

Report on Progress in Developing a Generative Learning Object using Newsfilm Online, Di Drummond, Trinity Leeds, Reporting Crisis: History and the Media – Memory or Manipulation GLO

Introduction

The proposed GLO using Newsfilm online is on the 1999 Crisis in Kosovo. The aim is to create a GLO that will aid students in examining newsfilm and using recent news reportage as evidence in investigating recent events in History. Another element of the GLO is considering how sources produced by the news media might be used in historic investigation.

Context – The Reporting Crisis Module

This module has been developed for level three Journalism and History undergraduates. It examines events in recent history such as the crisis in Kosovo and Bloody Sunday 1972 considering how these might be researched using materials produced by the news media (TV newsfilm and newspapers). Kosovo was chosen as a suitable case study for the GLO because of the ‘Chomsky Debate’. This argues that Kosovo is a new form of ‘humanitarian’ war, produced by a Western media that is heavily influenced by national governments to give a *raison d’être* for the continuance of NATO after the end of the Cold War.

Aims of the GLO

Subject Tutorial Objectives:	
1	To provide an on-line tutorial that will enable students to explore individually a recent or current event and its historical context through contemporary reportage in television media featured in Newsfilm Online.
2	For students to critically evaluate newsfilm produced by the British media (ITN) and for British public consumption considering what factors need to be taken into consideration when using such sources to research recent historical events.
3	For students to gain an understanding of the role of the media in commenting on historical crisis.
4	For students to assess and critically analyse the reportage and other sources of research provided on specific events through Newsfilm Online.

A further aim is to produce a stand alone online tutorial that will inform students in History and the wider Arts/Social Sciences, as well as Journalism undergraduates, about the source of media stories, the nature of news reportage in present day Britain and some of the dilemmas facing the news media in Western society.

Development of the GLO

Stage 1: Selection of appropriate newsfilm reports from Newsfilm online

A series of newsfilm reports for the ITN and Channel Four news were selected to be shown to students as part of the teaching sessions on the Kosovo Crisis. These were developed into a series of Powerpoint presentations. Sessions included:

- **Kosovo and the British Media.**
- **Kosovo and Former Yugoslavia – Historical Context.**
- **Newsworthy – What is this and what makes an event ‘newsworthy’.**
- **Newsgathering – Means and Methods of Newgathering.**
The News and Nato.
News Reportage in War – War Correspondents and their sources. Lyndsey Hilsum and Alex Thompson.

- **Questioning Western Government and Media. The Chomsky Debate and the LM Libel Case.**

Some of these films were edited.

Stage 2: Use of newsfilm extracts in taught sessions, development of key questions.

These were used with students for teaching purposes throughout the first semester of the module.

The following film clips were used in these taught sessions:

Kosovan refugee crisis in Macedonia 29th March 1999
http://ledi.edina.ac.uk:7824/fullRecord.php?collection=Channel_4_News&bulletinID=1085761&Time_Start=00:00:00:00&duration=00:03:53:21;

A report on the NATO newsroom in Brussels
http://ledi.edina.ac.uk:7824/fullRecord.php?collection=Channel_4_News&bulletinID=1087537&Time_Start=00:00:00:00&duration=00:03:23:00;

Commentary as PM Blair as ‘saviour’ 30th March 1999
[http://ledi.edina.ac.uk:7824/fullRecord.php?collection=Channel_4_News&bulletinID=1086681&Time_Start=00:00:00:00&duration=00:02:28:12](http://ledi.edina.ac.uk:7824/fullRecord.php?collection=Channel_4_News&bulletinID=1086681&Time_Start=00:00:00:00&duration=00:02:28:12;)

Students examined these closely and used them to comment on:

- 1 **Newsworthy and Newsform.** What makes a news ‘story’? The aim and intent of the film report. The form and narrative ‘story’ of the newsfilm reportage. How is this story represented? How are the ‘actors’ in the film represented? Are there stereotypical figures in this newsreportage? Etc.

- 2 **Newsgathering:** How was the news of events in Kosovo gathered – by correspondents in ‘the field’ and at NATO HQ Brussels? The problems of this and the form and ‘slant’ of the news reports that result from this. How critical of Western governments/ international organisations and their ‘supply’ of the news are journalists and correspondents? Questioning Clinton 16 April, 1999. http://ledi.edina.ac.uk:7824/fullRecord.php?collection=Channel_4_News&bulletinID=1086250&Time_Start=00:00:00:00&duration=00:03:23:22
- 3 **The Chomsky and LM Debate.** Sections of film from Newsfilm Online on the LM Libel case and interview of Naom Chomsky by Serbian TV on You Tube supplemented students’ wider reading of books, articles and newspaper articles on this.
- 4 **These sessions provided the basis for the GLO tutorials.**

Stage 3: Development of the GLO Tutorials

This has commenced and a provisional GLO was demonstrated to the project team at a meeting at the Higher Education Academy York in June.

Planning of the GLO Tutorials

The GLO’s have been planned on paper/ a form of storyboarding (I can’t draw). This identifies the pedagogic aims of each tutorial, its content and most of the exercises. Student feed back and commentary on the films provided some of the material for this.

It was decided that there would be the following tutorials:

- 1 **What makes a story ‘newsworthy’?**
- 2 **News reports – Analysing their content, form and approach.**
- 3 **Newsgathering.**
- 4 **The Chomsky-LM Debate – What is it? Can we see evidence of this in newsfilm reportage during Kosovo crisis of 1999? A critique of Chomsky.**

Development of GLO tutorials to date

I have now taught myself how to use GLOmaker. To date the basic form of all but number 1 of these tutorials has been developed on the GLOmaker software. Films were edited, sound extracts produced and other illustrated photographs found. In addition to this quizzes etc have been developed using the GLOMaker software. This was demonstrated at the Project meeting in June.

Technical Difficulties

In doing 3.2 I encountered a number of technical difficulties both with the GLOMaker tutorial and the software recommended for the conversion of the Newsfilm online films to Flash files.

It was agreed at the meeting in June that I should forward my film clips to the GLOmaker team at the London Metropolitan University centre. I have not done this yet but will do it soon.

I will also draft a letter this coming week to be sent to Lyndsey Hilsum and Alex Thompson inviting them to be interviewed about 'newsgathering' in Kosovo. The aim would be to film these interviews in London during the week commencing 27th October 2008.

Plans for Development, Trialling and Evaluation of the GLO tutorials

My aim is to finalise the current version of at least two of the tutorials (probably 2 and 4) for mid October so that they can be tested and used by my students via Moodle tutorials early November. In addition to this I am also inviting Dr Kevin Burden of the University of Hull to visit one of my taught sessions where Newsfilm online material will be used in October or November. This will allow me to finalise the tutorials after these trials. It might be that I do not have time to produce all four tutorials for the December deadline, but the other two would be produced soon after this (across the Christmas vacation).

Other Outcomes to Date

In addition to using Newsfilm online for the Kosovo project I have also done the following:

- 1 Developed extensive materials using Newsfilm online news reportage, scripts etc on Bloody Sunday 1972 and after for the second semester of this module 'Reporting Crisis'. Some of the commentary on newsfilm and how the form and narrative of this has changed between 1972 and 1999 or even today made by students will be used to develop aspects of the proposed tutorials.
- 2 Have spoken and given presentations on newsfilm and researching recent History, and the problems of using newsfilm regarding massacre and genocide at:

Plenary Speaker on 'Teaching Contemporary History through news film', Higher Education Academy History Subject Centre 10th Annual Conference, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, 2-4th April 2008. **Higher Education Academy, History Subject Centre, Diversity and the Past, University of Manchester 5th December 2007.** Presentation 'Including Diversity within History: A Review of Pedagogic

Practices'. **Controversial Topics:** History and Archaeology Subject Centre, Manchester Museum, 30th April, 2008 - invited presentation, 'What do you show the students? Teaching contemporary History using Newsfilm reportage of massacre and genocide'.

Faculty of Humanities Away Day, Trinity Leeds. 'Teaching Difficult Subjects – Massacre and Genocide'.

'British Media Reportage in Kosovo 1999' at the 'Every Word Matters: Communicating Diversity' Annual Conference of 'Communication Ethics', 16th November 2007 – audience of professional journalists – very useful!

3 Given presentations on GLOS and RLOS at Trinity Learning and Teaching Day, 27th May 2008.

Di Drummond Saturday, 13 September 2008.