

Introduction

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Abstract

This article serves as the introduction to DHQ's Special Issue, "Imagining the DH Undergraduate: Special Issue in Undergraduate Education in DH." Co-editors Emily Christina Murphy and Shannon R. Smith introduce the issue—its significance, theoretical underpinnings, structure, articles, and case studies. The special issue is organized into four thematic clusters: 1) program models; 2) disciplinarity and DH pedagogy; 3) tool development; and 4) professional concerns.

Putting together this special issue, we as editors were driven by the question of how the digital humanities now conceptualizes the role of undergraduate students in the discipline. As the field continues to develop, it gains a foothold in existing curricula and engages in building up its own, discipline-specific courses and programs. Our hunch was that, in a field meticulously concerned with defining itself and with reconsidering hierarchy and labour, the development of pedagogical practices would elicit the same critical scrutiny. The articles and case studies collected here certainly evince this assumption, and the ways they do so are as numerous as the institutional contexts in which their authors find themselves.

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In his now canonical introduction to *Digital Humanities Pedagogy: Practices, Principles and Politics* (2012), Brett D. Hirsch points out that the discipline of DH is especially primed to be a location for critical pedagogy. He notes that the symbiotic nature of the teaching-research relationship, fostered as it is by “collectivity and collaboration in pursuit of knowledge,” is crucial to the development of a critical pedagogy. He goes on to call for a movement of “pedagogy beyond the brackets, out of marginalization and exclusion to the fore of the digital humanities” [Hirsch 2012, 16; 6]. Hirsch is particularly indebted to Paulo Freire, who, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968, 2000), posits a model of radical pedagogy that challenges the power structures inherent in established educational models. Freire urges us to be at all times aware of the power dynamics in our pedagogical spaces [Freire 2000]. In the same moment as Hirsch, Ann Burdick et al. sketch the pragmatic and methodological foundations of DH research in *digital_humanities* (2012), acknowledging in addition the potential of DH pedagogy. For these scholars, “additional outcomes produced by hands-on, experiential, and project-based learning through doing” can allow students to “think critically with digital methods” [Burdick et al. 2012, 134]. We perceive these texts as some of the foundational moments in DH as a discipline, and their publication suggests the close complicity of the practicalities of skillsets, project-based learning, and experience-articulated by Burdick et al.—and the theoretical concerns of belonging, hierarchy, and politics—championed by Hirsch. Since this moment, initiatives like the Digital Pedagogy Lab's flagship journal, *Hybrid Pedagogy* [Digital Pedagogy Lab 2011] and the Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory initiative [HASTAC], as well as the UCLA *Student Collaborator's Bill of Rights* [Student Collaborators' Bill of Rights 2015], have foregrounded the theoretical question of undergraduate student belonging by articulating the practicalities of students' working conditions and rights to ownership over their work. Scholars like Katherine M. Faull and Diane Jakacki continue this trend, looking to the multiple contexts of DH pedagogy to support the development of humanistic habits of mind, insisting that the involvement of undergraduate students across the classroom, research, and employment contexts of DH are necessary for this vision of education [Faull and Jakacki 2015].

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In keeping with the energy and intent of this movement in digital humanities pedagogy, we have sought to bring other thinkers into dialogue with this work. As editors and contributors, we recognize that part of a critical engagement with our classrooms necessitates interrogating the identity categories central to them, and we have looked to similar work being done in parallel fields as a means of cross-pollination. Chief among this work is that of Claire Bishop, an art historian whose critical assessment of participatory art, and specifically pedagogic participatory art, has addressed the way this mode of artistic expression seeks to deconstruct and disturb the established identity category of the viewer [Bishop 2012]. At the same time that Bishop recognises in pedagogic participatory art the potential to disturb the traditional boundary between the artwork and the consumer, she also remains vigilant to the ways in which such disturbance can be co-opted for political purposes antithetical to the original intention. In both crafting the framework for this special issue, and in thinking through our own digital humanities pedagogy, we have returned to Bishop's work for its recognition of pedagogy's radical potential to disrupt hierarchies through challenging established understandings of key identity categories. Similarly, we also respond to Bishop's caution and call for critical awareness regarding how ideas of viewer (or student) agency can tend towards the support, rather than the challenging, of neo-liberal political ideologies.

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The interrelated question of theory and practice that we have traced here resonates, unsurprisingly, with the perpetual hack vs. yack debate of DH. However, what is foregrounded by a growing body of scholarship on DH pedagogy and the broader contexts we wish to bring it into conversation with is the fact that hack and yack inform one another. Of all research practices, pedagogical research is most difficult to separate from the tacit knowledges of the classroom. In this issue, the "hack" of DH undergraduate education provides the writers with subject matter and occasion, and their articles are yoked to the robust "yack" by means of the articles' and case studies' theoretical frameworks. Many of the contributions provide accounts of pedagogical practice, accompanied by the assignment guidelines and program description documentation that testify to it; in so doing contributors underscore the way in which our lecture halls, classrooms, and labs are the locations in which we see our theoretical concepts made manifest.

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Across these contributions, we can trace three key ideas that recur, and which we understand to be central to this Special Issue's investigation of DH's positioning of the undergraduate: agency, literacies, and scale. In line with Hirsch, Freire, and Bishop, perhaps the most pressing thematic issue to emerge in this collection is that of *agency* in undergraduate student belonging. The contributors to this issue have put this concern in various ways—Caitlin Christian-Lamb and Anelise ShROUT sketch "a theoretical model that centers student agency"; Janelle Jenstad, Kim McLean-Fiander, and Kathryn McPherson maintain that investing students with autonomy produces high-quality work; our own contribution proposes a scholar-citizen model in order to communicate the nature and responsibilities of belonging and participation in scholarly community. Complementing this focus on the question of student agency, Andrew Bretz reminds us of how the problem of faculty contingency intersects with this discussion. Many of the essays in this issue evince current scholarship's continued indebtedness to Freire and Hirsch. They also indicate that the question of student agency is far from settled, and that scholarship on undergraduate students in DH will need to map considerations of agency onto the circumstances in which they teach.

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Literacies emerge in these essays as key components in a skillset that facilitates agency. Nearly all of our contributors respond, whether overtly or implicitly, to Marc Prensky's 2001 description of the "digital native," the argument that a radical shift in technology has likewise produced a radical schism between digital native students and digital immigrant instructors, two groups whose divergent fluencies in the digital are close to irreconcilable [Prensky 2001]. Although much scholarly energy has been spent complicating and debunking Prensky's assertions, researchers in DH pedagogy still position themselves in relation or opposition to his ideas, indicating that the work of theorizing the undergraduate in DH is also one of refining our understandings of their relationship to the digital. Similarly, many of the articles in this issue turn their attention towards the way that undergraduate participation in DH relates to traditional humanistic education. Specifically, literacies emerge as a core educational concept in digital and cultural education alike (Kara Kennedy), with literacy in Renaissance Drama (Janelle Jenstad et al.; Laura Estill) and e-lit (Alexandra Saum-Pascual) provided as particular examples.

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Literacies, however, frequently prove to be contingent upon the circumstances and infrastructure of DH pedagogy, and among these factors questions of scale — time scale, classroom size, size of student contribution, or institutional reach

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— dominate. As a result of the restricted time frame of the semester-long course and the often introductory knowledge that students must gain about discipline or method, much of what this issue discusses is necessarily on a smaller scale than the promises of major DH research projects. Further, the articles at hand tend to be concerned with streams within curricula, scaffolding of single courses, and assignments (James O’Sullivan et al., Adriana Álvarez Sánchez et al., Brandon Locke, Kara Kennedy, Shannon E. Kelley, Laura Estill). This further restriction may indicate that DH programs are still in their infancy insofar as institutional purchase — that instructors and program developers are starting small with a view to building to minors, majors, and programs — or it may indicate that a smaller scale has produced particularly generative environments for DH learning. In addition, many contributors think about scale in terms of the coordination of digital spaces and communities across aspects of large institutions (Danica Savonick and Lisa Tagliaferri; Alexander Christie, Aaron Mauro et al.), or the development of robust resources that can be deployed in individual classroom settings (Jenstad et al). In terms of infrastructural scale, then, DH pedagogy seems to be at a crossroads: the infrastructure that supports the individual classroom appears to be expanding, while the challenges of the boutique-sized classroom persist.

The boutique scale of student work in addition to programming context may evince a further impulse in DH undergraduate pedagogy to seek a bite-sized approach to the field, a small-scale impulse that contrasts with the big-data promises that have come to dominate many flavours of DH. Undergraduate students’ output as described in these articles, even when in written scholarly forms, tends to be at the scale of the encyclopedia article or the blog post. Indeed, the small scale of undergraduate student contribution indicates to us a genre of response to Hirsch, Freire, and Bishop: the role of the undergraduate is moving away from one of menial labour on large-scale projects and towards producing work that mirrors or overlaps with a form of “professional scholarship,” as many of our contributors put it. The small-scale written genre may represent a midpoint in this movement, and as Melanie Kill notes, the different entry points into such activity, like those available to students collectively authoring knowledge on Wikipedia, are conducive to student engagement and participation [Kill 2012, 397–8]. The boutique-sized output requires research, often entails an original scholarly contribution, but it does not demand the same level of robust argumentation as other forms and remains true to the small-scale contexts that have proven generative for undergraduate pedagogy.

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The questions of agency, literacy, and scale ultimately amount to the models by which we theorize the role of undergraduate students. Considering undergraduates as apprentice scholars and researchers dominates the contributions to this issue, but the scholars represented here are also concerned with how students can have some kind of impact outside the academy, whether as a result of a pedagogy that shapes them as critically engaged citizens, or one that provides them with skills that make them more employable. A focus on undergraduates means that we as instructors and scholars are pushed to account for what undergraduates are going to make of their encounters with DH outside of the academy.

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As some of our discussion thus far indicates, the lines of reciprocity that cross the pieces in this special issue are multiple. However, we also perceive the pieces to fall into four thematic clusters around which the issue has been structured: 1) program models; 2) disciplinarity and DH pedagogy; 3) tool development; and 4) professional concerns. The issue is made up of longer, article-length pieces with emphasis on theoretical aspects of DH pedagogy, and the first three clusters also feature shorter, complementary case studies that concentrate on the practical aspects of pedagogical implementation.

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The first cluster, “Program Models,” features pieces that are concerned primarily with the means of building programs outside of traditional academic structures like the major or minor stream; they turn their attention, instead, to experiments in and principles of program design. Caitlin Christian-Lamb and Anelise ShROUT’s article offers a survey of undergraduate DH practice that comes out of a workshop held at the 2015 Digital Humanities conference in Sydney, Australia. The authors identify key characteristics that they argue should mark undergraduate pedagogy and posit an agentic student model which sits between that of the digital native and the apprentice or research assistant. Working in a humanities lab, Brandon Locke contextualizes digital literacy skills within the framework of the liberal arts in his article, asking how methodologies from libraries can support the development of critical liberal arts literacies in the digital age in collaboration with teachers and program developers. Janelle Jenstad, Kim McLean-Fiander, and Kathryn R. McPherson make a similar argumentative move, thinking about how collaboration across institutional contexts supports pedagogy.

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Their contribution echoes ShROUT and Christian-Lamb with its emphasis on first principles of student ownership through Research Based Learning and they provide an account of the pioneering practices of the *Map of Early Modern London* (MoEML) project's Pedagogical Partnership Initiative. This cluster ends with two complementary case studies. Shannon Kelley provides an account of how she implemented the Pedagogical Partnership of MoEML in her own classroom, constructively pointing out the limitations of an apprenticeship model for the faculty and students engaged in it at this small scale level. James O'Sullivan et al.'s case study also looks to provide an account of the praxis of pedagogical models, and in so doing he calls upon Jakacki's theorization of the digital project as pedagogy; he evaluates the use of the model in an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental context. The articles and case studies in this section are invested in first principles of pedagogy, whether those surveyed from the field or those asserted in order to guide program development, and frequently draw upon, explore, and nuance underlying assumptions about the nature of research and apprenticeship for undergraduate students.

The articles in the second cluster, "Disciplinary and DH Pedagogy," ask how the inclusion of undergraduate students shifts the disciplinary boundaries of DH and the humanities fields that overlap with it. Contributors focus on the politics of knowledge as the primary mechanism by which DH pedagogy shifts disciplinary borders. Aaron Mauro et al. ask how students fit into collaborative digital scholarship as a form of socially oriented knowledge creation dispersed across labour categories in the contemporary university. Their method fits their subject matter: what they have described as the "seamful" aspects of collaboration insist upon the heterogeneity of teams and infrastructural contexts in addition to their impact on student involvement in scholarly projects. Ultimately, Mauro et al. concentrate their intervention on the development of methods of measuring and evaluation as a means of facilitating ethical collaboration as a mode of pedagogy. Where Mauro et al. focus on students in multiple and heterogeneous institutions, our own article asks how ethical considerations may be applied in a single academic context. By constructing genealogies for DH pedagogy through the histories of feminist DH and participatory art, we posit a "scholar-citizen" model of DH pedagogy, one which draws from existing metaphors of pedagogy and allows an examination of the power dynamics that continue to inhere in pedagogical contexts. Feminist pedagogy also informs Kara Kennedy, whose article perceives DH pedagogy to entail a feminist imperative in the reorientation of the discipline of English to serve the employment needs of its students. As Kennedy notes, the need for students to gain digital literacy skills impacts most strongly upon the women students of humanities departments, who are the majority of English literature students and who often contend with gender biases in computing-dominated employment and pedagogical cultures. Although English literature has historically been a disciplinary stronghold of DH research, Kennedy maintains that DH pedagogy requires further work in order to transform the English literature classroom and discipline. In contrast to Kennedy, Alexandra Saum-Pascual responds to the domination of English literature contexts of DH by positing that the potential of DH pedagogy may be better supported in the disciplinary environments of electronic literature and foreign languages, with Spanish-language literature as her example. For Saum-Pascual, DH requires a range of cultural literacies that complement those required in foreign-language pedagogical contexts — the multiplicity of skills and literacies that both contexts demand is their potential to change the disciplines of literary studies and DH alike. More explicitly than much of the other work presented in this issue, Saum-Pascual's contribution focuses on the relationship of digital humanities to language. In a similar vein, the case study that closes this cluster, by Adriana Álvarez Sánchez and Miriam Peña Pimentel, offers a summary of programme development in a non-European and non-Anglophone North American context to cultivate opportunities for critical digital humanities pedagogy among undergraduates in a history department. This case study flags the geopolitics of disciplinary in complement to the theoretical politics of discipline explored in other contributions.

The third cluster, "Tool Development," approaches the problems and politics of the classroom from the perspective of the infrastructure that supports both aspects of DH pedagogy. For Alexander Christie, infrastructure is a primary vehicle of disciplinary and institutional forms of power. Christie cautions against the tendency for tools to become divorced from the contexts, materialities, and labours of their creation, and he grounds his observations in the creation of the Pedagogy Toolkit, a tool aggregator that both disseminates tools and provides documentation on their development and use for instructors. Danica Savonick and Lisa Tagliaferri have a similarly wide reach: responding to the challenges of infrastructure across a multi-college network in a single institution, they report on their implementation of the social networking tool, the Futures Initiative Commons in a Box, developed for student collaboration across the diverse student body and geographically dispersed campuses of the City University of New York. Savonick and Tagliaferri seek to use

Commons in a Box in order to make concrete many of the promises and ideals of anti-hierarchical, student-centered education in DH. Closing this cluster with a case study, Laura Estill offers a description of assignments from a Renaissance Drama course using Wikipedia, examining the incorporation of a well-established tool of a digital public sphere into the classroom. Tool use and development, for these contributors, is not simply the search for solutions to classroom challenges; instead, tools provide a technological substrate upon which to examine relationships among students, instructors, institutions, and a broader technologically motivated society.

The Special Issue comes to a close with a final paper on professional concerns, turning its focus from students to instructors with Andrew Bretz's discussion of digital tools and itinerant teaching labour. In Bretz's polemic, the tools that make possible so much of our pedagogy have paradoxically presaged a return to the labour model of the medieval university. Bretz prompts us to be aware of the economic, political, and social implications of our pedagogical turn to the digital and the way in which the practices and tools we use can foster faculty and student inequalities at the same time as they can construe autonomy, agency, and citizenship.

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