OLTD 503 Reflection of Evidence #1 Learner-Led Seminar

I have chosen my learner-led seminar for my first piece of evidence. As part of our OLTD 503, our facilitator instructed us that for the remainder of the course, we would be placed in groups and facilitate a week, on a certain topic relating to online communication. Our group was the first to present on the topic of tools in online communication. We set up a few synchronous meetings online using zoom to plan our week. A google doc was also set up to collaborate asynchronously during the week to plan. Here we exchanged ideas on what articles to choose, what questions to ask, what tools to explore, what activities to propose to the group as well as decide our roles as facilitators for the week. We decided what important concepts and skills we wanted the cohort to experience referring to our course learning outcomes. Our group decided on creating a PowerPoint presentation to present to the learners at a Zoom session at the end of the week, as well as create a newsletter with the details of the activities to be completed the following week.

With this major project, the course outcome I experienced was the : moderate and mediate online communication. I was forced to take the facilitator role in online communication as opposed to my current role as a face to face teacher. It was a challenge as we had to work collaboratively as a team to facilitate tools for online communication. As our planning took shape, I discovered that we would need to use Zoom to present our topic. There, we would share our PowerPoint presentation on the Zoom as well as create zoom rooms to have our learners engage in the topic by having conversations. All of these required a certain ease with technology that I did not feel I had at the beginning of this course. Also, being the first class to present, I wasn't clear on how we were going to make all this happen. Luckily, other members of my group were fearless and took charge. I learned quickly that in online teaching, there are many technological pieces to moderate and mediate which need to be considered as you are planning. The facilitator needs create engaging learning communities by providing opportunities for learners to feel comfortable in the conversation and group work. In our presentation, we got participants to consider tools they had used and liked as well as to reflect on other possible tools to use in online communication. The evidence shows that in our planning, we considered the CoI model (Community of Inquiry) from Anderson et al. (1999) to make sure we were considering each presence (teacher, cognitive and social) to create an enriched week which would have participants reflect and work together in learning about online tools. We presented our topics and set activities for participants as well as provided a space to post work and to comment on others work. We did notice that we should have been clearer on where to specifically post work as it got a bit confusing at the beginning. We encouraged the use of different tools such as Twitter and Canva to represent work. We also made sure to connect with the group during the week by commenting on their work and to offer support where needed.

Being a moderator and mediating in online learning requires a very important presence from the facilitator. There needs to be an understanding of building rapport and managing groups. The facilitator needs to build engaging communities and provide resources based on current research and best practice. As an online facilitator, I would definitely consider the amount of information being provided to the learner. When introducing new learning, there needs to be clear expectations and models provided to ensure understanding. It's important to provide a variety of opportunities for the learners to show learning.

Garrison, D.R., Anderson, T., Archer, W. (1999) Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. The Internet and Higher Education 2(2), 87–105. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Community-of-Inquiry-Model-Source-Garrison-Anderson-Archer-16_fig1_266851119