EDCI-339 – Topic #1

While I consider myself to be an innovative, ever evolving instructor, it is clear to me that I must begin to adopt a more balanced or “blended” approach to my teaching practice. I try to use technology in the classroom but many times, it is used in a way to support my in class instruction and not necessarily as a vehicle for the students to use to enhance their understanding of the subject. Morris and Stommel suggest that “Digital pedagogy is not equivalent to teachers using digital tools.” I take this to mean that digital tools must have a deeper purpose than simply supporting the content that the teaching is delivering. They go onto challenge teachers to put down irrelevant tools and to put each of their intended resources under a microscope. One thing they went onto to mention was that “both teachers and students must approach the classroom from a place of flexibility”.

In the same vein, Vaughan et al. describe blended learning as an organic selection of carefully and thoughtfully selected in person and online resources. They re-itter Morris and Stommel’s suggestion of carefully choosing what the students will be using to support their learning. I was intrigued by the thought of combining face-to-face communication with online and technological communication. They suggest that this combination enhances the students’ experiences and allows them to deepen their understanding of the content.

Another concept that I found interesting were the three presences that ultimately allow for an inspiring educational experience; social, cognitive and teaching presences. While the social and cognitive presences were fairly straight forward, it was the teaching presence that I found fascinating. At first, I assumed the presence referred to the presence the teacher had in the educational experience. However, Vaughan et al specifically refer to the “teachING presence” and not the” teachER presence” as the component of the experience that encompasses both the teacher and the participants. They state that, “The teaching presence is enhanced when participants become more metacognitively aware and are encouraged to assume increasing responsibility and control of their learning.” I completely agree with this statement in that when the students take responsibility of their learning and begin to support one another, higher order thinking and a deeper understanding is possible. However, as clear as this concept is in theory, to experience it in practice is a much more elusive one. Depending on the level, having our students become “metacognitively aware” is an extremely difficult task. Such awareness is not innate for most students. These are skills that must be modeled, described, explained and taught.

**References;**

Morris, S. M., & Stommel, J. (2018). An urgency of teachers: The work of critical digital pedagogy. Hybrid Pedagogy.

Vaughan, N. D., Garrison, D. R., & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2013). Teaching in blended learning environments: Creating and sustaining communities of inquiry. AU Press. [Chapter 1]