

OLTD 506 - REFLECTION 1

Learning Outcome - Develop understanding of: functional contexts and constraints, employment considerations, privacy tensions, BC legal, school policies/procedure, professional ethic

I have chosen two pieces of evidence, which were created in September of 2015, to demonstrate support for the above learning outcome from the course OLTD 506 - Special Topics: Social Media. The first piece of evidence I have chosen is a collection of the initial journal activities required in the "Foundations and Boundaries" portion of the course. The second piece of evidence presented is a pdf created to summarize the material presented in the unit and initially investigated in the journal assignments. The goal of these assignments was to synthesize what was learned about the topic of social media in the context of BC teachers. In these pieces of evidence, the boundaries of digital footprints, professionalism, privacy, safety, and social justice have been addressed.

I have been working as an online teacher for many years, but I was not particularly well informed about many issues presented in the Foundations and Boundaries unit of OLTD 506. I knew that, as professionals, BC educators need to be aware of their personal digital footprints. I also knew that teachers need to be aware of the digital footprints that could be left when students worked on class assignments using social media. I was aware of FIPPA, and my district did a good job of warning teachers of the possible repercussions of using social media in the classroom, but I was not really aware of how to get past what seemed like 'fear mongering' so I could educate and protect my students and allow us to take advantage of social media options safely and productively. Now I feel that I have the required knowledge to be able to much more easily introduce social media tools into my online courses.

As an online teacher, it is vital that I am familiar with online privacy and safety requirements including FIPPA and the particular guidelines set up by my district. It was very helpful to take the time to learn more about the 'Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act' and, in particular, see how Canada is different from the USA in regards to what is considered private online. It was also useful to take a closer look at what my district has set up as far as students' responsibilities and guidelines when working online within the district schools and with a district account.

As part of this reflection, I need to ask myself an important question. How could what I experienced when learning about privacy and safety online help me in my job now, to help me further develop my existing courses, and to create new courses that are engaging, structured well, and supportive? I was quite content with what I was offering to my online students, but now I feel I can add in some social media options to further enhance my courses, particularly in the areas of engagement, communication, and class co-operation. It will require changing some existing assignments and adding in an assignment designed to educate students in the same ways that this course has enhanced my learning in the areas of digital footprints, privacy and safety.