

IDEAS ONLINE AND PRESENTING RESEARCH: SESSION NOTES 2

13th November 2007

Objectives:

- Compare mainstream academic writing with internet journalism / blogging: (how) does academic writing fulfil different needs?
- Look at the different ways to provide supporting evidence or secondary references for your writing (to enhance credibility)
- Discuss the concept of 'quality' and the promotion of 'equality' in relation to these different forms of writing
- Practice academic writing

Warm-up: Groupwork discussion and feedback on the blogging experience:

- What did you learn? How did / do you feel?
- What did you enjoy most? What did you find most difficult?
- What will you do differently? What other support do you need?
- Specific comments about the comments function? Any other comments?

Academic writing - example:

Daniel, P. (2001) 'Towards Designing an Intercultural Curriculum: A Case Study from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua', in *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, Vol 1 No 1, 2001

The article addresses issues of gender, language and cultural diversity.

Many academic journals like *Journal of Teaching and Learning* are now online but not always fully accessible

Entry to the site: <http://137.207.120.196/ojs/leddy/index.php/JTL>

I need to register to view articles and abstracts, see here
<http://137.207.120.196/ojs/leddy/index.php/JTL/issue/view/32>

I've forgotten my password so even though I'm on the editorial board I can't access my own article!

My original version <http://www.patriciadaniel.org.uk/Intercurriculum.htm> is OK for online reference but not in 'journal format'

Fortunately a friend was able to register and downloaded the pdf from the journal website. Now accessible on
<http://www.patriciadaniel.org.uk/TowardsDesigningAnInterculturalCurriculum.pdf>

Practical work 1 (Group analysis)

How do writers adapt their language and style for different purposes?
Compare the features of academic writing with those of the blog format.
Refer to the Checklist for Applications of Writing: *Language in Context*
(See Pat's points on page 4 after discussion)

Focus on Referencing:

See online example here:

<http://jewelsinthejungle.blogspot.com/2007/06/g8-summit-2007-in-germany-closes-with.html>

Use of *hyperlinks* for *references* provides easy-to-access documentary support: for credibility, breadth, crosschecking of views and information with a range of sources. We can also add *further links* as references at the bottom – and others in the *blogroll* at the side

Compare with Harvard referencing system for conventional academic writing on paper – as used in the bibliography of the Interculturality article. Also use of *charts*, *tables*, *figures* and *quotes* to present *primary research*.

Spiked! approach with references is a combination of hyperlinks and Vancouver referencing, for example: <http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php?/site/article/3874>

Practical work 2: Write up (some of) the content of your blog in an academic form and style

See <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/studyskills/skills/essays.htm#top> for basic structure:

(Abstract) Introduction, Literature Survey, (Primary Research), Analysis, Discussion, Conclusion, Bibliography

- and use the Harvard system for referencing within the text and for the bibliography
<http://library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/harvard.pdf>

- Individual writing – do it online, in your blog!
- Share and comment on each other's work (Pairs)
- Group feedback on the experience. How did it feel? What were you able to achieve in each form?

Pat will read all the blogs / academic pieces later and write comments on each one. Also I'll email some general formative written feedback to all of you.

Practical work 3: Forum discussion: quality and equality on the internet

“Citizen journalism: does it mean democratised media or a decline in journalistic standards? What’s the difference in quality between blogging and academic writing or serious print journalism? Is the concept of ‘quality’ merely elitist, exclusive, in other words undemocratic? In other words, does ‘quality’ conflict with ‘equality’ on the internet? Is there such a thing as objectivity or does all writing and research reflect the author’s own perspective and bias? While women may feel freer to express themselves in blogs or elsewhere on the internet, does this mean that they are any safer from attack – that is, male violence in the form of verbal abuse?”

See the list of further reading http://www.patriciadaniel.org.uk/MA_reading.pdf

Also see Sokari **Ekine** (2007) ‘Freedom to abuse – choices in the African blogosphere’, in *Grace, tenacity and eloquence. The struggle for women’s rights in Africa*, Nairobi: Fahamu

Originally on <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/32742>

Read, reflect, discuss face to face if you want and then post your comment on <http://MAdemo.blogspot.com>

You can refer either to the general questions above and / or to other people’s comments and / or raise additional questions in relation to the topic.

Think about how to make your comment

- Strong
- Short
- Witty
- Constructive
- Depersonalised (this doesn’t mean you can’t express your own opinion but it should be talking about the topic not the person)
- Take the argument further.

Pat's points on task 1: Compare and contrast

Blogging

Finding your voice/
Raising your voice/
Realising a sense of entitlement

Exploring the world /
Opening it out

Subjective /
Presenting another perspective/

Focus on lived experience as
knowledge

Experimenting /
Getting your point across in
Different ways

Reaching a wider audience

Accessibility / inclusivity
of the medium and style

Free access

Use of hyperlinks for supporting
Information

Liberating / empowering

Academic writing

Neutralising your own voice

Classifying the world/
Closing it down?

Claim to objectivity/
'Balanced' academic analysis

Abstractions as knowledge

Using an imposed form and style

(Often very) limited audience

Process of having to fit in / be accepted

Often have to pay to read it/ see it

Use of academic referencing system

Constraining / disempowering?

- Both forms can use a range of evidence, sources and perspectives for triangulation (cross-referencing) of ideas
- Blogs can be analytical and clearly structured - but it's more difficult for academic articles to be creative
- Both forms have ways of establishing credibility
- The genres / media are not mutually exclusive, for example Pambazuka's book series contain online articles in print form; the G8 blog was summarised into other forms (letter, article) and the experience of blogging has become an academic presentation (see World Universities Forum <http://u08.cqpublisher.com/proposals/102>)

BLOGGING Use / purpose:

- *Widening democratic participation:* providing a relatively safe space* for marginalized voices; enabling women** to raise their own voice or to convey other women's voices; developing confidence as a writer in what you have to say and how you want to say it; increasing access to the global debate and facilitating dialogue within it (through the comments function, disseminating ideas from other people's blogs, providing links to related discussions and information etc)
- *Carrying out primary research:* for example, through live blogging of women's events or collecting evidence from the global community; a different way of exploring and recording the world from a personal perspective, along with other people's perspectives on the world; scope for creativity in methodology and a range of evidence - photographs, audio or video testimony, written quotations; an ethos of lived experience as 'knowledge' which is equally valid alongside 'objective' observation; also includes secondary research (literature searches) and easy access to supporting documentation via hyperlinks, providing cross-referencing (triangulation of findings and research validity)
- *Facilitating social activism:* changing the world through networking knowledge, sharing or identifying common concerns, developing solidarity, cyber-campaigning and virtual advocacy

* There are still instances of virtual sexual harassment (see Solari Ekine's article <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/32742>)

** *Women* or other marginalized groups, so this equally applies to widening democratic participation in relation to class, ethnicity, language. Literacy levels are another issue...