BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION FRAMEWORK, PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES by D. RANDY GARRISON AND NORMAN D. VAUGHAN - BOOK REVIEW

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In this paper, I would like to write the review of the book, entitled "**Blended Learning in Higher Education-Framework, Principles, and Guidelines**". It was written by **D. Randy Garrison** and **Norman D. Vaughan**. It was published in San Francisco by the Jossey-Bass Company. (A Wiley Imprint). It can be viewed from the following website: www.josseybass.com

The first edition of this book was printed in the United States of America. The International Standard Book Number of this book is 978-0-7879-8770-1. This book has 245 pages. The readers of this book see the list of the contents of this book on the **vii**th page and on the **viii**th page. Preface starts on the **ix**th page and finishes on the **xiii**th of this book. In the part of preface, Garrison and Vaughan (2008: x-xi) state that;

> "*This book provides an organizing framework to guide the exploration and understanding of the principles and practices needed to effects the much needed transformational change in higher education. Moreover, the book provides practical examples and organizational support structures required to fuse a range of face-to-face and online learning to meet the quality challenges and serve disciplinary goals effectively and efficiently.*
>
> *The primary audience for this book is faculty in higher education who are struggling to find the time and means to engage their students in meaningful learning activities. In addition, faculty who are trying to integrate the Internet and communications technology into their courses will find the book of considerable value. Certainly, faculty developers and instructional designers will find here a coherent approach and specific techniques for*

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designing blended learning courses. Finally, graduate students and administrators will find this book useful to gain an understanding and appreciation for the potential of blended learning designs."

In the same part of this book, it has also been mentioned by Garrison and Vaughan (2008: xi) that;

"Blended learning in Higher Education provides a vision and a roadmap for higher education faculty to understand the possibilities of organically blending face-to-face and online learning for engaging and meaningful learning experiences.. The first part provides the theoretical framework. The second part focuses on the practice of designing a blended learning experience."

The authors of this book and their short biographies are listed by Garrison and Vaughan (2008: xv) as:

*"**Dr. Randy Garrison** is the director of the Teaching & Learning Centre and a full professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. He served as dean, faculty of extension at the University of Alberta from 1996 to 2001. He has published extensively on teaching and learning in higher, distance, and adult education contexts. This is his sixth book, and he has published well in excess of 100 refereed articles. Randy Garrison has won several research awards.*

***Norman D. Vaughan** is the coordinator for the inquiry and blended learning program in the Teaching & Learning Centre at the University of Calgary. In this position, he coordinates course redesign projects and provides support for the faculty and graduate student teaching certificate programs. Norm is also a member of the editorial boards fort the Journal on Excellence in College Teaching and the Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology. His teaching background includes graduate and undergraduate courses in educational technology, K-12 education in northern Canada, technical training in the petroleum industry, and English as a second language in Japan. In addition, he has been involved in several consulting projects with book publishers and higher education in situations to develop online courses and resources. Norman received his Ph.D. in Educational Technology from the University of Calgary. His current research focuses on blended learning and faculty development."*

This book has two parts. The title of the first part of this is **Community of Inquiry Framework**. In the first part of this book, there are four different topics. The sub-titles of the first part of this book are as follows: **1.** Introduction **2.** Community of Inquiry and Blended Learning **3.** Designing Blended Learning to Create a Community of Inquiry **4.** Community of Inquiry for Faculty Development.

In the introduction part of this book, the key assumptions of a blended learning design are listed by Garrison and Vaughan (2008:5) as:

- *Thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning;*
- *Fundamentally rethinking the course design to optimize student engagement;*
- *Restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours.*

In the same part of the book, blended learning has been described by Garrison and Vaughhan (2008:6) as:

"Blended learning emerges from an understanding of the relative strengths of face-to-face and online learning. This opens a wide range of possibilities for redesign that goes beyond enhancing the traditional classroom lecture. Attaining the threshold of blended learning means replacing aspects of face-to-face learning with appropriate online learning experiences, such as labs, simulations, tutorials, and assessment. Blended learning represents a new approach and mix of classroom and online activities consistent with the goals of specific courses or programs.

Blended learning must be approached with the awareness of the broad range of flexible design possibilities and the challenge of doing things differently. It must be based upon a sound understanding of higher-order learning environments, communication characteristics, requirements of various disciplines, and resources. Blended learning redesign is a catalyst; it means to fundamentally reconceptualize and restructure the teaching and learning transaction. Its basic assumption is to open the educational mind to a full range of possibilities. Blended learning brings into consideration a range of options that require revisiting how students learn in deep and meaningful ways.

Blended learning is no more about reshaping and enhancing the traditional classroom than it is about making e-learning more acceptable. In both contexts, one is left with essentially either face-to-face or online learning. Blended learning combines the properties and possibilities of both to go beyond the capabilities of each separately."

Here, it is understood that blending learning has brought new approaches to the classes in recent years. Because it does not only mean online learning. It means it requires higher order thinking skills and communication characteristics.

The title of the second topic in the first part of the book is Community of Inquiry and Blended Learning. It starts on the 13th page and finishes on the 30th page. In this chapter, Garrison and Vaughan (2008: 19-20) state that;

> *"Students in a community of inquiry must feel free to express themselves openly in a risk free manner. They must be able to develop the personal relationships necessary to commit to, and pursue, intended academic goals and gain a sense of belonging to the community. The formal categories of social presence are open communication, cohesive responses, and affective/personal connections. (See Table 2.1.). These categories are progressive in the sense that they establish, sustain, and develop a community of inquiry.*
> *Meaningful communication begins when students can communicate openly. Community is established when students are encouraged to project themselves personally and academically. Interpersonal interaction is a very important means of connecting with others and creating trust."*

Table 2.1: Community of Inquiry Categories and Indicators

Elements	Categories	Indicators
Social presence	Open communication	Enabling risk-free expression
	Group cohesion	Encouraging collaboration
	Affective/personal	Expressing emotions, camaraderie
Cognitive presence	Triggering event	Having sense of puzzlement
	Exploration	Exchanging information
	Integration	Connecting ideas
	Resolution	Applying new ideas
Teaching presence methods	Design & organization	Setting curriculum and methods
	Facilitation of discourse	Sharing personal meaning
	Direct instruction	Focusing discussion

The title of the third topic in the first part of the book is Designing Blended Learning to Create a Community of Inquiry It starts on the 31st page of the book. As it has been mentioned by Garrison and Vaughan (2008: 32-33):

> *"Education is a structured learning experience designed to achieve intended outcomes effectively and expeditiously. The role of the educational leader is to provide the teaching presence that will structure, support, and shape a meaningful and worthwhile learning*

experience. These tasks frame the following discussion about the educational environment from a blended learning perspective.

Designing a blended learning experience is a daunting challenge. When designing for a face-to-face or online experience separately, the dominant mode of collaboration is either verbal (listening and talking) or text-based (reading and writing) communication. Educational designers must accept and adjust to the strengths and weaknesses of the medium. However, in a blended learning context, the designer is not limited by the communication medium. Although realistically there will be resource limitations, the educational designer has a broader range of choices. There is the potential and challenge to maximize the strengths of verbal and text communication for the particular experience, thus providing the opportunity for a complex weaving of learning activities and techniques from a full spectrum of possibilities.

The premise is that the ultimate goal is to create a community of inquiry in which learners are fully engaged and responsible. A blended learning environment offers the potential not only to create but to sustain a sense of community beyond the temporal limits of the face-to-face context."

Here, we can understand that designing a blended learning experience is not limited by the communication medium and it is not only important in reading classes. It is crucial in all classes such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The title of the fourth topic in the first part of this book is Community of Inquiry for Faculty Development. This topic starts on the 49th page of this book and it finishes on the 67th page of the book. Garrison and Vaughan denote (2008: 56-57) that;

"The exploration phase of the blended faculty community of inquiry should consist of a series of integrated face-to-face and online experiential learning activities that allow the participants o become immersed in a blended learning environment to see it from a student's perspective. We recommend that this process should take place over an extended period (a minimum of six months) and that the activities should be developed based on the feedback from the initial project meetings and in collaboration with the participants of the community inquiry. Appendix Six provides an example of a planning document that can be used to develop activities for a blended faculty community of inquiry. We suggest that the cohort activities be designed to provide participants with experience and expertise in curriculum design, teaching strategies, and educational technology integration (Figure 4.1.)

The curriculum design sphere involves the creation of a course outline or syllabus for the blended learning course. This document becomes the 'blueprint' for the redesign process. To develop teaching strategies it is recommended that the program provide opportunities for the participants to develop experience and skills with online discussions, group work, and computer-mediated assessment practices. The educational technology integration component includes the acquisition of strategies and skills for managing a course. Website and trouble-shooting basic student technology issues.

To achieve these program outcomes there should be a variety of learning opportunities that allow participants to share, discuss, and debate their course redesign experiences."

Figure 4.1: Program Outcomes for a Blended Faculty Community of Inquiry
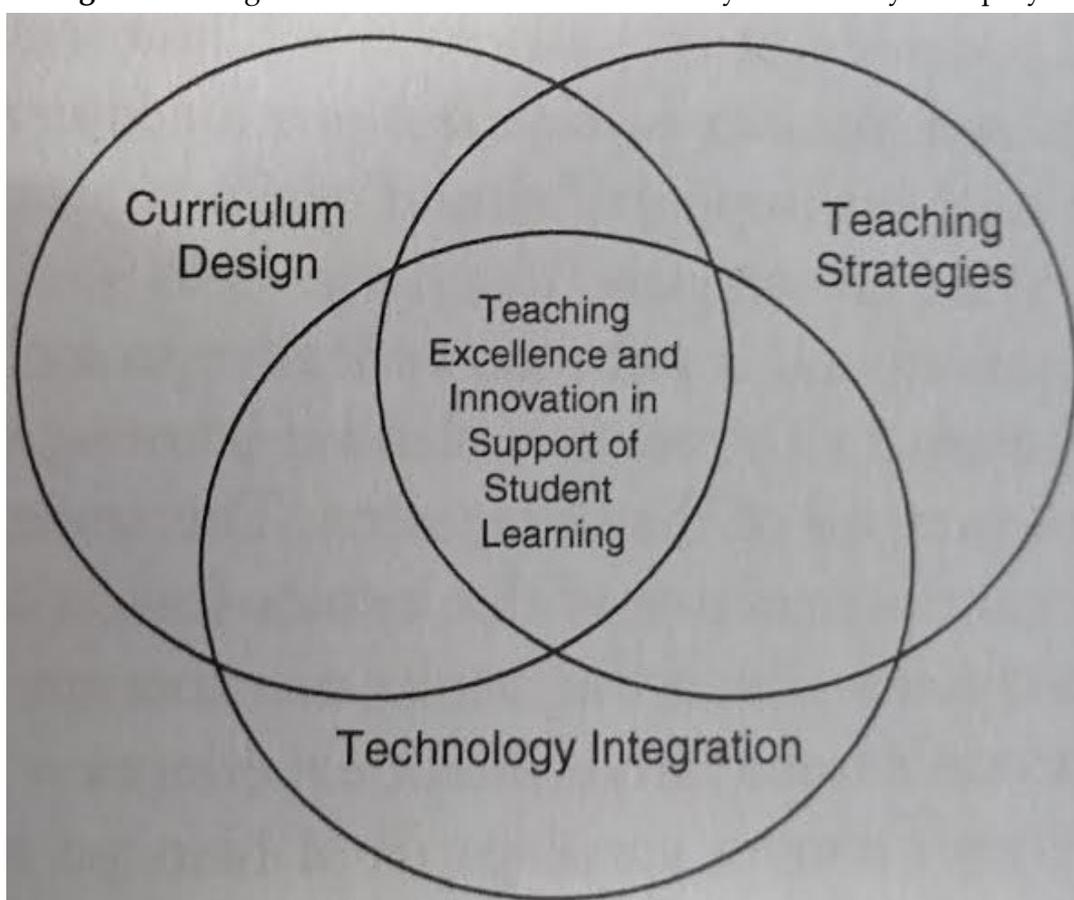
In Appendix 6, the Faculty Interview Questions are listed as: (Garrison& Vaughan, 2008: 195)

1. *What were the key goals or outcomes of your inquiry and blended learning project?*

2. *What new learning activities or assessments did you use to attempt to achieve these goals or outcomes?*

3. *How did you use information and communication technologies to support this process?*

4. *What did blended learning mean or look like in your course?*

5. *How did you inform or orientate your students to inquiry and blended learning in your course?*

6. *What were the benefits to you of this redesigned course?*

7. *What were the challenges that you encountered with this redesigned course?*

8. *What will you do differently the next time you offer this course?*

9. *Lessons learned?*

10. *What advice would you like to pass onto to other faculty members who are planning to redesign and implement inquiry and blended learning courses?*

The title of the second part of this book is Blended Learning in Practice. The sub-titles of the second part of this book are as follows: **5.** Scenarios **6.** Guidelines **7.** Strategies and Tools **8.** The Future.

The second part of this book starts on the 69th page and finishes on the 155th page of this book. In the second part of this book, Garrison and Vaughan (2008: 71) state that;

"Having good models and successful exemplars is essential for widespread change. Higher education faculty are professional critics and skeptics. Faculty must be able to see what the possibilities are. When most faculty see their colleagues successfully innovating and receiving recognition, they will not be far behind and will be extremely motivated to keep with the competition. This is why we begin this section with some good examples or scenarios in order to convert a reasonably concrete image of what blended learning might look like."

In the same part of this book, it has also been mentioned by Garrison and Vaughan (2008: 85-86):

"The synchronous and asynchronous connectivity and collaboration made possible through blended learning designs portend a transformation of teaching and learning in higher education. Blended learning has become the catalyst to rethink traditional approaches and rediscover the learning community. Blended learning designs offer disciplined inquiry through reflective and collaborative activities, while providing unlimited access to information.

Technology is the integrating platform that seamlessly connects the real and virtual educational worlds. Much has been made of the changing attitudes and expectations of current higher education undergraduates. They are often referred to as the next generation (Net Genres)."

After the second part of this book, appendices start. There are 11 appendices in this book. The titles of the appendices are as follows:

Appendix 1. Organizational Change

Appendix 2. Project Proposal Form

Appendix 3. Redesign Guide for Blended Learning

Appendix 4. Blended Faculty Community of Inquiry Planning Document

Appendix 5. Student Survey Questionnaire

Appendix 6. Faculty Interview Questions

Appendix 7. Student Survey Results

Appendix 8. Faculty Interview Comments

Appendix 9. Template for Preparing a Blended Learning Course Outline

Appendix 10. Sample Blended Learning Course Outline

Appendix 11. Sample Assessment Rubric for an e-Portfolio Assignment

References of this book are started to be listed on the 223rd page of this book and they finish on the 231st page of this book. Index of this book starts on the 233rd page of the book and finishes on the 245th page of the book.

This book can be read by all of the professionals who work for different disciplines in higher education. Readers of this book can learn the the role of blended learning in higher education effectively. As the outcomes of designing blended learning classes are handled in this book, readers can apply blended learning approaches in their own classes happily.

As a result, it can be said that students who learn their subjects with the blended learning approaches can be more talkative and active in their real class hours as they have many different opportunities to repeat their causes with the online activities or in the online discussion groups. There is no doubt this book has brought many opportunities to different classrooms in the world and it will encourage many educators to use blended learning experience for their own classes.

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