Capstone ePortfolio

Summative Introduction

When I started the masters program, all the program requirements were just a bit overwhelming. I was unfamiliar with instructional design and had never even heard of AECT. When I first read the AECT Rubrics, I thought to myself, "I will never make it through this program - it all seems too difficult".

Fast forward a few years (and countless hours of work!) and it all has started to come together. There were actually several pivotal points and a number of "A-ha!" moments.

One of the first times I recall starting to change my perspective was during the time I was working on my Needs Assessment paper. I had always intended on learning more about Universal Design for Learning and the principles behind the theory, but I had never researched the available literature. When I started that research, I began to see the range of opinions and research surrounding what is referred to a brain-based learning. It was truly an eye opening experience and caused me to investigate further and head down unanticipated paths. At first, I found all the information very disconcerting, but was able to make my way through the research and work from there. It also made me realize all the research that is being done on brain-based learning and helped me develop an interest in learning more about the topic. I've started to follow developments in several different areas and find the entire field fascinating.

Another pivotal point in my studies occurred during my Instructional Design efforts in the course EDUC 885, Technology and Teacher Learning. I came from a very technical background and my perspective was from a very technical point of view. Most of my previous instructional design efforts were focused around teaching a specific technology. As a result of
this particular course, I completely changed my perspective about how technology should be approached and included in instruction. I began to understand how the complex interplay among the three primary forms of knowledge (content, pedagogy and technology - reflected in a framework known as TPACK) affected how teachers integrated technology into their practice.

![Diagram of TPACK model]

Figure 1 - Image from tpack.org

From that point forward, I never approached lesson development the same way again. It forced me to see things from a teacher’s perspective and design instructional material focused on a combination of factors, not technology alone. I believe that this has helped make me a more effective educator.

**Artifacts Documenting AECT Standards**

One of the instructional tools that I created to support a series of training's that I was conducting as part of my Instructional Design work was inspired by this course. It is a resource available as a wiki and can be found here. When conducting professional development I will provide them with different links depending on their area of interest. For those who are more
visual learners, I also created an online concept map front end to the wiki which directs users to links to specific areas. It can be found [here](#).

All the "pieces" of what I've learned during this journey really came together during the time I spent preparing for my Curriculum Project, which involved designing a master’s level course covering Universal Design for Learning. While it was a truly overwhelming experience from the amount of time it took and the design work required, it was also a truly rewarding experience. The participants who took the class seemed thoroughly engaged throughout the five week session. And the lessons that many of them created were outstanding! You can find a sample (in PDF form) of a student’s lesson transformation [here](#). The before and after versions are both included.

To provide additional learning supports to the participants, I used Sakai as the learning management system. This allowed me considerable flexibility in providing additional resources that we did not have time to cover in class. The use of the Sakai wiki tool allowed me to quickly provide access to a vast number of resources. The course is still available in Sakai and the wiki still exists. In order to easily show the content of the wiki, I saved the information in PDF form so it would be easy to share as an artifact. It can be found [here](#), or on my Curriculum Project page under "Artifacts from Design and Implementation".

**Technical Quality of ePortfolio Design**

Another significant milestone during this process was the development of the ability to create web content. This was in large part enhanced by Dr. Hofstetter's classes and his video tutorials. The video tutorials provided the ability to go over lessons time and time again until I finally got it. I started this process being afraid of using a web development and finished by
creating content directly with the tool. Along the way I picked up enough skills to design, create, debug and manipulate web content. There is much more that I could learn, and as I've experienced in the past with other tools, the tools are constantly shifting. But this process gave me the skills to put together this electronic portfolio, and do it in relatively simple and elegant way. You can compare my early efforts at web design by comparing this [early web page](#) to this [later page](#) that is part of my current ePortfolio. I also had the opportunity to create a multimedia presentation that is embedded in the [Personal](#) page of my ePortfolio. It can also be found on [YouTube](#).