**Learning Module Final Reflection**

Following are my final reflections on the learning module project for EDCI 57500, Foundations of Distance Learning. The course I created was based on Opera Appreciation. The first module was about the opera, Tosca.

I was very pleased to learn that the six instructional design activities that we created in the beginning of our course made the actual construction of the final module much easier. It seemed as if all the “hard” work had been done by the time we got to Course Sites; it was as if all we had to do in the end was fill in the colors of a black and white paint-by-numbers canvas. I believe this was the most enlightening moment of all for me. I was gratified to learn that I was able to be creative and even inspiring with my subject. When the technology that I had chosen to use went off without a hitch, I was delighted. I learned much from my peers and developed relationships that will continue beyond the time and scope of EDCI 57500. Lastly, I enjoyed learning even more about the subject myself.

Most of the obstacles I ran into were either self-created or related to the course management system itself. My objectives were broad and I felt I needed to address all angles of each topic. I had also charged myself with a difficult set of learners in order to challenge myself. As for Blackboard, I found the software limiting, clunky and, frankly, out-of-date. I don’t think Course Sites is the most intuitive LMS software for designers, instructors or learners. My attempts to integrate more interaction with instant messaging and/or video chat went by the wayside when I realized the creation process was too involved for the time allotted. Just another little note: some of the texts that were referenced for this course had been acquired and read by the more experienced students, but not readily available to others or myself.

I felt as if I was missing a much larger picture in the beginning of this course. It would have been helpful to know more about the role of the hypothetical learners in our scenarios. Also, knowing now that the IDAs were part of an iterative process, I would have liked the opportunity to go back to align the activities with the final product for presentation and portfolio purposes.

The next time I have an opportunity to create a learning module with the same set of circumstances, I will be sure to create an “on-boarding” component that could be used as a generic introduction to the LMS and the course itself. I would like to have had more time to explore some of the course structures that Course Sites had to offer and relate them to the learning theories we had studied in EDCI 531. I have a feeling I could have chosen a structure that would have been more suited to the content – without having as much to change. I should have taken more time to explore the “skeleton” of the course in the very beginning. Next time, I will pare down my objectives in number and complexity. Finally, I found myself using many copyrighted materials for time’s sake where I could have created my own. It would have been interesting to go through the process of asking for copyright permission from the owners of the videos – instead of relying on “fair use.”

The process of peer feedback created peer-to-peer relationships, more interactivity and a sense of community. Partnering with my classmate and also a friend from outside of school was very enlightening, in that I learned how much we tend to **assume** about our learners as designers and instructors. By receiving feedback from peers that had no previous experience with the subject matter, I gained a whole different perspective in regard to content, direction and priorities. My peer reviews also allowed me the opportunity to test the technical challenges and confirm the feasibility of the chosen media on other systems in completely different scenarios.

Overall, this experience inspired me to ask myself “What is it that is unique to an LMS?” From my limited experience, the answers would include grading management, integrated calendars, affiliations with academic institutions, learning theory frameworks, LMS and computer standards already in existence and an absence of commercial use. A passion was excited in me to learn more about the world of LMSs in order to uncover the history and best practices in the field. Knowing there are partial solutions out there that can be utilized in a much more creative and effective way, I am compelled to explore different options.

In general, this course was challenging and very time consuming for a student like myself that has only had one theory course (EDCI 531) behind them. I question whether taking this course was an appropriate elective for me at this stage of my learning process. I was uncomfortable leaving the safety of my cohort class so soon, but having the same instructor for this class helped me tremendously. Dr. van Barneveld was the continuous thread that I could rely upon to provide guidance, inspiration, feedback and a sense of place.

I learned so much by designing and creating this course. I am grateful for the challenge and the opportunity to stretch my limits. I am sure this learning experience will serve me well in the rest of this program!