Social Sciences: Theory and Practice

Bridging the Digital and Traditional: Redefining Teacher Competencies for Hybrid Education

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Abstract: The rapid evolution of educational environments, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has underscored the urgent need for a redefinition of teacher competencies that effectively bridge online and offline teaching. This study explores the theoretical and empirical dimensions of modern teacher qualifications, focusing on the digital skills, pedagogical adaptability, and professional development required to navigate hybrid educational contexts. Drawing upon contemporary literature and comparative analysis, the research examines how teachers can balance face-to-face and virtual instruction while maintaining educational quality and student engagement. The findings highlight that beyond technical proficiency, effective teaching in both modes demands critical soft skills such as communication, flexibility, and emotional intelligence. The study also emphasizes the role of institutional support and continuous training in fostering teacher readiness. Ultimately, this research advocates for a competency-based framework that empowers educators to thrive in dynamic, blended learning ecosystems, ensuring resilience and relevance in a post-pandemic educational landscape. The study explores the redefinition of teacher competencies in hybrid educational contexts, emphasizing the need for a balance between digital skills, pedagogical adaptability, and professional development to effectively bridge online and offline teaching. The study aims to explore the theoretical and empirical dimensions of modern teacher qualifications, focusing on the digital skills, pedagogical adaptability, and professional development required to navigate hybrid educational contexts.

Keywords: Online and offline teaching, teacher competencies, digital pedagogy, hybrid education, 21st-century skills, professional development, blended learning, COVID-19 and education, educational technology, teacher adaptability.

Introduction

The first concept of distance learning was implemented in the mid-19th century with the establishment of the United States Postal Service and the intention of developing and implementing commercial correspondence colleges in which tasks and instructions were sent via postal service between teachers and learners. For now, online education is more accessible due to digital technology and even prestigious institutions offer synchronous and asynchronous classes. However, not all learners or educators agree that online education can be supportive as well as offline education for the reason that it should be researched broadly. Historical chronicles confirm that teacher competency has not been discovered at all because all attention has been paid how to improve digital technologies rather than teacher qualification. Numerous studies have shown that teacher competency affects not only learner engagement but also learner achievement, so teachers should always develop their competence and develop permanent habits that keep them up to date with new developments, whether in the educational sphere or in globalization. The COVID-19 pandemic is the main cause for enhancing online classes. During lockdown, all of Earth's population participated in classes using the internet, and it should be mentioned that web companies such as Google,Apple and others created apps that made online classes highly available.

Methods and materials

The problem online and offline teaching cannot be discussed on the way of technical devices but also simultaneously teachers' competencies should be mentioned. According to some cases,

education needs to be innovated even in 21-century, and here certainly international peer programs also are a good support for this process. Online or even offline classes` experiences are to be shared among institutions, stuffs, and as well as, guest researchers in order to have possible solutions for specific problems which could level up the sphere.

The following article researches for modern teaching competencies and their classifications, how online-offline teaching can be equalized using them and what teaching requirements should be adopted.

Modern competencies for balancing the effectiveness of online and offline teaching

Modern teaching competencies and its classifications

The inherent figures in education are teachers, who are responsible for classes and the knowledge backgrounds of their students. Moreover, teachers need to be aware of professional requirements, which are usually called "competencies". According to Houstan (1987), one of the most important requirements for teachers is competency, which includes knowledge, skills, and values. In turn, these competencies are classified according to the following key features:

- A competency is a set of one or more skills that the owner should be proficient in.
- Three main requirements should be connected completely. These are knowledge, skills and attitude.
- Competency is to be observable and demonstrable because of its performance dimension.
- As it is said that it is observable, it can be assessed and measured. Teaching competency should use all three features in some cases, but only one or two features may be required in others, for instance.

Logically, all features lead teachers to be motivated and focused on their purposes, which assist them in achieving complete proficiency. According to Shmelev (2002), teaching skills and long-life learning competencies ought to include the following characters: a good narrator, a mentally and physically healthy person, a conscientious team member, balanced and tolerant, an individual with soft skills, and certainly a leader.

Using 21st-century innovations, allow teachers to discover innovative ways of teaching that will play a significant role in their career development. As a result, it should be reckoned that teachers are more motivated, they are good at time management as well as using technologies, and of course, they are full of ideas for educational activities. The only reasonable explanation for teaching upgrades is information technology development,which is the result of theoretical approaches and empirical methods of teaching. Good examples for this are online and offline classes, transformative classes instead of traditional ones, and educational sites like Kahoot.com, which allow teachers a great opportunity to have multiple classes. Learners can even replay their lessons again and again in case they are recorded.

Results and their discussion

Automatically the following process caused to renovate teacher competencies in order to have advanced approaches for obtaining unfamiliar skills and attitudes certainly. Simply put, teachers should be worthy of using technology to support students' learning processes.

Olga Nessipbayeva in her article “THE COMPETENCIES OF THE MODERN TEACHER” classifies the 21st century competencies by dividing them into five segments. The first one states that teachers are leaders who possess their class rules, lead learners through their subject map, and assess learners` results according to their own requirements. The second segment emphasizes psychologically that teachers are balanced and tolerant, who are responsible for keeping respectfulness with learners, provide them with necessities (only for teaching purposes), and collaborate with students' families. The next one mentions that educators must be superb at their teaching sphere, which assists them to capture learners` attention at a glance and have their trust

entirely, which exactly lets them get good results. Being good facilitators, educators can help learners overcome difficulties in the learning process and even create some new, demanded skills (segment number four). For example, classes should be eased by using recently innovated methods, or classes ought to be systemized to upgrade learners` critical and creative thinking. The final one ensures that teachers are reflectors who can easily define learners' talents, knowledge levels, and future goals, allowing them to succeed in a specific domain.

Azar (2010) emphasizes that teacher training programs ought to contain practices strengthening teachers` self-efficacy beliefs, which must be a great instrument for having unique competency. Most teaching training programs aim to find out one of the most important competencies however, it could not be ticked or even discussed individually, because every competency has a special respond to a specific complex situation which easily and

completely point at the answer. For example,

- when setting objectives, teachers should be aware of what they really want to attain and how they can achieve it;
- educators strive to maintain constant contact with their students in order to foster interpersonal relationships;
- they must be informed about newly invented technologies and teaching resources in order to support learners in their studying process, so it is really important to share knowledge and experience with not only colleagues but also outside of teaching institutions;
- to be adept at time management, which can aid learners in staying focused on lessons;
- contextualizing the learning process from globalizing approaches to what eslbrain.com can serve as an example;
- designing a suitable environment for learners that helps them warm up or engage in other related activities.
- being a leader in classroom, teachers imply learners future plans so it means all activities should be made according to their interest spheres which indicates that if teachers have five classes with one theme they should prepare five other lesson plans with the same theme because of diverse outlook of classes;
- teachers are also designers of their lessons which means that every lesson should have coherent ending with aimed results or instead of sophisticated explanations, exercises, teachers should make it easy to understand.

Knowledge,skills and attitudes are components of well-functioning classes for learners, and as mentioned above, not all teachers can overcome teaching-related problems without awareness of competencies. Online teaching and learning are thought to be inferior to traditional methods, but digital competency is still in its infancy. The most important part here is that not only teachers but also employers of other professions face this problem. Teachers and students who are comfortable or advanced users of digital technologies can achieve excellent results from the educational process, which will be replete with positive feedback. Even offline classes inquire about digital competency because most classes are transformative ones, so it automatically means that teachers have to use technical equipment in their classes, such as TV sets, audio equipment, and laptops with internet connections.

Online teaching: theoretical and empirical methods

In the innovative educational sphere, teachers know that the only critical competence area is digital competence. Even the modern competencies mentioned above, are completely related to this one. Teachers had never imagined that they would need online teaching qualifications until the events of 2019. However, "digital competence" is currently upgrading all its features so that appropriate approaches and methods are being created.

Online teaching is conceptualizing from offline teaching according to the following

features:

- Long-distance communication between teachers and learners is conducted via online platform.
- Technology is used to gain access to relevant learning materials.
- Teachers and learners communicate using technology.
- Teachers support students' learning by using digital communication channels.

It can be hard to overcome problems while teaching online if teachers have neither knowledge-based competence nor digital competence. It is easier to look through these competencies breaking into two aspects: the cognitive aspect and the motivational aspect.

A cognitive aspect is responsible for teachers` professional knowledge development and as well as learners` outcomes depend on it completely. According to Huma et al., instructors' subject-matter expertise aids in learners' comprehension of pertinent ideas encountered during the learning process, and teachers' focus on and preparation for subject-matter expertise maintains academic accomplishment. Because of COVID-2019 pandemic, teachers and learners met some problems like a lack of digital competence. As a result of some inquires it should be said that if teachers are good at using digital technologies so learners also can be easily interacted in online classes.

Teachers' self-efficacy and enthusiasm dimensions are evaluated using motivational aspects, which show completed successful projects or tasks that motivate them to achieve the next level of success in their careers. Psychologically, it`s proven that confidence leads individuals' impossibility into the possibility, so the following aspect is a great instrument for educators to adapt to online teaching. Either self-efficacy or enthusiasm is one of the necessary factors that eliminates daily classroom challenges and simultaneously has an empirical influence on learners` outcomes.

During the COVID-2019 pandemic, the existing research results were not enough to realize the online teaching process perfectly; therefore, while teaching, teachers went through a certain amount of stress. Online teaching at that moment required teachers to be resilient to assist learners achieve learning outcomes, and automatically it was emphasized that highly resilient teachers must be capable of dealing with teaching emergencies. According to Li Zhao (2022) investigation, through teachers' resilience, online teaching challenges can be overcome or even have a one-of-a-kind solution; however, not all teachers may possess this competence, resulting in poor results. Moreover, it was determined that the only reason might be teachers` age because eventually their cognitive ability declines while their emotional intelligence keeps level.

While some researchers stressed that older teachers had less digital competence, other researchers underlined that there was no discernible age difference in teacher competence; Reed (2018), on the other hand, suggested that resilience increased with instructors' age. Scheibe et al. reported about the older university workers who displayed more resilience than younger workers in the COVID-2019 pandemic. According to Pallof and Pratt (2011), a master of online instruction must understand the modes of offline and online learning, as well as the differences between them, and be skilled at using methods in online class activities. Either online class teachers or offline class teachers should have values like being motivated, supportive, organized, respectful, active, open-minded, and honest.

Salmon (2003) classified online teaching competencies in five categories:

- Comprehending the online procedure
- Technical abilities
- Online communication abilities
- Content knowledge
- Personal characteristics

Technology facilitators can carry out their duties more easily thanks to the competencies outlined in the ISTE (2001) standards for technology facilitation. The following skill sets are included in these competency groups:

- digital operations and features;

- planning and designing educational activities and experiences;
- teaching, learning, and curriculum improvement;
- assessment and evaluation; productivity and professional practice;
- social, ethical, legal, and human issues;
- procedures, policies, planning, and budgeting for technology environments;
- leadership and vision.

Eight competency categories were found after Dubins and Graham (2009) examined 17 online learning programs. These competency categories included knowledge of the content management system (CMS), other technical skills, instructional design, social processes and presence, managing assessment, orienting students, institutional knowledge, and pedagogy and andragogy. Scientists are trying to create a unique framework that classifies and determines a cluster of competencies. For example, Abdous (2011) described a three-stage developed framework. The first stage is preparation one, before teaching practice instructor should prepare for classes, plan and design them. The next stage includes competencies for facilitating, interacting, providing and seeking feedback. And the last stage is the presentation mode where teachers should present the competencies of reflecting and have learned lessons. The next example also shows one of the successful frameworks, which are categorized in seven ways: active learning, leadership, active teaching, web technology, classrooms` design, digital competence, and policy enforcement (Redmond, 2012).

Tools and techniques for needs assessment analyses can be created based on these traits to establish professional development procedures and goals (Baran & Correia, 2014). As adult, self-regulated, and self-determined learners, these can also be used by online instructors to self-assess their abilities and then identify their own learning and training requirements. Lastly, competencies can be used as a protocol to ensure that educators are prepared to teach in online learning environments.

Online and offline teaching: Experiment

In order to have a balance between online and offline teaching, educators should always advance knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Usually, online classes consider untrustworthy and challenging, however, it can create a really flexible approach to learn. Strict discipline and multiple teaching skills help educators to balance both online and offline classes. Hung, Min-Ling (2010) stated that learner control as well as self-directed learning was noticed to be the most significant considerations favoring offline learning. They strongly advocate teacher orientation, displaying and demonstrating the use of online tools to learners, or reacting quickly to learner enquiries when it comes to learners who have significantly less learner control in order to maintain learners' motivation.

The learner's oral presentation skills were greatly enhanced through online education and purposeful practice, according to Heiman, Heather L., et al. (2012). In their article on the effectiveness of online versus offline learning, Singh, Shweta, David H. Rylander, and Tina C. Mims (2012) examined the efficacy of students who engaged in online studies and contrasted it to students who participated in offline studies. Unexpectedly, they made the argument that online learning was superior to offline learning. They found that the average for studying online was 78, while the average for studying offline was 70. They came to the conclusion that students preferred online courses to traditional ones. Only 38% of students in offline classrooms reported being satisfied with their form of instruction, compared to 56% of students in online classes. A total of 70 students were involved in this study, of whom 26 were enrolled in the offline system and 44 in the online system. Rachmah (2020), however, notes that some students prefer offline learning to online learning since they are more engaged in the classroom and so better understand the material. He emphasizes that offline courses also help pupils strengthen their communication abilities. Additionally, Rachmah (2020) and Wright (2017) both concur that most students felt more

motivated utilizing the offline approach than the online system. A total of 64.3% of students felt more motivated in offline classes, according to his data, while 57.1% of students felt more driven in online lectures. The study by Allen, M., Bourhis, J., Burrell, N., & Mabry, E. (2002), which states that because people have various preferences when choosing a learning technique, the substitution of offline learning will result in a minor decline in student satisfaction, shows the same outcome. However, they did claim that, generally speaking, students find offline learning just as gratifying as distant learning and that this does not result in any attitude changes. In order to have a clear understanding, the experiment below was specifically researched online and offline classes.

Procedure

Before the term began, the students selected one of two teaching methods—one offline and one online—from which they would be instructed. While students in the online format were trained via the Zoom application and IXL software, students in the offline format attended lessons as usual from the school and were taught in class by one of the instructors. In order to attain equivalent topic coverage, the instructors made an effort to guarantee that both groups went through the material at a similar rate and finished the identical assignments and tests. At the conclusion of the five-week session, the teachers and researchers created a final exam measuring the students' comprehension of the entire subject. The online group completed the test online, whereas the offline group completed it at school. Both groups answered the same amount of questions, which ensured uniformity in the data gathering. The 40-minute test was administered in the final week of the study during one of the math classes. The mean score for the offline group (83.10) is greater than that for the online group (80.43). This proves how effective in-person education is, although descriptive data can be deceptive. To find any statistically significant differences, we thus used inferential statistics (in this case, an independent t-test). Whether identical variances were assumed or not, the statistical analysis showed no significant difference between online and offline learning because $p=0.503$; $p>0.05$.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective teaching—regardless of being online, offline, or hybrid—depends largely on the teacher’s grit, commitment, and a well-rounded set of competencies, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Modern teaching competencies serve as a foundation for balancing both online and offline modalities, ensuring quality education in diverse contexts. The level of a teacher’s qualification should be assessed not merely by age or status, but by their experience, adaptability, and willingness to grow professionally. Ultimately, educators must embrace continuous self-development as an essential part of their role in an evolving educational landscape.

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