



Social media literacy and students' voices

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Aims

This Curriculum Design Collaboration project was designed to involve learners in a structured review of two core modules led by Professor Graham Meikle of the School of Media and Communication. Each has a social media portfolio assignment that requires a series of weekly blog posts throughout the semester, a photo essay and a video essay; learners are also required to post substantive comments on classmates' work, which adds social dimensions to the assignment. Overall, the portfolio assignments are designed to enable learners to:

- write for a small, supportive audience
- develop and explore ideas from the class
- share ideas, links and feedback with each other

Social media are spaces of rapid change, so it is essential to revise and update these modules every year. This Curriculum Design Collaboration offered an opportunity to bring learners' voices more fully into this revision and into the curriculum.

Methods

The project group met three times in spring 2019 for two-hour workshops focusing on:

1. Choice of platforms, and whether the learners perceive any social or ethical difficulties in using certain popular platforms for coursework.
2. Media literacies, and how to develop a reflective, critical understanding of different aspects of media literacy within these modules.

The final workshop drew together lessons learned from the first two as well as from our different experiences of the social media assignments as teacher and learner. The group brainstormed a list of 12 pieces of advice that they would give to new students approaching these tasks next semester. We then set ourselves the challenge of expressing these 12 points in a photo essay on Instagram. Our challenge was to create this in one hour in the library. The resulting artefact, while not intended to be a polished piece of visual communication, does include all the key ideas the group wanted to share with incoming learners, and it is itself an example of the kind of work they are asked to produce for this assignment: <http://www.instagram.com/internetcultures>.

Results

The social media portfolio assignment briefs for both core modules have been completely revised and refreshed for use in September 2019. There are new blog tasks, new emphases, a new use of Instagram for the photo essay, and the text of the assignment briefs has been rewritten for clarity.

