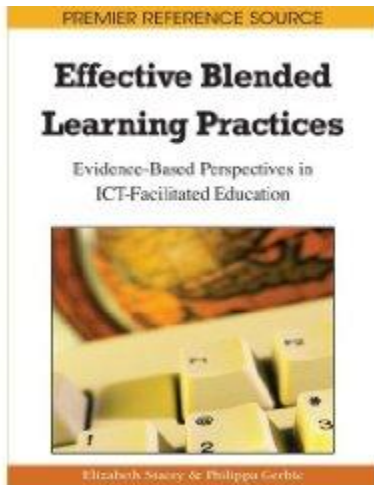


**EFFECTIVE BLENDED LEARNING PRACTICES:
Evidence-based Perspectives in ICT-facilitated Education**
Edited by Elizabeth Stacey and Philippa Gerbic, Information Science
Reference; 1 edition (March 30, 2009), ISBN-10: 1605662968, 358 pp.

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Blended learning refers to the integration of face-to-face and online learning activities with the goal of maximizing the value of students' experiences in both settings. This book collects new international research into many aspects of blended learning from the perspectives of learners, teachers, designers, and professional and academic developers in various disciplines, learning communities and universities from around the world. This book addresses the relative newness of online learning within blended environments. The book's broader audience is anyone who is interested in areas such as blended learning, communities of learning, virtual education, professional learning and community development, instructional technology, flexible learning, distance education and collaborative learning.

Blended approaches in teacher education, blending collaborative online learning, blended learning and teaching philosophies, campus-based student learning environments, ICT-enhanced blended learning, learning communities for K-12 teachers, professional development for blended learning, reciprocal mentoring, redesigning initial teacher education, responses to blended environments, strategies for blended teaching and learning, virtual learning and real communities are the topics covered in this book.

It reviews literature about blended learning in relation to the three sections of the book and discusses strategies for teaching and learning and establishing communities in its different contexts. The chapters of this book provide research perspectives on a range of blended learning issues and contexts and discuss implications for teaching and learning. The book also links its research to practice through its discussion of pedagogy and recommendations for blended learning practices.

Section I focuses on research-based strategies for preparing to teach effectively through the mediation of ICT. Firstly, a research is given and the pedagogical aspects of blended learning practices are analysed and its advantages for students in the study for whom English is a second language are discussed. Secondly a framework for Technology-Mediated Interactions (TMI) which could help teachers designing blended learning environments is given.

A detailed explanation of research analysis tools is provided researchers with suggestions for ways of researching blended learning environments. After that the process and pedagogical principles involved in redesigning traditional on campus and distance courses into a blended learning mode is described in a study from New Zealand. In the following three chapters, the international perspectives particularly captured. European responses to blended learning are discussed.

Section II emphasizes the value of online communities. This section includes a range of perspectives on research into establishing communities through blended learning practices. Firstly, the question of how formal learning communities could be blended with more informal and often naturally occurring workplace communities is explored through the research projects from Australia and Hong Kong. Next, it is investigated that how blended learning practices can be used for the sustained professional learning of teachers in higher education through the establishing of communities of practice.

After that, the notion of multi-membership of communities through the interaction and intersection of online and workplace-based communities is explored. Finally, the blended learning processes of an online community established by the provincial education authorities of Ontario for the professional learning of teachers is described.

Section III reports research that has been undertaken as universities realize the potential of integrating online learning and ICT-facilitated education into all courses and particularly into traditional campus-based institutions.

It also includes frameworks and innovative models for designing blended learning courses and for providing professional learning for teachers. Finally, it draws the main themes identified under the sections of the book and synthesizes the important concepts that have been discussed throughout the chapters of research. Implications for the future field of blended learning are provided for all its stakeholders and suggestions for further research directions. A useful model is given in this for research-based professional learning in many educational sectors.

Blended learning is now a widely accepted term to describe the range of teaching and learning strategies which have arisen from the mixing of different physical or virtual environments in universities, communities and the corporate sector.

Despite its popularity, blended learning requires more careful design and support than the traditional face-to-face teaching. Teachers transitioning to blended learning practices with discussion of the pedagogical and institutional implications of this process are very useful to researchers and strategic planners.

The implications and provided detailed recommendations can be a good model for practitioners, course designers and institutional policy makers. Finally this book is ideal for the teachers who are excited by the possibilities that technology provides to create an environment in which students can really engage with course ideas through discussion and debate, through self exploration of resources and through team work and collaborative projects.

The book is edited by Elizabeth Stacey and Philippa Gerbic. Elizabeth Stacey is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Deakin University. She has researched, supervised research students and taught about topics covering a range of interactive communication technologies including online learning via the Internet, computer conferencing and collaborative learning through blended, flexible open and distance education. She has published regularly in international journals of distance education and educational technology. Philippa Gerbic is an active practitioner and researcher in the e-learning field. She teaches undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in teacher education and adult learning at the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. She has recently completed a substantive investigation into undergraduate student approaches to learning when online discussions are included within a campus based programme. Other research interests include blended environments, the development of online and flexible learning, computer mediated communication, online learning design and student perspectives on learning. She is currently investigating the role of e-portfolios within a lifelong learning framework, and issues regarding their placement within blended environments.

It is consisted of 358 pages covering 16 articles divided into three sections and provides information about context for contemporary mix of physical and virtual learning environments.

It is explored from three different perspectives: blended university teaching and learning, communities of learning and practice and teacher transitions and professional learning.