

## **SOME REFLECTIONS FROM STUDENTS ON TEXT1400 ON THE CCS BLOGGING PROJECT – 2010-11**

The selection is taken from student's CCS blogs on Blackboard. They were required to write on a specific topic each week. The last entry was a reflection of the blog-writing process.

The topics were:

1. About me – this piece should explain who you are and your specific design and cultural-related interests. What inspires you as a designer?
2. Critical evaluation of one of your favourite blogs that deals with design/textiles/fashion – comment on writing style, content and presentation
3. Critical analysis of the work of one contemporary designer
4. Critical analysis of the work of a past designer (working before 1980) –
5. An issue relating to design currently in the news (e.g. relating to Paris fashion week, Government cuts in the cultural industries, news of an invention relating to fabrics/fashion etc)
6. Description and critical evaluation of an historic object or a piece of contemporary craft/design – choose something that you find inspirational - it does not need to be textile-related.
7. Review of a book you have read on a design related topic.
8. Discussion of an object from another culture (outside Western Europe and USA)
9. An exhibition review (any exhibition – not just textile-related)
10. A discussion of a family photograph focusing on the clothing/fabrics/accessories worn by a family member (this photo should have been taken before 1980). You may want to interview them as part of the entry. You could film this and insert it into your blog. You must include the photo
11. Write a piece reflecting on the process of writing a blog. Suggest what you might cover in your blog if you were going to continue with it.

(The entries below are pasted directly with no attempt to correct spelling or grammar)

- Before starting my blog entries, I was quite wary of the whole process as it is not something I was particularly familiar with. I followed a few blogs online already and had once attempted to keep my own but I soon gave up on this as it was difficult to find exciting things to write about and also quite disheartening when only a couple of people signed up to follow it. For these reasons I have found it useful to be given specific themes to work from as this stopped me from drying up in terms of ideas and it also gave me the opportunity to explore areas of design that I had never really looked into before, in particular the discussion of an object from another culture. I also enjoyed being able to read through other people's blogs and knowing that they were also able to read mine. I thought it was interesting to see the different objects and topics that others chose to discuss and the wide variety of things covered despite everyone working from the same simple guidelines.

I feel that my blog entries are mostly successful and hopefully they make interesting reading material. If I was to continue writing, I think I would like to look at the work that I have done in other modules since beginning the course and perhaps analysing and reviewing this now that it is complete and I can see where I could have made changes and improvements. I think that keeping a record of these thoughts about my own work would help me to stop making the same mistakes at each stage as I would hopefully see a pattern occurring. I also feel that a blog would be an appropriate platform for this type of discussion as it would allow others to contribute their thoughts and suggestions.

Overall I have enjoyed the experience of writing these blog entries and it is definitely something that I will try to continue with as it seems to be the most exciting new way for designers to showcase their work and gain support.

- This is the first time I have written a blog and I have really enjoyed writing it. It is a completely different way of writing which I find to be fun and nice to write as well as read. I have enjoyed reading other people's blogs and learning new and interesting things along the way.

When we were given the brief I was excited to get started and did so that afternoon. Since then I have really enjoyed completing my entry each week. I was able to share my opinions and things I like with others and learn things from other people's blogs along the way.

I would love to carry on with the blog for the rest of the year; I would enjoy discussing things which I stumble upon that interest me and may interest others and also share my work with other people. I would talk about things in the news that interest me, things that have made me smile, laugh and cry. I would share artists and things I have come across which I think others would enjoy as much as I have.

The whole blog writing experience has been very enjoyable and I hope to start my own blog sometime soon!

- Writing these blogs has introduced me to a whole new way of writing and a new writing style. I have really enjoyed being able to write in a more relaxed and friendly way rather than the formal style that we are encouraged to write in when writing essays.

At first I didn't really see the point in writing a blog but now I feel that blogging is an easy, less stressful way of tackling lots of issues. If we were told to write an essay covering the same points it would seem more daunting and less enjoyable. When writing the blogs I forgot the seriousness of the critical analysis and descriptions and enjoyed finding out information, giving my opinions and finding eye catching images. It has been good to explore the different topics that I would not normally have considered to be important, however I have found it hard to stick to the word limit each week.

After writing the blog I feel more confident about using blogging next year to create a public profile of myself as a designer.

If I was to continue with this blog I think I might look at things like critically analysing modern magazines or current shop displays. I would also like to produce more entries about fashion from different eras in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- The range of subjects that we have covered on the blogspot during the term has been varied and interesting. It has encouraged me to investigate certain areas of design and to focus on specific topics. I had not written a blog before and was apprehensive of the whole process, but I have enjoyed the challenge and the opportunity to look at a new approach to contextual studies. Blogging has allowed us to cover quite a wide range of topics without dwelling too long on each one. It has been interesting and a learning situation to read the blogs from other members of the group and to look at their choice of subjects each week.

I have found that the style of writing a blog is more informal than writing an essay and I still have difficulty in producing a blog that is more informal and chatty. If I were to continue with this blogspot, I might want to delve a little more deeply into certain topics which would mean that fewer entries would be made in a term. I might include images of my current work and mention the techniques and processes used as well as development ideas. It would also be good to develop a group of contacts that could meet occasionally in person to visit galleries, workshops and the like.

The thing that I am not keen on, regarding blogspots generally, is those that give you a lot of personal details - like what they cooked for dinner the previous day! That seems to be a waste of time both for the reader and the owner of the blog.

Overall, it has been a good introduction to writing and using a blog.

- During these past 10 weeks I have had the opportunity to explore a variation of interesting subjects through different sources, although at the beginning I found the task of writing blogs quite intimidating with time I developed a better approach to researching and voicing my opinions. I found writing my blog that I need to develop a more conversational style where discussing my ideas and discoveries can be done more informally. I think If I was to develop this skill my own personal interest in writing my blogs would also increase because I would be able to involve myself even more with my writing and thoughts.

I found being given different areas to research helpful because initially I was a little lost for where to start, this enabled me to ease into writing the online journals and as

I progressed so did the areas I was researching. I especially enjoyed writing the family photo blog and the exhibition one; I think this was because for me it was a more interactive piece where I was relying on purely imagery and becoming more involved with what I was writing. I think my weakest blog was writing about the current issue, I feel this is something I would like to develop better because it's forever changing and impacts my work progress every day, however when writing this piece I found it the least appealing to what I enjoy and couldn't fully involve myself in the piece like all my other blogs. If I was to continue writing my blogs I would enjoy working from much more primary research, possibly more old photographs and images I've taken myself that inspire me, as well as my own work, I found it a lot easier to write enthusiastically about the things I was more personally involved with.

During the process of writing these blogs it allowed me to learn more about myself and what inspires me, I was always aware I like travelling and was inspired by this, however until I reviewed websites, an exhibition, objects and a book that related to different cultures I wasn't quite aware how much this influences and interests me. Overall I found this a good introduction to writing blogs as it allowed me to become more comfortable in my opinions and learn more about places I can discover information.

- On reflection I have found it very difficult at first to keep my blogs interesting, especially with some of the topic I was set to cover. However the topics in which I found very interesting seem to come a lot easy to me, and I enjoyed writing them much more. As time went on and the more blogs I wrote it just became easier and easier to write a blog entry, as I felt more confident about what I was writing. If I was to continue writing however I would do a weekly blog that would reflect on my day to day life, at university and at home showing the different combinations, by doing this I would be taking a leaf out of 'pen pens blog' just to remind you 'pen pen' was the blog I covered in week 2. As you could guess this was defiantly my favourite one to write about.

- I've never had to write blogs before and it's a lot different to writing an essay or a long piece of writing. At first I thought it was quite hard to write blogs because of the amount of research you have to do, not only on the internet but with journals, books and also at other people's blogs too. After writing a couple of blog entries I had gotten use to the type of writing that is needed for blogging. I like the fact that they are different entries and not one whole piece of information. I find that it is more interesting to read because even when looking at other peoples blogs you see certain aspects and the blogs entries that catch your eye, and you don't feel the need to have to sit there reading through every single other blog because all other entries are different to one another. I have enjoyed this process of blog writing however I find the fact of keeping up with a weekly blog entry is not my kind of thing.

- Before starting my blog entries, I was quite wary of the whole process as it is not something I was particularly familiar with. I followed a few blogs online already and

had once attempted to keep my own but I soon gave up on this as it was difficult to find exciting things to write about and also quite disheartening when only a couple of people signed up to follow it. For these reasons I have found it useful to be given specific themes to work from as this stopped me from drying up in terms of ideas and it also gave me the opportunity to explore areas of design that I had never really looked into before, in particular the discussion of an object from another culture. I also enjoyed being able to read through other people's blogs and knowing that they were also able to read mine. I thought it was interesting to see the different objects and topics that others chose to discuss and the wide variety of things covered despite everyone working from the same simple guidelines.

- I feel that my blog entries are mostly successful and hopefully they make interesting reading material. If I was to continue writing, I think I would like to look at the work that I have done in other modules since beginning the course and perhaps analysing and reviewing this now that it is complete and I can see where I could have made changes and improvements. I think that keeping a record of these thoughts about my own work would help me to stop making the same mistakes at each stage as I would hopefully see a pattern occurring. I also feel that a blog would be an appropriate platform for this type of discussion as it would allow others to contribute their thoughts and suggestions.

Overall I have enjoyed the experience of writing these blog entries and it is definitely something that I will try to continue with as it seems to be the most exciting new way for designers to showcase their work and gain support.

- When I was first given the task of writing a blog I was not looking forward to it as writing about personal reflection has never been my strong point. At A level and foundation we had to write a daily reflective journal and this was my least favourite area of the course, however the more I used my journal I did find it became easier and was very useful.

When I started writing the blogs I found it was not as difficult as I expected and I really enjoyed researching and writing about some of the topics such as the contemporary designer and historic object as these were both areas which really interested me. The only problem I did find with writing the blogs is that I sometimes find it hard to keep my writing style appropriate for a blog and to stop it sounding too formal and more like an essay. If I was to continue writing my blog I would like to do further research into contemporary embroiderers and how embroidery varies across different cultures. I think writing a blog has been really helpful and has allowed me to research and give my opinion on a wide variety of topics.

- Writing a blog enabled me to research and reflect upon a wide range of topics relating to Art and Design in a short space of time and then evaluate, analyse, discuss or review each one but in a concise way in order to just focus on the key points relating to the subject. This differs considerably to the approach taken when writing essays or assignments for which you carry out more thorough research in order to improve and develop your understanding.

I had not looked at any blogs before, always steering towards websites believing them to be more reliable when carrying out research on an artist/designer. However I now realise that viewing a blog gives a personal insight into a designer's life, and tells you a great deal about their thought process, ideas and inspiration. The blog format is also successful in documenting an individual's work over a period of time, allowing the public to view past works as well as recent up to date pieces, promoting themselves as designers and communicating the latest news regarding exhibitions or craft fairs.

I enjoyed writing my weekly entries, although I sometimes wanted to expand further on the topic and often had to cut out sections in order to keep the number of words down. However I understand from viewing Textile blogs that they are predominantly visual and this encourages the viewer to observe and interpret a designer's work allowing them to draw their own conclusions. This ensures the design work is the main focus on the site as most designers use blogs as a means of promoting or selling their work.

- Before embarking on this blog writing challenge, I was aspired to write my own Blog, detailing different interests and aspects of me and my life. I have loved the experience of writing a blog. At first some topics were more challenging but this was short lived and as I researched the relative information, I was able to write more fluently. I have learnt a lot through each topic, even the subjects I knew about already. Gaining the information has been insightful and has given me a thirst to find out more.

I often found it difficult to keep within the word count. I feel this is because I was genuinely interested in what I was researching and I feel this is shown through each blog. I definitely prefer blog writing to essay writing as I have more freedom and I have found I am more expressive.

Blog writing is both fun and enjoyable. I now often spend a few minutes checking out other blogs online.

I would love to continue writing a blog, so I can develop my understanding of different topics and have a bigger wealth of knowledge.

- The range of subjects that we have covered on the blogspot during the term has been varied and interesting. It has encouraged me to investigate certain areas of design and to focus on specific topics. I had not written a blog before and was apprehensive of the whole process, but I have enjoyed the challenge and the opportunity to look at a new approach to contextual studies. Blogging has allowed us to cover quite a wide range of topics without dwelling too long on each one. It has been interesting and a learning situation to read the blogs from other members of the group and to look at their choice of subjects each week.

I have found that the style of writing a blog is more informal than writing an essay and I still have difficulty in producing a blog that is more informal and chatty. If I were to continue with this blogspot, I might want to delve a little more deeply into certain topics which would mean that fewer entries would be made in a term. I might include images of my current work and mention the techniques and processes used as well as development ideas. It would also be good to develop a group of contacts that could meet occasionally in person to visit galleries, workshops and the like.

The thing that I am not keen on, regarding blogposts generally, is those that give you a lot of personal details - like what they cooked for dinner the previous day! That seems to be a waste of time both for the reader and the owner of the blog. Overall, it has been a good introduction to writing and using a blog.

- I have found the process of writing a blog interesting because for me it was a whole new way of writing and documenting my findings. However I did find it difficult because it doesn't really allow you to explore the topic and explain it very much as the word count isn't supposed to be very high, so sometimes I did go over this because I got too involved in the topic, and couldn't find a way to condense the words down and still get the message across. I realise this is how blogging differs from writing an essay, but I do think that sometimes it would have been more interesting to write an essay and be able to go into more detail and do more research on the topic.

I think that if I was to carry on writing a blog I would look at more artists and other things that are inspirational to me as then it would become a useful source, sort of like a journal, which I could look at to help inspire my work. I could then add to it whenever I found anything useful, not just weekly. Although my timekeeping with writing this blog hasn't been brilliant, I think that this is something that would be useful to carry on with, and something I would like to do.

- Overall the blogs have definitely been an experience, being used to writing more formal or in an essay form, it was nice to have a change.

Being able to talk more informally was a massive help as my writing skills aren't the best!

I would have liked to have gone more in depth with some of my blogs and perhaps included a few more images to relate as images are always fun to look at and make everything so much more interesting.

Blogs are definitely going to be the future as everything eventually changes and I think a blog is a good way to express your feelings and opinions about a certain something.

Essays are too formal and complicated and I feel being more personal and individual is the way to go. Writing blogs is definitely a breath of fresh air and a way of writing your ideas and personal thoughts and to me being yourself is far more interesting.

- When I was first given the task of writing Blog's, I am not going to lie, I was terrified. I find it very difficult to write, especially when it is my own opinions and writing about myself. I also hated the fact that everyone could read my work, as I do find it difficult being judged and get quite nervous. However I feel this task has helped me overcome these problems and I do feel like I write now with confidence. I enjoyed the fact that we got given a different task every week, and the fact that they didn't follow, each one was very different and some were based on things I hadn't even thought about writing about or reading. An example being the whole Blog idea, I have never really been a big internet reader and always dismissed the

idea of reading and writing blog's however my opinion to this has been completely changed.

I think having to write blog's rather than essay's is a brilliant idea as it allows us to write more freely and not so formal, which I think makes tasks like these a whole lot less tedious and quite enjoyable. Also, at first a hated idea but now a life saver, the fact that we could see each others. When i got stuck on idea or didn't know how to start off a blog, looking at my piers work really helped and inspired me straight away. If I was to continue with writing the blog I would carrying on with reviewing things that I have found as I think having that opinion saved and read is extremely helpful for inspiration needed at a later date. I also like the idea of using it to review and show off my work and achievements.

- Over the past 11 weeks we have been writing our blogs on set topics and things we find interesting and inspiring within those topics. I have found this a rather enjoyable task as we have little written work to do, and I quite enjoy writing. I have found this quite easy to do and I think it would be a good practise to get into the habit of writing my own blog every week reflecting on my work, inspiration and world around me. I haven't managed to write this blog however, because at times of deadlines it has been put to the bottom of the list but I have found it very easy to catch up and haven't felt like I've really fallen behind. I think that this has benefitted me as it has encouraged me to do more research into the textiles world rather than just writing about things I know about. If I was to write another blog I would keep it up to date every week as I think that this is more helpful especially if it was about my own work a lot changes in a week! I feel however that i have completed this blog to the best of my ability and it has not been an unmanageable task, and have found it quite enjoyable just to have a place to write about different things.

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