

Final Reflection

EDTC 0550, Assignment #6

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How has my teaching style changed since the start of this course?

Since the beginning of this course I'm definitely more aware of the importance of student interactions and instructor presence. I've been a student of the 'sage from the stage' era and was very pleased to see the transformation to the 'guide and the side'. Learning about the Community of Inquiry model has really brought this home for me. I'm more overtly aware of the balance of the three areas: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence, and how important it is for the instructor to set the tone for a great learning experience.

Even in the PDAL programs I've seen the difference in my experience when my instructor is missing in action, versus popping in once in a while with a video and a comment in the discussion forum. To me it makes a HUGE difference to know that we are not left to fend for ourselves and that we, as students, are on the right track before we hand in our assignments. I learn a lot from my fellow students, but let's face it, I'm paying to also learn from the expert guidance of the facilitator. Throughout my time with PDAL I've also experienced courses that held less cognitive challenge for me, and those where I had to dig deeper to level up my experience. As I move forward in my online teaching experience, I will remember to be present, encourage students to learn from each other, encourage supplemental course content to enhance learning, and provide for a challenging experience in absorbing and applying out the course content.

Developing a deeper understanding of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Creative Commons has opened me up to the world of co-created content that I was not aware of before. I can see how it can contribute more easily to my content development, building upon what others have done, but also how I can combine efforts with my fellow positive psychology practitioners and researchers, and learning and development professionals to share what I'm developing. I'm looking forward to building my body of work with OER in mind.

One area that was another aha discovery for me was the further understanding of creative commons copyrights and copyright in general. In the past I was so concerned about boundaries and disrespecting what others had done, yet as we know there are no completely new ideas. We all build up one what has come before us. I now feel more confident in this area and feel freer to be creative while still respecting others. This was my first experience with Curriki Studios and I can see myself using it in my future work.

I felt that I had a pretty good grasp of hosting and facilitating online prior to this class. Much of my skills development comes from what I've learned through toastmasters. I host weekly meetings which helps me to learn how to present, use technology, speak on the fly and manage technologically glitches and new learners. I did learn even more from our unit on online facilitation and our zoom call. I learned about other creative ways to teach online from my classmates and received valuable feedback from a learning and development point of view.

In the area of learning theory, I'm now seeing how important connectivism is in my area of work and how my students will learn from each other. This deeper dive in connectivism and online learning has

been invaluable to me as I develop programs that combine course design technology (Thinkific), private social networks (Mighty Networks), and positive psychology content and interventions. In the work I do, much of the power comes from students learning from each other and taking each topic deeper.

Where do we go from here?

Recently I've been listening to the book, the Modern Artist's Way by Bridgette Mayer (<https://www.amazon.ca/Modern-Artists-Way-Successful-Creative/dp/0578606925>) and it's inspired me to see myself as an informational artist and to see my course creations as a body of work, in progress. This has inspired me to take more risks with my work and to try, fail and try again.

I'm excited to take the learnings from this course and create a library of courses of my own design, but also co-created with other subject matter experts in my industry. When I look over the course material from the past few weeks, I feel I can create an inviting virtual experience but there are always places that need work. Playing with technology to deliver content, engage students and extend learnings is one area. When I come across a new tool, I'm excited to see how I can imbed it in a new way. It's one way to use my strengths of curiosity and creativity. I'm excited about the new information that I've tapped into in this course and the Technology in Learning course from the spring. I feel like a new world has been opened up for me where I can enhance my creative teaching online and connect with others who are trailblazers in this area.

My next steps involve three areas:

1. Building my body of work by creating programs that develop skills related to positive psychology.
 - a. It's been shown through research that these skills can be learned just as well in a virtual setting and I look forward to creatively bringing these tools to others through online courses.
 - b. I have also started an online community to house my connectivism learning experience where students who are interested in the same topics can come together to share their experiences and learn from each other. I've been piloting a version of this program for the past 6 months with a group of university students and it's been very well received. My next steps are to launch it publicly.
2. Connect with businesses who need my help to refine their online learning in subjects related to positive psychology and wellbeing. I would like to partner with more organizations to help them create better virtual programming in topics related to wellbeing, mental health, positive psychology, etc. It's been shown that it can be delivered online. From a budget and distribution perspective, this is a great thing. The timing is perfect for this as the need is clearly there.
3. Continuing my learning in online teaching and program design, ideally at the graduate level or higher. I've been investigating courses at Athabaska University and Royal Roads University as options.

I'm grateful for this course and will miss this group as it's been my favourite of the PDAL courses thus far. I hope to stay connected with everyone in my group.