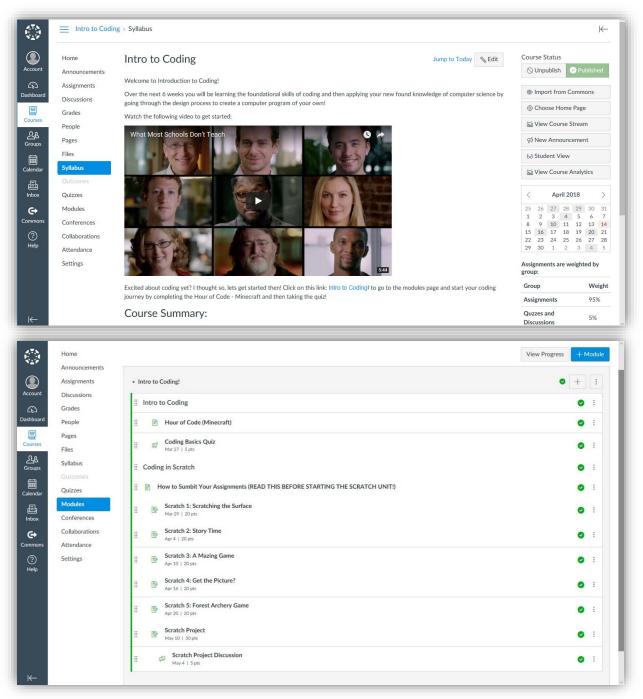# OLTD 504 ePortfolio Reflection #1

OLTD Program Learning Outcome(s):
- Be familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to Learning Management Systems (LMS) and non-LMS environments.
- Demonstrate basic competency with design and implementation within a variety of LMS and non-LMS environments and tools.
- Plan learning opportunities most suitable to the strengths and challenges of a variety of LMS and non-LMS environments.

Evidence:
LMS Unit Build in Canvas
https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/1300323

Reflection:
The piece of evidence I have chosen to support these learning outcomes is the LMS Unit Build assignment that I completed during the week of March 23 to 29, 2018 using the free version Canvas learning management software. Prior to starting this unit build I familiarized myself with Canvas by experimenting with the software in a test course, creating a screencast for my fellow cohort members to view, and by watching the screencasts that other cohort members made. In order to make this assignment as relevant and useful as possible, I created a fully functional introduction to coding unit that I could use when teaching the 6-week long Digital Literacy/Coding course that my school runs as a part of our grade 8 ADST rotation.

In completing this assignment, I was able to learn through first hand experience how to design and plan a real learning opportunity that I could use to teach an online course. I had had a fair amount of experience with Schoology learning management software prior to starting this assignment but I had always used LMS software in a face to face classroom setting and because of this my instructions on the LMS were not as robust/detailed as they needed to be if I were not in the room with the students to introduce the course and go over the material. Creating this unit in Canvas really allowed me to take a step back and evaluate how effective the units I had already been using in Schoology are through a more informed, experienced, and educated lens. After creating this unit in Canvas, I was able to use the material to refine my introduction to coding unit in Schoology which I feel has improved the learning experience for my students in that course. This opportunity allowed me to refine my understanding of LMS software by allowing me the opportunity to transfer my previous knowledge to a new LMS. This solidified my understanding of common terms and elements that make up all LMS and has made me even more confident in my ability to quickly learn how to effectively use any LMS I may come across in the future. The main strength of this evidence piece is that, more than assignment I have completed in OLTD thus far, it provided a hands-on learning opportunity to create something real that I can use in my classroom.

I feel that these OLTD program learning outcomes are critical to the success of any online educator. In an online learning environment where there is no physical classroom space and you are unable to provide face-to-face instructions and support for your students, having the knowledge and technical skills to use learning management software to design learning experiences that allow for effective and efficient presentation, communication, support, and assessment is incredibly important. In an online learning environment, the LMS replaces the classroom space and provides a home base and structure which facilitates and organizes the learning experience. An online course without an effectively designed LMS home base will feel very disorganized and confusing for students, which can lead to increased levels of frustration and disconnection with the course. When students feel disconnected with the course, instructor, and their peers it can lead to a lack of motivation and lower success rates. If an online educator has a strong understanding of the key elements of any one LMS, they will be able to transfer that knowledge to any new LMS that they may encounter in their career. A strong foundation of digital literacy will allow an online educator to adapt to the ever changing and evolving set of online tools and websites that they will be required to use when designing learning experiences. I will implement what I have learned from these outcomes into my own practice by continuing to refine the LMS that I use in my classroom to better support and engage students.