OLTD 510
Reflection on Evidence 1

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Examine current research around best practices and emerging practices

Evidence: Research Methods Glossary of Terms

Reflection:

Completed in week three of the OLTD 510 course, this Research Methods Glossary of Terms includes definitions for twelve terms that I believed to be key to the topic of research methods and methodologies. A recorded Research Methods 101 presentation by Rachel Moll, current Associate Dean at VIU, provided the foundational source of information for my glossary of terms presentation. I then followed up by accessing additional texts on this topic for some clarification and extended explanation and examples of the various research orientations and methodologies in order to solidify my understanding.

As a result of creating this glossary of terms I refamiliarized myself with the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research orientations and developed an enhanced understanding of the strengths and limitations of each of these orientations, particularly in the field of educational research. Having a more comprehensive understanding of the research orientations and various methodologies that can be employed will allow me to more effectively examine current research around best practices and emerging practices in education. When conducting research for my critical challenge questions I already felt better equipped to understand the range of research articles that I read and better able to analyze the validity and reliability of the findings presented based upon the methods applied in the study itself and the analysis of the data presented by the authors. Increasing familiarity with the organizational structures of published research articles makes them seem much more approachable and I know that moving forward I will continue to be more likely to seek out a range of research based articles as sources of information about best and emerging practices rather than relying as heavily on less formal sources such as blog posts. While I believe these do have their place for sharing and exploring ideas, empirical data is a more reliable source on which to base important educational decisions.

Prior to researching and producing this glossary, the thought of conducting a study and sharing findings for possible publication remained quite daunting, particularly when thinking about research in the more traditional sense of the quantitative, experimental design. This learning task however asserted the strengths of qualitative and mixed methods research in my mind, particular in the realm of education where "experiments" are not generally plausible nor would they be ethical. Case studies, narrative studies and action research stood out to me as particularly approachable methods. When researching my critical challenge question I once again noted the gap in available research around online learning at the K-12 level and I believe that it is important for practicing educators to step in and help fill this gap so that we can move our collective knowledge forward and continue to develop and implement research supported strategies that will best support our learners. This enhanced knowledge of the research processes can help me and others take the first steps towards not only accessing but also creating the research.