Librarian in the Classroom: An Embedded Approach to Music Information Literacy for First-Year Undergraduates

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Abstract

How do you foster the development of foundational research skills in first-year undergraduate music students? This was the dilemma facing Vanderbilt University music librarians and faculty. Although first-year students take an introductory survey course in music literature intended to prepare them for the more demanding courses in the music history and literature core, they were not acquiring the basic information-literacy skills required to successfully complete research papers and assignments. A solution to this problem was to implement a four-semester integrated music information-literacy program that emphasized library instruction for first-year students. To promote the integral role of the library in student learning, the
The author embedded herself in all three sections of the initial survey course for first-year students. By attending all class meetings, teaching in-class information-literacy sessions, and evaluating assignments, students came to view the author as a trusted partner in their educational process. The author details her experiences as an embedded librarian, examining the benefits and challenges of providing instruction to first-year students in this setting. The collaborative process between faculty and librarian in designing the information-literacy components is emphasized, and the tools used to evaluate student progress towards desired music information-literacy outcomes is shared. Also discussed is the importance of regular assessment of the information-literacy program, a process that resulted in revisions that improved the program.
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By Sara J. Beutter Manus

How do you foster the development of foundational research skills in first-year undergraduate music students? This was the dilemma facing Vanderbilt University music librarians and faculty. Our solution to this problem was to implement a four-semester integrated music information-literacy program that emphasized library instruction for first-year students. To promote the integral role of the library in student learning, I embedded myself in all sections of the initial survey course for music students. I will detail my experiences as an embedded librarian, examining the benefits and challenges of providing instruction to first-year students in this setting. The collaborative process between faculty and librarian in designing the information-literacy components will be emphasized, and the tools used to evaluate student progress towards desired music information-literacy outcomes will be shared. I will also discuss the importance of regular assessment of the information-literacy program, a process that resulted in revisions that improved our program for first-year students.

DEVELOPING A "NEW" MODEL FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

When I arrived at Vanderbilt in the summer of 2005, there was clearly faculty interest in information literacy, but there was no formal program. Library instruction was largely hit-or-miss. Faculty members usually requested the dreaded one-shot session in which I would try to educate their students about borrowing policies, the online catalog, music databases, reserves, etcetera, all in fifty minutes. I could not assume that students had been given any prior library instruction, so I had to cover the basics each time. Some students were bored because they had heard the same spiel three times; others were bewildered by trying to process all of this information for the first time.

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Literacy in a digital world: Teaching and learning in the age of information, hegelian theory acquires a dynamic momentum.

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