# OLTD 503 ePortfolio Reflection #1

OLTD Program Learning Outcome(s):

- Undertake engagement with environments through online facilitation for effective learning
  - Moderation and mediation
  - Understand how to build rapport and manage groups
    - establish relationships with learners and families
    - build teacher to student rapport
    - engage in building learning communities and communities of practice
- Plan learning opportunities most suitable to the strengths and challenges of a variety of Environments

Evidence:

- Learner Led Seminar – Tools for Online Communication
- https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xSEQOdj_dNPiDZ8dSCCkaNjZ-DDlwu-0uvriPwbNULI/edit?usp=sharing
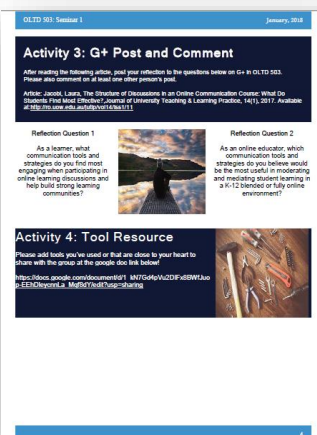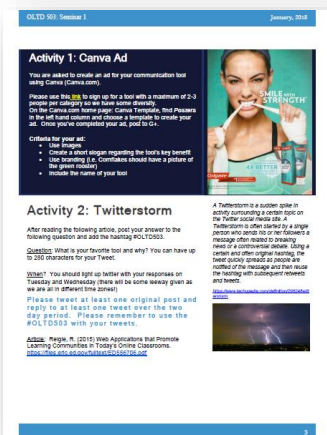
Reflection:

The piece of evidence I have chosen to support these learning outcomes is the Learner Led Seminar on Tools for Online Communication that my group and I planned during the week of January 5-11 2018 and facilitated during the week of January 12-18, 2018. Our seminar started with a live synchronous video conference session via Zoom on Friday Jan. 12th and continued with asynchronous learning activities posted on Google+ and Twitter from Jan. 12th-18th.

This seminar was my first experience planning and facilitating a lesson or unit in a fully online learning environment and I learned a great deal about the logistics and online communication skills required to be successful. I learned that clearly communicating instructions and expectations is even more important in an online environment where you are not able to physically see and check-in with your students to provide assistance and guidance. I also learned how valuable video conferencing is in creating a community environment at the start of the unit so that the instructors and students feel more connected and comfortable participating in the activities during the rest of the course. Our seminar topic was Tools for Online Communication and in preparing for the seminar and facilitating group discussions in our Zoom session I also became much more knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the most common tools for communicating online: email, newsletters, video chat, discussion forums, blogs, instant messaging, and social media. I found the break-out group discussions and reporting back to the whole group we did to be a very useful learning experience for myself. Taking advantage of the collective knowledge of the group is a fantastic way to learn. I think the strength of this piece of evidence is the fact that it allowed me to learn about online communication and facilitation by actually doing it. This experience was far more valuable than reading any journal article or completing any learning activity could have been.

The learning outcomes of planning online learning opportunities, online facilitation for effective learning, establishing relationships with learners, and building learning communities are of critical importance to me as an effective online teacher. These are the real world tangible skills that anyone who wants to be successful teaching an online class must have. Readings and theories are important and useful but actually having an opportunity to plan and facilitate an online class is the most valuable learning experience I have had to date in the OLTD program. Now that I have had the opportunity to do this I feel much more confident in my ability to facilitate an online course and am aware of aspects that I would not have thought of if I had just read about it and not actually practiced doing it. Experience is the best teacher and accomplishing these learning outcomes allowed me to gain some of it.