

ENGL 857 – Digital Composition, Literature, and Pedagogy
 Final Project
 Pedagogical Intervention
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Statement of Purpose

In their article, "They Have Come, Why Won't We Build It? On the Digital Future of the Humanities", Jon Saklofske, Estelle Clements, and Richard Cunningham state that, "To integrate digital humanities into existing curricula, it is important to remember that digital humanities is not a discipline, not a theoretical approach, and not an end in itself of research or teaching practices. Rather, it is a means of scholarship and pedagogy that embraces the digital frame as its knowledge *environment*, inclusively and self-consciously moving beyond the exclusive and often unacknowledged hegemony of print cultural paradigms"(Saklofske, Jon; Clements, Estelle; Cunningham, Richard;). I think this is partly true when we define digital humanities as a means of helping and enhancing skills of students in the humanities. This is because digital humanities does not simply mean that teachers and students use computers or digitized materials, for example, in a 16th century Shakespeare's drama course, or communicate academic opinions and writings via digital medias. It is definitely more than that. There is, I think, a twofold aspect in digital humanities; one is functionality, and the other is contents: the former is about how digital environment can enhance efficiency of the teacher's instruction and student's reception, and the latter is about how digital environment shapes content itself. And I will emphasize the latter part of digital humanities in this project.

Digital humanities has added a lot of new ingredients in its corpus. Now, I am going to narrow the boundary of digital humanities to literature in the department of English. Literature in the digital age is not the literature in the past. The pace of contents has become much faster and shorter. Some digital literary works, such as David Clark's *88 Constellations for Wittgenstein* and Shelley Jackson's *My Body*, do not have a long narrative and do not walk through with the readers from the beginning to the end, but they allow the readers to bound one section to another without thinking any premise and context between sections, which means each section stands alone; nevertheless, all sections are in some sense interconnected. Also, the form of contents has been liberated. Emily Short's *Galatea* does not give the readers a specific way to read the text, but invites them to take part in creating their own narratives. These works show us a lot of reasons why digital humanities matters with the department of English; and why it has to be considered as a discipline, and a theoretical approach; and why it needs specialized faculties who can properly deal with these new forms of literature. And it is sure that digital literature is going to be a more significant genre in literature as time goes on and as technology develops. Maybe, sooner or later, digital humanities would be divided into several offshoots according to its contents or forms, or would take over some areas in the department of English.

This happens because the computer has intervened the way people consume cultural products. Simply, books are not going to be the only materials that English majors have to deal with. That is way the English department will need faculty members who are specialized in this new area, and I will suggest a piece of class demonstration for the English faculties to have a better understanding of the concept of digital humanities.

Introduction

A simple example of digital literature is Emily Short's *Galatea*, in which the readers have to interact with the text, culminating with different conclusion from one another. Nowadays, there is a bigger and more complex example of this kind of interactivity in consuming digital contents - RPG(Role Playing Game). RPGs, these days, have added not only sophisticated interactivity between users and non-player characters(NPCs) or among users, but also more complexities to its contents, such as background narratives, complex characters, innovative graphics and sounds, and the like. Experiencing one of those RPGs these days may require time and intelligence equivalent to reading an epic-novel of more than 500pages. Themes in RPGs vary; one popular game, [Fallout](#), deals with the afterworld from the apocalypse of nuclear war. One of the most popular RPGs, [Diablo](#), has a theme of fantasy of which contents is no less than those in *The Lord of Rings*. Thus, it is my Final Project of Pedagogical Intervention to demonstrate a set of processes of a course that approaches RPGs as literary works.

Class Preparation

Target students

Undergraduate English majors

Text

Although there are many RPGs to choose from, selection of the games is based on its literariness; whether it has a specific narrative(s), characters, whether it has reasonable size and contents, and whether it is applicable to history and culture. One of the RPGs that I have chosen is *Diablo III* created by one of the most popular internet-game providers, *Blizzard Entertainment*.

Students must procure the class materials(texts). The texts will be RPG softwares, actively operable versions in computers. Each RPG would cost \$20 more or less. Furthermore, because the course requires a personal computer with a little higher specifications, I will specify the minimum computer requirement along with the price of RPGs in the course description, so that students decide whether they can take the course.

Additional texts will be the contents provided in online by the game providers

Lesson Plan

One session will consist of four classes.

First two classes will consist of two different sections to talk about narrative backgrounds. A designated group(3-4 students) will perform a presentation of the reading materials and have discussion questions with other classmates. I will provide some comments to the presentation and each discussion question.

Day 3, the class will mostly consist of sharing game experiences and my instructions for literary aspects of the game.

Day 4, students(approximately a third students, a proportion of the whole three sections) will have brief presentations on their mini-essays. And I will make some remarks on the mini-essays, and conclude the session.

*Figure 1 – Session 01 Diablo III Lesson Plan and Rubrics for the Class

Session 01- Diablo III

	In Class	Homework
Day 01	-Discussion of "the Story of Diablo" (Chapter 1-4) -Group presentation on the summary of the reading and sharing discussion questions -Discussion on the narratives concerning historical and cultural backgrounds	-Reading materials(Chapter 5-8) https://us.battle.net/d3/en/game/ -Constructing Characters
Day 02	-Discussion of "the Story of Diablo" (Chapter 5-8) -Group presentation on the summary of the reading and sharing discussion questions -Discussion on the characters concerning historical and cultural backgrounds of each character	-Playing the game through Act 1-2 -Summarize the game experience based on "the Story of Diablo"
Day 03	-Discussion on Act 1-2 -Discussion on the game with various issues.	-Playing the game through Act 3-5 -Summarize the game experience based on "the Story of Diablo"
Day 04	-Discussion on Act 3-5 -Mini-essay presentations -Culminating some conclusions of the session	-Reading materials(For the next session)
Mini-essay guidelines 1 - Based on one of your game experiences, you are going to summarize it and compose a brief synopsis. It must contain a certain plot(s), and you don't copy the master plot provided by Blizzard Entertainment. 2 - Make a brief remark or criticism on your synopsis. Examples- A historical, cultural, political, sociological, or philosophical interpretation; A criticism on various issues, such as an anachronism, racism, chauvinism, sexuality, violence, etc.		

Assignments (will be Graded)

- 1 - Students will post response(s) weekly to the assigned reading and other homeworks via designated online blog.
 - 2 - Students will compose a mini-essay at the end of every session.
 - 3 - Students will have at least one individual presentation on the mini-essay, and one group presentation on summery and discussion questions.
- *The Midterm and the Final exam are substituted by mini-essays.

Course Objectives

- 1 - Enhance an ability to interpret digital contents(RPGs) into literary contents
- 2 - Understand the forms, narratives, images, and sounds in digital contents.
- 3 - Acquire some skills to apply digital contents to various social issues.
- 4 - Acquire holistic understanding about the Digital Humanities through digital contents.

Online Posting Tool

Microsoft “Onenote” will be an online posting tool for both the students and the professor. This tool helps them to share various information, such as reading responses, class assignments, and peer collaborations.

*Figure 2 – Online posting tool

The screenshot displays the OneNote Online interface within a Microsoft Edge browser window. The title bar indicates "Web Note made in Microsoft Edge". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** Contains a "Notebooks" list with "Jinhyung Kim" selected. Below it, a "Welcome" message is followed by a list of pages: "WEEK 01", "WEEK 02", "WEEK 03", "_Collaboration S", and "_Content Library". A blue circle highlights "WEEK 01", and a blue line connects it to a purple callout box labeled "3".
- Top Bar:** Shows "OneNote Online" and "Jinhyung Kim".
- Main Content Area:** Displays a page titled "Response to WEEK 01 - Ross Geller" dated "Friday, May 5, 2017 12:31 PM". The text discusses "Digital Contents as Literature" and "Chapter 01 The Darkening of Tristram". A blue circle highlights the text "Diablo III consist of many different elements in its game, and the Heaven and the Hell is the basic concept of the conflicts...", and a blue line connects it to a purple callout box labeled "1".
- Right Sidebar:** Titled "NOTES", it contains three numbered items:
 - 1 If the professor comments on the response, the name will appear beside the sentence.
 - 2 Students will create pages
 - 3 Each section contains each week's works and responses.

The Goal of the course

One difference between normal players and the students who take the course is that the students must consistently think about literary forms, such as vocabulary, quotations, rhetoric, history, geography, sociology, and science. Students will eventually understand how these aspects work together in a digital content to give users pleasure. For the same reason, a student of English department who takes a course of the 19th century novels would be required to study all literary forms, stated above, in a novel.

Thus, there are two general goals for this course. First, the course will give English majors an opportunity that they experience the new forms of consuming literature in person. Therefore, it will enhance their literary skills in digital environment. Second, the course will train English majors in a more practical way that enables them to adapt their literary skills into various occupations in the world of digital generations. Experiences and reflections on digital contents will eventually widen job opportunities in ever expanding digital environment.

Postscript

After being through all class activities of this course, I have concluded that the English department should seriously take account of digital humanities as a source or genre of literature rather than a technological tool, merely applying to existing courses. Using various digital tools in a literature course may not contribute to understanding of literature itself. In his book, *Literature in the Digital Age*, Adam Hammond states that, “Every medium shift entails a conversation of the literary record... Though a digital file can accurately render the look of a printed page and the letters it contains, it cannot record the smell of a book or the texture of its pages; at present, there is no digital format that can express the weight of a book in our hands or the tactile sensation of leafing through pages with a finger marking an important spot” (41). In other words, technology does not really contribute to understanding of literary works that were written and printed in books. A reader may have a better understanding of a novel printed in a book when he or she reads the actual book, because it contains certain aspects of the media by which it is created.

People created literature with a means that they had at hand, and they understood literature by the same means. Throughout the history, revolutions have been made; ancient times, people experienced literature orally; then, writing system made a big difference; next, the invention of the printing shaped the way of consuming literature. Now, the computer has been intervening our way of understanding literature, which is why we need to see digital humanities in a different perspective. The reason is simple. Literature in the digital age, created in digital format, cannot properly be read, analyzed, and understood by anything, but by what they are created.

Bibliography

Hammond, Adam. *Literature in the Digital Age*. Cambridge UP, 2016.

Saklofske, Jon; Clements, Estelle; Cunningham, Richard;. *They Have Come, Why Won't We Build It? On the Digital Future of the Humanities*. Ed. Brett D. Hirsch. December 2012. 5 May 2017. <<http://www.openbookpublishers.com/htmlreader/DHP/chap13.html#ch13>>.