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Teaching, Technology, Textuality
Approaches to New Media

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Series Preface

One of many exciting achievements of the early years of the English Subject Centre was the agreement with Palgrave Macmillan to initiate the series “Teaching the New English.” The intention of the then Director, Professor Philip Martin, was to create a series of short and accessible books which would take widely-taught curriculum fields (or, as in the case of learning technologies, approaches to the whole curriculum) and articulate the connections between scholarly knowledge and the demands of teaching.

Since its inception, “English” has been committed to what we now know by the portmanteau phrase “learning and teaching.” Yet, by and large, university teachers of English—in Britain at all events—find it hard to make their tacit pedagogic knowledge conscious, or to raise it to a level where it might be critiqued, shared, or developed. In the experience of the English Subject Centre, colleagues find it relatively easy to talk about curriculum and resources, but far harder to talk about the success or failure of seminars, how to vary forms of assessment, or to make imaginative use of Virtual Learning Environments. Too often this reticence means falling back on received assumptions about student learning, about teaching, or about forms of assessment. At the same time, colleagues are often suspicious of the insights and methods arising from generic educational research. The challenge for the English group of disciplines is therefore to articulate ways in which our own subject knowledge and ways of talking might themselves refresh debates about pedagogy. The implicit invitation of this series is to take fields of knowledge and survey them through a pedagogic lens. Research and scholarship, and teaching and learning are part of the same process, not two separate domains.

“Teachers,” people used to say, “are born not made.” There may, after all, be some tenuous truth in this: there may be generosities of spirit (or, alternatively, drives for didactic control) laid down in earliest childhood. But why should we assume that even “born” teachers (or novelists, or nurses, or veterinary surgeons) do not need to learn the skills of the trade? Amateurishness about teaching has far
more to do with university claims to status, than with evidence about how people learn. There is a craft to shaping and promoting learning. This series of books is dedicated to the development of the craft of teaching within English Studies.

Ben Knights

Teaching the New English Series Editor
Director, English Subject Centre
Higher Education Academy

The English Subject Centre

Founded in 2000, the English Subject Centre (which is based at Royal Holloway, University of London) is part of the subject network of the Higher Education Academy. Its purpose is to develop learning and teaching across the English disciplines in UK Higher Education. To this end it engages in research and publication (web and print), hosts events and conferences, sponsors projects, and engages in day-to-day dialogue with its subject communities.

http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk
Notes on the Contributors

**Bryan Alexander** is Director for Emerging Technologies, National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE), Middlebury College. He has developed courses using digital media to teach the eighteenth century, Gothic literature, and the experience of war. He has also created curricula for teaching about the digital world, from multimedia writing to cyberculture and media studies. He has published on copyright policies, vampires in literature, critical theory, and utopias, and is working on a book about the uncanny in cyberspace.

**Andrew Booth** is Director, Flexible Learning Development Unit, and Professor of Online Learning in the School of Biochemistry and Microbiology, University of Leeds.

**Lisa Botshon** is Associate Professor of English at the University of Maine at Augusta. Recent work includes an edited volume, *Middlebrow Moderns: Popular American Women Writers of the 1920s* (2003), and articles on institutional issues within academia.

**Dorothea Fischer-Hornung**, Lecturer, University of Heidelberg, specializes in African-American studies, ethnic studies, and women’s studies. She is the author and editor of several books and numerous papers on African-American dance and literature, ethnic crime fiction, and Native American literature. Currently she is president of the Society for Multiethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas, and editor of *Atlantic Studies*, a new interdisciplinary journal published by Routledge, UK.

**Michael Hanrahan** is Assistant Director of Academic Technology Services and Lecturer in English, Bates College. He has published articles on late fourteenth-century English literature and culture as well as on the cultural phenomenon of academic plagiarism.

**Wolfgang Holtkamp** is Lecturer, University of Stuttgart. His research interests include contemporary American Literature, hyperfiction, American culture studies, and e-Teaching. He has recently edited a collection of essays, *Rediscovering America* (2001).
Christopher Kelty teaches anthropology and science studies at Rice University. He undertakes historical and ethnographic research on free and open source software in the US, Europe, and India; open content movements; the ethics and politics of scientific research; and the history of software and linguistics.

Stuart Lee is Head of the Learning Technologies Group at Oxford University, the main e-learning centre at Oxford. He also teaches on the English Faculty at Oxford and lectures on medieval English and hypertext and electronic publishing. His projects and publications include two books, Digital Imaging: a Practical Handbook and Building an Electronic Resource Collection: a Practical Guide (co-edited with Frances Boyle), the JTAP Project “Virtual Seminars for Teaching Literature,” and an online edition of three Old English Homilies.

David Lindley is Professor of Renaissance Literature at the University of Leeds. He has published on Shakespeare—an edition of The Tempest in the new Cambridge Shakespeare (2002), The Tempest at Stratford (2003), and Shakespeare and Music (2005). He has worked on the Stuart court masque, with an edition of court masques (1995), and a number of articles. Among other publications are Thomas Campion (1986), Lyric (1985), and The Trials of Frances Howard (1993). He is currently editing eleven Jonson masques for the new Cambridge Ben Jonson.

Leon Litvack is Reader in Victorian Studies and Head of Undergraduate Teaching at Queen’s University Belfast. He teaches nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, and his current research focuses on Dickens, as well as on cultural studies and post-colonial theory. He has authored numerous books, worked on Dickens for BBC radio and televislon, and is a Trustee of the Charles Dickens Museum in London. He is currently completing The Complete Critical Guide to Charles Dickens for Routledge, and is working on the Clarendon edition of Our Mutual Friend.

Alan Liu, Professor in the English Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara, began his research career in the field of British romantic literature and art, where his first book Wordsworth: the Sense of History (1989) explored the relation between the imaginative experiences of literature and history. In a series of theoretical essays in the 1990s, he extended the methodological work of this
book by exploring cultural criticism, the “new historicism,” and post-modernism in contemporary literary studies. In 1994, when he started his well-known Voice of the Shuttle web site for humanities research, he began to study information culture as a way to close the circuit between his longstanding concern for the fate of historical imagination and his parallel interest in technology. What is the relation between the imaginative experience of history and that of apparently instantaneous, history-less information culture? In 2004, Liu published his The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information. Also forthcoming is Local Transcendence: Essays on Postmodern Historicism and the Database. Liu is principal investigator of the NEH-funded Teaching with Technology project at UC Santa Barbara entitled Transcriptions: Literature and the Culture of Information, and codirector of the English Departments undergraduate specialization on Literature and the Culture of Information. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) and chair of the Technology/Software Committee of the ELO’s PAD Initiative (Preservation / Archiving / Dissemination of Electronic Literature). Most recently, he has started the interdisciplinary research project titled Transliteracies: Research in the Technological, Social, and Cultural Practices of Online Reading.

Jim O’Loughlin is an Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Northern Iowa (USA). He is the coauthor of Daily Life in the Industrial United States, 1870–1900 (2004).

Deborah L. Madsen is Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. She has been teaching with hypertext since 1993 to students of English and American Studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She is the author of numerous articles on e-learning and the pedagogical relevance of hypertext within the contexts of critical and cultural theory. She has also published more than a dozen books on aspects of American literature and literary theory.

Oliver Pickering is Deputy Head of Special Collections, Leeds University Library, and Associate Lecturer in English. He has published widely in the field of medieval English literature, and is Editor of The Library.
Eric S. Rabkin, Professor of English at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has been using information technology in his teaching and research since 1975 and has filled leadership roles in academic computing both intramurally and nationally. His regularly offered courses include “Technology and the Humanities.” He cofounded the Genre Evolution Project in 1998, a unique, IT-mediated attempt to meld the qualitative and quantitative study of culture. He has published more than thirty books of which the most recent is Mars: a Tour of the Human Imagination (2005).

Jeff Rice is an Assistant Professor of English at Wayne State University. He has published in the areas of new media, hypertext, and rhetoric and composition. He is the coeditor of New Media/New Methods: the Turn from Literacy to Electracy (2006).

Duco van Oostrum is Senior Lecturer in English, University of Sheffield. His current research revolves around American sports culture, in particular film and literature. His publications include forthcoming monographs on African-American sports literature and film (2007), and on autobiography in American culture (2006).
A Level: the General Certificate of Education (GCE) A level is, in the current British education system, the highest postcompulsory high school qualification, also the university entry qualification. Prerequisite to A level study is successful completion of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

ARPANET: (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) A data and communications network devised by the US Department of Defense that was the forerunner of the Internet.

AS Level: an autonomous qualification equivalent to the first year of study of the two-year British GCE A level qualification.

Blog: (see weblog).

CSS: (cascading style sheets) a simple programming language that web developers commonly use to control the presentation and layout of data in web browsers.

DHTML: (dynamic HTML) the coding practice that extends HTML by incorporating javascript, CSS, DOM, etc. to achieve interactive and dynamic as opposed to static Web pages.

DOM: (Document Object Model) an application programming interface (or API) that allows software applications, commonly web browsers, to access HTML.

Flash: A popular multimedia program created by Macromedia that is commonly used to extend the functionality and interactivity of web pages.

FTP: (File Transfer Protocol) a software standard for transferring files to and from computers.

HTML: (hypertext markup language) a simplified version of SGML (standardized general markup language) designed primarily for the creation of web pages viewable in a browser.

HTTP: (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) a standard that allows information to be exchanged and conveyed on the WWW.
Hypermedia: a distributed network of hypertexts and interactive multimedia including words, pictures, and sound connected by non-linear hyperlinks.

Hypertext: a distributed network of linked texts.

IM: (or Instant Messaging, also known as Chat) A real time communication service that allows users to exchange text messages in a rapid dialogic form.

Internet: the global system of interconnected computer networks that permits the exchange of information by means of various protocols (FTP, HTTP, TCP/IP, SMTP, etc.).

Java: a platform and machine independent programming language developed by Sun Microsystems.

Java applet: a software component written in Java that typically runs in a web application.

Javascript: a programming language that is commonly used to extend the functionality of web pages.

K12: primary and secondary education in the United States (or Kindergarten through twelfth grade, the final year of high school).

Mash-ups: songs or musical compositions that have been assembled from sampled portions of existing songs or compositions.

NGO: (nongovernmental organizations) advocacy groups that have no affiliation with governments or states.

Perl: a programming language originally created for use as an administrative tool for UNIX but which has become a practically omnipresent language available on all major computing platforms.

Sampling: digitally copying a section or segment of an existing sound recording and reusing it as an element in a new composition.

SMTP: (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) the standard for transmitting E-mails across the Internet.

TCP/IP: (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) a pair of standards that allow machines to establish connections between each other.
Toyota/GM NUMMI: (or New United Motor Manufacturing Inc.) California-based, joint venture between Toyota and General Motors.

VLE: (Virtual Learning Environment) refers to open source or proprietary software (sometimes called courseware) that promotes the development, storage, and maintenance of online teaching materials.

Weblog: web-based writing that typically takes the form of a diary. Weblogs are usually generated from software packages that are freely distributed on the Web (e.g., Wordpress).

Wiki: a web-based application, originally conceived as a collaborative writing tool, that creates web pages to which any user can contribute (including adding new or changing existing content).

WWW: (World Wide Web). The information sphere generally accessed by web browsers. The Web is one of many services offered over the Internet.

XHTML: (extensible hypertext markup language) an application of XML that has succeeded HTML as the evolving and future language of the Web.

XML: (extensible markup language) is a simplified subset of SGML (or standard generalized markup language) that was created primarily to describe data and to permit the sharing of data across different operating systems.
Introduction: From Literacy to e-Literacy

Michael Hanrahan and Deborah Madsen

The penetration of technology into the daily life of academia has forced, and in some cases, reinforced divisions within English departments and across institutions. The divisions are sometimes generational, highlighting differences between established and initially derided new-fangled approaches to the study of English literature, and they are also sometimes territorial, reinforcing contingent views of the appropriate and inappropriate areas of inquiry. The diverse and complex reasons that produce and reproduce such divisions within English studies and that have largely contributed to the discipline’s partial uptake of new technologies are explored in a positive context in the essays collected in this volume. What contributors share is a sense that humanities computing has a mission to integrate IT into literary studies in the same way that print-based media have historically been integrated to the point that their medium is invisible to and taken for granted by practitioners. This mission often involves nothing less than a reconsideration of literacy, a concept that sometimes conveniently refers to the seemingly stable practices of reading and writing. Walter Ong (1986, 23), among others, has forcefully argued that Western culture takes literacy as “unquestionably normative and normal”—not unlike the assumed innate suitability of print-based media to literary studies. New media and computer technology highlight the contingency of an inherited, interiorized view of literacy. The transformations effected by new technologies underscore the conceptual limitation of traditional literacy to describe what many of us our doing when we “read” and “write” with new media. Various literate practices attend and constitute e-literacy—reading and writing,
decoding and encoding, consuming and producing, using and repurposing, and so on. The many textual practices embraced by e-literacy are variously critiqued, advocated, and described in this volume. To varying degrees, the contributors engage directly or indirectly the ongoing as well as unfolding transformations to literate culture that have attended the Internet Age.

The acquisition of high order literacy skills is one of the traditional goals of a liberal education. Graduates should not only be able to read and write proficiently but they should also be able to do so critically, sensitively, and ethically. The cultivation of information literacy in the humanities curriculum consequently not only conforms to well-established goals of liberal education, but also helps realize recently identified priorities, including promoting independent learning and preparing graduates for life-long learning. Besides realizing these mutually informing objectives, ventures into e-literacy help extend our notions of reading and writing. Eric Rabkin persuasively articulates this idea: “Humanities education must extend itself beyond sequential literacy to deal with more capacious media and with diverse and flexible expectations for production and consumption.” By doing so scholar-teachers will help reposition humanities education to participate more fully and vitally in widespread cultural transformations. As Rabkin notes, our graduates will live and work in an increasingly rich and diverse world of information. They will be expected to participate in this “infosphere” as both producers and consumers, writers and readers, creators and users. The merging of these roles has already begun. According to a recent Pew report (2004), practically half (or 44 per cent) of adult users of the Internet in the United States have created and published digital content.

As the dynamics of the infosphere begin to break down the distinction between users and creators of content, legal codes governing intellectual property rights become more difficult to navigate. Chris Kelty provides an overview of the history and current state of intellectual property law and considers how its continuing evolution influences the humanities. His essay underscores that new media have not only changed the experience of reading and writing but have also had a profound impact on the circulation of information—a cultural phenomenon that is controlled as much by technology as by law. Kelty’s macrocosmic view of the culturally transformative powers of technology creates a context for understanding the shifting
technologies underpinning English studies and variously identified and engaged by the volume’s other contributors.

Just as the technologies enabling print-based books are perceived as “natural” to English studies, so Stuart Lee argues for the close synergy between IT and the study of literature, based on a list of core literacy skills for English studies listed in *The English Benchmarking Statement*: namely, the close reading and analysis of texts; the ability to articulate knowledge; sensitivity to the contexts that shape texts, their production, and reception; and bibliographic skills. In this list, the core skills required for the study of printed texts is assumed to be the same for electronic texts. Indeed, the increasing number of primary texts archived and available through the Web is one of the compelling reasons why students rely increasingly on electronic resources for their studies and why electronic texts increasingly find their way onto syllabi as well.

Beyond the provision of primary textual sources, there is, as Alan Liu argues in his essay, a close existing relation between textuality and the information technologies that control and manipulate it. Liu likens the academy, including the humanities, to a “post-industrial business” that has been corporatized in the same way as government, the military, and the health services. We may find the analogy discomforting, and for some the most powerful strategy for resistance is to ignore the changing economic, social, and political contexts in which contemporary English studies is situated. Liu argues, however, that the best strategy for the survival of the humanities is not to ignore but to engage IT in order to imagine and promote a knowledge society that is congruent with the traditions of humanities scholarship, as opposed to that of postindustrial capitalism.

In his essay, Jim O’Loughlin presents a similar argument but one contextualized by the so-called “crisis in the humanities.” The decline in humanities funding and student numbers coincides for the most part with the large-scale adoption of computers in the educational environment. This coincidence leads O’Loughlin to speculate that, in a digital age, the humanities are no longer perceived as offering the computer-based knowledge that is identified with the kind of “cultural capital” sought from institutions of higher education. The challenge of providing subject-specific contexts for the acquisition of computer literacy poses, as O’Loughlin argues, both problems and possibilities.