CLASHING CULTURES? LINKING LITERATURE AND HYPERTEXT AT POST-16

SASHA MATTHEWMAN

University of Bristol, U.K.

Abstract. This paper argues that new digital genres clash with notions of a 'traditional' version of English, as represented in post-16 Advanced Level Literature exam courses in England. This argument is set within the context of an ongoing political imperative to integrate ICT into the school curriculum together with general optimism amongst many English teachers regarding the potential of particular uses of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in aspects of English (Andrews, 2001; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004). The paper focuses on hypertext which has been the subject of some exciting theoretical claims about its value for literary study, ranging from access to searchable databases, texts and research, to democratising the publishing process and changing the relationship between reader, writer and text (Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996). The paper draws on a case study of an Advanced Level Literature classroom 'design' within the ESRC InterActive Education Project. The class experimented with the use of hypertext as a tool for researching and writing about literature. This revealed the dissonance between the subject culture of English Literature and the subject culture of ICT. Students attempted to negotiate altered reading and writing practices which were not readily compatible with the assessment demands and classroom practices of Advanced Level English Literature. This negotiation involved different levels of student resistance and compliance with the project of integrating technology into English literature study. The paper ends with some speculations about which aspects of 'traditional' English should be retained and valued in an age of information saturation and multimedia hype.
Keywords: English Studies, Hypertext, Literature Studies

Chinese

[Translated by Shek Kam Tse]
題目: 受到衝擊的文化？第十六項發表，文獻與超文本的聯結

作者: SASHA MATTHEWMAN 布里斯托大學，英國
摘要: 這篇文章發表於英國第十六項高級程度的文獻考試課程中，議論到新的電子基因明顯地衝擊著傳統的英語， 這個論述是基於在政治上資訊科技不斷地融入學校課程當中，而且，又有很多英語科的老師對於應用資訊科技去提升英語的教與學，抱持樂觀的態度(Andrews, 2001; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004)。文章集中以一個啓發性的理論為基礎，去解放出版過程和改變讀者、作家與文本的關係，當中會涉觸到資料庫的尋找、再到文本、再到研究(Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996)。 這文章以一個名為 ESRC 互動教育計劃，當中的一個課室設計的高等程度的文獻作為案例。這課堂以運用超文本作為一種研究與撰寫文獻的工具。這反映了在英語文化科的文獻與資訊科技科的文化上的不協調。學生嘗試去商討有關在閱讀與寫作練習時，可能因應評核時的需求與課堂練習時，所出現到不一致的情況。這個討論會涉及到不同程度的學生反對與對整合英語文獻計劃的順從。在文末，在這資訊滿溢與多媒體不斷擴張的世代中，「傳統」的英語科應否被保留與重新給予價值的一些深思，作為總結。
關鍵詞: 英語研究、超文本、文獻研究

Dutch

Samenvatting [Translated by Tanja Janssen]
In deze bijdrage wordt betoogd dat nieuwe digitale genres in botsing komen met traditionele noties van Engels, zoals deze weerspiegeld worden in 'post-16 Advanced Level Literature' cursussen in Engeland. De context wordt gevormd door de politieke imperatief om ICT in het schoolcurriculum te integreren, samen met een zeker optimisme onder docenten Engels over het mogelijke gebruik van ICT ter bevordering van het onderwijzen en leren van Engels (Andrews, 2001; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004). De bijdrage richt zich op hypertekst waarvoor enkele hooggespannen theoretische claims zijn gedaan wat betreft de waarde voor literatuuronderwijs, variërend van toegang tot databases, teksten en onderzoek, tot een democratisering van publiceren en veranderingen in de relatie tussen lezer, schrijver en tekst (Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996). In de bijdrage wordt verslag gedaan van een case studie van een Advanced Level Literature-klas binnen het ESRC InterActive Education Project. In de klas werd geëxperimenteerd met het gebruik van hypertekst als onderzoeksmiddel en als middel om over literatuur te schrijven. Dit bracht een dissonantie aan het licht tussen het vak Engelse literatuur en het vak ICT. Leerlingen probeerden andere lees- en schrijfpraktijken uit die niet zomaar verenigbaar waren met de beoordelingseisen en klassepraktijk van Advanced Level English Literature. De bijdrage besluit met enkele speculaties over welke aspecten van 'traditioneel' Engels behouden zouden moeten blijven en van waarde zijn in deze tijd van informatietoevloed en multimedia hype.

French

Résumé [Translated by Laurence Pasa]
Cet article affirme que les nouveaux genres numériques s'opposent à une vision « traditionnelle » de l'anglais, tel qu'il est abordé dans des cours de préparation du diplôme supérieur de littérature en Angleterre. Cette affirmation prend place dans le contexte d'un actuel impératif politique d'intégrer les TIC dans les programmes scolaires, assorti d'un optimisme général parmi beaucoup de professeurs d'anglais au sujet de l'utilité potentielle des TIC pour l'amélioration des pratiques d'enseignement-apprentissage de l'anglais (Andrews, 2001 ; Stevens Et McGuinn, 2004). L'étude porte sur l'hypertexte, sujet de quelques réflexions théoriques passionnantes sur sa valeur pour l'étude littéraire, des bases de données disponibles, littéraires et scientifiques, à la démocratisation du processus éditorial, en passant par les changements des rapports entre le lecteur, l'auteur et le texte (Delany et Landow, 1991 ; Landow, 1994 ; Joyce, 1996). L'étude se base sur une étude de cas d'une classe d'étudiants préparant le diplôme supérieur de littérature dans le cadre du Projet Educatif InterActif de l'ESRC. La classe a expérimenté l'utilisation de l'hypertexte comme outil de recherche et de production de la littérature. Ceci a révélé une dissonance entre la culture littéraire anglaise et la culture des TIC. Les étudiants ont tenté de négocier des pratiques de lecture et d'écriture alternatives qui n'étaient pas aisément compatibles avec les modalités d'évaluation et les pratiques didactiques à l'œuvre dans le cadre du diplôme supérieur de littérature. Cette négociation a impliqué différents niveaux de résistance et d'acceptation de la part des étudiants vis-à-vis du projet

d'intégration des nouvelles technologies dans l'étude de la littérature anglaise. En conclusion, l'article interroge les aspects de l'étude littéraire anglaise traditionnelle devant être maintenus et évalués à une époque où on regorge d'information et où on surinvestit le multimédia.
Mots-clés : Enseignement de l'anglais, Hypertexte, Enseignement de la littérature

German
Zusammenfassung [Translated by Irene Pieper]
Der Beitrag argumentiert, dass neue digitale Genres und eine traditionelle Auffassung des Englischen gegenwärtig hart aufeinander prallen, wenn man etwa die post-16 Advanced Level Literature exam courses in England betrachtet. Die Argumentation wird in den Kontext eines andauernden politischen Imperativs gestellt, wonach ICT in das Schulcurriculum zu integrieren ist, sowie eines allgemeinen Optimismus unter Lehrenden des Faches Englisch, was das Potenzial einer spezifischen Nutzung von ICT zur Verbesserung des Lehrens und Lernens in einigen Bereichen des Englischen angeht (Andrews, 2001, Stevens & McGuinn, 2004). Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf den Bereich des Hypertexts, der mehrfach für einige aufregende theoretische Annahmen im Bereich des Literaturunterrichts herangezogen wurde. Diese reichten vom Zugang zu Recherchemöglichkeiten, zu Texten und Forschung, bis zur Demokratisierung des Publikationsprozesses und der Veränderung des Verhältnisses zwischen Leser, Schreiber und Text (Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996). Der Beitrag basiert auf einer Fallstudie über Advanced Level Literature classroom ‚design' innerhalb des ESRC InterActive Education Project. Die Klasse experimentierte mit der Nutzung des Hypertexts als eines Instruments, um über Literatur zu forschen und zu schreiben. Es zeigte sich eine Dissonanz zwischen der Fachkultur Englische Literatur und der Fachkultur ICT. Die SchülerInnen versuchten ihre veränderten Lese- und Schreibpraxen, die nicht direkt kompatibel waren mit den Bewertungsmaßstäben und Klassenzimmerpraxen des Advanced Level English Literature, zur Geltung zu bringen. Der Aushandlungsprozess zeigte unterschiedliche Ebenen von Widerständen und Nachgiebigkeit im Zusammenhang des Projekts, Technologie in den englischen Literaturunterricht zu integrieren. Der Beitrag schließt mit Überlegungen dazu, welche Aspekte des traditionellen Englischunterrichts in einem Zeitalter von Informationssättigung und Multimedia-Hype erhaltenswert sind.

Greek
Metafrase [Translated by Panatoya Papoulia Tzelepi]
Το άρθρο αυτό υποστηρίζει ότι τα νέα ψηφιακά κειμενικά είδη (genre) συγκρούονται με την παραδοσιακή μορφή των Αγγλικών όπως αντιπροσωπεύεται στις εξετάσεις Ανωτέρου Επιπέδου Λογοτεχνίας στα μαθήματα για μαθητές μετά τα 16. Αυτό το επιχείρημα τοποθετείται στο πλαίσιο της συνεχιζόμενης πολιτικής να ενσωματωθεί η νέα τεχνολογία στο σχολικό πρόγραμμα μαζί με τη γενικευμένη αισιοδοξία μεταξύ των Άγγλων δασκάλων σχετικά με τη δυνατότητα ειδικών χρήσεων της νέας τεχνολογίας να βελτιώσει τη διδασκαλία και μάθηση όψεων της Αγγλικής (Andrews 2001; Stereus & McGuinn, 2004). Το άρθρο εστιάζεται στο υπερκείμενο το οποίο έχει γίνει αντικείμενο ενθουσιώδους θεωρητικής άποψης για την αξία του στη φιλολογική μελέτη, από την πρόσβαση σε τράπεζες δεδομένων, κείμενα και έρευνες, μέχρι τον εκδημοκρατισμό της διαδικασία έκδοσης και την αλλαγή των σχέσεων μεταξύ αναγνώστη, συγγραφέα και κειμένου (Delaney & Landow, 1991; Landow 1994; Joyce, 1996). Το άρθρο στηρίζεται σε μελέτη περιπτώσεων ενός «σχεδίου» τάξης Προχωρημένου Επιπέδου Λογοτεχνίας στα πλαίσια του ESRC Διαδραστικού Εκπαιδευτικού Σχεδίου. Η τάξη πειραματίστηκε με τη χρήση του υπερκειμένου ως εργαλείου έρευνας και γραφής για τη λογοτεχνία. Αυτό αποκάλυψε την ασυμφωνία μεταξύ της κουλτούρας του περιεχομένου της Αγγλικής Λογοτεχνίας και της κουλτούρας του περιεχομένου της ICT (νέας τεχνολογίας). Οι μαθητές προσπάθησαν να διαπραγματευθούν διαφορετικές πρακτικές ανάγνωσης και γραφής, οι οποίες ήταν άμεσα συμβατές με τις απαιτήσεις τους αξιολογώντας και τις πρακτικές της τάξης του Προχωρημένου Επιπέδου Λογοτεχνίας. Αυτή η διαπραγμάτευση περιελάμβανε διαφοροποιημένα επίπεδα αντίστασης και συμμόρφωσης των μαθητών ως προς το σχέδιο ενσωμάτωσης της τεχνολογίας στη μελέτη της Αγγλικής Λογοτεχνίας. Το άρθρο τελειώνει με κάποιες ιδέες, ως προς ποιες απόψεις των «παραδοσιακών Αγγλικών» πρέπει να διατηρηθούν και να αξιοποιηθούν σε εποχή πλημμυρίδας πληροφοριών και υπερβολής των πολυμέσων.

Polish
Streszczenie Translated by Elzbiéta Awramiuk]
W niniejszym artykule przekonujemy, że nowe cyfrowe gatunki kolidują z pojęciami "tradycyjnej" wersji angielszczyzny, takimi jakie są reprezentowane w Anglii na zaawansowanych kursach egzaminacyjnych

z literatury na poziomie zaawansowanym dla osób powyżej szesnastego roku życia. To stwierdzenie sytuujemy w kontekście istniejących politycznych zaleceń włączania ICT do szkolnych programów nauczania i ogólnego optymizmu wśród wielu angielskich nauczycieli w związku z możliwością konkretnych użyć ICT w celu poprawy nauczania języka angielskiego (Andrews, 2001; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004). W artykule koncentrujemy się na hipertekście, który był tematem pewnych interesujących teoretycznych twierdzeń na temat jego wartości dla studiów literackich, poczynając od dostępu do umożliwiających wyszukiwanie baz danych, tekstów i badań, po demokratyzację procesu wydawniczego i zmianę relacji między czytelnikiem, piszącym i tekstem (Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996). Artykuł wykorzystuje studium przypadku "projektu" lekcji zaawansowanej literatury w obrębie ESRC Interaktywnego Projektu Edukacyjnego. Klasa ekperymentowała z użyciem hipertekstu jako narzędzia badania literatury i pisania o niej. To ujawniło dysonans między kulturą przedmiotu "literatura angielska" a kulturą przedmiotu ICT. Studenci próbowali poradzić sobie ze zmienionymi ćwiczeniami w czytaniu i pisaniu, które nie bardzo odpowiadały wymogom oceniania i praktyce lekcyjnej zaawansowanego kursu literatury angielskiej. Próby te wymagały różnych poziomów uczniowskiej odporności i podporządkowania się projektowi włączenia technologii do studiów angielskiej literaratury. Artykuł kończy się kilkoma przemyśleniami na temat tego, jakie aspekty tradycyjnych lekcji języka angielskiego powinny być utrzymane i cenione w wieku nasycenia informacją i multimedialnego szumu.

Słowa-klucze: studia nad angielskim, hipertekst, studia nad literaturą

Portuguese

Resumo [Translated by Paulo Feytor Pinto]

Este artigo argumenta que os novos géneros digitais colidem com noções "tradicionais" do inglês, tal como ele é tratado em Inglaterra, nos cursos pós-16 anos, de preparação para os exames de Literatura de Nível Avançado. Esta argumentação enquadra-se no contexto do crescente imperativo político de integrar as TIC no currículo escolar, aliado ao optimismo de muitos professores de inglês acerca do potencial de alguns usos das TIC no sentido de facilitar o ensino e aprendizagem de aspecto do inglês (Andrews, 2001; Stevens & McGuinn, 2004). O artigo centra-se no hipertexto, género que tem sido alvo de algumas propostas teóricas exaltantes acerca da sua utilidade para os estudos literários, desde o acesso a bases de dados, textos e investigações pesquisáveis, até à democratização do processo de edição e à mudança da relação entre o leitor, o escritos e o texto (Delany & Landow, 1991; Landow, 1994; Joyce, 1996). O artigo centra-se num estudo de caso, da organização de uma turma de Literatura de Nível Avançado no contexto do projecto ESRC InterActive Education. A turma experimentou a utilização do hipertexto como ferramenta de pesquisa e de escrita sobre literatura. Tal pôs em evidência a dissonância entre a cultura da disciplina de Literatura Inglesa e a cultura da disciplina de TIC. Os estudantes tentaram negociar práticas alternativas de leitura e de escrita que não são imediatamente compatíveis com as exigências da avaliação e com as práticas de sala de aula, na disciplina de Literatura Inglesa (nível avançado). Esta negociação implicou diferentes níveis de resistência e de aceitação do projecto de integração de tecnologias no estudo da literatura inglesa. O artigo termina com algumas considerações acerca dos aspectos do Inglês "tradicional" que deveriam ser mantidos e valorizados num tempo de saturação informativa e de exaltação multimédia.

Palavras-chave: estudos ingleses, hipertexto, estudos literários

1.   INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH 'SUBJECT CULTURES' AND ICT

A 'subject culture' may be understood as the shared history and understanding of the curriculum content and the pedagogical methods and discourses to be expected within a subject domain. All subjects are not equally comfortable with technology. More importantly 'subject cultures' are not monolithic (Goodson, 1985) and may have competing histories and practitioner allegiances. Particular allegiances and approaches within a school subject may link more readily than others with the discourse and practices of ICT. Equally, the acronym ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) covers a wide range of proliferating technologies with varied potentialities and subject specific applications – we might think of video recorders in relation to drama and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) in relation to geog-

raphy. Thus in the case of English, a particularly riven and variegated subject, it seems necessary to think in plural terms of English subject culture(s) and their varied relationships with different ICT(s).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in the UK funded the University of Bristol InterActive Education Project (2000 - 2004) to examine the ways in which ICT could be used in educational settings to enhance learning. This was an ambitious project involving over 50 teachers in 9 schools as core members. The project was organised around the subject areas of English, maths, science, modern foreign languages, music, history and geography. Subject teams were made up of teachers, researchers and teacher educators who worked collaboratively to devise and evaluate lesson sequences and methods (called 'design initiatives') which integrated ICT into subject teaching. One of the cross cutting themes set up at the beginning of the project was the relationship between subject cultures and new technologies. Within subject 'design initiatives' the personal style of the teacher and subject-cultural factors were found to be far more significant for successful learning outcomes than the efficiency and suitability of the technology in relation to a task. The centrality of the teacher who embodies versions of subject culture along with personal theories and experiences was a recurrent element in reporting findings from the project. The concept of the 'design initiative' is intended to emphasise the teacher's role in crafting a learning situation and reflects the view that ICT alone does not enhance learning (John & Sutherland, 2004).

The subject English team was the largest team in the InterActive Project, comprising 2 researchers, 1 teacher educator and 17 English teachers in 9 schools (3 primary schools; 5 secondary schools; 1 further education college). In this paper I am writing from the perspective of a teacher educator/researcher and coordinator of the English team. I report on the research in one 'design initiative' whilst attempting to situate this within the findings of the InterActive Education Project as a whole. There were a variety of successful lesson sequences or 'design initiatives' within the interdisciplinary project of combining English and ICT. The diversity of 'design initiatives' reflects the broad range of what counts as 'English'. These 'design initiatives' included: using email to develop research skills and critical literacy; making multimedia stories; using digital cameras and PowerPoint to investigate the grammar of still and moving images; the production of a school newsletter and website; and working with language software and PowerPoint to develop deep understanding of spelling patterns; using the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) online for Advanced Level Language; collaborative creative writing and word-processing and investigating imagery in poetry through PowerPoint. Our experiences in this connect with a recognition amongst researchers and teacher educators about the potential of technology to shift the nature of the subject in digital and multimodal directions. This is frequently expressed as an inevitable and necessary response to the changing conditions of communication, whether or not technology is viewed positively as offering opportunities for creativity and pupil engagement (Stevens & McGuinn, 2004; Andrews, 2001). Interestingly, a focus for resisting this 'technological-determinism' emerged within the subject culture in the recent mainly online consultation about the curriculum in 2015 headed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in England (QCA, 2005). However, such consultations about English curriculum content

and use of ICT tend to centre around and refer to secondary schooling in England for pupils aged between 11-16. It is significant for this study of hypertext writing that, at post-16, subject definitions become more fixed. This means that 'Advanced Level English Literature' emerges as a distinct subject culture in its own right with its own special issues in relation to technology.

In order to illustrate this point about 'subject cultures within subject cultures,' I want to rehearse in more detail the particular conditions under which English as a subject is defined within the curriculum in England from secondary school to university level. I want to show why 'Advanced Level English Literature' represents a distinct subject sub-culture.

As a secondary school subject up to GCSE (the examination taken by pupils in England at age 16) 'English' is a hybrid of literature, linguistics, media, drama, creative writing and cultural studies. English carries both the weight of the national identity and the main responsibility for the nation's literacy. Not surprisingly therefore, it has been subjected to continual dissection, intervention and redefinition under competing ideological agendas. The debates have split the subject between literary and linguistic approaches and between progressive child-centred and skills-based paradigms (Ball, 1985). The National Curriculum sought to gloss over the disputes through a recognition of plural positions, these being defined as follows:

> A 'personal growth' view: emphasises the relationship between language and learning in the individual child, and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives.
>
> A 'cross-curricular' view: emphasises that all teachers (of English and other subjects) have a responsibility to help children with the language demands of different subjects on the school curriculum: otherwise areas of the curriculum may be closed to them.
>
> An 'adult needs' view: emphasises the responsibility of English teachers to prepare children for the language demands of adult life, including the workplace, in a fast-changing world.
>
> A 'cultural heritage' view: emphasises the responsibility of schools to lead children to an appreciation of those works of literature that have been widely regarded as amongst the finest in the language.
>
> A 'cultural analysis' view: emphasises the role of English in helping children towards a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment in which they live. Children should know about the processes by which meanings are conveyed, and about the ways in which print and media carry values
>
> (Department of Education and Science (DES), 1989).

These positions are commonly known as the five 'Cox models', presented in the original report as having equal weight. However, in practice particular models of English are given prominence. Thus, the 1995 and 1999 versions of the national curriculum for English in England, privilege a cultural heritage model. More dramatically, the secondary school manifestation of the English Literacy Strategy firmly reinstates linguistics in the form of skills-based literacy teaching (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 2001). This means that, at present, in terms

of documentation, English for ages 5-14 is weighted towards developing literacy skills whereas English for ages 14-16 is driven by the examination syllabuses which split into English, English Literature and Media Studies. The political rhetoric of integrating ICT at all stages does not always fit easily with assessment demands which involve print-based examinations requiring handwritten responses. However, in terms of the discourse of English up to Advanced Level there is a strong emphasis on adult needs and vocational versions of English which connect on a number of levels with the largely instrumental discourse of ICT as a core cross-curricular skill (Selwyn, 1999). This means that ICT is firmly on the English agenda for ages 5-16 in terms of the recognition of ICT skills, although at the level of school *practice,* any real paradigm shift in terms of a digital English curriculum is still only a matter of academic assertion (Carrington & Marsh, 2005). Certainly, the 17 secondary school English teachers in the InterActive Project all accepted the dominant discourse of ICT as an essential cross curricular skill and, more significantly, recognised and endorsed the potential for a strong connection of English with the changes in the communication landscape.*1*

At higher education level, the influence and integration of technology depends on the English related degree course on offer. The contested nature of English is evidenced in the vast differences in theoretical approaches and texts studied even between degree courses with the same title. 'Doing English', as Eaglestone (2000) points out, may mean engaging with a very different body of knowledge and prac-tices according to which higher education institution students attend. Moran (2002) links this diversity to the relatively late establishment of English as a degree subject and stresses the interdisciplinary bases and possibilities of the subject. This may make us expect that English will be open to other discourses, such as that offered by ICT. English has certainly always drawn on other disciplines and the subject boundaries are both permeable and shifting. However, English has a long history of resistance to positivist and functionalist discourses and the discourse of ICT has been seen as predominantly functionalist (Andrews, 2001). It is worth noting that the development from 1917 of the Cambridge English degree course towards a literary and humanistic focus was argued on the basis of it being an antidote to the 'rampant growth of technology'. The aim was to restore the sanctity of the human in an age which had witnessed the ravages of the machines of war (Eaglestone, 2000).

Advanced Level study (often called A-Levels) for post-16 students has tradition-ally in England been referred to as the 'gold standard' or the most prestigious and academically valuable award. Attempts to make Advanced Level broader (usually only 3 subjects are studied to Advanced Level) have been resisted by traditional universities as a lowering of academic standards threatening strong preparation for university courses. However, in England, the year-by-year increase in the percentage of students who attain the highest grades has led to a debate about whether the quali-fication is losing its value. Nevertheless, Advanced Levels in their present incarna-

---

1 This might seem to be inevitable given that the teachers were involved in a project about curriculum and technology, although in fact only two could be described as expert technology users and enthusiasts.

tion are still largely conceived as a preparation for *academic* higher education studies rather than vocational training. ICT is strongly associated with utilitarian, cross curricular and vocational discourses. In contrast, Neil Selwyn (1999) who has published extensively on ICT, curriculum and policy argues from empirical data that the academic and theoretical nature of Advanced Levels leads students and teachers to perceive ICT at post-16 as irrelevant. However, in terms of curriculum this does not seem to be equally the case for all Advanced Level subjects. For instance, in terms of English there are wide differences in the balance of academic and vocational emphasis in English related subjects. English at Advanced level splits into defined disciplinary enclaves: these connect directly with the different versions of English on offer at university degree level. The range of English related Advanced Levels includes: English Literature; English Language; Theatre Studies, Communication Studies, Film Studies and Media Studies. Of these, English Literature is perhaps least likely to integrate ICT since it has traditionally offered a bookish retreat and is resistant to changes in the communication landscape. Within this subject sub-culture, past literary works are often privileged and specified over modern texts and there are very limited opportunities for contemporary literary study. In contrast, the more recent Advanced Level Language, which many schools began to offer in the 1990s, has sought to define its difference from the more established literature courses through an increasing reliance on the analysis of a variety of contemporary non-fiction texts (including print-outs of media and ICT texts) and written products and responses in a range of forms. The impact of technology on language is both explicitly and implicitly recognised in the syllabus and in coursework submission. Students may make use of corpus searches, desktop publishing, databases, video and audio recording. Conversely, as Advanced Level Language and Media Studies have gained in popularity, Advanced Level Literature syllabuses have excluded non-fiction forms for reading and response as these may now be covered elsewhere. The literature syllabuses have been 'updated' in a 'non-technological' direction so that they follow more closely the literary theory developments at university level which places greater emphasis on the study of social context and literary critics. Whilst the theoretical base has shifted, the traditional practice for studying literature is very much in evidence: an emphasis on close reading of a limited selection of texts (and by texts here I mean published books or printed extracts from books) and a traditional analytical essay in response to literature (most of these handwritten under timed conditions). Advanced level Literature has therefore become more theoretical and academic as a subject as Advanced Level Language has taken over some of the documentary and non-fiction elements of previous syllabuses. In terms of school practice in literature courses, this has limited the integration of ICT to the word-processing of coursework essays and research on the internet for texts, contexts and critics.

Of course in relation to English, the issue is not simply about the integration of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning, but concerns the implications of technology for changing the definition of the subject. We might ask whether Advanced Level Literature courses should remain so firmly entrenched in traditional literary study. There is also the question of how the objects considered appropriate for literary study should be defined. There are claims for the study of hypertext novels, multi-

media poems and video games as literary artefacts (Aarseth, 1997) but these emergent technological genres do not feature in popular university English courses in England. It is likely that courses for post-16 pupils will continue the previous trend of dragging behind the higher education lead in this respect. Changing definitions of the subject in relation to technology might also be at the level of the methods and forms of literary research, analytical practice and literary critical writing. The next section discusses this aspect of technology and literary study as background to an Advanced Level classroom research 'design initiative' around hypertext and literature within the InterActive Project.

2.   THE RATIONALE FOR HYPERTEXT AND LITERATURE

A hypertext is 'a variable structure, composed of blocks of text (or what Roland Barthes terms *lexias*) and the electronic links that join them' (Delaney & Landow, 1991: 3). There are some interesting experiments with hypertext resources in degree level literature courses which offer ideas to explore at school level, notably Landow's work with literary hypertexts at Brown University, USA. The following ideas about hypertext influenced my discussions and research within the English team.

Firstly, hypertext may offer a way of developing students' abilities to think associatively (Moulthrop, 2001). Certainly in the planning stage of a literary critical essay, an associative and non-linear approach usually comes first. Hypertext offers collaborative potential and the facility to capture a range of viewpoints within a textual space. As well as providing web-based literary resources, university tutors or teachers can encourage students to contribute to the network of hypertext voices. Collaboration and discussion is highly valued in English classrooms and this is an aspect of ICT which may readily connect with the established culture of 'best practice' in English teaching.

Secondly, many studies claim the potential of hypertext to democratise the writing, reading and publishing process (Bolter, 1991; Landow, 1992, 1994; Bolter, 1998) even to the extent of claiming that 'Hypertext does not permit a tyrannical, univocal voice' (Landow, cited in Allen, 2000: 11). The web is a hypertext where anyone with access can get published and this presents a challenge to notions of critical and authorial authority. Additionally within some published hypertexts the roles of reader and writer are interchangeable. Readers can select texts, link them in particular ways to suggest or demonstrate particular semantic relationships (Burbules, 2002), and they can interpolate the texts with their own commentaries. Viewed positively, this functionality offers opportunities for increased student agency and active reading and interaction with texts. More fundamentally it offers an alternative way of presenting critical commentary which invites and allows alternative interpretations rather than presenting a univocal line of argument.

Thirdly, the argument that hypertext as it has developed represents a technical embodiment of poststructuralist theories has potential at classroom level:

> Because hypertext breaks down our habitual way of understanding and experiencing texts, it radically challenges students, teachers and theorists of literature. But it can also provide a revelation, by making visible and explicit mental processes that have always

> been part of the total experience of reading. For the text as the reader imagined it – as
> opposed to the physical text objectified in the book – never had to be linear, bounded or
> fixed (Delaney & Landow, cited in Allen, 2000: 201).

Most obviously, hypertext can display and map out intertextual connections through the function of electronic links. This may be helpful in making the theoretical concept of intertextuality more concrete and understandable for students.

In summary, the key research questions which underpinned the design can be framed as follows:

- Can working with hypertext promote student discussion and collaboration?
- Will students be empowered by writing in a different format to the traditional essay?
- Can hypertext help to illustrate the concept of intertextuality in a visual form?

3.   THE RESEARCH STUDY OR 'DESIGN INITIATIVE'

At John Cabot City Technology College (CTC)2, one of the school sites in the InterActive project, an English team member and teacher, Adrian Blight, had already experienced some success in using hypertext with his pre-16 classes in 2004. He was interested in following up his interest in the potential of hypertext with a final year Advanced Level Literature group (age group 17-18 years).

Given the context of a schooled and historical division between the cultures of Advanced Level Literature and technology, as researchers and teachers Adrian and I were interested to see what currently unexploited possibilities technology might offer to Advanced Level Literature students. We worked together to discuss plans and review video evidence from Adrian's earlier work with hypertext. In our planning we discussed how the shift in Advanced Level Literature to take account of elements of poststructuralist theory could be supported by the embodied characteristics of hypertext.

Our point of departure was the potential of hypertext to make aspects of intertextuality visible and concrete. Intertextuality is a highly complex and contested critical term and it is not amenable to a singular and simple definition. Our concern in this school context was to demonstrate the principle that texts always refer to other texts. Rather than viewing the literary text as an independent and self sufficient unit students were asked to consider the way that meanings are made in the relationships between texts. This 'outer sphere' of textual relationships can include reference to non-fiction and visual material.

> The fact that a text's significance depends upon a host of other texts is made an integral
> part of the reading experience of such hypertext systems and as a consequence the dis-
> turbance that intertextuality brings to notions of a text's 'inside' and 'outside' is made
> manifest by hypertextual reading (Allen, 2000).

---

[2] *A CTC is an independent 11-18 educational institution funded by business sponsorship and government grants. CTCs focus on science, mathematics and technology and have an ethos of high ICT use and curricular innovation.*

In practice this meant working with hypertext reading and writing to help students to make links within and between literary texts and out to contextual information – a key assessment objective for all Advanced Level Literature syllabuses.

In the particular syllabus the class was studying, the final and most challenging unit focuses on literature in the Great War (1914-1918) and requires students to have broad knowledge of the literary and social and historical contexts for this period. In examination, students are asked to demonstrate this knowledge in relation to unseen texts about the Great War through making deft links to context, critics and related texts from their own wide reading. To be successful in the exam, students need to develop knowledge of a variety of texts and to be prepared to link disparate texts around contextual and literary concepts. They are expected to build a broad knowledge base and to demonstrate skills of analysis and synthesis. We hoped that writing hypertexts would allow students to develop and capture their 'nomadic' and 'intertextual' thinking in relation to literature of the Great War and, at a more basic level, that they would be able to make effective links between texts and contexts.

4. STUDENTS' DISPOSITIONS IN RELATION TO LITERATURE AND ICT

It is important to note that the students involved in the 'design initiative' were not unused to ICT. Students all had their own email accounts and there is a college Intranet and easy access to ICT. My previous research experiences at the college had led me to expect the Advanced Level Literature students to be as positive about ICT as students of English lower down the school. This was not the case. Right from the start the Advanced Level students showed a more critical, sceptical and nuanced attitude towards ICT in relation to their study of literature.

The class consisted of nine girls (this is not uncommon and reflects the continued 'gendering' of subject choice in schools). The students reported having used ICT for English work in terms of searching the internet, using PowerPoint for revision and for writing their coursework essays. The question of student dispositions becomes particularly salient at post-16. Pupils begin to make choices which reflect their growing sense of themselves as young adults. Bloomer (1997) draws on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to analyse several case studies of Advanced Level students and the complex set of learning dispositions which are activated in a given learning situation. What Bloomer perhaps underplays is the strength of a class 'personality' or dynamic which can be a powerful influence on individuals within the group. In this particular case it became evident that the class was dominated by Emily. Emily was a flamboyant character and an articulate and highly vocal student who took great pleasure in the debates and arguments within the class and who loudly proclaimed her aversion to technology. In interview, she explained that her choice of English as an Advanced Level was made mainly on the basis that it would enhance her work in drama. She defined herself as 'not a computer person' despite actually reporting fairly extensive use of computers. Emily was clearly in rivalry with Anna (another talented student) who by contrast was a quiet, but confident and articulate independent learner. Emily's friends Rowena and Tracy tended to echo and support the views of Emily (Rowena loudly and Tracy quietly). Two other students in the

class, Jane and Kylie were referred to by the teacher as 'the new girls.' This was intended as a good-natured running joke (they had been at the school for a year). However, in truth they were clearly quite isolated from the rest of the group and sat together saying nothing unless prompted. The other members of the class, Eva, Naomi and Sheila, were quiet and compliant in the lessons that I observed. In the pre-design interviews all of the students showed an ease and familiarity with technology. But all students also detailed problems with the combination of ICT and literature, especially in relation to the internet. These included: issues of distinguishing reliable or authoritative sources from subjective opinions; problems of selecting salient sources; and finding the key ideas in non-linear multimedia texts:

> It's difficult to legitimately know what's a decent point and what's not. 'Cos I could put an essay on there now and put it on the web and people might take it as written word but it's not, it's just an opinion. (Emily)

For Emily, the 'written word' seemed to be synonymous with the *printed* published word. For eight out of the nine students print culture still carried more 'tangible' and reliable authority. Only Anna out of the group was wholly positive about the internet:

> I don't think I would have gotten by this year without the internet – you can get really radical and contemporary ideas about the text which you wouldn't find in normal books…I suddenly realised that there is loads of research you can do around your book.

Whilst Anna was still placing the concept of the book at the centre of her study and research in English, it is clear that she felt that the internet had widened her perspective. She was also expressing an implicit affinity with Landow's (1994) connection of hypertext with post-structural notions of plurality and the decentering of critical authority. Perhaps also her attitude to using technology in this context was influenced by her position as head girl of the City Technology College. This role seemed to give her status and a self consciously ambassadorial role for the college in relation to technology and the research process. In contrast, her partner for the project Eva, who saw herself as primarily a scientist, defined English very definitely and narrowly as being 'about books' and as a 'non technical' subject.

More defiantly, choosing English Literature Advanced Level for Sheila seemed to be rooted in the concept of 'the book' as anti-technology. With some evident indignation, Sheila related her parents' response to the library.

> I remember when we come here my dad was like 'this is a small library' she was like 'yeah we're IT based' and it was like, where are the books?

This unprompted anecdote seemed motivated by the student's concern to make clear to me as an 'objective outsider,' her principled opposition to the college ethos in its relentless promotion of technology. Within the college the book had largely been replaced by the computer. This theme was eagerly taken up by Naomi, her partner in the project. Naomi asserted that even more library shelves had since disappeared as the ICT had taken over the space. 'There used to be so many more shelves and now they've got rid of half of them.'

Issues to do with reading practices on the web were also elaborated by each student and themes included: time taken in searching; dislike of sustained reading on

screen; and the feeling of a need to scan quickly and move on, printing off relevant sections.

> The fact that there's so many websites you feel the need to sort of look at everything quickly and then like go on to the next one, as opposed to taking a long time just looking at one poem. (Jane)

This seems to counter Moulthop's (1991) notion of fluid associative reading and reader control. On the contrary, the students reported feeling driven by the hypertext, unable to give sustained attention to the material they found.

The overwhelming impression from the interviews was of a group who saw their Literature course as centred around the book, but who were able to critically evaluate the usefulness or otherwise of technology for their English work. There was none of the enthusiasm for technology for its own sake that was recorded in the interviews with younger students in previous designs within the InterActive Project– instead there was both wariness and weariness. With Emily as vocal spokesperson it was made very clear that the idea of the hypertext project was counter to how they viewed English and may even have been seen by Sheila and Naomi as another college endorsed attack on the book as a resource for learning:

> Yeah we do it in a lot of other subjects as well so it's a bit like to have it in English, you know you don't think of English as an ICT based thing…it's just too modern really for English. I think it's a very personal subject when you're reading. (Naomi)

So in the light of these interviews, the mood at the beginning of the project was, at best, mixed. Adrian set up the project with an introductory lesson in which he stressed the exam requirements and assessment criteria, gave some suggestions for texts and raised the importance of the idea of 'linking' as both physical and conceptual. He gave the example of how *Birdsong*, by Sebastian Faulks, a modern novel set in the Great War, might link to a poem by Siegfried Sassoon and to an historical account of the battle of the Somme in Fussell's study *The Great War and modern memory* (1975). The point of this is to suggest how Faulk's text is 'haunted' by texts that have gone before, retaining thematic and linguistic echoes of them. This is a concept of reading and interpretation as a rich, allusive and exploratory process. Students were asked in groups of two or three to create a website which showed the intertextual process of reading Great War literature. In order to make the task of demonstrating links between texts more manageable, students were asked to select two texts from the same genre with each group having a different focus: poetry, non-fiction, prose or drama. They were asked to use the internet to help them to locate two related texts and then to find texts which provided relevant contextual information connecting with their two primary texts for analysis. Whilst in terms of the lesson sequence this was conceived as a three stage process, in practice, the process of selecting, analysing texts and constructing the hypertexts was appropriately enough, rather more fluid and haphazard.

5.   SUMMARY OF THE LESSON SEQUENCE (DESIGN INITIATIVE)

The idea for the design was fairly straightforward:

1) Students would identify two extracts or short texts in the genre of poetry, drama, prose, non-fiction or novel on the theme of war from searching relevant sites on the web.
2) Students would be asked to analyse and compare these texts.
3) Students would plan, produce and present a website to display their textual analysis and to draws links between the texts and out to relevant historical and literary contexts.

5.1 Methodology

In each class we used digital video recorders left running to track six target students across the whole sequence of 7x90 minute lessons. These students were selected to represent the range of attainment in the class and the focus was on capturing the process of their work with the computer. All nine students in the class were interviewed in pairs before and after the design initiative with the aim of gathering their attitudes to studying English Literature; use of computers; and lesson processes and outcomes. Students completed an Advanced Level Literature exam question at the beginning of the module to give an indication of their attainment and their tendencies to make links between texts, and to other texts and contexts. Students answered a similar question at the end of the unit for comparison and to investigate any significant shifts in their essay practice. The hypertext products were collected for analysis.

The process captured on video showed the difficulties of drawing together technology and literature at the level of interaction, reading process and composition of text. I think it is worth looking in more detail at some of the incidents that occurred during the research design because they seem to exemplify some of the problems in matching subject cultures, curriculum and student dispositions and technology.

5.2 Incidents in the design

5.2.1   Group 1: Emily, Rowena and Tracy

In the first lesson, Rowena, Tracy and Emily found it difficult to find any drama extracts on the web. To their evident frustration they found instead websites which were advertising the printed play scripts for sale or advertising forthcoming performances. They were hampered by not being sure about what texts they were searching for in an unfamiliar domain. Instead of finding material which was new to them, the pupils fell back on their prior knowledge to help them to make sense of the task. So Tracy chose *In Holland stands a house* (Saunders, 1991) which she remembered studying lower down the school, Emily chose *Bui Doi* (Maltby, 1989), the song from the musical *Miss Saigon* (Schonberg et al, 1989) which she had recently seen in performance, and Rowena chose *Journey's end* (Sherriff, 1929) as it was one suggested in the Advanced Level English syllabus. They could not find the scripts for the plays on the internet so they loudly declared that they were going to go to the central city library to get *books*. (This trip involved a 30 minute bus ride there and back.) The fact that the students went in their lunch hour demonstrated both their

motivation and commitment as students, but also perhaps, the extent of their desire to actively show their opposition to the technological nature of the project and to prove their allegiance to a different view of English.

Once they began working on these texts for the hypertext it became clear that Rowena had been given the role of web designer. This was due to her previous success with multimedia design in her design and technology classes where she had won the school prize. However, Rowena's technical abilities were not as secure as this might suggest. She attempted to use PowerPoint as a platform for the web pages. This caused time consuming technical issues in reworking the material given to her by Emily and Tracy, and led to her starting the homepage again for three lessons in a row. During these lessons she spent her time searching for images, typing and retyping text, selecting font styles and backgrounds. This obviously bore no relevance to the sort of learning required for the Advanced Level Literature exam and as ICT design it was haphazard and low level. Without expert technological guidance as to how to move on from or solve her technical problems, Rowena became frustrated and understandably irritated with the whole project, loudly affirming 'I hate computers' as once again the screen failed to appear as she had expected.

Tracy, who was a fairly quiet and conscientious student played some part in the initial analysis of the extract from *In Holland stands a house* (Saunders, 1991) but spent the rest of her time typing out the introduction to the play which she found in the book that she had taken from the library. She was slightly abashed about this when I questioned her about it in interview – I was interested to know if she had altered the text at all and her reply was 'Not really'.

Emily was also unfortunate in her use of the technology. She decided to create a new webpage for each annotation point on the *Bui Doi* (Maltby, 1989) piece – a cumbersome strategy which reflected not just a lack of strategic technical knowledge but also her dismissive approach to the project and as well as her pragmatic desire to be seen to have done enough.

> I was making up stuff. I was forming opinions about things I hadn't formed opinions about …like you know the song and um desperately trying to fill out the webpage …so that's why everything is in font 27.

She acknowledged that she had worked hard on a page about shell shock but said that this was because she had 'done it in psychology'.

Overall the consensus from this group in the interview was that they had not learned anything from the project.

> Because I found a lot of it was just copying and pasting from the internet or typing out what you've already got. You don't really read it.

They had also decided that they had other priorities and spent 'no time' on the project outside of lessons. They reported that during the project they had missed the normal class practice of whole class discussions led and directed by the teacher as well as the varied range of opinions that they got from the class.

> Mr Blight has done it so he's had a laptop set up with a projector and we've done it on the board, but he's still been there with us teaching it, and I think we just need a guide while we're doing it. Because it was just … we had to do it ourselves and we're not fully independent learners yet, and it was just a bit like … we just did not know …

It was very evident that Adrian expected students to organise their own learning in a way that was not typical of his usual classroom style. This group of students resented this. The task for them was much less self explanatory than the teacher had predicted. The form of hypertext did not support discussion, did not make them feel empowered, and did not make intertextual reading easier or more visible.

5.2.2   Group 2: Anna and Eva

Video evidence showed Anna and Eva in some focussed literary discussions. Like the first group, they also selected texts which they had read previously. Anna developed the use of the 'insert comment' facility in Word to annotate their texts drawing out their interpretations. In interview they commented that this allowed them to develop more considered responses because these would be part of the presentation of the work to an audience rather than rough preparation for a written essay:

> Yeah, I suppose with this because we were making a webpage, whereas if you were analysing a poem on a piece of paper you'd probably only jot down a few words. But because it's a webpage, you feel kind of obliged to write more. (Anna)

However, rather than focussing on linking out from their texts to other related texts on the web, their websites remained remarkably self contained and narrow – quite counter to the principle of wide associative reading. They used ICT to annotate and compare two texts. However, they did not link to other texts and sites on the web, but rather selected a few facts to set within their own site. Despite the video evidence, which showed some close literary collaboration and discussion between the students, Eva's perception of the process was that the work was primarily technology-based and individual:

> Cos like maybe if we'd sat down together and actually discussed it we could have like bounced ideas off each other, like actually read it through together, that kind of thing. Because we didn't do that, I felt it was purely a kind of computer product as opposed to like a kind of literature analysis kind of thing.

This suggests that the computer was seen as a third party which formed a barrier to 'authentic' human discussion. Certainly in the student discussions the screen was very much a focus as they gestured and pointed towards it and turned from talking to each other back to looking at the screen. This comment also connects with the idea of a culture clash between literature and technology; literary analysis is here seen as separate and distinct from, and even antithetical to, 'writing' a hypertext product.

5.2.3   Group 3: Jane and Kylie

Jane and Kylie's website best illustrated the process of intertextual reading and the potential of using hypertext. They selected two contrasting poems, and made clear contextual and interpretative annotations to the poems, with links to annotations and texts on historical and social context. In analysing their work I found it helpful to use the concept of geographical scales to evaluate the complexity of their achievement. Hyperlinks in websites can work on different 'scales': the scale of the individ-

ual lexia[3], the scale of the website, and finally the scale of the World Wide Web. For instance, in one of the poems, there was mention of a battle report in 'the morning paper.' This phrase 'the morning paper' was hyperlinked to an annotation about the influence of the *media* on popular conceptions of the war (scale of the lexia). The next link was from *media* to a comment on *propaganda* and then to *speeche*s as a subset of this (scale of the website). From this point in the website there was an invitation to search out or 'find out more' from links to three websites about propaganda (scale of the world wide web). To what extent were the students cognisant of the different scales involved? Hot links can be quite puzzling because the semantic choices of the authors can be left for the reader to work out. For example, on their text, *biographical information* linked not to information about the poet's life, but to an autobiographical poem by the poet. In this case there was a practical reason for this in that the students could not find any biographical information. However, their link to an autobiographical poem could also be argued as a creative and artistically effective 'solution'. For me this raises the question of the extent to which the links made by pupils were opportunistic rather than strategic and semantic. The connections made through hot links between lexia were not always semantically clear and the pupils were not required to argue for or justify their decisions within the website. This is appropriate to the form of hypertext, but is counter to the requirements of the traditional English essay, where a cohesive and coherent argument is required. Again we might note a cultural clash between the subjects. In terms of perceptions of their work, Jane felt that she had gained useful IT skills, whereas Kylie reported that her gains had been 'more English than IT'. This comment shows a perception of the two subject cultures as distinct. Jane and Kylie took the task seriously and worked very closely together on the website for 'hours and hours and hours' outside of lesson time. As the pair that had been most marginalised in the group as the shy 'new girls', this was an empowering project for them which raised their standing within the class as a whole. The other students expressed admiration for the hypertext product that this group had produced.

5.2.4   Group 4: Naomi and Sheila

In contrast, Naomi and Sheila's website was largely plagiarised from other websites, created by cutting and pasting sections. In this case they were working with extracts from novels. Without access to a scanner, they opted to type out the extracts from their books because these could not be found on the internet. For these students, actually reading and analysing the book extracts did not appear to be as important as scanning the web for relevant information and images to link. This was reflected in their comments during interview on the way that their reading practices shifted to skimming and scanning modes when reading on the web. In consequence their engagement with the material was on quite a superficial level.

   The students did not read the novels and therefore felt (understandably) at a disadvantage in relation to the material. It might be noted that the time spent cutting

---

[3] *In electronic multimedia hypertexts, a lexia may refer to a visual image or audio recording as well as a block of text.*

and pasting and representing other secondary sources could have been devoted to reading the primary texts. In one video sequence the pair spent 10 minutes scrolling through images of war for use in illustrating their site.

6.   DISCUSSION: VALUING A 'SLOW' DISCIPLINE IN A 'FAST' WORLD

It is hardly a new idea that the agents in the classroom bring their own beliefs and dispositions to the shaping of the curriculum (Barnes, 1976). Teachers mediating external curriculum demands bring their own disciplinary conceptions of English, and they may also take account of pupils' interests and dispositions. English, therefore is not a settled and unified entity but is always under construction and being produced in the classroom (Ball, 1985; Kress, Jewitt, Bourne, Franks, Hardcastle, Jones, & Reid, 2005).

In the case of Adrian Blight, the teacher involved in this design, his experience and position as Head of Faculty within a City Technology College meant that he felt able to be experimental with technology. However, *literature* is central to his conception of English as a humanising force:

> English is a way of dealing with the whole world. Every bit of the world. Whether it's past present or future. Whether it's technology, science or creativity. I think you can deal with all that through English. You know a story is a story isn't it? You know people in Afghanistan have stories exactly the same as people in America and yet they hate each other because they are so different. And they're just not really. I think English shows that more than anything else – or literature, not English but *literature*.

What is interesting about Adrian's stated conception of English is that it is highly traditional and yet, at the same time, he is quite ready to embrace the changes of ICT – 'there's all these other areas which didn't exist twenty years ago which are surely part of English' – and he is very comfortable with the overt technology bias of the college. However whilst Adrian is certainly pro ICT and integrated this regularly in his teaching, his use of ICT with this particular Advanced Level group had been restricted to one or two PowerPoint lectures and the demonstration of a website about Carol Ann Duffy. Within his Advanced Level Literature class he had worked with more traditional practices consisting of reading together, discussion, debate and analysis of text. Thus, despite his expressed commitment to technology, Adrian was reproducing the dominant culture of Advanced Level Literature pedagogy.

The Advanced Level Literature 'design initiative' illustrates how all the contextual factors need to be considered when deciding a teaching approach. These include the topic, the dispositions of the students, the orientation of the teacher towards the subject content, and the levels of technological equipment and expertise within the class. In this case the students were grappling with both an unfamiliar topic and unfamiliar technology. Stronger teacher direction and a more structured task might have yielded more positive results. The topic was so broad that it was difficult for Adrian to be knowledgeable about the texts that were chosen by the students, which limited his ability to make pedagogical interventions. However, working in a computer suite seemed to push Adrian into a technical and distanced role which was not typical of his practice. Much of his time was spent in attempting to deal with the technical problems which arose. These problems included trying to locate a scanner,

dealing with queries around the web writing software, and questions of layout and design. Finally, the sweep of the work being so broad, it was not obvious to the students how the work on their chosen texts would benefit them in the exam. Students in their final exam year tend to be very focused on the assessment, as indeed are their teachers. For some of these students the technology represented a distraction rather than an enhancement of their study of literature. This illustrates just a few of the complex factors to be considered in each case of curriculum planning, and has implications for reporting findings from the research. In this case, for instance, there were differences between the responses of groups within the class which were strongly connected to individual student dispositions towards the subject English and towards technology. The outcomes in terms of the hypertext products and student evaluations were dependent on a range of classroom factors, and were not just related to the fitness of the technology to the task.

In terms of assessment, there were 'improvements' in the test results of five out of the nine Advanced Level students. There was also an increase in the total number of links made from text to relevant context from a total of 19 to a total of 26. However in terms of significance, these results are reported with the following provisos: Firstly, simply explaining the focus of this unit, and the need to make links, would have had an impact on the students' approach to the task. Secondly, improvements at this stage in essay writing may be simply due to practice. Thirdly, the quality of the writing, and the use made of the links, is more important than the number of links made. For instance, Rowena made a significant improvement from a low to a high essay grade with four significant and effective links to context in her final test essay. However, the reason for this may not lie with the process of writing hypertext, as video evidence over the entire sequence shows her to be entirely concerned with the technical problems of presenting text in hyperlinked form.

Jane also made a significant improvement from a low grade essay at the beginning of the project to a top grade in the final test. One indication of the increased sophistication of her thinking might be illustrated in the way that she was able to make nine valid intertextual links in her analysis of an unseen text. She reported putting in hours of time creating the website and seemed to be searching out relevant context linking to war propaganda and biographical details. However, she actually reported that her main focus was on the ICT – 'I'd like to say the focus was English but it was the technical bit' – although she also admitted that the project had prompted her to find out more about the contexts than in the traditional classroom.

> You can do a lot more research into things and just from two poems you can get all this stuff. Um, I don't think we'd have bothered otherwise, to be quite honest. If he would have said in the lesson 'For homework make sure you fully research the historical context, background of these two poems' I wouldn't have thought we'd have spent that much time on it.

Kylie, however, made no improvement in the essay writing test despite valuing the activity of the project for its 'English' content. The evidence for how far the skills of creating a hypertext were transferable to essay writing is therefore different for each student. However, it is interesting how eight out of nine students reported a per-

ceived focus on ICT which they considered to be in conflict with their work on ana-
lysing the texts.

The students' reactions to the 'design initiative' were surprising. A common
claim in writing about 'the information age' is that students are enthusiastically em-
bracing technology having grown up to be 'digital natives' in a digitally saturated
culture (Prensky, 2001). Whilst these students were clearly comfortable with using
technology (and were frequently observed engaged in off task digital communica-
tion either via email or text) they were nonchalant about technology in a way that
theorists and educationalists in this field are not. This might indicate that their encul-
turation in a technological world leads them to see technology as less new and excit-
ing than enthusiastic teachers and researchers might expect. Students had widely
differing experiences of this project, partly as they were free to organise how they
approached the task themselves. This led to one group approaching each text sepa-
rately and individually – so collaboration was only in terms of the physical process
of putting the website together. Two other groups discussed the texts together. The
relationship of the teacher to students in an Advanced Level class is often quite a
close one, and although most teachers will use group and individual work, there is
strong emphasis on sharing and debating within the class – this is particularly true
with smaller class sizes. The introduction of computer work over seven double les-
sons fractured the close dynamic of the class. This was not entirely negative as the
two students who were quiet and shy were allowed to shine within the group for the
first time, through their success in presenting an impressive website. Nevertheless,
these students commented they had not enjoyed the project as much as their 'nor-
mal' Advanced Level lessons although they agreed that they had gained skills in
ICT and contextual understanding.

Overall, subject English for the majority of the students seemed to represent a
haven from a technology obsessed curriculum. They valued the opportunities in
English for discussion, debate and reading as a whole class. They resented the com-
puter as being a threat to their enjoyment of books. Their reaction connects with the
historical resistance to technology within literary versions of English.

This case study raises a broader question. In a recent seminar at the University of
Bristol, Nicholas Burbules asked, 'what is the future of a slow discipline in a fast
world?' The study of English Literature seems to fit the notion of a 'slow discipline'
and we might therefore ask: What are the values of literary study that we would
wish to retain? These technologically literate students who were based in a college
with an explicit ethos of valuing technology had chosen to study and *value* a tradi-
tional version of English.

> I think English is such an organic subject, you know, writing and that sort of thing, and
> computers are so like industrial. I think it's completely incongruent. (Emily)

For the students in the project, their engagement with English as a subject shifted.
Students reported using different reading strategies when working onscreen. Sus-
tained and reflective reading seemed inappropriate to the habits of reading with the
computer. This meant that students seemed to resist close reading in preference to
scanning and skimming techniques which often led to the making of superficial links
which they were unable to justify explicitly within a cogent argument. (The ability

to construct a cogent argument is a key discriminator of attainment in Advanced Level Literature). Essentially they were reading for information. This connects with empirical research by Miall and Dobson (2001) which suggests that hypertext discourages the absorbed and reflective mode that characterises literary reading.

Related to this finding, students also felt that the subject of English was produced as one which is less about interpretation than about finding and presenting information. All the students reported and were shown on video re-presenting information for display, which included activities such as: typing up text; changing design features, or searching the web. Even where there was some analysis there was still a disproportionate amount of time spent on these presentational activities which have little to do with engagement with literature. (I would like to distinguish this type of activity from the practice of using different rhetorical devices appropriate to multimedia production which are discussed below). There were also practical and technical problems; for example, instances where time was wasted in trying to locate and set up equipment (20 minutes to replace a lead from the data projector), and problems with the transfer of files between home and school. These were common problems in all the designs at secondary school level that I observed in English research 'design initiatives' within the InterActive Education Project, but for Adrian, evaluating the project from the perspective of an Advanced Level teacher, they seemed particularly worrying. This connects with Selwyn's (1999) research findings that teachers view Advanced Level as a purer form of the subject, therefore elements which seem to be sliding into other subject boundaries seem to be of more concern. Teachers of English pre-16 seem to acknowledge a vocational side to English, with a recognition that some aspects of learning to read and write involve routine procedures and skills such as writing a business letter or a report. The study of Advanced Level Literature is the least vocationally oriented of the English related Advanced Levels and the emphasis in literary study is on the more subtle values of the aesthetic and the rhetorical.

Within the current paradigm of literary study, annotation and contextual research is part of the process of preparing a text before producing an analytical essay response. The structure of hypertext allows response to remain at this level of 'associative thinking' (Moulthrop, 2001) which can take the form of a selection of inexplicitly connected lexia. Bearing this in mind, we might question Moulthrop's characterisation of hypertext as a fluid integration of mental processes with technological form. Certainly in this case study the technical skills and processes to be mastered often caused blocks and disruptions to thinking and analysis. This is not to deny that, there were some benefits to creating a hypertext, particularly as students engaged in detailed discussion and paid more attention to the quality of the annotation of texts. However, the current assessment system requires a linear response, and it is exactly the process of structuring an argument which students find most challenging, and which discriminates between grades. Bolter (1998: 7) posits that 'hypertext may work against the very idea of a discursive presentation of an argument'. It is perhaps worth thinking about the desirability of this. For instance, as English teachers we might want to argue that the ability to construct a linear argument is well worth retaining and valuing. Given the information saturation of the web, it might be that skills of selecting, ordering and developing knowledge into an argu-

ment might be the most important. Alongside this point, we might recognise as educators the case for the validity of the different rhetorical strategies employed in hypertext products. We need to consider what new challenges are offered by the associative structure of hypertext and how to discriminate between hypertext products for the purposes of assessment and critical evaluation. There is no reason why argument could not form one of the lexias within a hypertext. A website can contain within itself a range of different genres and texts and a variety of different modes of representation which require individually different analytical responses. We should also consider the different 'scales' at which critical evaluation can take place. In evaluating a website, this could be on the scale of the quality of an individual lexia, which might involve the consideration of a particular genre of representation. Evaluation can also take place on the scale of the website, involving consideration of the construction of links between lexias and their relevance, range and quality. This would also include consideration of the way that the website offers different routes for different readers. And finally, evaluation might consider the scale of the web as a whole and how the website relates and links to works already available on the world wide web. One of the key aspects which led students to struggle with the task in the 'design initiative' reported here, was their lack of any map of the territory or a clear sense of what would be most salient for their purposes. Tuman (1992), writing of the shift in the textual paradigm from the essay to the webpage, suggests that we risk a type of 'cannibalisation' of print as information is cut, pasted, recycled and re-presented. This characterisation seemed to fit the process for all the groups in the design. If hypertext does become the new paradigm for writing, then we are still a long way from developing a settled 'rhetoric of hypertext' (Burbules, 2002). Evaluating what makes a good website is still at the level of the ease of navigation and information provided rather than any sense of the mapping of, and the connections with, a topic.

Finally, there was no doubt that students improved their confidence with ICT as a result of the project; but that is not why they chose to study English Literature. When I asked Emily what she felt she had learned from the project she replied: 'that computers should be burnt to the ground'. Of course, she was being dramatic as usual, but I think that what I learned from this project was that students who are fully immersed in digital culture can still hold deeply passionate beliefs about what it means to study English literature. This particular group of students, whatever their individual successes within the project, would have preferred their object of study to centre around the materiality of the book and the shared discussion led by the teacher rather than struggling independently through the web of hypertext. There are many contextual factors which could have resulted in a different response. Nevertheless, the articulation of a rhetoric of hypertext appropriate to teachers and students which includes questions of aesthetics and critical argument emerged from this case study as a necessary focus for English subject development. For instance, the fact that students were operating on different hypertext scales, from simple annotation to linking out to the world wide web, was not addressed in the teaching. English studies cannot afford to ignore this form of textuality without losing contemporary credibility and missing rich research and writing possibilities. However this study also suggests that the established practices of literary study such as sustained read-

ing, textual analysis, face to face discussion and critical linear argument are crucial to students' literary pleasure and learning and should remain central to subject English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Aarseth, E. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on ergodic literature.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality.* London: Routledge.

Andrews, R. (2001). *Teaching and learning English: A guide to recent research and its applications.* London: Continuum.

Ball, S. (1985). English for the English since 1906. In I. Goodson (Ed.), *Social histories of the secondary curriculum: Subjects for study.* (53-88) Lewes: The Falmer Press.

Barnes, D. (1976). *From communication to curriculum.* Aylesbury: Penguin Books.

Bolter, J. (2001). *Writing space: Computers, hypertext and the remediation of print.* (2nd Edition). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bolter, J. (1998). Hypertext and the question of visual literacy. In D. Reinking, M. McKenna, L. Labbo, & R. Kieffer (Eds.), *The handbook of literacy and technology: Transformations in a post-typographic world.*(3-13) Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bloomer, M. (1997). *Curriculum making in post-16 education: The social conditions of studentship.* London: Routledge.

Burbules, N. (2002). The web as a rhetorical place. In I. Snyder (Ed.), *Silicon literacies: Communication, innovation and education in the electronic age.*(75-84) London: Routledge.

Carrington,V., & Marsh, J. (2005). Digital childhood and youth: New texts, new literacies. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *26*(3), 279-285.

Delany, P., & Landow, G. (Eds.) (1991). *Hypermedia and literary studies*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Department of Education and Science (DES). (1989). *English for ages 5 to 16*. (The Final Cox Report). London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). (2001). Key Stage 3 National strategy framework for teaching English: Years 7, *8, and 9*. London: DfEE.

Eaglestone, R. (2000). *Doing English: A guide for literature students.* London: Routledge.

Faulks, S. (1994). *Birdsong.* London: Vintage.

Fussell, P. (1975). *The Great War and modern memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goodson, I. (1985). *Social histories of the secondary curriculum: Subjects for study.* Lewes: The Falmer Press.

Green, B. (2004). Curriculum, English and Cultural Studies; or changing the scene of English teaching? *Changing English*, *11*(2), 291-305.

John, P., & Sutherland, R. (2004). Introductory paper: Teaching and learning with ICT: New technology, new pedagogy? *Education, Communication & Information, 4*(1), 101-109.

Joyce, M. (1996). *Of two minds: Hypertext, pedagogy and poetics*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Bourne, J., Franks, A., Hardcastle, J., Jones, K., and Reid, E. (2005). *English in urban classrooms: A multimodal perspective on teaching and learning.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Landow, G. (1994). *Hyper/text/theory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Landow, G. (1992). *Hypertext: The convergence of contemporary critical theory and technology.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lanham, R. (1993). *The electronic word: Democracy, technology and the arts.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maltby, R. (1989). *Bui Doi* http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/misssaigon/bui-doi.htm (accessed June 2006).

Matthewman, S., & Triggs, P. (2004). Obsessive compulsive font disorder: The challenge of supporting pupils writing with the computer. *Computers and Education*, *43*(1-2), 125- 135.

Miall, D., & Dobson T. (2001). Reading hypertext and the experience of literature, *Journal of Digital Information, 1*, 1-16.

Moran, J. (2002). *Interdisciplinarity.* London and New York: Routledge.

Moulthrop, S. (2001). You say you want a revolution? Hypertext and the laws of media. In V. Leitch, (Ed.), *The Norton anthology: Theory and criticism* (pp. 2502-2524). New York: WW Norton Company.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon, 9*(5). NCB University Press.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). (2005). *English 21* http://www.qca.org.uk/11775.html (accessed May 2006).

Saunders, S. (1991). *In Holland stands a house.* Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Schonberg, C., & Boublil, A. (lyrics: Boublil, A. & Maltby, R.) (1989). *Miss Saigon.*

Selwyn, N. (1999). Information technology and the A-Level curriculum: A core skill or a fringe benefit? *Research Papers in Education, 14*(2), 123-137.

Sherriff, R. C. (1929). *Journey's end: A play in three acts.* London: Victor Gollancz.

Stevens, D., & McGuinn, N. (2004). *The art of teaching secondary English: Innovative and creative approaches.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Tuman, M. (1992). *Word perfect: Literacy in the computer age.* London and Washington: Falmer Press.

SASHA MATTHEWMAN

University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education
35 Berkeley Square
Bristol BS8 1JA, UK
S.Matthewman@bristol.ac.uk