Digital Content Creation Course for Malaysian English Undergraduate Students: Its Relevance to Promote Autonomous Employability Skills

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Abstract. Venturing into the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), being digital savvy is what makes a fresh graduate to be more employable than the others. Graduates with good digital skills will emerge as highly employable graduates as they are able to meet the industry's needs. Most companies nowadays are diverting towards digital content in promoting and informing their audiences about their product, as well as services. Being autonomous in creating meaningful content, such as marketing, as well as promotion videos, and even personal branding content that can help to attract targeted audiences can benefit the graduates not only as an employee, but also as an individual respectively. Having the skills of digital content creation not only helps to cater to the demand of industries, but also helpful in promoting autonomous employability skills within graduates to adapt to the workforce environment. In conjunction to this, employing a qualitative design of research with focus group discussion involving ten undergraduate students as the sampling of this study, this study will be discussing the relevance of a digital content creation course in tertiary education to prepare graduates' for autonomous skills in the workforce environment, also to accommodate the demand of industry in the Malaysian context. It is believed that, if planned accordingly, a digital content creation course could bring potential to assist undergraduate students to be more employable, alongside unleashing their English intercultural communication skills to cater to both themselves and the industry's needs.

Keywords: Digital Content Creation, English for Intercultural Communication, Employability Skills.

1   Introduction

Without a question, COVID-19 has had a major impact on a variety of global sectors [1], [2]. The demand for content and the velocity at which it must be published have both increased for many large firms and service content teams. Digital media have advanced quickly. Then, businesses and organizations use this to reach out to the general audience. This is why it is crucial to master the ability to create digital content. Digital content comes in a variety of formats. They could be any digitally submitted text, picture, music, or video. Then, these materials can be accessed via numerous digital platforms, including websites and social media. People can access the information via a variety of gadgets, including PCs, tablets, and smartphones.

Since the objective is more than just to publish text or images in digital format, producing digital content involves planning. The digital information produced must convey some sort of message. The process of creating content takes time and involves a number of steps, including selecting the type of material you want to use, developing a plan (either through keyword research or another method), and producing the content. "The content is always king," as the saying goes, and it is the material that motivates people, piques their attention, and influences their decisions. Therefore, focus more on creating content that draws in and engages viewers.

The realm of digital media and content creation offers a wide range of professional options and career trajectories, from web development to video storytelling. Every sort of person and skill set are needed in the sector, making it a strategic career path for almost any student to think about. The ability to effectively communicate (including marketing, copywriting, narrative, or storytelling), a general understanding of style and visual aesthetics (for example, for roles that include elements of photography, videography, or graphic design), technical familiarity (including basic coding or website maintenance skills), and comfort with learning new software tools are the skills most frequently required within digital media spaces. But a wide range of other abilities and skills can also be helpful.

The idea of co-creation is supported by a number of ideas, including service-dominant logic, organisational citizenship behaviour, diffusion of innovation, and stakeholder theory. The one of them that most effectively sets co-creation apart from its equivalents (i.e., students as partners, student voice, and student participation) is service-dominant logic. Theory of service-dominant logic by [3] contends that all products are services (e.g., goods dominant logic is obsolete because all goods also have corresponding service functions) and that all services are co-created because the value of a service is a joint process between what the organisation provides and what the user consumes.

[3] utilise the illustration of an automobile, which has no worth unless someone assigns value to it. Furthermore, the value may vary based on the person. One user's value may be that it makes it easier for them to commute to work, while another user's value may be that the car reflects success and money. Therefore, service-dominant reasoning contends that value is created post-production, when users apply and/or alter value, as well as during production (as was previously supposed). One of the essential elements of co-creation, this idea is known as value-in-use (ViU) [4]. Value-in-use and co-production, or the value created collaboratively during the production process, are two separate aspects of co-creation, according to [4]. Even though only one of these elements is frequently referred to as "co-creation," both elements must exist for the co-creation process to be fully developed (albeit not always in the same amount).

Currently, one of the job sectors with the fastest growth is the digital media and content development ecosystem [5]. Many of the job categories covered by this umbrella are expanding substantially faster than the national average. For undergraduate students, this makes it a desirable future employment landscape. This is especially important to undergraduate students of English for Intercultural Communication who are getting ready to apply for an internship or who are weighing their career options and need to decide what they want to settle in terms of their career. Students are knowledgeable about the kind of online content that is effective for them as consum-

ers of educational digital information, particularly during the pandemic. They bring substantial creativity, energy, and initiative together with up-to-date digital knowledge and skills. According to [6], acknowledging that students have valuable resources like perspectives, opinions, ideas, and experiences can reinvigorate higher education.

As we enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), having a strong digital skill set sets a recent graduate apart from the competition in the job market [7]. According to [8], the ability to satisfy the needs of the industry will make graduates with strong digital skills highly employable. Nowadays, the majority of businesses use digital content to market to and inform their audiences about their goods and services. The ability to independently produce valuable content, such as marketing materials, promotional videos, and even personal branding materials that can draw in certain audiences, can aid graduates both professionally and personally. The capacity to create digital material not only meets industry needs, but it also encourages graduates to develop independent employability skills that will help them adapt to the working world [9]. There are not many studies conducted on the significance of a digital content creation course incorporated in a faculty program that could help to provide students with extra skill sets to help them prepare for the real workforce environment. In conjunction with this, this study will discuss the usefulness of a course in digital content production for higher education to equip graduates with independent abilities for the workplace and to meet industry demands in the Malaysian setting.

2   Method

This study employed a qualitative research design where a focus group discussion was conducted with ten undergraduate students who have undergone their industrial training. The sampling technique used for this study is purposive sampling. The relevance and importance of a digital content creation course are discussed during the focus group discussion. The data collected were then analyzed thematically using an inductive thematic approach.

3   Finding and Discussion

During the data collection procedure, a focus group discussion was conducted with the participants to find out the relevance and importance of a digital content creation course for undergraduate students of English for Intercultural Communication to help them be more autonomous in their employability skills, as well as to prepare them for the industry demands. The findings have gathered that a digital content creation course is relevant and useful in terms of a. Preparing undergraduate students with industry demands, and b. Providing them with the extra skill set which can help to expand job opportunities.

3.1   Preparing undergraduate students with industry demands

Out of the ten participants, 100% of them agreed that a digital content creation course needs to be developed prior to their industrial training period. Some of the reasons being provided by the participants were because they feel like most internship programs require interns to create content on social media. This finding is aligned with a study by [7] on how having a strong digital skill set helps graduate to survive in the workforce environment as it is common nowadays to have companies are gearing towards creating content on social media. One of the participants specifically mentioned,

> "*Most of my internship task include corporate and creative copywriting , they also expect me to be able to create creative content regardless of the formats (writing, video, audio).*"
>
> *(Undergraduate student 3)*

A participant also mentioned that a digital content creation course would be useful to help enable undergraduate students to have at least basic knowledge about content creation, so they would not be completely lost during internship as mentioned in a study by [5] that digital media and content development ecosystem has the highest growth. He believed that this kind of course also can expose some students to a possible potential that they could improve overtime. Another participant from the focus group discussion also clearly stated that as Gen Zs, they are always expected to be well-versed in using technology and social media applications. According to the participant,

> *As an intern, you somehow get assigned to do content creation work because the superiors assume that all Gen Z are well-versed in using techs and applications like TikTok and Instagram.*
>
> (Undergraduate student 9)

Due to this, according to one of the participants, students are expected to know many things about digital technology because they are Gen-Z so they must be proficient in this area. Hence, the participants believed that if a digital content creation course is established prior to their industrial training experience, it could be helpful in providing them the skills and expectations from the industry as agreed by [8] that the ability to satisfy the needs of the industry will make graduates with strong digital skills highly employable.

3.2   Providing undergraduate students with the extra skill set which can help to expand job opportunities

From the findings of the focus group discussion, one of the participants did mention that she believes a digital content creation course could be helpful in helping students to acquire an extra skill set that is beneficial for them. One of the participants mentioned that she sees there are many job opportunities that require graduates to have at

least basic knowledge of digital content creation. This is later agreed by another participant who says that having the knowledge of digital content creation is seen as an extra skill set that could lead to getting a higher chance of getting employed.

It is seen as an extra skill set and have a higher chance to become an intern in a company.

(Undergraduate student 4)

Can expand job opportunities

(Undergraduate student 7)

Other than that, another participant also mentioned that digital content creation course can be beneficial to them in a sense that content creation skills could help to build her portfolio that showcase her talents and abilities. She believes that having a good portfolio that displays how she put the courses she was enrolled in into practice might provide potential values to the organization.

4   Conclusion and Implication

Despite having grown up with digital gadgets in their hands, today's youth frequently lack awareness of the potential power of digital information and content. Our current digital technology has made it possible to access information and perceive the world in completely new ways. The creation of digital information and media can be extremely potent tools. Early exposure to the world of digital information can benefit your students' understanding of the world they live in as well as their exploration of potential passions and career opportunities that may have an impact on the rest of their lives. It is proven that no matter what age group you teach, including these subject areas will keep your students' interest and impart useful abilities that will be extremely beneficial to them.

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