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INTERDISCIPLINARY

Music has always served to both reflect and transform society. As an art form that resides within a broader world of perception and communication, it additionally has worth as a cultural mirror. The two assignments in this chapter provide students with exposure to music within a complex world. One deals with the veracity of online information in our increasingly socially-mediated society. On the internet, whose voices carry the greatest weight, and whose are missing? The other assignment provides an example for the incorporation of music literature within the visual arts.

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO INFORMATION LITERACY AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT USING WIKIPEDIA

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INTRODUCTION

The interdisciplinary course *Pink Noise: Women Making Electronic Music* explores the hands-on creation of electronic music through the lens of feminist critical frameworks, activism, and collective action. Techniques and topics include Composing with Texts, Activist Sound, Live Sampling and Delay, Turntablism, Soundscape Composition, the Occult Voice, and Meditative Synthesis. Students compose electronic music individually and collaboratively in small groups. No prior knowledge of music theory, composition, instrumental technique, or sound software is necessary. I designed and co-taught this assignment with significant feedback from Christopher DeLaurenti, Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at the College of William and Mary. This assignment is a significant part of the course, and as the music librarian, I made six class visits over the semester.

This course is a new elective offered to students by the music department at a mid-sized liberal arts college. The course has no department-identified prerequisites, and students for the course were upper-level undergraduates with varying degrees of experience with music as a discipline. The course format was a small, in-person seminar.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Wikipedia assignment uses a common research assignment—writing an encyclopedia article—to meet the following pedagogical goals:

- Familiarize students with a wide range of women electronic music composers
- Encourage students to question issues of bias and authorship in sources, and more specifically, Wikipedia
- Raise awareness of Wikipedia as a platform for feminist activism

ASSIGNMENT

The Wikipedia authoring and editing assignment is designed as an authentic assessment. Jon Mueller defines authentic assessment as “a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills.”¹ This semester-long, scaffolded assignment engages students with Wikipedia content related to the course from a feminist perspective. Each student completes a final product that is either a significant upgrade of a stub (incomplete) article or the creation of a brand-new article.

Recent research on Wikipedia has identified a lack of diversity in the editorial community,² which has led to some distinct occurrences of bias in the encyclopedia. A notable high profile instance was the removal all of the female authors from the American Novelists list,³ the result of which was their appearance only on a separate American Women Novelists list. The specific advocacy goal of this assignment is to create awareness and correct issues of gender bias within Wikipedia relating to women composers of electronic music. Students explore these issues and are invited to take an activist view of their role as editors and to work at correcting institutional bias evident in the encyclopedia.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for this assignment is ongoing throughout the semester. Because of the course themes dealing with feminism, the instructor and the librarian turned to *Feminist Pedagogy for Library Instruction* by Maria Accardi to guide assessment design. As Accardi notes, “Feminist assessment is guided by the principles of feminist pedagogy. It is learner-centered and diverse and validates differing perspectives and voices. It challenges the power relations that govern traditional assessment methods.”⁴

Involving students in assessment processes shifts the focus towards student-centered learning, where students have a voice in developing the goals and process of their learning. To this end, this assignment employs significant peer assessment. Students are not only asked to be creators on Wikipedia, but also to engage with their classmates on editing projects to share perspectives and ideas. The instructors also participate in the assessment process, using Wikipedia as the sole platform for all interactions relating to the assignment, providing feedback, and suggesting additional resources for students exclusively through the site’s editing tools. Because of the nature of Wikipedia as a platform, this assignment is most successful when instructors engage in helping students experience a rich learning process focused on scaffolded goals throughout the semester rather than solely evaluating a final product.

One of the main benefits of authentic assessment techniques such as Wikipedia editing is that students complete a real-world task in an open public forum. Rather than having their work assessed only by faculty, they receive feedback from other editors not involved in their courses. One striking example of this came the day students were set to make their articles live: another editor had created an article for a subject that a student was working on and made it live only

hours before class. Because the assessment process is completely transparent, the student had already participated in the peer and instructor reviews of her work, but her final project changed significantly, as she worked to edit an existing article rather than posting her own original work. This assignment provides an authentic experience of how research happens that goes beyond instructor comments in the margins. The research process continues as resulting articles are updated and revised by Wikipedians well after the course has ended.⁵

Instructors considering this assignment should be prepared to familiarize themselves with Wikipedia and the Wikipedia Education Program. Wikipedia Ambassadors volunteer to support courses in the program and are sometimes available to act as virtual teaching assistants who can aid in navigating the culture and practices of editing Wikipedia. If no volunteers from the community are available, instructors will need to be comfortable with Wikipedia editing norms, culture, and syntax. In future iterations of this course, the instructors plan on modeling the assignment alongside students to further integrate the culture of Wikipedia into the course. Presentations of student research early in the assignment timeline are also recommended. Scheduling presentations during the last week of class in our first semester highlighted how useful information sharing on research discoveries for biographical articles would have been for students earlier in the process.

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO INFORMATION LITERACY AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT USING WIKIPEDIA—ASSIGNMENT

Wikipedia Assignment¹

Week 3: Wikipedia Essentials

Before class:

- Fill out the short survey under Wikipedia Survey in Blackboard. (important to do this first!!!)
- Create your Wikipedia account.
- Complete the online training for students. (Try out the interactive training and go for a barnstar.)
- Familiarize yourself with this handout: Welcome to Wikipedia (available in print or online from the Wikimedia Foundation).

In class:

- Overview of the course
- Introduction to how Wikipedia will be used in the course
- Anatomy of Wikipedia articles, what makes a good article, how to distinguish between good and bad articles
- Choose an article to analyze for next week:
 - Annea Lockwood
 - Pauline Oliveros
 - Maggi Payne
 - Carla Scaletti

Milestone: All students have Wikipedia user accounts and are listed on the course page.

Week 4: Editing Basics

Before class:

- Read the following short online pieces:
 - “Wikipedia’s Editors Are All Males: Here’s What They’re Doing About It”
 - “Sarah Stierch, Wikimedia Fellow, Wants To Bring More Women To Wikipedia”
 - “Wikipedia’s Sexism Toward Female Novelists”

¹ The full assignment is also available at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_Program:College_of_William_and_Mary/Pink_Noise:_Women_making_electronic_music_%28Spring_2014%29

- Analyze the article you selected, and relying on course readings, reserve materials, and what you know about Wikipedia articles, bring comments on what you might add to your article.

In class:

- Basics of editing.

Handouts: Using talk pages (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:UsingTalkPages.pdf>), Evaluating Wikipedia article quality

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Evaluating_Wikipedia_article_quality_2010-11-26_%28web%29.pdf), Wikimarkup cheatsheet

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Welcome2WP_English_Flap_081810.pdf)

Week 7: Choose your Biography

By the end of the week:

- Review potential composers for your project and choose the subject for your biography.

Week 9: Bibliography Due

Before class:

- Post a list of 7-10 secondary sources for your article to your talk page.

Week 10: Start your writing

Before class:

- Have an initial short draft of your article posted to your sandbox

Week 11: Go Public

In class:

- Be prepared to move your article into the public sphere. We'll work in class on citation formatting and any issues/problems we're having. We will finish getting outlines in and get started on some peer review in class.

Guidelines for Peer Review:

1. Check for appropriate and correct citations!
2. Anything missing (biographical facts, gaps in life or career, recent doings)?
3. Copyedit: is it readable? Are antecedents clear (niceties such as sentence variety come later)?
4. Is the language consistently neutral? (look for demonstrative adjectives, instances of bias, etc).
5. Is there original research (opinion, speculation, pontificating, etc.)?
6. Is your entry assignable to Wikipedia categories (e.g. Washington State composers, 1956 births, etc.)?

Week 13: Reviewing Articles

Before class:

- Incorporate any changes and revisions as appropriate from your peer review.

Week 14: Adding Media

In class:

- Discussion of copyright, creative commons and fair use.
- Use the Wikipedia:Creation_and_usage_of_media_files guide (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Creation_and_usage_of_media_files) to add media to your page:
 - Incorporate one image into your article from Wikimedia Commons (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Commons) or a site from the Library's copyright friendly resources guide (<http://guides.swem.wm.edu/copyrightfriendly>).
 - Add a sound file to Wikipedia files, include a fair use (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_use) rationale, and add it to your page.

Week 15: Presentations

In class:

- Presentations on your article to the rest of the class.