Aims

- To introduce a teaching initiative using digital narratives in an advanced undergraduate English Studies unit.
- To describe a number of themes for reflection on the utility and practicality of using such pedagogy.
What are Digital Narratives?

- Digital storytelling/narratives.
  
  “Digital stories are student-produced multimedia narratives or short films combining text, images and audio files. They exist in a range of genres, from personal or family histories, to short documentary films, to theory-inspired critiques of popular cultural artifacts” (Coventry 166)

What are the uses of Digital Narratives?

- The uses of digital narratives.
  
  “[D]igital storytelling is being used as an educational tool, a research method, a technique for community engagement, and a therapeutic medium” (Clarke and Adam)
  
  - in tertiary education is being used in literary studies, creative writing, American Studies, social and cultural history, teacher training, ESL, gender studies, history (e.g. see Ganley & Vila; Klaebe & Bolland; Oppermann; Klaebe, Foth, Burgess, & Bilandzic; Meadows; Lovell and Baker).
  
  - increasing use in primary and secondary school settings in Australia and North America (Dogan & Robin; Jetnikoff; Tucker; Weiss, Benmayor, O’Leary, & Enyon).
What are the perceived benefits of Digital Narratives?

- DN “offers students tools to investigate ‘texts and contexts’ in non-traditional ways (Coventry, “Cross-Currents” 166)
- In ‘demonstrating’ theory: “the digital authoring process makes visible to students how theory emerges from personal experience and how theorizing is both intellectual and creative. [...] It helps to demystify theory and empower students to become theorizers of their own historical and cultural experiences’ (Benmayor 200)
- May facilitate intellectual engagement for students new to academic writing, and for those who experience problems with the conventions of academic writing. In this respect, digital storytelling can complement traditional assessment methods such as critical essay writing (see Opperman).

What are the perceived benefits of Digital Narratives?

- DN can help to “build a collaborative [learning] community and promotes plurality while developing multimedia literacy skills, creative thinking and a new mode of academic discourse suited to the times in which we live’ (Ganley, In Press: n.p.).
- Dogan and Robin (2008): Secondary school teachers who implemented digital storytelling in classroom activities reported significantly higher levels of student engagement and motivation, and also believed that their students displayed improved technical, presentation, research, organizational skills, and writing.
The HEA319 Project

- The HEA319 Project
- ELT505
- “Digital Storytelling in Australia: Academic Perspectives and Reflections”
  *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* (In Press) with Dr Andrea Adam (CALT)
- Teaching Development Grant:
  - In partnership with CALT and the Faculty of Arts Flexible Education Unit
  - Evaluation being coordinated and conducted by Dr Sharon Thomas (CALT)

HEA319: Representing Contemporary Australia

- Unit: description and objectives
- The Digital Narrative Exercise: *What does ‘Australian literature’ mean to you? How does the experience of reading novels and poems, and viewing film reflect and/or influence your sense of who are and where you come from?*
- Create 3-5 minute Digital Narrative using iMovie software and a 750-word critical reflection.
Two Digital Narratives
Evaluation

- Ongoing ...
- Coordinated by Dr Sharon Thomas (CALT)

Methodology:
- Information and New Media Technology Survey
- Digital Narrative Training Workshop Evaluation
- Focus Groups (x2)
- SETLs
- Critical Reflection Essays

Reflections

- Constructive alignment ...
- Technology skills ...
- Resources ...
- General issues ...
Works Cited


