Re-envisioning Information Literacy:
Critical Information Literacy, Disciplinary Discourses, and Music History[1]

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Introduction

As a librarian who works with music students one-on-one and in the classroom, I always have several goals in mind. I want my students to discover that research can be fun, and that it can be exciting, meaningful, and relevant in ways that will resonate throughout their lives. I also want them to realize that learning about the research process, about information, libraries, and the internet, can be challenging, fascinating, and even empowering, as they gain new perspectives into our modern information environment and develop lifelong expertise in navigating its complexities. Yet I regularly encounter reluctance and anxiety from students at all levels: from the first-year student daunted by the complexity of her university library system, to the new graduate student returning to school after time away who feels as if the research skills he gained years ago are now inadequate.

In my professional role, I also share in my faculty colleagues' disappointment about the quality of student research. "How can I get my students to identify the core sources around a topic, so that they stop giving me bibliographies full of seemingly random citations?" Or, "Why do my students not understand that passion for a particular composer does not automatically lead to a compelling research question?" We all know that research assignments sometimes fail to produce our intended results. When the student research paper devolves into an exercise in mutual frustration, the rapid changes in our current information landscape often contribute to this failure. It can be challenging to translate the research methods we learned in graduate school for contemporary students, who are accustomed to the constantly shifting information buffet provided by

sites such as Wikipedia, YouTube, SoundCloud, and the International Music Score Library Project.[2] Undergraduate students can struggle with the transition from an almost exclusive reliance on Google to the complex information environment, both print and online, that the typical university library provides.[3] Graduate students may have fluency locating information in many different types of sources, but they can be overwhelmed by the volume and variety of information they encounter.[4]

We recognize that our students operate in a world of information abundance, but what is harder to acknowledge is that this abundance comes with a cost. In an online environment, the frequent lack of attribution or context can make evaluating the veracity of a source difficult even for the experienced researcher.[5] These difficulties become more troubling in light of the opacity of the corporate, technological forces shaping our online environment: the algorithms and filters Google uses to manage our online searching, and the algorithms and bots that impact the ways we access information and interact with one another via social media sites like Facebook or Twitter.[6] We find ourselves

2. Kirstin Dougan has addressed the impact of freely available online sites such as YouTube on music research and music information seeking behaviors. See "Information Seeking Behaviors of Music Students," *Reference Services Review* 40, no. 4 (2012): 558–73, https://doi.org/10.1108/00907321211277369. She surveyed undergraduate and graduate music students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and found high use of both the library catalog and YouTube to locate sound recordings; use of subscription library resources such as *Naxos Music Library* was low.

3. In her 2013 study on the research practices of first-year college students, Alison Head noted that many undergraduates have difficulty moving from a clearly delineated research environment ("Just Google it," or "Don't use online sources") to one where they are expected to successfully integrate a wide variety of sources, print and online, and scholarly and popular. See "Learning the Ropes: How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College," Project Information Literacy Passage Studies Research Report, December 4, 2013, accessed August 20, 2018, http://www.projectinfolit.org/publications.html.

4. Tancheva, Cornelia, et al., "A Day in the Life of a (Serious) Researcher," Ithaka S+R, accessed July 10, 2018, http://www.sr.ithaka.org/publications/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-serious-researcher/.

5. In their 2017 working paper, Sam Wineburg and Sarah McGrew compared the website evaluation practices of PhD historians, professional fact checkers, and Stanford University undergraduates. They found that only the professional fact checkers were able to evaluate websites effectively, because they read laterally, jumping from source to source to investigate content found on the site in question. See "Lateral Reading: Reading Less and Learning More When Evaluating Digital Information," Stanford History Education Group Working Paper, October 6, 2017, accessed August 20, 2018, https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3048994.

6. For more on these issues, see Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything: (And Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011) and Safiya Umoja Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

in an online information environment that is increasingly political, monetized, and surveilled.[7]

What does all of this mean for music students? It is time to reconsider how we introduce students to research within the context of music history. Music information literacy instruction has long focused on sources and tool-based skills. We teach students to use music-specific databases like *RILM*, introduce them to the intricacies of specialized music research tools like thematic catalogs, and guide them through the process of locating materials in our library collections. This "sources and tools"-based approach is no longer sufficient given the challenges of our contemporary information environment. In order to develop research assignments that are meaningful and effective in the context of lifelong learning, we need to move beyond the *what* and the *how-to* of research, and start discussing the *why*. Why is it important to move beyond Google when conducting research? Why did you select this particular source to support your claim?

What's more, to be successful, we need introduce *why* in relation to discipline. If information literacy provides us with a structure for explaining the mechanics of research, critical information literacy helps us extend beyond that initial foundation, by connecting the mechanics to central, discipline-specific questions. Why does music history value certain types of questions, methods, and sources and not others? Why (and how) do our discipline-specific sources, our information architecture, and our modes of sharing and codifying new knowledge privilege some voices over others? Music librarians are uniquely positioned as partners in this process; they possess subject expertise, first-hand insight into student struggles, and deep knowledge of current and past information landscapes. The inherently interdisciplinary work of librarianship enables us to act as intermediaries, connecting current conversations in librarianship with those in music history. This article introduces critical information literacy as a method for re-envisioning information literacy to meet the challenges of our current information landscape, and for doing so within a discipline-specific context. Critical information literacy is a new and expanded pedagogical approach to information literacy that can help us to improve the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of student research at all levels of the music history curriculum.

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7. Michael Zimmer has outlined what he describes as Google's "infrastructure of dataveillance," connecting Google's centrality to our daily lives, its methods for tracking user behavior, and by extension, its lack of operational transparency, with Jeremy Bentham's eighteenth-century vision of the Panopticon. See "The Gaze of the Perfect Search Engine: Google as an Infrastructure of Dataveillance," in *Web Search: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Amanda Spink and Michael T. Zimmer (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 77–99.

Critical Information Literacy

Critical information literacy is a recent development in information literacy. It stems from critical theory, critical pedagogy, and the works of educators such as Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, and bell hooks and has become an active movement within the larger field of library science.[8] As broadly conceived, critical information literacy envisions information not as an independent artifact but rather as deeply embedded within particular social, cultural, and political contexts. As both a teaching philosophy and a methodology, critical information literacy "examines the social construction and political dimensions of information, and problematizes information's development, use, and purposes with the intent of prompting students to think critically about such forces and act upon this knowledge."[9] Taking a critical approach to information literacy means helping students see not just what information is, how it is organized, and where to find it, but why information is packaged, organized, and presented in particular ways. When students can answer the *why* questions underlying our information landscape and our discipline, they are empowered to respond. Just as we accept that pedagogy is not neutral, and that to teach is to be an agent for change, critical information literacy acknowledges that information is politically charged, rooted in issues of power and control, and can be leveraged for social good or ill.

The goals of critical information literacy are broad and extend beyond the acquisition of readily measurable skills. Educators have tended to regard information literacy instruction as the process of teaching what James Elmborg has termed the "grammar of information"[10]—how to track down a citation, navigate a library collection, or modify search results. Understanding this grammatical structure is essential to successful research. However, practitioners of critical information literacy accept that becoming information literate encompasses far more than efficient navigation of collections and resources. Critical information literacy actively rejects a narrow, skills-based interpretation of information literacy, choosing instead to see it as something more complex than simply "an education obstacle that can be conquered."[11]

8. For example, there are professional conferences devoted to critical information literacy, lively discussion on the website Critlib (critlib.org), and the newly founded *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* (http://libraryjuicepress.com/journals/index.php/jclis).

9. Eamon Tewell, "A Decade of Critical Information Literacy: A Review of the Literature," *Communications in Information Literacy* 9, no. 1 (2015): 36, https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2015.9.1.174.

10. James Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32, no. 2 (2006): 198, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2005.12.004.

11. Tewell, "Decade," 25.

The Standards, the Framework, and Critical Information Literacy

Librarians engaged with information literacy turn to two professional documents for guidance: the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (the Standards), which were active benchmarks from 2000 to 2016, and the more recent ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (the Framework).[12] Explicitly designed as an assessment tool, the Standards focused on training students to use a specific suite of library resources, such as the library catalog or databases (Elmborg's "grammar of information"), and in effect, served to propagate a narrow and incomplete definition of information literacy. Despite their shortcomings, the Standards were a guiding professional document for librarians for sixteen years, and their influence remains strong.

The Framework, adopted in 2016, is an attempt to address the myriad changes to the information landscape and higher education since the Standards were first released, and it is a fundamentally different document from the Standards. The Framework is not a list of competencies, nor was it designed as an assessment tool, but is rather a "cluster of interconnected core concepts, with flexible options for implementation."[13] The Framework is organized into six frames, each of which represents a concept central to information literacy:

- Authority is constructed and contextual
- Information creation as a process
- Information has value
- Research as inquiry
- Scholarship as conversation
- Searching as strategic exploration

The Framework envisions information literacy as a broad suite of ideas and practices that situate engagement with information within specific socio-cultural contexts. However, because the Framework is designed to guide information literacy across all disciplines, it does not address specific classroom needs. It is, rather, a "new global perspective that must be translated locally."[14]

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12. The Standards were rescinded by the ACRL Board in 2016 but have been archived on the ACRL website: "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education," accessed January 22, 2019, https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/7668. For the full text of the Framework, as well as related information, see the Association of College and Research Libraries, "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," accessed January 22, 2019, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

13. "Framework."

14. Emily Drabinski, "Toward a Kairos of Library Instruction," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 5 (September 2014): 481, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.06.002.

Critical information literacy presents an opportunity to address these local, discipline-specific needs.

Critical Information Literacy in the Music History Classroom

At the time of this writing, there is no published literature addressing critical information literacy as applied to music. Two articles from other disciplines, however, emerge as models for how best to apply critical information literacy to music history, "Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move Toward Critical Information Literacy," by Michelle Holschuh Simmons,[15] and "Pedagogies of Possibility Within the Disciplines: Critical Information Literacy and Literatures in English," by Heidi Jacobs.[16] Both Simmons and Jacobs present a deeply situated vision of critical information literacy in which learning can be seen as the process of acculturation into the norms and rules of a specific discipline, with the goal of empowering students to become practitioners in their chosen discipline by helping them to realize that discipline's "tacitly communicated rhetorical practices."[17] These rhetorical practices, or modes of disciplinary discourse, can be deeply ingrained in the habits of a discipline and difficult even for disciplinary experts to recognize. Asking the questions that critical information literacy requires of us can help to expose unspoken disciplinary practices, revealing, as Jessica Critten says, the "processes that institutionalize certain disciplinary discourses."[18]

Taking a critical pedagogical approach and asking students to interrogate the construction of knowledge in music history can lead them into the very nature of our discipline and its accepted modes of discourse. This allows us to extend learning beyond factual information and to consider central disciplinary questions, such as how we assemble our knowledge base, what constitutes our shared values, and what methods we recognize as valid. [19] Rather than seeing information as a neutral artifact, students begin to understand it

15. Michelle Holschuh Simmons, "Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move Toward Critical Information Literacy," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 5, no. 3 (2005): 297–311, https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2005.0041.

16. Heidi Jacobs, "Pedagogies of Possibility Within the Disciplines: Critical Information Literacy and Literatures in English," *Communications in Information Literacy* 8, no. 2 (2014): 192–207, http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1089141.

17. Simmons, "Librarians," 297.

18. Jessica Critten, "Introduction," in *Critical Information Literacy: Foundations, Inspiration, and Ideas*, Annie Downey (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2016), 5.

19. Robert Farrell and William Badke describe this as the "epistemology, metanarrative, and methodology" of a discipline. See "Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines: A Practical and Systematic Approach for Academic Librarians," *Reference Services Review* 43, no. 2 (June 8, 2015): 319–40, https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-11-2014-0052.

as the contested product of "socially negotiated epistemological processes."[20] This insight guides their own research practices, empowering them to become active practitioners in our discipline: Paulo Friere's creators of knowledge and not simply depositories.[21] As Simmons observes, when we move beyond perceiving information as "monolithic and apolitical," research becomes not "a task of collecting information but instead [a] task of constructing meaning."[22]

Musicological Historiography

How can we help our students transition from fact-collecting to meaning-making? Because the first step towards disciplinary participation is often to understand the history of our discourse, historiography is a logical entry point into critical information literacy for music history. Our information sources are a window into our disciplinary discourses. They reveal how we have defined music history over time, as well as the ongoing debates and discussions that have shaped our definitions. As students begin to develop an understanding of the historiography of our discipline, they see that information does not consist of absolute sets of facts; it constantly shifts in relation to ongoing debates. More importantly, when they are able to understand the "epistemology, metanarrative, and methodology"[23] of music history as constantly negotiated, they are more able to position themselves within that shifting terrain. Through historiography, students are able to consider which disciplinary concerns, approaches, or areas of focus have resonated with them personally, and which have offended. They begin to recognize gaps in existing scholarship, and this new disciplinary insight is applicable to their own work.

As experienced academics, we recognize the role that emotion plays in scholarship. We are sometimes first drawn to a particular area of research

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20. Elmborg, "Critical Information Literacy," 198.

21. The 2016 U.S. presidential election and subsequent fake news scandals generated substantial online debate over the question of whether our apparent susceptibility to fake news is an indication that information literacy has failed in its mission to produce critical information consumers. As Barbara Fister noted in a February 2018 blog post on the website *Inside Higher Ed*, when we train students to be skeptical of online information, the message they sometimes receive is "trust no one." They may become overly skeptical, to the point that they mistrust valid, factually accurate sources. Commenting on Fister's column, William Badke observed that guiding students into the practices of a discipline is one way to avoid this mistrust. Helping students understand the context and origin of information gives them a rubric for evaluation that can be more effective than superficial methods for evaluating sources such as publisher or peer review. See Barbara Fister, "From Schooled Skepticism to Informed Trust," accessed March 28, 2018, https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/schooled-skepticism-informed-trust.

22. Simmons, "Librarians," 297, 299.

23. Farrell and Badke, "Situating Information Literacy," 323.

because of an affective response—the love of a certain composer, the compulsion to tell an untold story, or to right a historical wrong. Historiography enables our students to make similar, personally relevant connections. Dane Ward has argued that in order to be meaningful and effective, information literacy must embrace an affective domain. He asks, "Can we be information literate if we possess the technical ability to find and evaluate information, but not the human capacity to experience and value it? Can we be committed to an issue if it fails to resonate with anything within us?"[24] Many of us recall the moment when we first understood that music history has a canon, and what the makeup of that canon implies. Perhaps it was a galvanizing experience: where are the composers of color? Where are the women? And what about non-Western traditions? Historiography introduces students to disciplinary debates and compels them to participate, by making the factual suddenly personal, or even emotionally charged.

There are many possible ways to introduce historiography in the classroom. Students could compare representation or treatment of a topic by examining varying editions of standard textbooks, by looking chronologically at secondary literature, or by comparing older and more recent works by the same scholar. Our major reference sources, such as the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, or even Wikipedia, can also generate rich discussions around historiography. For example, Amy Strickland has created an assignment used in a graduate-level music bibliography course that asks students to compare depictions of the composer Benjamin Britten in varying editions of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *Oxford Music Online*.[25] By tracking changes in Britten's entry over time, students are able to see changes in Britten's reception, as well as broader changes in the nature of music history and the questions the discipline considers important. Through an examination of the Britten entries, students gain an understanding of the role that context and currency play in source evaluation. They are also able to reflect on whose contributions are recognized in our major reference sources, whose are left out, and what the reasons for that might be. Beyond these outcomes, Strickland's assignment additionally allows students to begin to perceive music history as an ongoing debate to which they may contribute. As Simmons observes, through assignments such as Strickland's, students are able to see themselves as "participants in a disciplinary conversation with the potential to effect change in the conventions instead of simply learning to conform to the established

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24. Dane Ward, "Revisioning Information Literacy for Lifelong Meaning," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32, no. 4 (2006): 397, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2006.03.006.

25. Amy Strickland, "Context, Reliability, and Authority: *Grove Dictionary* Through the Years," in *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion*, eds. Beth Christensen, Erin Conor, and Marian Ritter (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2018), 99–103.

patterns within a particular 'community of practice' or academic discipline."[26] A close look at any of our major reference sources reveals that the established patterns within music history do change over time. Community participants, including perhaps someday our students, enact that change.

Wikipedia and Public Scholarship

At the undergraduate level, Wikipedia can be an accessible entry point to musicological historiography, particularly as it intersects with broader issues of access and representation online. For example, Kathleen DeLaurenti has used Wikipedia as the foundation for an undergraduate course on women composers of electronic music. As part of the course, students complete or edit Wikipedia entries for selected composers. In the process of researching their entries, her students must confront both the frequent paucity of information on women composers of electronic music in the scholarly literature, as well as the generally poor representation of women composers, particularly those of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, on Wikipedia.[27] What does it mean when a source such as Wikipedia that features so prominently in the average internet user's search results is rife with documented bias?[28] Observing how bias influences our online spaces and recognizing how that bias is also reflected through representation in our secondary sources helps students understand the role that gatekeepers play in information creation and access. For better or worse, a community's gatekeepers, whether they are Wikipedia's volunteer editors or the peer reviewers for a particular disciplinary niche, enforce community standards by amplifying some voices and perspectives over others.

If traditional musicological historiography orients students to our disciplinary discourse, then historiography via Wikipedia translates discourse to the public sphere. Through DeLaurenti's assignment, students move beyond observing how history is constructed. They are able to engage personally and publicly in the process of history-making, and they experience first-hand the friction inherent in all healthy discourse. Char Booth has commented extensively on the pedagogical value of this type of public scholarship. As she says, "Creating content for the broader public, as opposed to solely for one's professor, changes the game for students. . . . When students understand that their

26. Simmons, "Librarians," 302.

27. Kathleen DeLaurenti, "Critical Approaches to Information Literacy and Authentic Assessment Using Wikipedia," in *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion*, eds. Beth Christensen, Erin Conor, and Marian Ritter (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2018), 41–46.

28. See for example Emma Paling, "Wikipedia's Hostility to Women," *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/10/how-wikipedia-is-hostile-to-women/411619/.

work will be accessible to anyone on the web, I find that it adds a measure of gravitas that sharpens focus and inspires greater diligence and responsibility. It's empowering and interesting for students to participate in a different sort of platform, one that requires them to revise their concept of 'audience' and the importance of their own voices in shaping discourse."[29] Introducing issues of bias, access, and representation through an open source such as Wikipedia enables students to directly intervene in musicological historiography, and to do so in a way that they understand as personally relevant.

Library Collections

Library collections can also be used to introduce critical information literacy via historiography and disciplinary discourse. Like our sources, our collections are a window into the questions and methodologies that music history considers important. For example, American music scholarship's historic disregard for the music of immigrant communities has impacted access to nineteenth and early-twentieth century immigrant music journals in the collections of U.S. libraries, and by extension, has stifled the development of research in this area.[30] While DeLaurenti's Wikipedia assignment highlights issues of representation online, librarians and faculty might collaborate to design similar assignments relating representation in sources to representation in our library collections. Students could identify a composer or performer, geographic area, genre, major concept, etc., related to a course theme, explore representation in a major reference source such as *Oxford Music Online*, and compare that with representation in their own library's collection. What do their findings tell them about the kinds of questions music history has historically valued? Can they trace changes in these values over time?

Connecting their investigation into sources with searches of the collections at their institution's library helps them recognize how academic library collections, like sources, are not neutral but instead reveal the accepted discourses of specific disciplines. This insight helps with the familiar "there's nothing on my topic" problem, as students are better able to predict what information they can expect to find in library collections, and in turn, how to shape their research strategies in response. When reframed within the context of historiography, students are able to see that "there's nothing on my topic" is not a research

29. Char Booth, interview by Eryk Salvaggio, "Information Privilege and Wikipedia: A Conversation with Char Booth (Part 1)," *Wiki Education* (blog), February 2, 2015, accessed October 11, 2018, https://wikiedu.org/blog/2015/02/02/char-booth-wikipedia-1/.

30. Benjamin Knysak, "Musical Information in a New Land: Immigrant Music Journals in the United States Part One: 1838–1930," *Notes* 74, no. 2 (2017): 185–220, https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2017.0104.

problem but rather an opportunity. Perhaps their question is an excellent one that makes an important intervention into our disciplinary debates. There are many reasons, for example, for the scarcity of information about 2018 Pulitzer Prize winner Kendrick Lamar in our library collections and major music resources. Understanding even just a bit about the historiographical reasons for this scarcity can guide a student researching Lamar's works from panic over lack of sources towards creative approaches for identifying relevant scholarly literature. Asking students to recommend a source to purchase for the library collection based on their findings could extend this assignment one step further. They become partners in the process of collection building, and the library collection, as a reflection of disciplinary discourses, becomes another conversation in which they can participate.

Disciplinary Debates

Historiography helps students see that: a) the nature of a discipline as well as the questions it asks change over time, and, b) information is not a fixed artifact but rather it continually shifts in relation to ongoing struggles for voice and representation. Exposing students to disciplinary controversies is a further way to introduce critical information literacy in music history, taking them more deeply into our disciplinary discourses. As Gerald Graff notes, "the tacit assumption has been that students should be exposed only to the *results* of professional controversies, not to the controversies themselves."[31] Disciplinary debates, he argues, are in fact central to the construction of a discipline. Graff writes from the perspective of literary studies, but his insights are equally applicable to music history. What matters most for students is perhaps not understanding music history as a "coherent cultural tradition," but rather perceiving that our discipline's very foundations lie in continual discussion and debate. Understanding the role that controversy plays in disciplinary discourse provides students with a "central means for making sense of education and the cultural world."[32] If music history is an extended series of debates, they are debates in which students may participate.

One approach to introducing students to the friction underlying disciplinary discourse could be to have students read and analyze a set of controversial articles. Music history has no shortage of such articles. A pairing to consider is Pieter van den Toorn's "Feminism, Politics, and the Ninth,"[33] and

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31. Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 8.

32. Graff, *Professing Literature*, 15, 9.

33. Pieter van den Toorn, "Feminism, Politics, and the Ninth," in *Music, Politics, and the Academy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 11–43.

Ruth Solie's "What do Feminists Want? A Reply to Pieter van den Toorn."[34] Students read these articles with eye towards structure and citations. Who are the other scholars van den Toorn and Solie engage with, and why? What evidence do van den Toorn and Solie cite? How are they using that evidence to make their arguments? Practicing this type of meta-reading can help students see the relationship between disciplinary debates and disciplinary orientation. Disagreements over the fundamental nature of a discipline can push scholars towards particular disciplinary orientations. In turn, disciplinary orientation can color every aspect of the research process and can lead scholars to privilege some types of questions, methods, and sources over others. Understanding this pairing of articles, or a similar pairing, within the context of debate over the questions that are central to music history allows students to begin to see scholarly communication as a "dialogic, political, and contested process."[35] Students perceive that secondary sources, far from being neutral, represent continual cycles of discussion and reinterpretation, and they begin to get a sense of how they might orient their own work within these ongoing conversations.

Open Educational Resources and Digital Humanities

Finally, exploring the related areas of open educational resources (OER) and digital humanities offers a further opportunity to incorporate critical information literacy. Developing assignments that touch on these growing fields can introduce students to issues of representation in our library collections, our online environment, and our curriculum. It can enable them to create meaningful public scholarship, and to participate in debates over how we understand our discipline. For example, including OERs as course materials can be a simple way to engage with critical information literacy for music history. Generally defined as "teaching, learning, and research resources that are free of cost and access barriers and also carry legal permission for open use,"[36] OERs have the potential to reduce the cost of higher education by reducing textbook costs, as well as enabling flexibility regarding course content. As music historians know all too well, typical music history textbooks for undergraduates are no different from other information sources in the discipline, in that they represent the weight of some voices and disciplinary orientations but omit others that may be of equal importance. Exploring the use of OERs in place of, or as a supplement to, traditional textbooks is a chance to introduce critical perspectives. Released

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34. Ruth Solie, "What do Feminists Want? A Reply to Pieter van den Toorn," *The Journal of Musicology* 9, no. 4, 1991: 399–410, https://doi.org/10.2307/763868.

35. Simmons, "Librarians," 300.

36. Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), "Open Education," accessed August 20, 2018, https://sparcopen.org/open-education/.

from the market imperative to produce textbooks applicable across a wide range of institutional settings, faculty (or even students) are free to create, edit, and contribute to OERs that acknowledge diverse viewpoints, emerging research areas, and current pedagogical trends. Music theorists are currently able to take advantage of at least one robust OER that addresses the challenges of music theory pedagogy as typically practiced, namely, Music Theory Examples by Women, a project currently based at the Eastman School of Music.[37] Similar websites for music history, when developed, could allow for greater responsiveness to variations in curricula across institutions, as well as changing classroom needs. By exposing students to contemporary disciplinary debates, they could also serve as an accessible entry point into disciplinary discursive practices and modes of codifying knowledge.

In the absence of an analogous OER for music history, the field of digital humanities offers numerous possibilities for implementing critical information literacy. While there are many examples in the literature discussing digital humanities as applied to the scholarship of music history, very few examples exist that address digital humanities and music from a pedagogical perspective.[38] Assignments based in the digital humanities, such as those asking students to respond to digital artifacts, curate digital collections, or contribute to digital humanities projects, are unique pedagogical opportunities that readily overlap with the aims of critical information literacy. By highlighting the contributions of underrepresented groups or new approaches to music history, these types of assignments are a rich means for helping students consider whose voices and perspectives our discipline has historically valued and why that might be. Like OERs, or even Wikipedia, these assignments can introduce students to the disciplinary debates of music history by actively engaging them in alternative ways of practicing and understanding our discipline. Students and instructors can choose to make their results freely available online as examples of public scholarship through which students are participating in an ongoing disciplinary conversation.

A simple starting point for exploring critical information literacy via digital humanities might be to work with pre-existing digital collections or texts. For example, a wealth of digital scores collections are now available online via libraries, museums, and other institutions. As an introductory research activity, students could locate a score in one of these collections by a composer from

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37. Molly Murdock and Ben Parsell, Music Theory Examples by Women, accessed December 6, 2018, https://musictheoryexamplesbywomen.com/. Thank you to Rebecca Shaw, graduate student at the University of Washington iSchool, for alerting me to this resource.

38. A notable exception is Kate Galloway's recent article for this journal, "Making and Learning with Environmental Sound: Maker Culture, Ecomusicology, and the Digital Humanities in Music History Pedagogy," 8, no. 1: 45–71, http://www.ams-net.org.ojs/index.php/jmhp/article/view/216.

an underrepresented group, perhaps one not discussed in the course textbook, and then create a very basic digital exhibit by annotating the score with contextual information.[39] New digital publishing platforms such as Manifold,[40] which allows for collaborative annotation and editing, as well as linking and the incorporation of media, could be used for more extensive course assignments. Through a platform such as Manifold, students could annotate a section of their textbook or another classic music history text, in effect creating an entirely new work that directly responds to the selected example, incorporating course concepts, library resources, and students' own perspectives.[41]

More lengthy assignments might ask students to curate digital collections or contribute to digital humanities projects. Your institution may have relevant materials already digitized. Are there primary source materials held at your own institution that lend themselves to explorations of music history through a critical lens? Perhaps you hold a collection of scores by composers belonging to communities historically underrepresented in the traditional canon, or documents relating to your institution's history that address issues of access, inclusion, and representation, such as the papers of student groups, or past concert programs. Consider working with a librarian to identify relevant materials and develop an assignment that asks students to assemble and contextualize these materials in a digital collection or exhibit. Educators with greater expertise in the digital humanities might consider involving students in a longer term digital humanities project. A recent example of such a project that overlaps with the concerns of critical information literacy is Louis Epstein's Musical Geography, which uses mapping technology and the work of student researchers to re-conceptualize music history in relation to time and place.[42] As they are reused, revised, or even extended through coursework, digital collections or projects such as Epstein's can become a type of OER, acting as an alternative or supplement to traditional music history curricular materials such as textbooks. The broad audiences that these types of collections and projects reach enable students to directly participate in the disciplinary discursive practices they are observing and enact change in impactful ways.

39. This idea was inspired by Claire Battershill and Shawna Ross, who share numerous practical suggestions for getting started with digital humanities pedagogies in their book *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom: A Practical Introduction for Teachers, Lecturers, and Students* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

40. Accessed December 6, 2018, https://manifoldapp.org/.

41. For example, a recent event at the University of Washington celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Organized by Department of English graduate students Sarah Faulkner, Matt Poland, and Eric Morel, and UW English Librarian Elliott Stevens, the event included the opportunity for attendees to collaboratively annotate an edition of *Frankenstein* using Manifold.

42. Accessed October 10, 2018, https://musicalgeography.org/.

Conclusion

Heidi Jacobs has asked, "How can we make information literacy relevant to disciplinary study?" She observes that when we let national standards or guidelines drive our conversation around information literacy, generic understandings of information literacy supersede disciplinary concerns. Instead, she notes, "We need to put the discipline first and build our curriculum around disciplinary questions."[43] Information literacy, she argues, is at a critical juncture, one that requires us to expand our definition of the term and identify ways to integrate information literacy more closely with discipline-specific concerns. Like Jacobs, I see the practice of information literacy as at a turning point. We encounter students with increasing frequency whose familiarity with the organization and structure of a physical library is limited. For many of our students, Google and research are synonymous. They may value the library, but they don't always see its relevance to their coursework, their musicianship, or their daily lives. Our online environment is infested with click bait, manipulative information, and political propaganda, and our personal data is harvested and tracked for profit or political gain. It's clear that we face a new information landscape. Our traditional approach to teaching music information literacy, with its emphasis on the mechanics of research tools such as the library catalog or *RILM*, is no longer sufficient, and it leaves our students unprepared to tackle the complex, nuanced information environment they will encounter during their education and later, as citizens.

Critical information literacy offers us a way forward. Building upon the expanded definition of information literacy presented by the Framework, it invites students to question and respond to the power structures underlying information creation and access. Because critical information literacy overlaps with many of the questions central to current music history scholarship––questions of ideology, representation, historiography, and methodology––it also provides a ready answer to Jacob's question regarding the relevance of information literacy to disciplinary study. Taking a deeply situated approach to critical information literacy, as applied within the discipline of music history, allows us to move beyond questions of *how*: how to search the catalog, or how to cite the article. Instead, we can more effectively engage students in the crucial questions of *why*: Why is library research different from Googling? Why does music history value certain types of questions, methods, and sources? And perhaps most importantly, why should we care? Dane Ward writes, **"**How do we understand a poem, a work of art, or a piece of music? Is it enough to be able to find, evaluate, and use information about Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to demonstrate

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43. Jacobs, "Pedagogies of Possibility," 197.

basic information literacy? Or does that capacity consist of something more? Beethoven expected more from us than an analysis of his work; he expected us to be affected and transformed by it."[44] Information literacy is complex and multi-faceted. Critical information literacy acknowledges that complexity. By revealing disciplinary discourses for students and inviting them to participate in our debates, we create the opportunity for research to become not just didactic, but meaningful, affective, and transformative.

44. Ward, "Revisioning Information Literacy," 396.