

OLTD 503 e-Portfolio Reflection #1

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I have chosen the Online Communication and Learning Piktochart as the first piece of evidence to reflect my learning journey in OLTD 503. This activity was completed as a requirement for [Seminar 5's Week of learning: Supporting Online Learning](#). Seminar 5 pulled together many of the individual topics from prior seminar weeks, thus allowing for a “cheat sheet” of important information to be created (hence, the Piktochart).

I feel the Piktochart demonstrates the OLTD learning outcome of *engaging with environments through online facilitation for effective learning*. The research and information presented in the Piktochart offers ways in which online teachers can engage with environments to positively affect learning. Also, I feel that through helping to facilitate the activities for Seminar 5, I engaged with multiple online environments. I feel the Piktochart shares a number of *engagement strategies and tips*, which I hope others will find useful, should they access the blog.

While creating the Piktochart, I realized I am becoming increasingly cognizant of how important it is for online teachers and course developers to demonstrate an understanding of the philosophies and theories of learning, including the various models and frameworks of learning that stem from these theories. Associated with these frameworks and models are tools and technologies. The Piktochart illustrates synchronous and asynchronous tools and technologies, of which using a mix is recommended for a more flexible learning environment. The chart also illustrates the importance of ‘social presence’. This is developed through student-teacher and student-student engagement, using communication tools and medium to promote affective responses and group cohesion. Social presence allows online communication to feel ‘real’. The Piktochart, in addition, illustrates potential benefits and problems of online learning communities. For example, benefits include convenience and flexibility, learning with others, and engagement and belonging. Meanwhile, examples of problems include information overload, low participation, and impersonality. A few examples are further illustrated and ideas for increasing benefits and reducing problems are offered.

I hope this Piktochart will serve as a reminder of things I should consider in my teaching practice to support online learning. Often we get so wrapped up in ‘doing’ that we don’t take the time to adequately reflect on our practice or try new strategies and approaches. This Piktochart will be a visual ‘trigger’ to remember that social presence, communication, and interaction should be a necessary focus in course design to build community and foster learning. It is *how* we use the tools, media and platforms that influences student learning!