

**CRAFTING MEANINGFUL RELECTIONS FOR ePORTFOLIO**

**by Kris Sward**

**Evidence: My Theory of Online Learning**

**OLTD Outcome Addressed:** Integrate current cognitive learning and brain-based learning theory

In order to show evidence of my learning in OLTD 501, I chose to share my own Theory of Online Learning. Created in 501 Topic 3: Design for Online Learning, my model outlines my priorities when it comes to online learning. I developed a sort of continuum that holds the course content in between the learner and teacher and presents it as a malleable entity that can adapt to the integration of new information and resources. In this way it is loosely based on connectivist principles.

I am not a theorist in any right and struggle to find my way through the onerous amounts of educational theory that have been amassed through the years. In trying to match my beliefs to a known theorist I find myself somewhere in a mix of constructivist and connectivist ideas. Using mobile devices and technology in my classroom I feel very much aligned with the ideas of Siemens when it comes to his beliefs that it is no longer a matter of what you know, but how you access, comprehend and contextualize information that is so readily available. However I also feel that knowledge is developed and added to by means of shared experiences. I really struggled to find my way through the creation of this model and was surprised and delighted to get such a good mark on it. When it comes down to it, though, it does reflect my own personal beliefs about teaching (online or not): that communication is the key, building respectful collaborative relationships is a necessity and that the student and teacher can work together to determine what content is covered and how.

Theory is definitely a challenge for me to muddle my way through and having to create my own model required me to really reflect on what I saw as being important in an online course. As my experience is limited, I used what I've learned in 501 and what I liked about how the course was presented to identify necessary structures and components of online learning. In a way this project helped me to solidify my beliefs in best practices in teaching, adapted as they would be for an online environment.

Good teaching is rooted in proven understandings and theories. In moving forward in my own teaching and learning, it is important to understand where I have come from, how I learn and how I can transfer those understandings into my teaching to benefit my students.