

Undergraduate Students and Digital Humanities Belonging: Metaphors and Methods for Including Undergraduate Research in DH Communities

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Abstract

How can alternate histories of DH through feminist criticism, participatory art, and design shape undergraduate pedagogy in DH? In this article, we argue for explicitly employing a “scholar-citizen” model as a principle of pedagogical design, making explicit many of the latent assumptions of DH belonging and community. By adhering to these design principles we have been able to question some of the assumptions of pedagogical theories like Research Based Learning and public-facing scholarship, demonstrating these theories’ complex relationships public, semi-public, or private dissemination; classroom and non-classroom spaces; complexity of the assigned task; and the role of assessment. Our experiences as Director and Assistant Director for a combined Summer intensive undergraduate Field School in DH occasion this article.

Introduction

In the short history of Digital Humanities pedagogy, arguments for the transferability of DH skillsets permeate the field. The pragmatic motivations for these arguments are clear. We live in a time of proscribed employment prospects across humanistic disciplines, whether that employment consists of academic, journalistic, or artistic pursuits. The humanities finds itself defending its utility, and as a scholarly community we insist upon the desirability of humanities skill sets.^[1] DH pedagogy can be said—whether in praise or as a point of criticism—to respond to the current crisis of the humanities. Its emphasis on collaboration and project-based learning stems from the labour practices of DH scholarship, namely, the project and the need to employ research assistants on those projects. In both the research project and in the classroom, DH frequently aims to provide undergraduate students with transferable skills.

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Little research exists to establish whether DH skills are, in fact, transferred, but recent scholarly activity has depended on this perception. For example, the Cambridge University Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) recently “lead a six-month project on the digital humanities and Transferable Skills Training [which] focuses specifically on the transferability of digital skills, and aims to increase awareness among early-career researchers of how the digital skills they have learnt in one context (social, academic or professional) can be applied in another” [CRASSH 2012]. CRASSH directs its efforts towards graduate and early career researcher training; a similar set of pragmatic concerns emerges as regards undergraduate students in online fora like the ACH *Digital Humanities Questions and Answers*. For example, Scott Kleinman expresses concerns over how best to support student acquisition of skills useful to their future employment:

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As we try to transfer DH research culture to the undergraduate classroom, it seems to me increasingly important to make a case that studying DH provides skills that are in demand by employers—and that give graduates a leg up in the job market—but one especially geared towards undergraduates, the majority of whom are not going to pursue graduate school. I think many of us treat the advantages as self-evident: coding skills, data analysis, project management, to name a

few types of knowledge not emphasized in the traditional humanities. These are all skills in demand. [Kleinman 2013]

Concerns for the future employment of undergraduate students are legitimate, and they have shaped both DH pedagogy and how we market the value of DH courses. In Kleinman's words, it is "increasingly important to *make a case* that studying DH provides skills that are in demand by employers" [Kleinman 2013] (emphasis added). The activity of justifying digital humanistic learning is often the activity of justifying its utility.

Our experiences as Director and Assistant Director for the Undergraduate Summer Field School in the Digital Humanities (DHFS) occasion this article. In marketing the program, we have certainly engaged in discourses of utility similar to the ones we have cited. The Bader International Study Centre (BISC), Queen's University's website describes the DHFS in terms of its utility:

Along with facilitating a new kind of engagement with questions long central to humanities disciplines, participation in the DHFS will also provide students with transferable skills in digital culture that can assist their transition into graduate opportunities or an identified career path. [BISC 2014]

In our own promotional materials, we insist both on the acquisition of humanistic skills—the "engagement with questions long central to humanities disciplines"—and on "transferable skills in digital culture." Like Kleinman, we respond to the exigencies of the job market and the perceived needs and desires of undergraduate students drive our appeal to their "identified career path." Further, much of our teaching practice was to attempt to offer course content that was relevant to students' diverse career interests.

Another driving factor is our need to justify the utility of our program to an increasingly corporatized university. Within this framework, instrumentalist knowledge is privileged, and the impulse to defend the utility of the humanities writ large is a response to this instrumentalism. But the opposite is also true: in the face of increasing demands to defend the utility and instrumentality of humanistic—and, by extension, digital humanistic—work, scholars have defended the value of the humanities despite, if not because of, a *lack* of utility. Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber's *The Slow Professor* [Berg and Seeber 2016], for instance, draws on the principles of the Slow Food movement to argue for the pleasures and politics of slowness and resistance. Similarly, in response to Daniel Allington, Sarah Brouillette, and David Golumbia's article, "Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities," scholars have cited alternate histories of DH that challenge the text analysis history of DH that Allington, Brouillette, and Golumbia purport to be neoliberal. Tara McPherson, for example, locates the roots of DH in design and the digital arts, citing engagements with the "expressive capacities" of screen culture and digital technology as driving forces in a critical humanities approach to technology, an engagement that provides an alternate genealogy to the text-analysis-dominant history that has persisted in origin stories of the field [McPherson 2016]. For McPherson, the history of computation is intertwined with the sensory and the embodied. Scholars like Jacqueline Wernimont continue this hybrid artistic and scholarly approach with projects like *Vibrant Lives*, demonstrating how the on-going history of DH is deeply rooted in creative critical engagements with the materiality of the digital [Wernimont 2016].^[2] This vein of scholarship asks a fundamental question: Can design foreground the values of a given field?

It is in this context that we insert our pedagogy. Alongside our own engagement in discourses of utility in humanistic education, we found that these alternate genealogies of DH were equally insistent in our thinking as we established and developed the DHFS. We contend that the alternate genealogies of DH research that have been traced by a growing feminist digital humanities body of scholarship may be brought to bear on the development of undergraduate DH pedagogy. The history of undergraduate pedagogy in DH has not yet been subject to historical recovery work. But we may take inspiration from feminist genealogies of DH scholarship as we participate in creating a potential history, a future anterior, of DH pedagogy. In order to explore this contention, this article takes two approaches. It traces the brief and recent history of how models of undergraduate DH pedagogy have conceived of the student, and it explores it explores the models that have informed our own pedagogical practice. While we include examples drawn from our experience of designing, implementing, and running an undergraduate-focused DH summer program, the aim of this

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article is not to provide a report of what we did. Rather, it is to theorize and contextualize our praxis. After providing a brief program description, the article will move on to discuss persistent formulations of the undergraduate student in DH before offering our own theorization of that relationship drawing on a range of influences from inside the DH community and adjacent to it. We account for our model's intellectual history, and illustrate it with a small set of examples. We conclude by drawing attention to the practical and ideological limitations of our work.

Program Description

The DHFS ran for two years at the BISC. In both those years it had a two-part structure: a classroom-based Field School at a satellite campus, and a one- to two-term paid Student Assistantship at Queen's University's home campus. [3] The Field School is a 6-week intensive program that consists of two half-year course credits designed to introduce undergraduate students to the digital humanities. Through these accredited courses which count towards their degrees, students participate in making, primarily using TEI technologies, and in critical engagement with both scholarly and popular digital culture. Content delivery occurs in classroom spaces and through academically integrated experiential learning opportunities^[4], guest talks from UK and North American DHers, and community-organized events.

After they complete the intensive Field School, students are eligible to apply for a one- to two-term paid assistantship with the W.D. Jordan Special Collections Library at Queen's University, in which they continue their DH training by taking ownership of a small-scale digitization project that aligns with priority areas in Special Collections. The aim of the program is to provide undergraduate students with an introduction to the field comprised of a DH-oriented skill set, an informed critical perspective on digital culture, and an application of that perspective to real research needs at their university. One student occupied the role of Student Assistant each year, Tiffany Chan in the first year and Jenna Mlynaryk in the second year.

The metaphor that drove our theoretical approach to the DHFS was that of the "scholar-citizen." Of the metaphors that exist in DH approaches to pedagogy, the scholar-citizen is persistent, but is perhaps the most implicit. In our organization of the Field School, it took some time for us to perceive the permeation of this metaphor throughout DH pedagogy. Two more explicit models presented themselves to us first: the ever-persistent and problematic "digital native" model and the "apprentice-research assistant" model. In many ways, our experience of parsing these metaphors in order to arrive at the "scholar-citizen" frames how we read the history of pedagogical metaphors in DH. In line with this experience, we discuss both the "digital native" and the "apprentice-research assistant" models below.

"Digital Native" and "Apprentice-Research Assistant": The Brief History of DH Pedagogy

Much of the discussion of the undergraduate and the digital maintains a problematic sticking point on the concept of the "digital native," Marc Prensky's infamous characterization of the "new" generation of learners in 2001 [Prensky 2001]. For example, when John Unsworth and Patrik Svensson envision the graduate student who "learned to do research with digital tools" [Svensson 2012], they rely upon the trope of the digital native undergraduate student who preceded the graduate student. And scholarship skeptical of this discourse has asked questions like, "Digital natives: Where is the evidence?" [Helsper and Enyon 2009], maintaining the validity of the "digital native" as a critical category even as it attempts to debunk it. Scholarship on the relationship between the undergraduate and the digital is primarily concerned with questioning whether "digital native" is an accurate characterization of the skill set of the undergraduate student, identifying this concept as problematic for the inaccurate perceptions that it perpetuates.

As our current project is to examine the metaphors of undergraduate belonging in DH, we find the digital native problematic for a different reason. The "digital native" mystifies the role of the undergraduate in digital pedagogy broadly and DH more narrowly. This metaphor prevents us from analyzing exactly what the undergraduate's relationship is to the digital and their potential relationship to the digital humanities. And, as a feminist pedagogical lens is an intersectional one, the term "digital native" casts belonging in binaristic terms: native or immigrant.

To unpick how this metaphor works is to recognize that it is about belonging and exclusion, with connotations of both

national identities, and racialized ones. It also depends on a binary of stasis and movement, with natives not needing to move and immigrants desiring, if not enacting, mobility. Recently, Assiniboine and Blackfeet activist and writer Lauren ChiefElk and the intersectional feminist Twitter account @colorcriticism have opened up a parallel critique of “digital native” to the one we are engaging in here. Using the Twitter hashtag #digitalnatives, contributors to the Twitter thread work to reclaim the term [colorcriticism 2015] and to draw attention to the presence of Native Americans and indigenous peoples in a digital space. To continue to deploy the “digital native” metaphor in a depoliticized DH pedagogical context not only obscures the student’s role in DH pedagogy, but it also ignores and even silences the potential identities and subject positions of students participating in the digital—individuals who might elect to identify as #digitalnatives. If we take as a starting point that the conceptual dimensions of our teaching are as important as their implementation, then our political allegiances demand that we move away from conceptual frameworks that risk flattening pedagogical politics.

If the “digital native” has been the metaphor which has received the greatest critical attention, the metaphor of the “apprentice-research assistant” has been a more implicit one. While the ostensible “digital native” may speak the language of the digital, the apprentice is not assumed to possess the necessary skills for DH work; instead, she learns skills within the hierarchies and economies of the DH project. In this second model, the undergraduate student’s typical first exposure to DH is as the necessary labourer in faculty-led research projects; she is indoctrinated into the discipline by means of witnessing a project’s inside operations. This model has underpinned many of the more practical discussions of DH pedagogy. The exigencies of the DH project, particularly those that depend on the labour of undergraduates, find their way into pedagogical practice. A pedagogy that concentrates on project-based learning fulfills the goals and needs of the DH project. In more explicit examples, some of the major innovations by such projects as the *Map of Early Modern London* hinge on careful experimentation with the pedagogical potential of project-based learning.

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The apprentice model has at least one conceptual advantage. It does not assume that a life-long participation in the digital equals either a knowledge of the underlying structures of digital products, or a knowledge of the skills required to perform research in the digital. The apprentice model, unlike the “digital native” model, retains a useful distinction between the digital and the digital humanities, recognizing one as a cultural phenomenon and set of products and the other as discipline.

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However, the apprentice model figures the power relationship of digital research differently from the assumed power relationship of naturalized digital knowledge possessed by the “digital native.” In Prensky’s depoliticized formulation, “nativeness” retains the locus of power due to its assumed naturalized knowledge. The apprentice model, despite its emphasis on praxis and self-directed learning, reinforces a conventional academic distribution of power between mentor and apprentice, assuming that the researcher’s critical knowledge is something to be shared with the apprentice in a top-down relationship. The apprentice model likewise communicates a kind of community, but one that is primarily about induction into a profession. The apprentice-research assistant model is a kind of economic transaction. If belonging is important to DH research communities, then the economic metaphor doesn’t express a robust understanding of the structure of that belonging beyond this hierarchy.

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A third metaphor, is the scholar citizen which is latent in the culture of the DH pedagogical field and which at times overlaps with these previous two models; it can be especially intertwined with that of the apprentice-researcher, though we maintain it is distinct from it. Imagining undergraduate membership in the DH field as a form of citizenship offers us a way of thinking about issues that arise as a result of interdisciplinary collaboration, namely those associated with labour and intellectual property.

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The Scholar-Citizen in Theory

In identifying those models from within DH that have influenced our own pedagogical practice, we first pay particular attention to scholars who engage in a critical digital pedagogy. Drawing on the works of radical pedagogical theory such as Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [Freire 2000], such models are interested in challenging traditional academic power structures. They push for the cultivation of a critical awareness and praxis that continues for both students and instructors after they leave the classroom.

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Melanie Kill's work with undergraduates and Wikipedia and Jesse Stommel's discussions of a critical digital pedagogy as a response to virtual learning environments of various scales are part of the genealogy of the scholar-citizen. In writing of her undergraduates' work with Wikipedia, Kill emphasises how student involvement in content development for the site allows the instructor to direct students' critical gazes on the digital public sphere and its dominant discourses. In turn, this becomes an opportunity to "educate students as citizens capable and responsible to share what they know about the world around them" [Kill 2012]. Kill is careful to qualify that she is not advocating merely for the development of transferrable skills; rather, this combination of undergraduate praxis and criticism is a means by which to "offer a long view of the humanities and the critical skills of analysis and communication" [Kill 2012]. In establishing her pedagogical framework, Kill notes her reliance on the work of The New London Group, a collective of 10 academics from the US, UK, and Australia, who advocate for the teaching of multiliteracies as a response to linguistic diversity and the multimodal nature of contemporary communication. The New London Group place an emphasis on students' use of newly gained critical perspectives outside of the educational context, something which Kill understands as essential to her own pedagogy.^[5]

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This emphasis on facilitating undergraduate interaction with the digital as a means of helping students "develop the capacity to speak up, to negotiate, and ... to engage critically with the conditions of their working lives" rather than be "docile, compliant workers" [New London Group 1996] is echoed in Jesse Stommel's articulation of a critical digital pedagogy. For Stommel, it is important for both students and instructors to remain ever critically aware of the digital environments within which much pedagogical work takes place. If Kill locates in undergraduate engagement with the digital an opportunity to cultivate a broader critical perspective, then Stommel is certain that heightened critical awareness needs to be present in order to facilitate a radical encounter with the digital. As Stommel notes, "[w]e are better users of technology when we are thinking critically about the nature and effects of that technology. What we must do is work to encourage students and ourselves to think critically about new tools (and, more importantly, the tools we already use)" [Stommel 2014]. Freire is central to Stommel's attempts to define critical digital pedagogy, as both Freire and Stommel offer a challenge to the power structures inherent in traditional educational models.

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Like Kill and Stommel, we embrace the critical potential of undergraduates' engagement with the digital and we recognize that such an engagement needs to foster and reinforce a certain degree of autonomy for those involved. As such, equally influential in determining our formulation of the scholar-citizen is the work behind such documents as the "Collaborators' Bill of Rights" [Collaborators' Bill of Rights 2011], and UCLA Digital Humanities' "Student Collaborators' Bill of Rights" [Student Collaborators' Bill of Rights 2015]. If adopting a continuing critical perspective on different forms of the digital—both within the academy, and as part of public digital culture—engenders a vital community, important to the growth and health of that community is the acknowledgment of intellectual property and the value of the individual's labour. In recognising the power and current prevalence of such rights discourses in DH, we must also be cognisant of the role such discourses play in political contexts that we might understand as antithetical to our pedagogy and our practice.

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The metaphors of citizenry in DH pedagogy have been compelling ones as we conceptualize our own pedagogical practice. But so, too, has the body of scholarship that has built up around critiquing citizenship in other disciplines. Disciplines like the practice and critique of participatory art provide models that respond to questions about autonomy and community. If contemporary discussions of critical digital pedagogy are important in thinking about DH pedagogy more broadly so, too, is the work being done in participatory art. When scholars like McPherson and Earhart trace alternate genealogies of DH through digital art and lost digital projects considered to be outside the "DH canon," they do so in opposition to the received history of DH as stemming from surviving text-analysis projects, and they push against the perception that DH is unconcerned with the politics of the digital. The creative field of participatory art—and the scholarly work interrogating the practice and the politics of this art form—offers alternative modes for thinking about pedagogical practice as it relates to the introduction to, and inclusion of, undergraduate students in DH.

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Central to the critical digital pedagogies articulated by both Kill and Stommel is an idea of both students and instructors actively engaged in the assessment of digital objects and the methodologies and discourses framing those objects. Participatory art places a similar emphasis on activity and engagement, seeking to disturb the traditional idea of the singular, isolated viewer and offer instead a "new understanding of art without audiences, one in which everyone is a

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producer” [Bishop 2012]. The spectator-consumer is replaced with multiple participant-producers; the one who looks becomes a community of those who do. We see in this challenge to dominant modes of viewer engagement with art a model that offers potential for countering the construction of undergraduates as individual consumers of knowledge and time, a construction which pervades the administrative and promotional discourses increasingly amplified on our campuses.

While all participatory art requires the involvement of those traditionally designated spectators, one stream of participatory art is specifically interested in experimental pedagogy as art. As such, this stream offers striking models for critical undergraduate pedagogy. Participatory art’s interest in experimental pedagogy can be traced back to Joseph Beuys’s lecture-actions on social and political structures and his *Bureau for Direct Democracy* at Documenta 5 [Beuys and Schwartz 1972]. These projects provided early points of reference for work by artists such as Tania Bruguera, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Paul Chan. A history of such projects presents us with a timeline that runs in parallel to the growth of the field of DH, and like some DH projects, the work of pedagogic participatory artists responds to “the different urgencies of their moment” [Bishop 2012]. Pedagogic participatory art can point up a lack of resources and infrastructure, as did Tania Bruguera’s 2002-2009 art school, *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* in Havana Vieja [Bruguera n.d.]. It can also function as a critical response to academic capitalism. Thomas Hirschhorn’s 2009 *Bijlmer-Spinoza Festival* which was staged in an Amsterdam suburb and focused on breaking down barriers between art historians, critics, and local residents is one such example, as is the 2006 collaborative conference and exhibition titled *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y* which situated itself in opposition to the European Bologna Process.^[6] Pedagogic participatory art shares what Claire Bishop defines as the larger goals of all participatory art: “to restore and realize a communal, collective space of shared social engagement” [Bishop 2012]. Through different mechanisms and practices, such works seek to “forge a collective, co-authoring, participatory social body” [Bishop 2012]. In looking to such creative work, we recognize the resonances between these artistic projects and our own, specifically in the ways they engage with ideas of autonomy and community.

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Autonomy and community are the core ideas in our formulation of the scholar-citizen model in undergraduate DH pedagogy, and they are ideas implicitly shared by documents like the “Student Collaborator’s Bill of Rights”. We propose the scholar-citizen metaphor to be a particularly appropriate way of modeling undergraduate pedagogy as it responds to some of the tensions that exist in the previously discussed formulations. That is, a metaphor of citizenship allows for belonging to be gained. In the “digital native” formulation, a digital immigrant can never become a native. In the apprentice-research assistant model, a student gains skills through hierarchical labour, but does not necessarily gain belonging in a community. In a scholar-citizen model, a migrant to the digital can become a DH citizen, she can gain skills and community.

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We identify five aspects of DH scholarly citizenship in our pedagogy. First, the structure of the DHFS works to acknowledge the “local” identity of the student. Undergraduate students migrating to the DH field bring with them skills and methodologies from their home disciplines; these are used as a starting point for the acquisition of DH skills and DH-inflected critical perspectives. Second, we seek to break down academic and generational divides across learning environments by regularly bringing undergraduate participants into contact with a range of DH–practicing and DH–adjacent researchers and with those whose cultural heritage is the subject matter of DH scholarly inquiry. Third, we preserve students’ intellectual control over the work produced in courses; whether or not it will be added as an accredited contribution to an affiliated DH project, for example, is at the student’s discretion.^[7] Fourth, where possible, we seek to provide multiple opportunities to interested students to deepen their investment in DH scholarship inside and outside the classroom, in particular supporting the development of their own networks and communities within DH. Finally, we seek ways to explicitly value student labour—to provide them with paid positions—particularly when their work benefitted academic or research units at Queen’s. Together, these five aspects of the scholar–citizen model emphasize the student’s individuality and choice while also enhancing access to the scholarly communities that shape the values communicated in the DH classroom. They offer students the opportunity to belong in DH communities, while valuing their unique perspectives on the field and on their own research.

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The Scholar-Citizen in Practice

In the design of the DHFS, we have attempted to organize student activities and assessment around these five core principles. The practical application of these principles, however, begins to reveal the complexities of our pedagogical model across learning spaces. As we now turn to demonstrate how we have put some of these principles into practice, the coherence of this model in the classroom tends to be shaped by the stakes tied to the learning activity at hand. Janelle Jenstad and Kim McLean-Fiander's contribution to this issue emphasizes "high-stakes" learning and publishing opportunities. They draw on research in *Research-Based Learning* by Angela Brew and Evan Jewell that claims that high-stakes learning "will motivate [students] to produce their best work" [Brew and Jewell 2012]. For pedagogical projects like *MoEML*, the "stakes" of a learning activity lie in its publicness—"the stakes are high in this kind of public scholarship"—while the audience of one entailed in the traditional classroom does not elicit students' best work. Our experiences and our filter of the scholar-citizen pedagogical model complicates this definition of the stakes of DH learning. In Jenstad and McLean-Fiander's pedagogical program, the high-stakes demands of public scholarship apply to assessed classroom learning opportunities; that is, students' assessed classroom work was the same work that could be contributed to a public scholarly project. The structure of the DHFS, by contrast, tended to separate high-stakes learning from assessment. The concept of the stakes of learning and the necessity for assessment in the classroom is further complicated by our conceptual pedagogical model. If we maintain that belonging and community are equally central to DH and to DH pedagogy, assessment and the stakes of learning represent two points of tension in how we imagine the DH undergraduate.

The Student Assistantship and the Field School together shed some light on the ways that design can change the questions we can ask of teaching and research. The Assistantship and Field School alike frequently divorce the public-facing aspects of learning opportunities from grades-based assessment. As a result, we have observed three tiers of "stakes" in learning opportunities. Low-stakes opportunities, as we have come to define them, may have public-facing features traditionally associated with high-stakes learning, such as participation in on-going, real-life projects, but they ask students to rely on existing skill sets and do not require that students develop complex projects. Medium stakes learning asks students to gain new skills and apply them synthetically and creatively, but it restricts public-facing aspects to remain within small, controlled communities and peer groups. High-stakes opportunities provide students with high levels of project autonomy, the results of their learning are widely disseminated, and the assignments expect that students will perform complex synthetic tasks. As will emerge in this discussion, each level of "stakes" has a complex relationship to the quality of work that students produce. Additionally, assessment appears to adversely affect the quality of work produced by students.

Low- and Medium-Stakes Learning in the Classroom

Two elements of the scholar-citizen model—(1) the acknowledgement of a student's "local" identity, and (2) the condensing of academic divisions—frame some of the more concrete examples of how the DHFS's curriculum development fits this model. First, in line with the first principle of the scholar-citizen model, we draw from students' "local" identities, be they disciplinary, cultural, or social, and we maintain that these identities should be used as a starting point in the acquisition of DH critical skills. In the context of the Field School, students' various disciplinary identities have been among the most impactful factors in the classroom. Approximately half of the students in the program came from humanistic disciplines like English and History. Half came from other disciplines not normally understood to be within the purview of DH: Psychology, Politics, Tourism, and Chemistry. In response to this heterogeneity, we endeavoured to create instructional space that recognizes and respects this component of the student's local disciplinary identity.

More concretely, students in the 2015 Field School prepared a presentation as part of their participation in a one-day symposium with a local charity. Co-organized by the DHFS and the Hastings Pier Charity, the symposium brought together the Field School's students and the charity's project developers and engineers to discuss the digital popular memory archive being assembled as part of a government-funded restoration of a Victorian pleasure pier on the Southern English coast. The students' presentation detailed a range of possible digital projects the charity could undertake using the assembled archival resources in order to provide a public-facing digital presence for the physical site. In doing so, not only did the students draw on class discussions of digital archives, DH project management, metadata, citizen scholarship, and folksonomies, but they also found valuable one student's previous degree work in

Tourism and his experience developing a digital platform for the crowdsourced writing and rewriting of public histories.^[8]

This experiential learning activity asked students to apply their classroom knowledge of digital cultural heritage to an ongoing cultural preservation project. The activity of drawing on students' local disciplinary identities distinguishes the specific knowledge base of one student, while promoting the contribution of individual knowledge to the classroom community. The recognition of the students' local disciplinary identities, then, also contributes to the second principle of the scholar-citizen model, the flattening or condensing of academic hierarchies. This learning opportunity seems to conform in many ways to the definition of high-stakes learning. It is public-facing, and it is tied to a tangible, "real-world" project; it asks that students make concrete suggestions that may change the direction of a project. Notably, it also elicited high-quality suggestions and engagement from the students. However, by our definition, "high stakes" does not accurately describe the complexity demanded of students in this learning opportunity. The learning opportunity was tied to assessment only circuitously, and it required students to draw on their own backgrounds and skill sets. But it does not ask students to display or share a project of their research. The task at hand for students was *application* rather than the more challenging task of *production* or *creativity*.

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Other aspects of curriculum development similarly seek to flatten hierarchies and allow students access to scholarly conversations they might otherwise be proscribed from. These more academic-facing learning opportunities also rest on the principles of community engagement that can only be circuitously assessed.^[9] In line with the fourth principle of providing students access to their own DH networks and communities, we attempted to challenge academic generational divides by fostering opportunities for scholarly conversation between undergraduate students and established DH and DH-adjacent scholars. Imperative to the successful crossing of generational divides is providing students with the necessary tools and vocabulary to participate as scholars in their own right. In this capacity, the DHFS collaborated with the Digital Curators at the British Library in order to organize a colloquium for students with the staff of the British Library Labs. In addition, we facilitated student participation in more traditional scholarly forms like the recent King's College London early career research conference, *Blue Skies Above, Solid Ground Below* (2015). Prior to participation in these events, students were supported in the articulation of their own digitally inflected research interests and questions about the field through one-on-one dialogue with instructors.

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The principles of experimentation and community, similarly to the principle of community as citizenry, connote a protection by community for the kinds of experimentation that DH learning and research entail. In other words, learning with community safeguards for failure is *low-stakes* learning. Indeed, in the examples above, students demonstrated their ability to contribute to scholarly and cultural communities in thoughtful and sophisticated ways in circumstances that were not directly tied to assessment. The scholar-citizen principles of recognizing students' local identities, facilitating students' participation across hierarchical and generational academic divides, and providing them with the opportunities to forge their own scholarly communities can be said to be a successful pedagogical model in light of the quality of student engagement. But it also sits uncomfortably with the necessity for evaluation in the classroom. For both students and instructors, the reality of evaluation necessitates the possibility of failure. Failure is the denial of community belonging.

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Following from this principle, we attempted to mitigate the risk of failure—to offer low-stakes learning opportunities—in work completed for assessment.^[10] For example, the students' major project drew from a partnership with the Amelia Alderson Opie Project, a SSHRC-funded archival project housed in the Department of English at Queen's University. The Project and the DHFS teaching team provided the primary source materials, namely letters written by Opie and her close circle of friends, from which students selected an object to become the centre of an individual DH markup microproject. Students were provided with a robust framework of digital editorial theory and were expected to gain familiarity with TEI in an oXygen editing environment, a technology that we chose as it lays bare minute encoding decisions but remains relatively accessible. The end product entailed an .xml representation of the students' chosen object, an optional customized schema (created in Roma), and a prose editorial statement on the student's theoretical and practical editorial decisions. We attempted to retain student ownership over their own work in line with the third principle of the scholar-citizen model. Distinct from student work that is contributed to a larger project with or without attribution, the micro-projects are designed as stand-alone entities, complete with an account of how the student

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understands her intervention into a single object. The markup project is then the subject of individual student presentations to their peers and the broader community on the satellite campus.

The major assignment was neither designed as a high-stakes learning opportunity in the same sense promoted by Research Based Learning, nor as a low-stakes opportunity like the ones discussed above. Instead, the assignment may be read as medium stakes: each student's markup and presentation is assessed on a traditional grade scale and the project is presented to a small, controlled public of peers. Students were provided with large amounts of individual attention from the instructors, and supported in developing presentation skills. Nevertheless, this small increase in the stakes of the learning opportunity had perhaps a paradoxical effect: students felt a great deal of anxiety about the assignment, as though it were a high-stakes situation; in contrast to the students' impressive engagement in community and scholarly settings, student performance on assignments was good but not overwhelmingly so. One trend is that students are able to reiterate, synthesize, and analyze theories of digital editing, but they are not able to apply those theories in the detailed work of encoding. While they have the skills for argumentation in prose, they did not necessarily gain competency in some primary DH critical mechanics. Some of this failure we may attribute to the short, six-week term. And some of it we may attribute to a natural variation in student aptitudes. It seems, furthermore, that the introduction of assessment correlates with increased levels of student anxiety and has little positive correlation with increased quality of work.

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The practical application of the scholar-citizen model in the Field School portion of the DHFS exposes some of the complexities of DH ideas of belonging, the risks of failure, and the stakes of learning. No students received a failing grade in the Field School—the small class sizes and our ability to respond with agility to student needs have been a great help in this respect. However, the varied responses among student participants in the program to low- and medium-stakes learning opportunities prompts us to critically question the often powerful claims the scholar-citizen model makes for inclusion and autonomy. If academic failure is a possibility—as it becomes with the introduction of traditional assessment methods—then community membership is not always guaranteed.

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High-Stakes Learning in the Assistantship

To our knowledge, the Assistantship is unique as a pedagogical project that financially rewards the on-going pedagogy of undergraduate students outside of the classroom and outside of the professor-directed research project. The Assistantship has run for two academic years as a paid position open to Queen's students who attended the Field School. It is offered in partnership with Special Collections at the W.D. Jordan Library at Queen's, co-supervised by the Curator of Special Collections and the members of the DHFS teaching team with support from subject-matter specialists and some technical support from the IT department of Queen's University libraries. Students digitized priority, underutilized collections at Jordan Library and designed and implemented a small-scale digital exhibition in line with their own research interests and in keeping with Queen's Libraries' aim to increase public access to their holdings. Tiffany Chan worked on a collection of nineteenth-century stereoscopic photographs, producing an exhibition that took advantage of contemporary animation techniques to visualize the three-dimensional photographic mode. Jenna Mlynaryk worked on a unique collection of nineteenth-century women's magazines that prominently features unused, full-color fashion plates. Her exhibition attended to the material histories of both the Victorian fashion industry and Victorian magazine culture. As a condition of the Assistantship, students were expected to present their work in an on-campus undergraduate colloquium and to blog about their research process in online fora like HASTAC. The design of the Assistantship attempts to apply the pedagogical principles of the scholar-citizen model: (3) students are given ownership over their own work, and (5) labour that contributes to the research needs of Queen's University or a broader project is explicitly valued in a paid position. While the Assistantship may count as Research Based Learning, it does not conform entirely to the power dynamics of the apprentice-research assistant model. Students were not assessed and they did not provide assistance for a project under a professor's direction.

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The low- to medium-stakes learning opportunities offered in the Field School portion of the DHFS complicate some existing research on student engagement, quality of work, and assessment. The Student Assistantship portion offers a counter-example of high-stakes learning, but one that is nevertheless not assessed. The public-facing, high-stakes aspects of the Assistantship appear to have produced in students a desire to contribute their best work. The quality of

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student work provides some evidence of this desire. For example, Chan produced an extremely thorough online exhibit. She has provided links to materials available in the W.D. Jordan library that support her research claims. The flipping animation and the 3-D animation—a technique known as tweening—curate the photographs as three-dimensional objects, communicating their materiality and the manner in which they would be viewed by contemporary audiences [Chan 2015a]. Mlynaryk produced a dynamic timeline to demonstrate changes in fashion trends across the 1870s as reflected in unique holdings of the *Young Ladies' Journal* Canadian edition [Mlynaryk 2016b]. In addition, students performed complex, synthetic, and creative research. Both projects are thoroughly and carefully researched and thoughtfully presented. Both rely on an impressive depth and breadth of research, in addition to demonstrating a keen eye for effective presentation of humanistic research in a digital environment.

The Assistantship fits more closely with existing definitions of high-stakes learning than the Field School portion of the DHFS. Public-facing dissemination is built into the requirements of the Assistantship. Students are explicitly expected to situate their work on widely disseminated platforms, and to perform complex, original research tasks. The high-stakes, public nature of the digital exhibit may result in the high quality of work in the students' projects in line with the causal arguments of Research Based Learning. However, Mlynaryk suggests in a blog post that the Assistantship—ostensibly a higher-stakes learning opportunity—paradoxically mitigated the risk of failure. Mlynaryk writes that she relies on the idea of “working failures” in her DH research:

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Being able to work with a tangible set of mistakes, as discouraging as it can initially be, has taught me to take better pride in my ideas and objectives. Accepting my failures as part of both an immediate and grander solution is the best way that I've learned to keep moving forward. So many of my traditional humanities courses would benefit from promoting working failures as a part of student success, and I hope to one day see failure embraced in all classrooms. [Mlynaryk 2016a]

In Mlynaryk's articulation, the learning environment developed by the Assistantship helped her develop the metacognitive skill of managing her on-going learning, perhaps especially when that learning is experienced as failure. Mlynaryk notes that, in the assessed classroom learning environment, “traditional humanities courses often lack a good model for analyzing failure” [Mlynaryk 2016a], as correction and criticism rarely accompanies the offer to improve on the work at hand. Mlynaryk's reflections on her changing relationship to failure, and her assertion that space for failure would benefit all classrooms seems at first to be contradictory in the context of “high-stakes learning opportunities,” in which the consequences of failure may be more deeply felt. However, Mlynaryk also lights upon the central digital humanities values of experimentation and its concomitant potential for failure.

Mlynaryk's insights are also valuable for the way that she perceives a “good model for analyzing failure”—an aspect of the kind of learning that she did *outside* of the classroom—to be a valuable corrective to the classroom experience. This tension between modes of learning in inside and outside the classroom space permeates pedagogical design and student experience in the DHFS. The classroom space and the realities of assessment—the possibility of failure in terms of grade point and financial loss and the attendant increase in student anxiety—go together. What Mlynaryk calls for may be extended to entail a thoughtful re-evaluation of what “a good model for analyzing failure” may be within the classroom, including a re-evaluation of how it is tied to assessment. As our experiences with both the Field School and the Assistantship have suggested, the relationships between the “stakes” of learning and the anxiety-producing effects of assessment is one that would benefit from further study and experimentation.

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Students as Scholar-Citizens

Perhaps the most palpable ways in which students embody the principles of the scholar-citizen model is in public reflections on the nature of belonging and on the communities that they found through their research. These reflections are part of blog posts required by the Assistantship, but their topics and content were entirely student produced. These reflections are public-facing, but their purpose is to be exploratory and to allow students a way to refine discrete aspects of their projects. The reflections, again, expose some of the ironies of DH pedagogy: they were purposefully designed as low-stakes learning opportunities not tied to assessment, but students produced sophisticated accounts of their place within DH and the nature of their work, performing the kind of synthetic work that we would expect from high-stakes

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learning opportunities. Thematically, the posts claimed that community and autonomy were centrally important to the students' scholarly development.

For example, in a blog post for HASTAC Tiffany Chan details the way undergraduate students who are integrated into the Queen's DH community develop "'hard' skills like metadata/archival work and web development," at the same time that they are given an opportunity to apply "'soft' skills in a context outside of class [so as to] better understand how they transfer" [Chan 2015b]. Perhaps most importantly, however, she also discusses the way in which involvement in this aspect of the Field School and the accompanying Assistantship helped her to cultivate a critical perspective on the DH field and her own place in it. Chan writes, "The traces of my intersecting communities are everywhere—all over my project, in and between every line of this blog post, and churning in the back of my mind...Because DH favours openness...and because my educators and mentors have been frank about them, I am aware of discussions about critical pedagogy, contingent academic labour, the 'corporatization' of post-secondary education, etc. that I would likely never have discovered otherwise" [Chan 2015b]. Chan, unprompted by either of her instructors, articulates her role in the digital humanities, and in her education more generally, as one of awareness and knowledge, of critical perspectives, of a specific local subject position, all aspects of the scholar-citizen model on which we had attempted to shape the pedagogical approach of the Field School.

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Chan's continuation of what may be read as the scholar-citizen model into her developing career speaks to some of the ways that this model can facilitate an expansion of the role of the undergraduate beyond the classroom and even beyond the limited-term research project. Outside of the paid assistantship position, Chan has also contributed to the on-going DH project of demystifying such DH work and democratizing DH skills. Chan has independently produced a project resource for undergraduate students entitled "How Did They Make That? For Undergraduate Projects," modelled after Miriam Posner's own "How Did They Make That?" This project includes screencasts of undergraduate projects, listing the technologies used to make the featured projects, resources for using those technologies, and alternative technologies that could accomplish similar tasks. Chan's goal is to showcase undergraduate projects to undergraduates, but she has incidentally produced an extremely useful teaching resource, demonstrating to instructors what engaged undergraduates can reasonably be expected to accomplish for a university project. Her contribution has the potential to shape the projects by which students may be evaluated and to encourage instructors who may not otherwise have chosen to allow digital projects in their classrooms. As a result of Chan's work in this area one of the DHFS instructors has successfully petitioned for the inclusion of digital microprojects as a form of assessment at other courses on the BISC's satellite campus. If a student project may offer an articulation of belonging and citizenship in a scholarly discipline, this is precisely what Chan has produced; she has drawn on her specialized, local knowledge, and contributed it to the scholarly community at large.

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The students in the Assistantship seem to have developed a scholarly community and a scholarly identity. But it would be too easy to claim that the scholar-citizen pedagogical model directly produced the students' sense of belonging and elicited their best work. Freire instructs us to be vigilant of the power dynamics of pedagogical spaces, and as such we believe that credit is due more to the students than to our pedagogical efforts. Both Chan and Mlynaryk are strong, imaginative students, in whom it is easy to recognize a great deal of the positive qualities that DH wishes to claim for its own and which it actively seeks to cultivate. Each has flourished within the scholar-citizen framework that the DHFS modelled itself on, but their successes are their own. The DHFS cannot yet claim that it has found a model that can make a consistent impact on its students or that has affected systemic change in the way that undergraduate students are taught and encouraged to participate in DH research. We simply don't have a large enough sample set, and these students may well just be exceptional.

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Limitations and Assumptions

But it is this exceptional quality of the students in the DHFS, and in particular in the Assistantship, that allows us to question of the limit of the scholar-citizen model. That is, citizenship and belonging may depend on a kind of engaged participation that is rare, a criticism that we may launch at many of the optimistic political science definitions of democracy, in which individuals each have a voice and a vested interest in a system. Our attempt to unpack the "scholar citizen" metaphor in relation to undergraduate students in DH is a conscious and hopeful one. Tracing its use in

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current DH discourses about critical pedagogy has helped us to understand other concepts that make up our current constellation of thinking about undergraduates. Out of the available metaphors—“digital native”, “apprentice researcher,” “scholar citizen”—it is the latter metaphor that has inflected our program design and our teaching practice. In situating both our theoretical and practical critical engagement with the term in the current scholarly landscape, we have had occasion to investigate how DH understands critical (digital) pedagogy and to locate how this heritage runs in parallel to other models of radical pedagogy.

Most resonant for our undertaking was pedagogical participatory art’s engagement with radical pedagogy. Further, this branch of participatory art resonates with the alternate, feminist genealogy of DH research through digital art and design. In turn, we are able to question the way that design may shift our understanding of some of the principles of DH teaching and learning. By designing the DHFS in line with the scholar–citizen model that we have observed latent in discussions of DH pedagogy, we have exposed new and necessary avenues of research and experimentation in DH. In particular, the “high–stakes” learning opportunities that have characterized many of the more innovative approaches to DH pedagogy come under new pressure within the design structure of the DHFS. The observations that this program design allows suggests that discrete aspects of high stakes learning—public, semi–public, or private dissemination; classroom and non–classroom spaces; complexity of the assigned task; and the role of assessment—do not always have a direct correlation to either student engagement or the quality of student work. Furthermore, students’ belonging in DH communities hinge on these design questions.

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In working to establish the “scholar-citizen” as a viable model of undergraduate DH pedagogy, we, like others, draw on discussions of power in the classroom, as laid out by Paulo Freire and others; however, we understand such a dynamic in a slightly different way than has been articulated by current DH scholarship. For example, in his definition of “critical digital pedagogy,” Jesse Stommel locates in Freire the possibility of levelling traditional classroom hierarchies, emphasizing the how radical pedagogical approaches can transform the learning environment into “a space for asking questions—a space of cognition not information” [Stommel 2014]. According to Stommel, in such a space “[v]ertical (or hierarchical) relationships give way to more playful ones, in which students and teachers co–author together the parameters for their individual and collective learning. Problem–posing education offers a space of mutual creation not consumption” [Stommel 2014]. We maintain, however, that while critical pedagogy needs to continually challenge hierarchical notions of power, it is never fully free of them. Scholar–citizenry should be about reflexive awareness of the power dynamic on the part of both students and instructors. Part of that reflexivity is an acknowledgement of just how challenging it can be to attain citizenship, and that citizenship can also be a function of a certain kind of privilege.^[11]

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We remain ever aware of how the program exists in a sphere of privilege, perhaps best symbolized by the campus’s main academic building, a 15th-century fortified English manor house. Though the DHFS endeavoured to afford undergraduates agency in the field, it must also continue to be critically aware of, and accountable for, its position and inheritance. As part of that inheritance, the DHFS’s content retained a Eurocentric focus, and reaches a largely North American student body that provides only limited exposure to the wealth of criticism emerging from a global DH landscape. One of our own failures, again, has been to find compelling ways of teaching non-Eurocentric and non-North American forms of DH.

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In addition, as we wish to subject a citizenry model to the same scrutiny as the “digital native” and “apprentice-research assistant” models, we are aware of how such a community-oriented model of engagement might privilege social compliance over individual agency, and, additionally, can act in service of a neo-liberal discourse that has utilized the language surrounding creative practice for its own purposes. As Claire Bishop notes in her critical assessment of participatory art, such collaborations can be co-opted into the project of rewarding “submissive citizens who respect authority and accept the ‘risk’ and responsibility of looking after themselves in the face of diminished [support infrastructures]” [Bishop 2012]. Bishop’s warning is instructive for the idealistic models of participation we envision for undergraduate DHers, models that rely on what can be markers of exactly this neoliberal subjectivity.

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Further scrutiny along these lines only leads us to ask: what is the remedy to the insistent place of privilege from which we conduct this pedagogical exercise? We attempt to model a pedagogy that thinks of our students as social, political, and ideological subjects, as scholar citizens, a model that shifts, if only slightly, the metaphors of belonging we apply to

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undergraduate participation in DH. We hope that this model will continue push us to challenge the underlying assumptions of our pedagogy in recognition that these moments of difficulty and discomfort, and a willingness to account for them and critically examine them, can help to render discourses of belonging in the digital humanities more accountable for those who are the subject of them.

Notes

[1] A desire to challenge the dominant cultural narrative about the value of humanities degrees is evident in the number of recent popular press pieces focused on the employability of graduates and the degree to which they possess sought after skills in a range of industries. For a sampling of these pieces in chronological order see [Weissman 2013], [Brady 2014], [Anders 2015], [Meyers 2016].

[2] It is also worth mentioning Amy Earhart's work in *Traces of the Old, Uses of the New: The Emergence of Digital Literary Studies* [Earhart 2015]. Earhart does not concentrate on design histories like McPherson. However, she does trace lost genealogies of cultural critical scholarly work even within the types of projects that we more traditionally read as DH projects. Her major contribution is to demonstrate our contemporary politics of canonization and historiography and to perform a feminist recovery of recent disciplinary history.

[3] The Field School portion of the DHFS did not run in the 2016 Summer term. However, the assistantship will run independently of the Field School for the first time in the 2016–2017 academic year.

[4] The Bader International Study Centre emphasizes experiential learning as a required component of all courses offered at the satellite campus. Experiential learning in this context is “a formal element of the curriculum which is usually active in some way, or more active than other elements of the curriculum” [Moon 2004]. It involves an organized student experience, unmediated by the instructor, and a structured process of reflection and academic assessment within the framework provided by the relevant course. Students are required to participate in experiential learning opportunities and instructors are required to provide a review panel with academic justification and assessment frameworks for those opportunities.

[5] See also [Cope and Kalantzis 2009]

[6] Due to the transitory nature of participatory art, we have included Reference entries that direct the reader to the documentary traces of these events, including interview transcripts [Beuys and Schwartz 1972], artists' statements [Bruguera n.d.], video footage [Derks and Groenendaal 2012], and event programs [Academy 2006].

[7] This attempt has exposed some of the fuzzy and frustrating aspects of intellectual property at our university.

[8] Our approach echoes the claims of Research-Based Learning that gives students the “tools to ask and answer legitimate questions” (Jenstad and McLean-Fiander), but as the discussion will show, such learning may not always be “high stakes.”

[9] In providing students with these opportunities we make an implicit argument about the relationship between the undergraduate student and DH as a discipline. Disciplinarity, however messy or broadly defined, is fundamentally important in undergraduate pedagogy. The successful integration of students' local identities has also relied on the knowledge base that accompanies their disciplinary backgrounds. And our attempts to compress academic generational divides depend on the values of DH itself to question academic hierarchy. Our choice to make disciplinarity explicit in the DH classroom is a departure from some of the existing arguments about disciplinarity and DH pedagogy. Unlike scholarly adherents to DH, undergraduate students tend not to have not yet made the choice to enter the professions they come across in their university courses. The as-yet-undecided position of the undergraduate has prompted scholars like William Pannacker and Ryan Cordell to argue that the term “Digital Humanities” does not make sense to an undergraduate audience. Pannacker suggests “Digital Liberal Arts” as an alternative, but Cordell goes further to suggest that even the term “Humanities” holds little meaning for undergraduates [Pannacker 2013] [Cordell 2015]. However, our claim that design, particularly conceptual design, reveals the values of a given field prompts us to approach disciplinarity in the undergraduate classroom differently. DH, in our understanding, is a field interested in critiquing underlying structures, whether technological or in humanistic. DH is a discipline particularly invested in questioning its own boundaries. Experimentation and community are immanent to DH research, and they are likewise integral to DH pedagogy, as are the disciplinary boundaries that shape communities of research and teaching.

[10] This is not to say that the evaluated course material was easy or simplistic. In fact, on anonymous student evaluations, one student remarked that the DHFS was the “one of the hardest – if not the hardest – course [he or she has] taken during [his or her] undergraduate career.”

[11] The attendees of the DHFS are privileged in very real–world, non–metaphorical ways. In terms of physical access, the program runs during

an optional third term in the academic year and thus is not necessarily logistically, or financially accessible. The necessity of aligning the program's budget model with institutional requirements means a program cost that can exclude interested participants, as only a portion of it can be offset by a limited range of needs and merit-based funding opportunities. In fact, one of our own infrastructural failures has been our inability to secure meaningful bursaries and financial assistance to students who might be interested in attending (and we have evidence that financial barriers have prevented some students from joining the program).

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