Making Time for the Library: Adventures in Integrating Information Literacy in the Curriculum

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Have you heard the one about…

- “I’ve taken research and bib three times, and it still hasn’t sunk into my gray matter!”
The undergrad music history survey plan

- Class serves three populations
  - Undergrads fulfilling a writing-intensive requirement in addition to the music history requirement
  - Undergrads just fulfilling the music history requirement
  - Grad students taking it as a review
The undergrad music history survey plan

- Types of assignments
  - All students must complete an annotated bibliography
  - All students have short library assignments (fact-finding missions)
  - All students have content-based exams
  - Writing-intensive students have additional projects (e.g. 2 more annotated bibs, listening journals, and creative writing assignments)
The undergrad music history survey plan

● The challenge
  ● Making time to include relevant library and information literacy instruction while attempting to cover centuries of music history in 15 all-too-brief weeks!
The undergrad music history survey plan

- The players
  - One enthusiastic music librarian
  - One musicologist dedicated to holistic learning
  - Students who want to find relevant information effectively (we hope!)
The undergrad music history survey plan

- The strategy
  - Music librarian visits class every other week for a 15-minute intensive session
  - Musicologist alerts the librarian of current topics, questions, assignments in the class
  - Music librarian selects resources and approaches relevant to topic *du jour*
  - Librarian asks a student to “drive” the computer and find the answer!
The undergrad music history survey plan

Examples

- How can I find recordings pertinent to my class assignments?
  - Opportunity to discover recordings available through Naxos Music Library, DRAM (for 20\textsuperscript{th} century American), and library holdings.
The undergrad music history survey plan

- **Examples**
  - How has Haydn been viewed as a Romantic composer?
    - Opportunity to examine *Grove Music* citing ETA Hoffman, search for translation of Hoffman’s work in *Source Readings in Music History* through Google Books (GASP!), and then locate the actual book in the library for complete article.
  - Solution in this case emphasizes the differences between primary and secondary sources.
The undergrad music history survey plan

- **Examples**

  - How was Hugo Wolf received during his lifetime?

    - Opportunity to discover *RIPM, JStor, and again discuss relevance of primary resources and first-hand observations.*
Benefits to the undergrad classes

- Focused gems of information
- Avoid information overload
- Students (we hope) retain information and skills gained, then are able to apply those skills.
- GREAT review and update for grad students who have taken the research and bib class (usually only once)
Benefits to the undergrad classes

- Just-in-time approach to teaching resources rather than the just-in-case and let me teach you everything you need to know in 50 minutes early in the semester.
- Students see relevance of resources immediately and can apply knowledge to current assignments.
Benefits to the undergrad classes

- Alternate weeks, the musicologist spends 10-15 minutes discussing how to write about music (integrating resources the librarian discussed)
What it takes

- Flexible musicologist willing to give up the precious 15 minutes of class time every other week (nearly two hours of class time total)
- Focused music librarian able to communicate complex concepts in only 15 minutes!
What it takes

- Physical environment that supports internet access, overhead projection, speakers to play musical examples, etc.
- Gregarious students!
What we see

- Students actually using resources presented in class in their work and not totally relying on the internet.
- Too early in experiment to see if information literacy concepts are really taking root.
Graduate class

- Working with a special topics class on Music of East Asia
- Unlike the undergrad class, all students have taken introduction to research & bibliography and a knowledge baseline is assumed.
- Ten students in class as opposed to 20+ in undergrad class.
Graduate course

- Types of assignments
  - Preparation sheets for each class meeting, requiring reading and researching into discussion topic
  - A full class period group presentation on a student-selected topic
  - A final paper and presentation on personal research topic
The grad special topics plan

- The challenge
  - Reinforcing baseline knowledge
  - Encouraging students to look outside of their primary discipline
  - Encouraging students to discover the appropriate resources and apply an interdisciplinary approach to research
The grad special topics plan

- The players
  - One enthusiastic music librarian
  - One musicologist dedicated to holistic learning
  - Students who want to find relevant information effectively (we hope!)
The grad special topics plan

- The strategy
  - Music librarian visits class once every four weeks for a 15 to 25 minute intensive session
  - Musicologist alerts the librarian of students’ specific topics
  - Music librarian selects resources and approaches relevant to topics; personalized handout for each student
The grad special topics plan

- Musicologist integrates recommended resources into class assignments
- Students evaluate resources; discuss results; compile questions for music librarian regarding resources and approaches
What has happened

- Assumptions about baseline knowledge have had to be revised
  - Q: Where do you start to look for resources on music in East Asia?
  - A: The internet? Google?
  - Q: What about the databases the library spends money on? Remember those from research & bib?
  - A: Oh.
What has happened

- Assumptions about baseline knowledge have had to be revised
  - Q: What resources do you use to locate music journal articles?
  - A: WorldCat?
  - Music librarian hits head on podium.
What we found

- Depth of student-selected topics not as deep as usually expected after taking research & bib
- Students tend to stay within boundaries of music discipline
What we found

- Students tend to start their research on the internet (e.g. Google but not Google Scholar) rather than library subscription databases.

- We attribute this action partially to lack of knowledge of world music and sources related to world music.
What we’re discovering

After initial visit, students were thrilled to have a personalized list of resources for their topics.
What it takes

- Flexible musicologist willing to integrate the craft of research.
- Focused music librarian willing to devote time and energy to exploring additional resources.
What it takes

- Students willing to leave personal comfort zones and assumed knowledge base.
- Students willing to share research successes and failures.
Results

- Some students will never get it (remember the student with the gray matter issue at the beginning?)
- Some students thrive with the challenge and reinforcement from the musicologist and music librarian.
- Some information literacy concepts are taking root.
Is it worth all of this work?