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PROJECT 3 REPORT

THE DREAM TEAM
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What's inside this report:

-PROJECT OVERVIEW
-COMMUNITY WORK
-VIRTUAL LEARNING ASSIGNMENT
-VIDEOS AND RESOURCES

PROJECT OVERVIEW

For Project 3, Dream Team had to create an illustrated ten-page report that described and reflected on the community work that has been done thus far. The team then had to extrapolate Ithaca High School's 9th graders' project into new virtual learning assignments. The assignment incorporated two additional genres and considered factors like types of online resources for research, production, collaboration, and publication/sharing. Instructional videos created from Project 2 were edited and used as resources for the students' virtual learning.

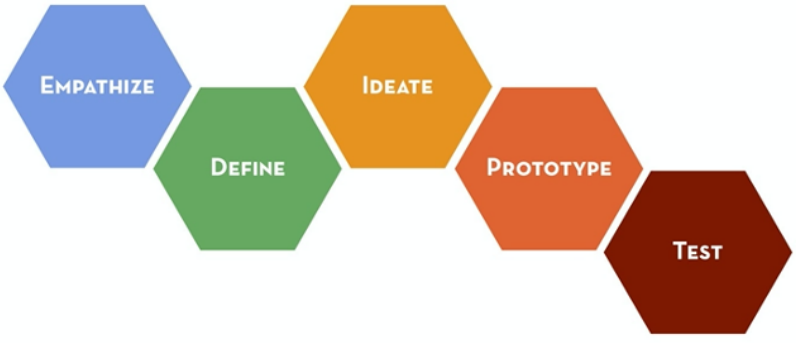
COMMUNITY WORK

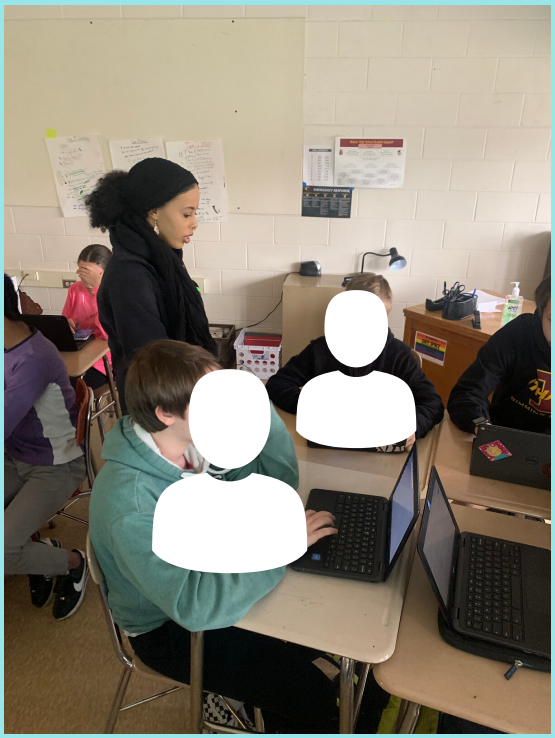
THE DREAM TEAM LEARNS ABOUT DESIGN THINKING, TRANSMEDIA KNOWLEDGE, AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

At the beginning of our course, we learned about what design thinking, transmedia knowledge, and project-based learning were. One activity involved creating a gift that a partner in the class can give to someone in their lives based on a description by the partner. We interviewed one another and learned about how we are able to understand and empathize. We may not personally know the individual the partner would like to give the gift to, but we try to grasp the relationship as best we can through this interview. With empathizing being the first step in design thinking, the class activity gave students a great opportunity to understand how we must go about empathizing with the students that we are going to interact with at our chosen locations in the coming weeks. We also started learning more about Pecha Kuchas, a short, narrated slideshow created to concisely present a topic, in preparation for our first field visit to Ithaca High School.

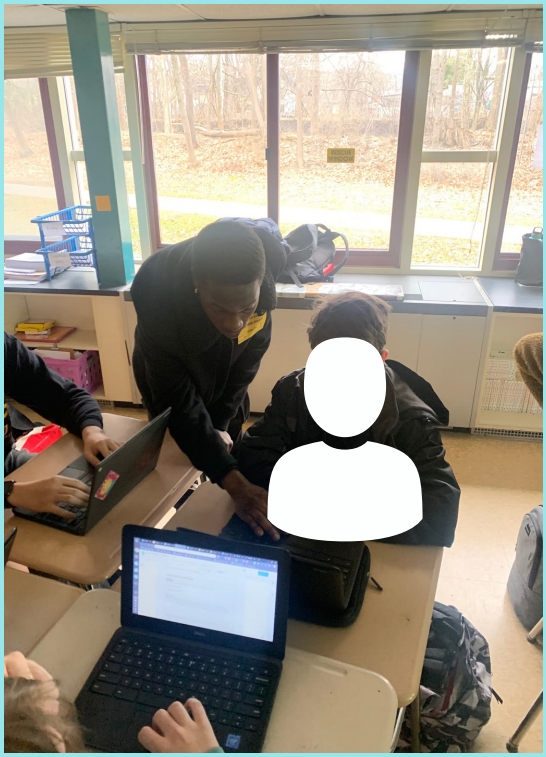
Once at Ithaca High School, Dream Team was introduced to a table of four ninth-grade students. Students were assigned to choose a concern in their own communities and develop a project from this concern. The first step of their project was to create a mini Pecha Kucha regarding their topic. As Cornell University students, we were to provide support in the first few steps of brainstorming. If the students were struggling with the brainstorming, we were to speak to them about what they are involved in within or outside of school and from any of these activities that they care about, we are to then suggest potential ideas for the project.

Our team noticed that most of the people in the group did not want to speak to us. They seemed like very introverted individuals as it was and adding strangers in the mix to talk to them about a long-term project could have understandably been awkward for them. Despite this, we empathized with each student and showed them that there were a plethora of ideas to explore. By the time we left the school, each student had a list of ideas to pick from.





CORNELL STUDENTS VISITED ONE OF ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL'S 9TH GRADE ENGLISH CLASSES



COMMUNITY WORK

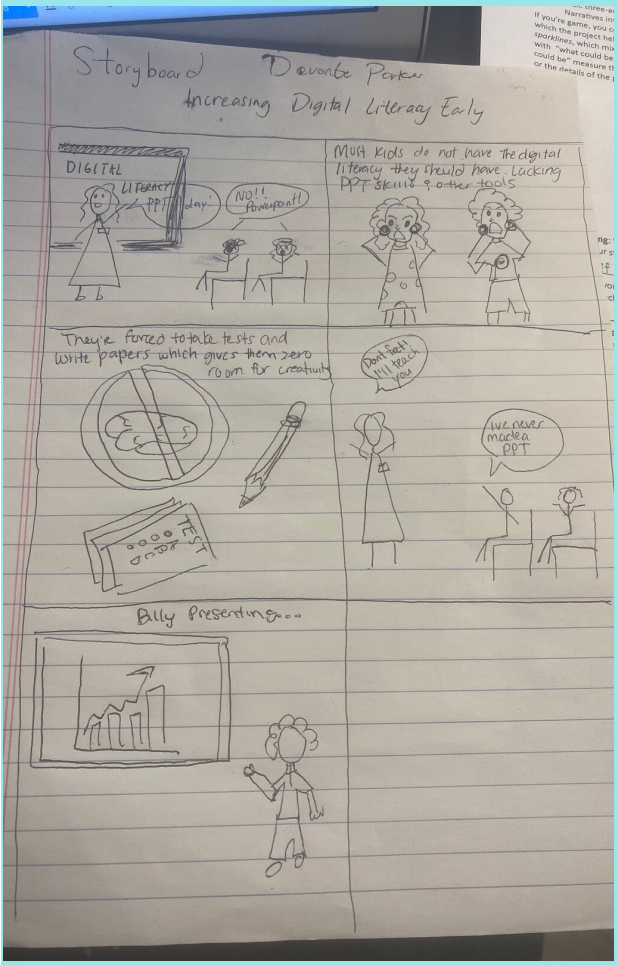
After our first field visit, Dream Team wrote a five-page report about our understanding of the design challenge involved with the Ithaca High School students' projects while utilizing concepts learned from design thinking, transmedia knowledge, and project-based learning. We also created a mini Pecha Kucha that reiterated our understanding as well as the anticipated next steps for the students' projects. We included ways in which we believe we could best be of support to them going forward. During the following classes back at Cornell, we explored user experience. We learned about how different professionals utilize media to change the aesthetics of their online presence and how that affects the viewer. We focused on sites like Experiments by Clever Franke and Stories Beyond Words. This then helped us see the impact of aesthetics when creating our future sites and our individual storyboards for possible solutions at Ithaca High School. The storyboards helped our team understand how the Ithaca students can have a better, more enhanced experience when doing their research or for future projects.

Once Project 2 was assigned, we chose one storyboard with a pragmatic solution and created an info comic using Comic Life software.

Dream Team's info comic focused on the storyboard addressing the need to provide sufficient digital literacy education to students. The info comics were designed to target a general audience and were based on our experience with working with the Ithaca High School students.

At our final visit, we helped the students plan out the first paragraph of their argumentative essays. Interestingly, Colleen wanted the students to start their essay off with the rebuttal as the first paragraph. A couple students had done this at home while others were still trying to do more research to come up with original ways to word their rebuttals.

Many of the students did not seem to want our help at this step as writing the sentences for this paragraph depended on their understanding of the topic, their own research, and their personal writing voice. It became difficult to provide assistance to the students without giving them literal words to write line for line. To keep that from happening, Dream Team focused on helping students with developing their topic sentence and the general direction of their rebuttal paragraph.At the end of each project, Dream Team submitted a CAT analysis that explained ways we succeeded and could have improved in regard to content, analysis, and the technical components of the project.



DIGITAL LITERACY SOLUTION STORYBOARD

VIRTUAL LEARNING ASSIGNMENT: INFOGRAPHIC

The current state of affairs requires that students adapt to new methods of learning and collaboration. This works quite well within the framework of transmedia knowledge and design thinking we've learned so far. As creators we ought to come up with novel ways of creating and sharing content with others. In addition, it's pertinent to utilize a form of media that allows students to create complex content that is easily digestible. Infographics present a great way to share content because it provides a great way for presenting research and for assimilating data.

For example, the Ithaca High School students could have presented their research project as a form of an infographic. As mentioned above, an infographic has the ability to condense complex data into a reader friendly form and this would've been a great way for students to present the research findings of critical issues in their community.

The abrupt switch to online learning has created several problems that can only be attenuated with ingenuity. One critical issue is the short attention span of students on online learning platforms. The traditional use of a computer is to give information as fast and seamless as possible, however, online lectures deviate from this norm. Thus, a shareable infographic could be an alternative for students to share their work as effectively as possible.

One advantage of using an infographic is its convenience in creating it. One does not need any form of advanced training to create an infographic. There are several tools available for free for students to create infographics. This includes google slides, adobe spark(starts from free), piktochart etc. If possible, high schools who can afford paid software can grant students access to remarkable software to produce an infographic. Free software could suffice, and wouldn't pose problems for students or schools who cannot afford paid software. There are several templates of infographics online that can be easily tailored to the specific purpose and audience of the infographic. In learning how to create an infographic YouTube videos could be the best resource for getting started on how to create an infographic. There are multiple channels dedicated to creating content using an infographic.

Through multiple iterations of the design process students can produce an infographic of their own quite easily. Traditionally, the Dream Team would visit students and offer technical support in person.

However, due to the status quo in-person instruction is possible. A potential way to bridge this gap is to use software like slack to maintain communication with the students. Platforms like Slack enables people to form groups and collaborate on work. Slack is available as a mobile and a desktop app, thus it's accessible to most people. We managed to integrate project based learning by involving a dynamic approach to a simple classroom question. No longer using the traditional methods of paper tests, fact overload, consistent memorization and boring teacher-led instruction as a means to reach the student. With Project Based Learning we observed the students integrate this aspect of "knowing and doing". Taking in actual knowledge they are supposed to acquire from their core curriculum, and shifting that information to apply it to authentic issues with helpful solutions. Not only did this method engage the students but it completely reconstructs the structure by focusing the education on them.

Ultimately, this process involved producing a collaborative product by taking advantage of digital tools, which teaches them a form of media knowledge that they would not have acquired from regular coursework.

EXAMPLE OF AN INFO GRAPHIC

VIRTUAL LEARNING ASSIGNMENT: DIGITAL COLLAGE

In this certain project they were instructed to create a Pecha Kucha about their topic, which is a wonderful genre of media for the kids to have learned. Clearly due to the world's ongoing condition there has been a global disruption of classes and an instant move to virtual classes for students all over the world. This sudden shift forced teachers and instructors to reframe their coursework and in this case it completely redefined our design challenge at hand, yet it didn't stop the flow of ideas and creativity for the children. Being forced to adjust to virtual learning isn't necessarily a negative thing, now children are forced to increase their digital literacy and knowledge of media tools which comes in our advantage. There are numerous resources and activities at our fingertips now and we can very well continue to integrate PBL virtually through other creations such as a digital collage. Digital collages are a form of graphic art that utilizes virtual imagery and textures from multiple different sources formed and layered together into one finalized masterpiece of pictures. This genre could potentially be an extra part to their Pecha Kucha topics. It would be quite interesting to see their simple question and argument transformed into an actual visual piece of art. There are many advantages of allowing the children to engage in a creative piece such as this; they are able to experiment with different resources, have a full range of creativity whilst learning about design, patternmaking, dimension and more. Creating a collage is quite simple but it could be as complex as they personally want. There are tons of programs for producing their masterpieces such as Collage Maker, Photoshop, Canva, as well as numerous more photo collage apps, however I recommend one of the threeIt would be a great thing to allow the children's creative minds to completely flow in and tie into their personal arguments.

EXAMPLES OF COLLAGE ART

VIDEOS AND RESOURCES

BELOW ARE ITEMS MENTIONED IN THE REPORT

Storyboards

Info Comic

Instructional Videos:
Sosna Gellaw, Sparkline

Nana Antwi, CAT Analysis

DeVonte Parker, Pecha Kucha