

IMPLEMENTATION OF BLENDED LEARNING IN ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL
PURPOSES AT UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES

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As the education landscape evolves, Ukrainian universities increasingly recognize the need for innovative teaching methods that align with global standards (Kalyniuk, 2024). One particular approach gaining traction is blended learning, which integrates traditional classroom experiences with online learning platforms. In the context of teaching English for medical purposes (EMP), this method not only enhances the language skills of medical students but also prepares them for the complexities of an ever-evolving healthcare environment.

Blended learning is grounded in several pedagogical theories, including constructivism, experiential learning, self-regulated learning, and self-directed learning (Adigun, 2024; Eggers, 2021; Liu, 2023; Nayar & Koul, 2020). Constructivism emphasizes the idea that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge through experiences and reflecting on those experiences. In the context of EMP, students engage with both theoretical content and practical language use in clinical scenarios. Experiential learning involves learning through active participation and reflection, which is especially relevant in medical education, where real-life application of language skills is key. Self-regulated learning refers to intentionally and strategically adapting learning activities to achieve educational objectives and enabling learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses, set realistic goals, and allocate time and resources effectively, ultimately leading to improved academic performance. Finally, self-directed learning encourages students to take control of their educational journey by fostering autonomy and personal accountability – two crucial qualities in today’s digital age.

In terms of EMP curricula, blended learning offers a unique opportunity to engage students and actively improve their medical English proficiency. Classes can be structured to include face-to-face interactions, where students participate in discussions, medical role-plays, and case studies, combined with asynchronous online components that allow learners to access resources at their convenience. This hybrid model helps accommodate different learning paces, making it an ideal fit for diversified classrooms filled with students from various backgrounds and levels of English proficiency.

The online component of blended learning is particularly advantageous when it comes to incorporating multimedia resources such as medical journals, video materials of clinical procedures, and interactive anatomical models. Students can

engage with these resources through discussion forums and online quizzes, thereby enriching their understanding of medical terminology and improving their confidence in using English in professional contexts. This interactive approach not only quells the anxieties associated with speaking a foreign language but also normalizes English usage in medical discussions.

Furthermore, during practical sessions, students can use blended learning tools to collaborate on group projects, such as developing a health campaign pitch for non-English speaking patients. These collaborative projects cultivate teamwork and communication skills, which are crucial in multifaceted healthcare settings.

The successful implementation of blended learning requires strong institutional support. However, many Ukrainian universities struggle with administrative reluctance to adopt innovative teaching methods. Resistance to change, compounded by bureaucratic inertia, can stymie efforts to develop and sustain blended learning initiatives. To overcome this hurdle, it is essential to engage in a dialogue with administrators, highlighting the benefits of blended learning, such as increased student engagement, improved learning outcomes, and enhanced competitiveness in the global education market. Showcasing successful pilots or projects that have already yielded positive results can also catalyse a constructive shift.

Additionally, the present state of EMP instruction among Ukrainian universities exhibits significant variability. Many institutions have begun to recognize the necessity of incorporating English language training into their medical curricula; however, implementation has remained inconsistent. While some universities offer comprehensive EMP courses, others lack the resources and trained personnel to deliver effective instruction. A preliminary assessment of existing programs reveals a reliance on traditional teaching methods, which can limit student engagement and language acquisition.

To implement blended learning effectively in Ukraine, universities should equip both lecturers and students with the requisite skills and technologies. Faculty training sessions focused on integrating technology into the EMP curriculum can empower educators to embrace innovative approaches. Institutions should invest in robust digital infrastructures and learning management systems that facilitate seamless online and offline interactions.

Moreover, it is crucial to incorporate feedback mechanisms into the blended learning model. Regular evaluations and student feedback can guide instructors in refining course content and teaching strategies. With ongoing assessment, students can track their learning progress, ensuring that the curriculum meets their evolving needs and aligns with international medical protocols.

In conclusion, adopting blended learning to teaching EMP at Ukrainian universities is a step toward nurturing a generation of healthcare professionals who

are equipped not only with essential language skills but also with the confidence to communicate effectively in diverse clinical settings. To address existing challenges, developing a comprehensive strategy that promotes institutional buy-in, provides training for educators, and allocates necessary resources to support the development of innovative EMP programs is vital. By harnessing the strengths of both classroom and online learning, Ukrainian institutions can create a more cohesive and practical approach to EMP instruction, ultimately leading the way in preparing students for successful careers in a globally connected medical community.

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