

Book Review

**Anna Wing-bo Tso, *Digital Humanities and New Ways of Teaching*,
Singapore: Springer, 2019, 249 p., ISBN 978-981-13-1277-9.**

As countries across the globe face the COVID-19 crisis, the topic of the digital humanities might be of special interest. Undeniably, the use of digital means to teach across the globe increased due to this, making the digitization an important process that offers useful resources. According to *Britannica*, humanities are traditionally seen as the disciplines that deal with human activity and culture, having their roots in the ancient Greek concept of *paideia*. Today, the digital humanities stand for the combination of digital tools and means with traditional humanist disciplines. This book is part of the Digital Culture and Humanities series by Springer and aims to provide a broad picture on how humanities are impacted, expanded and challenged in the age of technology in Asia and the Pacific region.

The editor of this volume is Anna Wing-bo Tso and she is currently an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the School of Arts and Social Sciences where she supervises the Master of Arts in Applied English Linguistics. She is also Director of the Research Institute for Digital Culture and Humanities and is the editor for the series of books titled *Digital Culture and Humanities*, published by Springer. Anna Wing-bo Tso has a keen interest in children's literature, gender studies and studies concerning translations and literature.

Digital Humanities and New Ways of Teaching is divided into four parts that contain about three papers each. The papers are grouped around the theme of each part and deal with archives and cultural heritage, the current situation regarding research on digital humanities in Asia and the Pacific area, teaching and digitization, and lastly discussing some future directions of the digital humanities in the mentioned area. They all allude to the same idea and that is that the practices of digital humanities can have positive results when they are used inside the university and other academic-related institutions. By giving examples and showing the results from various conducted studies, the goal of this book is to argue for the use and study of digital humanities on a larger scale in the Asian academic environment. The set goal is well achieved through the selection of papers the editor, Anna Wing-bo Tso, did as most

of the authors back up their claims with some type of evidence, have an analytical approach and try to make use of quantitative, qualitative and also mixed methods that help to emphasise certain ideas or aspects.

The first segment explores a situation beyond the Eastern scope, while also noting some very useful and more general applications. By reading this part (Monika Gänßbauer) one finds that the German-speaking world shares different opinions over the methods employed by digital humanities, having a general disinclination towards them. Even though some call Germany a country that is in hibernation in terms of digitization, the author effectively argues otherwise. The second chapter (Jack Hang-tat Leong) focuses on Chinese Canadian studies and how digital means are used by librarians and scholars for the study of heritage materials. The first presented project employs digital means to show how the Chinese people helped to build North America through railroads, the second shifts to the entire Chinese diaspora from Toronto, while the last two projects provide resources on Chinese migrants from around 1960's up to 2015. The third chapter (Sir Anril Pineda Tiatco, Bryan Levina Viray, and Jem Roque Javier) presents the fragile condition of material archives and documents, suggesting that this could be changed with a digital archive. The presented project deals with the cultural heritage of cultural performances through an online archive created to house all the data on such performances from Philippine.

The second part informs the reader on current research on digital humanities, from individual experiences to collective efforts. The fourth paper (Andrew Parkin) presents the experience of author Andrew Parkin from the type-writing where no mistake was allowed and the possibility to modify the document was not an option, up to the laptop and internet that allow a writer to easily get his/her work published. The fifth and sixth papers (Andy Chi-on Chin and Chaak-ming Lau) deal with a common topic of Cantonese related projects and studies. Author Andy Chi-on Chin starts by outlining the importance of Cantonese in Hong-Kong, continuing by launching a description of the construction and logic behind a Cantonese corpus. He then describes the two phases of the project, with emphasis on the latest as it involves the use of video segments and provides an ontological type of information. The last chapter of this segment details the need for constructing a thesaurus online dictionary, with an open data policy. Chaak-ming Lau explains that this project relies on the work on voluntaries that submit, edit and review content so that the users can enjoy verified and processed information. He details the process of selection, the use and role of social media, while the reader is presented with an analytical review of the project's strong and weak points that can help to guide similar endeavours.

Teaching in conjunction with digital humanities is introduced next. In chapter seven (Helena Hing-wa Sit, Sijia Guo) the flipped class method is presented to enhance the acquisition of a second language. As an extension of the *Developing Online Capacity in Introductory Chinese Language Units*, the project consists of a variety of activities that have both video and audio resources for learning. The research methods used are both quantitative and qualitative, with fifty-six entries in an online survey to provide data that prove flipped class to have positive results. The next

paper (Noble Po-kan Lo, Billy Cheuk-yuen Mok) tackles the language used by gaming, suggesting that it might prove to be a resource for teachers. After introducing gaming literacy, a set of basic characteristics follows that enable the identification of gaming language and terms. After conducting a survey, the research provides a table with the best-known gamers terms and in-depth results. The topic of e-literature teaching in the Pacific is explored in the ninth paper (John Paolo Sarce), as it's both contested and explored in the East. John Paolo Sarce launches a critique of post-colonialism and its relationship with technology. He argues on the uneven distribution of digital humanities centres and its possible factors and proceeds further to a critical approach towards school policies against technology. In the end, the author supports and highlights the novel forms of e-literature from the Philippines, the text tula or the social serye.

The last part casts itself upon the future directions of digital humanities and so do the three papers that form it. The first (Anna Wing-bo Tso, Janet Man-ying Lau) tackles the multimodal approach for the "Claude Monet: The Spirit of Space" exhibition from the Hong Kong Heritage Museum. The authors discuss the digitization from the last decade, explain multimodal literacy and practices, and state their aim to investigate the effectiveness of multimodal methods in exhibitions. Research questions, a part that details the Monet exhibition, the methodology used, its findings and the answers given by the visitors that joined the study are provided. The last two papers (Dora Wong and Winnie Siu-yee Ho) deal with digital literacy in different age groups. Groups of students join a creative project where they have to learn how to use both digital and traditional means to create a story through a digital video that is the result of the project. Three case studies show different means of achieving the same end, describing how the particular experience impacts the participants. The last piece of research argues that digital literacies can be found and developed on social media. The study has as target adult users of the Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps, via Facebook and the aim of author Winnie Siu-yee Ho is to show how online literacies are a resource for the volunteers. She makes use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with the users, trying to uncover the history of digital literacy of the user and their purpose for using Facebook.

As can be seen from the summary of the book, the papers manage to follow the same silver thread and keep their discussion around education and teaching. The evidence used to support each author's claim is well selected and well used, in the forms of surveys, interviews, with quantitative and qualitative methods. Keeping this in mind, the selection tries in most cases to engage with its audience. It has to because the audience is made up of people that will be impacted directly by the use of digitization in various aspects of education. The results of this book show clear, palpable evidence on how digitization affects, or not, the lives of these individuals.

However, in most cases, the number of survey participants is quite small and this may count as a detriment to the bigger picture. If one particular reader is looking to get a wider and yet general view, the number of the participants and their opinion might not be of much help. Despite this, the merit of this book lies in the various examples it offers and the potential of serving as an example for countries that are looking to develop their digital humanities practices in connection to teaching. Even if the focus is on Asia, the intended audience has a larger scope, that of teachers and

students alike. The obstacles and achievements of the authors that are mostly engaged in the pedagogical area may inspire and guide teachers and researchers that find themselves in similar situations.

The present volume is part of a series that proves a growing interest with digital humanities and new teaching methods, painting an honest and detailed image of this in Asia. Touching and discussing a wide range of situations and projects, it effectively presents an inspiration for both practical and theoretical future approaches. By employing a rich bibliography, the authors provide numerous means for a researcher to read further on the subject. All the papers have an analytical way of questioning and investigating the matter at hand, often using combined methods to support the arguments.

All in all, one should read this book and even consult other titles from the series if one is looking to find out how individuals deal with rather unwelcoming opinions and views regarding the digital humanities and digitization, as it provides ways of effectively employing the digital means in teaching practices. Based on the surveys conducted by the authors, a teacher can use the information to adapt his ways of teaching to the possible needs and capacities of the students. Using and processing the given info, this teaching process can be taken and improved further or it can be successfully introduced in countries that find themselves in a digital slumber. The use of such a book is evermore growing in the present context when it seems as if teaching becomes dependent on technology. By being unable to hold classes face-to-face, teachers have to find new and innovative ways of employing technology in their teaching process. This book can be a great example and inspiration which can provide a number of strategies that are so crucial for this current predicament. The flipped classroom, the multimodal approach, the many online platforms and projects highlighted are inspirational and outlined well enough to be replicated. The theories on the various approaches on the conjunction between digital humanities and teaching can have a practical use, starting from the theoretical framework laid out by this series.

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