

Poster

Title: **Using blogs as a reflective tool for learners to engage in academic employability modules and enhance their online profile**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand how to engage students in the reflective aspect of employability modules through the use of blogs.
- Enhance student's reflection on their learning and improvement of skills in the educational or working environment.
- Understand how students can use blogs to build an online portfolio which will enhance their exposure to graduate employers and widen their network.
- Understand how blogs can allow students to enhance general competences and prepare them for a digital society.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Employability is high on the agenda for Higher Education Institutions and is fully embedded into the curriculum. Undertaking placement opportunities is encouraged. Modules regarding employability often involve reflection on personal development. Knight and Yorke (2004:30) state that to be employable a person must be interested in and prepared for life-long learning which encourages reflective practice and learning from your previous experiences. Schon (1987) believed that if students are able to reflect on their learning then it will prepare them for the demands of practice in graduate employment after graduation.

Digital literacy is also high on the agenda for Higher Education Institutions. Students are becoming more digitally literate and more concerned with their online profile/presence. Ollington, Gibb and Harcourt (2013) highlight the importance of maintaining a good presence online as employers use social media sites and blogs during the short listing and recruitment process. Gvaramadze (2012) stated that using online or digital resources also allows students to enhance and develop general competences which will benefit their employability. Encouraging students to blog to reflect on their development and skills whilst at university or on placement would allow them to engage in reflection, enhance their

employability and prepare them for a digital society. This will also enable Higher Education Institutions to address these two agendas collaboratively.

Overall the implementation of student blogging as a reflective tool could achieve the following:

- Encouraging students to engage in the reflective aspect of the employability module.
- Allow students to reflect on their learning and improve and enhance skills in the educational or working environment.
- Blogs will allow students to create and widen their online network.
- The opportunity for students to build an online portfolio which will enhance their exposure to graduate employers.
- Enhance general competences and prepare students for a digital society.

References

Gvaramadze, I. (2012) 'Developing generic competences in online virtual education programmes at the University of Deusto'. *Campus-Wide Information Systems* (29), 4-20

Knight, P., and York, M.(2004) *Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education*. London: Routledge

Ollington, N., Gibb, J. and Harcourt, M. (2013) 'Online social networks: an emergent recruiter tool for attracting and screening'. *Personnel Review* (42),248-265

Schon, D. A. (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. California: Jossey-Bass