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Engl. 757
Pedagogical Intervention

Lesson Plan on Classification Systems in a Literature Course

School: Four-year university
Student type: Freshman/Sophomore
Course: American Literature
Subject: 19th Century American Literature

I was inspired to create this lesson plan from the article “Digital Pedagogy Unplugged” by Paul Fyfe. Fyfe discusses the idea of “teaching naked”, which means teaching digital pedagogy without using computers. Instead of being governed by the electronic tools themselves, “teaching naked” allows students to conceptualize and perform the work the machine is doing. [Fyfe] I like the idea of having students pay attention to what Fyfe calls the “critical labor that digital resources seem to dissolve”. This led me to want to create a hands-on, classification group activity in an American Literature course. I was also influenced by the work involved with the Omeka project.

The goal in doing this activity is to have students gain experience and a conceptual understanding of how large data sets are organized. This activity forces students to consider why certain choices are made in classifying large data sets. I think there is a strong answer to the “so what” question others may ask about this activity, which is this teaches students why classification is important, how to execute classifying data, and teaches students there were deliberate choices made for organizing data on websites. Students will have gained knowledge about why

certain organizational choices were made, and can't just say "because that's how the website is." I chose to create this lesson for an American literature course because that is ideally a literature course I would like to teach.

Lesson Plan:

- 1) Students enter class, I will take attendance
- 2) Assuming there are twenty-five students in the class, have students get into groups of five or six, making four to five groups
- 3) There will be five desks with assorted materials on them, such as biographical information, images, short stories, poems, and books relating to the authors and genres in 19th Century American literature in our course
- 4) In their groups, students will pick a desk to work with the assorted items
- 5) Students must classify the items into at least three different categories. Students must identify what the categories are, and provide a short rationale for why they made the classification choices they did. Time allotted for this portion of the activity is about twenty-five minutes.
- 6) Each group will take turns presenting their three (or more) categories and rationale to the class. Time allotted for this portion is twenty minutes.
- 7) If there is enough time left, I will wrap up the class with a short class discussion on the choices each group made in order to classify their data set.

Works Cited:

Paul Fyfe. "Digital Pedagogy Unplugged." *Digital Humanities Quarterly*. vol. 3, no. 3, 2005.