OLTD 504 Reflection
Evidence 2 – Non-Learning Management (LMS) Tools

OLTD Program Learning Outcome:
Students will explore learning management and content management systems for hosting and organizing online learning activity. Investigations will look at proprietary (e.g., Desire2Learn), open source (e.g., Moodle), and non-traditional systems (e.g., Web 2.0) regarding the pros and cons and technical competencies for the design of learning activities and course management.

This reflection of Non-LMS tools is divided into four parts to address the following overarching critical challenge question:

How can Learning Management Systems (LMS and/or Non-LMS) help me develop learning experiences where students learn in the best way for them (teacher-structured/personalized), while providing me with the tools I require for efficient and efficacious presentation, moderation, support, and assessment (for, as, and of learning)?

1. **What are some overarching principles that I follow in designing my courses?**
   An important principle is that there needs to be flow in the courses that I teach. The engagement needs to be effortless, timeliness and pleasurable. It should feel like a we are creating a community with lots of laughter and support. I realize that it difficult in some of the sessions, however I believe that elements can be incorporated into each session. Whalen (1999) describes the flow theory by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as an optimal state of immersed concentration in which attention is centered, distractions are minimized, and the person attains an enjoyable give-and-take with his or her activity.

   Allow me to explain how I incorporate flow and build community through the Canadian Mental Health Association, Living Life to the Full eight-week program. It is an introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. I recently facilitated this program to the Stroke Recovery Association of British Columbia. These are people, ranging in ages from 25-65, who have had a stroke. In each session I start with an icebreaker allowing people to share how their week has been and talk about how they incorporated (or not) the previous weeks' learnings into their week. I use a variety of tools including the whiteboard feature on Zoom, cartoons, a few words to describe their week, etc. Throughout it all I allow people the time that they need to express themselves and use laughter to ease the tension in the Zoom room. By the end of the eight-week session there were lots of tears, along with laughter. We continue to keep in touch with each other through WhatsApp.

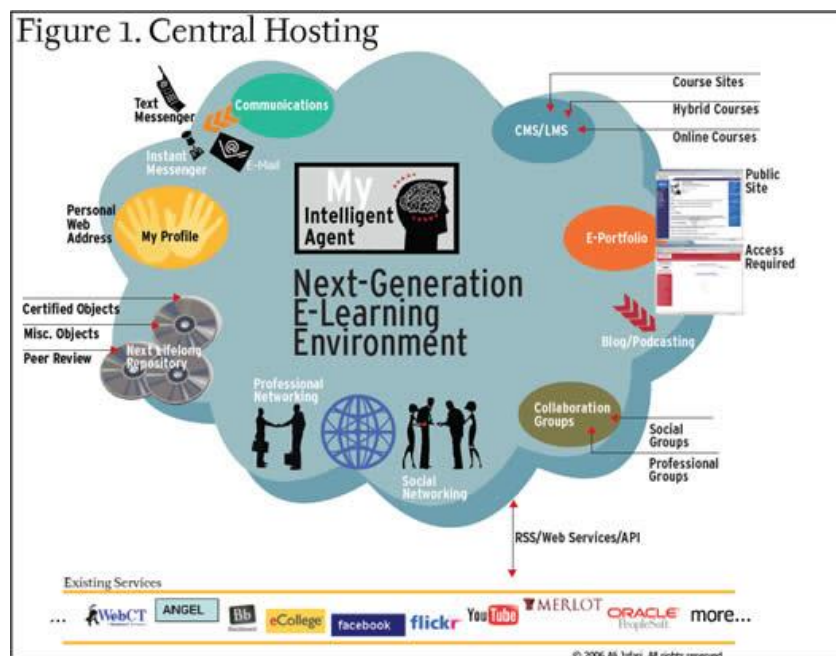2. **What are the tools that I need for building community?**
   The tools that I use primarily are through the activities that I design and deliver. I use MURAL for an activity called "The Happiness Grid" https://app.mural.co/invitation/mural/mcmfacilitationtraining4301/1592249168057?sender=mcmfacilitation7412&key=04ef5908-4ddd-44f0-9464-5f6a91276e83 This is to demonstrate that we are not always in a level five on our happiness scale, and it is ok to be at a level one or two.

   I also use Flipgrid to introduce myself and explain what the session will be. It is a great forum for creating teacher presence, but also for people to communicate and create community with each other.

Finally, I use Padlet for a variety of activities. I post a question about the topic that we are discussing and allow people to anonymously respond to where they are it with it?

3. **What criteria do I use in deciding whether an LMS meets the learning needs of the course participants that I work with?**
Some of the criteria that I have is that whatever tool I chose it must work for me first as an educator. If I cannot figure out how to use it then I know that I will be stumbling along in the course. Jafari, et. al. (2006) describes the need to compatible and interoperable and integrate with other systems. That is extremely important to me. Jafari (2006) goes on to state that any tool (or system) needs to consider the stakeholder by being globally accessible, around for the long-term, be a self-contained toolbox, cost-effective, and smart. Here is a great graphic of this:

`Source: https://er.educause.edu/articles/2006/1/managing-courses-defining-learning-what-faculty-students-and-administrators-want

Secondly, it must be accessible for the participants. I do not want people having to sign up for something. They need to link into it with an access code. Pugliese (2012) describes this as open architecture and says the following:

> Open" here means what the word itself implies: open interaction, sharing, and connection. Open, as in open source, means there is a body of open intellectual property, be it a technology platform, source code, or global access to open content, which can be leveraged within an established community of contributors.

4. **What tools are best for participants for expressing themselves (i.e., blogging, learning journals, chats, etc.).**
I find that the best tools for expressing themselves are in the chat on Zoom, and through the Whiteboard. Often, the participants who are not familiar with technology can talk and I will write it on the whiteboard.

Following the sessions, I encourage everyone to journal and show a video on the health benefits to journaling. I share this article with the participants about online journaling apps https://zapier.com/blog/best-journaling-apps//.

Sources:

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