

CONTACT

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CONTEXT

“Nobody should leave a journalism course without knowing how to write copy, sub a website, record an interview for audio or video, make a radio package, drive a desk, do a stand-up piece to camera and make a video report, and use a content management system. Any less than that and you’re not a journalist in the modern age – sorry.”

Bill Thompson - City University, London

In order to facilitate students’ progression on all elements of their BA Journalism programme, and to further underwrite and support the ‘multi-media/multi-skills’ philosophy of the programme, they undertake a compulsory module which helps to embed professional and technical skills at the beginning of their studies. This highlights the technological nature of the production of much of modern journalism, as well as preparing students to take maximum advantage of the opportunities to produce technical work at levels five and six. In the *Production Skills for Journalists* module they are immersed in a working environment which fosters understanding and competence in relevant media production skills. To that end, the module comprises of demonstrations and workshops where students will acquire and implant production skills that will underpin and encourage their journalistic abilities. Because of the speed of technological change, these skills may expand and develop over the delivery of the module. These skills comprise desktop publishing (including image production and enhancement), audio creation and editing, video production and editing and website design and management. The guiding principle is to prepare students to deal effectively with all the production challenges found elsewhere on the course.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Demonstrate awareness of and competence in varied production skills across various media forms
- Understand the importance of being able to create journalistic material across various media as well as becoming aware of the differing requirements of each medium.
- Show how editing and production can enhance and support the work of a journalist.
- Using appropriate given material, produce finished and authentic journalistic artefacts in print, broadcast and online media formats.
- Show general skill and competence in using relevant hardware and software including an understanding of relevant terminology and processes
- Be able to explain and demonstrate the operation and merits of relevant programmes and equipment to others.

THE PROCESS

The *TV News Package* assignment uses both the Kaltura media gallery and the Assignment tool for submission of the video. Submissions are accessed via the grade centre and assessed using rubrics.

Step 1: Students upload their video to the Blackboard module site via the Kaltura media gallery.

Step 2: Students formally submit their work for assessment using the Blackboard assignment tool. The *Add Mashup > Kaltura Media* functionality in the assignment tool’s text editor is used to link to the previously uploaded Kaltura video.

Step 3: The tutor accesses the assignment submission via the grade centre.

Step 4: The rubric is displayed in a pop-out window, and can be used while the video is playing back in the *View Current Attempt* window.

Step 5: Any additional feedback is added to rubric and the rubric is saved, generating a score out of one-hundred which is then automatically converted to the appropriate letter grade using a grading schema in the grade centre.

Step 6: The work is moderated and moderator comments added to the *grading notes* area. The feedback and grades are then released to the students using the *Show/Hide to Students* functionality in the grade centre.

THE BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

Benefits:

- Marking criteria is easily made visible to the students in advance.
- The marking workflow is simple and efficient, meaning that the maximum amount of time is spent feeding back on students' work, and virtually no time is spent dealing with technical issues.
- The rubric ensures that marking is consistent across the set of submissions.
- All feedback is in one place, on the rubric – which allows for additional comments at the individual criteria level as well general/overall feedback
- The auto-generation of the grade from the rubric scores means that the marking tutor does not need to spend time deciding what grade to award.
- The awarding of grades is done in a more objective and transparent way, which makes moderation easier, and allows the student to better understand why they have been awarded the grade that they have. Additionally, it is clear what they need to do to improve the work.

Challenges:

- To make best use of the rubrics a desktop computer and good sized wide-screen monitor (or dual screen set-up) is needed to allow the tutor to view the work and the rubric simultaneously. Marking comfortably using a laptop is more difficult, though not impossible if *list view* rather than *grid view* is used.
- No opportunity to add mashup or multimedia content in the overall feedback section of the rubric – so audio or video comments cannot be added to the rubric feedback.
- Tutors used to a more intuitive approach to marking may find rubrics too dispassionate, as it's difficult to work backwards from the grade to the criteria. For example, if years of experience tell the tutor that this is a B+ piece of work, it may then be difficult to arrive at that desired grade from selecting the criteria.

KEY POINTS

- Rubrics set out clearly in advance to students what criteria will be used to assess their work.
- Where multiple tutors are assessing work, rubrics are especially useful as they ensure a standard and consistent approach to marking.
- Not having to decide what grade to award simplifies and speeds up the marking process, and ensures a high level of grade standardisation across a set of submissions.
- Rubrics let students know how their grade was calculated and where they could improve their work.