Preface

The constantly changing landscape of blended learning makes it challenging for experts and practitioners to stay informed of the field’s most up-to-date research. That is why Information Science Reference is pleased to offer this four-volume reference collection that will empower students, researchers, and academicians with a strong understanding of critical issues within blended learning by providing both broad and detailed perspectives on cutting-edge theories and developments. This reference is designed to act as a single reference source on conceptual, methodological, technical, and managerial issues, as well as provide insight into emerging trends and future opportunities within the discipline.

Blended Learning: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications is organized into eight distinct sections that provide comprehensive coverage of important topics. The sections are:

1. Fundamental Concepts and Theories;
2. Development and Design Methodologies;
3. Tools and Technologies;
4. Utilization and Application;
5. Organizational and Social Implications;
6. Managerial Impact;
7. Critical Issues; and

The following paragraphs provide a summary of what to expect from this invaluable reference tool.

Section 1, “Fundamental Concepts and Theories,” serves as a foundation for this extensive reference tool by addressing crucial theories essential to the understanding of blended learning. Introducing the book is Hybrid Learning: Perspectives of Higher Education Faculty by Nahed Abdelrahman and Beverly J. Irby; a great foundation laying the groundwork for the basic concepts and theories that will be discussed throughout the rest of the book. Section 1 concludes, and leads into the following portion of the book with a nice segue chapter, A Kaleidoscope of Variables: The Complex Nature of Online Education in Composition Courses by Christopher Friend, Sean Michael Morris, and Jesse Stommel.

Section 2, “Development and Design Methodologies,” presents in-depth coverage of the conceptual design and architecture of blended learning. Opening the section is Design and Development of Educational Multimedia: The Software Development Process for Mobile Learning by Ibrahim Arpaci. Through case studies, this section lays excellent groundwork for later sections that will get into present and future
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applications for blended learning. The section concludes with an excellent work by Maria Ranieri and Isabella Bruni, titled Create, Transform, and Share: Empowering Creativity and Self-Expression through Mobile Learning.

Section 3, “Tools and Technologies,” presents extensive coverage of the various tools and technologies used in the implementation of blended learning. Section 3 begins where Section 2 left off, though this section describes more concrete tools at place in the modeling, planning, and applications of blended learning. The first chapter, Learning Goes Mobile: Devices and APPS for the Practice of Contents at Tertiary Level by Ana Iglesias Rodríguez and Blanca García Riaza, lays a framework for the types of works that can be found in this section. The section concludes with Web-Based Technologies for Ensuring Interaction in Online Courses: Faculty Choice and Student Perception of Web-Based Technologies for Interaction in Online Economics by Olivia P. Morris. Where Section 3 described specific tools and technologies at the disposal of practitioners, Section 4 describes the use and applications of the tools and frameworks discussed in previous sections.

Section 4, “Utilization and Application,” describes how the broad range of blended learning efforts has been utilized and offers insight on and important lessons for their applications and impact. The first chapter in the section is titled A Mixed Methods Examination of Instructor Social Presence in Accelerated Online Courses written by Patrick Ryan Lowenthal. This section includes the widest range of topics because it describes case studies, research, methodologies, frameworks, architectures, theory, analysis, and guides for implementation. The breadth of topics covered in the chapter is also reflected in the diversity of its authors, from countries all over the globe. The section concludes with The Effects of Flipped Classrooms on English Composition Writing in an EFL Environment by Adrian Leis, Simon Cooke, and Akihiko Tohei, a great transition chapter into the next section.

Section 5, “Organizational and Social Implications,” includes chapters discussing the organizational and social impact of blended learning. The section opens with Through the Eyes of Students and Faculty: A Conceptual Framework for the Development of Online Courses by Maysaa Barakat and Debra N. Weiss–Randal. Where Section 4 focused on the broad, many applications of blended learning technology, this section focuses exclusively on how these technologies affect human lives, either through the way they interact with each other, or through how they affect behavioral/workplace situations. The section concludes with Understanding Strategies of Teacher-Student Interaction: The Impact on Student Experience and Learning Outcomes in Online Education by Tarryn L. Kille.

Section 6, “Managerial Impact,” presents focused coverage of blended learning in a managerial perspective. This section serves as a vital resource for developers who want to utilize the latest research to bolster the capabilities and functionalities of their processes. The section begins with The Perception of Faculty Members on Hybrid Learning: A Naturalistic Case Study by Nahed Abdelrahman and Beverly J. Irby. The chapters in this section offer unmistakable value to managers looking to implement new strategies that work at larger bureaucratic levels. The section concludes with Mobile Learning in Workforce Development: Cultivating Creativity on Action Learning Teams through Higher-Order mLearning by Shawn McCann.

Section 7, “Critical Issues,” presents coverage of academic and research perspectives on blended learning tools and applications. The section begins with A Blended Approach to Teacher Education by Norman Vaughan. Chapters in this section will look into theoretical approaches and offer alternatives to crucial questions on the subject of blended learning. The section concludes with Unbounded Reading: Why Online Learning for K-12 Students Should Be a Literacy Issue by Dixie D. Massey.
Section 8, “Emerging Trends,” highlights areas for future research within the field of blended learning, opening with *Past, Future and Presents: Meeting New Online Challenges with Primal Marketing Solutions* by Ruth Gannon Cook and Kathryn Ley. This section contains chapters that look at what might happen in the coming years that can extend the already staggering amount of applications for blended learning. The final chapter of the book looks at an emerging field within blended learning, in the excellent contribution, *Virtually Sound: Flipped Classrooms and Other Learning Spaces* by Frances Di Lauro.

Although the primary organization of the contents in this multi-volume work is based on its eight sections, offering a progression of coverage of the important concepts, methodologies, technologies, applications, social issues, and emerging trends, the reader can also identify specific contents by utilizing the extensive indexing system listed at the end of each volume. As a comprehensive collection of research on the latest findings related to using technology to providing various services, *Blended Learning: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications*, provides researchers, administrators and all audiences with a complete understanding of the development of applications and concepts in blended learning. Given the vast number of issues concerning usage, failure, success, policies, strategies, and applications of blended learning in countries around the world, *Blended Learning: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications* addresses the demand for a resource that encompasses the most pertinent research in technologies being employed to globally bolster the knowledge and applications of blended learning.