

MOBILIZING JOURNALISM EDUCATION

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Abstract

Journalism in the 21st century has been radically changed through the ubiquitous connectivity and sharing of mobile social media and a cultural shift is required for journalism educators to enable engagement and critical reflection upon the use of mobile social media into new pedagogical strategies (Poerksen, 2011, Balsamo, 2011). A sustained community of practice of like-minded journalism educators, was brought together to investigate the potential of mobile social media within their teaching and professional practice (Cochrane, Sissons and Mulrennan, 2012). The paper evaluates several examples of integrating mobile social media within new pedagogical frameworks applied to journalism education.

Introduction

Journalism studies builds on a theoretical framework upon which students engage in an apprenticeship into a professional community. Five AUT University journalism educators have formed a community of practice, the primary focus of which is to

enhance the education of journalism through the rapid worldwide uptake of mobile social media.

Irby (1992) argues that the collaborative culture of journalism can be understood in light of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Irby advocates a model for teaching students how to become part of the journalism community by:

1. Understanding the thinking and culture of professionals
2. Creating a classroom environment that fosters expert-like thinking and group interaction
3. Implementing teaching strategies that assess students' preconceptions about journalism and enable students to confront these preconceptions and build new concepts that move them toward expert thinking

Journalism Education as a Model of Community Participation

Poerksen (2011) applies radical constructivism to journalism education. Ashton (2009) suggests how journalism students' involvement in "amateur production" via social media can use this experience alongside formal education to substitute for on-the-job experience in preparing for "professional and industry practices and contexts" (Ashton, 2009, p7). We argue that students can be initiated into a culture of active community participation that is relevant to journalism by modeling the classroom as participation within a community of practice (COP) (Wenger, 1998). In this context, the domain of the COP is journalism, and in particular the impact of mobile social media upon journalism. Built upon an exploration of the nature of apprenticeship within a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991), COP theory leverages social media to nurture (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger, White & Smith, 2009), broker (Wenger, 1998), and share the experiences of a learning community.

The Impact of Mobile Social Media on Journalism

Mobile social media has had a radical impact upon journalism, just as it has disrupted traditional approaches to several media industries such as music distribution, video distribution, telecommunications, and mail. Media commentators such as Hirst (2011) question whether traditional journalism can survive in a mobile social media driven world. Mobile social media has led to empowering 'citizen journalism' (Cameron, 2006; Skoeps, 2007; Elmendorp, 2007) and forced journalists to reconceptualize their roles and their core tools (Fulton, 2007).

Integrating Mobile Social Media into Journalism Education

According to Flynn (2011):

Journalism and the media are changing fast as the internet grows more accessible, and journalism degree programs are changing to accommodate new distribution paradigms. Any journalism program should include courses on web development, photo and video editing, and social media usage, as well as cornerstones like writing and the ethics of reporting. (Flynn, 2011)

We argue that journalism education must go further than critiquing case studies of the impact of mobile social media on news reporting and gathering, to integrating and modeling the use of mobile social media within the teaching of journalism. Thus actually introducing mobile social media as core tools for the teaching of twenty first century journalism, removing the disconnect between the theory and practice of

mobile social media. In our experience this requires a radical cultural rethink of pedagogy (Cochrane et al., 2012).

Supporting a Radical Cultural Shift in Journalism Education

Balsamo (2011) states that the introduction of new technology platforms by corporations such as Google and Apple have resulted in significant paradigm shifts, involving:

...new modes of knowledge construction and emerging forms of cultural reproduction. Given the distributed nature of this shift work, and the rapid adoption of digital media, the challenge for those of us engaged in the profession of education, not yet willing to abdicate our responsibilities as cultural stewards, is how to coordinate these efforts such that the paradigm-shifting efforts contribute to significant and beneficial social changes. (Balsamo, 2011, p 133)

We argue that radical cultural shifts require a catalyst (Cochrane et al., 2012). The disruptive nature of mobile social media within the journalism industry and in the classroom is a powerful catalyst for rethinking the role of journalists and the nature of teaching and learning (Kukulska-Hulme, 2010). In response, we developed new projects for incorporation in the journalism curriculum that introduced mlearning as a catalyst for pedagogical change, moving from instructivist teacher-directed pedagogy to social constructivist pedagogy, bridging the Pedagogy-Andragogy-Heutagogy (PAH) continuum (Luckin, et al., 2010), (see Table 1).

Table 1

The PAH continuum (from Luckin, et al., 2010, p78)

	Pedagogy	Andragogy	Heutagogy
Locus of Control	Teacher	Learner	Learner
Education Sector	Schools	Adult education	Doctoral research
Cognition Level	Cognitive	Meta-cognitive	Epistemic
Knowledge production context	Subject understanding	Process negotiation	Context shaping

Luckin et al., (2010) argue that heutagogy, or student-directed learning, need not be solely the domain of doctoral students, in fact student-directed discovery is a fundamental aspect of Montessori kindergarten education (Montessori, 1948). Designing learning experiences that enable student-directed projects creates the basis for a move from the delivery of teacher-directed content to facilitating authentic learning experiences for students in real-world contexts, initiating students into a culture of active participation within a journalism community.

Research methodology

The researchers initially formed a community of practice of journalism lecturers guided by a technology steward to investigate the impact of mobile social media on

the curriculum in 2011 (Cochrane, Sissons & Mulrennan, 2012). After initial explorations of social media projects within the curriculum the COP grew and took on an identity as the enhancing journalism education (EJE) COP in 2012 (Cochrane et al., 2013). A participatory action research approach was adopted (Swantz, 2008), focusing upon pedagogical change while allowing the research to develop within the introduction and evaluation of a series of mobile social media projects within the journalism curriculum throughout 2012 and 2013.

Research questions

1. How can journalism education react to the changes in the industry brought about by mobile social media in terms of the journalism curriculum?
2. What new pedagogical strategies can be leveraged using mobile social media to facilitate a move from teacher-directed pedagogy to student-directed heutagogy?

Data collection and analysis

Ethics consent was granted from the university based upon informed consent being obtained from all of the participating students and lecturers in the projects. Core sources of data for analysis were the participants' social media sites utilized by each project (Wordpress, Storify, Twitter, Vine, Vyclone, etc...). Reflective posts, comments and media were collated from these sites using an RSS aggregator, and these were regularly reviewed by the researchers to identify emergent themes and categorization of these themes relevant to the research questions. The researchers formed a community of practice that met weekly throughout the length of the projects to discuss and evaluate the progress of the mobile social media projects, and this led to the iterative collaborative development of each project.

EJE Team Case Study Results

The EJE team generated reflections on the impact of the EJE COP on each of the participants' teaching practice, and their conception of their roles as journalism educators. The following case studies are prepared by each lecturer.

Lecturer one engaged with the students as they built a professional online identity. He expands on how both he and his students became engaged with Twitter:

“Working with the EJE COP was an opportunity to explore and create an authentic digital identity using mobile social media. Previously I was a very early adopter of graphical online spaces and as such an early member of TableTalk, the postings area of Salon.Com. Upon joining Facebook and LinkedIn I observed that Facebook functioned in a similar way to TableTalk. As my participation within the COP progressed I decided to join Twitter, and spent six months developing some skills around using and making content delivered in short sharp takes. I wanted to be able to demonstrate that Twitter has a legitimate role to play in the arsenal of a journalist who will need to be competent across many platforms to not only remain relevant, but also to land and then keep a job. This involved creating a Twitter-brand that was clearly part of a unique digital identity, and became a valuable content curation tool enabling easy searchability. Following this I used Twitter to establish a personal online brand that would garner more followers. I now use Twitter as a tool to comment on media or political events daily, and as a social tool to illustrate or mark activity I believe

enhances my profile. My goal is to model the professional use of Twitter to my students, who initially view Twitter as a social tool only. In pedagogical terms this approach demonstrates the interplay between the private made public. I encourage students to view the space as one that can be used to create their own digital brand. It is also, a place to search for stories, content, leads and information and a way to test material. In the future, digital identity will become a vital part of news production, as a driver of eyeballs to a site, and credibility for crowd sourcing, and a measure of a journalists impact by the number of followers they carry.”

Lecturer two supported her students as they collaborated with three other universities to produce an online television programme, using Skype technology. She explains her recommendations as a result of the international video project:

“The Global City project was our first social media enabled international collaboration between journalism students at AUT University and three universities namely Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, Rutgers University, New Jersey, U.S.A. and Aarhus University, Denmark, in 2012. The aim of the project was a pilot to test the use of skype as a teaching tool that enabled students to communicate via mobile social media video, to share news and information about their countries of origin targeting an international student audience. Using a heutagogical framework, the students engaged in self-defined learning as they collaborated globally to produce a 50 minute programme in real time and in high definition with a low latency factor across the four time zones. During the pre-production phase, the students created a Facebook group profile and engaged with each other across this social medium as content was developed and scripting was completed. They also conducted Skype sessions where the students in the differing countries could meet and chat online as the production developed, while also discovering their cultural differences and commonalities. Successful outcomes of the project included the ability for the students to direct their own level of engagement with the activity, which differed at each University location. At AUT, the lecturers collaborated between the two curricular areas of Journalism and Television, as some students were enrolled in papers across both these areas. Assessment tools were modified to enable the students’ work to be submitted while maintaining the prescribed marking criteria. For example, the Journalism students produced the video-recorded stories and wrote the scripts, while the Television students produced studio interviews and orchestrated the studio-based production. In this way, they were also able to emulate a professional non-fiction/current-affairs broadcast production in real-time. The feedback from the students was that they valued the experience to work globally and interact with peers from other universities, and some students indicated they wanted to maintain contact with their international peers beyond the conclusion of the project via social networking. The Global City project was found to be a significant undertaking from a technical perspective, as the technology used - Haivision - was a closed proprietary system that needed to be installed in each university location, limiting collaboration partners. Therefore, we are appraising open access solutions for future iterations of the project.”

Lecturer three engaged in building critical metacognition skills into mobile social media use. She discusses how a multimodal social media tool was used as a substitute for the traditional academic essay:

“In 2012, we introduced an assignment that required the students to produce a multi-media narrative using Storify.com. Our research had led us to the conclusion that the traditional text-based essay needed to be reinvented for some of our core journalism classes. This is because one of the effects of mobile social media on journalism is that young journalists are required to be skilled at working with audio, video, graphics and text. News organisations also depend on their journalists to be familiar with the myriad variety of social media sites and how to use them for newsgathering and news dissemination purposes. However, we found that while students are familiar with uploading text and photos in a limited way to social media sites such as Facebook, they rarely collate material from a range of platforms into a professional narrative. Therefore we decided to reinvent a traditional essay assessment using the social media site Storify.com. The site allows students to go beyond the traditional text-base essay by collating and inserting rich media content from mobile social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Vine. The assignment question was: “How if at all have social media altered the way journalists and public relations practitioners interact? Use real examples from at least three social media platforms as well as academic sources to back up your arguments” (Assessment schedule 2012). Their essays were published either to their own blog or to their Storify.com site for the lecturers to mark. The lecturers found that the reworked assignment saw students engaging with the material at a deeper level, as it required them to examine the source material behind a news story. Working with the multimodal content also required a higher level of critique and creativity in comparison to that evidenced in previous essay versions of the assessment. Further, student feedback said they enjoyed the opportunity to explore social media in a way other than for social purposes. Most also realized they needed to be assured and articulate users of social media for their future as professional communicators.”

Lecturer four devised a way to reinvent classroom interaction via mobile social media. She reflects on the project:

“This year we introduced the use of blogs to the third-year news reporting course. There were several reasons for this: initially it was to encourage students to write, write and write some more, based on the premise that they should practice writing as an art. For more practical reasons, we also wanted somewhere the students could store their work and iteratively improve it over the semester. We were also keen to encourage students to use a form of social media that is relevant to the industry: many journalists/writers are now employed on the strength of their blog posts and how well they write. In this new assessment the students keep everything, from their initial drafts, right through to their ‘publishable’ articles, on their blogs. This includes their peer reviews, an important self-reflective exercise for every story they write. The introduction of student portfolios also enabled collation of their work making it easy to review all their work at the end of the semester. Each student is required to complete at least 12 publishable stories over the 12-week semester. Over the past couple of years, students would go into panic mode about Week 10, trying to find draft versions, peer edited versions and then the final version, which was approved by their writing tutor to be sent out for publication. This ensures everything is in one place.”

Discussion

Our examples of integrating mobile social media in journalism education illustrate how the traditional isolated case-study approach to new media journalism education can be reinvented. Here we discuss the implications and application of our projects for the journalism curriculum.

Identifying Key Themes from our Examples

We have identified six critical success factors (CSF) for mobile social media integration in education (Cochrane, 2012):

1. The pedagogical integration of the technology into the course and assessment.
2. Lecturer modelling of the pedagogical use of the tools.
3. Creating a supportive learning community.
4. Appropriate choice of mobile devices and web 2.0 social software.
5. Technological and pedagogical support.
6. Creating sustained interaction that facilitates the development of ontological shifts, both for the lecturers and the students.

Applying these critical success factors to the concept of the PAH continuum within the context of our mobile social media projects has led to the development of a framework for mobile social media integration within journalism education, which we outline in Table 2.

Table 2

A framework for using mobile social media to enable a move towards heutagogy.

	Pedagogy	Andragogy	Heutagogy
Locus of Control	Teacher	Learner	Learner
Course timeframe and goal	Initial establishment of the course project and induction into the wider journalism community	Early to mid-course: Student appropriation of mobile social media and initial active participation	Mid to end of course: Establishment of major project where students actively participate within an authentic community of practice
Cognition Level	Cognitive	Meta-cognitive	Epistemic
Knowledge production context	Subject understanding: lecturers introduce and model the use of a range of mobile social media tools appropriate to the learning context	Process negotiation: students negotiate a choice of mobile social media tools to establish an eportfolio based upon user-generated content	Context shaping: students create project teams that investigate and critique user-generated content within the context of journalism. These are then shared, curated, and peer-reviewed in an authentic COP
Supporting mobile social media	Enabling induction into a supportive	Enabling user-generated content and	Enabling collaboration across user-generated

affordances	learning community	active participation within an authentic journalism COP	contexts, and active participation within a global journalism COP
Alignment with critical success factors	CSF 1,2,3	CSF 4,5	CSF 5,6
Ontological shift	Reconceptualising mobile social media: from a social to an educational domain	Reconceptualising the role of the teacher	Reconceptualising the role of the learner

This mobile social media framework is now being applied to updating the new media paper within the journalism curriculum. For example, the aim of the new media journalism paper has been reconceptualised:

This paper examines the digital technologies and the issues affecting journalists and online news media sites. Covers the writing, editing and site design skills relevant to online journalism, including digital photography and image editing. Involves newsgathering with the aim of publication on the course website. (Course descriptor, 2009)

Students examine and critiques the mobile digital technologies, production and curation of news and social media source material within online news media sites. Covers mobile recording of news via mobile applications in text, image, audio and video, including crowd-sourcing, live streaming and social media enabled collaboration for publication on the course website. Establishes eportfolios which become the basis for a professional entry into contemporary journalism. (Course descriptor, 2013)

Thus in the redesigned new media paper we invite students to form authentic team-based projects in which they are included as active negotiators of the project outcomes (Heutagogy). Graduates of this redesigned new media paper will be prepared to become active members of collaborative mobile social media journalism teams, both nationally and internationally. Table 3 compares how the original assessment requirements and the redesigned assessments utilizing mobile social media relate to our mobile social media framework.

Table 3

Redesigning a new media paper based upon our mobile social media framework

Assessment event	%	Cognition level	Relevance to mobile social media	Alignment with Critical Success Factors	Shift	PAH alignment
Assessment 1, 2009: Group presentation in class and individual essay	30	Cognitive	N/A disconnect	N/A disconnect	Teacher directed	Pedagogy
Assessment 2, 2009:	30	Cognitive	N/A	CSF 3	Teacher	Pedagogy

Use LMS discussion forum for web portfolio			disconnect		directed	
Assessment 3, 2009: Production of a four-post, research-based blog	40	Cognitive	Web 1.0	CSF 5	Towards student centred	Andragogy
Assessment 1, 2013: Create an extended community of practice, and collaborate and curate a critical analysis on the role of mobile social media within a public news event	30	Cognitive	Personal digital identity building	CSF 1,2,3	Teacher modeled	Pedagogy
Assessment 2, 2013: Students create and develop a professional personal online digital identity profile which enables participation within an extended community	30	Meta cognitive	Collaborate in learning community as content creators	CSF 4,5	Teacher guided	Andragogy
Assessment 3, 2013: Students produce an eportfolio of news stories using mobile social media tools across multiple platforms, for publication on the TWNonline website	40	Epistemic	Enabling active participation within a professional community	CSF 5,6	Student directed	Heutagogy

Conclusions

The paper traces the establishment of the enhancing journalism education (EJE) mobile social media community of practice (COP) from its beginnings in 2011 through its growth during 2012 and 2013. The impact of the reified activities of the EJE COP used to broker pedagogical change throughout the journalism department has been significant (Coleman, 2012), and has led to the redesign of the core new media paper within the journalism curriculum. Thus based upon our experiences we propose a critical framework for supporting and implementing mobile social media for pedagogical change within journalism education, and we illustrate the use of this framework in the context of updating a new media paper within a bachelor of Journalism programme.

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