
The Complete Guide to Blended Learning: Activating Agency, Differentiation, Community and Inquiry for Students

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Abstract

In *The Complete Guide to Blended Learning: Activating Agency, Differentiation, Community and Inquiry for Students*, Catlin Tucker continues to support teacher wellness and student accountability. Unlike her previous books on blended learning, this book focuses on designing and developing a learning community that positively impacts both students and teachers. Recognizing that technology has become a mainstay in classrooms, Tucker provides recommendations that support educators in the selective use of digital tools to empower students to take an active role in their learning at all levels.

Keywords: *blended learning, student agency, pedagogy*

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The Complete Guide to Blended Learning: Activating Agency, Differentiation, Community and Inquiry for Students. Catlin Tucker (2022). Bloomington, Indiana, 2022. \$40.95 Paperback.

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In her latest work, *The Complete Guide to Blended Learning: Activating Agency, Differentiation, Community and Inquiry for Students*, author Catlin Tucker empowers teachers at all experience levels with blended learning. She dives into common blended learning strategies that combine the benefits of using technology for asynchronous learning with active, collaborative synchronous learning. Through the use of models and examples, Tucker shares the benefits of adopting various blended learning structures in classrooms of all levels. The reader is invited to use reflective questioning as a guide to adopt structures and tools to shift to student-centered learning.

Tucker encourages teachers to let go of the need to control all aspects of the learning process. She suggests that teachers partner with students to empower them to become key players in the learning environment. Throughout *The Complete Guide to Blended Learning*, Tucker provides example activities that engage students in developing metacognitive skills and support students in building their own self-regulation. Teachers can easily adopt these strategies in their own classrooms to create a learning environment where students and teachers share in the responsibility of working towards learning goals.

Throughout the book, readers are encouraged to connect blended learning and social-emotional learning. Based on the premise that students in blended learning environments take more responsibility for their learning, Tucker emphasizes the need for teachers to make time for creating a safe and supportive learning environment. She includes multiple activities that teachers can incorporate into their blended learning classes in order to support the social-emotional needs of learners while also building a strong sense of community.

Developing the idea that inquiry paves the way for engaged learning, the author connects the process of creating cognitive presence through active engagement in blended learning. She takes a unique approach to the use of the 5E instructional framework and its application to blended learning. Originally adopted in science instruction, the 5E framework is a student-centered teaching strategy that includes five phases of understanding: engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. Through anecdotes and sample activities, the break-down of each stage of the 5E instructional model provides teachers with instructional strategies to use asynchronous digital tools along with synchronous face-to-face activities which have the potential to develop inquiry among learners for rich, authentic learning.

While readers of this author's other works will see some repetition of anecdotes and resources, *The Complete Guide to Blended Learning: Activating Agency, Differentiation, Community and Inquiry for Students* provides new connections to blended learning and current educational trends. Readers will develop an understanding of how to address social-emotional and inquiry learning in a blended environment. The ready-to-go activities, some of which have been shared in her other works, may aid teachers in meeting students' needs in these areas.

The author did not follow her traditional writing style of incorporating anecdotes and examples from teachers and students to support the themes in this book. Quotes, ideas, and

short case studies are absent from *The Ultimate Guide to Blended Learning*, which makes this book feel more theoretical than practical, in comparison with her other books focused on blended learning.

The Ultimate Guide to Blended Learning incorporates Caitlin Tucker's expertise and passion for using blended learning to develop learning environments where teachers have the time and capacity to strengthen their learners. Citing research from educational giants such as John Dewey's work with constructivism, Carol Dweck's work with Growth Mindset, and John Hattie's study of the effect size of learning environments, Tucker supports her claims that creating a student-centered learning environment results in a positive learning experience for teachers and students. Whether new to blended learning or experienced, this book offers teachers from PreK to Higher Ed strategies to immediately use with students in all learning situations.