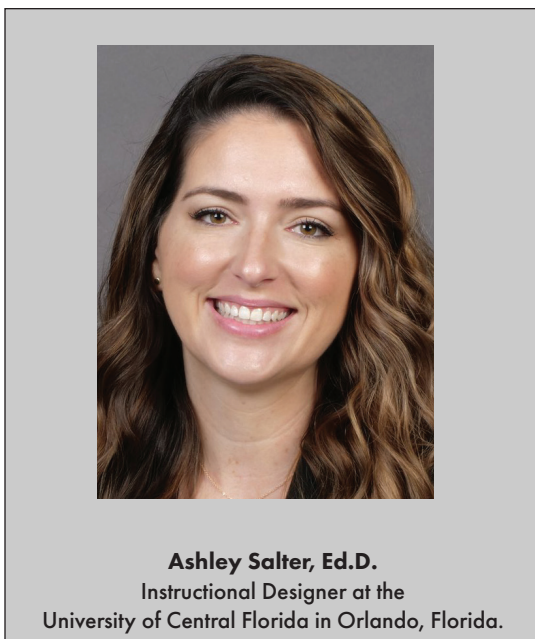


Principles of Blended Learning: Shared Metacognition and Communities of Inquiry

by N. D. Vaughan, D. Dell, M. Cleveland-Innes, and D. R. Garrison

Reviewed by Ashley Salter

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Vaughan, Dell, Cleveland-Innes, and Garrison's book, *Principles of Blended Learning: Shared Metacognition and Communities of Inquiry*, offers a comprehensive exploration of blended learning, focusing on developing shared metacognition and building communities of inquiry. Over six well-structured chapters, the authors discuss the history, pedagogical frameworks, and the interplay between technology and education in blended learning environments. This book is essential for anyone interested in understanding the complexities of blended learning.

One of the book's key strengths is its blending of theoretical concepts with practical applications. The authors combine the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework and shared metacognition with practical strategies, such as the seven principles of blended learning and the use of digital technologies for assessment. The text includes real-world examples, case studies, and actionable insights, such as structured reading group activities demonstrating how to facilitate deep reading and active

discussions of course material in a blended format. The book also provides a detailed design process template and guidance on facilitating collaborative activities.

By emphasizing the cultivation of shared metacognition and the development of communities of inquiry, the authors introduce innovative approaches to enhance student engagement and promote deep learning. The book's coherent framework makes it an essential tool for educators looking to create transformative blended learning experiences. The authors offer instructional design models, strategies for creating effective blended learning experiences, and examples from various educational settings to make the content accessible and applicable to a wide range of educators.

However, while the book explores the challenges of blended learning, it could benefit from a more in-depth examination of potential obstacles. These include technological gaps, student engagement issues, and the complexities of scaling blended models. A deeper exploration of these challenges would give readers a more comprehensive understanding of the difficulties they may face when implementing blended learning in their contexts. Also, a more detailed discussion of how emerging technologies and pedagogical theories will shape the future of blended learning would offer readers valuable insights into the field's potential and help them prepare for the evolving landscape of education.

Despite these opportunities for improvement, *Principles of Blended Learning: Shared Metacognition and Communities of Inquiry* remains a valuable resource for educators, instructional designers, and academic leaders. The book's central strength lies in its ability to meaningfully bridge educational theory and practical implementation, providing readers with the knowledge and tools necessary to create engaging, collaborative, and transformative blended learning experiences.

Brief takeaways include the following:

1. Importance of Shared Metacognition. In Chapters 2–5, the authors highlight the pivotal role of shared metacognition in facilitating profound learning experiences. Shared metacognition refers to the collaborative reflection and awareness of one's thought processes within a group learning context. It encourages students to understand their thinking and engage in meaningful dialogue about their cognitive processes with peers. By emphasizing shared metacognition, educators can foster critical thinking skills and deeper engagement in learning. Students learn to question their assumptions, consider alternative perspectives, and actively participate in the learning process.
2. Balancing Technology and Pedagogy. The authors advocate for a balanced approach between technology and pedagogy, acknowledging the transformative potential of technology in education. Still, they caution against the indiscriminate use of technology tools without thoughtful pedagogical considerations. In Chapter 5, the authors encourage educators to select technology tools such as Google Docs, e-portfolios, and digital video technologies to align with their instructional goals and learning objectives. This approach ensures that technology enhances the learning experience rather than overshadowing it. By striking a balance between technology and pedagogy, educators can harness the power of digital tools to create dynamic and effective blended learning environments.
3. Alignment of Assessment Strategies with Learning Objectives. Chapter 5 focuses on assessment methods that are best suited for blended learning environments, emphasizing the importance of aligning assessments with learning objectives. It places a strong emphasis on the alignment of assessments with learning objectives. This means that assessments should be designed to measure what students are expected to learn. The authors identify various assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments, self-assessments, peer assessments, and rubrics, highlighting the importance of ongoing evaluation as a feedback mechanism for educators and students. Effective assessment practices in blended learning environments ensure that students receive timely feedback and that educators can make data-informed instructional decisions. This approach promotes continuous improvement and supports the overall learning process.
4. Future Trends. The book offers a glimpse into the future of blended learning, including personalized learning, where instruction is tailored to individual student needs, and adaptive technologies that adjust content and pacing based on student performance.

These trends reflect ongoing innovation in education and the potential for technology to enhance and individualize the learning experience. Awareness of these future trends empowers educators to adapt their instructional practices to meet the evolving needs of students.

Principles of Blended Learning: Shared Metacognition and Communities of Inquiry successfully connects educational theory with practical application. The book provides a comprehensive look at the Community of Inquiry framework, the

seven principles of blended learning, and the importance of shared metacognition. Educators will find practical insights and strategies, such as the blended learning design process template and the use of digital technologies for assessment. While the book could further explore potential challenges and future trends, its contributions to the field of blended learning are significant. *Principles of Blended Learning: Shared Metacognition and Communities of Inquiry* is an essential read for anyone invested in creating engaging, collaborative, and transformative learning experiences.

RICHARD E. CLARK, EDITOR

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