FINDING THE PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN ONLINE AND IN-PERSON EDUCATION

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The article discusses the challenges and considerations involved in achieving a balanced approach to education that integrates both online and in-person teaching, as well as it provides a comprehensive overview of the original aspects of the issue. It highlights the transformative role of technology in education and the need to effectively integrate online learning platforms and digital resources into traditional in-person educational settings. The importance of adapting teaching methods to suit the unique characteristics of online and in-person instruction is also discussed. Moreover, the need for ongoing professional development opportunities to support educators in integrating online components into their teaching practice effectively is highlighted and key considerations and challenges while emphasizing the importance of collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement in addressing these aspects are synthesized. The article is valuable for educators seeking to navigate the complexities of integrating online and in-person modalities in education.

Key words: blended learning; online and traditional teaching; balance; technological advancement; multifaceted approach; ongoing process.

Introduction. In this digital age, bridging the gap between digital learning and traditional methods has become a talking point for teachers and educators. Due to recent technological developments, learning resources seem to be available pretty much everywhere. Mobile devices and the Internet make training opportunities more accessible than ever, from learning how to make cheese, to Business Management through a couple of Youtube videos. Overall we often ask ourselves which is the right combination of traditional and virtual training our students need to succeed. Without a doubt, technology plays an important role in enhancing virtual learning effectiveness, with methods like machine learning and chatbots, users can find content in real time and get it tailored results based on their interests and academic inclinations. Since the emergence of online learning, there has been a discussion on whether online classes are better than traditional classes (Биков, Гриценчук & Жук, 2015). At the moment many competing schools of thought are coming up with valid arguments for and against both. In this article, you will learn some tips and strategies to balance online and traditional teaching in your classroom.

Analysis of the recent research and publications. Blended learning is a mixture of eLearning as well as traditional learning. In blended learning, students are expected to join classes as much as they are expected to be online for education. The history of research on the balance of online and traditional teaching reflects the evolution of educational technology and changing attitudes toward the integration of digital tools into traditional classroom settings. It also reflects a dynamic and evolving field, influenced by technological advancements, educational trends, and the changing needs of students and educators. The blended learning model isn't exactly new, as it was first introduced during the mid-1970s in the United States. In the 1990s, educators began experimenting with incorporating online elements into traditional classrooms. Initial research focused on the feasibility and effectiveness of using technology to supplement face-to-face instruction. As internet access became more widespread, the 2000s saw a surge in the development of online learning platforms and resources. Researchers explored the effectiveness of fully online courses and began to investigate ways to integrate these technologies with traditional teaching methods (Simonson & Zvacek, 2019). The term "blended learning" gained popularity in the early 2000s as a way to describe the intentional combination of face-to-face and online instructional methods. Research during this period focused on defining blended learning models and understanding their potential

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benefits. The 2010s witnessed rapid advancements in technology, interactive tools, and multimedia resources. Research explored how these technologies could be integrated into traditional classrooms to create a more balanced and engaging learning environment. With the growing body of research supporting the effectiveness of blended learning, educational institutions began to adopt and implement blended learning models on a larger scale. Research shifted toward understanding the factors that facilitate or hinder successful implementation at the institutional level. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2019, forced an unprecedented shift to remote and online learning (Кухаренко, 2020). This accelerated the adoption of blended learning models and prompted educators and researchers to explore effective strategies for balancing online and traditional teaching in emergency remote and hybrid environments. The challenges associated with the rapid transition to online and blended learning during the pandemic became a focal point of research. Issues of equity, access to technology, and the digital divide were examined, emphasizing the need for inclusive approaches to blended teaching.

The research on the balance of online and traditional teaching involves contributions from a diverse group of educators, scholars, and researchers. Numerous researchers have contributed to the study of blended teaching and learning. The field is interdisciplinary, encompassing education, instructional design, technology, and related areas. According to Professor Charles Graham at Brigham Young University, who conducted extensive research on the balance of online and traditional teaching methods, "blended learning can offer a dynamic and flexible approach to education, allowing for a seamless integration of technology with traditional teaching methods" (Garrison & Vaughan, 2012). Known for their work on blended learning and online education, Norman Vaughan and Anthony Picciano have researched effective strategies for combining face-to-face and online elements to enhance teaching and learning. Researching the impact of online and blended learning on student engagement and success, Karen Swan, Professor of educational leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield, wrote that "balancing online and face-to-face teaching requires careful consideration of pedagogical principles, ensuring that technology complements traditional instruction to create a cohesive and effective learning experience." Dr. Jill Biden, the current First Lady of the United States, has a background in education and has been an advocate for community colleges and the integration of technology in education, including blended learning. It's important to note that research in this field often involves interdisciplinary collaboration, and many educators and scholars contribute to the understanding of how to balance online and traditional teaching methods effectively. Additionally, research on this topic is ongoing, and new voices continue to emerge in the exploration of best practices and strategies for achieving a meaningful and effective balance in educational settings.

Purpose. The main purpose of the paper is to explore, analyze, and provide insights into the integration of online and face-to-face instructional methods in educational settings. The tasks are as follows: 1) explore and highlight best practices for achieving a balanced and effective integration of online and traditional teaching methods; 2) acknowledge and address challenges associated with the integration of online and traditional teaching; 3) provide practical insights and recommendations for educators interested in implementing or improving blended learning initiatives; 5) explore emerging trends, technologies, and potential future developments in the field of blended learning.

Methods of the research. In the quest to achieve balance between online and in-person education, rigorous research is indispensable. Grounding our understanding in empirical evidence is essential. Utilizing research studies and data analytics can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of both online and in-person learning modalities. By employing a variety of research methods, ranging from quantitative analysis to qualitative inquiry, and embracing a mixed-methods approach, we can gain a multifaceted understanding of the complexities of this issue (Ko & Rossen, 2017). Comparative analysis, and action research further enrich our understanding and inform evidence-based strategies for navigating the evolving landscape of education. Through collaborative research efforts, we can chart a course toward a more harmonious integration of

online and in-person learning, ensuring that all learners have access to high-quality educational experiences that meet their diverse needs and aspirations.

Originality/Discussion. The quest for the perfect balance between online and in-person education is a multifaceted issue with several original aspects. The rapid advancement of technology has transformed education, leading to the emergence of online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and digital resources (Horn & Staker, 2017). The challenge lies in integrating these technological innovations effectively into traditional in-person educational settings while maintaining the integrity of the learning experience.

The introduction of online learning has changed the way that people think of education and success. Now, rather than the two functioning as stepping stone sin alignment to one another, they are often overlapping, creating effective and thrilling pathways to success even as they continue to study. Thanks to the introduction of online innovations and movements, the modern student really can have it all. While traditional education is not likely to tap out any time soon, it is undeniable that modern learning approaches and methods are finding their footing more and more comfortably in recent years – and especially in the last few months. There are key differences between the two, and it takes careful attention to detail to notice the differences and to effectively bridge the gaps between the two sides of the same coin (Snart & Caudill, 2010). Education and success can coexist quite harmoniously in either approach, but it is online learning that is gaining the most positive response.

Traditional education functions and thrives on structure, with a set syllabus that every student must adhere to and a foundation that demands students are on campus, at a specific time, and able to either pay for their classes up front or in eventual installments. Online education, on the other hand, is the very opposite. The flexible nature of online learning means that students who opt to learn via online education can work in their study schedules around the rest of their lives, and not the other way around. Additionally, online education is generally less expensive and does not require students to be on campus at set times – because there is no campus. Online education is the epitome of convenience and efficiency meeting flexibility, and it has continued to gain more and more traction in recent months because of that truth. The only difference that matters between the two approaches to academics, is that traditional education is more for students who thrive under strict structure, while online education is more suitable for students who like to be in control of their own journey.

It becomes more and more obvious all the time that online education is only going to continue to become more and more popular. Modern students love the idea of an academic experience that gives them everything that a traditional education experience does, without the hassles and enforced structure that traditional learning imposes. There will always be a place for both ideals in the worldwide education industry. The intent of online education has never been, and will never be, to overshadow traditional education. Instead, the ultimate goal is for online learning and traditional learning ideals to exist collaboratively, allowing for a more wholesome international education industry. There is nowhere to go but everywhere, and online education has taken the front seat – right next to traditional education. As for which counterpart will be in the driver's seat in the coming years…only time will tell.

We live in a world where digitalization and technological advancement is practically constantly innovating and moving around, always elevating to new heights. For the education industry, education and success now go hand in hand more perfectly than ever, and that fact is largely thanks to the introduction and ongoing advancements of online education. While traditional education will likely always have its place at the table in this core industry, it is fundamentally important to recognise that online education is the new framework for modern education standards in just about every way that matters. The mainstream introduction of online learning on a global scale has well and truly bridged and filled the gaps that have long plagued traditional education. The result of all this innovation and movement is that modern education is far more inclusive and overall wholesome than it has ever been, and that is thanks largely to online education.

Blending technology and traditional teaching can be a challenge, but also an opportunity to enhance your students' learning

experience (Moore, 2018). Technology can offer new ways to engage, communicate, and assess your students, while traditional teaching can provide the foundation, guidance, and support they need.

Finding the perfect balance between online and in-person teaching/learning involves a multifaceted approach that considers various factors. Step-by-step guide is suggested below.

a) Needs and preferences assessment: conduct surveys or interviews with students, educators to understand their preferences, learning styles, and technological capabilities. This will provide insights into the optimal balance for different individuals and groups.

b) Flexibility in instruction: offer flexibility in instructional delivery methods, allowing students to choose between online and in-person classes based on their preferences, learning needs, and circumstances.

c) Hybrid learning models: implement hybrid learning models that combine online and in-person instruction. Design courses that integrate the strengths of both modalities, such as asynchronous online lectures supplemented with interactive in-person discussions or labs.

d) Subject relevance: consider the nature of the subject matter being taught. Some topics may lend themselves well to online instruction, while others may require hands-on experiences that are best delivered in-person. Tailor the balance between online and in-person teaching based on subject-specific needs.

e) Technology integration: utilize technology effectively to enhance both online and in-person instruction. Provide training and support for educators to leverage digital tools, interactive platforms, and multimedia resources to engage students in both modalities.

f) Equity and access: ensure equitable access to both online and in-person learning opportunities for all students. Address disparities in technology access, internet connectivity, and learning resources to ensure that every student can participate fully regardless of their background or circumstances.

g) Individualized learning: provide personalized learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of students. Offer opportunities for students to receive individualized support and feedback, whether through online discussions, in-person office hours, or personalized learning plans.

h) Assessment and feedback: develop assessments and feedback mechanisms that align with the chosen balance between online and in-person instruction. Incorporate both formative and summative assessments to gauge student learning and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

i) Professional development: invest in ongoing professional development for educators to enhance their skills in both online and in-person instruction. Offer training on effective teaching strategies, technology integration, and classroom management techniques to support educators in delivering high-quality instruction in both modalities.

j) Continuous evaluation and improvement: regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen balance between online and in-person teaching/learning. Collect feedback from students, educators and use this feedback to make informed adjustments and improvements over time.

By following these steps and considering the needs and preferences of students, educators, and other educational institutions can strive to find the perfect balance between online and in-person teaching/learning, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for all.

To ensure the success of a blended learning environment, we must build the capacity of our educators by equipping them with the resources and professional learning that will enhance their instruction to advance student achievement (Концепція розвитку дистанційної освіти в Україні, 2000). Our new era of hybrid teaching has brought about a pool of resources and tools to support a diversity of learning styles. However, educators must receive ongoing support and training on implementing technology in their classrooms. A practical way to enhance capacity is to identify educators with successful blended learning classrooms to provide onsite, best-practices training to their colleagues. Consequently, this approach builds staff capacity on multiple fronts (i.e., teacher leaders and pedagogical growth).

Conclusion. Achieving the perfect balance between online and in-person education is an ongoing process that requires continuous evaluation and improvement. "Effective blended learning involves a thoughtful combination of face-to-face interactions and online elements, encouraging a shift toward

more student-centered and interactive learning experiences." When it comes to integrating both learning formats, balance is key. While several advantages may be found in virtual learning (individual, voluntary, self-guided, economical), it can be complementary and compatible with the standard class-room education format. As traditional training formats often only cover more general aspects of a topic, web-based training can offer a tailored solution for users' needs, since quality and availability of learning content seems to be less of an issue, with various collaborative learning platforms providing the most accurate content to complement or hone an existing skill, or simply satisfy someone's curiosity.

The field of blended teaching and learning is dynamic, and new researchers are continually contributing to the body of knowledge. Additionally, many collaborative efforts involve teams of researchers with expertise in various aspects of education and technology. We should keep an eye on academic journals, conferences, and educational research institutions for the latest developments in this field. Ongoing research continues to explore best practices for balancing online and traditional teaching. This includes investigations into effective instructional design, student engagement strategies, and the impact of emerging technologies on the balance between online and face-to-face instruction. Researchers are likely to continue examining how pedagogical approaches evolve as technology advances. The integration of artificial intelligence, adaptive learning technologies, and immersive experiences may shape the future landscape of balanced teaching methods.

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Анотація
ПОШУК ІДЕАЛЬНОГО БАЛАНСУ МІЖ ОНЛАЙН ТА ТРАДІЦІЙНИМ НАВЧАННЯМ

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Вступ. У цю цифрову епоху подолання розриву між цифровим навчанням і традиційними методами стало предметом розмов для вчителів і освітян. Завдяки останнім технологічним розробкам, здається, що навчальні ресурси доступні практично всюди. Мобільні пристрої та Інтернет роблять можливості для навчання доступнішими, ніж будь-коли. Загалом ми часто запитуємо себе, яке правильне поєднання традиційного та онлайн-навчання потрібне нашим студентам для досягнення успіху. Без сумніву, технологія відіграє важливу роль у підвищенні ефективності онлайн-навчання, користувачі можуть знаходити вміст у режимі реального часу та отримувати результати, адаптовані відповідно до їхніх інтересів і академічних нахилів. З моменту появи онлайн-навчання точилася дискусія про те, чи онлайн-

класи кращі за традиційні (Биков, Гриценчук & Жук, 2015). У цій статті ви дізнаєтесь кілька порад і стратегій, як збалансувати онлайн і традиційне навчання у вашому класі.

Теоретичне підґрунтя. Численні дослідники зробили внесок у вивчення змішаного викладання та навчання та дослідження балансу між онлайн і традиційним викладанням. За словами професора Чарльза Грема з Університету Брігама Янга, який провів масштабне дослідження балансу між онлайн і традиційними методами навчання, «змішане навчання може запропонувати динамічний і гнучкий підхід до освіти, дозволяючи бездоганно інтегрувати технології з традиційними методами навчання» (Garrison & Vaughan, 2012). Норман Воган та Ентоні Піччіано, відомі своєю роботою над змішаним навчанням та онлайн-освітою, дослідили ефективні стратегії поєднання очних та онлайн-елементів для покращення викладання та навчання. Досліджуючи вплив онлайн-навчання та змішаного навчання на успіх студентів, професор Карен Свон вважає, що збалансування онлайн-навчання та очного навчання вимагає ретельного розгляду педагогічних принципів, гарантуючи, що технології доповнюють традиційне навчання, щоб створити цілісне та ефективне навчання. Доктор Джилл Байден, нинішня перша леді Сполучених Штатів, має освітній досвід і була прихильником громадських коледжів та інтеграції технологій в освіту, включаючи змішане навчання. Важливо відзначити, що дослідження в цій галузі часто передбачають міждисциплінарну співпрацю, і багато викладачів і вчених роблять внесок у розуміння того, як ефективно збалансувати онлайн і традиційні методи навчання.

Методи дослідження. У прагненні досягти балансу між он-лайн та традиційною освітою необхідне ретельне дослідження. Використання дослідницьких досліджень і аналізу даних може дати цінну інформацію про ефективність обох видів навчання. Застосовуючи різні методи дослідження, починаючи від кількісного аналізу до якісного дослідження, і застосовуючи підхід змішаних методів, ми можемо отримати багатогранне розуміння складності цього питання. Завдяки спільним дослідницьким зусиллям ми можемо намітити курс на більш гармонійну інтеграцію онлайн та традиційного навчання, гарантуючи, що всі слухачі матимуть доступ до високоякісного освітнього досвіду, який відповідає їхнім різноманітним потребам і прагненням.

Результати і обговорення. У статті обговорюються проблеми та міркування, пов'язані з досягненням збалансованого підходу до освіти, який поєднує як он-лайн, так і традиційне навчання, а також надається комплексний огляд оригінальних аспектів проблеми. Підкреслюється трансформаційна роль технологій в освіті та необхідність ефективної інтеграції платформ онлайн-навчання та цифрових ресурсів у традиційні особисті освітні умови. Також обговорюється важливість адаптації методів навчання відповідно до унікальних характеристик он-лайн та традиційного навчання. Крім того, підкреслюється потреба в постійних можливостях професійного розвитку для підтримки педагогів в ефективній інтеграції онлайн-компонентів у їхню педагогічну практику, а також узагальнено ключові міркування та виклики, підкреслюючи важливість співпраці, інновацій та постійного вдосконалення у вирішенні цих аспектів.

Висновки. Досягнення ідеального балансу між онлайн-навчанням і очним навчанням – це постійний процес, який вимагає постійного оцінювання та вдосконалення. Ефективне змішане навчання передбачає продумане поєднання особистої взаємодії та онлайн-елементів, заохочуючи перехід до більш орієнтованого на студента та інтерактивного навчання. Коли справа доходить до інтеграції обох форматів навчання, баланс є ключовим. Сфера змішаного викладання та навчання є динамічною, і нові дослідники постійно вносять свій внесок у сукупність знань. Дослідження, що тривають, продовжують вивчати найкращі практики для збалансування он-лайн та традиційного навчання.

Ключові слова: змішане навчання; онлайн і традиційне навчання; баланс; технологічний прогрес; багатогранний підхід; постійний процес.

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