

## **OLTD 511: Blended Learning Reflection # 2**

### **OLTD Program Learning Outcome(s):**

- Engage in reflection of your readings, practice and learnings throughout the course.
- Demonstrate understanding of common terms, definitions and models related to blended learning.
- Develop a theoretical understanding of Blended Learning and the models associated with it.
- Create blended lessons that fit in your potential or existing teaching environment.

### **Evidence to Support Outcome:**

The evidence I have chosen to demonstrate competency with respect to the above-noted learning outcomes is the Major Inquiry Project, which was completed at the end of OLTD511. This project was completed over the last few weeks of the course, and I worked with a partner, Lisa Cole, to create a proposal for a blended learning environment. It should be noted that the final project evolved from an individual research assignment completed prior to the major project, and as a result, the evidence pieces demonstrate a summarization of this learning (which will no doubt continue to be adjusted as more learning occurs). Furthermore, because the chosen evidence is a Major Inquiry Project, it meets a number of learning outcomes, as a great deal of research and learning about blended learning environments was required in order to develop the submitted proposal. I feel the Major Inquiry Project moves my learning from the theoretical to the practical, hence the proposed plan for the implementation of a blended learning environment.

## Reflection to Support Evidence:

The evidence pieces selected to demonstrate the above-noted learning outcomes represent a great deal of research on blended learning environments, including some very insightful dialogue resulting from posts (by my amazing OLTD cohort) about blended learning within the OLTD511 Google+ Community. The primary text for the course, *Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools*, provided some terrific foundational knowledge and examples of blended learning environments, and the videos which accompanied the text were a great way to observe and analyze the different models of blended learning. Prior to this course I had a basic understanding of blended learning; however, I feel the in-depth analysis of blended learning models (including the different types of Rotation models, Flex, A La Carte or self-blended, and Enriched Virtual), guided expertly by OLTD511 instructor Justin Mark, has give me a much deeper understanding of the nuances and ways in which the various models may be used. The final course project has provided me with the opportunity to analyze my teaching context and to think about how blended learning could be used to enhance the learning experiences and success of my students, while increasing the financial viability and sustainability of my school. As the slides and paper note, because I teach in a DL environment, and due to the nature and needs of my students, a combination approach (i.e., combining to varying degrees a Flex and Enriched Virtual model of blended learning) is anticipated to be the model of blended learning that may work best (see evidence pieces for an in-depth look at these points).

The OLTD511 Major Inquiry Project was a great opportunity to collaborate with Lisa Cole, a cohort member who works for [eDynamic Learning](#). Lisa was able to contribute viable options and some wonderful insight to help address the [S.M.A.R.T. goals identified in the project](#) (p. 3-4). As slide 3 of our [OLTD511: Major Inquiry Project Presentation](#) states, the primary goals of our blended learning model were 1) credit recovery for non-graduated adult students and 2) financial viability and sustainability of NCDES. I feel that together we have been able to design a plan to address the non-consumption problem of credit recovery (a problem requiring disruptive innovation - see [Major Inquiry Project paper, p. 1-2](#)), while also addressing a core problem of including

more engaging interactive pieces within the course(s) to increase student engagement and thereby completion rates. By providing both the face-to-face and online components in a planned, fluid and integrated manner, we believe we are able to offer students an integrated learning experience, which we hope to implement in the near future.

As an educator, I believe it is important to understand the various models of learning that have the potential to contribute to the success (if implemented correctly) and acquisition of twenty-first century skills by our learners. Without a solid understanding of options and ways in which to implement various models of learning, we are limited in the options we provide to our students. By looking at other schools and other districts (in BC, Canada, and also beyond the boundaries of our country), we are able to examine how the nature of teaching is changing to suit the digital age and the changing and diverse needs of the learners. Twenty-first century learners will need to experience a model of learning that is more closely aligned to our data driven world, and blended learning offers this opportunity. Of course, it is what we do with the data, how we gather it, how we use it to effect change, and how much value we place on it that really matters. How we use technology and blended learning is ultimately up to us as educators, so the more information we have, the more we educate ourselves and examine our options, and the more open we are to feedback and adjustment of our goals, the more our learning environments and students will benefit. I hope to continue to collaborate with the staff at my school and with others in the educational field, like Lisa, to implement a “just right” model of learning for my students, thereby putting into practice my learnings and realizations about blended learning environments. The Major Inquiry Project selected for this reflection is the first significant step towards change and the implementation of blended learning.

### **Reference:**

Horn, M. B., & Staker, H. (2014). *Blended: Using disruptive innovation to improve schools*. John Wiley & Sons.