Design Thinking & Maker Culture: Digital Humanities Meets the Creative Industries
The IGNITE Curriculum

Johanna Drucker in her 2009 Chronicle Review article 'Blind Spots: Humanists must plan their digital futures' argues that 'The design of digital tools for scholarship is an intellectual responsibility, not a technical task'. Digital Humanities has embraced the ethos of Maker Culture and Makerspaces which emphasises learning by making and doing (Craig 2015) to promote cross-disciplinary problem-based and project-based inquiry, and hands-on and collaborative learning.

Design thinking, on the other hand, has become a crucial tool and mindset that enables organisations to think creatively beyond traditional logical and analytical approaches (Beckman and Barry 2007). It is about problem solving, creativity, logic and reasoning, critical thinking, self-directed and collaborative learning, and communication. It provides a framework for an empathic understanding of the people and issues underlying identified problems, as well as ideate, prototype, and test possible solutions that lead to human-centred innovation (Vandana 2014; Gobble 2014).

By drawing from the theory and practice of Design Thinking and the ethos of maker culture, the project, IGNITE: Design Thinking & Making in the Arts and Sciences is developing a 20 ECTS Masters module with funding from the EU Creative Europe Directorate. The project is developing its content for #dariahTeach, the open-source, freely-available online platform for the digital arts and humanities. Content for IGNITE is designed for two audiences: the lone learner (either outside of formal educational structures, or at an institution that does not teach DH) and educators (in formal classroom instruction or informal team or workshop leaders) who can teach a course (or part of a course, i.e. a unit) directly in the #dariahTeach platform or export content into their institutional instance of Moodle.

The module Design Thinking and Maker Culture is comprised of six 5 ECTS (or 5 credit) units:

Unit 1: Introduction to Design Thinking & Maker Culture
Unit 2: From Conception to Realisation: Workflows for Digital Projects and Products
Unit 3: Remaking Material Culture in Three-Dimensions: From Capturing to Printing
Unit 4: 3D Computer Graphics for Arts and Humanities: Building Virtual Reality Experiences
Unit 5: Storytelling for Digital Narratives and Blended Spaces
Unit 6: Game.Play.Design in the Arts and Humanities

The module reflects the pedagogic philosophy that the so-called digital divide is no longer about access to technology but about the ways that technology-based approaches are implemented in teaching practices, which often focus on the passive consumption of information rather than on reflective learning and the active construction of understanding.

The proposed paper will use IGNITE's learning philosophy as the starting point to problematise the combination of the communal practices of maker cultures with the processual learning of Design Thinking, as a pathway for co-creational problem-based learning, experimentation, iteration, and user-orientation.

References

Craig, William (2015) What Is 'Maker Culture,' And How Can You Put It To Work?, https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamcraig/2015/02/27/what-is-maker-culture-and-how-can-you-put-it-to-work/#7a730d85540b

Drucker, J. (2009). Blind Spots. The Chronicle Review 55(30), 3 April 2009. https://www.chronicle.com/article/Blind-Spots/9348

Gobble, MaryAnn (2014) Design Thinking. Research-Technology Management. 59-61. DOI: 10.5437/08956308X5703005