

OLTD 509
Reflection on Evidence 2

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate basic competency with design and implementation within a variety of online learning environments and tools.

Evidence: My OLTD ePortfolio website

Reflection:

This OLTD ePortfolio website was originally created in the first course of the OLTD program, 501, as a way to document and present my key learning throughout the OLTD program. It has been a work in progress over the past year and a half. The core quests completed in the first two weeks of OLTD 509 included an introduction to 7 design principles. After working through these quests, I spent some time further exploring web design principles and incorporating what I learned into my own ePortfolio site, creating the revised version presented here as evidence that I have developed basic competency with design and implementation that could be applied when using a variety of online learning environments and tools.

Through my work developing and redesigning this ePortfolio site I have learned how to use Weebly as a website builder, and I have also explored other similar tools such as Google sites and Wix. I have become more familiar with the capabilities and affordances of these various platforms, with the limitations that exist when using these types of tools, and with some possibilities for circumventing some of the surface limitations to allow for greater customization. For example, when revising my site I was not happy with the button options available within Weebly as I felt they did not fit well with the visual design of the site, so I decided to create image icons for the Evidence Of Learning and Reflections on Evidence buttons using Canva, then used these images with links attached as alternate buttons. I wanted the user to have a visual cue when the mouse was hovering over the clickable area of the icon, so I did some searching online and learned how to access and edit the HTML/CSS in my site to change the opacity of the images when hovered over.

Through the design focused core quests and my follow up work on my ePortfolio site I also about the Gutenberg Diagram, Z-Pattern and F-Pattern, and how these can

be applied when working with text-heavy content in designs, as well as the following seven design principles:

1. Intuitive structure
2. Visual hierarchy
3. Accessibility
4. Hick's Law
5. Fitt's Law
6. Communication and Content
7. White Space and Simplicity

I think my ePortfolio site demonstrates that I am able to effectively apply these elements of design in order to create a site that is visually pleasing and simple and effective for the user.

Being competent with design and implementation within a variety of online learning environments and tools is important to me as an online teacher because design is an important component of the overall user experience online along with functionality. In website, app, or any other human/device interaction design, the user experience (UX) overall is what tries to fulfill the needs of the user (Rocket55). A well designed site that is aesthetically pleasing and functions well enhances user engagement and helps to ensure that the user will finish what they need to do with the tool. Minimizing the time and effort required for the user to achieve their goals through good design helps to prevent them from abandoning their task (Eaton, 2018). As a teacher, I want to ensure that my students are able to achieve the educational objectives and complete the learning tasks presented to them using online tools such as a website or a learning management system. In using various learning management systems including Canvas and D2L, I have found that often the pre-made courses that we are provided with focus heavily on the content and could use significant revisions in the area of design in order to enhance engagement and the level of accessibility by students. Many courses that we create ourselves as teachers also struggle in this area as elements of design and user experience have not traditionally been a part of our teacher preparation education. Having an increased understanding of the importance of design in online learning environments and of the elements of design discussed earlier in this reflection will support me in developing and revising many of the online courses that I use in my current blended learning teaching role to enhance the overall user experience for my students which I believe will support their enhanced learning in this environment.

References:

Eaton, T. (2018, May 17). The power of good UI and how it enhances engagement. UX Collective. Retrieved from <https://uxdesign.cc/the-power-of-good-user-interface-and-how-it-enhances-engagement-the-new-currency-in-the-digital-43a59bcd9bda>

Rocket 55. (2020). *The importance of user experience*. Retrieved from <https://www.rocket55.com/lab-note/the-importance-of-user-experience/>