is compatible with personal computers, laptops, mobile phones and tablets. The innovative online platform My English Lab could be used as a blended learning or as a flipped learning model. My English Lab consists of the following blocks: Assignment, Calendar, Course, Grade book, Messages, Settings. There is online workbook, which is called “Course”. “Course” is packed with videos, reading, listening and writing activities, which correlate with the course book units. There are 12 Units on MEL as well as in the New Language Leader Advanced Course book. Each Unit on My English Lab consists of 6 lessons. Students can practise Listening, Reading and Grammar, Video, Writing Activities, as much as they want, while doing homework. MEL checks the tasks automatically and provides it on the screen. Every student can trace if he makes progress or regress. A teacher, as a mentor can spot how many attempts were made by every student in order to complete a certain task. A teacher also receives a report based on common mistakes (Common Error Mistakes), which could be practised during the class. Each activity that students complete is recorded on MyEnglish Lab Grade Book, making it easy to see students’ strengths and weaknesses. It can be viewed for the whole class or individual students. Every student has got an online cabinet. Taking everything into account, the online-platform My English Lab is innovative, provides an interactive environment, instant feedback and support from a teacher, helps improve Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. It doesn’t the replace a teacher but My English Lab provides cutting-edge technology for a teacher and students in order to succeed in the English language acquisition.*

Key words: *blended learning, e-learning, flipped learning model, My English Lab, online platform.*

Юлія ТАЛАЛАЙ,*orcid.org/0000-0003-3134-2030*

*кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
завідувач кафедри англійської мови та перекладу
Дрогобицького державного педагогічного університету імені Івана Франка
(Дрогобич, Львівська область, Україна) jutal@dspu.edu.ua*

MY ENGLISH LAB – ДОПОМІЖНИЙ ІНСТРУМЕНТ ДЛЯ ЗМІШАНОГО НАВЧАННЯ ТА Е-НАВЧАННЯ

*Після спалаху Covid-19 нам усім довелося зіткнутися з важкими часами. Змінилося все, в тому числі і процес навчання та отримання знань. Виникла потреба знайти ефективні, інформативні та інноваційні методи навчання, допоміжні засоби для змішаного навчання. **Метою дослідження** є з’ясування сутності My English Lab як допоміжного інструменту для змішаного навчання та електронного навчання. Різні вчені акцентували увагу на важливості змішаного навчання та застосуванні передових технологій і методів навчання на практиці. Наприклад, М. Хасті, І. Хунг, Н. Чен. Відповідно до Кембриджського словника, електронне навчання (e-learning) – це навчання, яке здійснюється вдома за допомогою комп’ютерів і курсу, доступного в Інтернеті. Під терміном «flipped classroom» мається на увазі «педагогічний підхід, за якого пряма інструкція переміщується з групового*

навчального простору в індивідуальний навчальний простір, а отриманий груповий простір перетворюється на динамічне інтерактивне навчальне середовище, у якому педагог керує учням, коли вони застосовують концепції та творчо залучаються до предмету». В умовах спалаху Covid-19 рішенням і порятунком стала My English Lab (MEL). My English Lab — онлайн-платформа, сумісна з персональними комп'ютерами, ноутбуками, мобільними телефонами та планшетами. Інноваційну онлайн-платформу My English Lab можна використовувати як змішане навчання або як перевернуту модель навчання. My English Lab складається з наступних блоків: Завдання, Календар, Курс, Заліковий журнал, Повідомлення, Налаштування. Є онлайн робочий зошит, який називається «Курс». «Курс» наповнений відео, вправами з читання, аудіювання та письма, які співвідносяться з розділами підручника. Є 12 розділів на MEL, а також у книзі розширеного курсу New Language Leader. Кожен розділ My English Lab складається з 6 уроків. Під час виконання домашнього завдання учні можуть практикувати аудіювання, читання та граматику, відео, письмо скільки завгодно. MEL автоматично перевіряє завдання та виводить їх на екран. Кожен учень може простежити, прогресує чи відступає. Учителю, як наставнику, може визначити, скільки спроб зробив кожен учень, щоб виконати певне завдання. Викладач також отримує звіт на основі поширених помилок (Common Error Mistakes), які можна практикувати під час уроку. Кожна вправа, яку виконують студенти, реєструється в MyEnglish Lab Grade Book, що дозволяє легко побачити сильні та слабкі сторони студентів. Його можна переглянути всім класом або окремими учнями. Кожен студент має онлайн-кабінет. З огляду на все, онлайн-платформа My English Lab є інноваційною, забезпечує інтерактивне середовище, миттєвий зворотній зв'язок і підтримку з боку вчителя, допомагає покращити мовлення, аудіювання, читання та письмо. Він не замінює вчителя, але My English Lab надає передові технології для вчителя та учнів, щоб досягти успіху в опануванні англійської мови.

Ключові слова: змішане навчання, електронне навчання, модель навчання перевернутий клас, My English Lab, онлайн-платформа.

The Problem Statement. When the Covid-19 broke out, we all had to face tough and challenging times. Everything has changed, including the process of education and accruing knowledge. We had to find efficient, informative and innovative methods of teaching. Teachers as well as students had to be on distant learning, the e-learning. We had to look for the solution. Traditional copybooks and pintables weren't suitable for the e-learning, because there were no e-books and online materials specially tailored to meet the needs of a specific group, a specific student.

Analysis of Recent Research. Numerous scholars did researches on electronic learning (Clark, Mayer), blended learning (Hastie, Hung, Chen, Kinshuk) and flipped classroom model (Bergmann, Sams, Dunn).

The purpose of the research is to elucidate the essence of My English Lab as a helping tool for blended learning and e-learning.

The Statement of Basic Material. The following scholars R. Clark and R. E. Mayer defined e-learning as instruction delivered by any technological mode intended to promote learning (Clark, Mayer, 2011, 2013).

According to Cambridge Dictionary, electronic learning (e-learning) is learning done by studying at home using computers and course provided on the Internet (Cambridge Dictionary). It should be mentioned there is a discrepancy between traditional teaching and learning at classroom and in an e-learning environment. A good-old teacher-student relationship should be transferred to a digital environment. A teacher's role is to be a mentor, to help students overcome challenges, to support students and also provide the material online efficiently. A teacher

should become a helping hand and use online resources, electronic books, provide new grammar material, reading, listening and speaking activities in a new learning environment.

Different scholars focused on the importance of blended learning and how to apply advanced learning technologies and methods in practice. For instance, M. Hastie, I. Hung, N. Chen and Kinshuk stated that "teachers and students living in a digital age are faced with complex problems that are forcing them to seek collaborative solutions. These problems can be addressed through a successful application of digital technologies and pedagogies that enhance educational, social and economic prospects of students. The main goal of this study was to suggest a blended synchronous learning model and to show how this model can be adopted for a better supporting educational international collaboration" (Hastie, Hung, Chen, Kinshuk, 2010: 9–24).

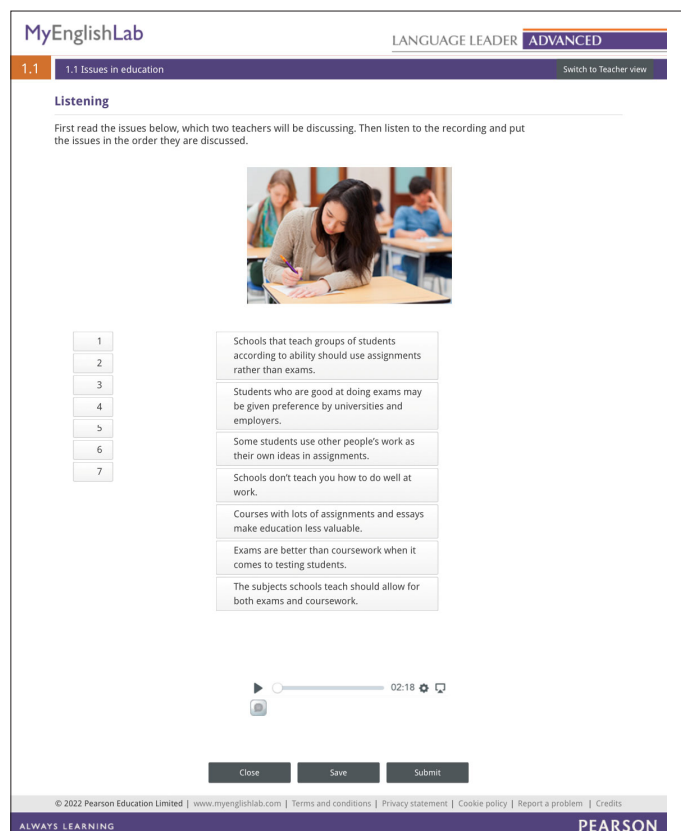
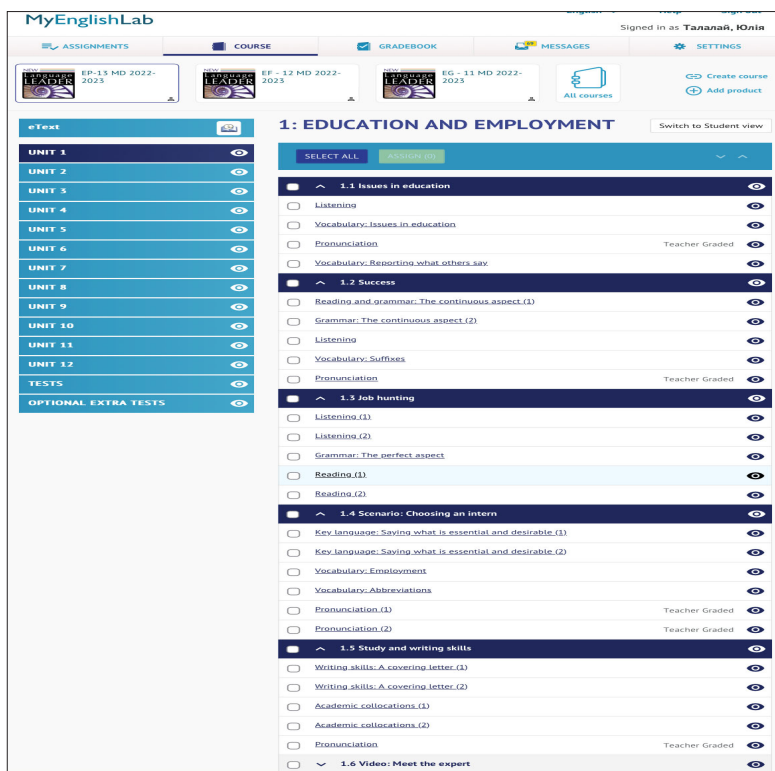
There is one more term, which should be defined. Flipped classroom is "a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from a group learning space to an individual learning space, and a resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment in which an educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage in the subject matter creatively" (Flipped Learning Network).

Under the conditions of the Covid-19 outbreak My English Lab (MEL) was the solution and salvation. My English Lab is the online platform, is compatible with personal computers, laptops, mobile phones and tablets. The innovative online platform My English Lab could be used as a blended learning or as

a flipped learning model. There is online workbook, which is called “Course”. “Course” is packed with the videos, reading, listening and writing activities, which correlate with the course book units. There are 12 Units on MEL as well as in the New Language Leader Advanced Course book. Each Unit on My

English Lab consists of 6 lessons, i.e., for example, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, etc.

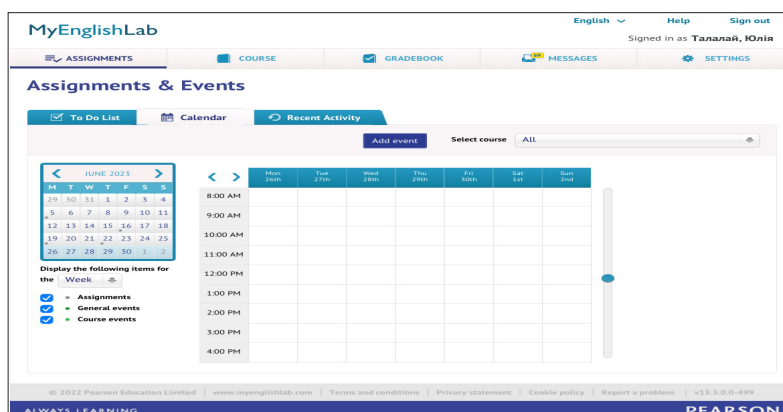
There are at least 5 exercises for every lesson. The students can practise Listening, Reading and Grammar, Video, Writing Activities, as much as they want, while doing homework.



MEL checks the tasks automatically and provides it on the screen. Every student can trace if he makes progress or regress. A teacher, as a mentor can spot how many attempts were made by every student in order to complete a certain task. A teacher also receives a report based on common mistakes (Common Error Mistakes), which could be practised during the class. There are also Teacher Graded Tasks, for example, the students could record their own voices in order to improve their pronunciation and practice the active vocabulary, the students could write essays, articles, formal/informal letters and short answers that would be checked by a teacher exclusively. Each activity that students complete is recorded on MyEnglish Lab Grade Book, making it easy to see students' strengths and weaknesses. It can be viewed for the whole class or individual students. Lessons 1.6, 2.6, 3.6, 4.6, 5.6, etc., are designed for the video activities and is called Video Meet the Expert. Each student has to watch the video and complete tasks online on MEL and in the course books (in the Section Video Meet the Expert) in pen. Every student has got an online cabinet. The

online cabinet consists of Assignments, Calendar, Course, Grade Book, Message and Settings.

With the help of the Calendar students can keep track of online tests and important events. The Course includes Units 1–12 and Unit Tests. Hence, a teacher can assign the online test based on the active vocabulary, grammar aspects, writing and listening. It is also possible to set up time limits and the number of attempts, which is beneficial for the e-learning. After the test every students gets the mark and the teacher receives feedback in order to make an analysis during the English class and provide explanations. In addition, a teacher has got an access to the e-book, which may come in handy especially when sharing the screen during the English classes. Grade Book includes marks, completed and uncompleted tasks for both the teacher and the student. The next bullet Message is quite useful; as the teacher may send in it the additional material, answer the students' questions. The students can chat within the group or send messages to the teacher (mentor).



The screenshot shows the MyEnglishLab interface for a video lesson. At the top, it says 'MyEnglishLab' and 'LANGUAGE LEADER ADVANCED'. Below that, there's a section for '1.6 Video: Meet the expert' with a 'Switch to Teacher view' button. The main content area is titled 'Video: Helen Kempster (1)' and includes the instruction: 'Watch the video. Put the topics in the order Helen mentions them.' A video player is centered, showing a play button and a progress bar at 07:03. Below the video player is a list of seven topics to be ordered: 1. four ways in which Helen helps students, 2. work experience, 3. what Helen does, 4. Helen's three most important pieces of advice, 5. interview preparation: work experience, 6. interview preparation: motivation, and 7. writing a CV. At the bottom, there are 'Close', 'Save', and 'Submit' buttons. The footer contains copyright information for Pearson Education Limited and the Pearson logo.

The last bullet Settings is vital for some profile changes, that is, first name, last name, region, language and password. A teacher has a bit different opportunity in the last bullet Settings. A teacher has got the list of groups and students. If a student forgot a password, a teacher can change it. In addition, a teacher can keep eyes on the last time the certain student logged in My English Lab and Time Spent on a Course.

The Conclusion. Taking everything into account, the online-platform My English Lab is innovative, provides an interactive environment, instant feedback and support from a teacher, helps improve Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. It doesn't replace a teacher but My English Lab provides cutting-edge technology for a teacher and students in order to succeed in the English language acquisition.

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