Interim report for *Teaching Digital Humanities at Warwick*

IATL strategic project, David Beck

Summary of the project

Digital humanities sits at the intersection of traditional arts study and computational technologies and techniques. It expands research paradigms in the humanities, but does so by communicating problems to computer scientists and IT professionals and reaching collaborative solutions. In teaching, it may involve the application of digital technologies and "digital pedagogy" to pre-existing humanities subjects; or may be based on research which itself relies on computational technologies (e.g. data mining, corpus linguistics, text encoding, crowd-sourcing, digital media…). Both broad approaches would result in the improvement and evidencing of students' digital literacy, a key aspect of future employability.

The overall aim of this project is to examine how best we can teach Digital Humanities at Warwick. Its three main goals are to:

- Make it easier for academics to incorporate aspects of Digital Humanities research into their own research-led modules, both by providing support this year and frameworks for the future.
- Enable the teaching of digital literacy to students where relevant to the curriculum or pedagogy being employed, and develop the support network for this.
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice in the use of technology for assessment, to include video-projects, e-portfolios and data visualisation.

Summary of activities so far and short reflections

Digital Humanities modules and research-based teaching

In the autumn term I taught *Thinking with Data in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, which by and large went well. The learning from that module has been incorporated in a new module, *Digital Humanities and Texts*, which will be taught from 2015-16 through IATL. The main changes are a more focused approach on textual analysis – covering a wider range of digital humanities approaches in ten weeks made the theoretical and critical engagement which is integral to the Digital Humanities too challenging for students. Secondly, the assessment method more coherently guides students through the process of producing a research project utilising one of the tools I will be introducing them to. The first three weeks of *Digital Humanities and Texts* will be co-taught with Simon Musgrave and Anna Poletti of Monash University, whose contributions to the assessment method and intellectual rationale of the module have been invaluable. A two page summary of the module is below.

I applied for and won Monash-Warwick Alliance Seed Funding of c. £17,000 (information enclosed) which allowed a workshop to be held at Monash in February 2015 – the summary of which is below. In addition to this workshop, and ongoing dialogue surrounding *Digital Humanities and Texts*, the seed funding makes provision for some training for myself and a further workshop in December this year, to coincide with the final week of Digital Humanities and Texts.

I've made some fairly minor contributions to another IATL Strategic Project on the Mediated Self (Jo Garde-Hansen and David Wright, Centre for Cultural Policy Studies) which will result in a postgraduate taught module.

I also ran a session entitled Culture in the age of 'Big Data' for Ele Belfiore (Centre for Cultural Policy Studies)'s MA module *Ideas, Politics and Policy*, which will be included in the module again in 2015-16.

Aside from my own module and these minor interventions, there has not been much development in creating undergraduate modules which are inspired by Digital Humanities research directly. From conversations with various staff members in Classics, History, English, and the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, I think we need

to solve the perceived "problem" of incorporating technical skills into modules before this will take place more widely. Hopefully, between some evidence gathering from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies (who teach technical skills alongside conceptual matters to postgraduates), and reflection on my own teaching of *Digital Humanities and Texts*, I will have some compelling arguments about the possibility of doing this, and resources to support other academics incorporating more conceptually troubling/unsettling digital humanities work into their teaching.

Digital literacy and skills

I've had extensive discussions with both academic and support staff surrounding digital literacy and its integration into the undergraduate curriculum – of particular value here has been input from Christian Smith (English), Emma Smith (SCS), Yvonne Budden (Library), Amber Thomas (ITS), Rob O'Toole (ITS), Siobhan Bennett (SCS), Giorgio Riello (IAS / History) and Melodee Beals (History, Sheffield Hallam). This will be the subject of a paper I write during the summer, but two key points which have emerged are the importance of academic involvement (rather than seeing digital literacy as a set of "skills" to be taught by SCS), and the incorporation of digital literacy into assessment methods, which I'll explore in a moment.

One model for taking this forward might be certificate-level study embedded within degree programmes – which could be supported by central services such as SCS and the Library, but delivered by academics who are part of the degrees concerned. In November I developed an outline (below) for a Certificate of Digital Literacy for Liberal Arts Students, which will be part of the first year of the Liberal Arts BA from 2016-17.

I co-taught a workshop for CADRE (with Yvonne Budden, Library) around "organising humanities data digitally" to around 20 PhD students from the Faculty of Arts (and a couple from Social Sciences). As regards doctoral training, this demonstrated fairly clearly the low base from which we are starting at Warwick as regards Digital Humanities provision. In an attempt to begin rectifying this, I've been involved in a couple of bids for funding for collaborative doctoral training networks, both headed by Beat Kumin in History, which with my input included a Digital Humanities element. One was unsuccessful and the other, for a 'European Training Network' with partners including QMUL, NATMUS Copenhagen, and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, is currently under determination by the EU.

Below is the outline for a paper to be given at the Teaching and Learning Showcase (Warwick) in May, and a poster to be presented at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute (University of Victoria) in June. Both touch on other aspects of this strategic project, but centre on the importance of digital pedagogy in developing student skills.

Technology for assessment

In November I held an event on digital forms of assessment, presenting my experiences with Making History and asking Michael Scott and Clare Rowan (both Classics) to speak to their use of student-produced wikis, forums, and digital stories. The discussion which followed demonstrated considerable interest in forms of assessment which demonstrate student's digital literacy, but concerns about academic rigor, the requirement for the module tutor to have technical knowledge, and the practicalities surrounding submission.

I'll write up some case studies about my use of videocasting and podcasting in Making History, Clare Rowan's use of digital storytelling in Classics, Michael Scott's use of student-produced databases in Classics, and Alison de Menezes' use of digital storytelling in Hispanic Studies, as part of the outputs of this bid. I've played a role in supporting each of those, and think we are beginning to address some of the concerns raised by other academics about the incorporation of digital forms of assessment.

On academic rigor, there are plenty of examples of institutions elsewhere using assessment methods such as these which I can draw on. In addition, Kirsty Hooper is running a module next year in which students will discuss the assessment of wikis and contribute to the design of their own assessment criteria. While having

student-co-produced assessment criteria will be a step too far for some, the model of having students critically engage with the type of output they are going to produce is a replicable one – my *Digital Humanities and Texts* will use something similar.

On submission methods. Previously, to use the example of digital storytelling, submission of video has been through workaround practices such as uploading to a sitebuilder "news" page, youtube, or other third-party service. Likewise "wikis" and databases have actually been a custom javascript interface laid on top of sitebuilder by Rob O'Toole, and only supported, to my knowledge, by Rob. None of these are sustainable models, only a couple meet requirements for external examiner access and marking workflows, and all require considerable trust or digital literacy on the part of the academics teaching the modules concerned.

Working with my Making History module, Rich Clay from the Academic Technology team has been piloting a system for the submission and marking of video and audio files through moodle (something which is not possible through tabula) to a service called mediastream. There were some problems with the service Rich was trialling, but he is working to resolve them with the service providers while scoping alternatives. Having something sustainable, easy-to-use, and well-documented in place is vital to spreading practices of digital storytelling or videocasting.

Regarding wikis, Radoslaw Poplawski, from the UNIX platforms team in ITS, has produced a set-up of mediawiki which uses the University-wide single sign on system. This will allow a wiki to be set up on request, with an easy system for the module leader to assign permissions to their students, all contributions to be tracked, and can potentially meet all the other requirements of a replicable submission workflow. I'll be working with him and Kirsty Hooper to check this works as intended through the next academic year.

It is important to stress that this isn't new, there are plenty of institutions which use technology far more comprehensively in their assessment than we do, as I'll explore in a paper later in the year. Nor are the techniques I'm using entirely new for Warwick, although the stress on providing replicable solutions that can be incorporated into modules without extensive one-on-one support or the possession by the academic of advanced technical skills, and the stress on making this part of "normal" practice rather than the exception-to-the-rule, is new here. All of this will take multiple years to embed.

Expenditure

I had, before starting the project, expected to need to run several profile-raising events in order to engage enough academics to productively utilise my time. That was not necessary. In addition, Netskills (who were going to provide two training workshops) are no longer in existence, and sourcing alternative provision has been problematic and taken time. As such expenditure this year has been lower than expected.

Embedding digital pedagogy in the humanities- next steps

Discussions about the possibility of central support in several areas are ongoing with Becky Woolley and Karina Beck (Library) as well as Lisa Faulkner and Emma Smith (Careers and Skills). All are unable to make commitments at this stage, but keen on the idea of some form of support for digital storytelling in particular, and on exploring the possibility of delivery in this area through blended learning in collaboration with academic modules / degree programmes.

From discussions with people mentioned above, as well as Siobhan Bennett (who is leading an HEA-funded project around employability in the curriculum), Giorgio Riello and Christian Smith, the importance of considering digital literacy across the length of an undergraduate degree has become evident. One model for this might be introducing students to the use of some technologies for content presentation and access in year one (with the mark being assigned on the content itself, the technology just being an accessory), followed by

a more critical use of a tools in year two (in which the mark is assigned partially on digital literacy demonstrated), with the third year giving a clear emphasis on digital "skills" as important to employability and/or postgraduate research. I'll flesh this out, and give the rationale behind it, in a later paper.

I'll be attending Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria – presenting a poster, and attending a week-long workshop on *Digital Pedagogy Integration in the Curriculum*. Following that, and other discussions over the summer, I will produce and publicise a document on curriculum design considerations for digital pedagogy at Warwick (and engage with the new Academy in this area).

Over the summer, my main task on this project will be to research and write up some drop-in frameworks for integrating digital pedagogies into existing modules. My current priority order is something like: digital storytelling as a mode of assessment, the use of wikis, introducing spatial analysis through google fusion tables, critically evaluating web resources. But that may well change. The intent is to produce something that an academic can drop in as c. 2 hours of contact time plus some self-study work for students, without the necessity of the academic being an expert in the area or requiring significant additional provision from support services – though for the next academic year I will offer some time to support people using these resources, while developing them iteratively.

Embedding Digital Humanities- next steps

Preparing for *Digital Humanities and Texts*, which will include materials development specific to the module but also a lot of things which will help to inform future teaching in the Digital Humanities (as well as co-teaching with Monash). Technically, I will be setting up servers with some of the requisite software using ITS's linux servers, an image of which will be kept and replicable for future courses. Pedagogically, the module will demonstrate the value of blended learning in extending the classroom beyond the taught session, when it is consonant with the material. The focus here on digital tools gives an obvious rationale to have some of the workload of the students take place through guided or facilitated virtual study.

The workshop being held in conjunction with both *Digital Humanities and Text* and the Monash-Warwick Alliance seed funding award on 7-12 December will provide a focal point in which the value and challenges of teaching Digital Humanities will be discussed. This will be widely advertised, and of real value in publicising and embedding the learning which takes place through the rest of this Strategic Project.

Continuing to work with Mediated Self, and other Centre for Cultural Policy Studies projects.

I'll be visiting KCL (with Amber Thomas) and TCD (with Jonny Heron) to learn from their existing programmes, as well as doing desk-based research and speaking with people from institutions with Digital Humanities programmes at appropriate events. Following this, I'll begin scoping the feasibility of Digital Humanities degree programmes at Warwick (BA, MA, MFA, PhD, or none of the above?)

Below

- Certificate of Digital Literacy for Liberal Arts Students - summary
- Digital Humanities and Texts – IATL module summary
- Sharing a virtual space: infrastructure for Digital Humanities - summary of Monash-Warwick Alliance Seed Funding Application
- Digital literacy and the digital humanities at Warwick – abstract for the Warwick Teaching and Learning Showcase
- Embedding the teaching of digital humanities at the University of Warwick – abstract for Digital Humanities Summer Institute, University of Victoria

Certificate of Digital Literacy for Liberal Arts Students

Certificate to be taught in term 2 of year 1 of the Liberal Arts BA (from 2016-17)

Title- Digital Literacy [for Liberal Arts students]

Rationale- To quote from a recent JISC study, "As 90% of new jobs will require <skills> excellent digital skills</skills>, improving digital literacy is an essential component of developing employable graduates." These necessary skills include everything from an awareness of different digital media platforms, the ability to manage a professional online identity, and the capacity to effectively utilise online tools for learning. Yet these skills are rarely recognised in the curriculum at Warwick. This certificate aims, for Liberal Arts students, to rectify that deficit by helping students think through the capabilities they need to live, learn and work in an increasingly digital society.

Workload and delivery -

10 contact hours plus 10-30 hours study in own time.

Assessment will be through a reflective learning journal on "myportfolio".

5x 2 hour sessions in alternate weeks. Maximum group size: 30.

Summary syllabus-

- Online identity (including social media, personal and professional profiles)
- Copyright and the reuse of digital information (including rights identification, attribution, etc.)
- Digital etiquette (cultural and personal good practice)
- Digital forms of media (e.g. news, blogs, networks, feeds)
- Academic technologies for research and collaboration

Learning outcomes-

By the end of this module, students will be able to…

interpret the information they find online in a way that takes into account the cultural, political, historical and other backgrounds of the author/site/organisation.

identify the rights associated with material found digitally and an understanding of the best practiced in terms of attribution and reuse of this material.

describe the issues around cyber security and protecting yourself in the digital world.

describe the philosophy and etiquette of "the digital age".

Digital Humanities and Texts

Undergraduate IATL module running Autumn Term 2015 taught by David Beck
partially co-taught with Monash (leads: Simon Musgrave, Anna Poletti)
www.tinyurl.com/DHTmodule

Module Outline

Digital humanities sits at the intersection of traditional arts study and computational technologies and techniques. It expands research paradigms in the humanities, but does so by communicating problems to computer scientists and IT professionals and reaching collaborative solutions. At its heart it's an interdisciplinary endeavour – bringing people together from disparate areas to work on common problems and subjects. And it's transformative, in more than one way.

Digital humanists at the forefront in a range of disciplines are using and combining techniques such as analysing texts through corpus linguistics, using numerical data effectively, visualising data in new and innovative ways, and analysing/incorporating the spatial both as data and visually. And, importantly for those of you who don't think they are IT-literate – the tools that make all of this possible are increasingly easy to use: point-and-click, intuitive, and free!

But this isn't just about bringing digital skills and methods into the humanities – digital humanities has also changed the nature of some humanities study itself. For instance in literary studies the work of Franco Moretti and others, which uses computers to read and critique texts, has raised questions about what it means to read a text in the first place – can a research project which uses a computer to read 2,000 texts produce greater insight into the history of literature than a scholar's close and context-driven analysis of text? Are these approaches complementary, different, or mutually exclusive…? In a number of humanities fields, digital techniques are igniting debate about how and what we study.

In this module, as well as engaging with some of these debates, we'll show you a variety of ways in which digital humanists work. You'll learn to use some new tools and build your confidence with IT, review existing resources, work collaboratively with a student cohort from the other side of the globe, and, as your main assessment piece, contribute something to the world of Digital Humanities research. Students will be getting involved in research projects based on two live databases- and this work will emphasize two key aspects of the Digital Humanities enterprise, collaboration and openness. Projects will be carried out by groups working collaboratively, and the key output will be shown to academics working on the data sources you use, and shared within the student cohort at Warwick and Monash.

Note that no previous IT experience or expertise is required for this module (although computer science students and others with a technical background are more than welcome).

Structure

Week 1 – Introduction to the datasets students will be working with (Godwin's Diaries, Restoration Theatre Song Archive)

Week 2 - Reading, writing and researching in a digital world (Anna Poletti), Research projects: principles and practicalities

Week 3 – Monash-led discussion on "text analysis and visualisation: what the digital can (and can't) tell us"; Warwick-led discussion surrounding Moretti's *Graphs, Maps and Trees*.

Week 4 – Principles and practices of linguistic analysis

Week 5 – Lab session on linguistics tools

Week 7 – Lab session on spatial analysis with texts

Week 8 - Thinking with Data: structure, format, manipulation, accountability

Week 9 – Lab session, manipulating and visualising data

Week 10 – reflections and conclusions.

Assessment

15 CAT: group research project and individual 1,250 word reflective essay (55%), project proposal (15%), 2 x Wiki entries of 500 words each (30%)

12 CAT: group research project and individual 1,000 word reflective essay (60%), project proposal (20%), wiki entry 500 words (20%)

The *wiki entries* will engage with and assess a Digital Humanities output from a list curated by Beck and Musgrave. It aims to encourage an analytical approach to DH outputs, encourage students to reflect on quality / assessment criteria for their research projects, provide an early diagnostic tool on student's technical knowledge, and to build a collaborative resource accessible to both Monash and Warwick students on the connected modules.

The *project proposal* will put forward a research question based on one of two datasets specified by the module convenors, and potential approach to using digital humanities methods to answer it. In addition to marking, tutors will assess the viability and rigor of approaches to decide which project proposals may be taken up by the group research projects.

The *research project* will be completed as a group of three to four students. It may involve the production of an annotated edition of a segment of text, the analysis of a large corpus, the development of a programmatic approach to textual analysis in the digital humanities, or another approach as discussed with the module convenor. In all cases, the digital component must illustrate (or give) a meaningful answer to a research question. It will be accompanied by an individual 1000-1,250 word reflective essay, which will be based around a templated set of questions.

While we will take feasibility into account, experimental approaches to research will be encouraged, so some of the *research projects* will in all likelihood fail to provide anything significant for submission. In that case, we'll invite a 2500 word co-authored analysis and reflective piece on the issues and problems which the group encountered (following a template), alongside the individual reflective essay. These analyses and reflective pieces will be eligible for the full range of marks.

Sharing a virtual space: infrastructure for Digital Humanities

Summary of Monash-Warwick Alliance Seed Funding Application
Principal applicants: Dr Simon Musgrave (Monash), Dr David Beck (Warwick)
Co-applicants: Prof. Mark Philp (Warwick), Dr Anna Poletti (Monash)
January 2015 to December 2015

Project summary

This project will develop an environment to enable co-operation in the digital humanities across the two institutions. Workshops and specialised training will build a framework within which datasets can be shared for both teaching and research purposes, enhancing collaboration in both areas. At least two existing datasets will be shared in the new environment and this will directly support the delivery of existing units as well as encouraging the development of additional units and courses and opening up new possibilities for collaborative research.

Project aims

1.   To advance research and teaching in the area of digital humanities at both institutions

2.   To develop a common framework for managing research data in the humanities which will enhance cross-institution activities

3.   To pilot a "sandpit" environment in which students and researchers at both Monash and Warwick will be able to manipulate research data.

4.   To migrate existing data sets into the framework and sandpit, initially in order to make them available for teaching in the unit MON3005 at Monash in 2015 and IL011 at Warwick in 2015/16.

Excerpts from the summary of Feb '15 workshop

(go.warwick.ac.uk/teachdh/feb15workshop):

Core skills. The core skills to be taught to students in Digital Humanities and Text(s) will be: understanding types of data, making data manipulable, text mark-up techniques, and understanding the importance of data format standards (e.g. .csv, xml). The unit will also feature collaboration and openness as key aspects of DH(aSS) by emphasising improving and republishing datasets which are used and by making student projects visible at least within our own communities.

Dataset identification. MON3005 will have students produce research projects based on different datasets each year. This suggests that some structured process of tracking available data in our institutions would be of value for teaching as well as research collaboration – we all know that there are plenty of datasets hidden away on institutional websites, and on individual academics' hard drives. We recommend an audit process should be initiated in each of our faculties. We suggest that discovery of datasets and sharing information about them is an important pathway to research collaboration for DH(aSS) in the MWA, and that making *Digital Humanities and Text(s)* work successfully will establish much of the common ground necessary to allow such collaboration to occur.

A **return workshop** will be held December 7th-12th at Warwick. The second workshop will take place during the final week of teaching *Digital Humanities and Text(s)* at Warwick and will therefore include a substantial amount of reflection on the experience of teaching the course. There will also be more focus on possibilities for research collaboration, and exploration of co-teaching further Digital Humanities research-based modules.

Digital literacy and the digital humanities at Warwick

Format- 15-20 minute presentation followed by 20-25 minute open discussion.

Digital Humanities teaching takes place at the intersection of digital technologies and the humanities disciplines. It may involve the application of digital technologies and "digital pedagogy" to pre-existing humanities subjects; or may be based on research which itself relies on computational technologies (e.g. data mining, corpus linguistics, text encoding, crowd-sourcing, digital media…). Both broad approaches would result in the improvement and evidencing of students digital literacy, a key aspect of future employability. As part of a strategic project on *Teaching Digital Humanities* which I have been conducting this year, funded by IATL, I've had a range of discussions with academics and support staff surrounding what digital literacy is and how it can be integrated into the curriculum here at Warwick.

This presentation will introduce the strategic project, and go on to explore the teaching of digital humanities as an exemplary way to integrate digital literacy into the curriculum. Two issues in particular will be covered –research-led teaching which necessitates students learning new digital skillsets; and the integration of digital methods of assessment.

Regarding research-led teaching, I will discuss the development of a new module for next year, *Digital Humanities and Text(s)*, partially co-taught with Monash University, and which offers to introduce students with no IT-expertise to corpus linguistics, xml encoding, and the production of a research project based on one of two databases. While developing the module, Simon Musgrave (Monash) and I have had extensive discussions surrounding how to "fit" both skills and theory into a module, which are worth re-iterating for a wider audience. Regarding digital methods of assessment, as well as talking through existing and proposed practices in History and Classics, I will address issues of collaboration across support services and academic departments at Warwick through the example of digital storytelling – the production by students of short still-image videos with narration.

The session as a whole will be of interest to anyone who is concerned with the integration of skills into the curriculum – while the focus will be on digital literacy many of the issues I cover have correlates for presentation skills, communication skills and other aspects of personal development. Discussion following the paper may centre upon any aspect of the presentation – depending on the audience I'd be keen to solicit feedback on the role of central services in delivering core/compulsory content to students, the relationship between (digital) skills and assessment practices, and other related areas.

Embedding the teaching of digital humanities at the University of Warwick

Proposal accepted for poster session at Digital Humanities Summer Institute, University of Victoria, June 8-12.

This poster will present some of the initial conclusions and outcomes of a Strategic Project entitled *Teaching Digital Humanities* which I have undertaken this year at the University of Warwick. Funded by the Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning, this project has allowed me to spend nearly half of my working time over the course of the academic year 2014/15 looking at how to embed Digital Humanities at Warwick. As part of the project I've been working with academic staff from a range of disciplines including History, English, Hispanic Studies, Culture and Media Studies, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, and Classics, as well as staff working in various roles within Student Careers and Skills, the Library and IT Services. The three major aims for the project at its outset were:

· To make it easier for academics to incorporate aspects of Digital Humanities research into their own research-led modules, both by providing support this year and frameworks for the future.

· To enable the teaching of digital literacy to students where relevant to the curriculum or pedagogy being employed, and develop the support network for this.

· To facilitate the sharing of good practice in the use of technology for assessment, to include video-projects, e-portfolios and data visualisation.

Digital Humanities teaching takes place at the intersection of digital technologies and the humanities disciplines – but what this means in practice differs greatly for different people. It may involve the application of digital technologies and "digital pedagogy" to pre-existing humanities modules and subjects; or may involve teaching based on research which itself relies on computational technologies (e.g. data mining, corpus linguistics, text encoding, crowd-sourcing, digital media…). At both ends of this spectrum, students are involved in activities with result in the improvement and importantly the evidencing of students digital literacy, a key aspect of future employability. And, in all cases, for these teaching practices to evolve beyond 'trailblazer' academics into 'normal' Departmental culture requires clear articulation of the benefits for students and staff, a support network, and a close-to-home evidence base.

This poster will particularly be of use to those who are responsible for curriculum development within their Departments, those in roles which support academic teaching, as well as those interested in models for supporting the development of digital literacy among undergraduates.