

# Educating the new generation journalist: from Moodle to Facebook

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## Abstract

The education of journalists is beginning to use social media tools extensively as a reflection of the fact that society now lives, not just *with* technology, but *in* technology. The action research project we describe in this paper, which is still in progress, tries to answer the question: “how can we educate the new generation journalist by exploring innovative learning experiences based on social contexts mediated by technology?” The analysis of the data collected so far reveals increased motivation and participation of the students in the learning experience, closer connection to the reality of the profession, and improvement of the students’ personal skills in the area of journalism. The recent migration of the project to Facebook is now offering outside visibility and contact with journalism professionals from outside the academic world.

## Keywords

Action research, journalism education, social media.

## 1. Introduction

The debate about the education of journalists has been focused on the skill set necessary for the professional performance (Baughman, 2007; Deuze, Neuberger, & Paulussen, 2004; World Journalism Education Council, 2007). This trend has been more evident in recent years, as technological change becomes increasingly influential. This means that higher education institutions in this area must strengthen their concern with the exposure of students to the cultures of technological change and educators must use their creativity to reduce the gap between academic education and professional reality (Hirst, 2010; Howard, 2005).

While in the past journalists were educated through apprenticeship, by just practising the profession, the emergence of journalism as an academic discipline at universities was accompanied by the strengthening of the theoretical bases of the phenomenon of communication in society. In some cases, however, this has been done at the expense of a decline in the development of technical skills. This paper subscribes to the idea that education in journalism must contemplate two knowledge dimensions: the theory that explains the phenomena of communication and the practical skills and personal techniques needed in the professional context. Surely, the balance between one and the other is a matter of adjustment for educational institutions, considering that employment and professional success will be the ultimate judge of what is (and what is not!) a good journalist.

This work tries to bring together the two fields in an attempt to reconcile the instructional understanding of the relationship between society and technology and the learning of a set of skills essential to survive successfully in the profession. Our effort has been concentrated in enabling an innovative learning context based on technologies and oriented toward the development of competences. Our key question is: “How can we educate the new generation journalist by exploring innovative learning experiences based on social contexts mediated by technology?” In the spirit of action research, we are concerned with continuous improvement, year after year, until the definition of the experience, supported by data emerging from the students’ reports, can reflect the results of their participation in the consolidated model.

Our alternative approach to the traditional initiation of the students into the particularities of journalism is to let them learn and practice the professional competences of journalism in a community context. However, the sense of belonging to a learning community mediated by technology is hard to create, since a community only emerges and maintains itself while their elements share a common interest, so we had to make sure that those conditions were sustained.

We begin by briefly describing the challenges faced by the new generations of journalists. We then present the experience we have developed with students of New Media Studies at Coimbra College of Education, Portugal. We have used two platforms for this experience. We started with Moodle, a Learning Management System (LMS) that we had been using for some years, and we then moved to Dolphin, a social networking platform we have specifically set up for our students. Finally, in the last phase of our action research project, we are using Facebook as an open platform accessible to all, where the work of the students is fully visible to the outside world.

## **2. The new generation journalist**

In recent years, much has been written about the shifts in the profession of journalist, so that one might question the relevance of still discussing change outside the boundaries of the fact that modern society is now living *in* technology, rather than *with* technology. The revolution brought about by information technologies and by the Internet, comparable to the aftermath of electricity in the industrial age (Castells, 2001), is an ongoing process of adaptation for journalists and a challenge for the media industries and for the universities that educate the professionals of the future.

The core features for the journalism profession did not, however, change that much (Porter, 2009). The substance from which the journalists get their nourishment are still the noticeable events, with more or less associated production means. The codes of ethics for professionals are, to a large extent, the same, the personal competences of readiness, efficiency in production, versatility, easy writing and communication skills are still highly valued requirements for the professionals in the media industry. However, the system of values and beliefs historically built into the professional discourse of journalism, as an occupational ideology, and the professional identity are being challenged by the emergence of technology (Deuze, 2005).

The major change is in the magnification and abundance of the media circuits for information, as well as in the logics of personalization for each consumer's habits and preferences. Existing newspapers are facing the online challenge of content dissemination and survival in social media, as their paper editions are threatened by a decreasing number of readers and announcers. Others publicize independent publications for specific platforms, like the iPad (Parr, 2010), trying out business models that the companies in the industry are still failing to find (Giles, 2010; Kramer, 2010). On the other hand, very popular social platforms, like Twitter or Facebook, connecting networks of individuals, are inspiring examples about the extent to which the future of the media will be around a one-man social scenario of wired individuals in a network. The readers, formerly known as information consumers, are now invited to act as citizen journalists and to comment and discuss the day's agenda in the media. More than ever, the future of journalism is involved with the idea of community (Lavrusik, 2010; Mensing, 2010) and challenged by the Internet (Deuze, 1999).

Where does this lead us when trying to characterize the new generation journalist? Those who are starting in the existing labor market will find significant differences from the old-age journalism they have been told about, not only in the technological apparatus they must use, but also in the kind of professional socialization they must adapt to. Now, it is much harder than it was in the past to find a more experienced colleague who can act as an advisor. A new sense of proximity with audiences is also emerging, as their feedback is closer than ever.

The institutions offering graduate studies in journalism are all dealing with the complex issue of striking the right balance between theory and practice in this new context. Traditionally, the teaching of journalism was based on the "wisdom of the craft", passed from an experienced journalist to a newbie. In fact, the emergence of journalism as an academic area of studies in universities in the USA has followed a similar process of socialization with the profession (Carey, 2000). For a long time, however, it has been recognized that the universities should not ignore the theoretical necessities of the employment area, so that students could easily cross the gap between theory and practice (Burgh, 2003; Skinner, Gasher, & Compton, 2001). Nolan (2008) argues that the debate about education in journalism frequently ignores the role played by universities, and this contributes to widen the dichotomy between universities, as critical and reflective forums, and the professional sector as merely concerned with practice.

It is also a fact that applied research is hard to find in the abundant literature about the education of journalists. Most of it focuses exclusively on essay and conceptual discussion, although accuracy and objectivity are terms deeply intrinsic to the genetic code of journalism. This does not mean that much of what is happening cannot be read on the Internet, in blogs and opinion articles. However, those are prone to pass ephemerally, like daily newspaper printed editions.

## **3. Between the management of content and social participation: three cycles for action research**

Our adoption of social media technologies in journalism education has two main empowering intentions: visibility, and the involvement of students in a community. Visibility is surely a wish of any student of journalism concerned with her professional future, but also something that the university tries to provide by offering opportunities in newspapers, television, radio, the Internet, or even in special publishing projects (Byline: Published Work A.L.C.J.I., 2010). In fact, a significant part of the time spent when graduating in journalism is used in learning and improving professional skills. Thus, the gathering of the resulting works in a public portfolio would be an important argument to help graduates face the professional market.

Social media technologies are reflected in several web applications (now available in computers and mobile phones) that make our social group of reference closer than ever. Any teacher recognizes that motivated students learn much better. The motivation and participation of the students is achievable by introducing novelty in the learning process. Part of this novelty can be found and renewed when exploring the active presence of others with similar interests in a community of practice. The traditional concept of community refers to a group of individuals sharing the same space, but a community can also be defined as those who share an identity and a way to think and act (Wenger, 1999).

Our experience has been developing with the voluntary participation of students of Media Studies at the Coimbra College of Education, in Portugal, with the following aims:

- To improve their professional skills in journalism;
- To develop a consciousness about the quality of the journalistic product;
- To approach the concept of cyberculture.

Our research agenda was to observe the social interaction in the learning community and look for data about the students' perception of their learning experience and community experience. We have adopted an action research approach based on the reports of the students throughout the experience, to help us strengthen the opportunities for improvement and translate good practices into teaching methods. Our choice of action research as a convenient research approach for the project resulted from our wish to progress in uncharted territory by trying out various solutions – each solution corresponding to an exploratory cycle – so as to accumulate knowledge from solution to solution.

### ***Cycle one: Scouting possibilities with Moodle***

The stage for our first experience happened in Moodle, an academic open-source learning management system (LMS), five years ago. At the time, we used Moodle as a meeting point for content sharing and interactive and systematic communication between teacher and students. The platform was then highly regarded in higher education, and some of its tools were most promising for our objectives. These included discussion forums, collaborative wikis, synchronous chats, and facilities for developing portfolios of academic works.

The platform fascinated the group from their first visit. It was a novel resource that afforded flexibility of time and made possible different learning paces, among other advantages. The students used it with great passion and explored all the possibilities the space offered, both as a learning process and as a mediator for socialization. For example, in Moodle, we have created disciplines as online newspapers where the student's academic experiences of media production could be published.

The experience was successful in the first years, if measured by the enthusiastic participation of the students and the skills they practiced and demonstrated. In later years, however, the participation started to decrease and the community became harder to motivate. In the personal evaluation records of the students they complained about the lack of interactivity of the platform and its outdated design (compared to the social media they were now using in their leisure time). Also, the external visibility of the academic works they produced was poor, since only other students or related stakeholders could access them.

These results questioned the continuity of Moodle as the platform to support our exploration of communities of practice in journalism education. A more attractive space was needed where the students could express their creativity without the implicit implication of mandatory assessment. We also needed an independent space for participation where a more genuine sense of community could be developed. The name "Myempowermedia" was chosen, to stress that one of our major concerns was to make the students more autonomous and empowered.

### ***Cycle two: The Dolphin promise for the Myempowermedia project***

The Myempowermedia project was tested in the final months of 2008/2009, using the Dolphin social networking platform, by Boonex (2010). At the time, seven finalist students in a curricular internship experience were invited to test the environment. The challenge was for the students to share, not only their experiences and the work produced within the internship, fostered by an external media company, but also other journalistic works developed in the last years of the course, such as news, coverage and chronicle texts, video, and audio. They were invited to use the forums to describe their experiences, discuss difficulties, and promote and publicize their individual portfolios. They were also invited to contribute with insights about their use of the Dolphin platform.

The Dolphin platform was designed explicitly to support social interaction as an all-in-one bundle of PHP community scripts. It includes features that let any member create forums, chats, message boards, blogs, events, and media sharing. Another advantage is that it enables easy follow up of the individual activity of each member inside the community. Clearly, Dolphin was a promising departure from the previous experience with Moodle.

The reaction of the test students was very warm when the idea was presented. The registration process was almost immediate. However, the subsequent participation of the test group was disappointing. Only three of the seven students had an active participation: a total of seven articles, ten photos, and no commentaries added about these shared journalistic products. In the forums, the students complained about the difficulties in uploading video files and about the confusing welcome page.

The explanation for these insipid results could relate to the timing we had selected: we had invited students a step away from graduation, at a time when they were already confronted with the challenge of professional integration and concerned with the conclusion of their academic year. The time required for involvement in the community and reading and commenting the others' work just was not enough. The remarks emerging from this test were useful to ground our first experience of implementation: the technical insufficiencies would need to be solved, the welcome page simplified, and new strategies for participation, involvement, and community building had to be developed.

#### *Community candies*

In the beginning of the academic year 2009/2010, the Myempowermedia Project was formally presented to the second year students of the graduation course of Media Studies at the Coimbra College of Education. This was our core group for research. Another two groups of students were also invited to register: first year students of Media Studies and second year students of Multimedia Design.

The Dolphin platform was presented as a place to welcome individual portfolios of journalistic materials produced in the academic activities and as a place for debate around the themes discussed in the classes. Registered members were free to post data, create events, and interact with others. All the students were invited to use the platform in these conditions.

To ensure participation and a dynamic learning experience, another challenge was launched only for the students of the core group. They were split into two subgroups, so that each subgroup could organize an independent and competitive online journalistic publication. The sections were created and the roles distributed. In each publication, a director and a section editor were voted, along with students taking the role of regular journalists. Each week the edition was prepared and the deadlines for delivery and publication of journalistic products were defined. Both publications created a special section about the profession of journalist. Some interesting works were published, like interviews to professional journalists, a report of a visit to a local radio, and theme coverage about new media courses in the academic context and about a local press. An example from one of the publications, "Clash", is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Blogs**  
 All Blogs Top Blogs Top Posts My Blog Add Category Add Post

**BLOGS - CLASH'S BLOG - POSTS**

[Que gente é esta? Que sociedade nos governa?](#)

22 January, 2010 1 comments [Made In](#)

Já vem de longe, mas sobretudo na última década as condições de vida de quem trabalha e produz neste País têm-se deteriorado assustadoramente. Em contrapartida, certas "castas" vivem desafogadamente, algumas até na opulência. Uma boa parte dos políticos, os altos funcionários públicos, as grandes sociedades de advogados, os grandes empreiteiros de obras públicas, os gestores públicos, os banqueiros, a gente do futebol e os corruptos da alta. Os corruptos, provavelmente, a avaliar pelas notícias que todos os dias nos chegam, estarão ligados a todos ou a alguns destes grupos. Há no País cerca de 600 mil desempregados. Há militares com baixa por doença. Há militares a receber vários tipos de rendimentos. Destes, pelas notícias vindas a público, grande parte estão ilegais. O que é certo, é que quem precisa de empregados não consegue recrutá-los. É ver os jornais, e as montras das lojas, com anúncios a pedir colaboradores. Alguma coisa está errada. Os que aparecem, não aceitam o trabalho porque estão a receber do Estado sem fazer nada, o mesmo que iriam ganhar, tendo que fazer alguma coisa. A parte que vive destes expedientes prejudica a outra parte que precisa realmente, e não recebe o que devia. O País é demasiado pequeno e pobre para aguentar tanta roubalheira. Está na hora de os governantes dizerem a verdade inteira e fazer sentir às pessoas que é preciso arregaçar as mangas e irmos todos ao trabalho. Não é a roubar, a deixar roubar e a aumentar impostos a todos os que trabalham e produzem, para distribuir anarquicamente pelos parasitas que o País se levanta.

Por: Liliana Mira

**DESCRIPTION**

[Clash](#)  
 Posts: 186  
 Comments: 96  
 Clash - Jornal do 2º Ano de Comunicação Social da ESEC (Atelier de Ciber Cultura Turma 2)

**CATEGORIES**

- [Secções do Clash](#) (0)
- [A voz da cidade](#) (27)
- [Sport Report](#) (34)
- [Arte & Specttacolo](#) (33)
- [Made In](#) (45)
- [Esec...sou eu e tu](#) (24)
- [As coisas pelos nomes](#) (3)
- [O jornalismo e a](#)

Figure 1: News capture from "Clash", one publication in the Myempowermedia project

The works presented to the community were expected to address the concept of journalistic products suitable for publication in multiple media supports. The quality of the journalistic product is a concern in any professional career in journalism. In fact, this concern can be considered in both its individual and collective dimensions. The journalist must build the dialogue with the alignment of work and the requirements of the employer, and it is legitimate to consider that the journalist is the first person responsible for that work. Nevertheless, as a professional, he or she should know the implemented structures of the media organizations to ensure the quality of the journalistic product for the reader. Some examples are stylebooks, revision departments, or even the hierarchies in the newsroom that ensure coordination and coherence among colleagues.

One of the objectives in the Myempowermedia experience was to observe the potential of social interaction in a learning community with common interests. The mandatory task of evaluation was prepared as an opportunity to encourage this concern with the quality of the journalistic product.

A document of scoring rubrics was proposed to the community members, consisting of a grid of qualitative units to serve as a base to analyze the works published in the community. A rubric is a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment by identifying the aspects that should be taken into account in its assessment and providing detailed descriptions of what characterizes the successive levels of performance, between unacceptable and very good (Stevens & Levi, 2004). A scoring rubric can take a holistic or a stratified structure, while referring to a task or a specific set of tasks (Moskal, 2000). The holistic structure combines different criteria of assessment in the same scale. The stratified structure allows a separate assessment of the presence or absence of the elicited qualitative factors, presenting a stratified and descriptive classification.

A grid of stratified rubrics was created to evaluate three types of published works in individual portfolios and in common projects of the students in the community: news, video and photography. The students were involved in the elaboration of the final version of the rubrics, so that they could understand and feel committed to them as evaluation criteria. The rubrics were first used to evaluate news, videos and pictures published in the local media. The next step was to set the details for the process of evaluation. A blind review process was established, so that a student could use the rubrics to evaluate the journalistic products of other colleagues without any constraint.

The qualitative analysis of the journalistic materials in the rubrics was supported by descriptors of present and absent characteristics that resulted in a position in a four level scale: "Week", "Improvements can be done", "Expectations fulfilled" and "Expectations exceeded". The rubrics for news comprised trends related to the adequacy of the title, organization and structure of the news, orthography, and grammar, and a few more subjective factors, like journalistic style, appropriate use of information sources, relevance, and originality.

The rubrics proposed to evaluate photos took into account their connection to the context, as ways of supporting news pieces, and their power of impact. Two other technical factors were also considered: the set and the balance between brightness and colour of the photo as an artistic object. In the assessment of video, the descriptors were about the consistency of the edition, quality of narration, and title and legend insertion.

The experience extended over the entire academic year of 2009/2010. In the second semester, between March and June, the possible continuation of the online community after the closing of the course was discussed with the students. They decided to maintain the community and to continue posting their works in one of the former publications. However, at the end of the semester the participations were scarce, so the Myempowermedia project was closed, in August of 2010.

#### 4. Content analysis of the Myempowermedia project

Translated into numbers, the Myempowermedia project gathered 123 members and 40 blogs, with personal portfolios from the students in the core group. Close to the end of the academic semester, all the members registered in Myempowermedia were asked to publish a small essay evaluating their learning experience in the project. The analysis of their written reports was based on the search and classification of data in two major categories: perceptions about the learning experience and perceptions about the community experience. Table 1 shows the sub-categories of data emerged from the analysis:







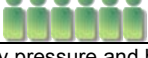












Perceptions about the learning experience	Perceptions about the experience in community
Practice of journalistic writing	Share Works and assignments with others ++
Practice on elaborating news	Share experiences and interests
Improvement of Professional skills 	Teamwork 
Professional experience 	Cooperation 
Approach to Professional reality 	Exchange of ideas, critics and commentaries 
Deadline responsibility 	Healthy competition 
Daily pressure and buzz	The advantages of new technologies
Reviewing of works 	Promoting one's work 
Discerning thinking 	Freedom to write 
Attention to news 	Entertaining experience 
Management of an online newspaper	Put knowledge into practice
Autonomy and responsibility	Sense of responsibility
Pair evaluation 	Enriching experience 
A fair assessment method 	Individual motivation
Misuse of rubrics	
Delay in completing evaluations	
Knowledge about Web 2.0 	
Knowledge about the potential of the Internet for a portfolio	
An interesting and productive dynamic	
 signs in front of sub-categories of data represent a repetition of the related content in independent essays	

Table 1: Categories of emerging content in written evaluation reports of students.

The most common sub-categories of data reveal that students valued the possibility to improve professional skills (experience, approach to professional reality, and responsibility of deadlines) in the learning experience. The

evaluation system also emerged as a significant sub-category in which students signal pair evaluation as a positive initiative. One of the students wrote “this experience allowed us to practice writing and improve our skills as future professionals in this area (...) In my opinion we also gained practice in the elaboration of journalistic works, personal experience and responsibility in dealing with deadlines” (Student #1). Another example also summarizes the emerging sub-categories of content: “the advantages are not only in the presentation of our works as a curriculum vitae, but also the possibilities of improvement through suggestions that other users leave in comments. Searching for news, selecting the more important themes, consulting several sources, applying in practice knowledge gained in other curriculum units (...) are some of the tasks we were involved in this semester.” (Student # 9).

In the perceptions about the experience in community the students refer to teamwork and cooperation as the key elements. The main dimensions of this type of content are translated into aspects like the exchange of ideas, comments and critics, and the possibility to show and promote a portfolio, as Student #10 wrote: “The advantage in using the social media platform is sharing information in community. This exchange of opinions and suggestions was a great achievement in the platform.” Students also referred to a sentiment of healthy competition, the freedom to write and publish, and the opportunity to put skills to practice.

A third category of content also emerged from data analysis, gathering the criticisms to the experience as felt by the students, in particular about Dolphin. We classified this content as criticisms to the Myempowermedia experience and found the emerging sub-categories shown in Table 2.





<b>Critics to Myempowermedia Experience</b>
Not all participants showed the same motivation
Not all faced the experience as an opportunity
Questioning the design and the functionality of the platform 
Placement of multimedia content 
Unappealing design
Personalization of the space
A positive platform, but needing improvements
Abundance of other sources for participation 
Lack of external exposure
 sign means the repetition of the category in another independent report

Table 2: Critics to Myempowermedia experience

Some of the students reflected in their reports their small participation, alluding to the unattractive design of the Dolphin platform and to the web address that was hard to remember. As a student wrote: “I found myself trying to remember the name or the link, and if I remembered it, I could not find it in Google or I could not get it right. I think that the general layout should be more appealing” (Student #32). Some other students agreed about the confusing logic of content in the environment.

Another area mentioned by some students referred to the abundance of public forums and social networks that they used on the Internet, which relegated the participation in Myempowermedia to a second plan: “Myempowermedia is different, but nowadays there are so many forums on the Internet that we tend to ignore some of them; in my case, Myempowermedia was somewhat forgotten. I think that this happens because the teacher only talks about it during the classes and I only remember to post something on that day. I think that Myempowermedia lacked external exposure.” (Student #37). For another student, the unexplored Dolphin platform was no more than a regular forum: “Myempowermedia is a forum that gradually tends to die because the students finish the discipline and will never remember to return again. It’s like some other blogs in which I participated; they eventually disappear because there is no more motivation to post. We hope to be read by many but in fact nobody will notice.” (Student #34).

Another group of students criticized the quantity of web platforms that they had to use in their academic activity: "It is complicating and confusing when we are called to different platforms around the disciplines we are enrolled in. It would be important to reach an agreement between the teachers and the school about what to use." (Student #39). Some other comments about the Dolphin platform recognized its potential and versatility: "It is an exciting tool to exchange ideas among people with concurrent interests" (Student #40); "In the age of social networks, success is in innovative services and content to attract the attention of new users and draw them from the countless social networks on the Internet." (Student #41)

Some reports show that the learning experience strengthened the student awareness of the concept of Web 2.0, namely the potential of the Internet to disseminate their portfolios. The experience in community revealed fuzzy feelings by some students, because not all of them showed the same degree of voluntarism in their participation. The design and functionality of the Dolphin platform was also questioned, mainly regarding the scarce variety of options for personalization and for the insertion of multimedia content.

Summarizing the recommendations for future experiences, the need to improve the technological support for the insertion of media content comes on the top. The Dolphin platform revealed too few configuration options for the students and some problems in the management of multimedia content. The need to improve the system of incentives to participation and the visibility of the published works also became apparent. The context of competition between teams and the system of evaluation rubrics were seen as positive aspects to maintain.

## **5. "Posts of Pescada": the current experience in Facebook**

The current learning experience started recently, in September 2010, and involved another group of second year students of New Media Studies. A significant part of these students had already participated in the Myempowermedia project. This time, the selected name for the project was "Posts of Pescada", a joke around the Portuguese idiomatic expression "mandar postas de pescada", that means showing off and talking nonsense. This time, the students were invited to publish their academic works in a blog and to index their publications in a Facebook group, on a weekly basis.

The students chose to structure the content into sections by journalistic gender. Every week, each group works in a different gender, leading them to practice the various possibilities. To approach the profession each group also works on the topic "journalism and profession" once a week. The students have researched and treated several issues related to the profession and have interviewed several journalists who gave them a closer view of the professional reality. They are also using scoring rubrics to improve their publications.

Although the experience is still in progress, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. One advantage of using Facebook is the exposure. None of the previous experiences gave students a community as large as the one they were able to enrol on Facebook (now with 495 members). The community built around the group is generating constant interaction between students. Besides other students from the course, and alumni who are participating with their comments, various professional journalists and friends joined the group. In previous learning experiences, we had never managed to bring journalists to the community. The students are, thus, gaining a richer learning experience, with the feedback and knowledge received from those already in the profession. To take this experience one step ahead we might be inspired by the words of Alfred Hermida (2010): "we need to stress that social media technologies do not just offer journalists new ways of doing old things. They offer the potential to explore new ways of telling stories, of collaborating and connecting with audiences, of rethinking how we do journalism." The consolidated result, in any case, must be treated through personal reports and open interviews to the participants.

## **5. Conclusion**

Our action research project is now in its third cycle, trying to consolidate innovative strategies to prepare future journalists for the professional challenge of a learning context based on social media. This is a tendency followed by other associations concerned with the education of journalists (AEJMC, 2010).

The reports published by the students who participated in the Myempowermedia project show their agreement about the success of the learning experience, which is visible in their approach to the professional reality. In fact, the students reported that they felt improvements in their professional skills, resulting from the observance of deadlines, the necessity of critical thought, the importance of following the media agenda, and a general feeling of autonomy. The students' reports also praised the assessment system for the journalistic works, based on a grid of rubrics, as a positive feature. The experience in community was valued by the perceptions of teamwork and cooperation.



Throughout the Myempowermedia experience, our second cycle of action research, we could see how the social media platforms can be resourceful helpers to promote journalism education through participation and interaction between users. In the communities that were built up, the students developed skills, discussed issues, shared views, increased their general knowledge, and became more informed.

Facebook has brought substantial differences in relation to the two previous experiments. The students are now more motivated to participate and to produce content. However, the lessons learned from the previous experiences are also recognized as critical contributions in our logic of continuous improvement.

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