

OLTD 502 e-Portfolio Reflection #2

By Fenella Olynick

Dec. 22, 2014

The Week #1 discussion question for OLTD 502 was: Does learning take place differently in online and blended learning environments? This question led to much research and investigation (as evidenced by the bibliography at the end of the introduction slides), and even more dialogue and debate. Initially, the question seemed fairly straight forward, but the more I reflected on it, the more complex the question and dialogue became. As a result, I have chosen the discussion post for Week #1 and the introductory slides (OLTD 502- Online and Blended Education) to represent my reflections and learning. I will no doubt continue to ponder this question throughout the OLTD program!

The most significant realization through involvement in the OLTD 502 D2L discussion forum, and through online and blended learning presentations, was that vocabulary, understandings, and personal experience and belief can create a wide range of views and feelings on the aforementioned question. This topic required a great deal of preliminary research on terms, vocabulary, models, and even cultural norms, in order to arrive at a foundational level necessary for more in-depth dialogue and debate. Indeed, blended and online learning needed to be defined in order to address the question, and some of the iNACOL publications were found to be extremely helpful in this regard (particularly presentations by Michael B. Horn of the Innosight Institute – see slides bibliography).

Becoming familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to blended and online learning environments has been extremely helpful in understanding that *Blended Teaching* is not *Textbook Enhanced Teaching*, *Technology Enhanced Teaching*, *Web/Online Enhanced Teaching*, nor *Online Teaching*. It is a pedagogical shift for a teacher, where students have more control over their learning (i.e, a shift to a student-centric model). Students have more control over how they learn, what and where they learn, and the time and pace of their learning. As I move forward in my teaching career, I hope these understandings will help me to contribute towards the successful implementation and navigation of new models of teaching within my school and district.