Scholarship of Teaching and Learning bibliography


Gailey argues that digital editing is a method that affords students a “rigorous, systematic, and somewhat flexible way for students to inscribe a view of the text onto the text itself” (194). Digital editing can become, as one of Gailey’s students says, “an extended meditation upon a poem” (196). But the approach is not without its critics. Some argue that digital editing, and digital humanities generally, lead only to “distant reading” (191) – a term developed by Franco Moretti (2003) and worthwhile in and of itself but distinct from close reading. Gailey’s most persuasive counter argument to the claim that digital editing is “uncritical” and leads to “sub-literacy” (191, 196) is in her comparison of a digital editing project with the traditional term paper, which leads me to consider how I would use this in an undergraduate course.

I would take Gailey’s highly structured approach of assigning students a portion of a text to first read and reread and then develop a critical lens through which to edit the text. As Gailey writes, the focus or foci may vary: “TEI includes tags for noting meter and scanning each line of a poem, for example – or more content-based interests, such as tracing the gender of speakers, the tribal identity of characters, the locations of places mentioned in the text” (194). Gailey mentions that she requires her students to create an editing guide, which I believe is valuable, but I would also assign a smaller written assignment where students would make interpretive gestures based on the critical editing work they did on the text.


Kelemen argues that we “ought to employ more textual criticism in the undergraduate classroom, and in this essay I explore in more detail justifications for doing so” (121). His rationale is textual criticism is a practical, experiential way to assist students in questioning the text and recognizing that all texts are mediated and remediated beyond the pen or word processor of the author: “The reasons to bring textual criticism into any classroom are to demystify textual media and thereby to increase students’ ability to negotiate and interpret textual mediations” (122). The primary contribution I see in Kellemen’s article, however, is how he intersects textual criticism with close reading. Here, Kellemen posits that textual criticism is not only a practical strategy but also a process to develop the critical and theoretical capabilities we hope for our students. Close reading is familiar to most who teach literature, but Kellemen claims that it has not been theorized or considered thoroughly enough; rather than a theory, it is often presented as a “rubric” or “checklist” (126). Kellemen argues “that a list of things to look for when reading a poem implies a theory but is not a theory itself, in the same way that a list of tasks for an editor (or a student-editor) to complete implies but is not a theory of editing, nor is such a list a theory of teaching through editing” (126).
Kellemen argues that textual criticism is an approach that might bridge that gap, but I wonder to what degree of planning this pedagogy would require. Perhaps ironically, I believe that to employ this technique would require me to carefully design the learning experience of the students -- the use of checklists would almost certainly be necessary. This resource primarily extends my theoretical understanding of an important pedagogical method within my field. On a more practical level, though, Kellemen’s article makes me think that an assignment which requires students to think about how they read and to what end could be a powerful addition to a literature course.

Teaching techniques

Essay in 180 words

Process:

1. Read assigned poem.
2. Choose one word to write about.
3. In no more than 180 words, relate the etymology of your word to the broader meaning of the line or stanza.

In this exercise students respond to a specific prompt about a text we have read in class within the 180 word limit. For example, I might use this to guide students in becoming more attentive and focused readers, especially when reading poetry. I imagine that I would be able to provide detailed feedback to these essays because they would be so brief, but I anticipate the need to help students transition from short to long essays.

Blog discussion

Process:

1. Read assigned poem.
2. Choose one stanza of the poem to explicate in one to two paragraphs, which you will post 24-hours before seminar.
3. Before the seminar, read your peers’ explications.
4. During the seminar, be prepared to present your ideas (you will not read your paragraphs!) to the class and then conclude your presentation with a question. You have five minutes!

I would use this technique to transfer the responsibility of the classroom discussion to the students. With this approach, students also have time to think through questions about the text before class.

Fishbowl discussion

Process:

1. Before class, read the assigned text(s).
2. During class, divide into groups A and B.
3. Group A will sit around the seminar table and discuss a question related to the assigned reading, while group B will sit outside group A and record notes of their discussion.
4. The groups will then switch, and group B will discuss another question related to the assigned reading.
5. As the class develops rapport, Group B could also discuss Group A’s conversation. What assumptions did they make? Do you agree with their arguments about the text?

I would use this technique to develop students’ ability to hold an extended seminar discussion. I believe that it is important that students have an opportunity to listen before trying to participate within the discussion. Additionally, I think that this approach could be used in such a way that builds rapport among the students in the class.