

Whitman Memories: A Collection

Project Description and Aims:

Our project is, broadly, a collection of Adobe Spark stories about memories we associate with certain spaces and places on campus. These individual stories are then tagged on a Google Map of the Whitman campus where a link of each story can be viewed. The goal of the project was to collect some of the memories we have each made at Whitman to create a collective memory about the diverse experiences that happen on campus. In the end, we hoped to track interesting patterns and intersections within our personal interactions with each place (for example, we all go to Reid, as the hub of campus, but why do we go there?), and to gain brief insight into each other's different lives in this place we all call a temporary home.

Digital Concepts and Tools from the Class that were Used:

Throughout this course we talked about many different ways to effectively communicate different kinds of data, and chose to combine our collective favorites (maps and Adobe Spark) to make something our whole group would enjoy creating. We wanted to create a project that would use the strengths of both of these tools: respectively, showing spatial relationships, and telling (roughly) linear stories. Ultimately, by combining these two tools, we were able to organize extremely qualitative data--essentially, our respective memories of and views on each place on campus--in a way that, we hope, makes sense while still giving our stories space to breathe.

Putting our data hub in the context of a Google map of Whitman familiarizes our data to the Whitman community that knows these places we are interacting with as well as or better than we do. The individual stories we provide for each place then contextualizes these places, as the reader is encouraged to view each place through the author's eyes, and to think about how their experience is similar or different to ours. Our unit on digital stories helped inform this aspect, as we learned of the value of nonlinear stories and collaborative authorship.

Current Project's relation to your Earlier Aims:

Originally we sought to record the relative past, present, and future associations with places on campus as they happened in real time. Each building holds significance to us each, and we hoped to map out how our experiences on campus intersect. In the end it turned more into a reminiscent project, where we went through our memories of interactions with the main buildings on campus. It also became more interactive, as our final step now includes linking to each other's stories (a la digital storytelling and interactive literature).

The Unfolding of the Creative Process:

It differed for each of us individually. Some of us had pictures that we have taken in the past that we incorporated into our stories. In other instances, we went around campus and took pictures to that helped trigger some memories we already had about the certain spaces or places on campus.

Moments of Failure:

Our original plan was to use Fulcrum to collect our data. However, we realized that it was an extra task that we didn't need to do. The required fields took up time and guided our answers too readily. Instead, we wanted to get at the very personal, of what we as individuals associate with specific place; rather than answering the simple question, "why are you here," we instead chose to broadly answering, "what significant memories do you associate with this place?"

Places where this Project might Expand:

If this project was broadened, we could collect stories from many people on campus to create a much larger collective story that represents everyone in the Whitman community.