

Blogging/Reflective Writing as Learning Methods

Expert: Jonathan Hewett, Chair: Roland Stanbridge

What is the place of reflection in journalism education? How can blogging help students to think more deeply about their journalism practice, and improve it? How can we make blogging and reflection work effectively both for teaching/learning and for journalism? This syndicate group will consider such questions, share experiences, and discuss practical methods of blogging in journalism education.

Reflection

- considered an essential part of critical thinking
 - critical evaluation, analysis, awareness – and reflection
- required in many academic programmes
- traditionally expected and assessed in academic essays
- in applied/'practical' subjects (such as journalism), part of reflective practice

Place of reflection in journalism education

- may include traditional academic assignments, such as essays
- what about the applied/practical journalism?
 - i.e. in practice-based programmes that use experiential learning ('learning by doing')
- risk of separating theory and practice?
- not always assessed explicitly – is it present?

Potential advantages of blogging for reflection

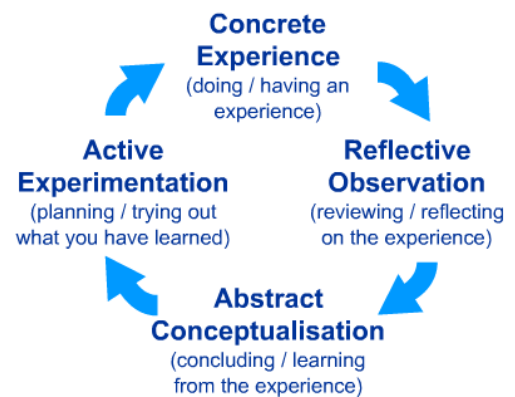
- feedback system built in (comments)
- contextualised learning
- encourages discussion and critical thinking
 - points published, queried, discussed
- collaborative, student-centred
- active learning, higher-order thinking
- social constructivist approach?

Context of journalism

- immediate professional relevance
- introduction to
 - blogging
 - CMS concepts
 - RSS, social media
 - online/multimedia journalism...
- professional networking/contacts
- employability: online presence

Flexible in scope/application

- group(s) or individual blogs
- private, group access, public (or mixed)
- Subject matter



Kolb's experiential learning cycle (credit: Leeds University)

Practical factors

- cost
- time (staff and students)
- IT access/support
- ease of use

Counter-arguments

- challenge to established principles of journalism?
 - balance
 - objectivity
 - accuracy
- plagiarism?