



“Journal LX has enabled me to move beyond just posting materials online. With it, I can participate with students in an ongoing dialogue, creating a reviewable record of the course.”

Dale Long
Professor, School of Early
Childhood Education
Seneca College

Seneca

Campus Pack™ in Action:

Journal LX™ as a Platform for Reflection

How can an instructor provide each student in a course with an enriching experience, even when face-to-face time is limited? With Journal LX™, an instructor can create ‘private journals’ for the class, providing each student a place to articulate his course-related experiences and giving the instructor a way to respond individually, but efficiently, to the students’ reflections.

At Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology, Professor Dale Long finds Journal LX allows her to sustain meaningful interaction with her students as they progress through her course.

Using Technology to Bolster Field Experiences

One of the largest colleges in Canada, Seneca College has long been a leader in the use of technology to support teaching and learning. Dale Long, Professor in the School of Early Childhood Education, takes advantage of the technologies available at Seneca in her *Preschool Learning Environment II* course.

As part of *Preschool Learning Environment II*, each student participates in a field placement, which has two implications: students need guidance in maximizing the value of their field experiences, and classroom time is minimal.

When faced with the challenge of adapting the course for a fully-online format, Professor Long felt compelled to rethink her instructional approach. “I needed to find new ways to make up for the loss of individual time spent with students, and more importantly, ensure they could synthesize their professional experiences in the context of taught materials,” says Professor Long.

To achieve these objectives, Professor Long incorporated Journal LX into the course. She devised a blogging requirement aimed at promoting lifelong skills in being a “reflective practitioner.” “Engaging students to reflect on their own learning is an essential component of the curriculum,” Professor Long explains. “Journal LX is a valuable tool that supports this objective and that has helped me successfully engage students in meaningful conversation, while at the same time effectively recording individual growth over time.”

About Journal LX™

Journal LX allows blogs and journals to be created within a course, providing the classroom community with a structured and engaging forum for writing about course-related topics, projects, and ideas.

With Journal LX, users can

- ▶ Explore course readings, class discussions, and field experiences in an online environment
- ▶ Share and critique each other's work, learning through both peer-modeling and peer-review
- ▶ Gain insight into their progress from individualized instructor feedback
- ▶ Sharpen critical thinking, rhetorical, and written communications skills



Recording Student Development

Effectively tracking a student's progress during a field placement is a historically difficult task. With Journal LX, students can write about their experiences and include photos, charts, and hyperlinks in their logs, creating a final document they can look back on and recognize the depth and range of transferable skills gained during the course.

In Professor Long's class, students' journals serve as the basis for written dialogues with her, allowing her to easily share her perspective on concepts encountered during the course.

A Structured Approach to Blogging

Professor Long initially thought that some students would be fearful of the technology and rarely post if they felt the structure was too loose. To combat these fears, she invites students to campus for a meet-and-greet and gives them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Journal LX.

Professor Long also provides her students with general guidelines for keeping an online journal; including requiring them to write at least one entry per week relating what they are learning to what they already know and using professionalism when writing about the children observed.

If faced with writer's block when journaling, students can refer to two resources provided by Professor Long: a list of possible topics for reflection and a series of probing questions designed to guide students in describing, analyzing, and reflecting on their experiences.

To assess the individual journals, Professor Long developed a grading rubric, distributed at the start of the course, outlining how each individual journal would be evaluated and assigning point values to four specific criteria. Journal LX's full integration with Seneca's course management system, particularly its gradebook functionality, makes the grading process easy to manage.

The Bottom Line

Professor Long concludes, "Journal LX is extremely flexible. I am teaching in a way that was not possible before. Getting started was quite simple, and students have responded so positively to the technology. It has become a key element in helping each student achieve their professional objectives."

Visit us on the web to learn more about Journal LX™ and the rest of the Campus Pack™ suite.

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