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# Photogrammar and the Federal Writer's Project: A Model for Teaching Data and Mapping Rhetoric

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In a poster session "Photogrammar and the Federal Writer's Project: A Model for Teaching Data and Mapping Rhetoric," we outline the use of some of the educational opportunities we have discovered in using large Digital Humanities projects to create *collaborative partnership pedagogies* to teach students digital rhetoric. In this approach, students become project managers serving the needs of a real world research client – Yale University, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and the University of Richmond's collaborative Photogrammar team.

Bringing together pedagogical theories in Composition and Rhetoric that stress the importance of understanding the role of rhetoric in the construction of digital texts (Sayers, Sample, Galloway) and strategies for equitable collaborative practices in Digital Humanities (Posner and Algee-Hewitt), we teach students to "critically make data" by becoming project leaders tasked with textual mark-up and metadata creation using digitized archival documents. As team leaders, students must think through key rhetorical issues involving naming practices, organizational practices, and user interface and access with a mind toward both historical authenticity and greater inclusion. In this way, they participate robustly in contemporary real world debates about civility, discourse, history and accountability in naming persons, events and things. Therefore, this pedagogical approach opens access into the center of current pedagogical and historical concerns.

The Photogrammar project brings together photographs by the Farm Security Administration

taken during the Great Depression and World War II with life histories created through Federal Writers' Project. The new tools currently in development will offer users the opportunity to search and map both the visual and textual histories of the Great Depression in relation to each other. These life histories hold great historical significance as they mark an important precursor to the development of oral history methodology by collecting the histories of people who were previously excluded from the historical record, including women, the working class, and African Americans (Couch, Hirsch, Penkower). Since they will function in some sense as extended captions to the FSA/OWI photographs, adding the life histories also touches upon important issues in the history and criticism of visual culture. Additionally, they hold linguistic keys to racial, gender, class, sexuality and location classification patterns of the time that the photographs alone may not expose. Ethical as well as methodological issues in bringing buried histories to light vividly arise.

Applying collaborative partnership pedagogies in an undergraduate course in Composition, Rhetoric and Digital Literacy at the University of North Carolina that had no prerequisites, students were tasked to create a metadata schema for the life histories to be added to Photogrammar, using TEI to create rules for encoding the text. Because most students entered the class with little technological or collaborative skills, the course places students in small working groups and used Trello (project management software) to organize work flows for lower stake exercises designed to address larger theoretical issues in digital rhetoric (Eyman, Hart-Davidson, Ridolfo). These small stakes activities helped students develop the skills necessary to tackle the larger project that required them to work through critical issues of power stemming from the task of making archival material from the 1930's useful in a digital setting today. For instance, some of the language used to classify racial groups in the FSA and the Federal Workers Project is off-putting, or even offensive today. Students had to come to consensus on such difficult issues because the project required that they present (via skype) their rationale for the metadata schema to a Photogrammar Co-Director. The Co-Director then gave feedback, which students used to write their schema rationale within the TEI of the archival documents. Their decisions did an excellent job of balancing the need to maintain the historical authenticity of the documents while using technology in the service of great inclusion and social justice are now used as the template for the

entire life histories collection. Therefore, they not only learned crucial transferable digital skills, but also were given the ability to contribute materially to how the historical record is produced.

Based on the students' work, it will be possible to map the movement of interviewers, trace the prevalence of important issues of the time such as sharecropping, women's labor, WPA work, and mill work, and generate comparative analyzes of rhetoric used via specific interviewer practices. This project highlights the new kinds of classroom as well as scholarly opportunities that arise when rhetorical questions and insights begin to allow students to direct and inflect the further development and build-out process of an established DH site.