Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Integration in the Curriculum

Diane Jakacki
Katherine Faull
Welcome to DHSI 2019!

Thanks for joining the DHSI community!

In this booklet, you will find essential course materials prefaced by some useful information about getting settled initially at UVic, finding your way around, getting logged in to our network (after you’ve registered the day before our courses begin), and so on.

Given our community’s focus on things computational, it will be a surprise to no one that we might expect additional information online for some of the classes - your instructors will let you know - or that the most current version of all DHSI-related information may be found on our website at dhsi.org.

Do check in there first if you need anything that’s not in this coursepak.

To access the DHSI wifi network, simply go into your wireless settings and connect to the “DHSI” network and enter the password “dhsi2019”.

And please don’t hesitate to be in touch with us at institut@uvic.ca or via Twitter at @AlyssaA_DHSI or @DHInstitute if we can be of any help ....
DHSI Wi-Fi

Network name: DHSI
Passkey: dhsi2019
The 2019 schedule is just taking shape nicely! A very few things to confirm, add, etc, still but this is the place to be to find out what is happening when / where ...

Sunday, 2 June 2019 [DHSI Registration + Suggested Outings]

If you’re here a day or two before we begin, or staying a day or two afterwards, here are a few ideas of things you might consider doing ....

Suggested Outing 1, Botanical Beach (self-organised; car needed)

A self-guided visit to the wet, wild west coast tidal shelf (and historically-significant former research site) at Botanical Beach; we recommend departing early (around 8.00 am) to catch low tide for a better view of the wonderful undersea life! Consider bringing a packed lunch to nibble-on while looking at the crashing waves when there, and then have an afternoon drink enjoying the view from the deck of the Port Renfrew Hotel.

Suggested Outing 2, Butchart Gardens (self-organised)

A shorter journey to the resplendently beautiful Butchart Gardens and, if you like, followed by (ahem) a few minutes at the nearby Church and State Winery, in the Saanich Penninsula. About an hour there by public bus from UVic, or 30 minutes by car.

Suggested Outing 3, Saltspring Island (self-organised; a full day, car/bus + ferry combo)

Why not take a day to explore and celebrate the funky, laid back, Canadian gulf island lifestyle on Saltspring Island. Ferry departs regularly from the Schwartz Bay ferry terminal, which is about one hour by bus / 30 minutes by car from UVic. You may decide to stay on forever ....

Suggested Outing 4, Paddling Victoria's Inner Harbour (self-organised)

A shorter time, seeing Victoria's beautiful city centre from the waterways that initially inspired its foundation. A great choice if the day is sunny and warm. Canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards are readily rented from Ocean River Adventures and conveniently launched from right behind the store. Very chill.

And more!

Self-organised High Tea at the Empress Hotel, scooter rentals, visit to the Royal BC Museum, darts at Christies Carriage House, a hangry breakfast at a local diner, whale watching, kayaking, brew pub sampling (at Spinnaker's, Swans, Moon Under Water, and beyond!), paddle-boarding, a tour of used bookstores, and more have also been suggested!

9:00 to 4:00

Early Class Meeting: 4. [Foundations] DH For Department Chairs and Deans (David Strong Building C124, Classroom)

Further details are available from instructors in mid May to those registered in the class. Registration materials will be available in the classroom.

3:00 to 5:00

DHSI Registration (Maclaurin Building, Room A100)

After registration, many will wander to Cadboro Bay and the pub at Smuggler's Cove OR the other direction to Shelbourne Plaza and Maude Hunter's Pub OR even into the city for a nice meal.

Monday, 3 June 2019

Your hosts for the week are Alyssa Arbuckle, Ray Siemens, and Jannaya Friggstad Jensen.

7:45 to 8:15

Last-minute Registration (Maclaurin Building, Room A100)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 to 10:00</td>
<td>Welcome, Orientation, and Instructor Overview (MacLaurin A144)</td>
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<td>Welcome to the Territory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Welcome to DHSI: Ray Siemens, Alyssa Arbuckle</td>
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<td>Welcome from UVic: Jonathan Bengtson (University Librarian), Alexandra D’Arcy (Associate Dean Research, Humanities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 to 10:00</td>
<td>Classes in Session (click for details and locations)</td>
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<td>1. [Foundations] Digitisation Fundamentals and their Application (Clearihue A103, Lab)</td>
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<td>2. [Foundations] Introduction to Computation for Literary Criticism (Clearihue A102, Lab)</td>
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<td>3. [Foundations] Making Choices About Your Data (Digital Scholarship Commons, McPherson Library A308, Classroom)</td>
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<td>4. [Foundations] DH For Department Chairs and Deans (David Strong Building C124, Classroom)</td>
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<td>5. [Foundations] Developing a Digital Project (With Omeka) (Clearihue A031, Lab)</td>
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<td>9. Out-of-the-Box Text Analysis for the Digital Humanities (Human and Social Development A160, Lab)</td>
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<td>10. Sound and Digital Humanities (Cornett A120, Classroom)</td>
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<td>11. Critical Pedagogy and Digital Praxis in the Humanities (Clearihue D132, Classroom)</td>
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<td>12. Digital Humanities for Japanese Culture: Resources and Methods (McPherson Library A003, Classroom)</td>
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<td>13. Conceptualising and Creating a Digital Edition (McPherson Library 210, Classroom)</td>
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<td>14. Retro Machines &amp; Media (McPherson Library 120, Classroom)</td>
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<td>15. Geographical Information Systems in the Digital Humanities (Clearihue A105, Lab)</td>
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<td>16. Introduction to IIIF: Sharing, Consuming, and Annotating the World’s Images (Cornett A121, Classroom)</td>
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<td>17. Web APIs with Python (Human and Social Development A170, Lab)</td>
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<td>18. Ethical Data Visualization: Taming Treacherous Data (Cornett A128, Classroom)</td>
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<td>19. Linked Open Data and the Semantic Web (Cornett A132, Classroom)</td>
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<td>20. Palpability and Wearable Computing (McPherson Library A025, Classroom)</td>
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<td>21. The Frontend: Modern JavaScript &amp; CSS Development (Clearihue A030, Lab)</td>
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<td>23. Conceptualising and Creating a Digital Edition (McPherson Library 210, Classroom)</td>
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<td>24. Information Security for Digital Researchers (David Strong Building C114, Classroom)</td>
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<td>10:15 to Noon</td>
<td>Lunch break / Unconference Coordination Session (MacLaurin A144)</td>
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<td>(Grab a sandwich and come on down!)</td>
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<td>Discussion topics, scheduling, and room assignments from among all DHSI rooms will be handled at this meeting.</td>
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<td>12:15 to 1:15</td>
<td>Institute Lecture: Jacqueline Wernimont (Dartmouth C): &quot;Sex and Numbers: Pleasure, Reproduction, and Digital Biopower&quot; Chair: Anne Cong-Huyen (U Michigan) (MacLaurin A144)</td>
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<td>4:10 to 5:00</td>
<td>Abstract: Drawing from Numbered Lives (MIT 2018), this talk will consider a long history of sex-number entanglement in Anglo-American Cultures. Drawing on historical and contemporary objects and practices, Wernimont will ask &quot;in what ways do theories of biopower, critical gender and critical race studies, and media studies&quot; suggest that we can understand this set of entanglements and their impacts. NB: While relevant, this talk will not include discussions of sexual trauma or violence. It will include frank discussion of sex acts and various ways of translating sexual behavior into numbers.</td>
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<td>5:00 to 6:00</td>
<td>Opening Reception (University Club)</td>
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Tuesday, 4 June 2019
Wednesday, 5 June 2019

9:00 to Noon

Lunch break / Unconference

"Mystery" Lunches

Presentation: An Introduction to Scholarly Publishing with Manifold (MacLaurin A144)
Lunch included for those who register here

This presentation introduces Manifold Scholarship, a Mellon-funded digital publishing platform developed by the CUNY Graduate Center, The University of Minnesota Press, and Cast Iron Coding. Manifold allows you to create beautiful, dynamic open access projects that can include text, images, video, embedded resources, and social annotation. We will provide an overview of Manifold and demonstrate how faculty, students and staff in the digital humanities can use Manifold to publish open access scholarly works, conduct and participate in peer review, and create custom edited versions of public domain course texts and OER.

1:30 to 4:00

Classes in Session

4:15 to 5:15

DHSI Conference and Colloquium Lightning Talk Session 3 (MacLaurin A144)
Chair: Kim O'Donnell (Simon Fraser U)

- Colleen Kolba (U South Florida), "What Comics can Teach our Students about Multimodal Literacy"
- Trish Baer (ETCL; U Victoria), "Preserving Digital Legacies: Archived Websites and Digital Discoverability"
- Suchismita Dutta (U Miami), "The Importance of Archival Transcription for Genre Building"
- Jeffrey Lawler (California State U, Long Beach), "Twining our way through the Past: Video Game Authoring as History Pedagogy"

Thursday, 6 June 2019

9:00 to Noon

Classes in Session

12:15 to 1:15

"Mystery" Lunches

[Lunch provided for those who register here]

1:30 to 4:00

Classes in Session

4:15 to 5:15

DHSI Conference and Colloquium Lightning Talk Session 3 (MacLaurin A144)
Chair: Kim O'Donnell (Simon Fraser U)

- Colleen Kolba (U South Florida), "What Comics can Teach our Students about Multimodal Literacy"
- Trish Baer (ETCL; U Victoria), "Preserving Digital Legacies: Archived Websites and Digital Discoverability"
- Suchismita Dutta (U Miami), "The Importance of Archival Transcription for Genre Building"
- Jeffrey Lawler (California State U, Long Beach), "Twining our way through the Past: Video Game Authoring as History Pedagogy"
Friday, 7 June 2019 [DHSI; ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference Opening]

9:00 to Noon  Classes in Session

12:15 to 1:15 Lunch Reception / Course E-Exhibits (MacLaurin A100)

1:30 to 1:50 Remarks, A Week in Review (MacLaurin A144)

2:00 to 3:00 Joint Institute Lecture (DHSI and ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference):
Matt Gold (CUNY Graduate Center and Association for Computers and the Humanities): “Thinking Through DH: Proposals for Digital Humanities Pedagogy”
Chair: Diane Jakacki (Bucknell U)
(MacLaurin A144)

Abstract: How do we teach digital humanities, and how should DH be taught? What, indeed, should we teach when we teach DH? This talk will present a proposal for grounding digital humanities pedagogical practice in the research interests of our students and the epistemological foundations of our methods rather than through an approach grounded more central in data and methods.

3:30 to 5:00 Joint Reception: DHSI and ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference (University Club)
E-Poetry Event (Chris Tanasescu)
Watch this space for details, including how to participate!
DHSI Conference and Colloquium Poster/Demo Session
• Pia Russel (U Victoria); Emily Stremel (U Victoria), “British Columbia’s Historical Textbooks Digital Library”
• Cody Hennesy (U Minnesota); Rachael Samberg (U California, Berkeley); Stacy Reardon (U California, Berkeley), “Finding the Haystack: Literacies for Accessing and Using Text as Data”
• Paula Johanson (ETCL; Independent Scholar), “Proving Seahorses and Juan de Fuca’s Travels in The Curve of Time”
• Tara Baillargeon (Marquette U); Elizabeth Wawrzyniak (Marquette U), “FellowsHub: J. R. R. Tolkien Fanzine Portal”
• Graham Jensen (U Victoria), “Canadian Modernist Magazines Project”
• Caterina Agostini (Rutgers U), “Art at the Time of Syphilis: A First-Person Medical Narrative in Benvenuto Cellini’s Vita”
• Lauren Elle DeGaine (ETCL; U Victoria), “Women at the Front: A Digital Exhibit of Victorian Frontispiece Illustrations”
• Adam Griggs (Mercer U); Kathryn Wright (Mercer U); Christian Pham (Mercer U); Gail Morton (Mercer U); Stephanie Miranda (Mercer U), “Digitizing Middle Georgia’s History of Slavery”

Saturday, 8 June 2019 [Conference, Colloquium, and Workshop Sessions]

8:00 to 9:00 Conference / Workshop Registration (MacLaurin A100)

The day’s events are included with your DHSI registration. If you’re not registered in DHSI, you’re very welcome to join us by registering here as a Conference / Colloquium / Workshop participant. We’ll have a nametag waiting for you!

Coffee, Tea, &c? Looking for some morning coffee or tea, or a small nibble? Options and hours of operation for weekend campus catering are available here. Mystic Market usually opens around 10.00.

9:00 to 4:00 DHSI Conference and Colloquium Sessions
ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference Sessions
Right2Left Workshop Sessions

All Day DHSI Workshop Session (click for workshop details and free registration for DHSI participants)
• 55. Introduction to Machine Learning in the Digital Humanities [8-9 June; All day, each day] (David Strong Building C124, Classroom)

9:00 to 9:10 Informal Greetings, Room Set-up (Lobby, outside Hickman 105)

Session 1

DHSI Colloquium and Conference (Hickman 105)
Digital Humanities & Literature, Chair: Kim O’Donnell (Simon Fraser U)
• Youngmin Kim (Dongguk U), “Transdiscursivity in the Convergence of Digital Humanities and World Literature”
• Caroline Winter (U Victoria), “Digitizing Adam Smith’s Literary Library”
• Kaitlyn Fralick (U Victoria); Kailey Fukushima (U Victoria); Sarah Karlson (U Victoria), “Victorian Poetry
9:10 to 10:30

**ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference** *(Hickman 110)*
Chair: Katherine Faull (Bucknell U)
- Aaron Tucker and Nada Savicevic (Ryerson U), "Write Here, Right Now: An Open Source eTextbook for the Flipped Classroom"
- Heather McAlpine (U Fraser Valley), "Digital Meters: Using Text Encoding to Teach Literature in the Undergraduate Classroom"
- Tiina H. Airaksinen (U Helsinki), "Digital Humanities in Cultural Studies: Creating a MOOC course for University Students and A-Level Students"

**Right2Left Workshop** *(Hickman 116)*
Keynote - Nathan P. Gibson (Ludwig Maximilians U, München): "Thinking in -JTR: Reorienting the Directional Assumptions of Global Digital Scholarship"

10:30 to 10:40

**Break**

10:40 to Noon

**Session 2**

**DHSI Colloquium and Conference** *(Hickman 105)*
Digital Humanities & Society, Chair: Eleanor Reed (Hastings C)
- Joel Zapata (Southern Methodist U), "Uncovering the Southern Plains' Mexican American Civil Rights Movement"
- Ayo Oseisanwo (U Ibadan), "Online Newspaper Construction of Agitation for the Sovereign State of Biafra in Nigeria"
- Joseph Jones (U British Columbia), "Testbed for an Approach to Distant Reading: Fictions That Represent Vietnam War Resisters in Canada"
- Brendan Mackie (U California, Berkeley), "Visualizing Long-Term Cultural Change: An Example From The Birth of Civil Society"

10:40 to Noon

**ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference** *(Hickman 110)*
Chair: Laura Estill (St Francis Xavier U)
- Jane Jackson (Chinese U of Hong Kong), "Interrogating digital spaces for intercultural meaning-making"
- Ryan Ikeda (UC Berkeley), "Disrupting Digital Literacy: Situating Electronic Literature Among Public Education Initiatives"
- Christopher Church, Katherine Hepworth (U Nevada, Reno), "We're STEAMed! A call for balancing technical instruction and disciplinary content in the digital humanities"
- Chelsea Milbourne (Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo), "Finding the Right Fit between Technology and Class Content: Reflections on Including Web Development in a Digital Storytelling Course"

**Right2Left Workshop** *(Hickman 116)*
- Edward "Eddie" Surman (Claremont Graduate U), "Qualitative Digital Text Analysis and #Right2Left Languages: A Demonstration of Atlas.ti using the Hebrew Bible"

Noon to 1:10

**Lunch** (We recommend Mystic Market on weekends!)

1:10 to 2:30

**Session 3**

**DHSI Colloquium and Conference** *(Hickman 105)*
Digital Humanities & Community, Chair: Claire Carlin (U Victoria)
- Pia Russel (U Victoria); Emily Stremel (U Victoria), "Mentorship and disability: Supporting disabled employees in digital humanities"
- Amy Lueck (Santa Clara U), "Virtually Emplacing Indigenous Memory"
- Md. Shehabul Alam (National U Bangladesh), "Integrating Library Service with Union Information and Service Center: A Joint Initiative towards Digital Bangladesh"
- Veronica Gomez (Instituto de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales (HuCSo) - UNL-CONICET), "Latin American E-literature and Location: The Nation Revisited in Electronic Literature Organization (ELO)"

1:10 to 2:30

**ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference** *(Hickman 110)*
Chair: Chris Tănăsescu (UC Louvain)
- Laura Estill (St Francis Xavier U), "One Assignment, Three Ways: Assessing DH Projects in a Literature Course"
- Felix Bayode Oke, Stella N. Kpolugbo (Anchor U Lagos), "The Multimodal Technique as a Pedagogical Tool in Pelu Awofeso’s White Lagos: A Definitive and Visual Guide to the Eyo Festival"
- Francesca Giannetti (Rutgers U, New Brunswick), "So near while apart: Correspondence Editions as Critical Library Pedagogy and Digital Humanities Methodology"

**Right2Left Workshop** *(Hickman 116)*
- Najla Jarkas (American U Beirut) and David Joseph Wrisley (NYU Abu Dhabi), "RTL Software Localization and Digital Humanities: the Case Study of Translating Voyant Tools into Arabic"
2:30 to 2:40
Break

Session 4

DHSI Colloquium and Conference (Hickman 105)
Digital Humanities & Media, Chair: Caroline Winter (U Victoria)
- Ashleigh Casserme-Stanfield (U Chicago), “Sonifying Hamlet and Reading the Room”

ADHO Pedagogy SIG Conference (Hickman 110)
Chair: Aaron Tucker (Ryerson U)
- Youngmin Kim (Dongguk U), “Teaching Digital Humanities and World Literature in Class”
- Alice Fleerackers, Juan Pablo Alperin, Esteban Morales, Remi Kalir (Simon Fraser U, U Colorado Denver), “Online annotations in the classroom: How, why, and what do students learn from annotating course material?”
- Andie Silva (York C and Graduate Center, CUNY), “Keeping it Local: Undergraduate DH as Feminist Practice”

Right2Left Workshop (Hickman 116)
- Joanna Byszuk (Institute of Polish Language, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw/Computational Stylistics Group) and Alexey Khismatulin (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg), “Attribution of Authorship for Medieval Persian Quasidas with Stylometry”
- Ilan Benattar (New York U), "#Right2Left Biblical Translations in Jewish Textual History: Case Studies in Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish"

2:40 to 4:00

Sunday, 9 June 2019 [Workshop Sessions]

8:00 to 5:00
DHSI Registration (MacLaurin Building, Room A100)

The day's events are included with your DHSI registration. If you're not registered in DHSI, you're very welcome to join us by registering here as a Conference / Colloquium / Workshop participant. We'll have a nametag waiting for you!

Coffee, Tea, &c?
Looking for some morning coffee or tea, or a small nibble? Options and hours of operation for weekend campus catering are available here. Mystic Market usually opens around 10.00.

9:00 to 4:00
All Day Workshop Sessions (click for workshop details and free registration for DHSI participants)

- 55. Introduction to Machine Learning in the Digital Humanities [8-9 June; All day, each day] (David Strong Building C124, Classroom)
- 56. Pedagogy of the Digitally Oppressed: Anti-Colonial DH Methods and Praxis [9 June; All Day] (Hickman 116, Classroom)
- 57. Natural Language Processing and Network Coding Apps for Text & Textual Corpus Analysis in the Humanities [9 June; All Day] (David Strong Building C114, Classroom)

AM Workshop Sessions (click for workshop details and free registration for DHSI participants)

9:00 to Noon

- 59. 3D Visualization for the Humanities [9 June; AM] (Cornett A229, Classroom)
- 60. It’s All Relational: AbTeC’s Indigenous Video Game Workshops as Storytelling Praxis [9 June; AM] (Cornett A121, Classroom)
- 61. Spatial DH: De-Colonizing Cultural Territories Online [9 June; AM] (Clearihue D130, Classroom)
- 63. Creating a CV for Digital Humanities Makers [9 June; AM] (David Strong Building C108, Classroom)

Noon to 1:00
Lunch (We recommend Mystic Market on weekends!)

PM Workshop Sessions (click for workshop details and free registration for DHSI participants)

1:00 to 4:00

- 65. Indigenous Futurities in the Classroom and Beyond [9 June; PM] (Cornett A121, Classroom)
- 66. DHSI Knits: History of Textiles and Technology [9 June; PM] (Fine Arts 109, Classroom)
- 68. Linked Open Datafication for Humanities Scholars [9 June; PM] (McPherson Library A003, Classroom)
- 69. Stylo - WYSIWYM Text Editor for Humanities Scholars [9 June; PM] (McPherson Library A025, Classroom)

After the day, many will wander to Cadboro Bay and the pub at Smugler's Cove OR the other direction to Shelbourne Plaza and Maude Hunter's Pub OR even into the city for a bite to eat.

Monday, 10 June 2019
Your hosts for the week are Ray Siemens and Jannaya Friggstad Jensen.

### 7:45 to 8:15
DHSI Last-minute Registration ([MacLaurin A100](#))

### 8:30 to 10:00
Welcome, Orientation, and Instructor Overview ([MacLaurin A144](#))

### 10:15 to Noon
Classes in Session (click for details and locations)
- 30. [Foundations] Databases for Digital Humanists ([McPherson Library 210, Classroom](#))
- 32. [Foundations] Digital Storytelling ([Cornett A120, Classroom](#))
- 33. Text Mapping as Modelling ([Clearihue D131, Classroom](#))
- 34. Stylometry with R: Computer-Assisted Analysis of Literary Texts ([Clearihue A102, Lab](#))
- 35. Digital Games as Tools for Scholarly Research, Communication and Pedagogy ([Cornett A229, Classroom](#))
- 36. Open Access and Open Social Scholarship ([Clearihue D130, Classroom](#))
- 37. Databases for Digital Humanists ([McPherson Library 210, Classroom](#))
- 38. Queer Digital Humanities ([David Strong Building C114, Classroom](#))
- 39. Digital Storytelling ([Cornett A120, Classroom](#))
- 40. Introduction to Electronic Literature in DH: Research and Practice ([Cornett A128, Classroom](#))
- 41. Surveillance and the Critical Digital Humanities ([David Strong Building C108, Classroom](#))
- 42. Text Analysis with Python and the Natural Language ToolKit ([Clearihue A103, Lab](#))
- 43. Processing Humanities Multimedia ([Human and Social Development A150, Lab](#))
- 44. Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Integration in the Curriculum ([Cornett A121, Classroom](#))
- 45. Accessibility & Digital Environments ([Priestly Law Library 265, Classroom](#))
- 46. Agile Project Management ([Cornett A132, Classroom/Lab](#))
- 47. XPath for Processing XML and Managing Projects ([Clearihue A105, Lab](#))
- 48. Text Analysis: Introduction to Humanities Data Analysis & Visualization in R ([Human and Social Development A160, Lab](#))
- 49. Text Analysis: Introduction to Network Analysis in the Digital Humanities ([Clearihue D132, Classroom](#))

### 12:15 to 1:15
Lunch break / Unconference Coordination Session ([MacLaurin A144](#))
(Grab a sandwich and come on down!)

### 1:30 to 4:00
Classes in Session

### 4:10 to 5:00
Institute Lecture: Angel David Nieves (San Diego State U): "3D Mapping and Forensic Traces of Testimony: Documenting Apartheid-Era Crimes Through the Digital Humanities"
Chair: Constante Crompton (U Ottawa)
([MacLaurin A144](#))

Abstract: In 1989 the killing of a queer, 14-year-old youth in Winnie Mandela's house named Stompie Seipei (an event that few in South Africa are willing to recall, let alone discuss, in any detail) -- is perhaps one of the most glaring examples where the queer and activist community was suppressed or erased from anti-apartheid liberation histories. Digital humanities may actually help both reconstruct and recover a history that is still very early in the telling, despite what is commonly believed about the liberation struggle and the contributions of queer activists in the dismantling of apartheid. Perhaps it could explain why a youth such as Seipei was killed -- or at the very least, provide a more complex and messy narrative that permits one to know more how the history of queer anti-apartheid activists was suppressed. This talk outlines a methodology for "messy thinking and writing" in the digital humanities that -- through a queer and feminist intersectional framework -- permits a more complex layering of oral histories and 3D historical reconstructions.

### 5:00 to 6:00
Reception ([University Club](#))

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**Tuesday, 11 June 2019**

### 9:00 to Noon
Classes in Session

### 12:15 to 1:15
Lunch break / Unconference

"Mystery" Lunches
Wednesday, 12 June 2019

1:30 to 4:00
Classes in Session

4:15 to 5:15
DHSI Conference and Colloquium Lightning Talk Session 4 (MacLaurin A144)
Chair: Lindsey Seatter (U Victoria)
- Ashley Caranto Morford (U Toronto); Kush Patel (U Michigan); Arun Jacob (McMaster U), “#OurDHIs anti-colonial: Questions and challenges in dismantling colonial influences in digital humanities pedagogy”
- Luis Meneses (ETCL; U Victoria), “Identifying Changes in the Political Environment in Ecuador”
- Laura Horak (Carleton U), “Building the Transgender Media Portal”

6:00 to 8:00
DHSI Newcomer's Gathering (Grad House Restaurant, Graduate Student Centre)
Come down, buy meal and a beverage, and make some new friends!

Thursday, 13 June 2019

9:00 to Noon
Classes in Session

12:15 to 1:15
Lunch break / Unconference
"Mystery" Lunches
Presentation: An Introduction Jupyter Notebooks for Researchers (MacLaurin A144)
This presentation introduces Jupyter Notebooks for researchers, via a partnership between Compute Canada and the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS) including a large number of Canadian institutions. Read more here. Presenting is James Colliander, PIMS Director and team.

1:30 to 4:00
Classes in Session

4:10 to 5:00
Institute Lecture: Karina van Dalen-Oskam (Huygens Institute and U Amsterdam; Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations): “The Riddle of Literary Quality: Some Answers”
Chair: Aaron Mauro (Penn State, Behrend C) (MacLaurin A144)
Abstract: What is literature, and can you measure it? That is the key question of the project The Riddle of Literary Quality. “The Riddle” is a research project of the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands (Amsterdam) in collaboration with the Fryeke Akademy (Leeuwarden) and the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (University of Amsterdam). The Riddle combines computational analysis of writing style with the results of a large online survey of readers, completed by almost 14,000 participants. In my talk, I will go into
some of the main results of the project.

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<td>Classes in Session</td>
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<td>12:15 to 1:15</td>
<td>Lunch Reception / Course E-Exhibits (MacLaurin A100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 to 2:00</td>
<td>Closing, DHSI in Review (MacLaurin A144)</td>
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Each day in this course we will focus on developing a course or assignment design using a different DH method. As we develop assignments, rubrics, [etc.] we will experiment with tools and platforms that can be used to meet the learning goals that participants both come with and that we will develop collaboratively. Each day participants will have time to work on their own and in small groups to brainstorm how digital assignments might fit in with their course objectives and also and then workshop these assignments. The course emphasizes engaging digital methods to experiment and deploy multiple ways for students to develop new knowledge and critical skills in the classroom and beyond. Participants will also work through questions related to intention, expectation, and critical pedagogies to tackle vital questions of inequity in society and history.

| Monday (6/10) | **Topic**: Engaging with Text  
| **Example platforms**: Voyant, Twine |
| Tuesday (6/11) | **Topic**: Engaging with Data  
| **Example platform**: Palladio |
| Wednesday (6/12) | **Topic**: Mapping  
| **Example platforms**: ArcGIS.com, Timeline JS |
| Thursday (6/13) | **Topic**: Critiquing and Sharing  
| **Example platforms**: WordPress, Omeka |
| Friday (6/14) | **Topic**: Conclusions, takeaways |

A more detailed schedule will be shared on the first day of class and will be revised as needed over the course of the week.
DHSI 2019
Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Integration in the Curriculum
Coursepak Table of Contents


How Not to Teach Digital Humanities

RYAN CORDELL

In late summer of 2010, I arrived on the campus of St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin. I was a newly minted assistant professor, brimming with optimism, and the field with which I increasingly identified my work—this “digital humanities”—had just been declared “the first ‘next big thing’ in a long time” by William Pannapacker in his Chronicle of Higher Education column.1 “We are now realizing,” Pannapacker had written of the professors gathered at the Modern Language Association’s annual convention, “that resistance is futile” (“MLA and the Digital Humanities”). So of course I immediately proposed a new “Introduction to Digital Humanities” course for upper-level undergraduates at St. Norbert. My syllabus was, perhaps, hastily constructed—patched together from “Intro to DH” syllabi in a Zotero group—but surely it would pass muster. They had hired me, after all; surely they were keen to see digital humanities in the curriculum. In any case, how could the curricular committee reject “the next big thing,” particularly when resistance was futile?

But reject it they did. They wrote back with concerns about the “student constituency” for the course, its overall theme, my expected learning outcomes, the projected enrollment, the course texts, and the balance between theoretical and practical instruction in the day-to-day operations of the class.

1. What would be the student constituency for this course? It looks like it will be somewhat specialized and several topics seem to suggest graduate student level work. Perhaps you could spell out the learning objectives and say more about the targeted students. There is a concern about the course having sufficient enrollment.

2. The course itself could be fleshed out more. Is there an implied overall theme relating to digital technology other than “the impact of technology on humanities research and pedagogy”? Are there other texts and readings
other than “A Companion to Digital Studies”? How much of the course will be “learning about” as distinct from “learning how to”?

My initial reaction was umbrage; I was certain my colleagues’ technological reticence was clouding their judgment. But upon further reflection—which came through developing, revising, and re-revising this course from their feedback, and learning from students who have taken each version of the course—I believe they were almost entirely right to reject that first proposal.

As a result of these experiences, I have been thinking more and more about the problem of “digital humanities qua digital humanities,” particularly amidst the accelerated growth of undergraduate classes that explicitly engage with digital humanities methods. I want to outline three challenges I see hampering truly innovative digital pedagogy in humanities classrooms. To do so, I will draw on my experiences at two very different campuses: the first a small, relatively isolated liberal arts college (St. Norbert College) and the second a medium-size research university (Northeastern University). I will draw also on the experiences of colleagues in a variety of institutions around the country.

As an opening gambit, I want to suggest that undergraduate students do not care about digital humanities. I want to suggest further that their disinterest is right and even salutary, because what I really mean is that undergrads do not care about DH qua DH. In DH classes, meta-discussions about the field too often preclude engagement with its projects and theoretical engagements. In other words, we lead students brand-new to DH immediately into straw-man arguments about its broadest characterizations, whether good or bad, rather than substantive investigations of specific projects, thinkers, methods, books, or articles.

In addition, I would argue that most graduate students in literature, history, or other humanities fields do not come to graduate school primarily invested in becoming “digital humanists,” though there are of course exceptions. Indeed, we are now well into a backlash against DH, particularly among graduate students who feel the priorities, required skills, and reward structures of their disciplines have shifted under their feet in ways they cannot account or adjust for. While I argue that the perception of wholesale DH transformation is largely wrong, I also contend that graduate students’ skepticism of the rhetoric around DH—whether it stems from the field itself or from outside—is neither misguided nor inconsequential. Very broadly, then, I will argue that we must work to take both undergraduate disinterest and graduate resistance as instructive for the future of DH in the classroom. I make this argument not from a place of despair, but because I believe DH pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate levels is essential to the futures of our fields. We need students and colleagues who are adept and thoughtful about the tools, platforms, and media of our day, and we should be wary of stifling their curiosity in our very attempts to kindle
it. To that end, here are the major challenges I identify for effective integration of DH into curricula.

“What Is DH?” Always Excludes

Let us begin, then, with rhetoric—specifically, the rhetoric with which we often frame the DH field. The rejected course I proposed at St. Norbert revolved around DH itself, and it began with a bevy of articles grappling with the question, “What is digital humanities?” “What is DH?” has become a prolific genre in its own right; there are no shortage of such pieces making all sorts of claims about what the field is or should be. (If you want a primer, the Digital Humanities Department at University College London has published a book, *Defining Digital Humanities*, and their director Melissa Terras maintains a regularly updated bibliography of the genre). What better way to outline the field we would study in this new class, I reasoned, than with such definitional pieces?

Except that it’s not. “What is DH?”—or “Who is in/out of DH?” or another variation thereupon—are very “inside baseball” genres, by which I mean they are meta-academic genres. “Digital” humanities is often defined in these pieces by contrast to “traditional” humanities. DH is collaborative rather than solitary, DH is interdisciplinary, DH is interested in new scales of analysis, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. This is because DH practitioners understand from hard-won experience how entrenched fields such as history and literature can be, how suspicious of computationally informed methods and tools. If you review the DH literature from just before the field’s “next big thing” apotheosis, you will find a deep undercurrent of anxiety: will our work ever be understood, valued, or recognized by our disciplinary colleagues? Our undergraduates, however, are blissfully unaware of the disciplinary reticences that underlie that term, digital humanities, and are not eager for academic courses in which the primary conversation is about the mechanics and politics of the academy itself.

“What is DH?” pieces can be valuable to folks invested in conversations about the humanities, about the future of the academy, and so forth. They help articulate the value of digital scholarship to colleagues unaware or unsure about the work we do. But even here these pieces often fall short. They speak of “DH” as an identifiable and singular thing, even if that thing contains multitudes, when in fact DH is often local and peculiar: a specific configuration of those multitudes that makes sense for a given institution, given its faculty, staff, and students, and given its unique mission and areas of strength. Of more concern to me, pieces in this genre often begin and end at the institutional level, puzzling over definitions of “digital humanities” but not enacting the transformations they proclaim.

In one oft-cited “What is DH?” piece (which appeared in the first *Debates in the Digital Humanities* volume), Matthew Kirschenbaum calls digital humanities
a “tactical term” that can help practitioners position themselves for institutional authorization of various sorts:

On the one hand, then, digital humanities is a term possessed of enough currency and escape velocity to penetrate layers of administrative strata to get funds allocated, initiatives under way, and plans set in motion. On the other hand, it is a populist term, self-identified and self-perpetuating through the algorithmic structures of contemporary social media . . .

Digital humanities, which began as a term of consensus among a relatively small group of researchers, is now backed on a growing number of campuses by a level of funding, infrastructure, and administrative commitments that would have been unthinkable even a decade ago. Even more recently, I would argue, the network effects of blogs and Twitter at a moment when the academy itself is facing massive and often wrenching changes linked both to new technologies and the changing political and economic landscape has led to the construction of “digital humanities” as a free-floating signifier, one that increasingly serves to focus the anxiety and even outrage of individual scholars over their own lack of agency amid the turmoil in their institutions and profession. (Kirschenbaum)

For Kirschenbaum, the “‘tactical’ coinage” of “digital humanities” can be “unabashedly deployed to get things done.” As true as this can be, particularly at the administrative level, DH remains a murky term for our colleagues, our students, and, if we were being honest, for those administrators. What is more, the many options offered in “What is DH?” pieces rarely clarify the question for newcomers, except to erect ideas of barriers more rigid in prose than in practice. In particular, few “What is DH?” pieces apply digital methods to a humanities topic, demonstrating how DH methods might lead to new insight. In other words, we too often fail to produce evidence in support of our transformational claims, which is why “What is DH?” literature reads to so many of our colleagues as instrumental, administrative, even neoliberal.

For our undergraduate students such pieces simply fall flat. Shockingly, the language of “disciplinary landscapes” and “infrastructure” and “free-floating signifiers” does not set the average undergraduate’s pulse a-twittering. Indeed, to assign such a piece to a class of undergraduates is to forget our audience entirely. Our students are just learning the rules of the humanities game. As Adeline Koh commented on the original version of this post, “to introduce DH discussions on the level that we’re used to may alienate undergraduates, who are only starting to learn the conventions of disciplines that a lot of DH debates are critiquing at meta-levels.”

I would distinguish here between definitional pieces such as Kirschenbaum’s—what I have been calling “What is DH?” literature—and theorizations of the field (or aspects thereof) that can serve similar framing purposes as foundational works of feminist or queer theory might in a literary methods class. While “What is DH?”
meditations tend to hover around the academy itself, more theoretical introductions to the field demonstrate how its approaches lead to new thinking. For instance, Alan Liu’s remarkable “Imagining the New Media Encounter” introduces Blackwell’s Companion to Digital Literary Studies by situating the field within a long history of media revolution and recursion. It is a piece not about the twenty-first-century academy, but about humanity’s complex relationship with media and its technologies. “Imagining the New Media Encounter” demonstrates the necessity of new methods and pedagogies from a theoretical rather than instrumental perspective (Liu). As a consequence, it is an article that resonates loudly in the undergraduate and graduate classroom, framing a semester’s discussions and laboratory experiments.

In the first version of this chapter, I posited that using the term “digital humanities” is often a tactical error, particularly when trying to introduce digital humanities into the undergraduate curriculum. In this version, however, I want to take this point one step further and suggest that our concern with defining and propagating the field writ large can interfere with innovative but necessarily local thinking about digital skills, curriculum, and research at both the undergraduate and graduate level. In the fall of 2014, I structured even my graduate DH course to avoid the “What is DH?” genre entirely, and I think the course was better for that decision.4 Rather than beginning with interminable discussions of what counts or does not count, or who is in or who is out, we worked toward an understanding of the field’s contours by studying the theories and methods that undergird it, focusing on projects and critical publications rather than the field’s attempts at self-definition. This still is not a perfect model. For instance, I have realized from students’ evaluations that in future iterations we need to spend more time analyzing “case study” projects in depth. But I have found “Texts, Maps, Networks: Digital Literary Studies” a more productive and stimulating class than its immediate predecessor, “Doing Digital Humanities.”

“Humanities” Is a Vague and Often Local Configuration

Indeed, a course once called “Doing Digital Humanities” has become, in its subtitle, “Digital Methods for Literary Study.” This is not because the course is no longer a DH course, or no longer interdisciplinary. In fact, more history students took the course on “Texts, Maps, Networks” than took previous iterations. But I have realized that while my teaching and scholarship benefit enormously from interdisciplinarity, that interdisciplinarity is grounded in my training in textual studies, the history of the book, and critical editing. In my teaching and my scholarship, I have become increasingly convinced that DH will only be a revolutionary interdisciplinary movement if its various practitioners bring to it the methods of distinct disciplines and take insights from it back to those disciplines.

We should not forget, of course, that “humanities” is not itself a self-evident signifier. What “humanities” does and does not comprise differs from definition to definition and from institution to institution. For our students, as for many of us,
the word “humanities” is opaque, vaguely signaling fields that are not the sciences. Even that broad definition is hazy. Consider anthropology, which is in some institutional structures a humanities field and in others a social science; the same sometimes goes for history. To talk about “digital humanities,” then, is not to talk to our students but to talk to each other. I write this not to disavow that important conversation, but to suggest that it need not interfere with our teaching.

Attempts have been made to revise the terms we use. Bill Pannapacker recently proposed “Digital Liberal Arts” as a replacement for DH, particularly at small liberal arts colleges in which a wider range of fields might be wanted to rally under the banner:

Stop calling it “digital humanities.” Or worse, “DH,” with a knowing air. The backlash against the field has already arrived. The DH’ers have always known that their work is interdisciplinary (or metadisciplinary), but many academics who are not humanists think they’re excluded from it.

As an umbrella term for many kinds of technologically enhanced scholarly work, DH has built up a lot of brand visibility, especially at research universities. But in the context in which I work, it seems more inclusive to call it digital liberal arts (DLA) with the assumption that we’ll lose the “digital” within a few years, once practices that seem innovative today become the ordinary methods of scholarship. (Pannapacker, “Stop Calling It ‘Digital Humanities’”)

It seems DLA has gotten some traction at several institutions. But for undergraduates, I would argue “digital liberal arts” misses the mark just as badly as “digital humanities.” For many undergraduate students, “liberal arts” signifies no more than “humanities,” and I actually suspect “digital” signifies in ways quite opposite to our intentions.

**Undergraduates Are Scared by Digitality**

We pair “digital” with “humanities” and feel we have something revolutionary, but for our undergraduate students the word “digital” is profoundly unimpressive. Their music is digital. Their television is digital. Many of their books and school materials are and have always been digital. To brag that our humanities (or our liberal arts) are digital is to proclaim that we have met a base requirement for modern communication. It would be like your bank crowing that you can check your account online. Of course you can. At this point, you would only notice if you could not do so.

Far from signaling our cutting-edge research and teaching, I suspect that the phrase “digital humanities” often raises perfectly valid worries with our students, many of whom have spent their entire educational careers sleepwalking through ed tech nightmares. The point I want to make here is exactly opposite familiar refrains about “digital natives.” That our students have spent their educational lives using digital tools—researching online, using applications to learn math or spelling,
listening to PowerPoint lectures and then downloading the slides, or even drawing boxes around the Mona Lisa’s face on a Smartboard—does not mean that they have learned all that much about or from those digital tools.

These same students then came to universities being “disrupted” by the MOOC evangelists, though these students’ very presence in our universities perhaps signals that they realized before many faculty and administrators that self-guided higher education from recorded lectures is not the newest thing in the world; lectures on tape and then CD have been around for decades. Of course, MOOCs are hardly synonymous with digital humanities, and indeed, DH practitioners have been among the most critical of the MOOC movement, which largely transplants a lecture-based model of education online. But our students’ perceptions of educational technology are bound to shade their readings of tech in humanities classrooms.

In short, I worry that we dismiss our students’ reservations about DH too blithely. Our students’ technological skepticism—which is often expressed through the language of “I’m not very good at computer stuff”—is not the same as our colleagues’ technological skepticism. Many of our students choose literature or history or art history or religious studies because they wanted to read and think deeply rather than follow what they perceive as a more instrumentalist education in business or technical fields. To do so they often resist substantial pressure from family and friends pushing them toward “more practical” majors, which are often (though incorrectly) perceived to be more technical majors. Of course, DH can help students read and think deeply, but we would do well to try and see this exchange from our students’ perspective.

In many ways, I think the way we often frame DH tries a bit too hard to achieve a *Dead Poets Society* moment: “your other teachers taught you literature with close reading and literary criticism, but in my class we’re going to disrupt that stale paradigm using computers. Now rip up your books and pull out your laptop!” But those attempts fall flat, for all the reasons I have tried to articulate thus far. Indeed, a growing body of evidence from students correlates at least two of the points I have made here. A 2011 survey by EDUCAUSE, for instance, found that only one in four students believe strongly that “their institution uses the technology it has effectively.” The survey tells us also a good deal about what students (or perhaps more to the point, what EDUCAUSE) believe “technology” entails—namely, hardware and commercial software. Few students surveyed believe their instructors use technology effectively, and many more students (a majority) believe they understand technology better than their teachers. For such a student, imagine how it must sound to hear her teacher talking up “computers” and “digital tools.”

**But Don’t Panic**

Because students do love doing DH things, when those DH things are framed around particular skills, often within disciplinary structures. I would argue more
and more that the way we should integrate DH into the undergraduate curriculum is as a naturalized part of what literary scholars or historians or other humanists do. Teach distant reading alongside close reading and do not worry about proving how revolutionary the former is. Such an approach also lowers the barrier for “doing DH” in the undergraduate classroom. You do not have to be a DH expert to create—or better yet borrow—a few exciting DH assignments.

I find it helpful to look back at that EDUCAUSE report and infographic again, this time focused on what students reported wanting to learn more about. When asked what skills they wished they knew better, students responded programming language (48 percent), audio creation (41 percent), e-portfolios (40 percent), geotagging (40 percent), and speech recognition (38 percent). These skills have little to do with particular hardware or commercial software. Indeed, the skills students want are those that would allow them to create their own digital work and perhaps even their own tools—in other words, they want to learn to engage with, and not simply use, technology in the classroom.

So how do we do this in the humanities? In the remainder of this chapter I want to offer four principles for curricular incursion that have worked well in my own classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I will use examples from a few of my courses, but I will draw most heavily on “Technologies of Text,” the course I revised based on the curricular committee rejection that I described at the start of the chapter. Where “Introduction to Digital Humanities” failed, “Technologies of Text” succeeded, and I think after teaching it (and thus revising it) four times I am beginning to understand why.

1. START SMALL

My first principle is simply to start small. You do not need an entire DH curriculum, or even a designated DH course, to introduce substantial digital pedagogy into your classes. In departments with a single faculty member interested in digital humanities—and this describes a significant proportion of humanities departments—small beginnings help instructors focus on what DH they can teach effectively. To be frank, I was not prepared to teach all of DH in that “Intro to Digital Humanities” course I proposed. By contrast, my “Technologies of Text” class is in essence a book history class with a strong DH undercurrent. Maintaining such disciplinary focus perhaps limits my students’ sense of the wider DH field, but it allows me to teach a few things well rather than teaching everything poorly. And indeed, my graduate course has moved in the same direction. Over the years my syllabus has shifted from a rapid introduction to as many methods and tools as possible to a more focused introduction to a few tools, methods, and theoretical conversations I know very well. In the older version of my graduate course, in which I did try to survey all of the DH field, I felt students left with only a glancing understanding of any aspect of the field. In the current version, students leave with fewer but more well-developed skills from which they can build.
My courses aptly illustrate the challenges that Rafael Alvarado suggests the larger field faces in defining itself. Alvarado claims that “there is simply no way to describe the digital humanities as anything like a discipline” in large part because of the sheer amount of skill and knowledge such a claim would require of DH scholars and teachers structures. If coverage is the aim of our “Introduction to DH” courses, only polymaths, as Alvarado names the occasional scholar who could master all facets of DH, could effectively teach those courses (“The Digital Humanities Situation”).

In many of my courses, one way students start small with DH skills is through closer considerations of digital media for scholarly and popular communication. One of my students, for instance, used a Tumblr blog to analyze fandom communities on Tumblr. By working in the platform she was analyzing, she was able to directly interact with the communities under study, which enriched her argument significantly. In a course most broadly about book history, students can directly contrast the affordances and limitations of digital and print technologies, as in another student’s remediation of Montaigne’s essays into blog form (and be sure to read the FAQ). Neither of these examples required extensive technical expertise from students or instructor, but such projects cultivate media thinking that could inform a deeper engagement with DH methods later in this class or in another. Indeed, the Tumblr project on fandom did blossom into a wider interest in digital humanities for the student who produced it and later expanded it as part of her thesis.

2. INTEGRATE WHEN POSSIBLE

My second principle builds on the first: integrate when possible. “Technologies of Text” teaches many DH ideas and skills: in our labs we edit Wikipedia, encode documents in TEI, learn the basics of computational text analysis, or program chatbots using the Python programming language. These labs, however, are framed not within a narrative of recent scholarly revolution, but instead within a sweeping discussion of book and media history. Before students learn to operate a 3D printer, then, they have transcribed manuscripts by candlelight in a simulation of the medieval scriptorium, made rag paper, set type and printed on a letterpress, visited the National Braille Press, and spent significant time with rare books in the university and local public libraries.

Each of these labs helps students understand technology not as something we invented ten years ago (give or take), but as a long continuum of human activity. As I write in the course description:

Our primary objective in this course will be to develop ideas about the ways that such innovations shape our understanding of texts (both classic and contemporary) and the human beings that write, read, and interpret them. We will compare our historical moment with previous periods of textual and
technological upheaval. Many debates that seem unique to the twenty-first century—over privacy, intellectual property, information overload, and textual authority—are but new iterations of familiar battles in the histories of technology, new media, and literature. Through the semester we will get hands-on experience with textual technologies new and old through labs in paper making, letterpress printing, data analysis, and 3D printing. The class will also include field trips to museums, libraries, and archives in the Boston area.

By contextualizing our moment of digital remediation historically, as but the latest phase in a long history of textual reinvention, I help students understand why my assignments ask them to experiment across modalities. Those assignments push students beyond their comfort zone—for English students, their comfort zone is writing a seven-page paper—asking them to consider the medium as well as the message of their own research and arguments.

These labs prepare students to develop their own “unessays” as midterm and final assignments. I am hoping to develop another piece about these unessays, and so won’t belabor a discussion of them here, but I do want to highlight the broad range of engagements students choose in the model unessays linked from the assignment, which include theoretical engagements with media, personal TEI encoding projects, video essays, argumentative listicles, altered books, built Morse code devices, and even physical “twitter poetry bot” generators. These disparate assignments allowed
students to grapple with those aspects of the course they found most compelling, both in terms of content and in terms of technology and method. In an “Introduction to DH” course these engagements might not all make sense, but under the rubric of book and communications history they certainly do. For several of these students, working on such assignments did generate a broader DH interest, and they have developed personal DH projects or gone on to work for other DH projects ongoing at Northeastern.

3. SCAFFOLD EVERYTHING

In order to move our students toward this kind of engagement, however, we must scaffold everything, from the introduction of new skills into particular classes to the progression of skills through a curriculum. The necessity of such scaffolding brings us back to the mistaken notion of the “digital native”—a notion, I would argue, that leads to frustration for both students and teachers. The idea that our students must have innate technological skills because they have grown up in a computer-saturated world is equal, to my mind, with assuming all drivers must be excellent mechanics or auto designers because they have spent so much time behind the wheel or, perhaps more germanely, assuming all students must be innately gifted writers because they have grown up around books and paper. We know the latter is not true—indeed, the very existence of college writing programs belies the idea—but we somehow persist in the former delusion when the fact is that our students need...
as much guidance thinking about and working with technologies of all kinds as they
do writing a cogent argument. Indeed, these two tasks can be wonderfully coupled,
as some of my classroom examples illustrate.

In making these points, I mean not to impugn our students’ abilities. Decades
of scholarship in rhetoric and composition have shown two very interesting things:
first, at least since the late nineteenth century, each generation of college students
has been writing at about the same relative ability level as the previous generation,
though our demands of college writers have steadily increased over time. And sec-
ond, at least since the late nineteenth century, each generation of college professors has
been certain that “kids today” write far worse than their own generation did. Tak-
ing these historical studies as instructive, then, I mean only to suggest that so-called
digital natives are neither more nor less innately adept at computational work than
“digital immigrants.” When introducing digital humanities into our classrooms, we
must structure those introductions for students with a wide range of technical back-
grounds and aptitudes.

Certainly technological imagination is not now nor has it ever been innate.
Yes, our students have grown up with apps and iTunes and YouTube—but it is one
thing to be able to use a particular piece of hardware or software and another thing
altogether to imagine what it might do or mean if pushed beyond its typical use,
or even more again to imagine what might be created in its stead. It is these latter skills that good digital humanities pedagogy must inculcate: not “how to use x tool,” though that is likely part of it, but more “understanding how x functions, delineating its affordances and limitations, and then imagining y or z.”

In an interdisciplinary course I taught on “Mapping Boston,” for instance, students used Neatline in their final projects to build “deep maps” of particular neighborhoods or landmarks in the city, layering historical photographs, maps, geospatial data, literary texts, and other elements to build arguments about their city. These final projects grew out of a semester of labs in which students learned to work with geospatial data in GIS, georectify historical maps in Map Warper, and manage digital archival objects in Omeka. I was particularly struck by those students who worked to push Neatline to its limits. Consider one student’s project on the 1919 Molasses Flood in Boston’s North End, or another student’s project on the history of Boston’s Harbor Islands. Both are messy in their way—we did not have time to revise these projects for usability as I would wish—but I was impressed by how these projects in particular integrated so many of our course methods and theoretical conversations and the creativity with which they approached the idea of “mapping” as interpretation. Both of these students brought to our seminar interests from their majors and previous courses, and both continued to think about mapping in subsequent classes in their majors.

4. THINK LOCALLY

In order to scaffold across classes, of course, we must have a clear sense of where DH skills and courses fit into our institutions. We must think locally and create versions of DH that make sense not at some ideal, universal level but at specific schools, in specific curricula, and with specific institutional partners. One major objection to my rejected “Introduction to Digital Humanities” course was that I wanted to offer it at the junior or senior level. Introductory courses, the curricular committee noted, are offered at the 100 level. Courses at the 300 and 400 level should build on those introductory courses.

I was at first perturbed by what I saw as semantic pedantry, but as a new professor I had little sense of how such committees operate and how they work to structure students’ experiences through their time at a given institution. Since then I have worked on such committees and largely come to understand their perspective. I was tacitly assuming that my course would build on skills that students picked up in their lower-division courses. I expected my students to be competent researchers and independent workers. I planned to build on their work in lower-division literature and history courses. I was in essence proposing a digital capstone to the traditional humanities skills they had picked up elsewhere in the curriculum, and my colleagues were right to worry that branding it an “intro” would confuse students and advisers about the aims and activities of the course.
This is a very specific example, but there are broader implications. Thinking locally can help you connect DH classes and projects to collections, colleagues, and your institution’s mission—all things more likely to generate student enthusiasm and buy-in, and perhaps also cooperation from colleagues and administrators. By thinking locally you can link your courses to libraries, museums, research centers, or other campus-level initiatives. Students love to build projects that make use of their institutions’ collections and contribute to their institutions’ legacy, and these often public projects can energize them to work that much harder, as they can create materials with a chance of life beyond the classroom itself. Such projects also give faculty the chance to work closely with librarians and other colleagues we might otherwise see only for short information sessions.

When I taught at St. Norbert College, for instance, our collections were very specialized, relating primarily to the holdings or records of the Norbertine Order that founded and supported the college. For their class projects, then, my “Technologies of Text” students worked with the materials we had, primarily through the Center for Norbertine Studies. One team created an exhibit of Canon Missae in the center’s collections, for instance, while a biology student delved into the papers of a prominent Norbertine biologist who had worked at the college. Working with these materials benefited the students, who felt they were contributing to their institution, and the college as well, giving a public face to its hidden collections.

Whither “Digital Humanities”?

All of these reflections bring me—as always, it seems—to the term digital humanities itself. I wrote in the earlier version of this chapter that “digital humanities will only remain a vital interdisciplinary movement” if it speaks self-consciously back to the legacy fields to which its practitioners also belong. In Digital_Humanities, the authors argue that humanities disciplines need to each establish agendas for computational practices—not as a way to assimilate, per say, but instead as a way to generate vital, critical, experimental questions that will keep the field moving forward. In particular, they assert in capital letters that “THE HUMANITIES NEED TO ESTABLISH DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC AGENDAS FOR COMPUTATIONAL PRACTICE” (Burdick et al.). But if “digital humanities” is not a meaningful term in undergraduate classrooms, and graduate students and faculty are charged with developing discipline-specific computational approaches, then why use DH at all?

Perhaps “digital humanities” will one day fall away, as some have predicted. If it falls away because DH methodologies have become widely accepted as possible ways (among many) to study literature, history, and other humanities subjects, this seems to me a fine outcome. But that is not the DH situation right now. Despite the attention the field has received over the past few years, it remains a very small cohort.
There has certainly been a slight uptick in DH hiring over the past few years, but as a result we often forget that the vast majority of humanities departments include no digital humanities scholars. Indeed, as Roopika Risam showed in 2013, rumors about the DH job market greatly outpace the actual numbers of DH jobs or hires (“Where Have All the DH Jobs Gone?”). We forget also that junior faculty hired to “do DH” for their institution face a steep challenge actually doing that work and making it legible to their colleagues at tenure time. Many colleges eager to “get a DH person”—and as a subtext, often, to begin getting grant money—have not well considered the infrastructure required to do DH well—and, as a corollary, to do DH in a way that will attract grant money. And certainly the vast majority of schools, including those actively working to build DH, have not actively reshaped their tenure and promotion guidelines to reward the kinds of knowledge that DH projects often produce. In such an environment, digital humanities remains a useful banner for gathering a community of scholars doing weird humanities work with computers. And I suspect it will continue to be useful for a while yet, long after the current wave of DH mania subsides, I hope, into a more productive rapprochement with the larger humanities fields.

NOTES

2. See Terras, Nyhan, and Vanhoutte, with further reading and updates at http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/definingdh/further-reading/.
9. The unessay assignment (with links to sample student work) can be found at http://f14tot.ryancordell.org/assignments/unessays/.
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A Feminist Digital Humanities Pedagogy beyond the Classroom

JESSICA DESPAIN

KEYWORDS
digital humanities, text recovery, feminist pedagogy, computer science, student workers

ABSTRACT  This article examines the set of concerns occupying feminist educators and scholars in the 1990s to imagine what a feminist digital humanities (DH) pedagogy should look like in the twenty-first century. The article draws examples from The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition, a project involving intensive collaborations between students and faculty at a regional university. The article summarizes research that indicates one reason for the lack of women and people of color in the computer sciences is a pedagogy that does not emphasize social, historical, and global problem-solving. The digital humanities could be a site wherein a successful, equal partnership between the computer sciences and the humanities might address diverse approaches to global issues and, in this manner, successfully attract underrepresented students. The institutionalization of the digital humanities, however, has limited the field’s range of concerns and topics. A feminist DH pedagogy must include students as equal researchers, operate with an infrastructure that makes the labor accessible to students with a variety of abilities, include the constant evaluation of underlying technological structures in a social context, consider content as well as technology, and create a community beyond the classroom. While projects that engage women and people of color in these ways are still occurring, the project argues that greater funding support and infrastructure would make opportunities like these more available to students and, as a result, ensure more diverse scholars and scholarship in coming years.

In 1991, Transformations’ inaugural year, Judith Wajcman published her groundbreaking study about the gender biases of technology titled Feminism Confronts Technology. Wajcman called for an acknowledgement that social and cultural structures presented barriers to women’s entrance into technological fields, and she inserted gender into the already growing body of scholarship arguing against technological determinism, writing, “Technologies result from a series of specific decisions made by particular groups of people in particular places at particular times for their own purposes. As such, technologies bear
the imprint of the people and social context in which they developed” (22). The last decade of the twentieth century, Wajcman claimed, was dominated by a culture of masculinity that shaped both technology and the skills required to build it.

Fittingly, at the same time that Wajcman’s work became a part of feminist discourse, a growing group of feminist scholars was experimenting with the Internet as a location for the textual recovery of women authors and writers of color who were not acknowledged by the dominant literary canon. These scholars saw the Internet as a space that was as yet free from the social structures that Wajcman identified and ripe for feminist definition. Their projects were often pedagogical in nature, as was the case with Donna Campbell’s *American Literature* website, which provided biographies and links to the works of women authors and essays about literary movements and events. As Amy Earhart’s recent book, *Traces of the Old, Uses of the New: The Emergence of Digital Literary Studies*, indicates, a cottage industry of digital projects arose as professors partnered with students to develop sites with few resources other than enthusiasm. But now, not many of these sites remain available (66–89).

Also during this period, a growing body of scholarship on feminist pedagogy was challenging classroom cultures of masculinity, like those that Wajcman exposed in the context of technology. One of the earliest and most comprehensive collections of essays on feminist pedagogy, edited by Margo Culley and Catherine Portuges, titled *Gendered Subjects: The Dynamics of Feminist Teaching*, included formative writings by Adrienne Rich, Frances Maher, and Elizabeth V. Spelman. As a collective, these proponents of feminist pedagogy argued for the educational validity of personal experience, the creation of cooperative learning environments, a rejection of professorial objectivity, and an emphasis on teaching for social change. The 1994 publication of bell hooks’s *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* responded to essentialist approaches to feminist pedagogy and argued, like Wajcman, that it must emphasize a “wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit” (14) by allowing students to integrate their learning with a “passion of experience” (91) that is specific to how they individually live through and understand race, gender, sexuality, and class.

In this essay, I’d like to return to the set of concerns occupying feminist scholars and educators in the 1990s to imagine what a feminist digital humanities (DH) pedagogy that extends beyond the walls of the classroom might look like in the twenty-first century, and consider why we need it. Many of the issues raised by Wajcman, hooks, and the host of students and scholars active in 1990s digital recovery are still with us. The work of textual recovery, supported by organizations like the Society for the Study of American Women Writers, that made women’s writing available for classroom use through the publication of edited scholarly editions, is now receding from view. And Earhart not only documents the loss of early digital projects, she also provides an analysis of
JSTOR data from 1950 to 2014, which indicates that scholarship related to recovery peaked in 1999 and has since precipitously declined (76). Most texts by unrecognized authors are only available via Google Books and other large-scale digital archives, which produced the works without scholarly commentary and removed from material and cultural contexts.

Similarly, the involvement of women in technological fields has stagnated. Between middle school and high school, women, regardless of race, tend to lose interest in the computer sciences as a field of study. According to census data, “The number of computer-science graduates stayed relatively flat from 1985 to 2010, at more than 39,000, while the number of women earning degrees in the field plummeted, from 14,431 to 7,306” (Gose B7). In a forum held by the Chronicle of Education on how to attract more women to the computer sciences, Robin N. Coger, the Dean of the College of Engineering at North Carolina A&T State University, a leading producer of African American women in engineering, argues that “attracting people from underrepresented groups to STEM fields requires the community to welcome and encourage the ideas and diverse perspectives that they can contribute toward solving the global problems before us” (“Why STEM Fields” B24). The digital humanities could be a site wherein a successful, equal partnership between the computer sciences and the humanities might address “global problems” and, in this manner, successfully attract diverse students.

Although the digital humanities developed first as a field of research, in the past ten years DH pedagogy has increasingly emphasized collaboration—like the feminist pedagogy that it partly draws from. Essays in collections such as Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Practices, Principles, and Politics and Collaborative Approaches to the Digital in English Studies encourage assignments and assessment methods that invite risk and consequent failure and encourages a praxis of tinkering, play, and experimentation. These practices draw on the longer tradition of inclusive pedagogical methods developed and used by feminists, but also result from the practicalities of digital labor, which require teamwork, minute attention to detail, and continual self-evaluation.

Despite these connections to the self-reflective and collaborative components of feminist pedagogy, digital humanities, like the computer sciences, has been widely criticized for the exclusion of women and people of color. Jacqueline Wernimont’s essay “Whence Feminism? Locating Critical Sites in Digital Literary Archives” is one stellar example of this deep examination of the field’s biases. As Joanna Goode, an educational researcher, indicates, students develop a technological identity early that can have an impact on their ability to manipulate digital environments when they enter college (497). In order for students and scholars to develop as digital humanists, they must first have both a methodological and haptic knowledge of technology. However, a 2005 census of scholarship on gender and computing over an eleven-year period found that, continuing upon Wajcman’s earlier work, “a masculine culture dominates academic and work
environments in computer fields” (Kusum et al. 508). Because of this bias, as Miriam Posner explains in her February 2012 blog post “Some Things to Think about before You Exhort Everyone to Code,” women who decide to embark on a career in the digital humanities may find themselves in unfamiliar, sometimes hostile, territory. Both text encoding and programming have steep learning curves. That learning occurs on one’s own or in classrooms where women and people of color are conspicuously underrepresented.

In addition, the projects where women DHers might cut their teeth have changed significantly since the 1990s as a result of the institutionalization of the digital humanities. Text-based projects focused on specific literary figures have been joined by scholarship that involves network mapping, tool creation, and the distant reading of massive datasets. Many of the largest, most enduring DH projects still tied to textual editing focus on canonical authors, including The Shakespeare Quartos Archive, The Walt Whitman Archive, and The Melville Electronic Library. The digital humanities has become a recognized field in which scholarship leads to tenure and is therefore governed by processes of peer review; as a result, younger scholars without tenure or on the tenure track—those most engaged in DH—may worry that a project on a noncanonical author is too risky. Whereas the recovery scholars of the 1990s were largely self-taught practitioners of html, DH scholars now need extensive training and intensive time to attain the high level of technological standards that would ensure the long-term sustainability and preservation of their projects. This is in many ways a needed change, as recovery scholars should do all they can to avoid what Karen Kilcup refers to as the “re-disappearance” of recovered texts (319). Still, the standardization and sustainability of digital humanities projects often requires funding from organizations that emphasize high impacts and broad audiences (read: canonical authors). Here I refer back to Wajcman's salient point that technology is shaped by the culture in which it is created and used. An ongoing debate in the digital humanities revolves around who is shaping the field's "big tent" (the theme for a 2011 Digital Humanities Conference at Stanford University). The conference and subsequent conversations have revealed that the digital humanities are not often geared in content or design toward attracting or educating women or people of color. Roopika Risam calls for an intersectional approach to DH that invites “greater intellectual diversity in the field" through an examination of its history. Risam argues that

theory and method can be combined to address recurring questions of the role of race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, nationality, and other categories of difference within the field. . . . There is no single way of being “intersectional”—instead, intersectionality privileges exploration and innovation in feminist praxis.

A Feminist Digital Humanities Pedagogy beyond the Classroom
Risam’s call for a DH informed by intersectional feminist praxis provides a way forward for the field to engage a diversity of students.

The first half of this article has been an exploration into the ways in which the promises and problems identified in digital technologies and pedagogies are very much with us today. In the second half, I will consider how a DH feminist pedagogy can occur in informal learning environments to continue the work begun by feminist scholars and to engage a broader spectrum of students in computer-related research. I particularly want to address how projects like those identified by Earhart, which involve in-depth collaboration between faculty and students, are still occurring. These projects can serve as productive sites for a feminist DH pedagogy that promotes a broader canon of digital scholarship. But we must first challenge the current shape of the digital humanities as an institutionalized field to provide support for such work.

Recovery DH now often exists in the byways of academia rather than at major research universities. I edited a special issue of the journal *Polymath* that discusses DH pedagogy at liberal arts institutions and regional public universities. In that issue, Katherine Harris offers one of the most in-depth, useful articles about DH pedagogy to date, wherein she describes the importance of selectively inserting DH into the curriculum using one or two low-stakes assignments (11–13). My own essay in the special issue speaks to how DH pedagogy should push students to think of their writing and research as a part of a larger community, but I also acknowledge that the finite walls of the classroom and the time constraints of the syllabus limit the influence of that method (27–28). Whereas Harris argues that DH beyond the major research university must necessarily occur in the classroom, I advocate for a digital humanities pedagogy that occurs via informal learning opportunities tied to faculty research.

My preoccupations with informal learning are a result of the very forms of institutionalization that I described above, including a concern for project sustainability, meeting the requirements of the tenure process, and issues with securing federal grant funding for the project. When I began my career at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 2008, I arrived on campus with a set of CD-ROMs that contained the first iteration of *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition*, a project I started as a graduate student at the University of Iowa. Susan Warner’s 1850 novel *The Wide, Wide World* relates the coming-of-age struggles and religious awakening of Ellen Montgomery, an orphan who is sent to live in the Hudson River Valley with her uncaring aunt after her parents depart for Europe. This bestselling work was reprinted over 170 times and translated into several languages over a hundred-year period. The novel attracted scholarly interest in the 1970s, when it became a site for feminist interrogations into nineteenth-century sentimentality. That first version of the project was composed of html and a database of images of the novel’s reprints.

Because I wanted this work to count for tenure and because I thought there was a larger story to tell about this novel’s many reprints’ importance for
understanding nineteenth-century culture, I applied for internal and external grants and sought to involve students. Undergraduates are eager for opportunities to work with mentors outside of class and to participate in innovative scholarly projects that operate as internship experiences. Since 2008, The Edition has become a large-scale digital project that maps transatlantic publication networks via the novel’s reprints and challenges assumptions about the gendered and national boundaries of sentimentality. It comprises an editorial collective that includes independent researchers, colleagues at SIUE and Harvard, and a rotating team of five to seven undergraduates.

Though some students volunteer, most participate through SIUE’s Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities program, which provides a thousand-dollar stipend per semester for one student to work with a faculty member on a research project. That enticement is a small one, and I know it isn’t enough of a reward for their labors. Typically, since several students work on the project at once, we rotate the stipend, and a student will earn the thousand dollars one time over their four to five semesters of involvement. We have unsuccessfully applied for National Endowment for the Humanities funding on several occasions in part to support student involvement. I’m setting out these institutional limitations both to demonstrate how the project’s pedagogical model grew out of them and to imagine how the digital humanities might better support student-inclusive projects in the future. Project members have come to see this informal, collaborative learning as a model of feminist DH pedagogy. What follows is an explanation of the tenets of that pedagogy along with examples from our project’s daily operations.

Rule 1: As practitioners of feminist pedagogy argue, students and faculty must be collaborators in the truest sense of the word. Because we are all cited as project editors, we are equally responsible for the project’s outcomes. We solve problems together; students train one another and me. We meet weekly, and I consult with them on every aspect of the project’s design and methods. As one example, in 2011, as a result of an internal grant, we were able to purchase an archival book scanner. The Constitution Island Association in West Point, New York, which curates Warner’s home and papers, sent eighty-two editions of the novel for us to scan. The students and I, through trial and error, developed best practices for using the scanner, quality-controlling our images, and renaming files. We used the machine weekly and reported back about our successes and failures. We became intimately familiar with our materials in order to achieve the best scans. By the time we returned the books, we had developed inventive scanning aids like satin-covered yoga blocks and hand-sewn sacks for supporting the books’ spines. Students learned that technology isn’t just about rules from a handbook; it requires complex problem-solving. We were each bringing a variety of experiences to the project, and no one of us was more capable than another at providing possible solutions.2

2 Haley Di Pressi and others at UCLA have recently developed “A Student Collaborators’ Bill of Rights” that is worth reviewing when developing a structure for a new project.
Rule 2: Design the project’s infrastructure so that the labor involved is accessible to students with a variety of abilities. Most of the students who have signed up to work on the project are English, history, and art majors. *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition*’s focus on women’s lives, the body, sentiment, and reading communities tends to attract predominantly women. As is typical of the demographics of a regional university, these students often come from working-class backgrounds. They are the very students who, researchers indicate, do not demonstrate an interest in computer science, and they have very little experience with web development. My advertisements for the project welcome students with the understanding that they will learn in an atmosphere that is open to a range of abilities and expertise. One of the major goals of the project is to help students become acclimated to digital environments and, eventually, to become confident builders of technology. To allow for this easing in, we run *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition* with a customized version of Omeka on SIUE servers. Omeka is a content management system for academic audiences that provides a user-friendly interface for adding items to a database using established metadata standards. It also allows users to share and manipulate digital items through a variety of plug-ins that include exhibits, maps, and timelines. Omeka has become a baseline tool for DH pedagogy, but few large-scale DH projects run on the platform because of the difficulties of customization. I decided that giving students a starting place to experiment was more important than the myriad limitations we would encounter.

Rule 3: Any successful DH pedagogy involves a constant evaluation of underlying technological structures in a social context. Perhaps the most time-consuming, heated, and frustrating discussions that occurred during our meetings involved the creation of our controlled vocabulary for illustrations and book covers. The project team had to decide how to describe these artistic representations to anticipate how users would search for them. Were we interested in listing all objects that appeared in illustrations down to cats, clothing, and dishes? Would we somehow try to describe thematic content as well as pictorial content? If so, how? And how many different ways might someone search for crying or tears? These conversations taught us about the novel, our own biases, what we really wanted the project to do, and how we expected our audience to use *The Edition*. It was tempting to take over and issue professorial edicts, but I have learned that students are most likely to lose interest when I remove their ownership. These conversations encourage students to think actively about how technology and their access to knowledge are socially constructed. They evaluate their own research practices and their interest in or indifference to technology through an informed contextual lens.

Rule 4: A digital humanities feminist pedagogy is tied to content as well as technology. Students read Warner’s novel as their first duty. Their next step is to complete a thorough bibliographic analysis of one of the reprints of *The Wide, Wide World*. Though the practitioners of feminist pedagogy emphasize a practice
that ties learning to personal experience, not every student feels an intimate connection to the novel’s heroine, Ellen Montgomery. After all, twenty-first century life experiences and identity politics are very different, but the novel’s story itself is an engaging one about how power structures our access to knowledge. The fact that, other than *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, no other novel throughout the nineteenth century sold more copies, and that the students have never heard of it, helps them to interrogate cultural hierarchies. They want to know about the readers, about a missing chapter accessible only in the manuscript housed at the Huntington Library in which Ellen visits a free African American girl and her mother, about the plates pasted in the covers that indicate that the books were given as Sunday school prizes to children who took on missionary responsibilities, and about the adaptations to Ellen’s dress and behavior across the century’s illustrations that indicate changing perceptions of women’s sexual freedom and access to education. In this feminist practice, students approach the novel, its readership, and their current study of it with a continual evaluation of the ways in which knowledge is both controlled and adaptable. Although this specific project is about a white, middle-class girl at the turn of the nineteenth century, as Risam’s work indicates, every aspect of a DH project can be approached intersectionally. By encouraging students to assess how knowledge is constructed both through the design of our site and in the context of the novel’s complicated transnational history, my students and I engage in work that prepares students to understand and address what Coger calls “the global problems before us” (“Why STEM Fields” B24).

Rule 5: Finally and most importantly, a feminist DH pedagogy is highly engaged in the active mentorship of students and in the creation of a community beyond the classroom. Seven of the students involved in *The Wide, Wide World Digital Edition* over the last five years have gone on to reputable library schools to study special collections and archives management as well as digital librarianship. One has pursued a career in urban planning and another is currently in Thailand teaching English. I’ve worked with each of these students closely. I know about their lives, their goals, and their successes and failures. We have *Wide, Wide World* boot camp at least once every semester where we train one another, work silently, eat pizza, doughnuts, and sushi, and sometimes just talk. This is hard work, and it isn’t always engaging. It is our community that keeps students coming back and that gives me the energy to keep working.

Although these rules may not seem revolutionary, they do go against the grain of current DH research practices that emphasize a lead scholar with a team of graduate students working on the most adaptable digital platforms and designing tools as needed. I can imagine a feminist DH pedagogy that engages with the creation of tools, but only if the predominate action is a thorough investigation into the social constructions underlying the choices that go into the tool’s creation. It is a constant reflexive practice that makes pedagogy feminist. We can talk about the “big tent” all we want, but the truth
of the matter is that digital scholarship should be occurring on more college campuses, myriad students should be intimately involved in its future shape, and its output should include all aspects of literary studies—tools and content, close and distant reading, canonical and noncanonical texts. This will necessitate funding-structure revisions to encourage and maintain a range of project topics and sizes. It will also require infrastructure to support DH recovery, even for scholars and students with little direct technological experience. This essay has attempted to explore how the institutionalization of DH has closed off a broader spectrum of literary study. A return to the feminist pedagogy and feminist recovery of the 1990s will help us challenge current institutional models to ensure more diverse scholars and scholarship in the coming years.

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**Works Cited**


Pedagogies of Race: Digital Humanities in the Age of Ferguson

AMY E. EARHART AND TONIESHA L. TAYLOR

In their 2013 essay, “Can Digital Humanities Mean Transformative Critique?” Alexis Lothian and Amanda Phillips ask, “What would digital scholarship and the humanities disciplines be like if they centered around processes and possibilities of social and cultural transformation as well as institutional preservation? If they centered around questions of labor, race, gender, and justice at personal, local, and global scales?” (Lothian and Phillips). As digital humanities scholars invested in critical race studies, we share their concerns, and we applaud the recent work in the field that draws attention to these questions. But we are also invested in the development of a practice-based digital humanities that attends to the crucial issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the undergraduate classroom and beyond. Our White Violence, Black Resistance project merges foundational digital humanities approaches with issues of social justice by engaging students and the community in digitizing and interpreting historical moments of racial conflict. The project exemplifies an activist model of grassroots recovery that brings to light timely historical documents at the same time that it exposes power differentials in our own institutional settings and reveals the continued racial violence spanning 1868 Millican, Texas, to 2014 Ferguson, Missouri.

An Activist Model of Grassroots Recovery

As our cultural heritage is being transferred from print to digital form, we must ensure that we do not perpetuate known biases. In the previous volume of Debates in the Digital Humanities, one of this chapter’s authors, Amy Earhart, critiques the digital “canon that skews toward traditional texts and excludes crucial work by women, people of color, and the GLBTQ community,” advocating for an activist model of grassroots recovery projects to expand current digital offerings (316). This model could also help to allow broader participation in canon expansion. Rather than the current digital project model, one that relies on a high degree of expertise...
and knowledge, as well as substantial funding, grassroots recovery approaches emphasize the use of entry-level technology and broad partnerships, with particular attention to community and student participation. We select technologies with low entry points so as to encourage this range of participation. Here we disagree with those who see digital humanities projects as too complex or too difficult for introductory courses, such as Peter J. Wosh, Cathy Moran Hajo, and Esther Katz. We reject an approach that “relies more on describing and critiquing projects than examining the challenges inherent in creating digital projects,” instead maintaining that embedded skills development is possible within such courses, and that undergraduates may make meaningful contributions to digital projects (Wosh, Hajo, and Katz). We are also concerned that an overreliance on high-end technologies in digital humanities projects necessarily excludes those outside of well-funded, elite academic institutions. As we watched news from Ferguson and later Baltimore, it became apparent that citizens on the ground were closest to the news and were using social media to share their experiences. We view this as a compelling reason to keep skills at an accessible level so that they can translate from the classroom to the community. In our classrooms, we teach “small” digital humanities skills such as data collection, metadata application, and analysis. We are invested in working with community activists and students, both of whom have much to add to scholarly work. Accordingly, we structure our projects to provide entry points for a range of collaborators. Ours are projects that can grow over time. The careful structuring of a classroom exercise allows for the development of an increasingly complex and sophisticated project as budgets and skills grow.

A collaborative project between this chapter’s authors and the students in their respective classes at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) and Texas A&M University (TAMU), White Violence, Black Resistance, provides an important example of how grassroots projects can teach research, recovery, and digitization skills while expanding the digital canon—in this case, as it relates to race, violence, and Texas politics. White Violence, Black Resistance privileges the recovery of historic primary sources and literary products languishing in our university special collection and archives. Accordingly, Earhart has focused on the recovery and curation of primary materials related to the Millican riot, an 1868 race riot in Texas, while Taylor has collected materials related to Prairie View A&M women. As we were collecting and digitizing these materials, the United States was hit with waves of violence against black bodies. As the murders of Mike Brown and Eric Garner made the news, our historic project gained additional contemporary significance. Activists’ use of social media to document and draw attention to recent events reaffirmed our desire to include local communities in our projects. Taylor, who began to collect tweets associated with the hashtags #ICantBreathe, #BlackLivesMatter, #BLM247, #Ferguson, and #JusticeforMikeBrown, was shocked by the eerie echoes of the language used during the coverage of the Millican riot and how it was replicated in contemporary coverage of violence against African American men. It redoubled our desire to
broaden the digital canon with respect to white violence and black resistance, since those issues remain crucial to our understanding of contemporary events.

By viewing our project as activist in nature, we are able to tap into alternative understandings of project development. Most digital humanities work is premised on an acquisition model, wherein a project or center must accrue money, staff, space, and hardware so as to complete meaningful digital projects. We wondered how we might, instead, think about a dispersal model, one designed to decenter traditional power structures by shifting power centers, eliminating funding needs, and reducing the necessity for advanced technical knowledge. What does it mean to create a truly student-centered project? What does it mean to rethink archival ownership? How do we redefine the relationship between scholarship and community? Might we allow subject specialists who lack high-end technical skills to participate in digital projects? *White Violence, Black Resistance* was designed to answer such questions as we leveraged expertise and resources across historical areas of divide. We also followed the lead of GO::DH co-founder Alex Gil, who argues that diversity of approach is the key to access (see also chapter 16 in this volume for Ernesto Orozao’s interview with Alex Gil). Indeed, resources and support vary by borders and by institution and are fundamentally local. In our project, citizen scholarship and community interest in the recovery and analysis of historical and cultural materials provide invaluable resources. In designing our project, we have prioritized the development of a space for community activists and citizens to participate.4

**TAMU and PVAMU: System Institutions with a Twin Past**

We are acutely concerned with inequitable distributions of digital humanities resources and labor, given the divergent histories of our home institutions, Texas A&M University (Earhart) and Prairie View A&M University (Taylor). Prairie View A&M University first opened in 1876 as Alta Vista Agriculture & Mechanical College for Colored Youth, the same year that Texas A&M University was opened as the land grant Agricultural and Mechanical College.5 During segregation, the two universities were divided by race, and they continue to be divided by resources. Though the state constitution in Texas clearly indicates that both are “universities of the first class,” they have not seen the funding allocations that would realize this (Woolfolk, 27–28). Rather, the campuses continue to be marked by a separation of race and resources that constructs Texas A&M as a predominantly white (PWI) research university and Prairie View as a historically black (HBCU) teaching university.

Over the course of our collaborative project, certain practical implications of this racially charged history became apparent. For instance, Taylor discovered that the two universities have had different attitudes toward the development of special collections materials (Gabriel; Owens). Certain types of preservation were viewed as a drain on limited resources that exacerbated existing power differentials. According to an informant, the racial tensions and pressures of creating a space:
for the education of Negroes meant that keeping paper and stuff was seen as the white man’s job [emphasis spoken]. You know something that white folks did. And could do better. You had folks that really believed that. So they thought that if they, you know, A&M, wanted to keep stuff then folks would let them. Never mind this meant they could care less about us or what really happens up here, but you know, we kept what we could when folks would know better. (Anonymous Informant No. 2)⁶

The inequitable treatment of HBCU libraries within larger university systems is a pervasive problem. Irene Owens documents the difficulties that such libraries have faced in terms of space, personnel, and collections, and the library at Prairie View A&M is no exception (“Stories Told yet Unfinished”).⁷ Funding issues for a variety of campus-related preservation projects at PVAMU have only recently begun to be addressed. We view our project as another way to help equalize the imbalance between institutions. For example, Taylor discovered, during her time working on the PV women’s materials, that many PVAMU-related documents had been moved to the TAMU special collections. Yet the materials were often stored haphazardly in back rooms at the main campus, effectively hidden from the cataloging system and therefore from use. Through our collaboration, we have been able to find partners at both institutions to help review the collections. The Dean of TAMU has promised to return the materials pending the findings of the investigation; the process of repatriation has begun.

White Violence, Black Resistance reminds us of the range of means by which power differentials are replicated within the academy. When we selected Omeka as our platform, we each asked our institution to host the software on a campus server. Omeka is available either as a free software program that an individual or organization can install and run on a server, or as a for-fee service through which the software is hosted by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and Media (RRCHNM) at George Mason University. We initially hoped to install the software on our own servers, as there is greater ability to customize the site with local control. Unfortunately, hosting the Omeka software proved difficult. Texas A&M University has strict rules that prohibit faculty from running small-scale servers, making a self-run Omeka installation out of the question. Earhart’s interest in using Omeka began a formal inquiry into content management systems run by the TAMU library, but at this date neither the library nor the Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture (the IDHMC, TAMU’s digital humanities center) have installed Omeka. So, institutional support of this sort of collaborative pedagogical work proves challenging at Texas A&M University. To complete the project, Earhart used her research funding to purchase access to an RRCHNM-hosted Omeka installation. Taylor, on the other hand, found Prairie View A&M University supportive of Omeka hosting due to its pedagogical applications. Taylor was able to secure the annual purchase of Omeka access through university funds for student research and faculty
development, yet she was unable to persuade the university to support Omeka on its own servers due to concerns over student access to Omeka as a data curation space. The launch of the project through Omeka, then, was impacted by our universities’ understandings of their respective missions—teaching versus research—and institutional rules about server access.

The divergent missions of these universities also impact the ability of their faculties to access research funding, whether through conference travel or release time. When our paper on *White Violence, Black Resistance* was accepted at Digital Humanities 2014 in Lausanne, Switzerland, for example, Taylor was unable to secure travel funding, so Earhart attended and presented the paper with Taylor skyping in to the session. But other institutional structures present greater impediments to the project’s success. Taylor was able to locate a GIS specialist, Noel Estwick, who taught her students basic mapping approaches to historical data, a partnership nearly impossible at TAMU, where tenure and promotion requirements encourage faculty to privilege research productivity over pedagogical training. Through the project, we have learned that successful partnerships must circumvent the limitations of specific institutions and find strength in partnerships that remove barriers. Rather than assuming that the research institution has greater resources, our partnership reminds us that every institution can make valuable contributions to carefully constructed projects.

Such partnerships require careful management of the ownership of materials and digital content, however. Given the past history of removal of resources from PVAMU to TAMU, we carefully considered symbolic markers of ownership in the project. We decided that individual pieces of the project might be housed on the respective scholars’ institutional server, but that the project website needed to be neutral, a space deliberately unaffiliated with either university in its domain registration and visual branding. We chose a Google Sites page as a federating space in which to gather our materials and eschewed institutional labels or logos. Given a history of institutional exploitation, we wanted to emphasize in simple ways that Texas A&M and its affiliated faculty and students were not going to co-opt materials or work from Prairie View A&M. At the same time, we wanted to individuate the projects and give students control over their engagement with them. The discrete representation of individual digital objects within Omeka allowed students to delineate their own items while at the same time contributing to a larger project. Omeka became a bridge through which we could model student research across the two universities, emphasizing individual archival collection and collaborative moments of interaction between the classes.

**DIY Digital Projects: Choosing Tech and Teaching Choices**

Central to the recovery project has been a sense that historical and cultural narratives have often erased Prairie View and other primary black towns and spaces
in Texas and within our university system. Will G. Thomas III and Elizabeth Lorang argue for “an alternative modality of engagement with the digital on our campuses—one built around reciprocity, openness, local community, and particularity.” We view projects like our current work as a way of disrupting such erasures, using carefully constructed technological projects to spread digital cultural empowerment through both universities and student bodies. Much as we saw activists using Twitter to promote change during #BlackLivesMatter campaigns, we too see technologies as opening spaces of intervention. Here we also agree with the FemTechNet whitepaper that Internet technology “strains the capacity for respect and the appreciation of the nuances of diverse backgrounds which increases the intensity of the work that must be done by teachers and organizers of the learning process.”

To locate the voices, spaces and places where African American contributions have been most actively present, yet also actively erased or silenced, we have been careful to create digital structures that reveal rather than conceal. Such erasure, we found, occurs both symbolically and literally. Our project intervenes in current structures of production through the digitization and dissemination of materials about white violence and black resistance found buried in difficult-to-access archives, crumbling newspapers, analog and/or transcribed oral histories, and unknown journals. We focus on the recovery of cultural objects that have been underrepresented in digital archive collections, artifacts that discuss the racial violence, tensions, and other aggressions (micro and macro) in our localized Texas environment. This project brings to light the very different university and social structures in which our students reside. For Taylor’s predominantly black students, the recognition of historical racism and violence against African Americans is far less surprising than it is to Earhart’s predominantly white students. In Earhart’s class, students often struggle to come to terms with the horrific mutilation and lynching of a black Methodist minister, Reverend George Brooks, that occurred a mere twenty minutes’ drive from campus. The difference in student perceptions of the Millican race riot mirrors national understandings about violence and race. After Ferguson, numerous polls showed that black and white Americans perceived race issues very differently. For example, a December 2014 Gallup poll, cited in *U.S. News and World Report*, revealed a statistically significant difference in the view of racism (Cook). The same patterns are replicated in our classrooms, reminding us of how significant it is to engage students in such complex and troubling history.

When Taylor discusses the idea of erasure with her students, she is careful to focus on how individual stories have often been silenced. As V. P. Franklin reminds in his text, *Living Our Stories*, the voices of African Americans are crucial to the American project. While the slave narrative is the first, and, Franklin argues, the only real American literary tradition, it gives birth to a power inherent in the names and naming of black lives. Franklin impresses on his reader that in the telling of the stories there is a resistance to silence and erasure. The power of the narrative is held within the black body telling the story. For students engaged in the digitization of
documents, it becomes important to name as many aspects of the document, such as the author, the place of publication, and the race of the participants, as possible. This naming happens in the creation of a plain but common language system used for metadata. It also gives both Earhart and Taylor an opportunity to discuss how racial descriptors that may have once been in vogue can change over time. In conversations with students, there have been deep discussions about the use of racial descriptors that appear in historic newspapers and photo captions. So where Franklin would argue that there is power in the telling of the stories, we would assert that there is particular power in the story of metadata as a searchable discourse that expands or contradicts the data. For this reason, we encourage students to think about how the use of descriptive terms of race such as “colored,” “negro,” “white,” and “mulatto” function historically and contemporarily, in both historical documents and our current digital project.

In Taylor’s class, students worked on projects related to the Prairie View Women’s Oral History Project, which redresses the fact that very few of the published histories of the university mention the women who were on the staff or faculty of the institution. Among the oral histories collected from women who have had a thirty-year or longer relationship to the university, students interviewed Dr. E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith, the longest serving upper-level woman administrator in PVAMU history. Students uncovered a number of women who came to Prairie View and returned as staff or faculty members, including Lucille Bishop Smith. After finding that there was little mention of the first women who attended Prairie View A&M, students discovered evidence of a washerwoman on staff in 1878 (unnamed in the annual report) as well as female students in attendance. The project collects narratives, personal papers, photographs, and audio and video recordings related to the growth, development, and maintenance of the university, its students, faculty, staff, and surrounding community through a “deep dig” into the university archives, expanding the digitized canon of works collected and archived by the university. The items that students located were often well known to senior community members but missing from the official digital archive.

In Earhart’s class, students researched a local history event, the Millican race riot of 1868, a conflict that occurred in Millican, Texas, a town located fifteen miles from Texas A&M University campus. Details remain unclear, but we believe that Reverend George Brooks, a local Methodist preacher, former Union soldier, and Union League organizer, led his congregants to drive a Klan parade out of Millican, which sparked several days of conflict and the deaths of numerous black Millicans, including Brooks. The event was covered by newspapers across the globe, yet when the event is discussed by scholarship a watered-down version with glaring inconsistencies is presented. For example, in Still the Arena of the Civil War: Violence and Turmoil in Reconstruction Texas, 1865–1874, Mary Jo O’Rear notes that in response to the supposed lynching of Miles Brown, the black militia “took Brown’s boss, plantation owner Anthony Holiday, hostage” (275). Students’ research
of newspaper archives, marriage documents, and Census materials reveal that the relationship between the Holiday or Halliday family and the black community is complex. Andrew and William Holiday, sons of the former Brazos County plantation owner Samuel Holiday, were involved in the riot as well as black freedmen who share the surname Holiday, suggesting that they were either owned by the Holiday family or were relatives of the white Holidays. Clearly the complexities of the local situation demand recovery to bring the riots and the participants into focus.

The *White Violence, Black Resistance* site functions as a common space for the two courses as well as a classroom space. While we are interested in producing a high-quality research project, we continue to position student learning and shared inquiry before the production of the archive. This is a crucial distinction, as we do not want to lose student agency and participatory learning in our desire for a finished site. Paul Fyfe calls the interaction between classroom and research “a terrific opportunity to join students in shared projects of inquiry and explore new aspects of the discipline” (85). To this end, we evaluate student learning based on tasks completed within a project during the course through carefully constructed markers of assessment. For example, students are asked to apply metadata to the individual items that they include in the Omeka site. To facilitate this task, we workshop the project with a metadata specialist in the library and incorporate a discussion of the limitations of metadata, which is particularly important when dealing with the complexities of race. We also ask students to write reflections on the experience of applying metadata so as to have them apply humanities interpretations to technological functions. As Lindsay Thomas and Dana Solomon note, “Asking students to use, break, and comment on a project currently in development—and then, ideally, repeating this cycle—transforms how they think about the project itself and about their roles as researchers, students, and developers.” Finally, we see students as part of a process of creation and fully expect that materials that they create will undergo review and revision similar to the peer review process of scholarship. We remind students that they will be given credit for the work they produce. At the same time, we make clear that process-oriented projects mean that various partners might revise items submitted to projects, much as an editor would suggest revision to scholarly articles and books.

Here we understand digital pedagogies as closely akin to the way writing and communication has been taught. Process remains the central goal, not just product. Accordingly, students take an active role in the project, some driving to local sites related to the project to collect graveyard records and others seeking relatives whom they might interview about ties to Prairie View A&M University. Students select particular areas of interest with which to engage, giving students ownership and responsibility for constructing their own attributed sections of a larger federated site. We are focused on what E. Leigh Bonds calls a “methodology of experimentation—of teacher and student producing knowledge rather than delivering/receiving it” (“Listening in on the Conversations”). Crucial to our belief in a student-centered, activist
Accordingly, each student was given a form to fill out that requests students opt in or out of the public display of the project. While we might require that students complete work on the project for the class for credit and grades, we must give students the right to opt out of the public display due to safety concerns or privacy issues.

A focus on points of resistance is central to student learning. Just as we as faculty collaborators interrogate moments of resistance in our partnership, we encourage students to understand how points of resistance in their own work, in the historical narrative, or the technical interface reveal crucial moments of engagement and insight. Instead of following a lockstep approach to a text, we ask the students to creatively interrogate the text within a broader context. As Ann Hawkins argues, “the textual condition I find most commonly in my students: [is] a textual boredom.” By asking students to engage with the consideration of how such resistances shape knowledge, the project spurs student engagement and skills development. Omeka’s use of Dublin core metadata provides one such moment of interrogation. Dublin core metadata is a fifteen element form of description that is purposefully “broad and generic” (Metadata Innovation). While the broadness of the metadata makes it broadly applicable, the danger of such a metadata form is a loss of the specific contours of certain cultural experiences. Application of metadata forces students to consider their materials as nuanced and complex. Instead of merely conducting close readings of materials, as would happen in a traditional literature or communication studies course, the application of metadata helped to push students to confront crucial concepts that we teach in our courses. For example, the software defines the creator category as “an entity primarily responsible for making the resource” (Omeka). Students questioned how to apply the creator category to newspaper article reprinted or extensively quoted in other newspaper publications. They also wondered how to attribute the creator of oral histories passed down from parent to child and preserved by the black community. Such questions help us to reframe the way that ownership becomes culturally constrained.

Most powerful is the ability of such projects to shift the relationship between student, teacher, and community. “In such networked humanities projects, . . .” notes Alan Liu, “the paradigm changes to one in which the teacher and student stop looking through the text just at each other, turn shoulder to shoulder, and both look at a different kind of project they are building together—one that, as in the case of a Web site, allows them to look through it to a public able to look in reverse at them” (314). The ability to have students work with faculty and to allow the public to view the type of work that we accomplish is powerful, particularly within the current environment of distrust of the academy. Students are interested in classroom activities that have an impact, and “there is clear evidence that students are not dominated by new media (as the NEA reports),” according to Tanya Clement, “but instead feel an increased sense of creative control and therefore a desire to participate in society and actively engage in ‘generative practices’ that herald social change” (“Multiliteracies”).
Students who participate in our digital projects uniformly note that the work is a highlight of their college career, a project that meant something important to them and to their learning experience. The community benefits from our work as well through expanded access to the topics we are investigating. Many of the resources related to our project, such as contemporary newspaper accounts, are paywalled. As university faculty we have access to a substantial number of resources that remain unavailable to the general public, whether digital, such as digital newspaper databases, or physical, the permission to examine archives. As we have received feedback from the interested public regarding our project, it is clear that the inequities of access have impacted what the interested novice might be able to learn about these events. Hence, we have focused on collecting and making open access to primary resources related to the events we are exploring.

Our work has revealed that the print record tells only one piece of the story of such racial conflicts, so we have turned to the local community to flesh out the record through oral histories. Contemporary newspaper reports give the numbers of dead in the Millican riot from zero to sixty persons. Oral histories from the local black community suggest that the number was far greater than reported. By including oral histories we present other stories and perspectives, learning from local communities with long memories of such events. Such projects encourage our students to interact with the community, to move off of the campus grounds, while also expanding their understanding of cultural and historical events. The opportunity to work with the community also provides student agency. Saklofske, Clements, and Cunningham note that “students need not only collaborate with academic colleagues, but also with their wider community. The mutable nature of the digital environment demands flexibility, so that students can be allowed to bring their own ideas, knowledge, questions and topics into the learning environment, as opposed to the strict set of guidelines that might be imposed by an instructor of administration.” While acknowledging that such freedom could seem “daunting” to students, “we must recognize various means of knowledge contribution through unique and differing methods of communications” (Saklofske, Clements, and Cunningham). For students this has meant a greater connection to the events and people of the past. Moreover, students are empowered to think critically about the ways that not digitizing the stories of the local community further silences them. Students working with the Prairie View Women’s Oral History Project recognize that Prairie View’s rural location and agricultural focus allows for a localized knowledge of history that is often invisible to those outside the university community. Curating digital exhibits with the aid of community members provides needed institutional and social memory context. To ensure that local knowledge is not exploited or misrepresented, projects are created in collaboration with community members and the faculty member. Of course, a connection to the local community needs to be carefully navigated. Given the historical past of our universities, community members...
rightly fear exploitation. Any connections to the community need to be carefully built, paying attention to power dynamics.

At a moment where black bodies are under threat, attention to the historical roots of such violence is crucial. Through the engagement of students and the community White Violence, Black Resistance creates a digital record of past violations that have a direct impact on how we understand Ferguson, Mike Brown, Trayvon Martin, and other such contemporary events. Student exploration of the historical events through primary documents provides an important space for students to come to terms with such events and to position these historical events in relationship to current events. The creation of digital canons where such events are erased allows us to believe that such acts are random occurrences of a few individuals rather than systemic actions that have origins within American culture. Through careful attention to historical inequities within our institutions, with the attention to power dynamics between students, faculty, the university, and our communities, our project provides a model of digital humanities engagement with complex issues of race and social justice while also providing needed expansion of the digital record.

NOTES

3. Currently, the digital canon is skewed by the types of projects that seem most likely to receive funding. Funding is often reliant on granting agencies that must make decisions based on impact. Impact is often measured by interest in a subject or author, which means that better-known authors, more canonical authors, are necessarily more likely to be funded than those seemingly noncanonical or lesser-known authors. Jessica DeSpain and Elizabeth Lorang have tracked NEH funding awards and argue that "from 2006–2016, the combined totals of Digital Humanities Start-up Grants, Implementation Grants, Digging into Data Grants, and Fellowships, as well as Collaborative and Scholarly Editions and Translations Grants indicate that out of 691 grants, only 34 have women's work as a subject—5 percent of funded projects. The statistics for grants considering underrepresented cultures is slightly higher, at 14 percent.”

4. Other digital projects are built on community interaction. See History Harvest, http://historyharvest.unl.edu, and eBlack Champaign Urbana, http://eblackcu.net. Thank you to Paul Fyfe for suggesting these resources. We are also exploring partnerships within our community. One local group, the Camptown Texas Ten Counties Historical Explorers, has a history of exemplary work in documenting African American experiences in Texas. They have successfully documented the Camptown Cemetery in Brenham, Texas, and have been working to obtain historical markers to commemorate the Millican riot and other black history events. The knowledge possessed by individuals who participate in the group is rich and often underestimated by scholars.
5. Prairie View A&M University became a land grant university in 1890 when the Morrill Act was expanded to include “Negro-Land Grant Institutions.”

6. Participants in the Prairie View Women’s Oral History Project are allowed to choose to have their interviews remain confidential; in some cases the names of participants are withheld by mutual agreement.

7. Owens also has a helpful discussion of the inequitable treatment of HBCU libraries.

8. We recognize that the choice of Google as a neutral space runs counter to many in digital humanities who are concerned with Google’s control and ownership of materials. Our project, however, uses Google as the federating space, with project and partnership descriptions linking to individual project materials housed on other servers.

9. Contemporary newspaper reports indicate that Brooks was mutilated before lynching. Reverend George Brooks’s body was only identifiable by his previously missing finger on his right hand (Nevels, 21).

10. Dr. Flossie M. Byrd is the second longest serving woman administrator with twenty-seven years of service (she was a Dean of the College of Home Economics for twenty-three years). Mrs. R. B. Evans is likely the third longest serving woman administrator as Dean of Women, and Dr. Thomas-Smith is the longest, as her appointment in administration is ongoing. Dr. Thomas-Smith was Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs for eighteen years. She served in administrative roles for nearly thirty-nine years and has been at PVAMU for forty-seven years.

11. The town is located 36.5 miles from Prairie View, Texas.


13. Just under half of the students that have participated in the curation and collection work on the Prairie View Women’s Oral History Project have had one or more family member(s) previous attend PVAMU. The majority of these students were not from the Prairie View or Waller County communities. So while they had an intimate family connection to the university, they tended to not have the same familiarity with the surrounding community. This required both students and professor to think more critically about the connections to community and the location of narratives.

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From Text to Tags: The Digital Humanities in an Introductory Literature Course

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From Text to Tags: The Digital Humanities in an Introductory Literature Course

What role can the digital humanities play in the undergraduate classroom? Answering this question can be tricky because the topic, Digital Humanities, is so broad. Matthew Kirschenbaum describes digital humanities as “more akin to a common methodological outlook than an investment in any one specific set of texts or even technologies” (par. 3). Rafael C. Alvarado associates the field with those scholars “who have embraced digital media” (par. 9). However, as he goes on to say,

Because the category of digital media includes essentially everything afforded to the humanist by the presence of available computing—everything from crowd sourcing and social media to natural language processing and latent semantic indexing to gaming and haptic immersion—the digital humanities is in principle associated with as many methods and tools as there are intersections between texts and technologies. (par. 9)

The complicated variety of options, and the fact that the public face of the Digital Humanities is often made up of large-scale projects that display advanced scholarship and complex programming, can make it hard to see how digital humanities work can be part of the undergraduate classroom experience. As Bryan Alexander and Rebecca Frost Davis argue in “Should Liberal Arts Campuses Do Digital Humanities?” professors at small liberal arts institutions who are interested in doing digital humanities can encounter “problems of logistics, infrastructure, and campus identity” that are less likely to be found at larger, more research-oriented universities (par. 5). Even professors at those larger institutions can struggle with bringing digital humanities into a lower-level classroom. However, more and more professors are doing just that. In this article, I’ll describe my own experiences using freely-available tools and software to design assignments that introduce students to some basic elements of digital humanities work while developing and reinforcing the fundamental reading and analytical skills students learn in an introductory literature class.

Because my class was not a special course on the digital humanities, but rather our regular English major gateway course, I used the standard outcomes of the course to drive the types of digital assignments I created. The class, titled “Introduction to Literary Study,” helps students build the foundational skills commonly used for the study of literature, including
close reading, textual analysis, attention to genre and form, and attention to material and historical contexts. These are all skills that experts working in the digital humanities use to produce projects like digital scholarly editions, tools for large-scale analysis, and visual representations of texts and intertextual relationships. However, my students (largely sophomores), needed to work on honing those skills rather than applying them to a large-scale project or series of complex texts. With that in mind, I designed a digital humanities unit made up of a series of small assignments oriented towards experimenting with digitization and text analysis in a fairly low-stakes environment. The unit starts with identifying key elements of physical texts (rare books from the university library) and how those might translate into a digital environment. It then moves through digitization and into the ways that computers impact our reading and analysis of texts, focusing on some introductory text analysis tools and text markup. Though my assignments revolve around computers and bytes more than paper and highlighters, they share the goal articulated by Paul Fyfe in “Digital Pedagogy Unplugged”: “to keep students’ attention on the critical labor that digital resources seem to dissolve” (par. 12). By introducing my students to the process of creating familiar products like a digitized text or a word cloud, I hoped to demonstrate to them that the act of building a digital product or working tool is always an act of interpretation.

Thanks to extensive websites like the Internet Archive, Project Gutenberg, and Google Books, we are growing increasingly used to reading texts in a digital, searchable form. Both students and scholars rely on those sites, and others, to find and read out-of-copyright books otherwise locked away in distant libraries, and it is easy (especially for students) to equate that digital encounter with reading the actual book. It is only occasional glitches, like those documented by Miriam Burstein on her blog The Little Professor that remind us how these digital texts are mediated by the—often anonymous—individual or group of individuals who create them (par. 1). We started our unit with digitization because I wanted my students to consider digital texts as mediated objects. During this unit, my students started to learn what is involved in transforming a physical book—often old, fragile, and in a limited-access location—into a digital format that at least partially captures that text’s physical presence. This assignment, a group project, also introduced them to the central role of collaboration in digital humanities work.

The role of collaboration began with the design of the assignment itself, which I built around an existing project: an Omeka site developed by my colleague Dr. Tonya Howe that is devoted to my university’s rare books room, the Gomatos Collection. Dr. Howe envisioned the site as “an extensible tool for the sharing of student-authored digital media,” which made it ideal for the limited time and resources my students and I could give to a digitization assignment (par. 4). We could not have designed, built, and
launched a complete digital collection of any kind, but we could add our efforts to those of other students who had contributed to the site. This kind of collective project is valuable for small forays into the digital humanities and could exist in a variety of formats, from a single course site that successive groups of students contribute to year after year to a topic-oriented site where students from many different courses (even different disciplines) add knowledge about that topic. Alternatively, a professor could ask students to contribute to a publically editable website (Wikipedia, for example). Not having to build a brand-new website each semester frees the professor and the students to focus on interpreting material and creating content, and it also gives students the chance to contribute to something with a presence outside of the space and scope of their one-semester class.

The Gomatos Reading Room site to which my students were contributing already contained entries for a small subset of the Gomatos Collection’s books organized into two virtual collections: Travels & Voyages and Illustrated Books. For the digitization assignment, I broke my students into three teams of three to four people each and tasked them with adding three books to a new collection area for the site: Race, Slavery, and Abolition. The three books, Richard Hildreth’s *The White Slave* and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and her *The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, are present in the library as a boxed set, which gave the assignment a sense of coherence despite the different working groups. The students kicked off their digital humanities experience by reading online versions of those texts. Because I was inserting an independent digital humanities unit into a pre-existing syllabus, I did not build in time for them to read the complete books, so I instead required them to read a set number of chapters, and from those chapters to choose a short section (maximum two pages) that would be their special focus. The fact that the students did not have a chance to read the books completely is one weakness I’d point to in this iteration of this course. Ideally, the material the students work with digitally would be integrated completely into the class. However, even with limited excerpts, my students were able to apply their critical reading skills (which they started developing earlier in the semester) to identify the key themes, issues, and rhetorical approaches employed by each author and choose significant scenes for their special focus sections.

Armed with a basic familiarity with the books, my students shifted into the digitization part of the assignment. The core experience of this part of the project was our class trip to the rare books room, where a librarian introduced the students to the collection and to the protocols for working with the materials. After that introduction, the students spent the rest of the period working in their teams to identify and photograph key pages of the books, note down the metadata they would need to enter into the Omeka site, and take notes that they could use to later write a description of the book. This part of the assignment required them to combine attention to
detail (the metadata had to be accurate) with independent decisions about the important features of these editions. As the students knew, these texts were already available in multiple formats online, so I urged them to think about what might set these particular editions or copies apart. Aside from requiring them to include title page images and certain types of metadata, I let the students drive the content, forcing them to decide which elements of their material book would become the authoritative (for our specific site) digital version of the text. They had to choose the most interesting or important pages and features to document. As they learned, the production of a digital version of a text, even just an abbreviated exhibit version, is made up of compromises driven by website parameters (we could not publish the whole text), technological limitations (we had only handheld digital cameras with no stands or special lighting to capture images), and stakeholder debates.

The next steps of the project, which involved image editing and the conversion of images into digital text, highlighted some of the technological challenges of doing digitization projects without the support of a digital humanities center or strong university infrastructure. Knowing that our resources would make it hard to achieve a perfect final product, I approached these steps as teachable moments, and I decided to have my students experiment with the functions of different free programs, their capabilities and limitations. For the imaging portion, the students had the option of working with the programs GIMP, Paint.NET, or Picasa, which were all capable of performing the functions the students needed. I had experimented with the programs and was on hand to guide my students, but I mostly left the groups to themselves. What I noticed was that the groups tended to distribute tasks according to each person’s interest and level of comfort with technology. Certain students worked with the image editing software, while others focused on writing text descriptions or inputting the data into the Omeka site. While this means that not all of the students learned the same technical skills, they did get to experience a common model of collaboration within the digital humanities: a team of people with different specialties working together to build a project. If you are working within the constraints of a crowded syllabus, this kind of approach that encourages students to use their pre-existing technology skills can cut down on the amount of class time you need to devote to getting everyone to the same level of proficiency, which might not be essential to the goals of your class.

The other teachable technology moment came with the image-to-text conversion process. The process we worked with is Optical Character Recognition (OCR), a complex process that requires, as my students discovered, the kind of advanced software that is not available for free. This is an instance where I intentionally made my students face a roadblock. I knew from experimentation that the free OCR products they could down-
load would not be able to read a camera image of a nineteenth-century page with any kind of accuracy. Sure enough, when the students tried it with their selected sections of text, they were faced with pages riddled with so many errors that many of them decided that retyping their sections entirely would be less trouble than correcting the OCR files.

Why would I set my students up for frustration in this way? Because the actual conversion of a physical printed page to digital text is one of the labors that gets, as Fyfe puts it, dissolved in our day-to-day encounters with digital resources (par. 12). As my students now know, behind every machine-readable digitized text is a pricey piece of software and/or hours of human labor, both with the possibility for error. Confronting this fact, however, meant that the actual amount of text digitization that my students could do was small because it involved a false start and much manual labor. For that reason, I made the image-to-text conversion a separate step of the project, and one that we were not committed to putting on the Omeka site. While making knowledge available to a wider public audience is a key element in digital humanities work, it does not need to be the end goal of all classroom projects, especially those focusing on the early development of skills. For the rest of the unit, students used the class blog to report publicly on their experiences, but the experiments themselves were very much focused on process, rather than finished product.

Once my students had converted their selected passages into machine-readable text, the next process we experimented with was the computer analysis of that text in the form of word clouds. I chose word clouds for my text analysis assignment because they are increasingly familiar sights on the web, on posters, and in advertisements. They are perceived as a fast and easy way to see a text’s key words and their relative importance, and yet clouds pose challenging questions when it comes to interpretation. Jacob Harris, for example, compares looking at a word cloud to “reading tea leaves at the bottom of a cup” and backs up his assertion by pointing out that they lack the context that enables us to understand what a particular word signifies at any given time (par. 7). To foreground these issues, I asked my students to take a closer look at how word clouds are generated, particularly how the act of generating a word cloud can be an act of textual interpretation.

For this part of the unit, we worked with the Cirrus word cloud generator in the Voyant Tools suite, a free set of connected text analysis tools accessed through the web. Cirrus does not have the kind of custom style outputs found in products like Wordle or Tagxedo; its strengths are that it allows users to customize the list of “stop words”—words eliminated from the cloud—and that it is integrated with a larger collection of text analysis tools. During the first part of this exercise, students focused on their stop words lists. They started with the default list that cuts out common words like “a,” “and,” and “the” and added or subtracted words order to create
what they felt was a more useful cloud representation for the analysis of their text. This was a multi-step process, as students would make a cloud, examine it for useful insights, and then re-format it with new stop words to see if those insights would appear more clearly. Several of them did discover themes in their passages through the word cloud that they had missed before, or they discovered that the themes they were expecting were being expressed through words they had not expected. This exercise allowed students to practice the traditional literary skill of identifying important words that shape a passage’s meaning, but in a different format that refocused their attention on the importance of evaluating each and every word.

The second step of this exercise involved experimenting with some of Voyant’s other tools. Though the students enjoyed creating their word clouds, many of them found that the cloud was most useful in conjunction with other approaches. Many students gravitated towards two of the most intuitive and closely-related tools to the cloud. One was the Keywords in Context tool, which shows user-selected words from the cloud in their original sentences. As one student noted in a blog post, the word cloud showed how prominent the word “sorry” was in a passage, but the Keywords in Context tool expanded on that information by showing who was using the word, and to whom (Julie, par. 3). The other tool my students most often reported using was the Word Trends graph, which plots the relative frequencies of a word’s appearance over the course of the text selection, which helped students track the changing visibility of a theme or issue through keywords in the text.

There are, of course, many more complex and visually elaborate tools out there for text analysis, within the Voyant suite and from other developers. However, those three simple tools are both intuitive enough for lower-level undergraduates to learn without much coaching and powerful enough to show how computers have expanded the ways we can interact with texts and analyze their content by isolating words and recombining them or by identifying and comparing similar segments of text. These tools also pair well with the building of foundational literary critical skills by validating the students’ ability to interpret the themes of a passage (no student was completely surprised by the results of their text analysis) while opening up other dimensions of those themes or suggesting alternative issues present in the text that they might have overlooked. By the end of this exercise, the students were more sensitive to the distinction between what Mark Beatham calls the “tool” and the “task”—the vehicle that delivers data and the interpretation of that data—while also realizing the interpretive labor that goes into creating some of the digital end products that are so familiar to us.

The final stage of the digital humanities unit, tagging texts using Extensible Markup Language (XML), continued our focus on the intersection between the work of digitization and interpretation. XML tags are
used to describe the data (text) that they surround. For example, I could use the tag <title> to identify the words *Moby Dick* as a book title in this way: <title>*Moby Dick*</title>. XML is called Extensible because, as Julie Meloni writes, “the structure of the document and the language you use to describe the data being stored is completely up to you” (“A Pleasant,” par. 6). This means that instead of using <title> to describe *Moby Dick* I could use <very_long_book> and it could be equally valid under the rules of XML. Tagging plays an important role in the digitization of texts for analysis because, as Thomas Rommel points out, “[w]ithout highly elaborate thematic – and therefore by definition interpretative – markup, only surface features of texts can be analyzed” (91). Tagging allows for thematic indexing, the conceptual linking of different groups of words, and many other operations, and often (as in my <very_long_book> example above) involves an act of interpretation. Although XML tags can be entirely self-created, many humanities scholars and organizations use the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines to design their projects. The TEI is an evolving set of standard tags and practices that enable scholars to create their digital works in a format that is readable and accessible to others—a kind of common language, as it were. Though TEI provides structured guidelines, there is still opportunity for invention and dissent within those guidelines. My own experiences working with TEI for the Documenting the American South publishing project at the University of North Carolina taught me that sitting down to tag a text could lead to a demanding set of interpretive choices that required my literary as well as technological skills to make.

In keeping with the introductory nature of my course, my goal was not to make my students proficient in the ins and outs of TEI tagging or XML documents. Instead, I focused on tagging as an act of interpretation that requires the same skills they would use to explain a text’s genre structure, form, and content, and then craft an argument about it. I used a brief lecture with examples to introduce my students to the concepts of XML and tagging, and I gave them a list of TEI tags that identify the most common structural and conceptual elements of text like paragraphs, titles, names, dates, and places. Throughout this lecture, I stressed the role that the scholar’s choices play in marking up text. Then, I gave them their assignment: to take the small section of text they had been working with and mark it up with tags that they felt best described the text’s structure and meaning. In many ways, this is the lowest-tech portion of the whole unit. A student could tag a text by writing notes on a piece of paper or by typing into a word document or simple .txt file. For those students who wanted to use a more coding-friendly program, I suggested Notepad++, a free software program that color-codes tags to make them more easily distinguishable from the text they surround.
Even though this assignment involved the least complicated technology of the unit, the students found it more challenging than some of their other exercises. Though tag-based code (HTML) is used to present every web page they view, the logic of code and the process of tagging were unfamiliar to most of my students. Tagging text is also a detail-oriented process that can be very time-consuming. I gave students two class periods to develop their tags and mark up their text sections, and I probably could have given them more time in order for them to really grasp the array of choices and consequences tagging entails. However, even with the time we spent, the students made interesting steps forward in their analysis of their texts and their understanding of how marked-up digital texts, much like word clouds, do not spring automatically from a neutral source.

As most students discovered, thoroughly marking up a text with tags that identify structural and thematic elements makes it impossible to gloss over the detailed meaning of words and their relationship to one another in favor of the bigger picture. One issue students faced was the decision of whether or not to group a string of words within a single tag. For example, a student decided he wanted to identify words related to wealth with a tag. He then had to decide which words fell under that broad category and also decide if a string of those words together should be grouped inside one tag or identified separately (Onelio, par. 2). Asking students to think through issues like this one encourages them to examine their interpretations of texts and, more specifically, the evidence they are using to develop those interpretations and how each word fits—or does not fit—within it. Words can, of course, have multiple meanings depending on their context and the reader’s own perspective. However, tagging requires that you deliberately choose one meaning over another or that you explicitly recognize multiple meanings through multiple tags. It makes interpretive choices concrete.

An outcome of this process can be that students discover how tagging can bring together disparate words within one kind of reading. One student wrote that his decision to apply the tag <institution> to the word “church” led to the discovery that <institution> could also apply to the word “slavery” which, he explained, highlighted the “fascinating contrast” between those two common institutions in the novel that he had not previously considered in depth (Eric par. 1). As these examples show, text tagging helped my students discover that, as Geoffrey Rockwell writes, “the logic of tools, despite (or because of) their tendency to become transparent in use, can enhance or constrain different types of reading” (2). Though my students did not transform their marked-up sections into working online texts, they did get the experience of creating a kind of tool—a specifically-structured and labeled section of text—and they discovered how their choices as they produced that tool could shape further interpretations of the text by themselves and by others.
Julie Meloni in “Engaging with the ‘Screwmeneutical Imperative,’ or Why I Teach Humanities Students to Code” claims that “as students find themselves enmeshed in electronic information networks, it becomes necessary to investigate and interrogate how these networks and methods of information organization, storage, and retrieval permeate their lives” (par. 2). The digital humanities unit I have just described tackles a part of that large issue. By focusing on the digitization process, the mechanics behind simple text analysis tools like the word cloud, and the logic that drives marked-up digital texts, I tried to show my students how digital technology is built on fundamental reading and interpretive skills, even as it has the power to reshape the way we apply those skills and approach texts. Overall, I believe this unit was successful. Even though the students struggled with unfamiliar (or inefficient) technologies, short deadlines, and new ways of viewing the familiar practice of reading, many of them identified the digital humanities unit as the most interesting section of the course. As one student blogged, the assignments that bridged the gap between text and technology were “an interesting way to take the old with the new” (Dorsey par. 1)

That being said, I would make modifications to this unit in the future. I believe the students would have an easier time engaging with the digital assignments if they were working on a more familiar text. For that reason, I would create space in the syllabus for them to read the complete text and discuss it in class before launching into the digital assignments. Alternatively, I might consider shorter texts (short stories or poems) so that the students could really dig deeply into smaller sections of text. The other thing that I think would benefit the students significantly is more time to work on these projects. One way to make this possible would be to spread the assignments out over the course of the semester. That way, students could start an assignment during a dedicated class session, but then complete it at their own pace, working in the background of our other non-digital assignments. I think making these digital assignments milestones throughout the semester, rather than a cluster of assignments all at once, would allow the students more time to digest the readings and exercises as well as to develop their own ideas about these digital tools. This would also allow me to include more reflective moments, where we move back and forth between digital and non-digital methods, considering how they relate to each other and our practices of reading and interpretation.

As I’ve shown, you don’t need a digital humanities center or special programming support to incorporate digital humanities assignments into an undergraduate class. Blogging sites, wikis, open-source photo editors, digital mapping tools, online text analysis programs, web publishing platforms like Omeka, and much more make it possible for any professor to design course-appropriate assignments (brief or extensive) that expose students to the ways that digital media has impacted the skills and approaches
we use as scholars in the new millennium, and the ways we share our discoveries with the wider world. Choosing the right tools and assignments can be challenging, but it is ok to start small by working just one new digital experience into your semester. Thoughtful exposure to one method can be as valuable as a quick tour through many. And remember, perfection does not have to be your goal. My class didn’t create perfect digital projects for all the world to see, but I also did not ask them to. Instead, I gave them a safe space to explore these new approaches and to practice creating knowledge, which is what I believe undergraduate courses (especially lower-level courses) are all about. For that reason, I’m excited to be running this course again, with a slightly modified digital humanities unit that will hopefully lead to as many, if not more, exciting learning experiences for my students.

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Notes
1 Developed by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, Omeka is an open source content management system that allows users to build exhibits, archives, and editions, with minimal coding skills.
2 If you are looking for tools to use in digital humanities assignments, I recommend visiting the site Bamboo DiRT (http://dirt.projectbamboo.org/), an extensive registry of tools categorized by the tasks they are designed to accomplish. Many of the tools I mentioned in this article are indexed on that site.
3 This invaluable piece of advice was given to me by Diane Jakacki, Katherine D. Harris, and Jentery Sayers, the instructors of the Digital Pedagogy seminar at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (2012). The website associated with that seminar is an excellent resource for information on teaching with digital tools. You can find it here: http://web.uvic.ca/~englblog/pedagogydhsi/.

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There is a certain embarrassment about being a storyteller in these times when stories are considered not quite as satisfying as statements and statements not quite as satisfying as statistics; but in the long run, a people is known, not by its statements or its statistics, but by the stories it tells.”— Flannery O’Connor

10.1 Introduction

Digital storytelling represents an emerging praxis within the broader pedagogical toolkit. This is especially true for educators who embrace digital technologies, not as a panacea for some supposed ‘crises’ in the humanities and related disciplines, but as part of the “exceptional promise for the renewal of humanistic scholarship” (Burdick, Drucker, Lunenfeld, Presner, & Schapp, 2012, p. 7) made possible by these technologies. The successful integration of content, pedagogy, and technology requires a thoughtful approach to teaching and learning from both educator and student. This partnering aspect is crucial to developing engaged pedagogical approaches, which requires that we do more than simply insert computers into the space of the classroom. Such an approach is unsophisticated and accomplishes little to improve the overall quality of a student’s experience. Achieving the true benefits of digital technologies for teaching and learning requires educators adopt a reflexive stance. Such a position acknowledges that we do not intuitively understand how to adapt new technologies to teaching, and vice versa (Robin, 2008). The creation of an engaged pedagogy incorporating digital storytelling is an experimental process, and the resulting freedom should be a source of joy, not anxiety.

This chapter describes my experimentation with digital storytelling as a research method and pedagogical tool. My approach views digital technologies as relating to both technique (e.g., scripting, video editing) and methodology (e.g., critical media literacy). This later aspect involves moving beyond the technical requirements for making digital videos and engaging with higher levels of thought, and helping students develop critical media literacy. While providing technical instruction is important, finding ways to critically engage with subject matter is often lacking in digital storytelling assignments (Hicks, 2006; Robin, 2008). My approach to these aspects has changed since I first utilized digital storytelling as a pedagogical device.
in 2010. In the intervening years I routinely included digital storytelling assignments as part of my courses. This engagement has benefited from my scholarly use of digital storytelling and I situate digital storytelling alongside other forms of digital scholarship as part of a mixed methods approach to studying the past (González-Tennant, 2013). My experiments with these technologies are producing an ever-evolving approach to incorporating digital technologies into my teaching, research, and public outreach.

Digital storytelling offers a scalable approach for addressing some of the central concerns of engaged pedagogy. Digital storytelling assignments can be created for large survey classes (100+ students) or smaller seminar-style courses. While the nature of assessing assignments will change depending on the size and level of each course, the successful creation of an engaged pedagogy incorporating digital storytelling necessitates a thoughtful combination of method and theory. This is a fundamental tenet of engaged pedagogy and the following section outlines several approaches. I then describe my use of digital storytelling for research and teaching. The incorporation of digital technologies in my research supports digital storytelling in my courses. This speaks to a primary aspect of an engaged pedagogical approach; the honest, personalized, and politicized investigations of complex issues as a part of the classroom experience (hooks, 1994). I also discuss various approaches to assessing digital storytelling assignments.

10.2 Thoughts on Engaged Pedagogy and Anthropology

My exploration of digital storytelling is part of a conscious decision to explore new teaching strategies. This includes igniting student interest and connecting with them as intelligent actors. Engaged pedagogy supports these and other goals by addressing specific responsibilities of the educator and providing guidance related to critical thinking as a form of emancipatory practice. The works of critical and feminist education scholars such as Freire (1970, 2002) and hooks (1994, 2003, 2010) continue to inspire educators who seek ways to create an engaged classroom. Engaged pedagogy begins with the understanding that the traditional educational experience often produces a stifling environment inhibiting fruitful and enjoyable engagement with the material at hand. This “banking system of education” treats students as passive receivers of knowledge (Freire, 1970, p. 72; hooks, 1994, p.5). Such a view not only denies student agency, it is also deeply disrespectful of difference. Recognizing and altering the hierarchical classroom to engage with students as whole-persons faces considerable obstacles. The most powerful of which are the entrenched attitudes and expressions of power held by educators and university administrators. Unfortunately, many educators seem less interested in engaging their students and more “enthralled by the exercise of power and authority within their mini-kingdom, the classroom” (hooks, 1994, p. 17).
Engaged pedagogy is an exercise in liberation and I associate this as part of a broader movement in the social sciences to decolonize the scholarly mind and toolkit (Harrison, 1997; Smith, 1999). The emancipatory potential of engaged pedagogy centers on the willingness of the educator to embrace new teaching strategies which celebrate diversity. This includes the diversity of an increasingly multicultural classroom as well as individual difference. It also requires educators experiment with new assignments and assessment strategies. Understanding that teaching is a performative act represents a necessary step in realizing the goals of an engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994, p. 11). This realization motivates me to maintain a playful and open classroom, even as I talk about shameful aspects of US history such as race riots and lynching, a focus of much of my research (González-Tennant 2017). An open classroom requires active participation from both educator and student, and this develops only when unnecessary hierarchical posturing is actively addressed and eliminated. I attempt to accomplish this with an open discussion of the nature of higher education and challenge my students to recognize how the structure—not to mention spatial arrangement—of education seeks to reduce them to passive recipients. Challenging the status quo of the classroom is inherently a counter-hegemonic practice. While certainly a struggle, such emancipatory work need not be a negative enterprise. Recent works by hooks (2003, 2010) and Freire (2002) discuss the emotionally uplifting aspects at the heart of an engaged pedagogy. They agree that the delight educators feel from a successful teaching experience is something to cultivate. This can be accomplished by the educator leading the way in deconstructing the hierarchical classroom. A candid and open discussion of the modern classroom represents a powerful and reflexive strategy for accomplishing these goals. In my experience, having such a conversation at the beginning of the semester supports more active student involvement. Addressing and honestly attempting to dismantle hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and so forth supports a classroom environment where students feel empowered and are challenged to realize their full potential. In turn, this empowering perspective often (re)ignites student interest in both the course subject and the educational process.

Another central tenet of engaged pedagogy is the creation of personal connections between educator and student. In the modern classroom—flooded with paternalistic notions of in loco parentis—the ability to connect with students is overshadowed by the pressure to produce a politically neutral classroom. This naïve attempt at objectivity actually privileges certain perspectives (white/male/upper-class) and is essentially dishonest (hooks, 1994, pp. 35-41). Addressing this imbalance requires educators and students to listen to one another. This is a fundamentally different experience from the banking method of teaching described above. Other factors may limit our ability to connect with students, including the growth of classroom sizes and the expansion of general education requirements, which many students feel push them to unnecesarily enroll in courses outside of their chosen major. Instead of viewing these as challenges to overcome, an engaged pedagogy might
Thoughts on Engaged Pedagogy and Anthropology

view them as opportunities waiting to be realized. Creating an engaged classroom does not require assignments critiquing the status quo or addressing large political and social issues. Assignments supporting an engaged pedagogy can be relatively innocuous. For instance, finding ways of connecting students from different majors with the disciplines of their general education courses supports this goal. The current system of higher education in the United States, often framed in terms of disciplinary silos, detracts from the holistic pursuit of knowledge and the development of student skills oriented towards the collection and evaluation of evidence. Digital storytelling assignments which focus on asking students to identify and examine their choice of major supports a serious exploration of the possibilities inherent to interdisciplinary approaches.

Unfortunately, the emotional component of an engaged pedagogy makes many educators uncomfortable. This discomfort has many possible causes; they include self-indulgence in networks of power and privilege, an unwillingness to challenge ourselves (as educators), a fear of appearing soft or not rigorous to our peers, or simply a lack of knowledge regarding possible alternatives. As educators, we must recognize the emotional aspects of teaching and embrace them as part of an engaged pedagogy. These same emotional strains are felt by our students, particularly in a social climate where acknowledging the politics of difference (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality) are discouraged through creeping notions of a post-racial present. Honestly engaging with the emotional aspects of teaching is the first step in understanding how the same issues affect our students. This requires a mix of “rage and love, without which there is no hope,” engaged pedagogy is “meant as a defense of tolerance—not to be confused with connivance” (Freire, 2002, p. 4). In the modern, depoliticized classroom which many educators find themselves, the creation of an engaged pedagogy can feel like a radical position.

While I think many of the above comments will ring true with readers of this collection, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the potential difficulties relating to the creation of an engaged pedagogy. Educators who embrace imagination and passion and seek ways of confronting prejudice and various axes of inequality do so at some risk. The decision to creatively explore alternative strategies can be a risky one, particularly for younger academics like myself (Emihovich, 2005). The politicization of complex issues, increasingly seen as an ethical obligation for anthropologists (Angel-Ajani & Sanford, 2006) requires specific classroom approaches to ignite student interest. Overcoming the detachment many students feel towards social issues is difficult to accomplish. The use of digital storytelling, and particularly its focus on engaging individual perspectives and creativity, represents a powerful addition to an engaged pedagogical toolkit for anthropology.

Digital storytelling cogently addresses many of the central concerns of an engaged pedagogy. Igniting student interest in a subject is crucial, and digital storytelling is an important tool for accomplishing this goal. Digital storytelling also provides unique avenues supporting the thoughtful and honest connection
between educator and student, something increasingly difficult in the 21st century classroom. The new media nature of digital storytelling represents a post-industrial logic, a point I return to later. This aspect supports an emancipatory practice by supporting critical media literacy; students are able to explore on their own terms the decisions and practices involved in creating media. In my experience, accomplishing the various goals of an engaged pedagogy in regards to digital storytelling assignments also requires educators themselves to experiment with new methods of disseminating scholarship. This process of experimentation has become a key component of my research, a point I turn to after a brief introduction to digital storytelling.

10.3 An Introduction to Digital Storytelling

While an overview of digital storytelling is covered elsewhere in this volume, I think it is valuable to understand how each author conceptualizes this emerging practice. The following paragraphs present my own views on the development and importance of digital storytelling. This is followed by a brief overview of the ways I utilize digital storytelling as part of a mixed methods practice investigating the tragic history of Rosewood, Florida. I then reflect on the use of digital storytelling in the anthropology classroom.

Digital storytelling traces its roots to a series of workshops in Los Angeles during the early 1990s. These workshops proved so successful that a StoryCenter was created shortly thereafter and remains the national center for working with digital media to tell personal stories (Lambert, 2009, pp. 1-10). Indeed, the impulse to share personal lives continues to characterize digital storytelling and Lambert’s (2009) book by the StoryCenter captures this spirit as well as outlining the components, themes, and methods for creating digital stories.

Lambert outlines nine types of stories conducive to digital representation (Lambert, 2009, pp. 24-27). The first group is character stories relating the experiences between people. Memorial stories share personal views on why certain events, people, and places are important to us. Adventure stories document travel experiences and personal exploration. Accomplishment stories relate the experiences of achieving a personal or communal goal. Place stories explore those spaces and landscapes that are particularly important to individuals and/or communities. Job stories discuss professions. Recovery stories reveal the struggles of overcoming a great challenge. Love stories explore romantic relationships between people. Discovery stories reveal personal realizations and their effects on people. A broader grouping of digital stories is offered by University of Houston’s Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling Web site (http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/). This site groups digital stories into three major categories: personal stories, stories that inform, and stories that re-tell historical events (Robin, 2008, pp. 224-225).
In addition to discussing the varieties of stories people tell, Lambert goes on to discuss the specific methods storytellers employ when crafting digital stories. As the majority of digital storytelling projects center on one or a handful of individuals, and focus on bringing out the emotional aspect of personal experiences. Digital storytellers are encouraged to own their insights, find their voice, and use it to speak. As digital stories are often personal stories, the importance of confessing one’s true feelings and opinions is paramount. Lambert stresses the importance of emotional content because it creates a more interesting story and reflects reality in more genuine ways.

In addition to the personal content, planning the actual structure of the story is highlighted. This includes clarifying the story’s meaning by the use of storyboards and other traditional aspects of filmmaking. Lambert encourages the use of music, but warns against using copyrighted material; instead, he encourages digital storytellers to utilize copyright-free music and to always provide attributions for content created by others. The importance of mapping out a digital storytelling project’s general timeline and script is encouraged, even for short pieces. As most digital stories range between five and twenty minutes, many neglect the importance of planning out a story from start to finish. The final consideration for digital storytellers is their method of delivering digital content. Will the video be presented online, at a public location, distributed via DVD?

My goal for adopting a digital storytelling approach as an emerging method to share historical research was motivated by numerous concerns. First, the major benefit digital storytelling has over traditional film/documentary making is cost. Digital stories can be created with little investment of time and resources. The primary equipment required can be broken down into three parts. The first consists of a laptop or desktop computer – the hardware component. The second involves an image and/or audio capture device. These typically take the form of camcorders and digital voice recorders. The final component is the software, programs for editing both video and audio content. Just a decade ago these three components could easily cost thousands, even tens-of-thousands of dollars. In the intervening years equipment and programs have dramatically dropped in price. Low-cost computers and video capture devices are increasingly available to people around the world. Indeed, modern mobile phones often have the required hardware and sharing capacities to quickly create and effectively share digital stories.

My second concern views the internet as a primary delivery method for sharing research. Using the internet to freely deliver content makes research immediately accessible to a broader audience. Also, using the internet eliminates the necessity of hard media such as DVDs, further reducing the cost of sharing research. A third goal for exploring digital storytelling grew out of a commitment to social justice education, and specifically the ways emerging digital technologies such as virtual world environments and digital storytelling can assist in the creation of a critical view of minority disenfranchisement in regards to American history (Gonzalez-Tennant 2013).
10.3.1 Digital Storytelling in Rosewood, Florida

The former site of Rosewood is located approximately nine miles from the Gulf of Mexico in Levy County, Florida (Figure 10.1). The town was settled during the late 1850s (Hawks, 1871, p. 57), and its name and initial economic vitality derived from the large stores of red cedar in the area (Dye, 1997, p. 29). By 1900 the majority of residents were African American and by 1920 the town had three churches, a black masonic hall, a black school, and a mix of house sizes (Jones, Rivers, Colburn, Dye, & Rogers, 1993, p. 23). The economic fortunes of Rosewood declined after the Cummer and Sons Lumber Company built a large sawmill in nearby Sumner around 1915. This was followed by the relocation of most businesses to Sumner by 1918. Although these developments challenged Rosewood’s residents, the town continued to survive and grow (Jones, 1997, p. 194). This came to an abrupt end the first week of 1923.

Figure 10.1: Location of Rosewood, Florida

What has become known as the Rosewood Race Riot was in fact a weeklong series of events. According to oral testimonies collected in the 1990s, the violence began following the accusation by Fannie Taylor, a white woman in Sumner, that a black man had attacked her. The general consensus today is that Taylor fabricated this assailant to hide the injuries she received during an altercation with her white lover. While Sumner residents believed her story, black witnesses stated the assailant was a white man with whom Taylor was having an affair (Jones et al., 1993, pp. 25-27).

Following the accusation, the sheriff was notified and a posse organized to track the assailant. Hounds led the group to nearby Rosewood, most likely following the scents of residents whose daily walks between the two towns provided an easy trail to
follow. The posse rapidly grew beyond the men initially deputized by the sheriff. The mob speculated on the assailant’s identity. The consensus identified Jesse Hunter, a black man who had recently escaped from a local labor camp, as the possible assailant. Rumors suggested that Hunter had been in the company of Sam Carter, a longtime resident of the area and Rosewood’s blacksmith (Jones et al., 1993, p. 30). While under considerable pressure, Carter admitted to giving Walker a ride in his wagon to the nearby town of Gulf Hammock. When the bloodhounds were unable to pick up the scent, and after Carter was unable to satisfy the mob’s inquiries, his body was riddled with bullets and left on the road between Sumner and Rosewood. After Carter’s murder, the posse approached other homes in Rosewood seeking more information. In the growing frenzy the posse nearly hanged several other residents. Hostilities then ceased for several days.

On January 4th a “party of citizens” went to investigate unconfirmed reports that a group of blacks had taken refuge in Rosewood (Jones et al., 1993, p. 38). What spurned these reports is unknown, but it is likely that some residents simply sought additional confrontation after the relatively anti-climactic events of Monday. The group targeted the Carrier household and two members of the mob attempted to break into the home (Jones et al., 1993, p. 40). The Carrier’s opened fire and a pitched gun battle commenced.

The battle continued into the early hours of Friday, January 5th. Reports of wounded white men in Rosewood roused local whites, including members of the KKK from Gainesville, Florida. When whites left Friday morning to replenish ammunition, African Americans fled into the surrounding swamps. The white mob returned to Rosewood later that day and burned several homes and at least one church. They also reportedly found the bodies of Sylvester and Sarah Carrier in their home, victims of the previous night’s gun battle (Jones et al., 1993, pp. 43-44). The mob also killed Lexie Gordon, an African American widow of approximately fifty, by shooting her in the back as she fled her burning home (Jones et al., 1993, pp. 44-45). The death toll now included four African Americans and two Euro-Americans (who died from injuries received during the previous night’s fight). The seventh death occurred later that day when whites shot Mingo Williams in the head as they drove through nearby Bronson on their way to Rosewood.

A train run by two brothers came through Rosewood at 4am on Saturday, January 6th. It stopped at several towns along the way including Rosewood, Wylly, and Otter Creek to rescue frightened African Americans. Only women and children where allowed on the train, which took survivors to Archer and Gainesville where descendants remain to this day (Jones et al., 1993, p. 61). That Saturday, James Carrier briefly returned and was apprehended by whites. He became the eighth death when the mob lynched him near the fresh graves of his mother and brother (Jones et al., 1993, pp. 50-51). On Sunday, the mob returned to Rosewood and burned every remaining African American building (Figure 10.2).
My scholarly use of digital storytelling concentrates on several interrelated goals. I addressed these goals with the construction of a 26-minute digital story exploring the history of Rosewood’s community (available online at www.virtualrosewood.com). This digital video is titled *Remembering Rosewood* and provides a transparent overview of my research questions and methods. I describe my mixed methods approach integrating oral history, documentary evidence, geographic information systems (GIS), historical archaeology, and heritage visualization to represent Rosewood as a dynamic community instead of a single event. Approximately half of the digital story shares the life stories of two survivors, Robie Mortin and Mary Hall Daniels. These two women were both present in Rosewood during the events of 1923, Mortin was eight and Daniels was three. A particularly touching moment in the digital story occurs when Mortin describes meeting her father for the first time following the riot. She describes how her father quickly recognized how the accusation of rape and subsequent attacks on Rosewood might turn into large scale violence. He sent Robie to nearby Williston with her sister. After hearing about the destruction of Rosewood several days later, and not being able to meet up with their father, the two girls assumed he had been killed. They worked as migrant laborers in Florida citrus fields and over several months made their way to Riviera Beach, north of Miami. Mortin (Figure 10.3) shares what happened one morning when she went to a newly constructed church several months after moving to Riviera Beach:

> There was a ditch that separated Riviera Beach from the black neighborhood. There was a bridge across it, and there was a Hearst Chapel AME Church there. They had built that church right on our side of the ditch. So, we, my sister and I, went to church, and would you believe our daddy was there, and we didn't know where he was, hadn't seen him in months. We didn't even know he was still alive, and there he was in the front of that church (Interview with Robie Mortin and Author, 2009).

In addition to the 26-minute digital documentary, visitors to www.virtualrosewood.com can also explore a virtual reconstruction of Rosewood as it existed in late 1922.
The ability of digital storytelling to share touching moments like these with my students represents an important intersection for engaged pedagogy. Students immediately realize how scholars can engage with complex and emotional histories in sensitive ways. This avoids the depoliticization which so often haunts the modern classroom. Mortin’s words, delivered in her soft, ninety-four-year-old voice, touches viewers in an unmistakable way. The emotional impact of her brief story demonstrates the trials, and in this one example happy surprises, which make a life scared by trauma bearable.

10.4 Assigning and Assessing Digital Storytelling for the Anthropological Classroom

My exploration of digital storytelling in the classroom began with a General Anthropology course I taught at the University of Florida in the autumn semester of 2010. This was a large survey course with 120 students. I approached this assignment by dedicating an entire class to discussing digital storytelling. This included a presentation and student handout describing various types of digital stories, a summary of Lambert’s seven steps of digital storytelling, a brief discussion of technology, and useful online resources for copyright-free images, music, and sounds. The presentation included brief introductions to platform specific video and sound editing software. The presentation ended with a showing of my Remembering Rosewood video as an example of digital storytelling.

I gave students the choice of working alone or in groups of three or less. The assignment stipulated that each video be between five and ten minutes in length. The videos had to address one of two questions: what is your favorite aspect of

Figure 10.3: Still of Robie Mortin from Remembering Rosewood, interviewed by author in 2009
anthropology, or how do you see anthropology intersecting other disciplines? As a general education course at the University of Florida, typically 50% or less of the students are anthropology majors and minors. I designed these questions to better understand how my students responded to the course content. Initially, my goals for digital storytelling focused on the creation of a creative assignment allowing me to gauge my course content and what aspects of an introductory, four-field anthropology course ignited student interest. Given the relative freedom of designing their own message in regards to anthropology, what would students choose to represent as key ideas and sentiments of the discipline? I also shared my hopes with students regarding the assignment and its ability to invert the usual hierarchy of learning in a lecture-based class.

The assignment was discussed at various points throughout the semester, and specific deliverables required at regular intervals. This included a one-page outline and a time-table. The relatively small number of related assignments in my early explorations of digital storytelling reflects the large size of my classes (100+ students per course each semester). I emphasized the importance of the story above the technology and regularly reminded students that their grades were not based on technical proficiency. Creating a digital storytelling assignment for a large lecture course required a flexible approach to grading. Initially, I scored assignments as essays. I assessed them on clarity of purpose and point of view, pacing and voice, appropriate use of media, economy of composition, and appropriate use of grammar and language.

My initial exploration of digital storytelling resulted in 94 separate videos, available online at www.youtube.com/AnthroDigitalStories. Many of the videos show students in private settings – their homes and dormitories – speaking to the camera in a confessional manner. I was drawn into their videos by their posture and quiet speaking style. I wondered if this was simply reproducing the style of a video diary common to reality TV programs, or if this pointed to a deeper pedagogical possibility. For some, this represented the path of least resistance as it required less effort and planning than other approaches. For others, this provided me with an opportunity to learn more about my students and their opinions on my class, their chosen majors, and how these things integrate into the larger experiences associated with college life today. Determining which confessional style videos were of the former type is easy. It is immediately clear when students failed to plan their videos. For instance, some of the longest videos submitted by students conform to this confessional style, but are recorded in one sitting and without any editing. These students typically failed to address the other parts of the assignment, which was also reflected in the supporting deliverables (e.g., time table) as well as the overall quality of the videos.

I interpret the unexpected confessional nature of many of the videos as speaking directly to the goals of an engaged pedagogy. Students revealed personal perspectives rarely shared in a traditional classroom environment. This is particularly the case in large survey and introductory courses where classroom discussion is difficult to
initiate and sustain due to the number of students. These videos demonstrate the ability of digital storytelling to bridge the chasm which typically separates educators and students. Digital storytelling also inverted the usual hierarchy of learning by giving students the opportunity to expand the scope of the course, to reflect critically on the assigned readings and lectures, and to teach the instructor and other students about students’ first-hand experiences of complex issues such as discrimination and non-(hetero)normative lifestyles.

These videos often revealed hidden aspects of student lives, their hopes and desires, their personal connections with anthropology, and their hidden assumptions. The videos ranged between thoughtful and revealing treatments of anthropology to half-hearted attempts to hastily produce a video satisfying some students’ uncritical belief about what I wanted from them. I interpret the thoughtful treatments as partially reflecting my own commitment to teaching a four-field anthropology and demonstrating its increasing importance in today’s world. I see these responses as supporting the idea that anthropology’s perspectives and methods can speak to a generation disillusioned with traditional forms of scholarship and education. I view the half-hearted attempts in one of two ways. The first set corresponds to the subset of students who simply fail to take adequate time or care to complete their assignments. The second set corresponds to those students who remained uncomfortable with visually expressing their opinion in the format of a digital video. In recent years, I have attempted to address this by expanding these kinds of assignments to include the creation of graphic novels/comics, photography essays, and even abstract paintings. Regardless of the assignment, there is always a subset of students who fail to take the assignment seriously, but my experiences remain positive and the majority of students appreciate the extra freedom in expressing themselves.

Formal methods of assessing digital storytelling assignments have been created by other educators. They all agree on the necessity of a rubric. One well-known example is the University of Houston’s sample rubric (http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=24). I believe this ten-point rubric is particularly useful for educators who are not personally involved in digital storytelling as part of their research. This rubric helps students understand how the digital storytelling project differs from a conventional term paper and gives them a framework for considering the possibilities. I initially took a highly subjective approach to grading digital storytelling, often delighting in my students’ work as much as they clearly did while creating it.

I continue to utilize digital storytelling assignments in my courses, and have adapted my approach to smaller classroom sizes. This includes integrating digital storytelling as part of a semester project alongside other deliverables such as timetables, scripts, and formal papers describing the project and stating how the video satisfies the assignment. These additional assignments allow me to better track a student or group’s progress through a semester. The paper supports a more traditional form of assessment. I have found this necessary as mainstream “education
Digital Storytelling in the Classroom

currently doesn’t encourage, and rarely requires, students to produce schoolwork in ‘new media’ formats such as digital stories” (Ohler, 2008, p. 62). I agree with Ohler that this stems from the fact that most educators are not comfortable creating or assessing new media artifacts. I would add that the maintenance of a hierarchical learning environment also plays a role in the resistance many educators have for this type of work, even as they celebrate interdisciplinary scholarship in their classrooms. I have found Ohler’s approach (2008, pp. 65-67) to assessing digital storytelling particularly helpful. Instead of a standard rubric, he proposes nine considerations that provide a rough guide as well as specific deliverables/artifacts that can be assessed by educators.

The first involves setting clear goals. This step is familiar to educators and we would not assign papers or other work without clear goals (e.g., page length, reference style, number of citations). The same holds true for digital storytelling assignments. The second point focuses on the story and the student’s ability to present an orderly narrative. This involves students creating videos that draw on additional sources to support their assertions. I discuss various ways students can bring traditional forms of scholarship into their digital storytelling projects, including the referencing of texts and incorporation of other media objects. Ohler (2008) stresses the importance of assessing all artifacts created as part of a digital storytelling project. This allows educators to understand the general process of content creation and understanding. Assessing student planning also supports the need to assign and assess multiple artifacts. The next two considerations assess grammar and the presentation of content. Educators should discuss with their students appropriate ways of using media to support their assertions. Asking students to critically engage with content in their assignments represents an aspect of digital storytelling that is similar to traditional artifacts such as essays.

Since many digital storytelling assignments involve group work, determining methods for assessing shared responsibilities and effective use of resources is a vital component. I accomplish this by having a mix of group and individual assignments. The timetable and script are good group artifacts. Individual essays discussing the project and assessing the overall quality of the video allows me to identify which students invested greater effort and thought. I typically accord the individual paper a large percentage of the overall project’s grade, 50% percent or more. I have also found that including “a performance or publication venue at the outset” improves the overall quality of student work (Ohler, 2008, p. 66). Setting time aside in class to show the videos addresses this aspect of assessment and supports peer review of the videos. This addresses Ohler’s final point of including some form of self-assessment at the conclusion of the project.

Incorporating these considerations into my own digital storytelling assignments supports an expanded experimental engagement with alternative assignments. In addition to regularly assigning digital storytelling projects, I have experimented with other forms of self-expression. In a recent Anthropology of Religion course I
allowed students to draw on any form of expressive culture as part of a final research project. Students enthusiastically responded with artifacts that further challenged my ability to assess their work. This included the production of abstract paintings by one student as part of her project on vampire folklore from Eastern Europe as well as photo essays examining the role religion plays in addressing personal loss. These assignments further pushed me as an educator and I sought out colleagues in the fine arts programs to get advice on assessing these new (to me) forms of expressive culture. I have also replaced digital storytelling assignments with graphic novels in my freshman seminar on zombies. My previous experiences with digital storytelling—requiring multiple deliverables—proved equally useful for these types of student project.

10.5 Discussion

Lev Manovich, in his seminal work *The Language of New Media*, not only provides us with the most concise definition of the term new media, but also presents five characteristics useful in conceptualizing the use of digital storytelling for engaged pedagogy. New media is the “translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers” (Manovich, 2001, p. 20). This includes the translation of analog materials (e.g., photographs, movies, records) into digital formats as well as the creation of fully digital artifacts like digital images and 3D models. New media is what happens when media and computer technologies meet.

“All new media objects... are composed of digital code” (Manovich, 2001, p. 27) represents the first characteristic, and while modern media such as film follow an industrial logic (large scale production studies, expensive equipment costs, necessity of labors), new media provides us with a post-industrial method, one not regulated by mass standardization. This aspect of new media means its potential as an emancipatory form is literally hardwired into its very structure. The technical and equipment aspects of digital storytelling, made widely available through modern manufacturing, should not be confused with the logic underlying their use. Traditional media (e.g., film) is organized like a factory and the physical objects associated with these technologies require standardization to function. Standardization has resulted in a restricted set of values and expressive modes in Hollywood, and the entertainment industry in general. These modes are driven by both mass standardization and corporate funding streams. In contrast, new media expresses a post-industrial logic by highlighting “individual customization, rather than mass standardization” (Manovich, 2001, p. 29). Although the individual components may be produced in factory, the wider potentials of self-expression which exist with digital technologies allows for a wider range of expressive modes not available/accepted by mass media.
Secondly, new media is modular; parts can be deleted, re-arranged, and added without destroying the original. This invites experimentation and exploration. This feature is easily coupled with pedagogical interests related to teaching media literacy.

A third aspect involves automation, and this is particularly important for sharing digital storytelling artifacts via websites like YouTube and Vimeo. The most common form of automation is the creation of programs to access information, and while Manovich focuses on the proliferation of access agents (e.g., Google) for sorting through the bewildering amounts of information now available online, without automated access, our ability to share digital stories would be limited to hard media such as DVDs.

The fourth characteristic centers on the variability of new media objects. This flexibility is useful for digital storytelling and allows users to present alternative and even contrasting perspectives side by side. This addresses the hierarchical classroom and its desire to produce one authoritative view of a subject. Engaged pedagogy recognizes the value of different perspectives and respects how standpoint influences multiple engagements with a topic, all potentially as true and valid as one another. This aspect also supports the creation of a variety of interfaces with the same content. The same content can now be delivered via traditional formats like television or via interactive websites.

The final characteristic of new media is cultural transcoding. This involves the interaction between cultural ideas and new computer methods. At present, this is dominated through analogy with traditional media: the printed page becomes a webpage, cinema becomes online video (edited and navigated based on analog concepts like fast forward), the human computer interaction of fingers on keyboard become fully immersive virtual reality. In regards to digital storytelling, this satisfies the engaged pedagogical impulse to respect difference. Students are less constrained than in traditional assignments and their unique, culturally-informed experiences can be positioned side-by-side and equally valued. As with the birth of any new technology, we can only begin to hypothesize about the range of potential applications. The term “transcode” means to translate, and how educators and students translate traditional assignments into these new formats, and the reciprocal effect on our practice as educators is only beginning.

The unnecessary hierarchical posturing associated with traditional education is one of the first things jettisoned by thinkers exploring an engaged pedagogical practice. The traditional classroom setting, disciplined through centuries of tradition represents a socializing spatial arrangement subjugating student knowledge and experience to that of the educator. A critical approach to engaged pedagogy simultaneously recognizes the professor’s unique knowledge while respecting the ability of students to contribute important insights. This perspective also acknowledges the unique value offered by the lived experiences of students from underrepresented groups; particularly in regards to race, nationality, sexuality, age, and so forth.
My ongoing exploration of digital storytelling intentionally intersects many of engaged pedagogy’s central tenets. This begins with a sincere engagement on my part with the technologies and techniques of digital storytelling as part of my research. The alternative format of digital storytelling, coupled with traditional assignments (e.g., individual essays), helps to ignite student interest and invert the traditional hierarchy of the classroom. These types of assignments invite students to become active producers of content and responsible viewers of work produced by their peers. The emancipatory potential of new media supports these goals as well. The creative exploration of new media invites students to participate in the educational experience in more active ways. This also provides a bridge allowing educators and students to connect in ways that are increasingly difficult in today’s classroom.

Digital storytelling also addresses other aspects of 21st century education. The exploration and creation of digital media artifacts represents a crucial aspect of developing critical media literacy. This form of literacy seeks to expand “the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication and popular culture as well as deepen the potential of education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). Specific methods for accomplishing these goals include understanding how media is generated and engaging with the work of others in critical ways. Digital storytelling can support these goals by exposing students to the intentional choices that are made while fashioning a news report, documentary, or popular television show. Dedicating portions of class to viewing the results of digital storytelling assignments allows students to question these decisions and recognize how their own biases influence their representational decisions in unforeseen ways.

I see digital storytelling as a core pedagogical component regarding the recent rush to embrace digital humanities among many scholars, academic institutions, and funding agencies. Unfortunately, what is often less clear in this exploration is the reciprocal relationship between the digital humanities and pedagogy (Brier, 2012, pp. 390-391). Digital storytelling offers a powerful suite of methods for engaged pedagogy in the college classroom. The preceding pages offer one possibility for addressing the pedagogical deficit within the digital humanities. I believe the sincere impulse to make new media meaningful for current and future generations is centrally important to education, particularly in the present moment. It is “highly irresponsible in the face of saturation by the Internet and media culture to ignore these forms of socialization and education” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). Digital storytelling represents a powerful form of self-expression addressing the central concerns of an engaged pedagogy while simultaneously teaching students to create and critically evaluate new media artifacts in their daily lives.
10.6 Conclusion

My experimentation with digital storytelling began as an outgrowth of my interest in engaged pedagogy. The scalable nature of digital storytelling allows me to tailor assignments to different class sizes, student levels, and course content. I have found digital storytelling to be a powerful form of engaged pedagogy allowing me to invert the traditional hierarchical nature of the college classroom and connect with my students as active and intelligent participants. The ability of my students to share personal experiences that are unavailable to me represents a core methodology for bridging the divide between educator and student. This divide is the result of centuries of tradition and overcoming it requires specific and dedicated effort. Digital storytelling represents a powerful bridge allowing me to access student perspectives and knowledge(s) in sensitive and active ways. This also supports active learning and provides students with the skills and peer feedback necessary for understanding the constructed aspect of media. The 21st century’s reliance on distributed networks of communication technologies is neither malignant nor benign. It poses the same problems and possibilities of traditional media, and I believe teaching digital storytelling represents a central methodology for supporting a critical engagement with new media.

In many ways, new media offers a new set of tools, ones not found in the master’s house (Lourde, 1984, pp. 110-113) and therefore potentially very liberating, a constellation of approaches and technologies not regulated by gatekeepers and tradition—although certainly in dialogue with them. Obvious and sizable obstacles to full participation in new media include the manifestation of a digital divide as well as the (re)inscription of negative identity politics within virtual spaces (Nakamura, 2008). Just as the printing press was utilized in the past to democratize knowledge, so too can we teach ourselves to draw on new media methodologies for a similar purpose. Only time will tell if this optimistic viewpoint will produce transformative fruit or if mass standardization will reassert itself. I choose to remain hopeful, because the alternative deprives our students of potentially liberating educational possibilities.

References


CHAPTER 21

Doing DH in the classroom

Transforming the humanities curriculum through digital engagement

Diane Jakacki and Katherine Faull

In this chapter, the authors reproduce the theory/praxis model we employ when teaching digital humanities pedagogy workshops at DHSI and other institutions. By first situating each aspect of the process in a broader pedagogical framework, we present sound practices for the integration of DH methods and tools into humanities courses. We then present a case study that demonstrates how these practices can be employed effectively in the classroom. At the end of the chapter we offer a “Further Reading” section that offers course websites, sample syllabi and additional readings on DH pedagogy. In the chapter we focus on courses rooted in research-based or experiential learning, which we believe offers the teacher an opportunity to involve students in the kind of humanistic enquiry that we as DH scholars engage in as we undertake our own scholarship. We believe that this approach is most effective when helping other instructors adapt and adopt these models for their own use.

In the summer 2014 issue of The CEA Critic, authors Lindsay Thomas and Dana Solomon remarked on the notable lack of discussions of pedagogy in the development of the digital humanities in undergraduate institutions. Arguing that DH pedagogy should be something far more than an afterthought, Thomas and Solomon outlined how their undergraduate project “RoSE” at the University of California, Santa Barbara developed students to be active users and researchers of DH. In the same issue of The CEA Critic, E. Leigh Bonds drew on the discussions of Melissa Terras, Stephen Ramsey, Alan Liu, and others about the fundamental difference between the learning goals of DH courses and those of traditional courses in the humanities. How do we teach students to be critical makers and doers...
together? Or, in Liu’s terms, how do we develop a pedagogical hermeneutic of “practice, discovery, community”?¹

The term “digital pedagogy” has gained traction in the wake of the digital humanities’ move from margin to center in the academy.² But there is no one definition for digital pedagogy: the term is used to identify everything from massive open online courses (MOOCs) and clickers, to flipped classrooms and hybrid courses, to blog and wiki assignments, to scaffolded projects in which the digital is intrinsic to course design and learning outcomes. Experimentation at the assignment level gives “digital-curious” instructors the opportunity to test digital tools and methods. However, this is very different from the design and execution of an intentionally designed course in DH. When we overhaul our syllabi and our teaching methods to transform the classroom and course structure with specifically DH-inflected learning goals and outcomes, it may seem alien and unsettling to our students and even to our departmental colleagues; but it is progressive and truly distinctive in ways that reflect the changing nature of humanities programs and curricula. This radical shift in design and execution is both exciting and necessary, and challenges us, as digital humanists, to become more effective teachers by incorporating our own DH research and interests into the classroom.

One of the fundamental differences between digital humanities pedagogy and a more general integration of technology into the classroom lies in the intentionality of course learning goals; in other words, how we lead students to new forms of understanding through the methods of the digital humanities. Integration of technology into the classroom is predicated upon the development of fundamental forms of discrete digital literacies to encourage students to think critically about media engagement so that they can become better digital citizens. Often, these entry-level approaches focus on forms of collaborative writing and introductory multimodal assignments. This foundation establishes a trajectory for both students and instructors in which they develop digital skills and the vocabulary to assess particular types of assignments. Courses that are designed as *sui generis* DH courses occupy the other end of a trajectory of digital learning. Here, digital humanities scholar-practitioners shape their syllabi to teach DH-specific learning goals that are deeply embedded within digital ways of knowing, a specifically DH hermeneutic. To achieve these learning goals, such courses focus on intermediate-to-advanced integration of methodologies – such as text encoding analysis and topic modeling, data visualization, and geospatial analysis – into humanities-based critical enquiry that creates even more compelling DH learning environments. Often, in such courses, digital humanists teach research-based learning that is tied to their own DH projects.

This chapter focuses on the far end of the spectrum, modeling what we believe is best practice in digital humanities pedagogy by means of an extended case study: our experience of planning and implementing a new DH project-based course at Bucknell University. This course introduced undergraduate students to the world of digital humanities through the use of selected digital tools and methods of analysis. We believe that in the context of this volume, *Doing Digital Humanities*, it will serve
to demonstrate the importance of planning, assessment, training, support, and evaluation to do DH in the classroom.

**COURSE DESIGN AND GOALS**

The integration of digital humanities at the core of a course – whether when designing a new course or restructuring an existing one – requires that the teacher pays particular attention to course goals and learning objectives. This form of pedagogical intentionality may surprise instructors who have taught a particular subject using more traditional methods in the past, but is crucial to the implementation of a course that establishes a sound learning framework and ensures the successful pedagogical coalescence of DH into a humanities context. In this section we will model ways in which the creation of a new course requires the teacher to question and re-address accustomed approaches to teaching, and to identify specific digital learning goals while still meeting departmental curricular requirements.

In the case of Humanities 100 – a course without precedent at Bucknell and with few guiding models at other undergraduate institutions – the development and implementation of the syllabus and learning goals was challenging and required a high level of commitment from both instructors. While we had both co-taught courses before, neither of us had developed what both agreed was a high-risk, high-profile course that could have significant impact on our colleagues as well as on students. We believed from the outset that the course clearly had the potential to establish a foundation that could scale to a much broader presence for the digital humanities across the Bucknell University curriculum.

This course, taught within the Comparative Humanities program, was designed specifically for first- and second-year undergraduate students with no background in digital humanities, in order to encourage the development of digital habits of mind at the earliest phases of their liberal arts curricular experience. The Comparative Humanities program at Bucknell University provides an ideal curricular environment in which to teach such classes with its explicit learning goals of comparativity (historical period, cultures, genres, modality). This program context is important for the success of such explicitly DH-focused courses, in that the process of practice and discovery happens within a curricular community where that is the norm. For these program-based goals, course-specific learning goals that pertain to DH were developed. These goals speak to the specificity of digital humanities pedagogy as a mode of learning: namely, students learn to identify, use, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different DH methodologies and tools; they develop sound research questions that can be answered with DH methodologies and tools; they create projects using the tools taught in the course; they learn to articulate and assess success (or failure) of a humanities research project involving DH methods; finally, they work individually and collaboratively to create projects that relate to specific interests. This multi-section course not only provided the instructors...
the opportunity to expose students to methodologies related to distant and close reading, network and spatial visualization, but also required that they learn to think critically about what each of these methods, and the tools that they used within the course, reveal in the texts with which they worked.4

One of the crucial decisions that must be made when undertaking such a course is what kind of data students will develop and use in the execution of these course goals. We realized early in the design process that student success was contingent upon their understanding of how DH data are developed. We therefore decided to make archival material the core source of data for the course. Further, the size of the corpus should be small enough that students could gain an oversight over the material even without needing to implement techniques of distant reading. Therefore, the decision to root the course in a multifaceted analysis of archival materials provided the rare chance for undergraduate students to also engage in the research process typical for a humanities scholar: namely, the discovery of artifacts, the formulation of research questions, followed by the analysis and synthesis of findings culminating in the publication of initial findings in a digital medium. In the process, we introduced students to the basic structure of how to develop a DH research project.

The first time the course was taught we decided to run it in two sections, anticipating an opportunity to reflect different perspectives of our expertise with DH methods and tools, and therefore to cross-teach while learning from each other: Jakacki’s focus until then had been on text encoding and analysis, while Faull’s had been on mapping and data visualization. We also worked with discrete data sets of archival materials. Faull’s course focused on the Colonial mission diaries of the Moravians from Shamokin, Pennsylvania (today Sunbury) and situated near the university on the Susquehanna River. Written in English, the diary sections selected dealt with interactions between some of the first Europeans to the area and the Native peoples they met and worked among. Faull has spent the past five years working with this subject matter, and is considered an expert in the field of Moravian studies. Jakacki’s course concentrated on a subset of the diaries of James Merrill Linn, one of the first graduates of the university and a soldier in the American Civil War. Linn’s family left his life papers to the Bucknell Archives, and these were accessible to students. The choice of this material was based on Jakacki’s interest in finding a subject with another connection to Bucknell’s location, and offered an opportunity for students to consider first-hand the differences between material and digital archives. In the second iteration of the course in spring 2015, Faull selected a different set of Moravian archival materials that took the students slightly further afield, but still kept them within the Susquehanna River watershed and the Chesapeake Bay. In fall 2015 Jakacki shifted the archival emphasis in her section to sixteenth-century English theatre studies using a collection of anecdotes and performance records as core text and dataset. The instructors’ choices reflect and extend Bucknell’s interest in digital/spatial thinking in terms of place in the larger historical and cultural narrative. This was particularly important for Faull’s decision to root her courses in regional history; students responded well to the investigation
of places familiar to them, with several students having family connections to specific locales mentioned in the archival materials. In all cases, we taught material that (to our knowledge) had not been incorporated previously into learning environments and that was unpublished, either in traditional print form or in digital format.

In the design of the course, we decided to implement a scaffolding of assignments to accommodate both the selected core archival texts while reinforcing the importance of considering how different DH-based methods strengthen students’ understanding of that subject matter. This approach allowed both instructors to develop more sophisticated and complex course modules while assisting one another through complementary strengths and skills. This transparency challenged us to consider whether we were co-teaching two sections of one course or two courses in collaboration. This simultaneous or parallel mode of teaching also allowed us to identify moments that offered a richer learning environment for both sections, supporting each other in the separate sections when individual DH expertise and pedagogical approaches needed to be supplemented. In essence, the instructors learned how to teach one another while teaching the subject matter to students. Early on in the course development process, we realized that in order for students to understand the evolving nature of DH research, we would have to reveal our own status as learners. Teaching unfamiliar material – not only across sections but within a particular class – required an at times uncomfortable degree of transparency. It must be said that such honesty can have varying effects on students. Some recognize that learning from each other happens to everyone, and respect that mode of collaboration and camaraderie. Others, perhaps more used to the “one way” pedagogy of the lecture hall, are definitely uncomfortable with the non-hierarchical class structure.

Another challenge to the class design was the high number of L2 students (students for whom English is a second language) who were enrolled in the course. In Faull’s fall 2014 section over 20 per cent were from mainland China; in her spring section that ratio increased to 60 per cent. In the fall 2014 there was also one student from Australia and one from Vietnam (neither L2s but international students); one student in the spring course was from South Africa – her first language was Afrikaans. Although the students admitted to being challenged by the readings and also the public-facing writing in the course website, a means for adjusting for student errors and allowing for corrections was developed that would allow the students to post their blog reflections in a way that did not impede their openness to reflection, knowing that they would have an opportunity to correct their English.

Some institutions may already have a culture of digital engagement that focuses on one or another facet of engagement. At Bucknell, the focus in digital humanities scholarship and learning to date has been primarily on spatial thinking, until recently rooted in working with ArcMap-type geospatial analysis and thinking about humanities in “place.” It was important to both instructors to emphasize and extend that objective in the development of the course and its learning outcomes; and so the focus moved to using more DH approaches that would be of interest to students so that...
they could relate to the historical context more directly. Therefore, in addition to a mapping module, we added close and distant reading and data visualization, relying on an array of platforms: ArcGIS Online (mapping); Juxta Editions (text markup using the Text Encoding Initiative guidelines); Voyant and Gephi (text analysis and visualization); and Omeka (digital curation of archival materials). To tie it together, a WordPress site was created as a course management system and a platform for student reflection. Students wrote public-facing posts on the site, embedded screenshots of their work, and commented on each other’s work. Students were also able to point to the website when explaining to curious family and friends what their course was about.

INTEGRATING CRITICAL REFLECTION

One of the distinguishing features of a Digital Humanities course is the foregrounding of critique. Unlike more CS-based classes, students in DH classes are required to reflect on the process they have undertaken in developing their projects to be able to place their praxis within the broader scholarly discourse of DH. Therefore, carefully selected readings that are directly linked to development of each of the student’s competencies should be embedded within the class schedule. Teaching students to use these digital platforms requires the conscious placement of the course within a curricular context; in our case, within the context of the program in Comparative Humanities.

To this end, each module required students to read key secondary texts and reflect upon the theoretical as well as practical aspects of DH. For example, students had to reflect on what Johanna Drucker says about the visual rhetoric of visualization. They had to account for Elena Pierazzo’s argument for the epistemic difference of diplomatic editions. They considered Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton’s essay on the development of timelines and the conceptualization of history. The interdisciplinary humanistic approach was thus clearly and directly linked to the learning goals of the course and reinforced departmental learning goals of analyzing intellectual materials of different and opposing types and theorizing the difference between textual and material artifacts. Students also learned to identify, use, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different DH methodologies and tools and were encouraged to identify and use key terms and concepts. As a result, students learned to develop research questions that could be answered with DH tools and methodologies, and work collaboratively in groups to create projects that related to their own research interests.

SCAFFOLDING ASSIGNMENTS

One benefit of DH-focused course design that distinguishes it from many more traditional approaches is the ability to build assignments across the semester,
expanding and enhancing student engagement with source material and emphasizing how DH scholars must focus on process rather than product. By scaffolding digital assignments, teachers can also encourage students to gain confidence in their own particular learning strengths – visual and textual learners alike can find moments of connection with the same source materials.

As outlined above, the pedagogical hermeneutics of Humanities 100 were intentionally designed to encourage student examination, experimentation and discovery with a range of digital humanities approaches. To this end, the sequencing of the modules was carefully designed so that the "product" of each module then became the “data” of the next module. This established an environment in which learning was both iterative and generative.

For example, we modeled professional archival (DH) research practice by having students transcribe and produce a clean digital text. In the first iteration of the course, students transcribed the assigned pages of the facsimile into a shared Google doc. This digital text was then color-coded in terms of “proto” tags to ease the way into close reading with TEI tags in the oXygen XML editor. At the beginning of the second semester, we obtained an institutional subscription to the online platform Juxta Editions which established a “transcription desk” work process in which students did their transcriptions and the first pass at TEI tagging, helping us to better prepare them to think about tagging schema and standardized markup. As one student noted:

For us it was important to tag dates, events, and places because it is a journal that we are transcribing and we want to keep track of a journey. Sometimes we had to face even tougher decisions than just whether or not to tag a word. For example, it required some more thinking to determine whether a word was a place vs. an object. We had to just all agree on the same tag so we could be as consistent as possible.

Once a reliable text had been established, we then introduced students to the concept of “distant reading” through the Voyant platform. At the same time as students were encouraged to “play,” we also pointed out the circular motion of discovery and confirmation that is inherent in any research experience. The students had just read these archival texts very carefully in order to transcribe them, so we asked them the usual kinds of questions one asks when approaching any kind of new text. What is it about? What are the major themes? Who are the most important characters? Then, having read Edward Whitley’s text on distant reading, we asked the students to think about what reading a text distantly does to that hermeneutic. Describing her process, one student in Faull’s class wrote, “We put the Travel Diary and the Powell Diary – two documents which are similar – together in DocuBurst. [We were] able to show connections between words related to ‘justice’. This is really cool to use digital tools to connect 2 old documents.” (Figure 21.1)
From the transcription came the lightly marked-up digital text which was then imported into oXygen for more complex tagging. Students began tagging in earnest and were introduced to the discoveries of close reading involved in marking up a text. Names, places, and dates were easy (they had already been tagged in Juxta Edition). However, the hermeneutical fun started with trickier distinctions; for example, was a boat a place or an object; is God a person; or just what was balsam, an object? an emotion? During these classes, the historical remoteness of the texts was reduced by the act of tagging and the lively discussions that accompanied it. A student remarked how:

As a class, we have had multiple discussions on whether certain things are objects or places and event versus time ... each side would have to give an appealing argument to support their claim. This kind of action in class made for a very productive work environment, and helped bring about discussion that benefitted everyone.

These data, the TEI tags, crucial to the success of the students’ markup assignment and the production of a final digital document, needed some restructuring as we moved on to the next module. To manage this, we developed a prosopography for each core text – a database of people, places, and connections that grew organically out of the focus of each specific section and provided the data for entry into Gephi, and was then built out in adding geospatial data for GIS.

For example, one group of students wanted to use Gephi to interrogate the assumption that relationships between the missionaries and the Native Americans in the...
area around the mission remained constant. Importing the words they had tagged in TEI as `<persName>` and importing them into Gephi node/edge tables, the students in Faull’s classes were able to show how relations between the Native leaders and the Moravian missionaries changed over a five-year period of the mission (Figure 21.2). Network analysis was less helpful in the first iteration of Jakacki’s section, as the Linn diary offered a very small data set of related people. It became clear from all iterations of the class that the hermeneutics of social networks was the hardest for the students to analyze and manipulate (which is surprising, given how most of them are well plugged into social media).

The last module in each section of the course focused explicitly on place, with students effectively writing map-based essays. The nature of the travel journals in the first three course iterations provided us with a valuable opportunity to challenge students to rethink their conceptions of space and journey. We prepared georectified historical maps and pertinent cultural, environmental, and historical GIS data layers, and urged students to use them to think about how a traveler in the eighteenth or nineteenth century would conceptualize space. They analyzed the contemporary maps and associated data to consider how a traveler might have to rely on a manuscript map, or was faced with travel conditions that would affect chosen routes: terrain, weather, rudimentary pathways, etc.

In all cases, the students incorporated contemporary accounts and records as direct evidence within the context of ArcGIS Online story map templates, added map notes, paths and shapes to propose theses about locations and sequence of events, and framed the map interface with textual and visual arguments and conclusions (Figure 21.3). This dynamic and creative approach to GIS analysis provided those students who had sometimes struggled with negotiating their archival materials through textual means with a more visual way to understand the role their subjects played in historical events. As one such student noted:

> When I started this project, I knew I wanted to talk about Linn’s naval travel, but I was unsure about what specific aspect would be most interesting. My research question was how did naval warfare affect the way that the Civil War was fought, and how did the weather, tides, wind, and other nautical issues affect the way that the war played out. The answer, however, was hidden deeper than I expected.

Both the composition of the class (in terms of student personalities) and also the nature of the material determined to some extent the kind of final project students chose. For example, in Faull’s section there were some natural groupings of students and there were a variety of final projects (one involving Gephi; two TEI markup; one hybrid ArcMap and TEI; and one story map). In Jakacki’s class all but two students chose to work independently. In the second iteration of Faull’s course, students decided that they would produce one final group project all together – a course website that highlighted the best of their DH work.
Figure 21.2
A Gephi network visualization of two sections of a historical diary, revealing a change in social relations in two distinct time periods.
Thus, by scaffolding the assignments to build one on another in an iterative process, both students and faculty are able to engage in the building of complex digital artifacts that are manageably scaled and that reveal in their construction the importance of understanding the abstraction, structuring and retrieval of DH data. For all the challenges involved in teaching the class, there were moments of glory. Disengaged students became engaged; solitary learners recognized the essential need to collaborate in order to succeed; participants recognized the transformative nature of the course to their own concepts of the humanities. Students were eager to participate in crowdsourced data collection; they were intrigued to visualize ego-networks as they learned the concepts of network theory; they were excited to see their marked-up transcriptions published in an online digital edition. Through these discoveries, they realized that they were creating a community of young DH-ers and expressed eagerness to take part in more of these learning experiences. All iterations of the course proved to be successful for a number of reasons. Our students showed facility engaging both with unfamiliar materials and with new approaches that constituted rhetorical engagements – textually, visually, spatially – in ways that surprised them and gave them a confidence and ownership in their work that they would not have experienced in a more traditional first- or second-year humanities survey course. For the teachers, we had to be ready to course-correct when students wanted more time to work with a particular module; we had to learn to accommodate one another’s distinctive teaching styles; we had to be honest with our students about course material in ways that we hadn’t really expected. For Jakacki, that meant the experiment working with “found” local materials

Figure 21.3
A segment of a student’s ArcGIS Online story map
left her feeling self-conscious about teaching subject matter so outside of her field of scholarship, and resulted in the change in subject matter for fall 2015. For Faull, that meant continuing to scour the Moravian Archives for appropriate English language materials that will spark the interest of students and lend themselves to the hermeneutical lens of DH.

**RUBRICS AND ASSESSMENT**

When DH is built into humanities-focused assignments, specific rubrics can help students to better meet expectations and understand degrees of competency. Through clear articulation of rubrics, teachers also help themselves as they give feedback to students. In addition, it is helpful to build formal and informal reflection and assessment across the course so as to gauge when things are working and when more time needs to be taken to ensure that students can meet expectations. In this section, we will reflect upon how we met challenges and adjusted our expectations for the course as we continued to develop it across iterations.

How well did our students meet our learning goals? For Faull’s fall semester class, 80 per cent of students met the learning goals at grade B or above. There were challenges, especially in meeting some of the Comparative Humanities departmental learning goals for this group of students. For example, in order to meet the learning goal that requires students to gain the ability to compare historical periods, students had to grapple with the differences between the present-day world and early American culture. Some of the students were challenged in understanding the Colonial American world of the 1740s. Similarly, most students had very little knowledge of Native American history in the Contact period and their analyses of Iroquois culture, movement and contact were less than satisfactory. In Jakacki’s section, similar difficulties were encountered. In order to understand the perspective and relevance of Linn’s field observations, it was necessary for students to understand the broader context of the Civil War, national and global events and trends in the 1860s. For all sections, we devised an assignment that required students to collaborate on a multimedia TimeMapper timeline. This helped them to question to what degree, for example, Linn internalized his role as a combatant. For Faull’s section, TimeMapper allowed students to contextualize the events of Colonial America in terms of European imperialism, exploration and invention. In the spring semester, helped by a smaller class size and a very different group of students, 100 per cent of the students met the learning goals. The collaborative exercises were far better integrated and the process of discovery was equally shared and mutually beneficial.

How well did we do in the students’ eyes? They realized they were doing something really new and very transportable to other courses. Furthermore, despite the highly structured nature of the syllabus, students did not feel as though they were being forced through a machine. Rather, they experienced a growing sense of agency as DH practitioners.
CONCLUSION

Taking this class as a case study for how to incorporate a DH course into the Humanities curriculum and designing it to model the very core of DH’s pedagogical hermeneutics, we have aimed to help our colleagues in the field who would like to develop their own courses. We hope that our experience provides a model for how digital humanities can and should be taught at the earliest stage of an undergraduate’s university experience, and that this type of learning experience is transformative in terms of demonstrating the interdisciplinarity within the humanities. If such courses are well planned, modestly ambitious, truly collaborative in both conceptualization and execution, they can promote radically new ways of understanding the goals of humanistic enquiry; a new pedagogical hermeneutic for both teachers and students.

NOTES

1. Alan Liu has published many essays on the way in which digital humanities has the potential to engage students and researchers alike in hermeneutical and critical acts that deeply reflect and inflect the humanities. Most recently, Liu has delivered the talk “Key Trends in Digital Humanities – How the Digital Humanities Challenge the Idea of the Humanities” in the US, New Zealand, and Siberia. These are key terms from that as yet unpublished talk, which was also delivered at Bucknell on 30 April 2015.


3. www.bucknell.edu/ComparativeHumanities

4. All sections of the Humanities 100 course taught by Faull and Jakacki are licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial ShareAlike licenses. Course websites with goals, outlines, and assignments can be viewed at http://dhpedagogy.blogs.bucknell.edu/

5. Bucknell University has an educational site license for ESRI’s ArcMap suite, and provides all Bucknell students, faculty, and staff with ArcGIS Online accounts. Bucknell also hosts WordPress and Omeka installations on its servers.

6. In 2014–15 sections we used the Voyant 1.0 web version. In Fall 2015 we introduced the Voyant 2.0 VoyantServer, then still in beta and hosted locally.

REFERENCES


FURTHER READING

Course websites, sample syllabi, and an annotated bibliography of articles and essays pertaining to digital humanities pedagogy can be accessed at:
http://dhpedagogy.blogs.bucknell.edu/

12.1 Introduction

Digital storytelling is a process of creating narrative, computer-/internet-based video projects that has seen increasing use in teaching and research at colleges and universities in recent years. It is deemed by many to be useful in the teaching and practice of a range of academic disciplines. In this chapter I will address digital storytelling’s particular relevance to anthropological teaching and practice. I will first discuss my own introduction to digital storytelling and the way I have utilized it in teaching an anthropology course. An assessment of the range of digital storytelling assignments I have received as part of teaching anthropology classes will help to illustrate digital storytelling’s usefulness in teaching anthropology in that all of the digital storytelling projects I have received have been autoethnographic, allowing students an opportunity to apply anthropological concepts to their own lives.

I will then look at advancements in visual media technology and their relation to both digital storytelling and anthropology. Changes in video production technology are reducing producers’ need to have access to desktop computers with particular software installed, thus making it easier for anthropologists to utilize digital storytelling and like media production processes in their teaching and research. The overall effect of these innovations is increased access to the means of producing digital media, which has significant implications for both anthropological teaching and research practice.

12.2 My Introduction to and Experience with Digital Storytelling

In the Spring 2010 semester I received approval from the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, in which I was a PhD Candidate, to teach a Self and Society course. This course was one that had been offered by the department for some time, but the professor who originally developed the course had moved to another university and no one voiced an interest in teaching it. I had long been aware of the course title and thought that a “Media, Self, and Society” course, in which students would explore a range of media studies approaches and apply those to media in their own lives, would be a very productive course that would draw substantial numbers of students. When I was approached by my department to see if I would be interested in teaching a course in the Fall of 2010 they suggested several possibilities; Self and
Society was not among them. I decided to chance my arm and proposed the media-oriented version of Self and Society. They liked the idea and gave me the go ahead to teach the course in the Fall 2010 semester.

I already had broad ideas about the content of the course, but I had hardly begun to think about the assignments that would be included. A fortuitous workshop changed that. At the same time I was given permission to teach my roughly envisioned course, Dr. Hugh Crumley, who was an Instructional Technology Specialist at Duke University’s Center for Instructional Technology, offered a three-day session on digital storytelling. In this workshop participants produced their own one-minute digital stories using *iMovie, GarageBand*, and other readily available software programs.

It did not take long for me to recognize the potential benefits that digital storytelling assignments had for my proposed course. As stated above, from the earliest stages of developing my course I wanted students in the class to engage with the concepts and theory of academic approaches to media covered in the course in order to analyze the media-saturated environment(s) in which they lived. Digital storytelling seemed to be the perfect vehicle to achieve this goal. I began to develop a “critically autobiographical video” final assignment in which students would be required to apply ideas from the scholarship we would cover in class, or equally rigorous academic approaches to media, in order to critically assess the ways in which their self, or selves, may have been affected or shaped by media.

My experience using digital storytelling assignments in the course far exceeded the expectations I had for them. The students seemed energized by the projects they created, enthusiastically applying academically rigorous theories and concepts in order to look at and describe their own lived experience in ways that I have never seen done in more standard written assignments. A couple of examples will illustrate this.

### 12.2.1 Digital Stories on Museums and More

One of the more notable digital storytelling final projects I received in the first semester I taught the course was an evaluation of the possible effects of museums as a type of media. Expanding on a topic we touched on in the course of the semester through a discussion surrounding Mark O’Neill’s article “Enlightenment Museums: Universal or Merely Global?” (2004), the student who produced this project explored the ways in which the display principles common to museums prefigure the ways audiences approach the items displayed and, perhaps, the world generally.

One of the particularly interesting aspects of the project is that the student details her personal experience of curating an exhibition of Chinese artifacts as part of an internship she completed at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. One of her duties associated with this exhibition was to write the general information labels that were to accompany the display. Analyzing the writing of these labels, the student recognizes a process of interpellation involved in the process.
I was told to write for a broad audience and not to assume that they had prior knowledge. But, I realized as I was writing that I was making assumptions about who would read the text. I couldn’t use any of the Chinese names for the objects, thereby assuming the viewer to be someone with a Western background. Yet, I could assume the reader to be educated enough to recognize the geographical locations I was referencing. It was as if the text I was writing set a standard that included one kind of visitor, and excluded another. Though museums today strive to be more global, we must question what these institutions assume about its viewers as subjects.

The student’s focus on a media creation process of which she was an integral part brought a personal element to the project that is a common element of digital storytelling as a genre. It was a common aspect of most, if not all, of the final projects submitted in this course as well as those I have received in teaching the course at Duke and elsewhere in subsequent semesters.

I have written about and given presentations in which I have addressed this museum digital story in the past (Thornburg, 2011; Thornburg, 2014). It was produced by a senior Visual and Media Studies major with well-articulated academic interests and a definite vision of a career in museums after graduation. As a result, the project makes productive use of media theories to analyze a topic that has clear bearing to the student’s particular interests. It was not the only digital story I received that did this. Another project I received from a senior pre-med student in the first semester that I taught the course addressed medical diagnostic imaging technologies (MRI, ultrasound, x-ray, etc.) as a form of media and their effect on how we perceive the body and ourselves. I have used this example in a presentation of the use of digital storytelling in the anthropology classroom as well (Thornburg, 2012b). I have come to refer to projects like these as “focused” projects. Early on in my use of digital storytelling assignments these seemed the most appropriate examples to use in discussing the advantages of giving digital storytelling assignments.

As I have continued to teach the class and have gotten a wider range of examples of digital story final projects, however, I have begun to notice other types of digital stories. These projects are more often produced by first-year or sophomore students taking the class and they tend to be more general in nature, exploring a range of media in their lives and how it has affected their identity and/or perspective. I have come to refer to digital storytelling projects like this as “general” projects.

A notable example of this general type of project was produced by a first-year student who came to Duke University from Newport Beach, California. In her project, this student examines the way that her move to Duke and her exposure to “a completely new sea of foreign media and stimuli” shaped her personal identity. In one frenetic part of the project the student quickly listed the range of media available to her during her daily life at Duke: books, magazines, newspapers, signs, posters, banners, flyers, e-mail, websites, lectures, events, and much more. The student explored how all these forms of media impinge upon her as she (re)creates her identity in her new surroundings. “Sifting through the storm of media that comprises Duke I am beginning to redefine myself here,” the student claims.
Another similar, general, example produced by a student from the Bay Area of California was also turned in at the end of that first semester that I taught the course. I screened this project as part of my presentation at the American Anthropological Association’s Annual Meeting in San Francisco that is one of the bases for this chapter and this collection (Thornburg, 2012a).

I now recognize that in the early stages of evaluating the advantages of utilizing digital storytelling assignments in anthropology courses I deemphasized this general type of project in favor of those by senior students with more focused interests and projects. However, I am increasingly considering these general projects in combination with the focused projects in order to determine what an analysis of all of them can tell us about the use of digital storytelling assignments. In this regard, I am struck by what a comparison of general digital story final projects and more focused, topical projects, like the museum piece described above, can tell us about the potential benefits of assigning digital storytelling projects in anthropology courses.

12.3 Digital Stories as Autoethnography

One of the things I noted as I compared the range of final projects that have been submitted as part of my classes is that they are all ethnographic. Each of them explores cultural phenomena, media in particular, with the intent of providing a description of the knowledge and practice of the group of people exposed to it. However, the direct focus is most often on the producer him- or herself. In that sense, these projects can be considered instances of autoethnography.

Autoethnography is particularly hard to define. In the introduction of her 1997 edited collection *Auto/Ethnography*, Deborah E. Reed-Danahay (1997) provides a history of uses of the term autoethnography. She notes two major uses of the term: “whether or not the accent is on autobiography or ethnography” (p. 8). She suggests that the accent is on (native) ethnography in the writings of anthropologists such as John Dorst, David Hayano, Mary Louise Pratt, Marilyn Strathern, and John Van Maanen. Autoethnography is tied to autobiography in the writings of Stanley Brandes, Alice Deck, Norman Denzin, and Phillipe Lejeune. Looking to reconcile these two definitions of autoethnography, Reed-Danahay (1997) states that in her volume autoethnography will be defined as “a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context” (p. 9). This definition is strikingly appropriate for the digital stories submitted as final projects in my course.

In other venues I have written about what I see as the advantages of assigning digital storytelling assignments in anthropology classes (Thornburg, 2014). In this work I highlighted the writings of social anthropologists Simon Coleman and Bob Simpson (2004). Coleman and Simpson argue that in teaching anthropology it is preferable to move from substantivist pedagogical strategies, in which the emphasis is on imparting a body of disciplinary knowledge, to imaginativist pedagogical
strategies that help students learn to apply anthropological knowledge in effective ways. Anthropology, Coleman and Simpson (2004) suggest, is all about “the contextualisation of knowledge, action, belief, meaning and language” (p. 20). And, any teaching strategy that fails to incorporate student experience into the learning process, Coleman and Simpson (2004) go on to say, is missing a crucial pedagogical opportunity (p. 20).

In their chapter, Coleman and Simpson give examples of autoethnographic assignments that they claim have facilitated the application of anthropological knowledge and methods to their students’ lived experience. In particular, they describe autobiographical/life history assignments submitted by a student they call Joyce, who provides an ethnographic analysis of her experience growing up in the coal mining district in northern England. These assignments allowed Joyce to apply anthropological concepts to her own experience, resulting in a better understanding of the concepts and approaches taught in her anthropology courses.

“Joyce’s example is one of many that could have been identified to illustrate the way students combine perspectives gained from an anthropological ‘worldview’ with reflections from their own past,” Coleman and Simpson claim (2004, p. 28). Through these autoethnographic assignments, students are able to better understand the concepts and ideas they have been exposed to in their anthropology classes. “[W]e are here describing a pedagogical strategy whereby students are encouraged to perceive and write about places that are familiar, but to do so through an anthropological lens that defamiliarises and even, to some extent, objectifies them” (Coleman & Simpson, 2004, p. 29). This is exactly what I contend is the advantage of the digital storytelling assignments given in my own course.

A general survey of the range of digital storytelling projects that have been submitted to me by students in my course shows that in almost all cases students are applying the media studies and anthropological approaches covered in the course, and/or similarly academic approaches from outside the class, to analyze some aspect of their media environment. This process has the effect of defamiliarizing what is very often taken for granted in their lives. This process is very much in line with anthropology’s oft cited project of making the familiar strange.

This is the case with all successful autoethnography. Good autoethnography is able to bring anthropological concepts and approaches to bear in order to evaluate and think about things in the life of the autoethnographer that quite often go unanalyzed. It has the effect of notabilization: highlighting bits of experience that often go unnoticed in the wash of everyday activity and making it significant. This process is at the very heart of the drive to defamiliarize the familiar that is a longstanding goal of anthropology.

Both the assignments described by Coleman and Simpson and the digital storytelling projects I received as a part of my course are examples of this process. Joyce’s assignments gave her new understandings about the social environment in which she grew up. In both the general and focused digital storytelling projects I
received, students explored their position as media consumers and producers and developed new insights regarding the significance of themselves and the media with which they interact.

The fact that these assignments are effective in teaching anthropology is precisely because the process of creating them is at the heart of anthropological practice. In sum, these assignments make good anthropological pedagogy because they make good anthropological practice.

12.4 Technology Change and Anthropology

12.4.1 Technology Change’s Past Effect on Anthropology

Technical innovation in the field of visual media production has long had significant effects on the practice of anthropology. In particular, those innovations that have made audio-visual technologies lighter and more easily portable have facilitated change in the practice of, at least some, anthropologists.

For example, one significant innovation that had a large impact on the practice of some anthropologists was the transition from larger 35-millimeter cameras to smaller and lighter 16-millimeter format cameras. Jean Rouch (1975) attributes this innovation, which he characterizes as a “breakthrough,” to technical developments precipitated by World War II (p. 89). The first portable tape recorders appeared in 1951, and improvements continued on those tools (Rouch, 1975, p. 89). “It was in the attempt to satisfy our demands (lightness, solidity, quality) that excellent portable tape recorders and portable silent cine cameras were perfected around 1960” (Rouch, 1975, pp. 89–90).

The introduction of videotape also facilitated “steadily accelerating activity” among anthropologists (de Brigard, 1975, p. 30). Video recording was increasingly used as a form of note-taking or data recording as well as in the creation of visual ethnographies (de Brigard, 1975, p. 31).

As evidenced by the range of projects presented in this volume, digital storytelling and the technologies associated with it have, likewise, led to changes in practice by some anthropologists. However, as Emilie de Brigard (1975) claimed, “the existence of technology has never been a sufficient condition of scientific advance” (p. 30). Only when these technologies and techniques are appropriately paired with well-thought-out approaches and analyses is anthropology as a field altered.

12.4.2 Continuing Change

Technological change continues with regard to digital storytelling and audio-visual media more generally. These technological changes will continue to have potential
implications for the teaching and practice of anthropology. Two innovations that may hold particular promise for anthropologists are the development of remote video editing services and the advancement of mobile digital storytelling.

12.4.2.1 Remote Video Editing Services

One of the potential difficulties involved in utilizing digital storytelling in anthropological teaching and practice concerns the availability of the computer tools needed to produce digital stories. Especially if anthropologists are attempting to facilitate the digital storytelling process for others, be they students or research participants, it is sometimes problematic to provide consistent access to computers with the range of software, video, and audio production programs that are required to construct the video projects installed.

An advance in video production technology that promises to ameliorate these difficulties is the advent of remote, software-as-a-service (SAAS), video editing sites. These services, such as VideoToolbox, WeVideo, and others, take the burden of maintaining software on the computers used by anthropology students or research participants away from the teacher or research project organizer. Internet-ready computers and Internet access are still necessary, but the software needed to produce digital stories is “housed” at the remote video editing service.

A further advantage of using these types of services is that they arguably help to facilitate collaboration between students or research participants. Often, more than one video producer can be logged into and working on a single project at any given time, allowing people to cooperate in the production of a video without having to be in the same room, sitting around the same computer.

This innovation in video production technology has been met with much enthusiasm by academics in anthropology and other disciplines and by the digital storytelling community. I recently had a conversation with a faculty member in the Communication Studies program at my institution in which he suggested that the use of WeVideo, or like services, would greatly benefit classes, like my Media, Self, and Society course, in which digital storytelling and like assignments are given. The development of remote video editing services, this faculty member pointed out, may hold particular benefits for courses taught online. This is because distance-students who have less access to the physical facilities of the college or university, on which instructors teaching courses with “new media” assignments so often rely, will still be able to complete the assignments without having to buy or otherwise acquire the software needed to do so.

There are also indications that the digital storytelling community, more generally, is embracing the development of these SAAS video production sites. For example on November 1, 2013, I received an e-mail from the StoryCenter in Berkeley, California, announcing their first online course/webinar on using WeVideo to produce a digital story. The innovation of remote video editing sites has every indication of being a
Digital Storytelling as Autoethnography in Anthropological Pedagogy and Practice

12.4.2.2 Mobile Digital Storytelling
A second technological innovation relating to digital storytelling is the move of video editing processes from laptop and desktop computers to pad and smartphone devices. This is part of a wider trend toward ubiquitous computing (see Dourish & Bell, 2011). Video production apps have now been developed for both mac iOS and Windows based devices, so that people can record video, take pictures, download assets (images, music, etc.) from the Internet, record voiceovers, and combine all of these things into complete video projects, all on a single pad or on their smartphone device. This innovation has the potential to detach students and other video project producers from laptop or desktop computers entirely.

The potential that mobile digital storytelling processes have for teaching and practicing anthropology is notable. In anthropology classes, students will be able to quickly produce anthropology-oriented video projects and upload them using college or university Internet resources. Anthropologists can also bring mobile devices to their research sites where finished media projects can be produced (either by the anthropologist him- or herself, or by research participants) to be uploaded using the resources of a cooperative institution or at researchers’ home institutions when they return from the field.

In line with the potential this audio-visual technology innovation has for anthropology, I organized a mobile digital storytelling Innovent* at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco. Titled “Media in Motion in the Mission: Mobile Digital Storytelling” (Thornburg, 2012c), the stated purpose of the event was to “provide (participants) an opportunity to get acquainted with a media form and process that is rife with potential for anthropological pedagogy and practice” (Society for Visual Anthropology, 2012). Eleven conference attendees participated in the Innovent. We all met at a café in the Mission District of San Francisco with our iOS or Android devices in hand. After the Executive Director of the StoryCenter Joe Lambert, who ran the workshop event, gave a short demonstration

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40 Remote video production services, like VideoToolbox and WeVideo, are also developing their own applications that will allow users to, at least, work on a rough cut of a video project on their mobile device and later upload the unfinished project file to their website for finishing and saving. For more info see (WeVideo, n.d.) and (Google Play, n.d.).

41 Innovents were events other than paper-based panels that occurred in association with the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting, though often at a site other than the conference venue. Innovents, along with Salons, have now been subsumed into the category of Installations (American Anthropological Association, n.d.).
A quick prompt-based, free-writing session, we were set loose on the Mission District to take pictures of the area’s beautiful murals and/or other things that caught our attention. We had about an hour of exploring and picture-taking before we met at a restaurant at the other end of the district for a quick tutorial on editing our pictures into a complete digital story project.

Fun was had by all the Innovent participants. More importantly, however, after just two hours most left the event discussing the potential uses these techniques and processes had for their own anthropological teaching and/or practice. The potential that mobile digital storytelling practice has for anthropology teaching and research should not be understated. Or, as put in an e-mail received from Joe Lambert on November 15, 2012, in the run up to the Mobile Digital Storytelling Innovent, “[i]f you are wondering what this has to do with Anthropology. In 20 years, improvised self-documentation in location engaging diverse citizens immediately available to a planetary discourse, ie the mobile digital storytelling workshop, will be anthropology. I don’t know what they will call the stuff you folks have been doing.”

12.5 Discussion: Democratization, Digital Divides, and Anthropology

The overall effect of the technical innovations just described is the increasing of accessibility of the processes of digital media production, or what has been heralded as the increased “democratization” of media. Media scholar Dan Gillmor, for example, has suggested the media is becoming increasingly democratized and that this process takes two major forms. First, technological innovations make it possible for a growing number of people to produce quality media. In Gillmor’s (2008) words, “the tools of creation are increasingly in everyone’s hands” (p. 4).

The second aspect of the democratization of media is that, given the presence of the Internet, it is much easier than ever before to share the media content produced. That is, “we can make what we create widely accessible” (Gillmor, 2008, p. 4).

These two changes in the media landscape have had effects on media, media audiences, and the relationship between them. “The democratization (of media) gives people who have been mere consumers the ability to be creators. With few exceptions, we are all becoming the latter as well as the former” (Gillmor, 2008, p. 4). This fact has led Gillmor (2006) in other venues to write of the “former audience,” people who have transitioned from being solely consumers of media to being contributors to and producers of media (p. 238; also see Shirky, 2008, p. 7).

In the midst of this technophilic talk about how the technological innovations discussed here may empower the masses it is important that we not ignore the idea that it is the already affluent and privileged that are able to reap the benefits of these changes while those of lower socio-economic classes are unable to do so; that is the
idea that there is a “digital divide.” In her book on the concept of the digital divide, Pippa Norris (2001) distinguishes several types of divides. The one addressed most directly here is a “social divide,” which “concerns the gap between information rich and poor in each nation” (p. 4).

Many, if not most, commentators on the development of digital media will acknowledge that there are disparities between the digital “haves” and “have nots.” However, the general discourse and drive is toward putting media production technology and Internet access into the hands of those traditionally excluded from the benefits of technological innovation. Especially in the field of education, there are concerted efforts to provide underserved communities with the Internet and related technologies. As a result of this, some have claimed that the digital divide is continually narrowing.

Perceived gaps are closing among various ethnic, racial, and geographical groups in access to the Internet. At least two factors account for the rapid diffusion of Internet technology: steadily decreasing costs of use, and steadily increasing ease of use. (Morrisett, 2001, p. ix)

So, while disparities in access to and the knowledge to utilize computer-based media production tools no doubt continue to exist, efforts at increased inclusion are being made.

This discussion about access to the means to create and share media representations is innately related to the discipline of anthropology, many practitioners of which have, since at least the 1980s, striven to “give voice” to those with whom they have done their research. The increasing democratization of the means to create and distribute digital media projects allows anthropologists to more easily help those they work with to produce their own (auto-ethnographic) representations. Those same anthropologists are, in turn, helped by those they work with to bring ethnographic representations to a wider public. The increasing ease in providing the hardware and software required to produce media can aid anthropologists in facilitating the creation of representations of cultural life both for pedagogical purposes and as part of ethnographic research projects.

42 Other forms of divides discussed by Norris (2001) include “global divides,” which relate to the disparities in Internet access between industrialized and non-industrialized countries, and “democratic divides,” which relate to disparities between those who do and do not utilize the Internet and related digital resources “to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life” (p. 4). These forms of digital divides are also related to discussion here.
12.6 Conclusion

Digital storytelling is a process of creating (often) short, narrative video projects addressing a range of topics (often) from a personal point of view. It is a technique that has its origins in the computer-revolution age of the early- to mid-1990s and based on the efforts of those in the arts and other fields. It had early ties to higher education and continues to gain traction in K-12 education as well as multiple academic disciplines in colleges and universities.

As the contributions to this volume demonstrate, digital storytelling practices are contributing greatly to anthropological research and teaching. One of the reasons the processes involved in digital storytelling can be such a great benefit in both the teaching of anthropology and anthropological research is that it facilitates students’ and research participants’ ability to produce effective autoethnography. Digital storytelling makes good anthropological pedagogy precisely because it makes good anthropological practice.

Advancements in digital video production technology, in the form of software-as-a-service systems and mobile digital storytelling innovations, have the potential to further facilitate the use of digital storytelling and like digital media production methods by teachers of anthropology and ethnographic researchers. Just as innovations in audio and visual media production equipment following World War II proved beneficial to a great number of anthropologists, so the “democratization” of media production brought on by advancements in computer technology can assist today’s anthropologists to bring autoethnography, for both teaching and research purposes, to a larger population. This may prove to have the effect of “giving voice” to a larger number of people than ever before.

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In the summer of 2004, I worked with a group of six advanced undergraduate students at Grinnell College to produce a website called The Transatlantic 1790s. This essay will describe that experience and offer some thoughts about the uses of small-scale digital humanities projects for teachers of the humanities and particularly for scholars of transatlantic studies. I mean to outline a model of undergraduate pedagogy in the digital humanities that draws on multiple generations of practices in humanities computing during the web era, spanning the 1990s to the present. The ability of online projects to create visual models of interconnectedness makes humanities computing an especially fruitful area for transatlantic studies.

To reflect on the recent history of humanities computing (an older and broader phrase than ‘digital humanities’), I will look backwards and forwards from the 2004 summer project, which came about in the context of Grinnell’s Mentored Advanced Projects (MAP, pluralised to MAPs) initiative, then a new programme at the College. Developed as a way of regularising and compensating the supervision of summer research then mainly done by students in the sciences, the MAP programme sought to extend the idea of closely mentored capstone projects across the curriculum. The MAP programme requires students to do advanced work that moves beyond regular curricular offerings; to be supervised regularly and closely by the instructor; and to produce results that are shared beyond the audience of the instructor and fellow students. Many MAPs in the humanities resemble theses: they are individually crafted research projects organised by a proposal driven by a student’s research interests. My version instead used a seminar model, in which the students worked in a predetermined subject area by pursuing their varied interests in a shared space with a common set of core readings.

I divided the schedule of my course into two blocks. The first was essentially
an undergraduate seminar on transatlantic literatures of the 1790s that took advantage of students’ full-time attention to the course by moving rapidly through primary texts. I chose the transatlantic content of the readings in part to reflect my own scholarly interests; after working mainly on British and Irish literature in graduate school, I was then in the early stages of a book project on transatlantic literature. The course texts were organised in clusters including political writings of the Revolution-era United States; literary and polemical works of the Joseph Johnson circle in London (William Blake, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft); British reactions to the French Revolution; and gothic and sentimental novels such as Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk*, Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*, Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly*, William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy*, and Susanna Rowson’s *Charlotte Temple*. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* provided a crossing point, a text bridging the generic and geographical divides separating many of the other works. We also read a small number of secondary materials, both in history and in literary criticism, but we reserved most of those works for the second half of the course.

In the second block, we departed from the seminar model as the students designed and executed digital projects based on our shared readings. We began this part of the course by exploring other humanities projects on the Internet, discussing what we found useful and attractive in those sites as well as what would and would not be realistic to attempt. (For one obvious example, we were not going to undertake the kind of archive creation that might develop over years or decades in a digital humanities institute at a research university.) I told the students that I planned to have us ground our work in an online, searchable, customisable annotated bibliography, but beyond that collective enterprise, I hoped they would apply their work and imagination to making and sharing projects that interested them and would, if all went well, interest a niche audience on the Internet as well.

At its base, this approach to building web projects came from the ethos and practices I absorbed in the early days of the World Wide Web, when my graduate training included an enthusiastic exploration of the new ways of sharing pedagogical and research materials on the Internet. Before the widespread adoption of commercial content management systems, making course websites (for example) publicly accessible by writing basic HTML was easier than crafting a password-protected secure environment. Although creating one’s own public web pages is now even easier than it was then, content management systems and institutional training have combined to make closed environments the default location of online course materials.

In asking my students to learn a bit of code and use the web as an environment for serious creative play, therefore, I sought to recapture the kind of experience I had as a student in graduate school at the University of
Pennsylvania, where in 1995 I took Stuart Curran’s Electronic Literary Seminar, an undergraduate and graduate course that gathered students of literature and computer science, introduced them to what was then the cutting edge of humanities scholarship online, provided some lessons in HTML programming, and invited them to explore and create digital environments. The course’s commitments to fostering students’ initiatives were reflected in its ‘Rules of Engagement’: one rule read, ‘If you don’t know something you need to know, ask someone who knows it. And ask again, until you really know it. Ignorance isn’t the bliss it’s cracked up to be.’ And the last was this: ‘If the class seems too easy, it’s your fault.’ Even at that early stage, when having photographs on the web was still largely a novelty, the students in the seminar were able to create projects reflecting many of the enduring concerns of humanities computing and the digital humanities, from digital archives to textual analysis tools and electronic literature.

Curran’s course inspired many of the guiding principles of my summer MAP and subsequent work in the pedagogical digital humanities, but its most important short-term effect on my work came from Curran’s decision to have students do their own programming – helping one another when necessary, to be sure, but fundamentally taking control of their code. For me, the acquisition of basic web programming skills led to developing them further, in part by qualifying me for part-time jobs that allowed and required me to continue programming in non-profit and corporate settings. Once I had those skills, I looked for ways to apply them to my academic work, and such applications have become increasingly central to my scholarship and pedagogy, most clearly in my teaching website, which integrates course syllabi, assignments, and instructional materials on literature, research, and writing. I hope to create similar possibilities for students who learn basic coding skills in my digitally oriented classes, though I handle the construction of each site’s structural components.

Even for students who will not continue to write computer code, the process of co-designing an online project and learning the basic processes of web programming (creating and uploading a page, using tags and links, and so forth) opens up what Matthew Kirschenbaum calls programming as ‘a kind of world-making, requiring one to specify the behaviours of an object or a system from the ground up’. Even websites with simple structures – made from the classic web programmer’s tools of pages, images, links, style sheets, and navigational apparatuses – involve creating connections in multiple directions and modelling a reader’s experience of reading and interacting with the site. For many of my students, being able to produce a ‘Hello, world!’ message in raw HTML still provides an excitement beyond that of posting photo albums to Facebook, and I hope that excitement leads to other ways of resisting the prefabrication of today’s social web.
In the 2004 summer course, we organised much of the site’s content in a MySQL database, which allowed our web pages to use PHP to call information from the database into the website. In non-technical terms, this process would enable, for instance, the bibliographical information about a given scholarly resource to be stored in the database and retrieved for use in any number of contexts. For instance, a student’s annotation of Pamela Clemit’s book *The Godwinian Novel* could become part of a customised bibliography of criticism from the 1990s, or a bibliography of scholarship on Charles Brockden Brown, or a topical bibliography generated by searching for the keyword ‘Priestley’ – and the varied locations of the citation would illustrate its relevance to American, British, and transatlantic frames of analysis. This dynamic generation of a page’s content in response to a user’s requests gave our site a flexibility that had been out of reach for most websites a decade previously.

The use of databases in humanities computing is nothing new, and literary scholars have productively attended to the implications of database technologies in pieces such as Stephen Ramsay’s essay in the *Companion to Digital Humanities* titled ‘Databases’, which describes the architecture and design of relational databases, or Ed Folsom’s ‘Database as Genre: The Epic Transformation of Archives’. These pieces theorise the database’s power to organise information, such as archival sources and metadata, so that the critical analysis may subsequently benefit from that organisation. As Ramsay puts it, ‘after we have designed and implemented relational systems, and reaped the benefits of the efficiencies they grant, we consider the role they may play in the varied pursuits which have descended from what was once called – appropriately – the higher criticism’. In adapting relational databases to undergraduate pedagogy, I mean in part to undo that sequence by placing the products of students’ analytical work in the database itself. When a student’s detailed annotation of a theoretical piece or a student’s analytical essay becomes part of the content of the database, it becomes adaptable and reusable by a website’s users and, crucially, by other students. Giving access to such a database through a web interface enables two important processes. First, it creates a visual representation of the students’ participation in the academic conversation about literary texts; and second, it transforms students’ writing into the object as well as the output of students’ analysis.

In 2004, the students decided to create three interlinked sections for our own site. These were, first, the annotated bibliography I had suggested; second, a detailed chronology of the transatlantic 1790s, divided into categories such as literature, history and politics, and science and technology but also keyword-searchable; and six projects, one by each student, that would build on the bibliography and chronology but otherwise allow for nearly complete autonomy. These sections, two collaboratively written and one consisting of individual projects, constitute the site as it exists today.
The students produced a large amount of material in their ten weeks together. Their final chronology includes more than 850 entries, all of which include basic details such as a date, essential facts, identification of the student who authored the entry, and a bibliographic citation; some also add a more substantial explanation of the described event. The bibliography comprises many dozens of entries, most with substantial annotations as well as basic citations. The individual projects reflect the range of the students’ interests. The lone history major in the group, Elizabeth Braverman, created ‘Conversations in Politics’, focusing on Thomas Paine and his critics and followers in England and America. Sarah Cornwell wrote ‘Daughters of Misfortune: Anatomy of the 1790s Seduction Novel’, which surrounds a modern recasting of Charlotte Temple (‘Lily, or Virtue Confused’) with short academic essays on key concepts such as coquetry, consent, and the seducer. Sara Millhouse wrote ‘Loyalists: Spies, Defense from Sedition, and the “swinish multitudes”’, analysing the relatively under-examined movements in support of British institutions during this revolutionary era. In writing ‘Revolutionary Nuptials’, Betsey Blanche investigated debates about marriage in the 1790s to illustrate the centrality of marriage to other conversations about the roles of religion, education, slavery, and revolution. Elisa Lenssen wrote ‘Everybody Matters: Science and the Corporeal in 1790s Literature’, working with physiognomy, figurations of the eye, and diagnoses such as hysteria in the discourse of the day. Justin Wallace used narrative theory, particularly the concepts of narrative tracing and narrative embedding, to undertake a comparative analysis of some of the course’s novels in ‘Gothic Narratives’. All of the projects draw on the digital bibliography extensively, allowing readers the choice to click on references for more information about source texts, often including library accession information.

These projects showed me the particular value of this application of the digital humanities to transatlantic studies, a value that arises precisely from the ability of the projects to represent a transatlantic approach explicitly or implicitly. The juxtaposition and interconnection of the collective bibliography and individual projects imply the streams that merge to form transatlantic scholarship: criticism that addresses literature of any subset of Britain or the Americas, criticism that already employs a transatlantic framework, theoretical texts about the concepts of transatlantic or Atlantic studies, and general literary theory that readers can apply to transatlantic issues. The bibliography does not aspire to complete coverage of transatlantic studies, even as applied to the 1790s, but it does provide something between the bibliography of a monograph and a library’s catalogues and databases: a curated collection of resources drawing on multiple scholars’ perspectives and allowing for future expansion.

I did have some subsequent students add to The Transatlantic 1790s, but
in a limited and short-lived way. Now, I see that additive process as a central goal in my digital pedagogy because it enables the passage of classroom culture from one generation of students to the next. It seems strange to me that every time I teach the same novel, for instance, to a new group of students, they have no sense of how my students have discussed that text in the past. Although I appreciate the pleasure of insights that feel new repeatedly – for instance, seeing class after class discover their own ways of talking about the narration of *Wuthering Heights* as a function of Lockwood’s relationship to Ellen Dean – I still want to resist the convention that the writing of every group of students disappears into file folders when a semester ends. I wonder whether our courses can, like the speaker of Keats’s ‘On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer’, recognise the wonder of ‘first looking’ while also prizing the community implied by appreciating what has come before. Capturing the work of a group of students online, and having another group of students augment that work, creates place-based, semi-virtual communities that can accomplish more than any one group can in a single semester.

Working more recently to create new online projects with students, I have developed a set of four goals for digital pedagogy appropriate to my situation at Grinnell.

1. Maintain a core sense of the web as a creative space where academic writing has a live, interested audience.

The most powerful effects of the course came from the combination of giving students simple tools for creating web-specific content, on the one hand, and, on the other, giving them a concrete sense of reaching an audience of interested readers. Mark Sample has written recently about his ‘ongoing effort – not always successful – to extend [his] students’ sense of audience’; he argues for building and sharing as the means of realising his vision of the digital humanities, whose heart is the reproduction rather than the production of knowledge. In a similar vein, I want to cultivate a sense of audience that has a useful immediacy – they write, read, and edit with their classmates – as well as a useful ambition to reach a wider readership online.

2. Foster the creation of expansive archives.

These online projects create connections between conventional library research (itself increasingly an online activity, of course) and online resources. Far from replacing conventional library-based research, my students’ projects rely heavily on it, and their websites allow easy linking among their most creative work and its bibliographical backbone. Writing in a digital environment lets a student curate a kind of expansive archive: a collection of thematically
connected materials that points outward to scholarly resources, other web projects, and work inherited from other students. These projects prize archival curation without archival enclosure.

3. Encourage the inheritance of classroom culture and achievement.

This is a pedagogy of remixing as well as making. These experiences have clarified for me how much my other pedagogy, and humanistic pedagogy in general, valorises original writing and research over the skills of collaboration, even when incorporating group exercises and other common forms of ‘collaborative’ work. My newer assignments therefore strive to use the web to foster the skills of co-creation: intensive editing of other students’ work, larger projects that require students to coordinate multiple contributors, and projects that will involve the contributions of future students.

The aspect of this sharing that involves the transmission from one group of students to another does, however, require more structure and management than I initially imagined it would. I have found students less comfortable than I anticipated with incorporating other students’ writing into their own. In the past, I have approached the issue by presenting the work of previous students and other (published) scholars simply as two kinds of contributors to ‘inventory’, in the sense Mary Carruthers articulates:

Having ‘inventory’ is a requirement for ‘invention.’ Not only does this statement assume that one cannot create (‘invent’) without a memory story (‘inventory’) to invent from and with, but it also assumes that one’s memory-story is effectively ‘inventoried,’ that its matters are in readily-recovered ‘locations.’

My mistake was to assume that once good student work was inventoried, readily recoverable, and presented as the stuff of invention, students would readily merge this inventory with the more conventional materials of published scholarship. In fact, I have found students much more comfortable referring to conventional authorities than to their peers. I will work in future courses to emphasise and guide this process of merging student-produced and conventionally published scholarly inventories.

4. Allow for the addition of new analytical tools to established ones.

This last goal arises from the changing practices of humanities computing – or what we now call the digital humanities – in the last decade. My 2004 students’ work reflects little of the quantitative and geographical emphasis of today’s digital humanities, and I want my current and future students to
explore the analytical power of contemporary practices and their successors. Just as my earlier students’ projects augmented library research rather than replaced it, my current students are working to layer GIS mapping, textual tagging, and quantitative analysis onto the bibliographies and research-based analytical projects I have described. I mean for this layering to make visible the interconnections among literary study in a variety of modes, and to allow my students and their readers to evaluate the power and limitations of multiple methodologies. I am currently working on one implementation of a database-backed set of student-written resources about James Joyce’s Ulysses – I also teach my department’s seminar on that book – designed specifically to combine close reading of the novel with computer-aided spatial and quantitative analysis. For example, my transatlantic background will inform a GIS-based section on the ‘global Ulysses’, which will link to a collective bibliography to engage scholarly work on the intersections of nation, race, and travel in the novel. I hope, in other words, for a pedagogy that stages the engagement or confrontation between literary theory and machine learning. As Ted Underwood has written, if literary theory and computer science ‘really approach similar questions in incompatible ways, it will be a matter of some importance to understand why’.12 Focusing these methodological questions on a specific area of acknowledged contestation, such as the transatlantic, will help undergraduates understand and contribute to the coming debates in literary theory.

In light of this last goal, I return in closing to the special uses of this pedagogy for transatlantic studies. In that field, the work of combining theoretical sophistication with the newest quantitative and geographical tools will be especially important in the coming years. The techniques of computational ‘distant reading’ – Franco Moretti’s term for analysing literature by searching large archives of texts – increasingly enable the empirical investigation of, for example, the way British periodical journalism was reprinted, clipped, and circulated in American publications.13 Matthew Wilkens has begun to raise questions about the literary periodisation surrounding the American Civil War; we will similarly be able to unearth stylistic signatures and patterns of allusion and reference that will add new evidence to questions of how much and what kind of borders the Atlantic Ocean created among British, American, and Caribbean literary cultures.14 In humanities computing, that is, we can construct tools that achieve a kind of transatlantic perspective unavailable to scholars whose academic world is shaped by the conventional boundary marker of the Atlantic: a perspective that can generate new readings by, as a starting point, not knowing where authors were born or what genealogies generally contain them. We can also create online environments that place these new insights in the context of transatlantic theory and (less conventionally) vice versa. Doing so will allow teachers and students to co-create the means
of understanding the compatibilities of, and confrontations between, the methods of close and distant reading.

NOTES


2. To clarify what may and may not be transportable from my context, I will note that the MAP programme involves stipends for summer students’ living expenses and partial course releases for participating faculty; the students’ stipends allow the programme to require full-time work of forty hours per week on the MAP, for ten weeks. I detail the institutional support for the MAP programme in part to make explicit the resources required by the kind of project I describe in this essay. Although the project required very little funding compared to many kinds of summer research that require laboratory equipment or group travel, it did require funding from the college and could not have worked as a full-time summer project without that funding. I hope that some of the general goals I describe later in this essay will apply to other institutional situations, though I recognise the barriers to digital projects for many teachers and scholars that Katherine Harris has eloquently described. See Katherine Harris, ‘In/Out, DH, Pedagogy, or Where it all Started (MLA 2011)’, tripodtri, 1 March 2011. Available at <http://tripodtri.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/inout-dh-pedagogy-or-where-it-all-started/> (last accessed 18 October 2013).


9. In other courses subsequent to the MAP, I have continued to look for ways to divide the attention of students doing shared readings, so that each student develops a specialised interest which then becomes part of a collaborative reading in the classroom. Cathy Davidson has recently theorised the value of this kind of division: discussing recent scientific developments in the study of attention and ‘attention blindness’, she writes: ‘Where [many neuroscientists] perceive the shortcomings of the individual, I sense opportunity for collaboration. If we see selectively but we don’t all select the same things to see, that also means we don’t all miss the same things.’ See Cathy Davidson, *Now You See It* (New York: Viking, 2011), p. 2.
Active Users: Project Development and Digital Humanities Pedagogy
Lindsay Thomas, Dana Solomon

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For additional information about this article
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cea/summary/v076/76.2.thomas.html
Several recent pieces on the digital humanities (DH) and pedagogy have included the observation that, despite the rapid recent growth of DH in many academic fields and institutions, pedagogical issues are consistently overshadowed by issues related to research in DH scholarship. For example, in his piece in the recent collection *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, Luke Waltzer discusses how “much current work in the digital humanities . . . values research and scholarship far more than teaching, learning, and curriculum development” (Waltzer 338). Stephen Brier writes in his contribution to this collection that “teaching and learning are something of an afterthought for many DHers” (Brier 390–91). In his introduction to the collection *Digital Humanities Pedagogy*, Brett D. Hirsch makes the case that “research remains the principal vehicle for professional nobility and mobility . . . in the digital humanities” (5–6). Hirsch and Brier prove these points by tracking the occurrences of the words “pedagogy” and “research” (and their synonyms and variants) in recent publications in the field, noting that in popular reference collections, monographs, and journals on the digital humanities, pedagogical concerns are often what Hirsch calls “bracketed,” or relegated “to the status of afterthought” (Hirsch 5). Brier and Waltzer also turn to the NEH’s Office of the Digital Humanities for evidence of this bracketing. They note that “very few” projects funded by the Office’s Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants “have focused specifically on the undergraduate student as humanities doer,” and they show how these projects consistently fail to include words like “teaching,” “learning,” “classroom,” and “pedagogy” in their abstracts (Waltzer 341, Brier 392). This, for Brier, emphasizes the idea that pedagogy and teaching “are not yet primary in terms of digital humanists’ own conceptions of their work” (Brier 392).

This article picks up on this last point by focusing on the Research-oriented Social Environment (RoSE), a project funded by an NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant from 2011–2012 at the University of California, Santa Barbara (RoSE). At first glance, the various materials documenting RoSE appear to follow the patterns identified above regarding the bracketing of pedagogical concerns. For example, an article published at an early stage of the project doesn’t use the words “pedagogy” or “teaching” once (Chuck et al.). Additionally, the abstract the RoSE team submitted to the
NEH does not contain the words “pedagogy” or “teaching,” and it only contains one instance of “students.”

As this material suggests, we did not necessarily see pedagogical concerns as primary when we began the project. RoSE grew out of the Transliteracies Project, an existing research group on online reading practices, and, as such, we focused in the beginning of the grant period on epistemological concerns related to social computing, networked knowledge, and bibliographic data. However, in the following discussion, we reflect on how this focus shifted throughout the year. We report on the involvement of undergraduate students in the development process and on the importance of this involvement for refining our own understanding of RoSE. Thanks to the feedback we received from the students involved in the project, we began to see RoSE by the end of our development year as a tool for discovery and learning—as a system that, in many ways, has pedagogy at its core. In this way, the value of incorporating undergraduate students into the project development process has been quite obvious for us. In reporting on this value, however, we also hope to draw some connections between project development and digital humanities pedagogy. In other words, we hope to suggest how project development itself can be understood as part of a digital pedagogy.

RoSE and the Classroom Use Scenario: Defining an Audience

RoSE is a system for exploring the humanities that encourages users to seek out relationships between authors, works, and commentators—both living and dead—as part of a social network of knowledge. Developed out of a desire to leverage the evolutionary and dynamic qualities of social networks for a bibliographic tool, it presents bibliographical information as an interconnected network of evolving relationships between, for example, an author’s influences, friends, collaborators, and readers. Like a kind of bibliographic Facebook, RoSE allows users to add items to the network, create and visualize their own collections, and produce “storyboards” to visually organize their findings into meaningful arguments or narratives. In addition to any content added directly by users, RoSE also acts as an interface to tens of thousands of records machine-harvested from other databases like Project Gutenberg, YAGO, and SNAC, including information on people, documents, and keywords.

Since RoSE was funded by a start-up grant, the goal of our grant period was never to deliver a final version. Rather, the development team, which consisted of faculty members and graduate students from UCSB’s English Department and Media Arts and Technology Program, was interested in an ongoing and iterative development process that was as much about discovering and shaping the conceptual goals and aims of the system as it was about crafting a functional prototype. We began the project with the
goal of creating a knowledge system that combined the affordances of a bibliographic tool with the ease and comfort of a social network. However, in the course of development, we became increasingly aware that we needed to specify who the primary audience for the system was, but we didn’t necessarily know how to think about this audience. Were they individual humanities researchers? Were they instructors and students? Were they simply interested members of the general public? How we conceived of the users for the system determined how we thought about the system’s features and what users might expect from these features. As we solicited early feedback from colleagues, we determined that the primary goals of the system were not only to create a resource for information access and research, but also to create a stage or vehicle for the exploration and discovery of knowledge—for a kind of pedagogy. It was our pursuit of this goal that led us to the conclusion that one of the primary audience groups for RoSE was undergraduate students in a humanities classroom.

In order to better understand how this audience might use RoSE to facilitate their learning and research and to determine how their feedback might impact development, we designed a classroom-use scenario. The scenario was meant to be conducted on a very small scale, so we chose students from an undergraduate class co-taught by Rita Raley and Dana Solomon in Spring 2012 as our study’s participants. The course was entitled “Distracted Reading,” and it explored reading practices with special attention to different media environments, so including RoSE as one of those environments worked well in connection to the theme of the class. RoSE was introduced in the context of a unit on new modes of digital textual analysis. The instructors crafted an assignment that required students to create a collection on the themes of the class and storyboard it in RoSE, using whichever parts of the system’s storyboard feature they deemed useful. The storyboard allows users to visually arrange items they have gathered into collections in meaningful ways. They can group and connect these items together, adding colors, shapes, and annotations in order to tell their story or make their argument (Fig. 1). We demonstrated RoSE and its capabilities in class and worked with the students over two additional class meetings to create their storyboards. Overall, we received feedback from students about RoSE in three different ways. First, as the students worked to create their storyboards, one member of our research team interviewed students about their immediate thoughts on RoSE, recorded their responses, and drew up a narrative report. Second, after creating their storyboards, the students were asked to draft a short reflective statement on RoSE, focusing particularly on the utility and value of the system for humanities pedagogy and scholarship. Finally, we asked volunteers to fill out a questionnaire we had created focusing on both conceptual and general usability issues.
Student Responses and Implications: RoSE and/as Pedagogy

The use scenario offered undergraduates the opportunity to directly affect the development of a web application. Excited by their ability to affect change on the system’s design and goals, the student participants offered a great deal of feedback during the use scenario and afterwards in their final reflections. They granted the development team a great deal of insight into the usability of the system, pointing to problem areas and adding suggestions for improvement. One student, for example, noted that “[a]s far as improvements, I think the biggest addition would be short biographies for authors and summaries for documents similar to the way Wikipedia is set up” while another emphasized that links to actual sources would be ideal when available (Liu et al. 44). This student also added, “I would like to see the use of images in RoSE greatly increased. In this time of picture
blogs and Facebook, images are a crucial commodity and attraction. If RoSE could capitalize on this, it would be a far more enjoyable experience” (Liu et al. 44). This type of feedback was useful to us in our final months of project development, helping us to focus on immediate areas of concern and to build a wish list for future development.

Many students also moved beyond usability issues to envision future development goals and challenges for the project. For example, one student commented:

> With the sheer amount of data that has the potential to be entered into the system, there is an equally large potential for the entry of incorrect or outdated information. . . . The alternative would be that RoSE users simply confirm this data by their own methods, but that feels like an essential element of research is being omitted from what should be a complete experience from RoSE (by which I mean that RoSE should ultimately become a website that you go to at the start of your research, and use all the way through to completion, having to use as few outside resources as possible). (Liu et al. 45)

Another suggested the “biggest limitation associated with RoSE will be whether or not there is someone overseeing the validity of the information that is being added to the databases. It would be easy for someone to add false information to RoSE without some kind of moderation on the users [sic] actions” (Liu et al. 47). Such comments encompassed conceptual issues concerning who has the authority to produce knowledge in online environments like RoSE, and what this authority means, questions circling around the margins of the Distracted Reading class itself. As both developers and teachers, it was exciting to see the degree to which students took advantage of the use scenario as an opportunity to meditate on the themes of the class in which the use scenario was taking place. Comments like these demonstrate the ways in which RoSE can be used as a pedagogical tool. Exploring RoSE as an example of new modes of online reading and textual analysis, for example, helped students to apply concepts from their class in a different context.

Due to the nature of the assignment students were given, much of their feedback centered on the storyboard feature. This feedback focused on both usability and conceptual issues. For example, one student suggested that “the storyboards [become] more telescopic and interactive,” offering different ways this goal might be accomplished (Liu et al. 44). Another student thought “the storyboard could be improved with some small changes such as more color options, being able to adjust the size of the canvas and of the nodes, being able to edit and abbreviate the text that appears with the nodes, and of course being able to save [one’s work]” (Liu et al. 44). A third student “found that perhaps the ability to expand the size of your storyboard would also be more helpful for times when those dealing with
a very complex grouping of relationships need it” (Liu et al. 45). This feedback helped us to focus development efforts on the storyboard feature. We followed many of the suggestions the students gave us, adding to the functionality and flexibility of this feature by adding more color, shape, and connector options, and by adding the ability to save storyboards and load previously saved storyboards. More importantly, perhaps, the use scenario also signaled the students’ identification of the storyboarding feature as an important component of RoSE. Two-thirds of the students who responded to the questionnaire rated the storyboard as RoSE’s most important feature. As this feedback shows, many students saw this feature as one of the most unique components of the system, something that clearly separated RoSE from other social networks and bibliographic tools.

The strength of the positive student feedback about the storyboard feature was surprising to us, but it did help us solidify our own understanding of the storyboard’s general significance for the system as a whole. When we reflect on this shift in the project’s white paper, we write, “We were surprised how clearly the purpose and shape of our project came into focus . . . once we decided that the end-user should get out of our system the ability to ‘build’ a visual canvas ‘interpreting’ an argument” (Liu et al. 14). This purpose and shape came to center on the ability to produce a visual narrative of research that the user has done in the system. Unlike RoSE’s more familiar social network visualizations, the storyboard feature does not produce high-impact visualizations at the click of a button; instead, it provides the opportunity for the user to interact and experiment with the system, constructing his or her own interpretations of the research he or she has done in the system.

This emphasis on constructing, on building, is the pedagogical core of the RoSE system. As mentioned in the project white paper, the storyboard feature “engage[s] student thinking in a particular way that revolves around the active production of or interaction with information/knowledge” and it “work[s] on a meta-level to recover the mental process of organizing information into narrative, argument, ‘story,’ or knowledge” (Liu et al. 14). The storyboard feature can be understood as “pedagogical,” then, not because it necessarily teaches students something they didn’t know before about Shakespeare, for example, but rather because it asks students to create and construct this knowledge about Shakespeare from what the system gives them. In this way, the storyboard feature shows how RoSE is not “just” a pedagogical tool; it is also a mode of pedagogy. It asks students to contribute to communities of knowledge—perhaps by adding a character or commentator to Shakespeare’s network, perhaps by creating a new collection of publishing houses that printed Shakespeare’s works—and then it asks them to process their own participation in these communities. The storyboard feature, in many ways, shifted our understanding of RoSE from an environment where one goes to “do research” to one where
student researchers go to discover and make sense of knowledge. RoSE is not just a “research” environment; the storyboard feature shows us how RoSE is also a discovery and learning environment.

“Screwing Around” with RoSE

How, then, does this involvement of undergraduate students in the project development process relate to pedagogy in the digital humanities? More broadly, how can RoSE itself be understood as exemplary of digital pedagogy? There has been a resurgence of interest surrounding the term “digital pedagogy” of late, and there are, of course, many different understandings of what it can mean.\(^5\) By way of conclusion, we want to focus here on one aspect of the term that surfaces again and again: the value of experimentation, of playfulness, of what Stephen Ramsay refers to as simply “screwing around.” In his piece on screwing around, Ramsay wonders if it is possible to see “screwing around, broadly understood . . . as a research methodology” (7). In other words, he emphasizes understanding as the kind of “serendipitous journey” browsing the internet makes possible—if you like one thing you might also like another thing, on and on—as a kind of research (7). Katherine D. Harris has applied this concept to her teaching and implemented ways of “screwing around” in class by having her students blog collaboratively about each other’s ideas and the texts they are reading, hoping to emphasize the kinds of unexpected insights collaborative work can generate. Similarly, Jesse Stommel states that digital pedagogy is “less about knowing and more a rampant process of unlearning, play, and rediscovery,” and Cathy N. Davidson likewise writes about digital pedagogy as “a different way of knowing the world” that courts “failure” and “unlearning” (Stommel; Davidson, “Collaborative Learning”). As these examples indicate, digital pedagogy often involves an openness to experimentation, collaboration, and even failure—a willingness simply to try different things and see what happens.

RoSE encourages users to experiment with different ways of arranging, interpreting, and, ultimately, knowing. Each part of RoSE allows for a (re) discovery of knowledge that aligns it with digital pedagogy and its notions of exploration and experimentation. The visualization function is designed to highlight emergent connections and relationships between actors in the system that may have otherwise remained undiscovered. In addition to the visualization options that allow for the visual discovery of new relationships or objects, the storyboard feature begins with a blank canvas and offers a flexible medium for the organization, representation, and discovery of knowledge. Even a more minor feature, like RoSE’s history-tracking tool, which produces a breadcrumb-style record of a user’s movements through the system, is designed to encourage free exploration; by removing the need for the user to manually document every new discovery he or she makes, this feature increases the user’s exploratory momentum.
Though the system allows for a more rigid approach to locating and cataloging specific resources, it affords users multiple points of entry into its information stores and lends itself particularly well to "freeform" research.

The flexibility of the system is due in large part to the flexibility of the development process we used when working on RoSE. This process was iterative and the insights and goals of the development team were constantly reinforced, challenged, or balanced by external feedback and practical experimentation. In terms of internal play, several meetings were spent with team members exploring the system and calling out issues, suggestions, or just trying to break things in order to give us a good idea of where to redouble development efforts. The iterative development process encouraged the incorporation of undergraduate students into the project's development cycle because it specifically asked them to try and break the system, identify its shortcomings and highpoints, and otherwise play around and let us know what they thought. In other words, it was a low risk, high reward process. Giving all developers—including undergraduate students—a degree of responsibility and power to impact the project while also constructing a context of play and exploration generated unexpected insights and enthusiasm.

Indeed, this is perhaps the most valuable insight we gained from involving undergraduate students in the development process. We learned, quite simply, that the involvement of students in this iterative development process was integral to the project itself. The undergraduate students who participated in our use scenario were not just our guinea pigs; rather, they became our research partners. Like all members of our team, they played around with RoSE, reflected on how the system might best serve users' needs, and suggested changes. This student involvement undoubtedly improved RoSE's features and functionality, and we believe that many DH project teams would benefit from more direct involvement from undergraduate students in the development process. Beyond simply improving RoSE, however, involving undergraduate students in our development process also demonstrated how iterative project development itself is a pedagogical technique. Asking students to use, break, and comment on a project currently in development—and then, ideally, repeating this cycle—transforms how they think about the project itself and about their roles as researchers, students, and developers. This process is capable of producing concrete and actionable feedback on a project, while at the same time encouraging the kind of exploration and unlearning at the heart of digital pedagogy.

Our experience with RoSE has certainly proven to us the pedagogical value of screwing around, but it's also shown us how valuable experimentation and play can be for research as well. In fact, RoSE has shown us that the differences between "research" and "pedagogy" are often smaller than we think. When we wrote at the end of the last section that "RoSE is not
just a ‘research’ environment’ but also “a discovery and learning environment,” perhaps we should have written that RoSE is an environment where research is discovery and learning and vice versa, where research and teaching both involve experimentation and play. While it’s true that issues related to research have often overshadowed those related to pedagogy in the digital humanities, perhaps what we should strive for are tools, scholarship, and practices that take both research and pedagogy into account. Perhaps we need to pay more attention not only to pedagogy, but also to how pedagogy and research can inform and influence one another. Perhaps we need to browse, experiment, play, and explore just a little bit more.

Notes
1 For more on RoSE and its features, see the RoSE Documentation site.
2 The project abstract can be found via the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant page of the National Endowment for the Humanities site.
3 We originally conceived of three use scenario studies, each involving a subset of our target audience: an individual academic researcher, a group of participants at a conference, and the above-mentioned undergraduate class. As our thinking on the primary audience for RoSE developed, however, we came to focus most of our energy on the classroom use scenario. Though we completed all three studies, the undergraduate class study was the most extensively developed and the most productive in terms of actionable feedback.
4 See the project white paper for the narrative report, samples of student feedback, and the questionnaire (Appendixes E, G, and H, Liu et al.). The white paper can be found via the Start-Up Grant page of the NEH site and is also published on RoSE’s documentation site.
5 The scholarship on digital pedagogy is large and varied. Hirsch, for example, emphasizes that pedagogy has started to resurface as an important area of concern in the digital humanities, citing a number of recent conferences, panels, and publications focused on digital pedagogy (and this special edition is certainly another example of this shift; see Hirsch, pages 6–7). For more on this renewed interest in pedagogy in the digital humanities, see “Digital Humanities Made Me a Better Pedagogue: a Crowdsourced Article.” For a great review and reflection on much of this scholarship, see Jesse Stommel’s “Decoding Digital Pedagogy, pt. 2: (Un)Mapping the Terrain.” See Cathy N. Davidson’s “Collaborative Learning for the Digital Age,” Paul Fyfe’s “Digital Pedagogy Unbound,” and Sean Michael Morris’s “Decoding Digital Pedagogy, pt. 1: Beyond the LMS” for many more examples of what the term can mean.
6 See Davidson’s “Research is Teaching” for more on this subject.

Works Cited


