

Faculty Showcase '06

Sponsored by Academic Technology at Simmons College



Storytelling in the Age of the Internet



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Goals

- Use stories as a means for considering a range of cultural perspectives, including questioning assumptions about class, age, race, gender, ethnicity, and ability
- Understand writing and other forms of authorship as processes that include critical thinking, planning, feedback, and versioning
- Increase understanding of (and academic facility with) technology

Project Overview

"MCC 101: Culture Matters" is required for incoming Simmons undergraduates. Faculty members who teach this course are allowed considerable flexibility in course content. Yet all sections of MCC challenge students to improve their writing, think critically, and examine the challenges and opportunities associated with living in a multicultural society.

In fall 2005, when Gail Matthews-DeNatale taught an MCC 101 section entitled "Storytelling in the Age of the Internet,"



http://at.simmons.edu/digital_stories

"If it weren't for this course I would have been missing out... only appreciating the things I am already familiar with and not those that are most important to be exposed to...the stories and things that are new and different!"

"The digital story made me take into account not only my actions, but my impact on the student with whom I worked. I knew I had to make my work mean something."
– Simmons Students

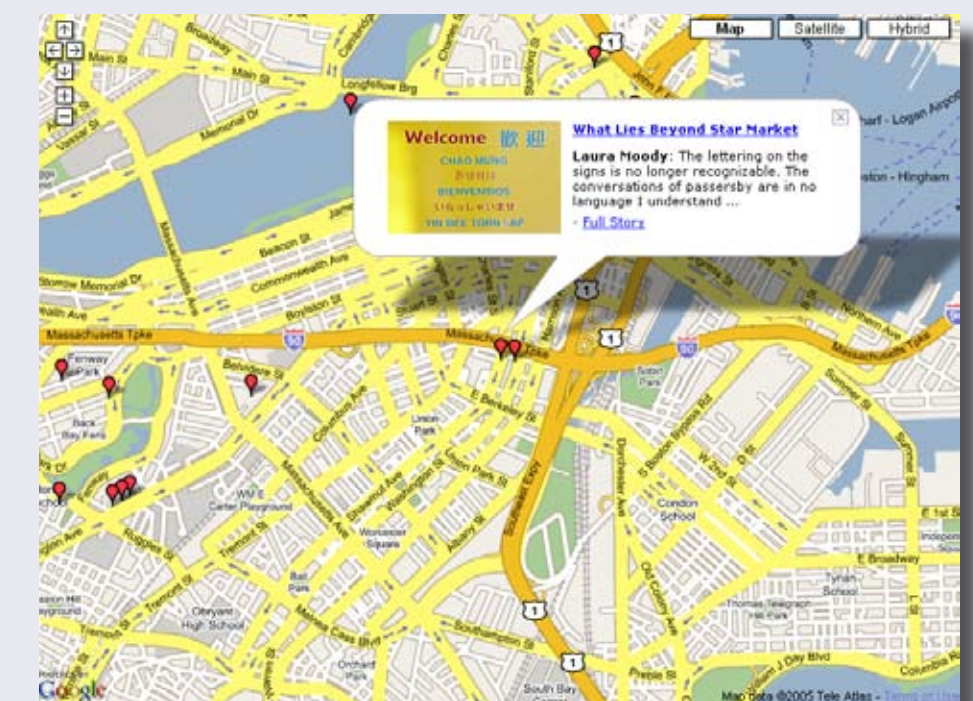
she had an additional goal: to increase students' fluency with information technology. With the help of Academic Technology Training Specialist Lesley Weiman, by the end of the semester students had published their writing on the web and produced original "digital stories" (short digital videos).

Boston Story Map: At the beginning of the semester students observed, photographed, and wrote about a Boston place. They were encouraged to seek out a new experience or culture. After a process of peer feedback and revision, students published their essays online. These stories were linked as a collection through a Google map.

Digital Stories of Service Learning: During the semester, students also participated in service learning, keeping online journals about their experiences. At the end of the course students worked in pairs to plan, storyboard, script, and produce short digital videos about their service learning experiences. They also provided peer feedback on works-in-progress. During the final session of the course, students screened and discussed what they learned from the videos.

Applications Beyond

These assignments are flexible enough to work well within case studies, field placements, service learning, semesters abroad, and writing-intensive courses. They are not discipline-specific and can be used to accomplish a range of learning goals. For example, the map assignment was used in Jackie Horne's "MCC: Writing the Child." Students explored places that represent differing perspectives on childhood (e.g., the Children's Museum, Talbot's Kids, and Children's Hospital) and published their essays as an online mapped collection.



http://at.simmons.edu/boston_story_map/2005.html