

Personal reflection on learning and communicating online course

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



As an online learner with Swinburne University, seeking to be a qualified teacher, this unit has taught me that learning and communicating in the online environment is an essential skill I need to fully understand to complete my bachelor's in teaching. I have learned how to utilize the importance of online media and how it will have a major impact on my future studies and career. I've been encouraged to find and understand the original source of my information, evaluating its credibility within the academic environment. In this personal reflection I will discuss the extent in which my knowledge of the online environment has grown, and the factors in which have contributed to the development of my unit and course goals.

At the beginning of this unit I was unsure of what skills I would need to succeed in my course and was unfamiliar with the nature of online learning. Through participating in the COM10003 unit's assessment tasks, weekly readings, collaboration sessions and discussions boards I feel much more confident and less daunted by the thought of learning online. Although I still feel I have a long way to go I feel as though I am on the right path to getting to where I want to be. I have discovered the need for reflection upon my learning to fully understand what I have learnt. As Dewey once said ' We do not learn from experience.. We learn from reflecting on experience" My knowledge of understanding whether or not something is credible or now has significantly developed. Having learnt about Metzgars Criteria and following the necessary requirements to decipher if something is credible or not has really helped me with my academic writing thus far.

Furthermore, during my learning experience in this unit, I have better developed my communication skills, which I feel is the most important skill to have. Not only have I learned to communicate online with others whom I don't know but also outside of the online environment. I am naturally an outgoing bubbly person but really struggle with asking for help when I need it. I have found that branching out and asking others to read over my work or help me better understand some of the tasks online has really helped broaden my communication skills. Studying studies at 31, with two kids and having a full-time job hasn't been easy however, I have gained the confidence I need with asking my teachers for help and watching informative videos in the collaboration sessions which have helped me better understand the task at hand. Building on my communication skills will help me in the future as it will allow me the confidence when speaking with my students and colleagues. When I started this unit, I had absolutely no knowledge of referencing. Having left school at the beginning of year 10 I have never written an essay, never used referencing in my life.

This unit has taught me of the importance of referencing. As Summers, Smith (2014, p. 21) says, Referencing is one of the most important parts of the individual's work as it's not only to avoid plagiarism and acknowledge others' effort, it is also to help us record the information we have found so as we can refer to it when needed. Referencing is still something I feel as though I struggle with and is not my strong point. Sometimes I'm not sure if I reference too much or not enough. I have learned that I must reference my findings however, as I work in a primary school I have along the way picked

up valuable information through attending professional development days that I find useful in my academic writing and therefore am unable to reference this knowledge. As someone who is new to the online learning experience I thought that any web source on the internet was trusted. After reading Metzger (2007) and learning how to analyze if an article is a credible source or not, I realized that in the past I have many a times applied random, online advice that was inaccurate to my personal life or the situation. Metzger (2007) encourages students to evaluate the credibility of online sources before using them in our academic writing. I am now much more aware of the nature of information on the internet and how it can both help as well as hinder when producing academic research and writing. I need to be sure to source information that is reliable by using the evaluation techniques set out by Metzger (2007) as it helps me to assess the accuracy, objectivity, currency and coverage of the information or source. I now find myself steering clear from websites unknown to me and instead focusing on the readings available to me in my course as well as engaging in the collaboration sessions and group learning boards.

My main goal over the duration of this unit was to plan and organize time for my studies as well as maintain a healthy family/work/study balance. I found it easier to print off the essential readings whilst at work and highlight the bits I found useful as I read through them. As staring at a computer reading pages and pages of information strains my eyes, I found this way was much easier for me and highlighting points of interested made it easier when referencing my findings. I also found that it meant I could read texts while

sitting in the car waiting for my horse to eat his dinner, or while my daughter was having a riding lesson. It also meant that my studies were able to travel with me and didn't always imprison me to my laptop. I also found that working at a school is beneficial as I can put some of the things I have learnt into practice and see firsthand what it looks like. Another goal I wanted to achieve over the duration of this unit was to develop better strategies to construct my own knowledge effectively. Having only ever learnt in a classroom environment when I was in school, the thought of having to learn online without a teacher present was daunting and had me second guessing about studying online.

Knowledge had always been transmitted to me via teacher. This is known as the transmission model of education where the teacher has the authority to deliver facts and evaluate learning outcomes. In week 6 of the Learning and Communicating Online course I learnt about other modules of learning such as metacognition and constructivism. Constructivism states that New information is linked to prior knowledge, thus mental representations are subjective. The learner is not a blank slate (tabula rasa) but brings past experiences and cultural factors to a situation. Learning about the different modules of learning has really opened my eyes up to different forms of learning and I feel as though this will help me in the future. By the end of my studies, my main goal is to become an early childhood educator. Although I am only one teaching period in, already I can envision myself in a teaching position. I have been utilizing the skills I have learnt so far when working not only with my own children at home, but also with the children at work. I find

it empowering that I have taken a whole new approach on how to help best develop language in the students who are a part of my language groups and am already seeing their language develop and them then being able to transition into a guided reading group with the rest of their classmates. Seeing such progress makes me thirsty for knowledge and makes me excited to one day be teaching an entire classroom of my own students. Early childhood educators are the first people to introduce children to the world of education. They form meaningful bonds with the children in their care, and their interactions, behaviors, and teaching practices all influence children's development, as well as their later school readiness.

One of my goals that I struggled with the most was to be more active on the online discussion board. Although it's not as confronting as putting your hand up in classroom full of people and asking a silly question, I still found myself holding back when I was unsure of something and just hoped that someone else would ask the same question. Everyone online has been amazing and super supportive that I now don't feel that I need to hide behind my keyboard and that we are all in this together so just ask the question and let people help me. I feel that being more active on the discussion board will be beneficial to me in my future studies as bouncing ideas off my fellow classmates will help me when consolidating my knowledge.

As this unit comes to an end, the past 11 weeks of studying Learning and Communicating Online, I have learnt many key skills that I feel are very important and that I will use and transfer across all units of study as I complete my Bachelor of Education through Swinburne Online. By continuing

to build on my new media literacy and novel and adaptive thinking skills I will be better prepared to face my future workforce and build confidence as I continue to learn online. It hasn't been easy establishing this new-found knowledge in such a short duration of time however and I feel confident that despite at times I feel overwhelmed and unsure in my academic writing, with hard work, persistence and practice, I feel as though I will get there and this will show in my grades in the future as well as be present in my future career.

The beginning of Nike's controversial ad features a teenage boy skateboarding on a rail and continuously falling onto the ground. It also references two young boys with no legs wrestling on a mat, a female Muslim boxer, a girl in a wheelchair dribbling a couple basketballs, and a Ghanaian teenage refugee playing for a national soccer team. These recurring clips inspire the audience to overcome adversity, and the hardships these individuals face show the audience that despite the challenges, anyone can be a champion. The commercial goes on to acknowledge the accomplishments of successful athletes such as LeBron James and Serena Williams who have overcome numerous barriers to become the best of the best in the sports industry. Using these public figures and ordinary individuals, Nike presents the idea that one can accomplish anything regardless of what their role in society is.

In the middle of the advertisement, Colin Kaepernick vocalizes a phrase that becomes the center of attention and relates to the ethos, " Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything." This statement

references his original protest, and his choice to stand up against police brutality and other social injustices that resulted in him losing his place on the football field. Detractors believe Nike endorsed Kaepernick to invoke debate because in the business world, controversy sells. However, after being blackballed by the NFL, Nike gave Kaepernick a platform to voice his means of protest on a national scale. Kaepernick gives a voice to people who are marginalized and continue to face discrimination, adversity, and physical disabilities, among other things. Towards the end it is Colin Kaepernick's voice and his image are shown to inspire individuals, appealing to the pathos, speaking the words " Don't ask if your dreams are crazy, ask if they're crazy enough". This quote encourages the audience to keep dreaming even if it doesn't seem possible. Negative judgments often force people to question if their dream is worth pursuing. Those who face adversity feel as though the challenges they endure prevents them from accomplishing great things. Nike goes on to dispute these claims by using the aforementioned visuals of kids without legs and a woman in a wheelchair persevering through adversity which fills the audience with a sense of purpose, and motivation to not only pursue their goals in the face of opposition, but attack them.

The negative responses incited by Nike's ad are a tangible representation of the emotional impact of the " Just Do It" campaign. Angry Americans across the country have been taking the situation into their own hands by burning and throwing away their Nike apparel to protest against the usage of Colin Kaepernick in their video. The #BurnYourNikes and #NikeBoycott hashtags

have been demonstrated in the social media world to promote the rebellious actions of many individuals that disapprove of what this advertisement is endorsing. Some have pledged to take their business elsewhere, specifically to Nike's competitors, Adidas and Puma. Others have gone out to Nike stores to buy their products just so they can burn it later on. In the light of these responses Nike's share in the stock market plummeted but rose again following the release of the commercial. They continue to remain sports gear's highest selling company despite the negative backlash. After all the emotion invoked by the advertisement, Nike and Colin Kaepernick received millions of dollars in revenue from the promotion of the ad and Kaepernick was granted a larger stage to protest.

The effectiveness of this advertisement is very significant and apparent as it implemented people who have been socially and physically challenged by society. Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and Tamir Rice are lives that were taken from the world too soon due to the racial bias that poisons many communities all across the nation. There is complete unanimity between Nike and Colin Kaepernick as they joined together to address and, in a way, combat these social issues. Nike presents an inclusionary message to encourage individuals to pursue their dreams regardless of the personal or physical barriers that may stand in the way. By integrating the difficulties presented by missing appendages, destitution, and gender stereotypes in sports, Nike straightens the specifics of these deterrents. Rather, the company presents them as proportional character-building challenges, voicing that it takes hard work and determination to

prevail. Nike connects with its young and older audience by using individuals of all ages to convey the encouraging message. By including ten-year-old boys who wrestle without any legs and run continuously on a dirt road, Nike appeals to the young generation of the world. They provide them with evidence that even people as young as eight or nine can achieve overarching goals in the face of all the barriers in their way. Referencing older, ordinary individuals while also implementing triumphant athletes inspires Nike's older audience to never settle for less than what they deserve and to remain positive in the light of negativity. In an era of such exclusion and societal division, Nike and Colin Kaepernick generated both positive and negative attention aiming their focus on social equality. After the release of the advertisement, perhaps other high-profile companies will take a stand against issues that hold great importance.

Nike's commercial encompasses numerous meanings that the nation and possibly the world will take into consideration. Social injustices remain intact because there is nothing being done about it. People who are socially disadvantaged aren't being heard because they don't have a voice to speak up against these issues. However, with their prominent social status, and bountiful resources, multi-billion dollar companies do.