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BENEFITS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEBINARS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Changes in the law on higher education, scientific and technical activities, President's decree on the development of Ukrainian education, state national program "Education" (Ukraine of the 21st century) confirm the statement that educational system in Ukraine needs reforming. "The Common European Framework of References", on the one hand, defined new requirements on English language competence of university students. On the other hand, this document recommended to shorten hours for in-class activities and to double the time for individual student's work. First of all, these changes concern the image of a university teacher or lecturer. New style of relations between student and a lecturer, based on partnership, brand-new methods of teaching and innovative

technologies, now aims to master students not only in speaking, listening and writing skills, but in creative thinking, getting the necessary information and making right choice. That is to be active participants of the studying process. Currently, student abilities to self-education and self-perfection are being paid close attention to.

In terms of economic slow-down in Ukraine most students cannot afford practical studies abroad. Of course there are free online courses to which an unlimited number of volunteers can sign up. For example, British council started the first massive online course (MOOC). The duration of this course is 6 weeks and you should spend about 2 hours per week for English language training. Each activity is a serious of steps and you can study at your own speed. In case you complete more than 50% of the steps in the course you can purchase a certificate. The statement of participation costs from 19 pounds plus shipping.

Another way to continue advanced training is, in our opinion, adding webinars to the list of training options. So the aim of our study is to determine the main characteristics of webinars and to consider the advantages of this online workshop.

Webinar is a kind of interactive communication with a native speaker mediated through the Internet. Our study is based on experience of attending more than 20 webinars. They are Pearson and Dinternal Webinars, National Geographic Learning, Cambridge English, LingvoTech+(the Academy of educational technologies), Macmillan webinars. Most webinars last about an hour, but Pearson and Dinternal organize half an hour and hour trainings. To join the Webinar the participant should fill in the register form and choose the appropriate time zone. As a rule, the conformation of participation is sent on email address and it is very convenient to have a “webinar reminder”. An hour before the seminar starts you click the meeting or get adobe connection. As we can see, webinars are easy to join. Moreover, they are free and the participant has a chance to get the certificate of attendance (in some cases, Macmillan Webinars, for example, after passing a test). Since webinars

take place over the Internet and there are no costs involved with attending the Webinar they are considered to be cost-effective and time-efficient trainings.

But the first and foremost benefit of the Webinar is a real-time or, in other words, face-to-face communication. In addition, online seminars are led by native speakers and English language teaching experts. This is a good chance to master speaking and listening skills. Moreover, Webinars offer wide spectrum of actual topics. No doubt, the topics such as “6 steps to remembering new vocabulary”, “How placing learners at the right level raises standards”, “Learnt and not forgotten: 3 rules for an exam”, “Twas the class before Christmas...a 1-hour training session for ELT teachers organized by Pearson” cannot but sound promising. As we can see Webinars cover a wide range of the hottest and the most applicable topics in the field of the English language learning on motivating students, exam preparation and what not. Moreover, being the latest development Webinar can transmit audio, video, presentations, images and is a perfect example of invading computer technologies into teaching process.

The second, but not less important advantage of using webinar tools is interaction between the presenter and the participants all over the world. Such format of the training provides the immediate feedback. The trainees have an opportunity to ask and answer the questions in chat box and submit their feedback about the Webinar at the end of the meeting. Online workshops include thought-provoking and open-ended questions. The member of online seminar tries to answer as quickly as possible and compare his variants with partners' ones. Webinars help to ruin the geographic distances or so called language barrier between the members and get them ready for further communication and education abroad.

It should be noted that all of the mentioned Webinars offer the option to access the contests and materials of previous trainings. Most language learning

centers archive each webinar and the participant can use the material of the training in his teaching practice. So, online seminars have long-time value.

Lastly, the certificate of attendance will add value to teacher's portfolio. But, the process of getting certificate at some webinars depends on passing or failing status and individual performance during the Webinar.

To sum up, teachers and lecturers of Ukrainian universities can benefit from attending Webinars. Flexibility, interactivity, cost-effectiveness, long-time value made online workshops number one training in the world. In addition, the participation in Webinars provides you with open access to up-to-date teaching training materials, classroom resources, networking opportunities to meet the needs of teachers of English.

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