

Building community and emphasising learning beyond the classroom.

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ENHANCING FOR IMPACT

RGU'S ANNUAL LEARNING AND TEACHING CONFERENCE

Building Community and Emphasising Learning Beyond the Classroom

Craig Leith & Dr. Rachael Ironside

Aim & Objectives

Aim

To introduce, and evaluate, the role of a blogsite and associated events in building community and enhancing learning within a subject area.

Objectives

- *To review the initial rationale for the blogsite*
- *To introduce the key features of the blogsite*
- *To evaluate the impact of the blogsite*
- *To recommend future steps and direction for the blogsite*

Rationale for the blogsite

- Built on from the regular subject area newsletter of previous few years
- Addressed concern of student isolation during covid
- A recognition that “good stuff” was being done but not shouted about
- Subject area/course recruitment tool
- One-stop repository for the subject area news, successes and activities
- Illustrate the value of learning and industry understanding out-with the classroom
- Opportunity for external engagement
- To showcase teaching team and students passions and areas of interest
- AND – increased subject area community

Introducing the Blogsite..

- [T.H.E News](#)
- Choose a month....
- Curiosity Programme
- Types of blog articles:-
 - Staff personal reflections
 - Student personal reflections
 - Staff research successes
 - Student events
 - Field trips
 - Book reviews
 - Semester messages to students

Impact of the blogsite (Google Analytics)

- 1st Aug 2021 – 1st Oct 2002
- 4580 views
- 620 to blog homepage
- 830 views of Curiosity Programme (external visits?)
- Most popular blog entry – Peterhead Prison Museum (187)
- 2nd most popular – Sri Lanka tsunami recovery (57)
- Average length of visit – 30 seconds (eternals longer)
- Popular blog posts – field trips, personal experiences, reflective
- Extremely few comments left in response to articles

Impact of the blogsite (Student Feedback)

- 50 respondents from UG during induction
- 18 said “not aware of the blogsite”
- Of 32 aware, visits to blogsite were:
 - Several times a month – 0
 - Once or twice a month – 1
 - Very rarely over the year – 17
 - Never – 10
 - Only when reminded – 4
- Limited expression of interest to write blog posts this coming year

Impact of the blogsite (Student Feedback)

- Reasons for limited engagement with blog
 - Wasn't aware of it
 - Kept forgetting
 - Too busy with other things
 - Would do it if I HAD to for module
 - No interest in the articles (*respondent had never visited)
 - Did look, but the article was boring

The Future of T.H.E News site

- HAS the site achieved its aim?
- Does it have a future?
- Heads of Year actively promote/remind students
- Stronger links to modules (IEP, use within tutorials)
- Greater active encouragement for student (and staff) input and engagement
- Video elements?
- Progression of Curiosity Programme

The background features a series of concentric circles on the left side, with the innermost circle being white and the outer ones being light gray. On the right side, there is a large, faint, light gray question mark graphic. The text "Questions?..." is positioned in the upper left quadrant.

Questions?...