

OLTD 503 e-Portfolio Reflection #2

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Learning Outcome:

- Critically assess and evaluate resources for best practice in online learning.

Reflection:

The second piece of evidence to demonstrate my learning in OLTD 503 is an essay: *Online Communication and Learning: The Path to Shaping Virtual Communities*, which was submitted for Assignment #3 in Unit 3. The essay is a reflective examination of literature relating to 'best practices' in facilitating learning in online environments.

Through a critical examination of philosophies, beliefs, and current teaching practice, the research and writing of this essay has enabled me to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas of focus for personal growth. The literary research, and opportunity for discourse in the process, has allowed me to attain a broader perspective and depth of knowledge that I hope will facilitate meaningful and progressive change; change based on a theoretical framework. The study of philosophies and theorists' models, learning design models, and interactions within online communities - including a look at the learner, teacher, technologies, benefits and problems - provides a springboard from which my teaching practice can be improved to facilitate learning. Perhaps the most significant point to be made through the creation of this artefact is the importance of 'social presence' in online learning.

I believe the learning outcome to *critically assess and evaluate resources for best practice in online learning* is especially important, as it plays a key role in determining the choices educators make regarding their teaching practice. By carefully considering philosophies and theories of learning, and through reflective practice and the re-evaluation of one's beliefs, parts of theorists' design models become consciously interwoven into one's design theory, thereby addressing cognition, motivation, and human development. I feel the more insight one gains, the more one is able to make thoughtful, well-considered and effective choices regarding instruction, course design, and learning.