Course Evaluation for 203: Electronic Literature

The Electronic Literature course is intended to have a balance between practical and theoretical / literary history work, with a greater emphasis on practice. We had some special circumstances this term for both 203 and 207, as we had a failed search for an open position and had to integrate part-time instructors for modules. The teachers all did a generally good job, but these circumstances created a number of difficulties. In the past, all of 203 was taught by one instructor, so the course design may not have fit as well with a number of people (six in total including Scott Rettberg, Nick Montfort, Hannah Ackermans, Patricia Tomazek, and Andreas Zingerle) taking up different components of the course. In the future, as resources allow, I would restrict to this to two instructors doing the majority of the teaching. Student assistants were employed for lab hours. This informally seems to have been a positive aspect of the course, although in the future I would like to see their role more clearly defined / structured. The general reaction to the course was positive, but it is a course that requires more consistency in instruction than we were able to manage this term because of the lack of available full-time faculty.

The course evaluation was prepared by Andreas Zingerle, who taught the last component of the course. Because Andreas had prepared a brief feedback form, I did not prepare a different one.

1. **What did students like about the course?**
The vast majority of the students reported most enjoying the creative aspects of the coursework. They felt that they were exposed to a wide variety of diverse content (with the exception of one or two students who felt that they had learned enough about e-lit from 103). The assignments were generally described as fun and engaging. Twine projects were the most popular assignments. Students enjoyed the netprov but felt that more time should have been spent on it.

2. **What suggestions do students have for the course?**
Nearly all the students felt that there were too many teachers involved in the course, and that they did not get enough feedback on projects outside of in-class discussions. More structured feedback clearly could have improved the course. There were definite issues this term with not enough teaching resources. We had to put together a patchwork. In the past either I (Scott) or a Fulbright have essentially taught this whole course. In this case, the teaching became somewhat scattered. I should have done more to coordinate and facilitate communication both between the instructors and students – also to communicate who should be giving feedback. We should have had "team meetings" to better coordinate. At least one of the instructors did not get accustomed to the online platform. So the main takeaways were fewer instructors and more structured written feedback.

3. **Instruction**
Students felt that the instructors were knowledgeable and subject experts but had mixed feelings about different instructors. Andeas Zingerle, who was teaching with us for the first time, got particularly good responses.

4. Suggestions for Teaching

Comments were generally oriented toward improved planning and structure.

Overall, the main takeaways are that the vast majority of the students find the subject matter engaging and are particularly engaged with the creative and imaginative aspects of the course, but that there was a "too many cooks in the kitchen" issue this term and that the course needs more consistency in planning, and more extensive feedback on the assignments during the term. If we are in a situation where we need to employ a part-time instructor for the course again, it would be better to have one person for at least 50% of the course.