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# Book Review
## Guide to Blended Learning, by Marta Cleveland – Innes with Dan Wilton, Common Wealth of Learning (COL): Canada, 2018. 80 pages ISBN 978-1-894975-94-0

It is very essential to relook the entire teaching learning process to help the students to learn better and develop into 21ˢᵗ century global citizens. Teachers need to empower themselves with skill sets that are essential to conduct teaching learning online along with face to face teaching. In this context, this book prepares an individual for the complex world of digital or online classroom also and face to face interaction in a blended mode.

As the name suggests "Guide to Blended Learning" the book offers a platform for the trainee teachers, teachers and teacher educators to design, develop and implement blended learning courses suitable in their respective contexts. It is one of its own kind by providing video introductions to each of the chapters which would trigger interest and help the readers focus on specific tasks. The author is a Professor and Programme Director, Centre for Distance Education at Athabasca University in Alberta, Canada. Her commitment to make high quality education accessible and affordable for everyone and anywhere is remarkable. The author of the book is invloved in running online courses or MOOCS on Technology enabled learning, open educational resources, learning online under the banner of Common Wealth of Learning (COL). Publications of COL advocate the systematic integration of technology in teaching learning for higher education institutions through policy changes, capacity building and the use of appropriate low cost technologies.

This 80 page book is divided into 8 chapters each emphasising different aspects of blended learning practices. These range from theoretical inputs to developing and implementing blended learning courses. This book is an essential for the readers who are interested in educational technology in general, and blended learning in particular. Chapter I of the book discusses conceptual ideasaround blended learning i.e. what is it, how it emerged, how it is being used, what it has to offer. It presents the many challenges one may encounter when implementing a blended learning approach in teaching.

Chapter II provides the strong theoretical framework and comprises various theories and blended learning structures in education. This theoretical background helps the reader get acquainted with conceptual understanding before the book plunges into more details and guidelines. The Complex Adaptive Blended Learning System, the Community of Inquiry Theoretical Framework in Blended learning and SAMR Model are discussed elaborately along with seven blended learning structures in education. The seven discussed are Blended face-to-face class, Blended on line class, the flipped classroom, the rotation model, the self blend model, the blended MOOC and flexible-mode courses. Chapter III focuses on the implementation of blended learning, providing central principles for planning blended learning. It speaks of how to integrate in-class and online activities during the course. Further it elaborates on teaching principles that support blended learning.

The Chapter IV focuses on design of blended learning course. It presents ideas on how to plan a lesson starting from writing of objectives and projected learning outcomes upto assessment of the same. Chapter V

provides details of various technologies like Learning management systems, web conferencing, social media, digital textbooks, blogs, wikis social bookmarking, mash-ups, digital storytelling, simulations, E portfolios etc. These are technologies that can be used to create blended learning course or programme. Chapter VI elaborates the role of LMS, how to create activities, how to customise as per the context and learners, usage of open education resources and various learning assessment strategies in developing a blended learning course. The Chapter VII focuses on how to balance synchronous and asynchronous activities in a blended learning course. It discusses the benefits and the challenges in the way of this and analyses as to how a Community Inquiry Framework would help towards careful integration of both forms of activities. The concluding chapter VIII explores various dimensions of evaluating successful blended learning practices.

Each chapter of the book is meticulously planned and organised with an introduction and conclusion with a summary, reflective questions and resources for further learning. The beliefs of the author are reflected in first few sentences of each chapter where she tried to say why the concept is important and gives justification for it. For instance on page 9 she says: "*Grounding our practice in theory will make us better decisions when implementing blended learning and support out learners more effectively to achieve deep and meaningful learning" (page 9).* The templates of design and evaluation and other relevant documents are enclosed in the appendices. One interesting feature of this book is its presentation. The author has presented complex concepts in such a simple manner thatit will help the teachers use the rich resources in a step by step guide to develop blended courses. The concepts are explained with a lot of illustrations, pictorial representations, tables, examples and case studies. The scenarios presented are interesting and can be related to any training programme irrespective of the culture, context and facilities. Links of various web conferencing tools, online writing tools are given in the footnotes providing a ready access to the readers.

The book provided a strong research base is provided where ever there is a need to present arguments or stress or emphasises any particular aspect of online learning. The reflective questions given are very interesting and provoke the learners to think, envision, explore and learn the tools on their own. The following question is an example: "*Web conferencing tools offer much opportunity for student engagement and interaction. Google hangout, skype and big blue button are available to you and your students even if your institution doesn't offer a web conferencing tool. Can you envision where in your blended course one of these tools might be used and what educational experience it could provide that otherwise might not be possible? Which of the three tools suggested here look user friendly and accessible to you (page. 44)*"?

Overall this book is a notable scholarship on Blended learning practices and hence would be of immense help to preservice and inservice teachers who are now in need of developing online courses.