

14 Bear Grylls¹ in Belfast: Integrating digital fieldwork in the international event management fieldtrip to post-conflict post-Covid Belfast

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Abstract

This case narrative examines the integration of the fieldtrip into the student's international event management degree experience. It concentrates upon visits to Belfast, Northern Ireland, where students have an immersive experience into event management, placemaking and regeneration in a post-conflict environment. The fieldtrip constitutes a deep learning pedagogy of real-world scenario and authentic dynamics that complement and enliven classroom activities and module readings. The digital artifacts developed by students, and their presentations on the last day of the fieldtrip, focus their studies whilst in the field.

Subjects: Fieldtrips; immersive teaching and learning; digital; placemaking; post-conflict; regeneration; Belfast

Introduction

Remembrance Day 2022, also known as Poppy Day in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: 11th November at 11am to mark the time the guns of World War One fell silent 124 years ago. By chance myself and some of my group of students are asked to stand in two minutes' silence and observe this moment as we are leaving one of the key rooms in the Belfast's Titanic Experience – the launch gallery with a crowd painted on the wall, a model display of the Titanic in construction in its dock on Queen's Island, and a dramatic glass wall pointing down the real Titanic slipway to the river, one of the signature glass points between the main pointed walls covered in shining anodized aluminium. Here you can see the launch path of RMS Titanic, and in the background the new

1 The students used Bear Grylls camcorder glasses to collect video material on the fieldtrip.

Titanic Studios used recently by the Game of Thrones film crew. My two students are from Hong Kong and are accustomed to stand to attention. Other visitors sit with similarly bowed heads contemplating the loss of life not from the sinking of the Titanic but from the various European and World War conflicts past and present. The gallery clock continues to play out a loud “TICK TOCK” march of time but to a new meaning. Once over, a staff member thanks us for our collective observance over the ‘Museum’ sound system and the launch continues for the rest of the day, and the visitors go about their leisure time.



Figures 14.1, 2 and 3: 2022 Fieldtrip commemorating Remembrance in the Titanic Experience and the H&W Drawing Rooms (photos by author)

This case narrative examines the integration of the fieldtrip into the student’s international event management degree experience. It concentrates upon visits to Belfast, Northern Ireland, where students have an immersive experience into event management, placemaking and regeneration in a post-conflict environment. The fieldtrip is an illustration of experiential learning theory that constitutes a deep learning pedagogical experience of a real-world scenario and authentic dynamics that complement and enliven classroom activities and module readings. The digital artifacts developed by students, and their presentations made on the last day of the fieldtrip focus their studies whilst in the field, and give a lasting influence upon the educational development of the students.