

Digital archives in the classroom: The challenge of appropriating the CLARIAH Media Suite into tool-supported pedagogical practices

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We present practical insights based on our experiences of working with digital archives in the classroom, and the pros and cons of using a specific data infrastructure, the CLARIAH Media Suite, to do so. These insights relate to specific questions we deem relevant in Digital Humanities teaching today: **challenges, engagement and broader implications.**

Challenges:

What are the challenges of appropriating new tools related to large data infrastructures into the classroom:

- “De ont-google-ling” (the “de-Google-ing”) and challenges of using a new tool
- Challenges in the international classroom, such as issues around language, translation (of interface and materials) and critically approaching audiovisual materials

Engagement:

How do students engage in learning-by-doing while exploring a new digital tool and data infrastructure:

- How to motivate students’ curiosity
- How this works and what it looks like in the specific data infrastructure and media archive that is the CLARIAH Media Suite, linking diverse types of media content: tv programs, newspapers, oral history interviews... and metadata

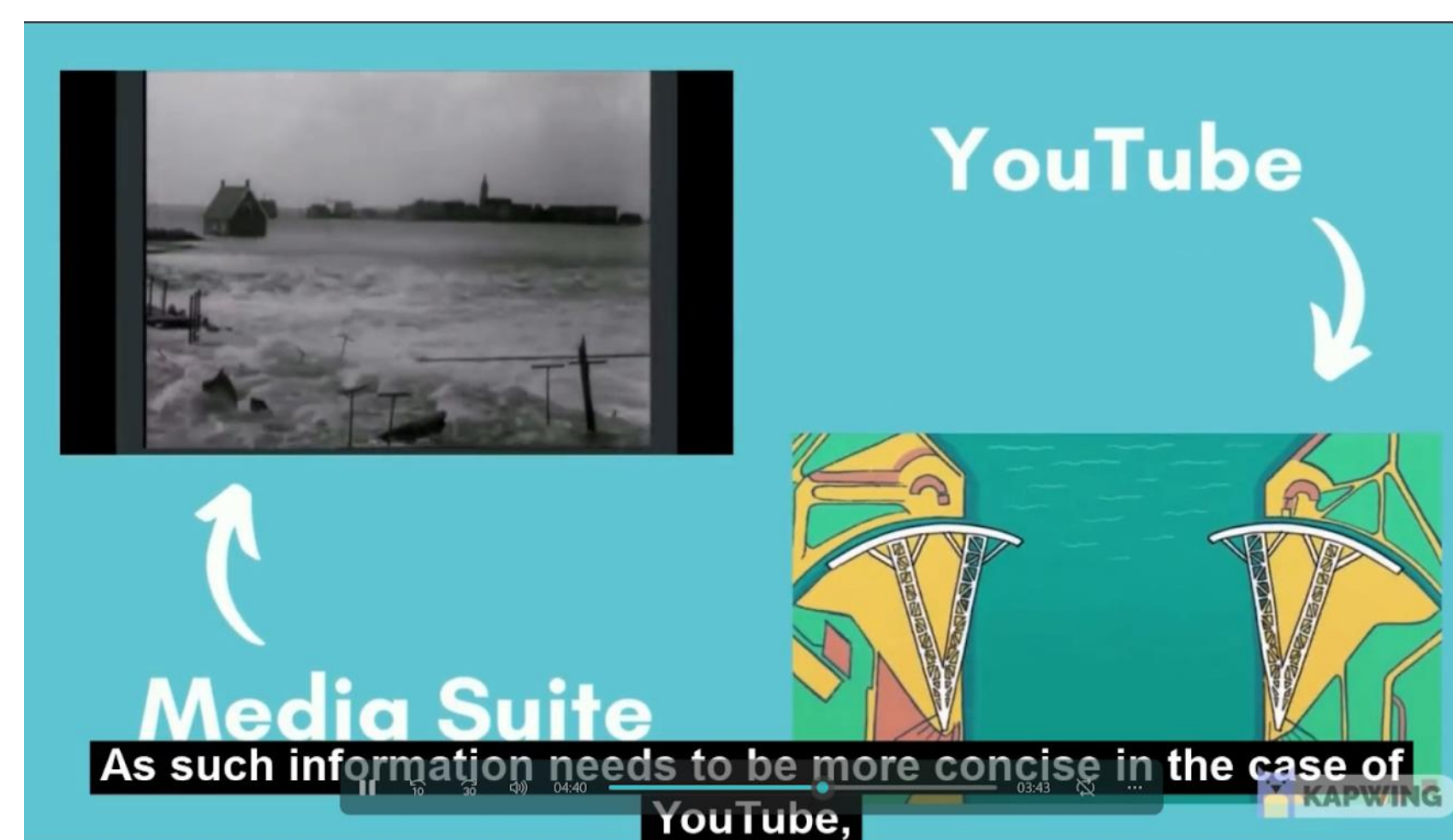
Broader implications:

- For archives: Awareness of search habits of (foreseen) archive users is key. How to balance the complexity of search and retrieval, with expectations about usability
- For students and teachers: Students learn about a tool but are also taught to adapt their learning and (re)search processes by means of (alternative) tool use

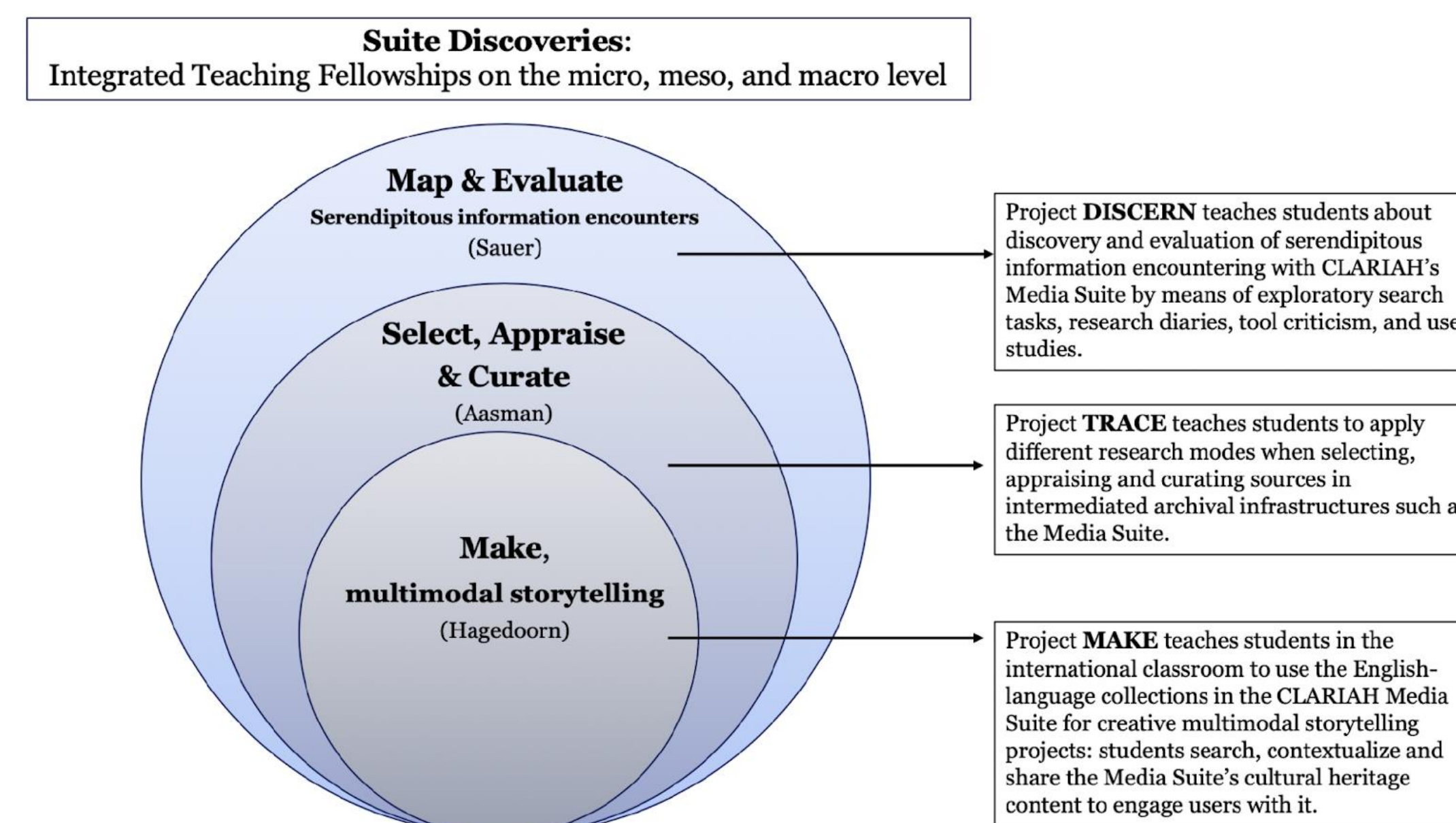
Recommendations:

Our recommendations for students to explore digital archives and learn about digital (re)search are:

- **Know your audience and their own awareness of search habits:** be sensitive about/aware of search habits (students expect a Google-like search experience)
 - **Intuitive search** does not work in an (inter)mediated institutional search environment, and that provides room to learn
 - **From habit to craft:** acknowledge and bend cultures of search, depending on the learning goal
- **Cultivating awareness in your user,** there are two sides to this in the educational setting: learning about searching the archive **AND** learning about what is in the archive
 - **(Inter)mediated search** can help raise historical awareness about past events and its own sensitivities: why words/keywords matter
 - Drive engagement with the archive and tool by teaching **transferable skills**
- **Iterative process:** going from tensions between focused search and discovery, to creative re-use and multi-modal storytelling practices (e.g. new stories in video essays)



Student example of comparative (re)search using the Media Suite and YouTube (video essay)



Student example of multimodal timelines (video essay)

This project was sponsored by CLARIAH (Teaching Fellowships 2021-2022), and executed by the following team members:
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