

OLTD 511 - REFLECTION 2

Learning Outcome - Engage in building learning communities and communities of practice.

I have chosen two pieces of evidence, which were created in December of 2015, to demonstrate support for the above learning outcome from the course OLTD 511 - Blended Learning. The first evidence piece was initially created in a Google Doc, so it could be easily shared with my cohort group, and then saved as a document. The second evidence piece is a video presentation that was created using Google Slides, recorded using Screencast-O-Matic, and uploaded to Youtube. These activities were completed with a partner and the different parts of the projects were split evenly between the two of us. This final project, involved detailing a proposal to create a blended learning program for School District #70, and then recording a presentation of the proposal.

Previous assignments had made me familiar with the characteristics of blended learning, including a lot of terminology that was not previously part of my vocabulary. This final assignment gave my partner and I the opportunity to put what we had read about into practical use. For example, we first needed to identify what problem we wanted to solve and what model of blended learning we would use to solve it. Then we had to decide how we wanted to organize our team, what experience we wanted to provide to our students, how we were going to define the teacher's role, and how we were going to establish a positive school culture. Finally, we had to look at a budget strategy that would encompass the hardware, software, and classroom modifications that would be required. This assignment was very relevant. Because we were asked to write up and present a blended learning program for our own school district, we had to identify a real problem, and come up with a real blended learning solution to the problem. Perhaps the most valuable part of the project was that we were required to know enough about the blended learning model, we were proposing, to share its value to the district. It reminded me of the saying that if you want to become an expert at something, you should teach it. Having to 'teach' the value of our blended learning model necessitated that we really understood what we were talking about.

As part of this reflection, I need to ask myself an important question. How can what I experienced while **engaging in building learning communities and communities of practice**, help me in my job now, to help me further develop my existing courses, and to help me create new courses that are engaging, structured well, and supportive? To answer this question, I am able to say that by completing a proposal for a blended learning program, I now feel quite comfortable moving from my totally 'online' environment, to one that is 'blended'. Up to now, there was very little face-to-face connection built into my online courses. Students received all of their instruction via the online course, and I never actually met very many of my students, in person. While this method of instruction was not unsuccessful, by investigating the potential of a blended learning program, I learned how a 'flex' blended environment would easily fit into, and add dimension to, several of my courses. Since not all of my students live in the immediate area, I would need to keep these face-to-face meetings optional, but by offering them, I now believe I could increase student engagement and further encourage student/teacher interactions and communications.