SYNOPSIS

This project is a pilot study to use multimedia storytelling not primarily for documentary, artistic or journalistic purposes but as a pedagogical tool to heighten students’ out-of-class room learning experiences using multimedia tools, documentary processes and anthropological field methodology. This project will help students express and reflect upon the educational value of their engagement, immersive, service, volunteer and internship experiences as they unfold.

A faculty led unit, the Duke Center for Civic Engagement’s (DCCE) mission is to support campus-wide efforts to provide a more effective integration of classroom and experiential learning at Duke. This is the driving rationale behind the Knowledge Map Initiative as well as this affiliated multimedia storytelling project. If successful, this pedagogical strategy can be easily adopted by faculty and staff overseeing discrete experiential learning programs to help students think more comprehensively and intentionally about how their out-of-class room experiences enrich their broader course of study at Duke. With proof of concept, existing units resourced with the equipment and faculty and staff expertise to support method of co-constructing narrative (CDS, MFA program in Experimental and Documentary Arts), might be persuaded to partner with the DCCE to share their technical, artistic and methodological resources with experiential learning programs across campus to enrich undergraduate integrative learning at Duke.

PROJECT SUMMARY

During the pilot phase, project conveners will work closely with a select group of Duke students involved in experiential learning. The crux of the project is to bring a greater sense of intentionality and empathy to a student’s learning experience through the process of co-constructing multimedia narratives.

These students will participate in a Media Workshop run, in this pilot phase, by Colleen Vasu and Jonna McKone. During this Workshop students will learn to use basic audio/visual equipment as well as different interviewing skills to help them purposefully document sound, voice and scenes from their field experiences. Additionally, they will learn about the basics of documentary production, storytelling structures, journalism ethics and basic narration. Ms. Vasu, Ms. McKone, Dr. Prasad and/or Dr. Granda will continue to mentor students in-person or virtually while they are in the field.
Student stories will be loosely scripted in advance, prompting them to use multimedia storytelling as an educational resource to enhance, enrich and reflect upon the educational value of their out-of-classroom learning. They will be directed by the following queries: What critical and practical tools from my classroom learning are useful to me in this experience? In addition to fulfilling or failing to fulfill my project goals, what “unintended” learning am I experiencing in the field that is meaningful? How does my presence impact the community I have entered? What am I learning from my community partners? What will I take back to Duke and beyond Duke?

Additionally, students will be asked to give artistic form to their experiences by writing a short story or poem and/or find or make a souvenir. This process of making and displaying a work of art (through performance or exhibit) will also be used as a critical pedagogical tool in the undergraduate course Dr. Granda will teach beginning in the Fall, 2014.

**Part I: The Radio Dairy**

Part one of this pilot project is geared toward capturing stories while students are engaged in off-campus learning opportunities. This is not the same as recollecting experiences after they are complete. Instead, using audio/visual tools, Ms. Vasu and Ms. McKone will coach this student to narrate her personal journey as she goes through it. Both her successes and challenges in this immersive experience are documented, revealing her learning process as it unfolds: her story expresses the simultaneity of “doing and undergoing” to borrow the words of American philosopher, John Dewey. She acts and reflects; acts and reflects; using her diary to bring a critical mind—a mindfulness or intention-- to her direct experiences in the field.

The first student, Adrienne Harreveld, will record her experiences as part of the Duke Immerse South Africa Program. She will then work with Ms. McKone to develop the recordings into a more polished project. Simultaneously, she will be utilizing the experience as an opportunity to critically reflect on the process of engaged learning and answer the overarching queries outlined above.

The second student will join Dr. Prasad this summer during a DukeEngage program in Hyderabad, India. Duke rising senior, Katia Griffin-Jakymec, will take part in the Multimedia Workshop facilitated by Ms. Vasu. Additionally, while in the field, Dr. Prasad will mentor Ms. Griffin-Jakymec to record some of her personal
reflections, conduct interviews with community partners and student peers and document meaningful sights and sounds. Upon her return to campus, Ms. Griffin-Jakymec will attend a Post Production Workshop with Ms Vasu and Ms. McKone to edit and shape her story into a final piece.

Part II: The Teller’s Story.

We hear over and over from students, faculty and staff at Duke that we don’t provide enough opportunities at Duke for students to bring a self-awareness to their experiences outside of the classroom, to process and reflect upon them. In order to facilitate greater opportunities for reflection we have created a part of the project to give students the tools and space in order to grow their sense of self-awareness and empathy. In our pilot phase next year, Ms. McKone will coach a student working in a service or engagement project in Durham to produce a 2-3 minute piece of his experience in the field using the aforementioned script. Ms. McKone will mentor the student through the process of interviewing, shooting and shaping his work into a finished piece. Currently, Ms. McKone, is a T.A. for a service learning class in which Duke students go into a local hospital to work with terminally ill children. Ms. McKone helps the students work with the children to tell and document their stories about their illness. What’s missing here is an opportunity for the Duke student to tell his or her own story. In addition to the general queries which guide the work of this project, this part will also call on the students to ask themselves: What is it like to hear these childrens’ stories? How has this experience changed them and how they think? What success and challenges are they facing and how are they handling them?

Again, this pilot project places an emphasis on helping students gain a greater sense of empathy toward the community in which s/he engages; an awareness of “co-being” through this participatory learning experience.

Part III: Reflecting and Remembering

The third part of this project aims to create a space for display and consumption of stories of engagement. These stories will represent an opportunity to for others to reflect on the processes as well as explore the ways in which engagement occurs at Duke and what impacts these experiences have on students, the communities they work with and the wider Duke community. Ms. Vasu will produce more polished 2-3 minute multimedia stories for the Knowledge Map in which students, faculty, alumni and staff reflect upon a participatory learning experiences. Found and made souveniers of these experiences can also be exhibited as part of this
multimedia collection. Our plan is to create multimedia stories that narrate each of the kinds of experiential learning categories represented in the Knowledge Map. In contrast to the first two types of stories, these will be more highly produced in terms of form and content and will be made available for use for various institutional purposes by units across Duke to more effectively illustrate integrative learning than the stories of student achievement currently being told by marketing and public relations. From the undergraduate focus groups we ran this year as part of the Knowledge Map Initiative, we found that our students rely primarily on their peers for information about the experiential learning opportunities at Duke. These stories are intended to capture and represent these peer-related stories in an easily accessible and navigable collection. The stories, as part of the Knowledge Map, will be featured on following Duke websites starting in the fall of 2014: Duke University homepage, Undergraduate Admissions, Trinity College and Pratt School. Ms. Vasu is working closely with Duke’s public relations office in this capacity.

PART IV: FRESHMAN FOCUS CLUSTER: DIRECT AND MEDIATED EXPERIENCE

The final facet of the project draws together the threads from the other three parts. The forms that these stories take intentionally echoes the syllabus for an interdisciplinary humanities-based course that Dr. Granda will develop this year and begin teaching in the fall of 2014 as part of the Knowledge In the Service of Society Focus Cluster for incoming freshmen. This seminar will introduce students to the intellectual history of the nature of human experience as an idea, a belief and a science through guest lectures and select readings in the fields of philosophy, literature, religion, psychology and brain science. It will also serve as a means of introducing incoming students to faculty at Duke working in the humanities and qualitative social sciences as well as select student resource providers, such as Dr. Holly Rogers and Dr. Margaret Maytan, Duke clinical faculty who developed and teach “Koru: Mindfulness and Meditation Class” as part of Duke’s Counseling & Psychological Services. In reading based discussions and conversations with visiting lecturers, students will be invited to ponder the following: What is the nature of experience? What are the different ways that we engage with the world outside of ourselves? Do we have any agency over the quality of our experiences? What is the place of emotion in thought and experience? How do we experience thought and feeling in our bodies? How do we bring intention to the stream of experiences we undergo in our daily lives?
Finally, students will be asked to find a way to embody a meaningful life experience in artistic form through performance, written text, or a multimedia made or found souvenir. We will curate these expressions into a staging as our final project.