

Music Library Association Conference 2013: Incorporating Faculty Collaboration, Active Learning, and Hands-On Experience into Music Library Instruction to Improve Student Learning Outcomes

MISTI SHAW, GUEST EDITOR

The 82nd Annual Meeting of the Music Library Association (MLA) included several conference and poster sessions focused on music library instruction, which delved into a variety of topics including the use of in-class assessment techniques, instruction in non-traditional environments, online learning and live-action video tutorials, and active learning. The session, “And Now for Something Completely Different: New Exercises to Keep Your Students Engaged in Library Instruction,” included presentations by music librarians Scott Stone, Misti Shaw, and Katie Buehner; their presentations are summarized in the following essays along with a contribution by Sara Manus, Music Librarian for Education and Outreach at Vanderbilt University. Together, these essays discuss how music librarians are using collaboration with music history faculty, peer teaching, and in-class hands-on activities to teach students of varying research capabilities how to evaluate and use music resources and become information literate in a digital age.

One challenge music librarian instructors continue to tackle is how to teach our digital-native students to become information literate using both print and digital resources for music history research—often in the constraints of one fifty-minute music history class session. When determining the subject matter to be covered, librarians face the additional challenge of assessing the current research skill set of the students. In higher education, it can be easy to overestimate the research skills of today’s digital-native students. Many librarians have read about the work of the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL) project—an ethnographic study of what students, librarians, and professors think about the library and each other at five institutions.¹ One of the findings suggests that the majority

1. Background, findings, publications, and personnel described at <http://www.erialproject.org/>.

of students struggle with nearly every aspect of the research process. Librarians who overestimate students' research skills leave them feeling too intimidated to ask for help, while professors who are idealistic about their students' research abilities often do not send them to ask librarians for assistance with research projects.² In essence, we're throwing students in the deep end before we teach them to swim. ERIAL research team members Miller and Murillo suggest that "professors play a critical role in brokering students' relationships with librarians."³

Music and Performing Arts Librarian Scott Stone works closely with music faculty at Chapman University to provide recurring library instruction in a classroom setting. He explained his preference for peer teaching and in-class resource evaluation activities in order to facilitate learning for students of varying levels of ability. By having his students evaluate resources and then present their findings to classmates, students remain actively engaged with library instruction. I shared my experience of designing a hands-on library instruction activity for undergraduate students in music history seminars at DePauw University; the activity enables them to learn how to use—and when to use—specialized music tools and resources, including thematic catalogs and composer works lists. Searching for sound recording reviews and scholarly digital archives helps them to hone their evaluative skills in a relaxed environment with a librarian's guidance. Katie Buehner discussed the in-class activity she designed for the copyright portion of the graduate-level music research class she teaches at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music. She explains that by moving away from a lecture to a hands-on activity, students gain practice in searching for and evaluating information to solve copyright queries while relying less on their instructor for answers. Thus, students who intend to become performers are prepared to seek out, evaluate, and apply copyright information after they graduate.

In lively question-and-answer period followed the presentations, Sara Manus discussed a successful collaborative project with professor of musicology James V. Maiello to create a course, "J. S. Bach: Learned Musician and Virtual Traveler," in which she had a role as embedded librarian. She created an accompanying hands-on capstone project so students could make deeper connections with course materials. By integrating library instruction into a

2. Partial findings summarized by Steve Kolowich, "What Students Don't Know," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 22, 2011, accessed June 2013, http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/08/22/erial_study_of_student_research_habits_at_illinois_university_libraries_reveals_alarmingly_poor_information_literacy_and_skills.

3. Susan Miller and Nancy Murillo, "Why Don't Students Ask for Help? Undergraduate Help-Seeking Behavior in Three Academic Libraries," in *College Libraries and Student Culture: What We Now Know*, eds. Lynda Duke and Andrew Asher (Chicago: American Library Association, 2011), 60.

music history course, Manus asserted that students learn more than they do in one classroom library instructional session.

Feedback from audience members reveals that music librarians relish the opportunity to collaborate with music history faculty to deliver effective library instruction to students. Instruction librarians also relay that they continue to reevaluate the content they cover and their methods for enabling learning. The following papers, which include detailed descriptions of the classroom activities, support the possibility that along with faculty collaboration, active learning, in-class activities, and hands-on experiences may lead to successful library instruction outcomes.

Library Freaky Friday: Information Literacy and Peer Teaching

SCOTT STONE

As a music librarian whose primary job is to provide reference and information literacy instruction for undergraduates and faculty at a medium-sized university, I teach approximately fifty information literacy class sessions each school year. The musicologists and some of the applied music faculty I work with are very much in favor of their students receiving library instruction on a regular basis, which means that I see some students in four or five sessions throughout the year. Dealing with this repetition can be a significant challenge as some students bring to class extensive experience with research techniques and concepts learned in previous sessions, whereas others might only be familiar with the basics.

As I've experimented with various exercises and lesson plans to engage this wide variety of student ability, one in-class exercise has continued to prove effective at both teaching and engaging multiple levels of students. This exercise, which I like to call "Library Freaky Friday," is based on the educational theory of peer teaching and involves students teaching students rather than the librarian or professor teaching the class. Velez and his coauthors believe that, "peer teaching encourages students to assume a more active role in knowledge acquisition," which should please any instructor.¹ In addition to peer teaching, this particular exercise requires group work, which, as Yaman and Covington demonstrate, increases participation from students, an attribute that is desirable in any class but especially so in information literacy classes that are often rife with disinterested students.²

Library Freaky Friday starts with me informing the students that neither I nor their regular instructor will be lecturing them that day. After the excited whispering has died down, I inform them that *they* will actually be teaching

1. Jonathan J. Velez, et al., "Cultivating Change Through Peer Teaching," *Journal of Agricultural Education* 52, no.1 (2011): 40, doi:10.5032/jae.2011.01040.

2. Dan Yaman and Missy Covington, *I'll Take Learning for 500* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2006), 11.

the class. I divide the students into groups (my classes are normally composed of five or six groups of four students each) and assign each group a topic and an information resource that they will present to the rest of the class. I select information resources for each session that are appropriate to the needs of a particular class or research assignment; these might typically cover electronic databases like *RILM*, *Oxford Music Online*, and *JSTOR*, in addition to several print resources such as bibliographies or focused encyclopedias.

Before releasing the students for the next twenty-twentyfive minutes to prepare their presentations, I explain that the students need to become true experts on their resources by using them to search for their topics, but that they shouldn't actually tell the class about their topic. Instead, they will explain how they interacted with the resource while researching their topic. This is an essential part of the exercise and needs to be emphasized throughout the preparation time; otherwise, students will instead come to the front of the classroom and attempt to present their research topics. With that being said, you might ask why the students should even research a particular topic instead of just exploring their information resource. There are several reasons for this. First, searching for a particular topic helps the students to explore the scope of a resource. Second, in my experience with this exercise, I've found that groups will give much more compelling and complete presentations when assigned a topic. Without having a specific information need, many students will just play around with their resource for a bit without fully discovering how it works.

During the preparation time it's important to circulate through the room and engage each of the groups. Ask them standard questions such as: "What type of information can you find in this resource? What type of information can't be found in this resource? Can you find information easily using your resource? Are there search limiters available to help narrow your search? Do you like the resource?" Groups should also be asked specific questions related to their resource. For example, I always ask the group assigned to work with *RILM* if they've discovered how to search multiple databases at once, which would allow them to search both *RILM* and *Music Index* simultaneously.

Once preparation time is complete, I again remind the students that they are to give a complete overview of their information resource, and to refrain from acting like a car salesman who only covers the positive aspects while avoiding negative parts of the resource. Occasionally presentations are sub-par, making it important for the librarian to remain engaged throughout the presentation in order to help coax the group to a more successful presentation. Much more often, groups give a solid presentation with various students presenting on different aspects of the resource. In the instances in which everything is perfect with the presentation, it is still important to engage the

group by praising their thoroughness, asking questions of the class, and emphasizing important points made by the group.

Peer teaching in the library classroom has been an effective method of engaging students in learning about information literacy at my school. Post-session surveys and assessments have garnered student quotes including “It was great to feel more acquainted with the programs and actually have a personal preference for using them now,” and, “I like how the exercise helped us understand how different resources were better for finding certain information over different kinds of information.” In contrast, post-lecture evaluations after a traditional bibliographic information session have never shown an understanding of the advanced information literacy concept that different information will be found in different types of resources. I feel that this point needs to be emphasized, as it is important to all parties involved in the information literacy process. Students who use the proper resources for different types of information (e.g., search in *JSTOR* when looking for primary resources from nineteenth century journal articles, or use *IIMP* rather than *RILM* to find information on a current popular musician) have the most success in completing their assignments and are less likely to experience frustration during the research process. Professors benefit as their students become more likely to stop using freely available Web sites of questionable authority and instead write papers supported with more authoritative information. I credit the students’ newly learned skills not to poor teaching abilities on my part, but rather to the fact that the students are so engaged with the fun group assignments and peer teaching that they want to learn and consequently internalize this knowledge.

There are many different ways for music students to learn about information literacy. Library Freaky Friday is one of the more effective methods I’ve used over the years. The peer teaching is flexible enough that it is still able to engage students who have received multiple music library sessions in one semester as well as introduce concepts to those who are receiving it for the first time. I encourage you to have a conversation with your music librarian and work together to design an effective information literacy session that engages and challenges your students.

Like a Scholar: Gaining Hands-On Experience with Specialized Music Tools and Resources

MISTI SHAW

As the Music and Performing Arts Librarian at DePauw University, I provide sequential library instruction that is integrated within the music history curriculum. I frequently collaborate with music history professor Matthew Balensuela to identify ways in which I can better meet the library instructional needs of his students and thus improve the quality of work they submit to him. In the fall of 2011, he reflected that his students were not getting enough experience working with specialized music tools, including thematic catalogs, works lists, and scholarly collected edition scores in the 300-level topics course (similar to a seminar). Rather than give a lecture and create an assignment for them to complete outside of class—typical for their sophomore year music history survey—I created an in-class activity so that students could gain hands-on experience using the tools while I was present, so that I could assist with their questions.

There are usually between fifteen and eighteen students enrolled in each topics course which meets for three hours each week of a semester of fourteen weeks. Before the class meets, I select the compositions to be assigned to students who will work in teams of two. In a Mozart or Beethoven course, I might select a variety of compositions, including a piano concerto, a string quartet, a symphony, and other works whose entries in the composer's thematic catalog seem straightforward. When class begins, each pair of students receives a worksheet with their assigned composition indicated at the top. Before they begin their work, I give a brief ten-minute overview about thematic catalogs and collected editions and why they may be helpful when conducting research. After reminding the students that I am available to answer questions should they arise, they tackle their worksheets. (See Appendix for an example.)

1. Locate the assigned composition within the thematic catalog, located at the front of the classroom.

The students must first spend a few moments familiarizing themselves with how the thematic catalog is arranged before they can find their work's entry. They are often intimidated by the German text, but after a little encouragement, most identify their entries quickly. Once they find their entry, they record the following information onto their worksheets: the composition's title, its instrumentation, the year(s) it was composed, where the manuscript is held (the worksheet asks that they simply list the first city that they see in the Autograph area of the entry), and whether or not a facsimile exists. While students work on this portion of their in-class activity, I sit nearby in order to give additional information about thematic catalogs to each pair of students in a more personal setting. I might explain what incipits are, show students the abbreviations table, or discuss alternative ways thematic catalogs may be arranged—chronologically versus genre, for example. Usually students feel comfortable asking questions in this setting and express interest in learning about the other information and headings they see within the entries.

2. Using the composer's works list in Grove Music Online, locate the score by pulling the correct volume from the collected edition.

Students must find the entry for their composition in the *Grove Music Online* works list in order to determine which volume contains their work within the collected edition. After writing the volume and page number on their worksheets, students visit the collected editions area of the stacks and try to locate their work within the correct volume. If the library owns more than one collected edition for the composer, the worksheet will remind students that I want them to locate the score from the newer edition. When they pull the correct volume and flip to the page where the composition first appears, the students find a sticky note with a congratulatory message that I placed in the volume before class began. They remove the note and affix it to their worksheets and head back to the classroom.

3. Locate and read a full-text review for a sound recording for the composition using the International Index to Music Periodicals (IIMP) or the Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music in print in the reference section.

The worksheet indicates that students may select a favorable or unfavorable review—as long as it's a review, they can use it. They must write two or three sentences about what they find most interesting in the review, which helps to ensure that they engage with the review rather than skim through it quickly until they find the “answer.” While most students enrolled in a topics course will have already received instruction on searching for scholarly

journal articles in a prior course, few will have had the opportunity or need to search for and use sound recording reviews. When asked to write a critique of musical sound or performance, our students sometimes do not know what to listen for, or do not fully understand the language to employ and terminology to use. Exposure to sound recording reviews provides these students with examples they can use as models for their own critiques while in the relaxed classroom environment of library instruction.

4. Navigate to a digital archive containing the composer's works

If this is a Beethoven class, they are directed to the Beethoven-Haus Bonn digital archive¹. In a Mozart class, they visit the Digital Mozart Edition.² Other digital collections online are not devoted to specific composers, and might be useful for a variety of other topics courses. These collections might include the Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection, the Library of Congress American Memory Collection, and digitized collections from university libraries such as the University of North Texas, UC-Boulder, Yale, and others.

We know that students turn to Google more often than library databases when conducting research, and many struggle to evaluate online resources for quality, authority, accuracy, and objectivity.³ Rather than urge students to use library databases exclusively, or lecture them on evaluating online resources, I prefer to show students examples of scholarly online resources and facilitate engagement with them. At DePauw, I have observed that students who gain experience using trustworthy Web sites and quality digital archives get better at recognizing and discarding online resources that are unsuitable for research.

The class worksheet directs the students to the archive I have chosen for them. Their tasks involve exploration of the archive, searching for manuscripts or early editions, and identifying other features that can assist research, such as accompanying images or bibliographies. At the Beethoven-Bonn archive, the students must see if there is information about their assigned composition, find an image or PDF of a manuscript or early edition, and search the site for any accompanying images or anecdotal information they find interesting. They provide a short summary of their findings. Students

1 Digital Archives of the Beethoven-Haus Bonn, http://www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de/sixcms/detail.php?template=startseite_digitales_archiv_en.

2 Digital Mozart Edition, <http://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/main/index.php?l=2>.

3 A partial summary of the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries project, is in Steve Kolowich, "What Students Don't Know," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 22, 2011, http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/08/22/erial_study_of_student_research_habits_at_illinois_university_libraries_reveals_alarmingly_poor_information_literacy_and_skills.

alert me when they finish their worksheets so that I can review their findings and answer any lingering questions.

The first time I assigned this worksheet in a topics course, I was surprised by how much the students enjoyed completing the tasks. A few of the students believed that the work they did—using thematic catalogs and searching for scholarly scores using works lists—was work that musicologists do, and they felt proud about this. One student remarked “I feel like a true scholar.” Another student said, “This was so much more fun than last year,” which was a reference to the research assignments they received in their music history survey course. Any worries I had that the students would find the tasks boring or confusing were dispelled as I saw them “high-five” each other as they located their scores in stacks.

Semester-end class evaluations were similarly positive, and indicate that students enjoyed the hands-on aspect. For the question, “What was the most useful part of the session(s),” a student wrote, “Misti planted clues inside of research tools we needed to use that are not easy to look for without instruction. We went on a scavenger hunt through the library and it gave us confidence to find things ourselves and it was fun!” Another answered the question with, “Telling us about how to use reference tools, and then having us actually use the reference tools.” One student responded, “The session gave us a chance to try out the different resources that were presented. I love the interactive portion and scavenger hunt.”

Though this activity might be too challenging to assign to a class containing more than twenty students, it might be possible if the music librarian is able to enlist the assistance of another librarian, professor, or staff assistant. The activity can be modified for a course that is not composer-specific; for a course on a particular era in music history, compositions can be assigned from a variety of relevant thematic catalogs or other specialized tools. The activity could also be expanded if the course meeting time lasts longer than fifty minutes. If given more than an hour, I might ask students to visit a composer bibliography in *Grove Music Online* and locate a book and a journal article that DePauw owns or offers in full text. I cannot show each student how to use each resource in the music library—no instruction librarian can. Yet, I urge music librarians and music history professors to consider adding a hands-on learning component when possible not only to increase student competence, but to also combat the intimidation they experience when confronted with specialized tools and resources in music libraries.

Appendix: MUS390 Topics: Mozart In-class Activity

Names of those in your group:

1. Find your composition in the Köchel thematic catalog (front of room near piano).

a) K number: _(instructor fills this in)_____

b) What is the instrumentation of the work? (Translate the instruments into English as best as you can).

c) Where and when did the premiere take place?

d) Where is the manuscript held? If it's held in more than one place, pick one. Ask Misti for help if you need it.

e) Is there a facsimile? Just answer yes or no.

2. In *Grove Music Online*, go to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Works List. Using the columns of the Works List, locate your K number/composition in the table.

Using the *NMA* column (the New edition), locate the volume your composition appears within the collected set in our library.

You must physically walk to the collected set downstairs in the stacks and locate the volume on the shelf.

Once you find the volume, pull it off the shelf, open it and look to the left of the inside of the cover. You should see a purple Post-It note.

What is written on the purple Post-It note? _____

3. Navigate to the music library Web site, click on *IIMP*, and locate a sound recording review for your composition. It can be favorable or unfavorable—as long as it's a review for a recording containing the full version of your work. If

you cannot locate a review in *IIMP*, use the *Penguin Guide to Recorded Music* (in front of room, by piano).

- a) Write 2-3 sentences about what you found interesting in this review. Would you be compelled to listen to this recording? Why?

Optional extras for another class or a longer class:

1. Locate a sound recording of this work in our online catalog. If you can't find one, proceed to b.

- a) Write the call number here: _____

b) If we don't have a sound recording at DePauw, locate one in Worldcat (using the link on the Music Library Web site). Name the title of the sound recording you found: _____

Go to the bibliography in *Grove Music Online* for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Click on the + sign to view the bibliography for "Biographies, studies of life & works."

2. Locate a book that DePauw owns. (Use Worldcat to do this, if you like) (Remember: italics in title but nothing in quotation marks means it's probably a book.)

- a) Write down the title and author:

b) Write down our call number: Go to the "Operas" portion of the bibliography

3. Locate a journal article for which there is full-text access at DePauw. Start at the top of the operas bibliography—you won't have to go too far down.

HINT: the **titles** of journals will be in italics. The article will appear within quotation marks.

Journals are often abbreviated. You must click on the abbreviation to see the full name of the Journal. **SEARCH FOR THE JOURNAL TITLE** using the **Journals tab** on the Music Library Web site. Then, navigate to the years to find your specific issue and article.

- a) Write down the full citation for the journal article that you found access to.

Copyright in the Classroom: Raising Awareness Through Engagement

KATIE BUEHNER

To ensure the legal use of research materials and to discourage cheating, instructors usually spend class time or a page of the class syllabus addressing what constitutes plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty. A partner to plagiarism is copyright, but the latter tends to occupy the fringe, and not the core, of library instruction curriculum. In addition to writing the normal research papers, however, many courses require that students create online portfolios, maintain class blogs, or produce movie mashups for a grade. All of this student work—the portfolio, the blog, the movie—is hosted in online forums.¹ In other words, student work is leaving the confines of the classroom and seeping into a public arena of published content.

Because digital publishing platforms, such as YouTube, Wordpress, or even Facebook, are so affordable and readily available, the likelihood of students encountering copyright issues in their academic or performing careers has increased exponentially. For this reason, I incorporate a class session and short assignment on copyright into my graduate music research classes at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music. This essay includes an outline of a lesson plan on copyright, as well as a description of an in-class activity and homework assignment. The class session and activities are designed to raise student awareness of, but not expertise in, copyright law and licensing.

To communicate this goal of “awareness, not expertise” to students, I begin by asking for any lawyers in the class to identify themselves. This helps to establish that copyright is a law and so it stands to reason that copyright experts tend to be lawyers. The class then brainstorms as many copyright terms or principles as they can think of in less than three minutes, and I write

1. See Dànielle Nicole DeVoss, “English Studies and Intellectual Property: Copyright, Creativity, and the Commons,” *Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 201–15 for a sample list of copyright scenarios students face both inside and outside of the classroom. DeVoss's students read about intellectual property, including the public domain and Creative Commons licensing, and “compose a set of principles in response to both copyright and copyleft perspectives.”

them on the whiteboard. As the class progresses, the whiteboard is updated with definitions, affirmations, and a small amount of myth-busting.

The class then watches Lawrence Lessig's TED talk, "Laws that Choke Creativity."² Lessig provides an excellent overview of copyright and licensing in the digital age. He starts his talk by discussing "user-generated content" and how the creation and consumption of content has changed throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. I ask students for their questions or thoughts about the video's content, and this provides a segue into examining several resources they can use to answer copyright questions. Our first stop is <http://www.copyright.gov> and the actual copyright statutes, focusing on exclusive rights in copyrighted works, fair use, and the first sale doctrine. If there are any music education majors in the class, then I also present the Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization Act or TEACH act. The Music Library Association's Web site has a comprehensive listing of copyright resources including reports and studies, a glossary, and a list of important decisions accompanied by brief summaries of the ruling.³ If nothing else, most students will recognize *A&M Records v. Napster*; however, in my course they actually read the ruling summary and understand the arguments and decision. Once students are equipped with some basic vocabulary and a short list of copyright resources, it is time for them to put that knowledge to work. The class is split into two groups, and each is given a digital object (usually a score from IMSLP) and tasked with determining terms of use. Students present their findings to the class, and also explain their research process and list any resources used. If students use any copyright terminology (e.g., "fair use," "public domain"), they must define the term.

The in-class exercise furnishes students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of copyright tools, terms, and concepts. Moving from lecture to hands-on practice also displaces student reliance on the instructor as their primary source of information. Instead, the activity forces them to formulate alternative routes of information gathering (e.g., copyright resources, peers) and personal interpretations of the law. The group structure necessitates student debate of individual interpretations, which must be synthesized into a consensus opinion that can be communicated to the class.

Lastly, I refer back to the Lessig talk and Creative Commons licensing in order to help students disentangle licensing from copyright, and to show how licensing is used in the dissemination of digital-born content. "Laws that Choke Creativity" serves as an object lesson. While the TED Web site offers

2. Lawrence Lessig, "Laws that Choke Creativity," (video of lecture, TED Talks, March 2007, posted November 2007) accessed June 1, 2013, http://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity.html.

3. Music Library Association, "Copyright for Music Librarians," accessed June 1, 2013, <http://copyright.musiclibraryassoc.org/>.

the option of ordering a DVD copy of Lessig's talk, the "share and embed" options are the native publishing tools for the video.⁴ The video itself was made to be shared freely, but to always track back to its creators (TED, Lessig, etc.). Examining the various levels of Creative Commons licensing only affirms and expands upon student understanding of the terms and concepts previously discussed in the class.

The graded assignment is an inflation of the in-class task, but I select objects with more complex terms of use: use with permissions, use with attribution, and even items where a clear determination cannot be secured. In addition to assigning an object, I also provide a context for use—for example, "You want to use this image/video in a blog entry you're writing for a professional organization's website." Students are again required to provide a reference list of consulted resources.

While it is important to give students the research and writing tools to succeed in their graduate studies, the broader-reaching goal is to equip them for a successful career beyond university. In order to succeed, this generation will be required to publish online, whether that publication be a professional Web site, a video, a blog, or even a scholarly article or book. Students should know their rights as both content creators and content users, especially since copyright law protects both. I do not expect students to have the answer to every copyright question when they leave my classroom, but I am encouraged if they know to ask the question in the first place.

4. To prove this point, I search for Lessig's TED talk in WorldCat, which indicates that the only available copy (as of June 1, 2013) is for the online video.

Moving Information Literacy Beyond an “Add-On” to “Hands-On”

SARA J. BEUTTER MANUS

Information literacy initiatives are often perceived by students as “add-ons” to music history courses. While instructors and librarians intend to provide students with the knowledge and skills that they need to research and write papers, a variety of factors often interfere with the effectiveness of library instruction. Lack of attendance by students, inadequate class time, lack of “hands-on” experience for students, and failure to deliver information at the point of need are but a few of the issues that can impede the success of information literacy initiatives. By developing a true partnership between the librarian and the instructor, information literacy can be woven directly into the fabric of the course, improving outcomes for all parties and offer students the chance to engage in a non-traditional, hands-on project.

In the summer of 2011, I was approached by assistant professor of musicology James V. Maiello regarding a newly approved course. James and I had worked together in the past, and he had become a great advocate for information literacy sessions because the skills that students learned led to better research and writing (thus necessitating fewer corrections from him). We had many discussions about how to best remove the obstacles that prevent students from developing the information literacy skills necessary to academic success, and he wanted to design a course that would include information literacy as a primary curricular goal. Our collaboration resulted in the course “J. S. Bach: Learned Musician and Virtual Traveler,” first offered in the spring of 2012.

While the course was for upper-level undergraduates, it was modeled on the graduate seminar model. It was to be discussion-based, and each student would be required to give a substantive presentation on a Bach work. We included several “traditional” music history assignments (an annotated bibliography, a research paper, and an editions study of the Bach B-minor Mass), but we also designed a capstone, hands-on assignment that would require students to synthesize their experiences in the course in a creative way by curating an exhibit at the Anne Potter Wilson Music Library.

Since we envisioned a seamless integration of information literacy into the course, we explicitly included the following course goal and objectives in the syllabus:¹

Curricular goal: To develop advanced information literacy and research methods.

Objective: Acquire, evaluate, and employ relevant information/research appropriately and effectively.

Objective: Communicate in the content area orally and in writing, using an appropriate, discipline-specific vocabulary and proper mechanics of language, grammar, and style.

To reinforce the role of information literacy in the course, I decided to “embed” myself in the class.² I committed to attend all class meetings, and we opted not to schedule discrete library instruction sessions. By removing a set time and date for the librarian, we were demonstrating that information literacy is not a stand-alone concept, but a set of skills that can only be developed within the context of a discipline. Since even the best-designed syllabi can be derailed by unexpected events, being in the classroom gave me the flexibility to deliver instruction directly at the point of need. It was also beneficial to work with students throughout the semester, reviewing information covered previously, answering questions, and suggesting alternate research strategies. Rather than just explaining “how” to do something, we were able to explore “why” things are done the way that they are in a particular discipline.³

As the semester progressed, it became clear that our students were making great strides forward in their research and writing abilities. James and I graded their annotated bibliographies and editions studies jointly, and we offered students the chance to rewrite. Feedback was taken seriously, and later drafts reflected increasing comfort with the research and writing process. Rather than viewing the library (and the librarian) as separate entities, they seemed to grasp the interrelated nature between information and the discipline of musicology.

1. In formulating our goals and objectives, we relied on the Music Library Association’s Instructional Objectives for Undergraduate Music Students, compiled by the Bibliographic Instruction Subcommittee, approved by the MLA Board and endorsed by the Association for College and Research Libraries (2005), http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/uploaded-Files/Publications/Online_Publications/BI_MLA_Instructional_Objectives.pdf.

2. Embedded librarianship is an increasingly popular means of forging relationships between users and librarians in both physical and online environments. An introduction to the concept can be found in Kathy Drewes and Nadine Hoffman’s “Academic Embedded Librarianship: An Introduction,” *Public Services Quarterly* 6, nos. 2–3 (April 2010): 75–82.

3. Students were particularly interested in learning about the conventions of scholarly discourse and how that related to citation practices.

The final project of the semester gave students the opportunity to curate an exhibit in the Wilson Music Library. This hands-on project put them in charge of documenting their experiences in the classroom throughout the semester in a creative way. By asking them to do this type of capstone, we had the chance to observe how students had synthesized the various elements of the course. Since we wanted to give them the opportunity to make the projects their own, the guidelines were flexible and fluid. The only firm requirement was that each item in the display be accompanied by a descriptive card with a correct bibliographic citation in Chicago style.

It is fair to say that the resulting exhibit, “J. S. Bach: The Learned Musician,” exceeded our expectations. Students did turn to us for some guidance and assistance, but the vision reflected in the exhibit was their own. The exhibit overview describes their approach:

Arguably the most renowned composer of all time, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) was—ironically—somewhat self-conscious of his lack of academic pedigree. From his earliest professional appointments, Bach cultivated consciously his image as “learned,” despite having neither university degree nor academic appointment. This exhibit focuses on the multifaceted nature of Bach’s education and concludes with a brief look at Bach in our own university. He was a product of German’s “Latin School” system, a cut above the “German” schools most children attended, and one based on a Classical model. Bach’s musical education was a combination of traditional North German apprenticeship and self-study, built largely around German masters like Buxtehude, as well as popular Italianate and French styles. Although he never traveled far from his native Thuringia, Bach’s music reflects the varied techniques and styles from all over Europe. Perhaps most surprisingly, Bach took his duties as a composer of sacred music very seriously, becoming a competent, sophisticated theologian in his own right, as evidenced by both his music and his private library. Finally, J. S. Bach left an indelible mark on the American university landscape through performances of his music, scholarly research on his life and works, and in university courses devoted to Bach and the music of his time. It is our hope that this exhibit respects Bach’s own self-image, calling attention to, as Christoph Wolff so aptly titled his magisterial intellectual biography, *J. S. Bach: The Learned Musician*.

Students demonstrated their research skills by searching the library’s collections and the Internet for objects to include in their exhibit. Among the items chosen for display were a 1750 Luther Bible from the Divinity Library’s collection, a digital image from the German version of Wikipedia of a 1609 edition of the *Compendium locorum theologicorum* (essentially, Bach’s

“textbook”), and a commemorative bronze medal cast for Vanderbilt’s 2000 Symposium on Albert Schweitzer from Special Collections.⁴

Students also embraced creative elements in their project. The favorite object on exhibit was a fictional “report card” for Bach which assigned grades for choir, arithmetic, Latin, Greek, religion, logic, and rhetoric. A comment from August Braun, the cantor at St. Michael’s, stated that “we were very excited to have Sebastian join the Matins choir, but almost immediately, his voice dropped an octave in the space of a week. We were hoping to take advantage of his once-fine soprano voice. Hopefully, he can adjust to this new register and stay in the Matins choir.” Bach also received low marks for attendance, which was described as “not his strongest area.” This creative report card recounted Bach’s time at St. Michael’s in a creative and relatable manner.

We believe that the hands-on element of this course was particularly beneficial to our students, as it allowed them to make deeper connections with the course material of the sort that foster long-term retention of information. We also know that the collaboration between librarian and instructor led to better outcomes on course assignments. Far from being an “add-on,” our students truly had a “hands-on” experience that shows how information literacy is a pillar of academic inquiry.

4. Although best known for his humanitarian work, Schweitzer’s two-volume study of Bach’s works (published in 1908) remains a milestone in Bach scholarship. Christoph Wolff was one of the speakers at the symposium, thus adding even greater relevance since his biography functioned as the central text for the course.