



STYLISH ACADEMIC WRITING: PREPARING OUR GRADUATES FOR THEIR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL SELVES

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RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Does blogging encourage students to write in a different way that is accessible and inclusive and where they learn skills in how to convey complex arguments in concise and meaningful ways?

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE WRITING

Accessible and inclusive writing

Just going back to what you said about how blogs would affect later life or something outside of the course, I think I was thinking the concise writing, I quite liked having that word limit. It was small, but I liked it. And I think I want to go into development and humanitarian stuff and that's a very social thing. And it's what you were saying, people are made into stats, they're made into just an academic thing. I think a blog is a really accessible way to convey what academic research is saying to the wider audience and in a concise way as well.

SKILLS IN CONCISION AND WRITING MEANINGFULLY

something I struggle with is condensing ideas into a small...like 2,000 words. I find it quite hard a lot of the time to answer everything that it seems the marker is looking for. And I think a 400-word blog was a lot smaller, it really made you think this is my point, this is what I want to say and what's the best way I can say it in 400 words? Which really isn't a lot. And I think going forward I think that's probably a good skill to learn and use (R? Geog).

I think it makes you more aware of modern parts of it. So if you Google it, if you're trying to start and it gives you articles or even modern stuff on it, so you're more aware of current situations. Whereas if you were just learning it for an exam you probably wouldn't go to that effort (R1 Law).

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Does blogging encourage students to think about their audience as well as to experiment with seeing writing as a form of public engagement?

THINKING ABOUT AUDIENCES

communicating it to a broader audience, is probably the biggest skill [I've] taken out of here (R2 Geol)

Because when we go out to the big wide world, we're gonna need to be able to communicate ideas, or things, and we need to know how to make that, we need to know how to transfer those, like, transfer the information we've got in our heads, this is really good in practice. Take a step back, and making it simple for somebody else to understand, which is, we're gonna need that when we go out into an office. If you work in an office, you need to be able to communicate like, an idea, to somebody, or somebody you know. So this is a really good way of taking a step back and just having a good way of communicating it (R3 Geol)

WRITING AS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Yeah, so last year, I did a course, outreach, where I went to primary school, and I had to basically do some essays on what I've done this year, with the blogs. And really take a step back from geology and look at, really, basic. So, yeah, I want to do a PhD, but I suppose, that's quite, yeah, I'll take these skills through. I guess it's communicating science, that's what I'll take away from it, but also, I want to do some work that, with schooling, and stuff like that, that I do. So, like, being able to communicate to children the basics of geology, is really important. And this is like, that's some practice of how to step back from it, and make it simple for them to understand. It's really important (R3 Geog).

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Does blogging encourage students to be more creative in their writing, seeing it as an opportunity to develop stylish prose that is more creative than the kinds of writing they do in more conventional assessments?

CREATIVE/STYLISH WRITING

it seems to allow people's personality to come through more, whereas essays are more...there's a marking criteria for them and it feels like everyone's is the same or they want everyone's to be the same, in a certain way. Whereas blogs, there's a degree of flexibility with how you do them, and obviously what you can do it on as well. And I just think that's encouraging people to think outside the box and be a bit more unique and individual, rather than worrying about what everyone else is doing and it's got to be to a certain format or whatever. (R3 Geog)

STYLISH ACADEMIC WRITING

Assessed blogs (whether formative or summative) can...

- be professionally written and formatted
- provide opportunities for authentic learning experiences
- provide opportunities for individuality and personalisation
- help students to think about audience
- prepare students for this future professional selves