

Collaborative Projects and Experiences in Teaching English and Communication

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SYMPOSIUM *on*
LEARNING *and*
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

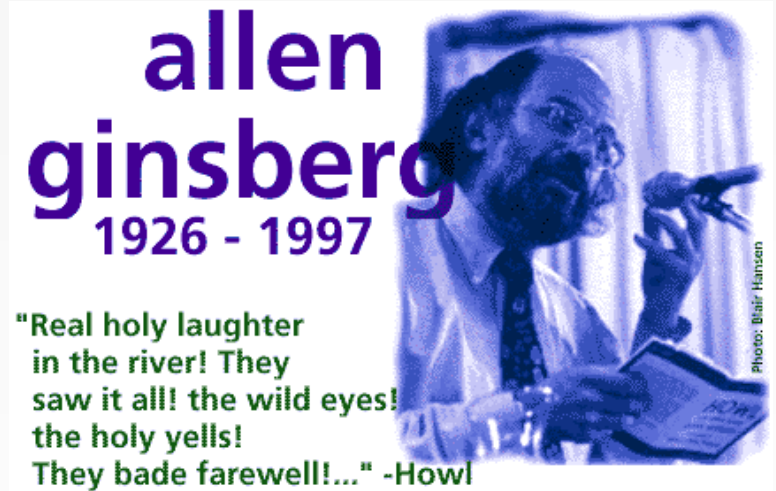


How to Select a Subject for Collaboration in your Course

- Look for
 - Something key to your course, but difficult to cover
 - A concept you are willing to devote time to
 - An issue enriched by multiple approaches
 - A topic for critical thinking

The “Howl” Project

- The background
 - [Allen Ginsberg](#)
 - [The Poem](#): 400 lines, over 2800 words
- The poem can be difficult for students with middle-class values as it deals with homosexuality, mental illness and drug use
- Understanding the polyvalent nature of poetry is a key element of the course.



The “Howl” Project, 2

- The projects
 - [Group 8: Pink Floyd](#) ([download](#))*
 - [Group 1: Johnny Cash](#) ([download](#))
 - [Group 5: Summer Overture](#) ([download](#))

* You only need the download link once. After you have downloaded the file, place it in the same folder as this slide presentation and use the main link.



The *Death in Venice* Wiki

- The assignment

- Make 2-3 entries in the wiki at:
<http://deathinvenice.intodit.com/page/home>
- Fill in your user name for the wiki, and add any other comments worth making about your participation

The screenshot shows the homepage of a wiki titled "Death in Venice". At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Home", "Discussion", and "Members" tabs. Below this, there's a "What's new", "Invite", and "Wiki settings" section. A message states "This page is locked for editing." with an "Unlock page" button. The main content area is titled "Introduction to this Wiki" and contains a paragraph about Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. To the right of the text is a book cover for *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann, translated by Michael Henry Heim, introduced by Michael Cunningham. On the left side, there's a sidebar with "Wiki Actions" (Add new page, Edit menu widgets, Add menu widget), a search bar, and a list of topics: "Introduction to this Wiki", "Frederick the Great", "Location of the Story", "Real-Life Events on which the Story is Based", "Gustav Mahler", "Cholera", "The Politics behind the Story", "Humor", "Romanticism", "Modernism", "Imperialism/Colonialism /Alterity", and "Ancient Greek Pederasty".

Pedagogical Issues Involved in Using Wikis as “Collaborative” Projects

- The nature of wiki collaboration is asynchronous: your assignment structures the interaction so it's not just “parallel play”
- Audience is difficult for students to understand in the abstract
- Students are accustomed spurning wikis: this is an opportunity for critical thinking
- The wiki won't belong to the students if you are a “helicopter teacher” with respect to it
- You can guide the structure of the wiki through: the assignment, the nature of the information you give students, and the nature of your evaluation

The Death in Venice Wiki, 2

• The feedback:

Thu July 22 13:58:30 EDT 2010

My first entry is about how Aschenbach's growing curiosity about the cholera pandemic mirrors his growing obsession with Tadzio. My wiki entry is called Cholera The disease is a metaphor that symbolically illustrates Aschenbach's growing obsession with Tadzio. As the cholera pandemic becomes increasingly more alarming in Venice so does Aschenbach's obsession.

My second entry is entitled Outward appearance. I was interested in Aschenbach's outward transformation in the novel. I felt although this outward change represents his inward obsession with Tadzio.

Fri Aug 06 13:56:48 EDT 2010

Section Instructor Eva Thury

Your entries are all good and useful, but please add your page numbers to the "Page List for Annotations" page.

Thu Aug 12 13:56:48 EDT 2010

Section Instructor Eva Thury

You added the page references and your entries are thoughtful, clear and useful.

The Death in Venice Wiki, 3

The feedback:

Tue July 20 13:58:30 EDT 2010

Student xxx

user name: qwertyuiol

Mon July 26 13:58:30 EDT 2010

Student xxx

I think the one question Mann is asking us is this:

To what lengths would you go to achieve your desire?

Risk social repugnance? Retaliation? Death?

We see that Aschenbach will risk everything, (as Tadzio's relative try to protect the boy, or then the risk of deathly disease) to get the chance to be with the boy alone. His activity his repugnant.

Mann wrote this to grab the reader's attention with an racy plot to confront the reader's ideas about how to square rationality with desire.

Sat Aug 14 13:58:30 EDT 2010

Student xxx

user name: qwertyuiol

I added some thoughts in the Politics section of the wiki, describing Mann's thoughts toward political authority

Fri Jul 23 12:17:37 EDT 2010

Section Instructor Eva Thury

In this assignment you are supposed to sum up your contributions to the wiki. Please resubmit.

Fri Aug 06 13:42:06 EDT 2010

Section Instructor Eva Thury

You still seem not to understand. You are supposed to add to the wiki and improve it. Then here in BbVista you tell me what your changes/additions to the wiki were. Come talk to me if you have questions.

Tue Sep 07 14:14:03 EDT 2010

Section Instructor Eva Thury

Your contribution is interesting but it doesn't seem to me to belong on the politics page. Also, it is minimal.

The Death in Venice Wiki, 4

The feedback:

Final Student comment:

I fixed my comments on the modernism page and put the quote in order of page numbers. I used a quote from page 46 and put it in order with the other pages.

I posted this:

The desire to be freed from the genre conventions of the past is a characteristic of modernism that is inherent in the relationship between Aschenbach and Tadzio. This relationship would not be readily accepted in the time period depicted in the book. Aschenbach's obsession with the young polish boy eventually becomes over excessive. This relationship is one that society would have never approved of.

Page 46-"He sat so that the observer saw him in profile. His feet were clad in black patent leather and arranged one in front of the other; one elbow was propped on the arm of his wicker chair rest on his closed hand an attitude of nonchalant propriety and completely devoid of the all but servile rigidity to which his female siblings seemed accustomed."

The reader can see tha Aschenbach has turned into a person that is constantly watching Tadzio to see what he is doing and making sure that he is safe and secure. The observation turns from the level of a man wanting to engage a young boy to a level of stalker that if Tadzio is out of his sight then he is unable to deal with the situation.

One key aspect of modernism is that it transcends to the level of the author and deals with more than just the characters of a story. Mann has written about a relationship that seems to be of a homosexual nature. Such a relationship is unconventional and not found in literature. The very nature of the relationship is one that is unconventional as well.

Fri Aug 06 13:39:15 EDT 2010

Section Instructor

Eva Thury

I don't see a mention of the English Gardens on the Ancient Greek Pederasty page. Also, please place your contribution in the top part of the page, before the list of works cited, and add Johnson to that list. A page number is needed in this entry, as well as in your humor entry. And please add those page numbers to the "Page List for Annotations" page. And finally I would note that your current formulation of the pederasty issue is too strong. You don't give any evidence that Aschenbach wanted to use Tadzio sexually. Your other statement that he didn't show any inclination "to teach him, inspire him and help him find out who he was" is much more reasonable. Let me know if you want to discuss what I am asking for.

Thu Aug 12 13:43:54 EDT 2010

Section Instructor

Eva Thury

On the Modernism page, you say, "Modernism can be seen as an idea that turns art into a reality." However, I don't know where this definition comes from. It is not part of any definition of Modernism that I know. Also, why have you not placed your entry into the large list of pages in the book, instead of sticking it at the end?

I see you have added your reference to the Page list, and that's good, but how will anyone find it when she gets to the Modernism page if it's not in page order there?

On the pederasty page you say "While the narrator never comes out directly and says that the main character Aschenbach was a homosexual male, the reader kind of has a hint to it." That's a good opening general statement and it should be followed by some specific page numbers.

You also say "By the end of the novella however it might be clear that Aschenbach didn't show any inclination to teach him, inspire him and help him find out who he is." But this only makes sense if you use some of the material on Greek pederasty below, and bring it up to the general part. You don't have to fix the whole entry but take pity on your poor reader, who may well be a student like you, and improve the beginning by integrating the first section a bit more.

Tue Sep 07 14:06:14 EDT 2010

Section Instructor

Eva Thury

I see you backed off your comments on the pederasty page: you could have put much the same there as on your Modernism page. The latter is much better now. You should look at it, as I consolidated some of your comments there, and cut down the definition of modernism. It would have been good to provide a second page as evidence of the "stalking" but the beauty of wikis is maybe someone else will do that for you! I also got rid of the blue on that page: I hope it's better now.

The Death in Venice Wiki, 5

- The motivation: midterm exam sample question
 - Compare the use of Colonialism/Imperialism/Alterity in any two of the literary works we read. Be sure you refer to specific events/detail in each literary work, and to specific characteristics of Colonialism/Imperialism/Alterity. Start your essay with an overall thesis statement comparing how the works use Colonialism/Imperialism/Alterity, and then support your answer with specific detail.
- The flaws of the wiki

Wikis for End-User Documentation

- The assignment:
 - The class is to study a library of documents that has been set up in Zotero, and use them to create a wiki on the subject of using wikis for documentation at <http://wikis4userdoc.intodit.com/>. Each student must participate in expanding and commenting on the library and in using it in the development of the wiki.
 - Students were asked to make approximately the following numbers of contributions: 5-10 comments or contributions (adding sources, with a comment) on the library
 - the development of 3-5 wiki pages
 - revisions to 3-5 wiki pages
 - 3-5 contributions to the discussion on the wiki
- [Feedback](#)
- Motivation: 10% of grade
- The flaws of the wiki

Technical Aspects of Using Wikis as “Collaborative” Projects

- You need to provide:
 - A purpose for the wiki: for you, and for your students
 - A body of information from which wiki entries will derive
 - A blank wiki to work in, like this: <http://voyeur.intodit.com/>
 - A style guide
 - Some indicators of structure
 - A way of assessing what students have accomplished
- You need to avoid:
 - Micromanaging the wiki

Where do we go from here?

- Let's talk to each other about how we can implement some of the theories and practices we have heard about in this symposium
- And let's keep on talking:

<http://hip.netcippia.net/>