«Exploring the Gap»: Intercultural Learning in Literature and the Arts in Lifelong Learning

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ABSTRACT: Lev Manovich (2001) suggests that the heart of the new media relationship is language, programmes and people in collaboration producing and interpreting new representations of the world through «cultural interfaces – Web pages, CD-ROM titles, computer games». In this paper, I explore the gap in-between the artist, the programme and the cultural interface. Gaps are something into which we either fall – or we fill. We may rush to fill an awkward gap in a conversation; or alternatively, we may use that gap – relish the silence – and take the opportunity to explore it creatively. This paper provides a contribution towards filling the digital gap in new media learning via analysis of student questionnaires, recorded interviews and exemplar material, and concludes with reflections on the pedagogical and intercultural theoretical issues involved.

Keywords: intercultural learning, digital media, cultural interface, reconceptualization, knowledge transfer, creativity.

RESUMEN: Manovich (2001) sugiere que en la base de las relaciones entre los nuevos medios de masas se encuentran el lenguaje, los programas informáticos y los individuos que producen e interpretan de manera colaborativa nuevas representaciones del mundo mediante «interfaces culturales – páginas web, carátulas de CD-rom, juegos de ordenador». En este artículo se exploran los espacios existentes entre el artista, el programa y la interfaz cultural. El ser humano puede apresurarse a rellenar un vacío conversacional o disfrutar del silencio y explorarlo de manera creativa. Este artículo contribuye a rellenar el espacio digital producido en la enseñanza realizada con nuevos recursos multimedia, a través del análisis de cuestionarios, entrevistas grabadas y materiales ilustrativos realizados por los estudiantes, concluyendo con una reflexión sobre los aspectos pedagógicos e interculturales de naturaleza teórica derivados de tales cuestiones.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje intercultural, multimedia digital, interfaz cultural, reconceptualización cultural, transferencia del conocimiento, creatividad.

> I will use the term *cultural interface* to describe a *human-computer-culture interface* – the ways in which computers present and allow us to interact with cultural data. Cultural interfaces include the interfaces used by designers of Web Sites, CD-ROM and DVD titles, multimedia encyclopaedias, on-line museums and magazines, computer games and other new media cultural objects. (Manovich, 2001: 70)

In Humanities and in Education university departments in the UK there used to be a reluctance to engage with digital technology at the level of research, preferring instead to see the new system of communication as a useful tool for education or for storage of cultural and historical artefacts in digital format, for example, the play texts of Shakespeare, which could then be transmitted and accessed in their transcoded form to researchers and students world-wide. However, there seems to be something about the driving digital impulse of the new media that presents a cheeky challenge to the traditions of logo-centric print-based culture and associated rights of entry to the Academy, which is more radical even than that launched by the analog media of cinema, television and video in the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps belatedly, the relentless advance of digital media has provoked a plethora of new theoretical interpretations from the Higher Education Academy, which range from social and political, psychological, phenomenological, gendered and cultural explanations, to the conceptual ideas of «borderless», «inter», «trans», and «hyper» – all of which indicate now an intense interest in the global communication phenomenon that is digital technology.

In terms of inter-cultural communication, this digital upstart is not only modular, fragmented and infinitely repeatable, but it also presents hyper-texts and inter-active elements that appear to offer endlessly deferred interpretations and indeed the real possibility of «no-ending» at all somewhere out there in «cyberspace». Not surprisingly, the Academy is divided as to the proper way to interpret a multi-media form that defies categorization, and yet the phenomenon now is all encompassing and trans-global so it can no longer be ignored: it must be addressed. This is perhaps particularly pertinent for students of education in the Arts and Humanities where the very nature of their study and future teaching format is challenged by the constantly changing systems that deliver new cultural artefacts, which appear to reduce the live interaction with creative impulses to a string of 0/1 digital codes, algorithms, programmes and a navigation structure. Given that Literature and Theatre and Education all explore how we as human beings respond to and conceptualise our essential «liveness» (Auslander, 1999) and our experience of living in the «real» world, there are «real» problems when that experience is apparently transcoded into a series of noughts and zeroes with gaps in-between, and viewed and experienced via computer screens. This is essentially a cultural communication process and as other articles in this journal will doubtless explore, it is an inter-cultural communication process that is also a conceptual divide between «emerging» and «established» cultures.

In *The Language of New Media* Lev Manovich (2001: 67) describes how the «content of an artwork is the result of a collaboration between the artist/ programmer and the computer programme, or, if the work is inter-active, between the artist, the computer programme and the user» and so he takes us into a three-way relationship, which is digital coding, programmes and people in collaboration producing and interpreting new representations of the world through «cultural interfaces – Web pages, CD-ROM titles, computer games» (Manovich, 2001: 71). While I like this approach because it emphasises the activity of the user in the human-computer interface, Manovich does make the assumption of digital language competence (as reader or writer) and artistic creativity (as reader or writer) in the cultural interface triangle that I am not certain is a common competence for all students of the new media. As we shall see, there are gaps in-between the human-computer-cultural interface, which this paper explores. The concept of the gap is an interesting one for digital media in particular because it works at the level of the technology itself – there is an actual gap in-between the 0-1 – even if that gap is not perceptual to the human eye; and there are gaps in our perception of our own ability to meet the challenge of the new technologies, particularly perhaps if one is a mature student who has not grown up surrounded by and familiar with digital communication systems. Gaps are something into which we either fall – or we fill. We may rush to fill an awkward gap in a conversation; or alternatively, we may use that gap – relish the silence – and take the opportunity to explore it creatively. This article provides a small contribution towards filling the digital gap through an assessment of the student learning experience of a module called *Literature and the Arts in the new media*, where mature part-time students in Higher Education engaged creatively and critically with digital media as part of their English and Performing Arts degree programme, and it explores some of the pedagogical and theoretical issues raised.

1. Context

The BA (Hons) English Studies and Performing Arts degree is offered by The Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of Sheffield. Designed in 1998, the central exploration of the degree as a whole is the relationship between English Literature to Theatre, Cinema, Music and the New Media. The module *Literature and the Arts in the new media* is one of two core modules that form the spine of the degree, which runs in tandem with *Criticism and Critical Theory in Literature and the Arts*. I designated the module *Literature and the Arts in the new media* as core to the degree because it seemed to me essential that a new arts degree should engage critically, creatively and theoretically with the structures of the new media. My argument for this was that if critical theory was the *enfant*

terrible of the 1970s, then digitization and the prolific growth of the new technologies in the 1990s were destined to be the next phenomenon that would require the attention of the Academy, as indeed it has proved. At that time in English Higher Education, digital technology was conceived of largely as a technical skill confined to university libraries, data bases and word processing, and this seemed to me inappropriate as graduates not only need to be able to use new media in employment after university, but also to apply their conceptual thinking skills to the wider framework of new media. Therefore, the inclusion of *Literature and the Arts in the new media* as a core module at level two, plus its successor module at level three, *Policy and Practice in Contemporary Culture* was certainly more than a nod to the skills-based directions of Government education aspirations (White Paper, January 2003). Rather, it was recognition that because digital technology includes science, technology and culture within its structure so students studying an interdisciplinary arts degree needed to think about the implications of the new international and trans-global phenomenon that was clearly going to have an impact on all areas of our lives and was more than just a new intermedial cultural «games machine»:

> New media in general can be thought of as consisting of two distinct layers – the «cultural layer» and the «computer layer.» Examples of categories belonging to the cultural layer are the encyclopaedia and the short story; story and plot; composition and point of view; mimesis and catharsis; comedy and tragedy. Examples of categories in the computer layer are process and packet (as in data packets transmitted through the network); sorting and matching; function and variable; computer language and data structure. Because new media is created on computers, distributed via computers and stored and archived on computers, the logic of a computer may be expected to considerably influence the traditional cultural logic of media; that is, we may expect that the computer layer will affect the cultural layer. (Manovich, 2001: 46)

2. Module Aims and Learning Outcomes

The module aims to:

- Explore the uses of the new technology in literature and the arts;
- Examine changes in the processes involved in reading and writing texts arising from the use of ICT (Information, Communication and Technology);
- Assess the new technologies within the critical and theoretical framework of the degree.

By the end of the course it was expected that the students would be able to:

- Apply knowledge of the new technology to more than one artistic area;
- Demonstrate their understanding of reading and writing in an interactive format;
- Discuss critically the new technology within the theoretical framework of the degree.

The module has three central areas for investigation and assessment:[1]

- Analysis of literature and the arts on the www;
- Working creatively with the media: student multimedia project;
- Critical discussion of theoretical issues.

The module is positioned at level two in the degree structure, so the students had completed the level one course on semiotic analysis of literature, theatre and cinema before the start of the module and had basic skills in computer literacy, file transfer and sequencing and sampling. For the first six weeks of the new module, students were given guided explorations of the Arts of the World Wide Web as a comparative study to the arts of the theatre and cinema. Assessing a selection of poems and hyperfiction available on «Eastgate.com» (<http://www.eastgate.com/ReadingRoom.html>) raised the question for the students as to how digital coding created web stories and poems and how they differed and yet were similar to print based literature, which raised the issues of the canon, authorship and power. The students learned very quickly to transfer their skills in semiotic analysis of literature, theatre and cinema to the computer screen and added to their critical vocabulary the language of the web. They learned that a very notable difference in the narrative construction of hyperfiction is the addition of sounds and images to the written text and that hyperfiction reveals itself a screen at a time – with hidden texts behind – and without any necessary linear connections or directions. Thus, they learned to make choices as to which way to go and, through the click of the mouse, which pathway of the story to explore. Typically, a hyperfiction text offers many routes and many stories and the choice initially appeared to be at the command of the user. Their investigation appeared to reveal that the author was indeed «dead» (Barthes, 1968) and that they had control over the interpretation of the narrative. However, more detailed analysis revealed that they were often confined by the technical construction of the site, and that the hyperfiction author had constructed the interface in such a way that semiotic indicators tended to trigger specific cultural

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1. Assessment criteria used are given at appendix A.

responses from the reader and thus their pathway was actually determined by a mixture of cultural and digital structures. While learning that their control over the text was less free that it initially appeared, they discovered that many of the texts are open ended and resisted closure; and that hyperfiction tended towards the poetic through the inclusion of image and music / sounds to the words, so that logos became one element in the larger visual narrative.

All of the students were very capable of reading and analyzing the new media at this level and had no problem at making connections between their web sites analysis and the other core module of their degree, critical theory. Indeed, applying a cultural materialist theoretical perspective to web sites such as <www.sheffield.ac.uk> and <www.bbc.co.uk> revealed the economic underpinning of the world wide web, and how the UK Government educational remit was present in both web sites – one could say almost as a co-presence.

3. The Multimedia Project

The atmosphere of the course changed radically once the workshops for the multimedia project began. The multimedia project (assessment criteria 50%: Project 30%; evaluation of project 20%) was included to give the students, many of whom came on to the degree from a certificate in creative writing, the opportunity to use the medium in a creative way through the use of the software *Dreamweaver* and *Photoshop*. The task set was to write an off-line story, play or poem; use appropriate illustrations and sounds and record the whole on to a compact disc. In tandem with creating their own multimedia project they were asked to keep a diary of what they did and this formed part of their evaluation of the project. Students were asked to reflect on the process of creating a multimedia project; on their perceived strengths and weaknesses; the creative and editorial decisions they made and the reasons for those decisions. Given that the student body were all mature part-time students it was not surprising that almost all the multimedia projects drew on their own life experiences, and some of the group were enthusiastic about the opportunity to use the technology to interpret their lives as a new narrative.

> I enjoyed planning, actually on paper, I thought – yes – this will be good and I'd love to do this, and I really enjoyed that – it was the frustration of not being able to do what I wanted to do – that was difficult.

Some students however, were not inspired, but rather more pragmatic:

> I think that because you left it as open as you did it allowed people to be as creative as they wanted to be. Certainly, the week that you asked people what their ideas

were – at that point I had no ideas whatsoever – so I just came out with something and then worried about it afterwards – and I had to be creative from that point and had to come up with something. So it forced me into creativity if you like, rather than me having all these ideas and needing someway of getting them out – but it turned out to be the ideal route.

One student created a multimedia project where they drew on a recent touring holiday during which they had taken some digital photographs, and using the image and travel as inspiration the student wrote some short poems that encapsulated thoughts on the journey. From there the student designed a web site that drew on the literary concept of «the journey through life» and the different pathways that each individual makes in life. To each page the student added appropriate music to enhance and express the words and images, and so created a simple but very effective multimedia project, which included hotlinks as a narrative technique.
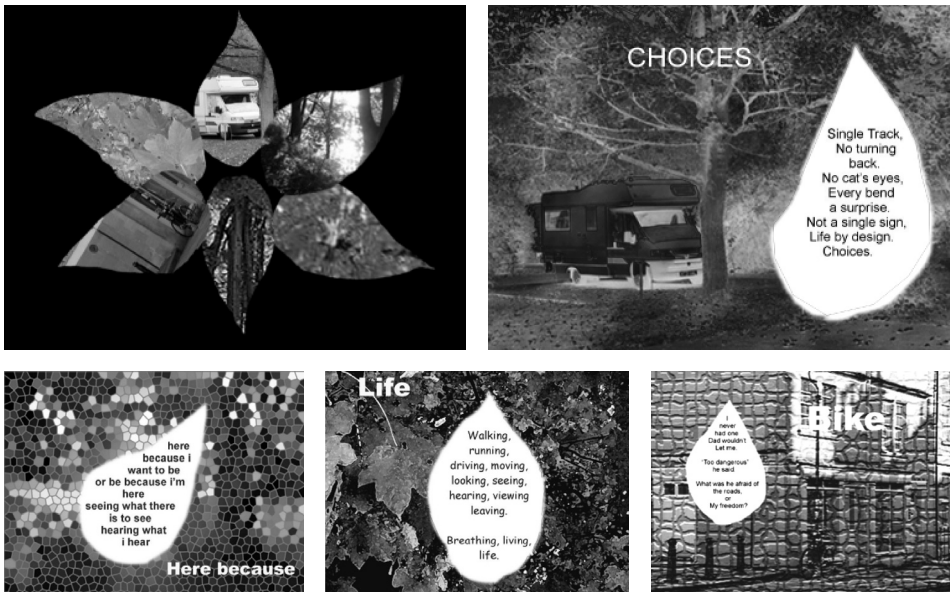
(Extracted from creative project with permission of the student)

4. Theoretical Issues

The final section of the course discussed the theoretical issues that the course raised and included a formal examination (assessment criteria 30%) in two sections: prepared questions that related to the theoretical issues discussed on the course; and an unseen extract from a theoretical piece of writing, which was analysed by the student in the light of the work done on the course. Despite

the looming formal examination process, for many of the students the theoretical section turned out to be the most enjoyable part of the course:

J1   I think it was good to actually have some time to think about it – I mean that was the thing I liked best.

A1   The course work was handed in so we could actually sit and talk and think […]

5. Student Interpretation of the Learning Experience

After the end of the course 7 from a class of 11 students came to record their experiences of the module as a feed-back and research session. As programme director I had been aware of their struggles and discontent with the workshop section, so it was an opportunity for me to see what needed to be changed, and for the students to air their opinions. All the students were informed about the context of the meeting and those who attended gave agreement for the conversation to be taped, transcribed and used for academic research and future publications. A short questionnaire[2] completed before the general discussion began revealed that the software package *Dreamweaver* was unfamiliar to the majority of the students before the course, and most of them found it very difficult to use. However, interestingly, 4 of the 7 would, in varying degrees, recommend a friend to use it to design a project. *Photoshop*, the second software package, was seen as more user friendly. The questionnaire revealed that the multimedia project did lead to changes in student interpretation of their perspectives about reading on the web, and to how they thought about the relationship of words to images and sounds. When the discussion began, however, students immediately focused on the problems that they had experienced in the workshops:

J2   I feel almost as though I was a technophobe. It became problematic in that barriers were built up, and I think that was because it wasn't «hands-on» enough in the early stages. That created a big problem later on when we were actually doing the project, and I hadn't the confidence, if I am honest, to come in extra during the day. With the other course at level one I had the confidence to come in during my own time and practice, but there was no way that I could have done that here because I wouldn't have known what to do without a member of staff there. So I couldn't come in and practice.

L   Even the basics were hard to grasp, and that was just finding the web site that you had already started, and things like that – it was just – we got so far behind.

Int   Didn't you get any practical input at all in the second half of that first semester?

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2.   See appendix B.

LONG PAUSE
J1   Not that I can remember, so that's how memorable it was.
Int Right... But Tutor B did do practical sessions with you on *Dreamweaver?*
J1   If he did then I can't remember them.
J2   They were more like lectures, if we are really, really blunt. It was like a lecture, and you can't learn a practical subject in that way, frantically taking notes and barely any time left to have a go yourself. You can take notes but you can't see the screen.
A2   So you needed printouts for everything you have gone through. He'll say to you «Go away and practice what we've just done», and you can't because you've just forgotten it. He didn't give us a printout each session, but I think that we needed that.

The pedagogic issue is that tutor B was using inappropriate teaching methods, particularly for mature part-time students who are less familiar with technology than their younger full-time counterparts and who tend to be unsure anyway about their abilities to cope with new material. Of key importance is that the students' perception of their lack of expertise with the software led to frustration, as a gap appeared in-between what they wanted to do creatively and the actuality of working with the new media. What we can see here is the underlying panic of students who felt out of their depth and at odds with the learning environment. As the discussion continued it transpired that the problem was not just their inexperience with the software, but the experience of the human mind meeting hard technology (the *human-computer interface* identified by Manovich), and a gap opened up between the human beings and the digital media interface. In addition, the students did not realize fully that the written evaluation of the project was their opportunity to reflect on the problems of working creatively with digital technology, and that reflection on the process was just as important as technical expertise. They continued to feel justified in thinking that they had been let down by tutor B and they worried that if they were critical of tutor B in their written evaluation, this might lead to a negative impact on their grades.

Int Did you feel that the written evaluation of the problems was useful?
A   Well, it became an imperative within the context – you know we all had other things – other assignments and it was like – you felt – I know that there's an evaluation and I know that, but I've just reached the point where I have got to move on because there's other essays to do, so yes I had a copy of the software at home, but I'd still have the same problems when I got home because I felt that I didn't have the knowledge to use the tools to get the thing out of the way. And it was – for me – it was such a barrier.
J2   It was quite difficult. I tried to be very frank and honest in my evaluation of the work that I had done, how successful I thought bits were – what I wanted to do – that I didn't really achieve as much as I wanted and had planned to do – but

the problem was how to do that and not moan and groan? How to say I didn't think it worked out as well as it could have perhaps – without being a «moaning minny» in a piece of my work that was going to be marked – so I tried very hard to steer clear of that and focus on what I had done – these are the facts and that worked and that didn't – Rather than say what I really thought…

Int   And you felt that you couldn't say what you really thought in your evaluation?

J2   I didn't want that person that I was slating to read it. You know… this was a task that I had been given to do. So, I thought, just get on with it and don't say anything.

It seems that lack of skills – «tools» – led to frustration and the students felt that they could not express their frustration openly because of the system of education in which their creative experiment was taking place: formal assessment of a degree core module that was impacting on their ability to get on with other tasks set for assessment in other modules.

The second point that emerged was that working with the technology became a very solitary experience, which to a greater or lesser degree all the students experienced. Some students found the solitary nature of the experience liberating because they had the technical competence and so they enjoyed the direct contact with the medium, which gave them creative satisfaction and liberation from the need to express themselves verbally as part of the small group seminar sessions, which form the major teaching style of The Institute for Lifelong Learning. To the less technically proficient students, the solitary nature of working one-to-one with the screen was frightening because of the loss of the shared communicative learning of small seminar sessions. The teaching of the technology within a creative workshop group thus becomes a cultural as well as an educational issue.

A1   It's been an unusual course for me because I went off and did my own thing. When you are doing something like building a web site, unless you are doing it as a team effort, it is always going to be a solo thing – it's your creativity, your ideas, your implementation, your coding – from start to finish – you have 100% control over that – and that is what we all had. It's interesting because a lot of the technology-based modules do have that solo impetus. The music technology module was the same – the creative writing on the web was the same – you are on your own – you do your own thing.

Int   So, are we saying that the technology is, in some way, re-enforcing the idea of the solo artist – the artist in the garret writing his own novel – driven by what he wants to say – in his or her own way? At the end of the day you took your decisions about your art work.

A1   mmm, yes, that was nice.

Int   Is this quite revolutionary in terms of teaching in our department?

A3   It can be quite disempowering as well. I think that many people learn in a collective experience through exchanging ideas, and I think that it was quite disempowering to think that you may have total power / autonomy, but it's just you.

L   It's a lonely experience isn't it?

A3   It is yes.

L   We never got a chance to talk to one another.

J1   It was a very selfish course.

A2   When we have had troubles before we have always managed to talk stuff through, on other courses we have always gone for a drink, or whatever, and sorted things out there. But with this one we didn't…

S   The fact that you were all going on to another class – that was a bit isolating – I am used to going off for a drink and talking over different problems with people.

A3   That's the potential that the web has to do that – it's just you and the screen. The world might be out there, but it's just you and the screen – and somehow it becomes very difficult to stop working with the computer and talk to someone.

Int So for something that's designed as the great communicator to bring things and people together

L   It's the opposite.

6. Philosophical Reflections of Working with the New Media

In the student's discussion of the final section of the course – the theoretical issues that the course raised for them, and their reading of key thinkers and writers on new media – a common strand that emerged was their dual feeling of alienation and fascination with the medium. Their experiences of working creatively with the medium had made them very alert to the McLuhan (1967) thesis that the new media might be / had become «an extension of the mind». Working with the medium had also raised their consciousness about how the new media was impacting on their behaviour in their classroom setting and on how it had filtered through to their social lives outside the university:

S1   I think that the three elements actually dovetailed quite well towards the end for me. The final reading – although I am sure it wasn't shown in the exam – was very enjoyable because I could look back at both knowing a bit about how a web site is built and about some of the literature we have read and it sort of put it all together somewhere. I think that it has got a lot of practical applications in real life and has made me think more about what I am doing when I am using the various media: texting, email, whatever. I was thinking today about how much I have used, just this morning, things that we have been learning about this year – just in the domestic sense of sending a few emails, setting a few things off, texting a few people, it's kind of melded with real life as well for me.

A1   I found that it's entered into my personal life because having worked on creating a web site, then my daughter has created one for her business and so I had a look at that and I think that I saw it in a more analytical light. I was pointing out that her photographs were taking a long time to load – and things like that – and which bits of text were more easily accessible and which weren't giving enough information. I do think that it makes you see things on the internet in a different way. I probably only realised it when I came to look at my daughter's web site. I began to realise what had gone into building it – so I think that those things had been going into my mind gradually. It only really came to light at that point. I had gained something from the course that I hadn't realised!

The student experience does point to their awareness that working with the new technology had impacted on the structure of their social arrangements within the classroom, and gives indications of an awareness of the fluidity of boundaries between their university learning and their social lives which could be significant. However, the question raised is whether their experiences are part of a wider trend. Has the rapid increase of digitization meant a real shift in the structure of our social arrangements and our ways of perceiving the world? I am not prepared to argue a case for this on such a small study, but what we can say is that for some of the students the digital gap between the *human-computer-culture interface* was filled by the students engaging with digital technology at the level of creativity and at the level of critical and theoretical interpretation, which led to an exploration of cultural identity:

J2   I don't think that the work that I have done will make me want to be creative in that way again. Certainly since then, when I've been on the Internet I've been looking for sites and reading more literature, reading more poetry – mostly prompted by xxx who tells me where s/he's published this week – but it's opened it up for me. Looking at things like gender identity expressed on the web and actually reading some of their work and thinking well – yeah, their identity is hidden – and I'd never thought about it before. Now, because it's sort of a hidden thing – you are not sure about authorship – yeah, it's an interesting subject. That is the thing I have learned.

So, for all of its ability to incorporate images, sounds and multiple narratives, and the technical challenges of digital technology, it seems that they are not the abiding issue that remained in the minds of the students. What remained were the critical and theoretical discussions that took place about the hidden nature of web authorship, webs of identity, the web economy, globalization, digital democracy and power, and the sexual / textual politics of Cybercultures. For some students, the positive power of the medium is the provision of a space for authorship where human cultural and sexual identity is expressed in poetry and literature. That is their contribution to using the media technology creatively –

in their own creative writing. However, the way in which reading and writing is changing through web technology, and the students' doubts about the nature of this new reading and writing was expressed in the theoretical discussions the group had about the unlicensed, unauthorized nature of cyberspace, where the hidden structure of the web – the unseen digital gap between 0/1 provided a space (a gap) that is filled by inter-cultural writing, reading and learning about identity that is all pervasive, and ultimately, uncontrollable. If we now combine these thoughts with the reflections about the fluidity of boundaries between academic study and everyday activities that take place in the social spaces of the home, then we can see how this small research project contributes a little to filling in some of the gaps in the discourse on media technology, inter-cultural identity and learning.

However, perhaps the most significant impact of the new media on this and subsequent cohorts of students who have now taken this module is the inter-cultural connection to their own personal education. Initially this is triggered by simple comparative analysis of a variety of university web sites in the UK, which reveals the different kinds of higher education offered by the educational establishments and how they are advertised. Once the students have thought about how their images, and the images of younger students, are used to promote a culture of university learning, they become very interested by two factors in particular: the first is that they are now customers buying their higher education who can shop around rather than waiting to be selected; and two, there is a written discourse on the web sites that tells them about «the student learning experience» and what they can expect from their university courses.

> My aim anyway is to challenge myself to meet deadlines and to study something that couldn't have been studied when I was last at university in the 1960s and that has been totally achieved for me this year. I have been delighted by the course – I have had a lot to think about – in the way in my outside world I feel that I dominate the conversation about the web because I feel that other people don't really know very much about it – well they have strong feelings but they are not really based on anything – and I have got this kind of smug «well you know so and so said this that and the other». I think I was disappointed that we started with the 1960s author rather than – I was expecting to encounter more people like Bell and Levinson who wrote in the late 1990s, and I think they were more relevant but I kind of see the point. It was a cheap course as well; from the university's point of view – they should carry on with it – it had very much to do compared to some of the other courses I have been on recently.

What our mature student has done is to join up the dots through linked web pages and it has opened their eyes. Being students of semiotic analysis and web design, they can now follow the links to look at university sponsorship and

finances and think through the consequences for their courses. Students today are active in investigating the sources of learning by using search machines or the BBC web site to find out how the Government and Education work in the UK. It is small wonder then that the university now has mature students who are able to take control of their own learning and, crucially, their own education, and this has to be a good thing. It is indeed the *raison d'être* of education, as opposed to training, which is directly a function of new media. As Manovich (2001: 47) points out:

> In new media lingo, to transcode something is to translate it into another format. The computerization of culture gradually accomplishes similar transcoding in relation to all cultural categories and concepts. This is, cultural categories and concepts are substituted on the level of meaning and/or language, by new ones that derive from the computer's ontology, epistemology and pragmatics. New media thus acts as a forerunner of this more general process of cultural reconceptualization.

It is mature students in particular who need and deserve the opportunity to reconceptualise themselves as part of the larger process of cultural reconceptualization – to change their perception of their position as subject in the global discourse skills-based learning and to fill-in the gaps in their own cultural structures creatively through education. What we have seen here is that it is the hyperlinked structure of the web that enables them to begin to do this.

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Appendix A

Criteria for Assessment for 2092 [Multimedia Project - 30%]

Work of a standard appropriate to Class 1 70% - 100%	2:1 60-69%	2:2 50-59%	3rd 45-49%	Pass 40-44%	Work in respect of which the candidate fails 1-39%
Creativity of the ideas is extremely well implemented in the new technology	Creativity of the ideas is very well implemented in the new technology	Creativity of the ideas is quite well implemented in the new technology	Creativity of the ideas is implemented in the new technology	Limited creativity of ideas is implemented in the new technology	No creativity of ideas appears to be present in the project
Extremely good use of the written word in relation to the sound/image text	Very good use of the written word in relation to the sound/image text	Quite good use of the written word in relation to the sound/image text	Use of the written word in relation to the sound/image text is appropriate	Awareness of the potential of the written word in relation to the sound/image text is limited	Use of the written word in relation to the sound/image text is not considered

Excellent awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user	Very good awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user	Quite good awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user	An awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user	Little awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user	No awareness of the narrative to multiple readings by the user
Excellent clarity in concept	Very good clarity in concept	Quite good conceptual clarity	An attempt has been made to achieve conceptual clarity	Little attempt has been made to achieve conceptual clarity	No attempt has been made to achieve conceptual clarity
Excellent artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative	Very good artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative	Quite good artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative	Artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative is present	Artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative is present but very limited in scope	No artistic creativity in the use of a new art form to tell a narrative is present

Criteria for Assessment for 2092 [Evaluation of Multimedia Project - 20%]

Work of a standard appropriate to Class 1 70% - 100%	2:1 60-69%	2:2 50-59%	3rd 45-49%	Pass 40-44%	Work in respect of which the candidate fails 1-39%
Excellent critical reflection and analysis of the process of the multimedia project	Very good critical reflection & analysis of the process of the multimedia project	Quite good critical reflection & analysis of the process of the multimedia project	A reasonable critical reflection & analysis of the process of the multimedia project	Limited critical reflection & analysis of the process of the multimedia project	No critical reflection or analysis of the process of the multimedia project
Excellent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work	Very good analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work	Quite good analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work	A reasonable analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work	A limited analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work	No analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their own artistic work

Excellent awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one	Very good awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one	Quite good awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one	A reasonable awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one	A limited awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one	No awareness of the critical relationship of the editorial decisions made in the project, to the analysis of work on the www, as evidenced in assignment one

Appendix B

Questionnaire for Reading Digital Technologies: The Arts and the Lifelong Learner

Number of students who completed the course: 11
Number of students who participated in the research project: 7

	Yes, a great deal	Yes, a reasonable amount	A small amount	Not at all
Did you use IT packages, such as word-processing before the course began?	5	1	1	
Had you used the www before the course began?	2	4	1	
Can you now surf the web and find what you are looking for?	4	3		
Do you use the web more now than when the course began?		2		5
Were you familiar with *Dreamweaver*?		1		6
Did you find using the *Dreamweaver* software difficult?	6			1
Would you recommend a friend to use *Dreamweaver* to design a project?		1	3	3
Were you familiar with *Photoshop*?	2		2	3
Did you find using the *Photoshop* software difficult?	2	2	1	2

Would you recommend a friend to use *Photoshop* in a project?	2	2	3	
Did doing the project change your perspective on reading on the www?	1	2	3	1
Did doing the project change how you thought about the relationship of words to images to sounds?		4	2	1