

Crafting meaningful reflections for my ePortfolio.

OLDT 501: Introduction to Online Learning

Evidence: Topic Four, Supporting a Learning Journey, Activity #4: Pecha Kucha.

Course outcome: Demonstrate basic competency with design and implementation within a variety of online learning environments and tools AND understand, design and commit to student success in online learning environments.

Pechu Kucha is a medium in which a concept is presented in a concise and fast paced format. For this activity, the projects objective was to promote our thinking of our current and future teaching online. Beginning with the phrase 'I Imagine ...' a series of slides with images portraying the attributes we associate with online learning were to be presented with associated words. The timing of 10 slides plus the opening slide of 'I Imagine' and final slide of 'I imagine Teaching Online ...' was to be set to music. The goal was to create an interesting visual narrative of our perception of teaching online. Images were to be collected from the online source Flickr and references cited.

I am new to the concept of teaching online and always saw it as the delivery of a package. This project helped highlight to me the simple conclusion that more than simple content parallels exist between the traditional and online classroom. Initially I thought that simply pulling a few words together and pasting some appropriate images would not be too difficult and wondered how this would force deeper thought from me regarding the online learning process. I was wrong.

I began with a single word that made me think of student engagement and began an image search. Quickly did I realize that the image was of great personal importance to me, it had to represent the beliefs that I associated word and in the context of my thoughts about online education. Then my second word had me thinking about its relationship to the first, and a theme emerged within the images that made sense to me. More words and images came and then the order needed addressing if the narrative I was trying to convey as to have any real meaning. If this was going to work, I needed to ensure it told my story, not just display a random assortment of words.

We had just completed a collaborative video session where theme was how school kills creativity. It suddenly occurred to me that I could bring my project to life by creating a movie rather than a PowerPoint. I wanted to use effects to draw the viewer into the image and make the words appear so that they were timed with anticipation of the images meaning. I was now really taking ownership of this project. Unfortunately my technical ability has never been much more than the person holding the camera before and this technology was all new to me.

Finally I needed to select a song, and just like the images and words just any song would not do. The more thought and research I put into it led me to 'Turn On The Sun' by the Beatles. My presentation was now making sense; I was making meaning of the words, images and songs in relation to my thoughts regarding online education.

The project itself made me think personally about what I wanted to achieve from this program and why. It helped me make the connection that I was collecting the work of others and presenting it as my own in a way that was truly mine in a meaningful way. It showed me that the array of resources available doesn't have to be a hindrance, but rather an opportunity to expand and follow an idea through to its completion. It allowed me to see that learning can be presented in different ways and that technology, even for me, can provide the opportunity to expand on what I am trying to express. This project, at least for me, highlighted many of the lessons that we have been taught so far, especially that the technology has the ability for us to reach out and collect a great array of resources from other talented people and use various tools to combine them to form a personal meaning about a concept that meets a goal.

Presented with an opportunity students can use a variety of online tools to complete research and how our understanding of student needs can enable us to design activities that use different formats to support and promote their success.