Chapter 17
Quality Matters in Transcultural Blended Learning and Teaching in Postsecondary Education: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT
Quality matters in transcultural blended learning and teaching in postsecondary education. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a framework for quality assurance in transcultural blended learning and teaching in postsecondary education. The framework includes a transcultural blend of institutional fitness, teaching effectiveness, and learning outcomes. The institutional outcomes encompass factors such as institutional leadership, administrative and logistic supports, and the accreditation standards. Teaching effectiveness includes the overall curriculum design and the delivery of courses. The learning outcomes concern the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that stakeholders expect students to exhibit after attending a blended learning program or course.

INTRODUCTION
The utilization of a blended learning approach has become common practice in many postsecondary institutions around the world and one of the top trends in the knowledge industry (Finn, 2004). For many scholars and practitioners, blended learning has justified itself as an alternative that combines the benefits of best practices in online and face-to-face learning (Mayadas, Bourne, & Bacsich 2009; Rooney, 2003). Dowling, Godfrey, and Gyles (2003) found that blended learning is associated with improved learning outcomes of students. Although many studies argue that blended learning is comparable to face-to-face learning (Larson & Sung, 2009; Bonk & Graham, 2006), there are some doubts about the effectiveness of blended learning and concerns regarding

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its quality, especially concerning student outcomes (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Crouch, 2009). Blended learning programs and courses must address all issues of policy and governance, faculty and student supports, regulatory and legal, technology, finance, which contribute to quality and effectiveness. Quality does matter in blended learning and teaching in postsecondary education. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a framework for quality assurance in transcultural blended learning and teaching in postsecondary education.

THE TRANSCULTURAL QUALITY TRIANGLE IN BLENDED LEARNING AND TEACHING

Quality assurance is a multifaceted concept whose meaning vary based on various stakeholders in postsecondary education (Van Kemenade, Pupius, & Hardjono, 2008). For example, accrediting agencies will focus on standards of quality that they set to maintain the accreditation status of a postsecondary institution. Leaders and administrators of higher education may tend to focus on factors that best serve the fulfillment of the vision and mission of their institution as provider of higher learning. Faculty may focus on indicators of teaching effectiveness. Students and the community may hold postsecondary institutions accountable for short-term, mid-term, and long-term learning outcomes. Regardless of the facet, quality assurance and high academic performance remain essential for the sustainability of colleges and universities. The most common approaches include, but are not limited to, performance indicator (Yorke, 1998), service quality (Firdaus, 2006), continuous quality monitoring (Houston, 2007), and total quality management (Koch, 2003).

The transcultural quality triangle features a transcultural blend that has implications for the institutional, learning, and teaching dimensions through which the quality of a blended program or course should be appreciated. In other words, a quality blended program or course should ensure that it captures the cultural context influencing the institution, the students, and the faculty concerned by the dynamics of curriculum and instruction. The institution providing the blended program or course should be able to pass a fitness test through instructional leadership, administrative and logistic supports that are necessary to maintain a quality blended learning and teaching program or course. Also, a quality blended program or course should focus on the short-term, mid-term, and long-term learning outcomes, experience and satisfaction of the students. And finally, it should ensure that faculty members receive appropriate support and adopt best practice of teaching effectiveness applicable to both face-to-face and online teaching. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the transcultural quality triangle in blended learning and teaching.

TRANSCULTURAL BLEND

Transcultural blend refers to an application of the four dimensions of transculturality in the systemic

Figure 1. Transcultural quality triangle in blended learning and teaching
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