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EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BENCHMARKING APPROACH WITH EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES IN MARITIME ENGLISH EDUCATION

The article describes the use of a benchmarking approach as an effective means of assessing and comparing competitiveness and improving the organization's activities. In the era of the information society, knowledge fast changes and distributes, making it impossible for educational institutions to be successful if not have a real competitive advantage. The use of educational technology while Maritime Education and Training improves student outcomes, including grades and test scores. The paper describes the use of educational technology in a variety of ways, including blended learning, flipped classrooms, and personalized learning as a more engaging and effective learning environment. Benchmarking and educational technologies are two intertwined concepts that play a crucial role in improving the quality of maritime education. Research suggests that educational technologies can positively influence Maritime English education of future ship engineers. EdTech tools can be used to simulate different educational scenarios and predict potential outcomes. This can help educators benchmark their current practices against alternative approaches and make informed decisions. Such technologies provide students with access to authentic materials, real-life scenarios, and immediate feedback, enabling them to develop their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Benchmarking can foster a culture of continuous improvement and encourage collaboration among educators to share best practices and develop innovative solutions. The paper concludes with positive impact of benchmarking approach with educational technologies into Maritime English education of future seafarers. The prospects of further research can be seen in the use of benchmarking approach while Collaborative Online International Learning, namely Maritime English online courses on LMS MOODLE.

Key words: benchmarking, educational technologies, Maritime English, higher education, blended learning, e-learning.

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Introduction

In conditions of a decrease in the number of Ukrainian institutions of higher education and aggravation competitive struggle regarding the possibilities of realization of the products of educational activity, there was a need in the management technology for the prompt settlement of issues related to ensuring competitiveness of higher education institutions. The functions of such technology in modern international educational practice are performed by competitive benchmarking. It is one of the methods of strategic management aimed at improving the quality of education in modern educational institutions. The formation of a competitive educational environment and the improvement of the quality of educational services are among the priority directions of the system of higher education institutions of Ukraine today.

Benchmarking is a valuable approach when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of educational technologies in Maritime English education (Wu & Yang, 2022; Lukianenko & Vadaska, 2020). By comparing the performance of different technologies, educators can identify best practices, areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about implementing these technologies in the classroom.

In the era of the information society, knowledge fast changes and distributes, making it impossible educational institutions to be successful if not have a real competitive advantage. There are numerous providers of scientific and educational services use advanced learning technologies, to attract customers and overflow educational institutions on the market. Every year with the development of Internet technologies, consumers of education discover more high standards and requirements for the education system. Benchmarking is becoming not only necessary in the field of education, but also mandatory if an organization wants to survive. It is easier and cheaper to adapt someone else's proven ideas than to create them yourself, develop and learn from your own mistakes, so benchmarking can be used as a tool for strategic planning and forecasting (Kononova & Yurzhenko, 2020; Kharchenko et al, 2024).

At the same time, the increase of the universities' competitiveness and the quality of educational services depends on several factors. First, it is necessary to use the methods of strategic management in accordance with maritime professional education. Noticeable flaws can lead to serious problems in attempts to reform the educational complex. In the conditions of implementation of innovative processes, higher education institutions should choose wisely and apply methods of improving one's activity, focusing on the best (Abusalem et al, 2024; Semerikov et al, 2021).

The aim of our research is to investigate how benchmarking, combined with educational technologies, can be used to enhance the effectiveness of teaching Maritime English.

The main tasks of the article include evaluating the current state of Maritime English education, analysing the effectiveness of digital tools and methods in this context, and offering insights into best practices that can be benchmarked across institutions.

Sources Review

The first significant scientific research on benchmarking was proposed by R. Kemp, who characterized it as a continuous process of finding solutions that will provide the organization with the highest achievements using synthetic modelling. The specifics of using benchmarking as a marketing strategy, aimed at a competitor in the field of educational services, is partially noted by Polish researchers Z. Datsko-Pikiewicz, A. Pabiyan and a Ukrainian researcher V. Zakharchenko. The use of benchmarking as a tool for managing organizations, in particular in the field of education, is the subject of research by both Ukrainian and foreign scholars. In particular, the theoretical foundations of benchmarking as an integral system are revealed in the works of O. Zhegus, E. Deming, K. Ishikawa, F. Crosby, and others; the study of the features of benchmarking as a management tool in the field of education was carried out by S. Garlyk, A. Karajalainen, D. Maslov, N. Paliulis, S. Tucker; practical aspects of using benchmarking in the processes of improving educational institutions are laid down in the works of such scientists as N. Vasylykova (2017), H. Okhrimenko, N. Savytska, S. Semeniuk, and H. Chekalovska.

Professor O. Bilyakovska considers benchmarking as a management technology that allows to implement the best educational practices and adapt the best management practices to the educational process of a higher education institution. In fact, benchmarking is a process of cognition and discovery aimed at collective creativity in achieving and improving the quality of university education (Biliakovska, 2021).

G. Okhrimenko described the concept of benchmarking as a method of increasing the competitiveness of educational institutions, which includes the study of a specific product, service or method of operation of an educational institution in order to compare them with similar products, services or methods of operation of other educational institutions. The purpose of this process is to adopt best practices and improve one's own product, service or way of doing things in accordance with the needs of the rapidly evolving educational environment in higher education (Okhrimenko, 2016).

Scientist G. Chekalovska defines benchmarking as a systematic activity of higher education institutions aimed at finding, evaluating and learning from the best examples, regardless of the form of ownership, specialization and geographical location of educational institutions (Chekalovska, 2018).

Chumak M. interprets benchmarking as a way to evaluate the strategies and goals of an organization in comparison with first-class business structures to determine its place in a competitive market (Chumak, 2020).

However, despite a significant body of research in the field of benchmarking, in Ukraine, unfortunately, there is no special and comprehensive research on the benchmarking potential of higher education with clear directions and evaluation criteria in the field of educational marketing.

Research Methods

The research was conducted on the students of the second and the third courses/years of study (consisting of 123 students aged 18–19) with the same abilities of education (including blended learning and flipped classrooms). Students were divided into two groups: experimental and control. In the experimental group (61 students), classes were implemented using interactive technologies (MOODLE platform, Whiteboard, Mentimeter, Classtime, etc) and study

materials from different institutions, while the control group (62 students) studied only with electronic student books. Methods of observation and analysis were used in the research and calculation of results.

According to the experiment and its results, nobody's interests were violated.

Key methods used in the study involve case studies, continuous assessment strategies, and the application of e-learning tools like Moodle LMS. These methods are designed to enhance language proficiency and technical skills, which are crucial for maritime professionals.

The first test, conducted at the beginning of the experiment, revealed that the students had the same level of English proficiency. This indicates that all participants of the experiment have approximately the same initial knowledge and skills in English. Such a result is important for the further stages of the research, as it provides equal conditions for all participants, which, in turn, allows for a more objective assessment of the impact of experimental methods on the development of language skills.

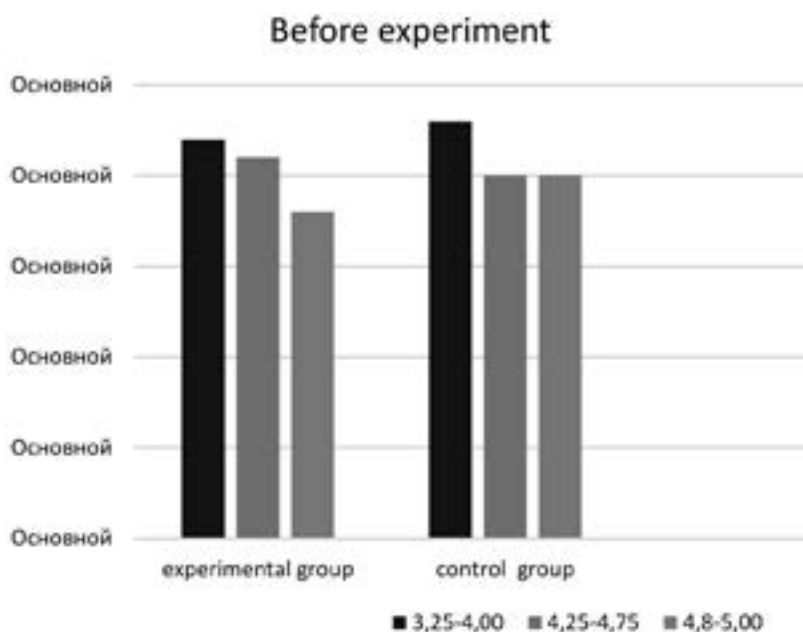


Figure 1. Testing before experiment

In the first group, 22 students have grades of 4.25–4.75, 18 students have grades of 4.8–5.00, and 21 students have grades of 3.25–4.00.

In the second group, 23 students have grades of 4.25–4.75, 20 students have grades of 4.8–5.00, and 20 students have grades of 3.25–4.00.

Results and Discussion

Benchmarking helps identify successful practices and strategies that can be shared among educators. By analysing the effectiveness of different technologies in different educational institutions, teachers can gain insight into effective pedagogical approaches and teaching methods. Such knowledge sharing can lead to evidence-based practices that

will positively impact English language education as a whole and increase teachers' access to relevant educational resources, research articles, and expert opinions. Using IT technologies, it is easier for higher education institutions to find a competitive educational institution, so that exchange students can have the opportunity to study and gain knowledge, which will increase the level of competitiveness of higher education institutions in the future. Besides, participating in various conferences, Maritime English teachers can gain access to a huge store of knowledge, i.e. exchange of experience, which will allow them to make informed decisions about their teaching strategies and promote better learning outcomes for their students.

Combining benchmarking with educational technology has several advantages. First, it allows teachers to assess the impact of technology on Maritime English learning outcomes. By analysing the responses, teachers can determine whether certain technologies improve students' language skills, engagement, and overall learning experience. For example, using the LMS MOODLE, our students show better results from module to module (Shalatska et al, 2020; Yurzhenko, 2019).

MOODLE is an open-source learning management system (LMS) designed to facilitate online learning and education. Originally developed by Martin Dougiamas, MOODLE stands for "Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment". It provides a platform for educators to create online courses, organize and deliver content, interact with students, and assess their progress.

Educational technologies have also played a significant role in enhancing Maritime English learning experiences. Numerous studies concentrate on their impact on English education, assessing their effectiveness across various contexts. When learning online during the lesson, the teacher can use various IT technologies to improve students' knowledge (Miro white board for working in groups, collaborate in pairs, make a project).

To effectively implement a benchmarking approach, it is critical to involve a diverse group of participants, including faculty, students, administrators, and

technology experts. Their perspectives and ideas contribute to comprehensive evaluation and provide valuable feedback for improving the educational technologies being evaluated.

These technologies cover a wide range of tools and platforms, such as online language learning platforms, multimedia resources, language learning programs, virtual reality simulations, and more. They offer interactive and exciting learning opportunities, allowing students to practice English in an interesting and personalized way. Research shows that educational technology can have a positive impact on English language learning. They provide students with access to authentic materials (e.g. news or incident reports), real-life scenarios and immediate feedback, enabling them to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In addition, gamification elements (Figure 2) integrated into educational technologies make learning enjoyable and motivate students to actively participate. We consider gamification as the application of game design elements, game mechanics, and game-like thinking to non-game contexts with the goal of engaging and motivating people. Gamification in education involves applying game-like elements and principles to the learning environment to enhance cadets' engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. It leverages the inherent motivational aspects of games to make the educational experience more enjoyable and effective.

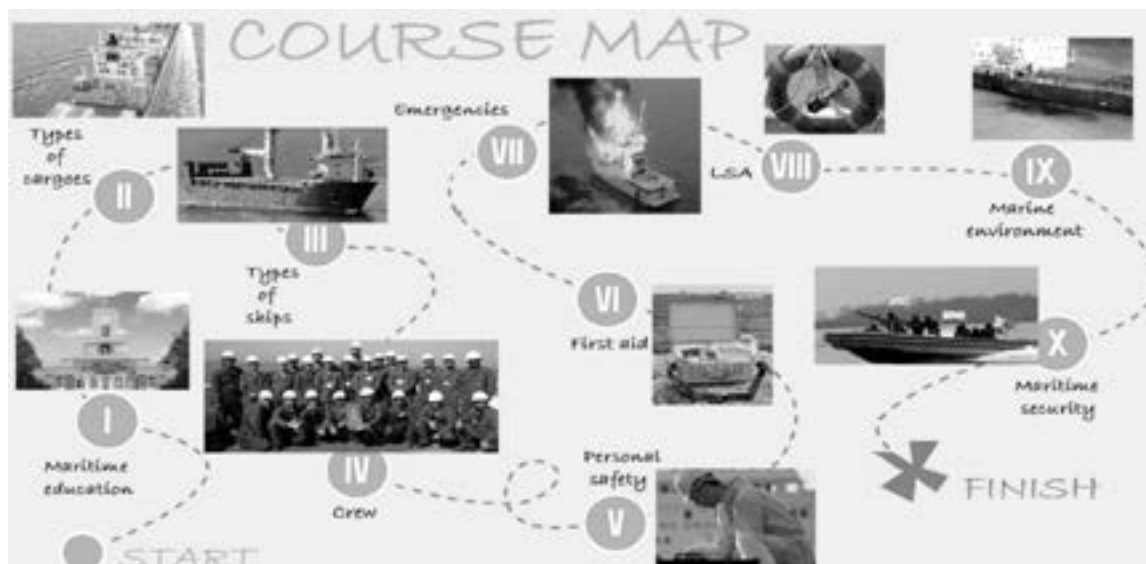


Figure 2. Gamification course map

One of the gamification elements is badge (Figure 2). They provide a tangible and visual representation of accomplishments. Badges also act as a form of recognition for users who have completed tasks, achieved specific goals, or demonstrated mastery in a particular area.

Badges can be used to track and showcase a user's progress. As users earn different badges, they can visually see their advancement, providing

a sense of accomplishment and encouraging further participation.

Another gamification element is points or marks. Every activity has assessment. It can be manual (by teacher) or automatic (by system). points or marks are used to quantify and represent a user's or student's achievements, progress, or performance. Both points and marks serve as measurable indicators and can play a role in motivating and assessing individuals.

Points can be reflected in leaderboards or gradebook. They are used to quantify and represent a user's or student's achievements, progress, or performance.

Both points and marks serve as measurable indicators and can play a role in motivating and assessing individuals.






	Second Engineer	You've got an epaulettes of Second Engineer!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activity has to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Quiz - Stop and check"
	Motorman	Congratulations! You've got a promotion! Now you're Motorman!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activity has to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning: This activity is no longer available.
	Fourth Engineer	You've got a promotion! Now you're Fourth Engineer!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activity has to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning: This activity is no longer available.
	First aider	You made good presentation on "First aid kit" topic!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activity has to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning: This activity is no longer available.
	Chief Engineer	You've got an epaulettes of Chief Engineer!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following activity has to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Quiz - Stop and Check"

Figure 3. Badges` titles and their descriptions

However, it is important to recognize that effective implementation of educational technology requires careful planning and consideration of student needs. Teachers play a critical role in guiding students, selecting appropriate resources, and integrating them into their teaching practice. Benchmarking aims to provide comprehensive information and understanding of how educational technology can improve English language learning.

Blended learning combines online and face-to-face learning, providing flexibility and accessibility for students. Benchmarking allows institutions to compare their approaches to blended learning with those of leading institutions. Benchmarking helps institutions ensure that their blended learning programs meet international standards, such as the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) in the maritime industry, and ensure that students acquire the necessary competencies, whether through online modules, face-to-face learning or a combination of both. Educational institutions can compare different blended learning models, such as flipped classrooms, hybrid courses or fully online modules, to determine which approach best meets the needs of their students while adhering to international standards.

The use of authentic videos in teaching can greatly enhance students' listening and speaking skills. This method not only improves technical vocabulary but also increases students' motivation and interest in learning.

Flipped classrooms are designed to increase student engagement by shifting passive learning activities (like lectures) outside the classroom and using class time for active, problem-solving tasks,

group discussions, case studies, or hands-on projects—against those of other institutions that have reported significant improvements in student performance and engagement. This comparison allows them to refine their approach, ensuring that their flipped classrooms are truly student-centered and effective.

Feedback also indicated that students learning English at a lower level would initially need a beginner level, but should improve their level from module to module, as Maritime English learning currently only consists of intermediate and advanced levels. Students can pass the easiest level of tasks at first, but later, they must pass the tests at a sufficient level. Educational technology refers to the integration of digital tools and resources into teaching and learning processes. In the context of learning Maritime English, these technologies play a crucial role in improving language skills and understanding of terminology related to the maritime industry. Here are some aspects to consider:

1. **Interactive learning:** Online simulations (e.g. OCEAN Learning Platform), virtual reality or augmented reality (e.g. OMS-VR) can help provide an immersive experience, allowing students to practice their English language skills in a marine environment. This promotes a deeper understanding and mastery of marine terminology and provides practical application and the ability to communicate more confidently.

2. **Access to authentic resources:** e-books, research articles and industry websites enrich students' knowledge and language skills. Such resources allow students to stay abreast of the latest developments and increase their professional competence. By reading articles in authentic resources, students

immerse themselves in a professional environment, discuss, develop critical and creative thinking, and express their assessment of the situation that occurred in class.

3. **Personalized learning:** Adaptive learning platforms such as MOODLE assess students' language abilities and offer tailored content and exercises according to their specific needs. This parameter helps improve learning outcomes and optimize the effectiveness of the learning process.

4. **Collaborative Learning:** Technology facilitates collaboration among students, allowing them to collaborate on projects, share ideas, and practice communication skills in marine technical English.

Online collaboration tools, discussion forums, and video conferencing platforms allow students to collaborate across the globe (Naicker et al 2021; Sherman et al, 2020).

5. **Benchmarking:** Benchmarking can be used to compare performance and effectiveness. Online quizzes, interactive exercises and simulations can be used to assess students' language knowledge and understanding. In addition, digital tools allow for instant feedback, allowing students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers, analysing the results, develop a plan, which topic or grammar material needs to be repeated, which exercises to use.

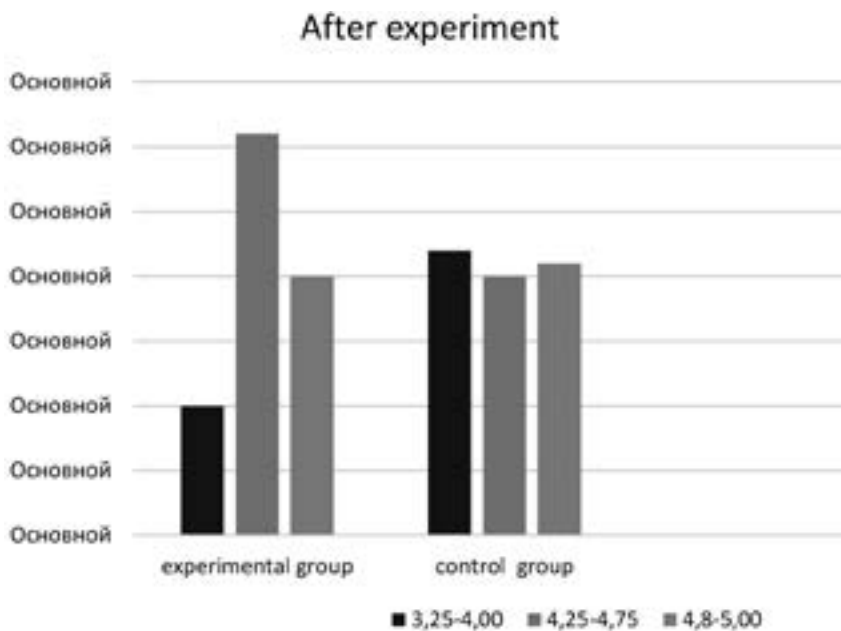


Figure 4. Testing after experiment

In the first group, 31 students have grades of 4.25–4.75, 20 students have grades of 4.8–5.00, and 10 students have grades of 3.25–4.00. In the second group, 20 students have grades of 4.25–4.75, 21 students have grades of 4.8–5.00, and 22 students have grades of 3.25–4.00.

According to the results of the second test, the experimental group shows a significant improvement in knowledge compared to the initial indicators. At the same time, no significant changes were found in the control group. This testifies to the effectiveness of the applied interactive teaching methods and various educational materials from other institutes for blended learning and the flipped classroom method.

As to the benchmarking approach in maritime English education, there are several advantages to using educational technology, it is important to ensure that technology is used effectively and integrated into the curriculum with clear learning objectives.

It is worth noting that benchmarking is an ongoing process, as technologies are rapidly developing.

Regular evaluations and updates are needed to ensure that benchmarking results remain relevant and applicable to the ever-changing landscape of maritime English education.

Benchmarking in the modern educational environment is an innovative way of developing an educational institution that strives to work efficiently and quickly adapt to changes. And the combination of benchmarking and educational technology while learning Maritime English allows teachers to assess the impact of technology and improve student outcomes.

Conclusions

In exploring the effectiveness of the benchmarking approach combined with educational technologies in Maritime English education, the results indicate that benchmarking is a powerful tool for identifying and implementing best practices. This approach has led to significant improvements in students' knowledge, surpassing their initial performance levels. By adopting interactive learning methods and integrating educational materials from other

institutions, particularly within blended learning environments and the flipped classroom model, the study demonstrates that these strategies are highly effective.

The success of these educational approaches highlights their potential to revolutionize the learning experience in Maritime English education. Benchmarking allows educators to continuously refine and adapt their teaching methodologies by comparing them against established best practices, ensuring that students receive the most up-to-date and effective instruction. Moreover, the integration of educational technologies facilitates a more engaging and interactive learning environment, which is crucial for developing the language and technical skills necessary in the maritime industry.

Ultimately, the findings support the broader adoption of benchmarking and innovative educational strategies within Maritime English education. By doing so, institutions can better prepare future maritime professionals to meet the challenges of the global maritime industry, ensuring they possess the necessary communication skills and technical knowledge to operate effectively in a highly demanding field.

The current state of the educational environment of Ukraine necessitates the formation of a theoretical and practical basis for the effective development of the marketing potential of higher education with the help of benchmarking. At the same time, there is a problem of lack of experience in the effective and balanced development of the marketing potential of higher education in order to implement the tasks and obtain competitive advantages in the international market of educational services in the future. The above conditions of the use of new tools for the higher education system, namely benchmarking, with the aim of determining the directions of development and obtaining ready-made practices for the implementation of positive experience of the functioning of leading higher educational institutions of Ukraine and the world. In our opinion, benchmarking aims to provide comprehensive information and understanding of how educational technology can improve English language learning. The prospects of further research can be seen in the use of benchmarking approach while Collaborative Online International Learning, namely Maritime English online courses on LMS MOODLE.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX from LMS MOODLE

MOODLE Appendix 1

Name	Badge status	Criteria	Recipients	Actions
The best dialogue	Available (criteria locked)	Awarded by: Teacher (Teacher)	0	👁️ ⚙️ 🗑️ 📄
The best essay	Available	Awarded by: Teacher (Teacher)	0	👁️ ⚙️ 🗑️ 📄
The best project	Available (criteria locked)	Awarded by: Teacher (Teacher)	0	👁️ ⚙️ 🗑️ 📄
The best wallpaper	Available	Awarded by: Teacher (Teacher)	0	👁️ ⚙️ 🗑️ 📄
Winner of the game!	Available	Awarded by: Teacher (Teacher)	0	👁️ ⚙️ 🗑️ 📄

MOODLE Appendix 2

Last name / First name / Middle name	Institution	home task: part 1	home task: part 2
АС СКРИЦЬКИЙ Антон Сергійович	ХДМА	5.00	5.00
БГ ГОГА Богдан Геннадійович	ХДМА	-	-
БС САВИЦЬКИЙ Богдан Олександрович	ХДМА	5.00	-
ГУЗЕНКО Владислав Олександрович	ХДМА	5.00	5.00

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ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ БЕНЧМАРКІНГОВОГО ПІДХОДУ З ОСВІТНІМИ ТЕХНОЛОГІЯМИ У ВИВЧЕННІ МОРСЬКОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

У статті описано застосування бенчмаркінгового підходу як ефективного засобу оцінювання та порівняння конкурентоспроможності й удосконалення діяльності організації. В епоху інформаційного суспільства знання швидко змінюються і поширюються, що унеможливує успіх навчальних закладів, які не володіють реальними конкурентними перевагами. Застосування освітніх технологій у галузі морської освіти та підготовки покращує результати навчання студентів, у тому числі їхні оцінки й результати тестів. Описано використання освітніх технологій у різних формах, серед яких змішане навчання, «перевернуті класи» та персоналізоване навчання як навчальне середовище з більшим залученням учасників освітнього процесу й ефективністю. Бенчмаркінг і освітні технології — два взаємопов'язані поняття, які відіграють вирішальну роль у підвищенні якості морської освіти. Дослідження свідчить про те, що освітні технології можуть позитивно впливати на вивчення морської англійської мови майбутніми судновими механіками. Інструменти EdTech (освітніх технологій) можуть застосовуватися для моделювання різних освітніх сценаріїв і прогнозування потенційних результатів. Це може допомогти викладачам порівняти власні актуальні практики з альтернативними підходами й ухвалювати обґрунтовані рішення. Такі технології надають студентам доступ до неадаптованих матеріалів, реальних сценаріїв і швидкого зворотного зв'язку, що дає їм змогу розвивати свої навички говоріння, аудіювання, читання та письма. Бенчмаркінг може сприяти формуванню культури безперервного вдосконалення та заохочувати до співпраці між викладачами для обміну найкращими практиками й розробки інноваційних рішень. У статті доведено позитивний вплив застосування бенчмаркінгового підходу з освітніми технологіями на вивчення морської англійської мови майбутніми морськими фахівцями. Перспективи подальших досліджень вбачаємо у використанні бенчмаркінгового підходу під час міжнародної співпраці у формі онлайн-навчання (COIL), а саме онлайн-курсів з морської англійської мови на LMS MOODLE.

Ключові слова: бенчмаркінг, освітні технології, морська англійська мова, вища освіта, змішане навчання, електронне навчання.

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