

From Building Research Skills to Professional Development: Using Blogging in Humanities Teaching

Emily Bowles, Department of English and Related Literature

This paper introduces delegates to the potential of blogging; not only to support existing learning outcomes and course-specific skills, but also to extend modules further and incorporate careers skills at the programme level, adding value for Humanities students that will assist them in the most common areas of graduate employment.

Although blogging forms part of some degree programmes, such as the Computer Science 'Skills, Knowledge & Independent Learning' module, it has much more to offer Humanities teaching in helping students develop key academic skills and skills for the workplace than has been recognised. This year, as a PGWT for 'Global Literatures' in the English Department, I have developed a blog for which students produce all content, improving their independent research, referencing, close reading and confidence with the material. They are also exposed to basic principles of digital marketing, including how to write effectively for Search Engine Optimisation and for a non-specialist audience. This paper discusses challenges and benefits of blogging in practice, including student feedback, and introduces delegates to methods of incorporating social media into degree programmes more easily as both formative and summative assessment.

Building on work I have done to develop postgraduate social media skills as a speaker at the Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities and the York English Graduate Training Programme, and content contributed to 'Blogging Beyond the Classroom', a Higher Education Academy-funded research blog run by Dr Helen Rogers (LJMU), this paper addresses the rationale behind blogging, questions of implementation and assessment, and evaluation.