

Stumbling toward self-regulated learning: Using blog entries for promoting motivation, interaction and reflection

Alejandro Cerón, Mengye Liu, and Raymond Pang
Department of Anthropology

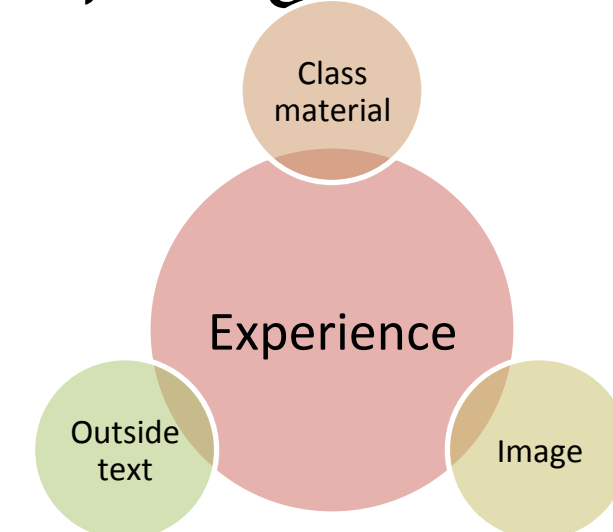
1. Assignment description

Blog entry

- Free style, format (1000 words)
- Free topics, based on own experiences
- 3 elements: class text, image, outside text
- Explicitly say how the 3 elements relate

Comment to blog entry

- Free choice, format (500 words)
- What aspect of the blog entry
- Express agreement, disagreement



2. Assignment context, students

Course

- Since 2007, seven courses
- Medical Anthropology (5), Public Health (1), and Applied Anthropology (1)
- U. of Washington (Seattle), U. Del Valle (Guatemala), U. of Denver.

Students

- Majority advanced undergraduates or graduates
- Majority anthropology majors
- 25% majors in health or in development.

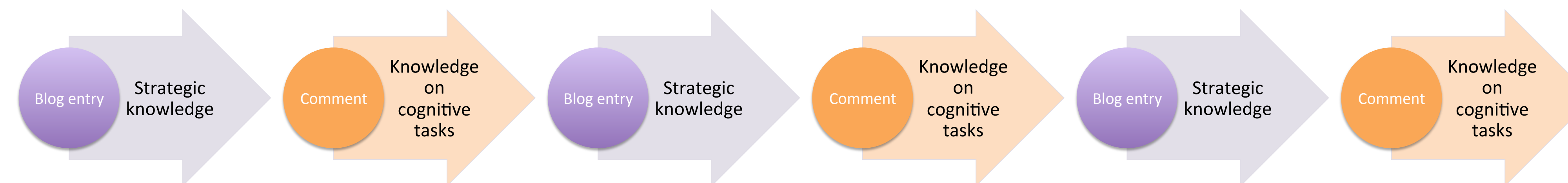
3. Assignment evolution and self-regulating learning

Blog entry

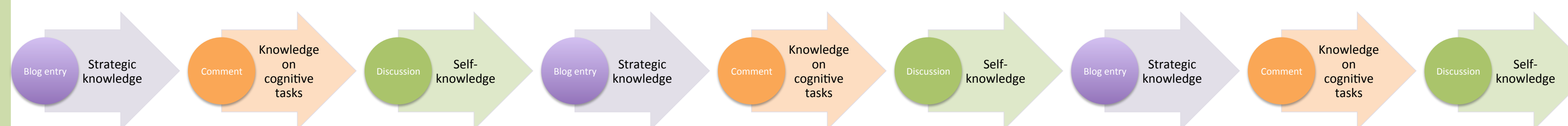
- Initial assignment



- Current assignment



- Future assignment



4. Student analysis and feedback

Mengye

Ray

Positive aspects of the assignment?

-We were not restricted by structure or format
-Students have the responsibility to decide the topics of blog entries
-And I was given the chance to tell my own story and experiences.
-I gained motivation by learning from others, in turn, enhancing everyone's learning.

-There were lots of benefits to me and to the class
-The opportunity to intertwine personal experiences, with readings, and concepts, although the 1st assignment caused some initial stress.
-I enjoyed reading others' blog posts, and reflecting on their comments on mine.

Negative aspects of the assignment?

-What makes this assignment interesting is that we could speak out freely.
-However, sometimes I felt like the topics of blog entries were too broad to discuss in the class.
-Not enough time for class discussions

-A number of people expressed their displeasure with the lack of structure
-I found that to be a strength of the exercise.
-If instructor's expectations are made clear at the beginning, a lot of confusion could be avoided.

What did I learn from it?

-Motivation
-how to integrate images with contents. It is powerful to choose appropriate images to strengthen my argument
-I got to know medical systems of other places such as America, India, Italy. Their stories that we could hardly learn from textbook attracted me.
-I gained confidence realizing other students were learning from me

-Others' views of the healthcare system, shaped by their own experiences
-Everyone took something different away from the blogs
-It integrates the readings, personal experiences, and class discussions into a tangible activity.
-Offers a format for thoughtful reflection, and the continuation of discussions outside of the classroom

Would you recommend its continuation?

-I would definitely recommend to continue using it.
-Suggestion: narrow down the topic and discuss our blog entries in class

-Yes, vehemently.
-I have some ideas on how to further incorporate this kind of learning exercise into different courses.



UNIVERSITY of DENVER
ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Anthropology

Alejandro Cerón, Assistant Professor,
alejandro.ceronvaldes@du.edu
Mengye Liu, Master Student,

Raymond Pang, Master Student,

Strategic knowledge

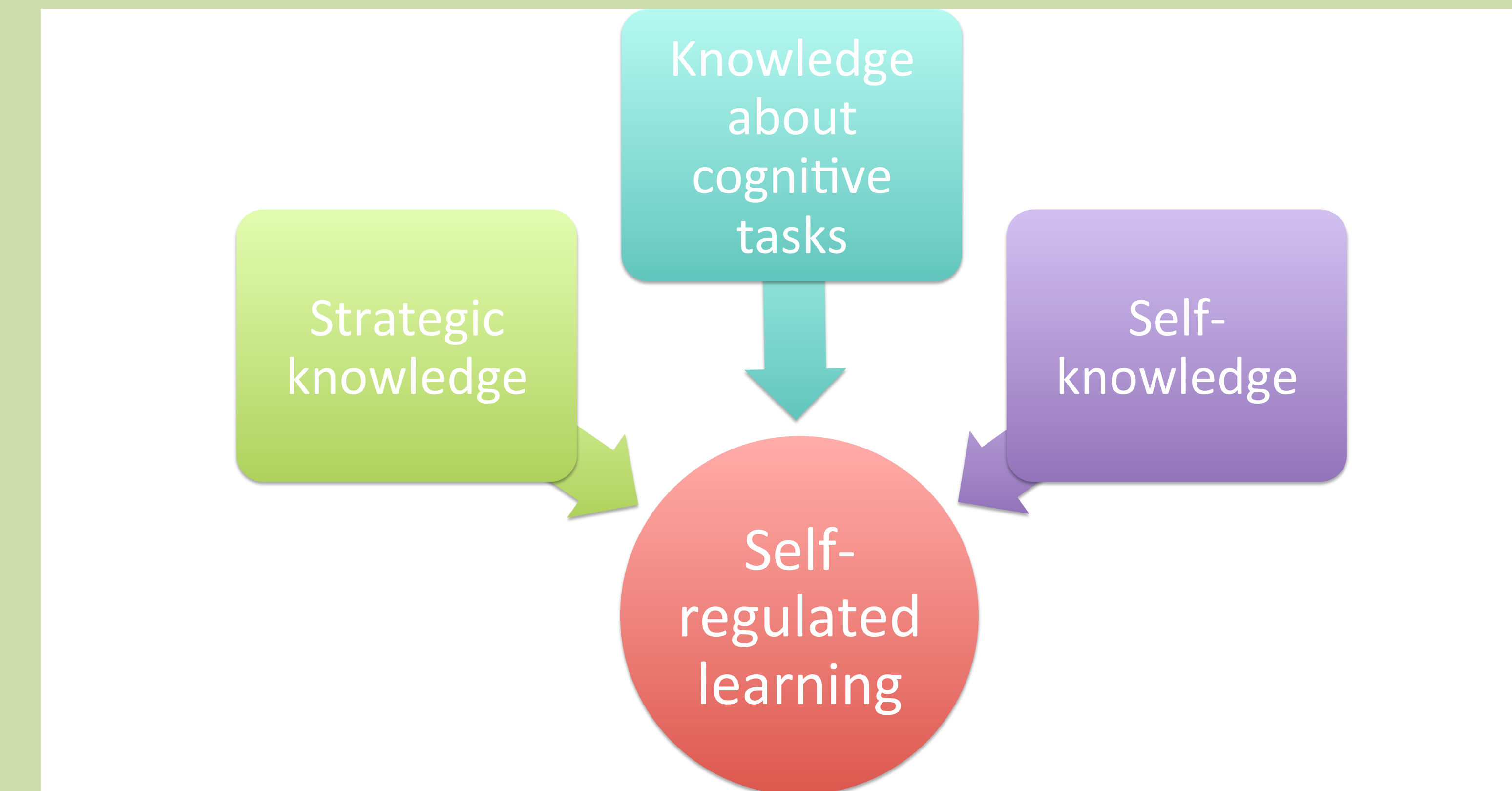
- Different learning strategies
- Planning and progress monitoring
- Organizing (concept maps and other)
- Rehearsal (memorizing)
- Elaboration (summarizing, paraphrasing, etc.)

Knowledge about tasks

- Comprehending directions (i.e. meaning of verbs)
- Assessing difficulty of the task
- Deciding wisely what learning and thinking strategies to use

Self-knowledge

- Knowing one's strengths and weaknesses as learner
- Accurately judging one's command of the material
- Knowing what strategies work best for oneself to accomplish given tasks



Introduction to Medical Anthropology

Blog entry #1

If a Blog or Journal can be graded, a grade assigned to an individual member is applied only to that individual. [More Help](#)

Create Blog Entry

Instructions

Describe an episode or event that has some bearing on health, illness, and/or healing, which you experienced, participated in, or witnessed at first hand. Bear in mind how we will be using these accounts subsequently; please select an episode that you feel merits sustained reflection, and one you will feel comfortable sharing with your classmates. Pay attention to how you describe and characterize: people, places, time and plot. Try to give coherence to the narrative as a whole but feel free to structure it as you want.

What for:	Help students integrating readings, lectures, and section contents with their experiences and knowledge.
What?	A blog entry making reference to one of the class readings from the previous two weeks (excepting the first blog entry, due on week 1). At least 1,000 words, and it should include: a. a quote from a class reading; b. an image; c. a text from outside the class (movie, poem, song, book, etcetera); d. an explicit explanation on how the two texts and the image relate to each other.

C.1. Blog entries 3 X 10 points/ each = 30%

What for:	Help students integrating readings, lectures, and section contents with their experiences and knowledge.
What?	A blog entry making reference to one of the class readings from the previous two weeks (excepting the first blog entry, due on week 1). At least 1,000 words, and it should include: a. a quote from a class reading; b. an image; c. a text from outside the class (movie, poem, song, book, etcetera); d. an explicit explanation on how the two texts and the image relate to each other.
When?	Three times during the quarter, on weeks 1, 3, and 5.
Where?	Written in course blog. Turned-in through course website.
Blog entry #1	Describe an episode or event that has some bearing on health, illness, and/or healing, which you experienced, participated in, or witnessed at first hand. Bear in mind how we will be using these accounts subsequently; please select an episode that you feel merits sustained reflection, and one you will feel comfortable sharing with your classmates. Pay attention to how you describe and characterize: people, places, time and plot. Try to give coherence to the narrative as a whole but feel free to structure it as you want.
Blog entry #2	Apply 2 or 3 of the ideas, perspectives, questions, and comparative examples encountered in our readings and class discussions. The idea is that you reflect on different aspects of your account and the ways you represented them or did not include them in your original description. Your essay should include introductory and concluding paragraphs. You should explicitly make reference and quote from your personal account and from class readings and lectures.
Blog entry #3	Write an essay in which you: 1. demonstrate how one's social position and background shapes one's experiences, values and beliefs about the world and one's place in it. 2. Explain the social and cultural aspects of "expert" knowledge and how they influence the way we think about the world, its problems and its solutions. Draw on examples from your personal account and class readings, lectures and discussions.

C.2. Comments on blog entries 6 X 5 points/ each = 30%

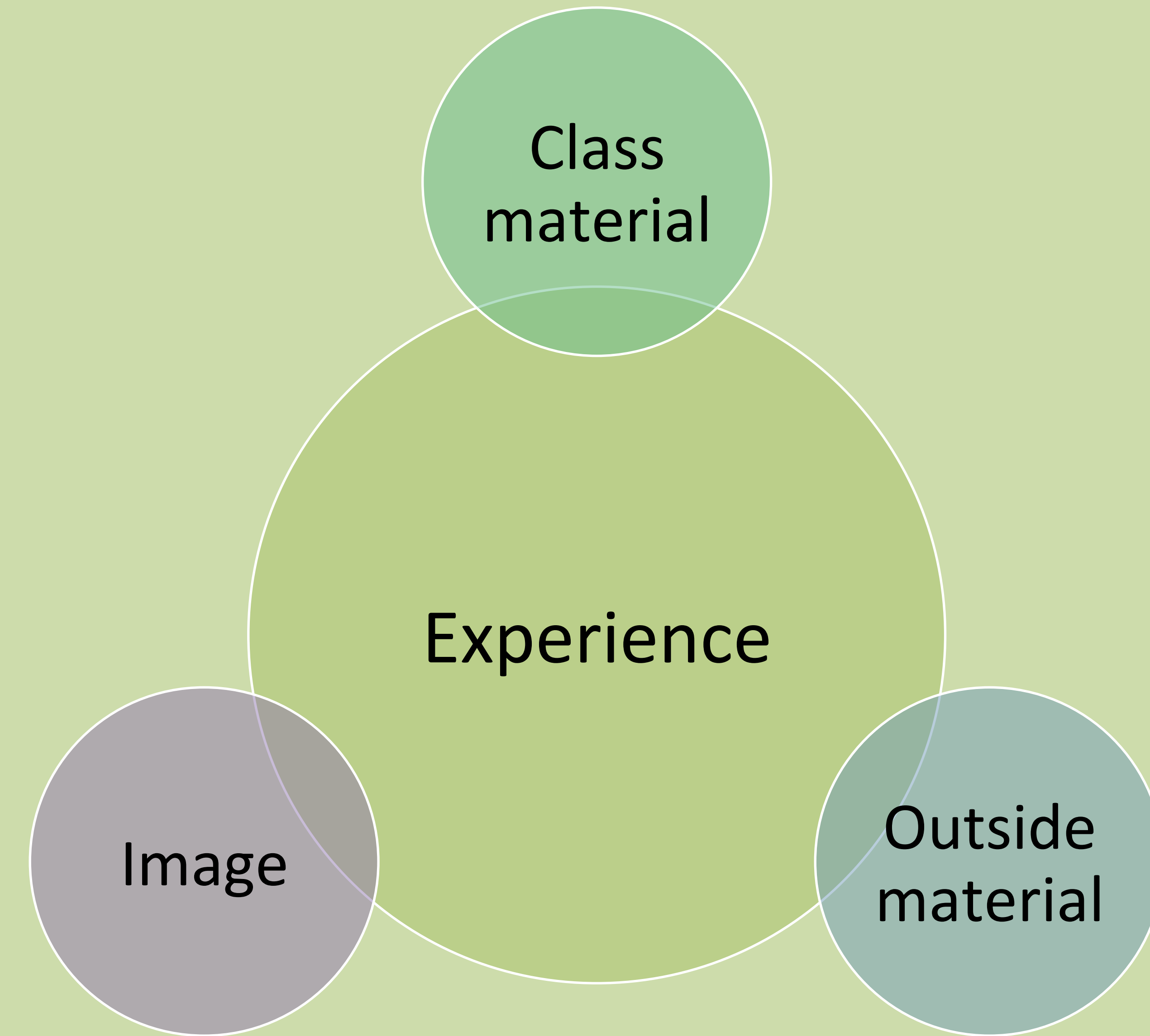
What for:	Promote interactive teaching and learning environment.
What?	Each student will comment on one of his or her classmates' blog entries from the previous week. At least 500 words divided in two paragraphs: a. one explaining to which specific aspect of the blog entry the comment is referring to; and b. another one explaining why you agree or disagree with it.
When?	Three times during the quarter, on weeks 2, 4, and 6 (two comments each week).
Where?	Written in course blog. Turned-in through course website.

D GRADING CRITERIA

D.1. Blog entries 2 X 10 points/ each = 20%

Each entry will be graded according to the following criteria:

Criteria		Points
Quote from class readings	Present/absent	1
Image	Present/absent	1
Text from outside the class	Present/absent	1
Explanation of relationship between the three elements	Present/absent	1
Knowledge of written conventions	See rubric below	2
Clarity and coherence	See rubric below	2
Rhetorical choices	See rubric below	2
TOTAL		10



D.2. Comments on blog entries 6 X 5 points/ each = 30%

Each entry will be graded according to the following criteria:

Criteria		Points
Paragraph 1	Present/absent	1
Paragraph 2	Present/absent	1
Knowledge of written conventions	See rubric below	1
Clarity and coherence	See rubric below	1
Rhetorical choices	See rubric below	1
TOTAL		5

