Title of case study

Mediating Memory – Blog assessment

Staff Lead

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Contact

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School/ Department

Communication and Media

Faculty

School of the Arts

Name of course and module (if applicable) case study took place within

Mediating the Past

Please briefly describe the activity undertaken for the case study

Students (56) were asked to design and curate a 'virtual museum' in the form of a multi-media blog page. Using WordPress, students based their projects on any example, place or subject matter that represented an aspect or item of heritage and/or memory. The examples/places /subjects could be from anywhere around the world. Students demonstrated how the past associated with their example/place/subject matter was/is mediated through wider cultural memory. The blogs included text (1200 words) and multi-media content (e.g. photos, videos, hyperlinks, sound files, maps, etc.).

In addition to considering the filtration of heritage and memory, the written component included a section where students critically reflected on their blog, what they sought to achieve, and how they would develop their blog further into a larger project.

The project sought to give students a practical understanding of blogging and curation. Students were provided with a workshop, where they set up their blogs and explored how to curate content virtually.

The blog was assessed based on:
- structure and organisation of content
- clarity of presentation
- use of multi-media content
- their reflection and contextual overview.

The blogs were set up so that students could use this work as part of their digital portfolio after the completion of their degree.

How was the activity implemented?

A workshop was provided where students set up their blog and learned about the assignment. We also gave students instructions in lecture and seminar. Students were given access to examples and introduced to online museums currently in existence. We created a webpage, where students could get advice about using WordPress and setting up their virtual museum. Information and instructions on project submission were also provided, along with details of the assessment criteria and the marking rubric being applied.

Has this activity improved programme provision and student experience, if so how?

It has given students practical experiences, both in terms of using WordPress and curating content. Additionally, this assignment has helped students identify how they can take theoretical ideas and make use of them in a practical manner. The product of this assignment has also expanded their digital portfolio. We have encouraged students to consider how the product of this assignment can be used to demonstrate their digital competency to future employers.

Did you experience any challenges in implementation, if so how did you overcome these?

We were worried about student privacy when using WordPress. To overcome this, we showed students how to set up anonymised accounts, as well as how to maintain their online privacy by limiting and controlling who could gain access to their site. This was a good exercise in digital privacy.

Which Liverpool University Hallmarks and Attributes does this case study relate to (tick all boxes that apply)

Research-connected Teaching   X
Active Learning   X
Authentic Assessment   X
Confidence   X
Digital Fluency   X
Global Citizenship   X

How does this case study relate to the Hallmarks and Attributes you have selected?

Research-connected teaching
The module and its assignments are related to the research interests of the leading staff member. As part of the third year teaching curriculum, Mediating the Past is a research-

led module drawing on scholarship addressing conceptual ideas linked with memory, heritage and nostalgia. Students are exposed to these ideas as part of the theoretical underpinnings of the module and are expected to apply this knowledge practically in the form of the blog/virtual museum exercise. In addition to applying this knowledge, in this module students become active researchers as they are given the space to select, investigate and analyse a topic of their own choosing.

Active Learning
Students actively take part in the creation and shaping of their blog. They are a large amount of freedom and the creative space to shape the virtual museum as they saw fit.

Authentic Assessment
The assessment allows students to show their knowledge through a non-traditional format and exercising their ability to communicate to different audiences.

Confidence
Students gain confidence as they develop new skills and abilities, both in terms of blogging and curation and the reflective element helps them to recognise and articulate their learning.

Digital Fluency
The use of WordPress enables students to further develop their digital fluency as they come to use and understand this software and the possibilities it affords.

Global Citizenship
Students engage with places, memories and cultures from around the world through their exploration and depiction of significant events/places/objects/cultural practices.

How could this case study be transferred to other disciplines?

The subject-specific content of the blog as a 'virtual museum' does not in any way limit the use of this kind of assessment to other disciplines and subject areas. In particular, it is the multimedia functionality of the blog tools that allows the potential for content to not just be limited to text. Instead students are encouraged to think digitally, strategically and creatively in terms of how they are disseminating information and how they might productively harness digital tools and content as part of a visually rich, multimedia platform. The blog assessment can be used to update other traditional forms of assessment found in the Humanities and Sciences, such as poster presentations. It will enable students from various disciplines to display their knowledge and understanding creatively, and will help students to exhibit their skills as researchers.

If someone else were to implement the activity within your case study what advice would you give them?

- Students will require significantly more time than you would think when initially setting up the blog page.

- Don't assume that because students are from the tech generation, that they will be tech savvy.
- Provide guidance videos students can return to throughout the course of the assignment preparation.
- Have the students submit the link to the blog as well as screenshots of the blog page. The screenshots can be used to a) make sure the student's assignments do not change after the submission date and b) ensure that if there are any issues with WordPress, the students' work is not completely lost.