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User Education

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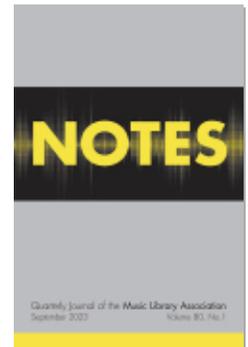
USER EDUCATION

By Angela Pratesi and Zoua Sylvia Yang

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You notice the flashing notification in the corner of your screen. Click: Claim Chat.

Chat00568: Hi! I'm writing a paper about Black representation in opera and trying to find a copy of *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. I tried googling but wasn't able to find it. Do you know where I can find a copy?

Music Librarian: What a great topic! One moment while I search for that.

Furiously searches all of the standard places for a new opera score. **Fire Shut Up in My Bones** *is too new to be commercially available but it does look like there are a few options to view or listen to a recording of a production.*

Music Librarian: It looks like the score is not available for purchase or rental, yet. Let me see if we have an audio or video recording.

Music Librarian: Alas, we don't have it on CD, DVD, or access through any of our streaming services. Based on my WorldCat search, a few other music libraries in the region have a copy of the DVD. Would you like help placing an ILL request?

Chat00568: That would be great! Thanks! Could you help me find scholarly articles about the opera, too?

Music Librarian: Sure! Why don't we set up a research consultation for later this week? You can schedule a meeting with me using my online scheduler. Would you prefer to meet virtually or in-person . . .

You start drafting an email to the opera history professor to discuss scheduling a library instruction session.

As Leslie Troutman noted in the "User Education" essay for the Current State of Music Librarianship in 2000 (upon which the above interaction

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is modeled), "Whether we call it user education, library-use instruction, or bibliographic instruction, the goal is the same: to teach our users to be effective, efficient, and independent researchers."[1] The nomenclature continues to change, and today, librarians are more likely to use the terms information literacy instruction or library instruction, but the main goals of user education remain. It is the information landscape and expectations for the methods and modes of delivery themselves that are radically different. This essay will provide a brief overview of the changes and developments in library instruction, with an emphasis on music libraries in higher education, that have occurred since the 2000 essay in an effort to capture what user education looks like in music librarianship today.

MUSIC LIBRARY INSTRUCTION SINCE 2000

Arguably, the most significant developments in user education in the last few decades for music librarians are the Association of College and Research's Library's (ACRL) approval of the "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education" (2000) (hereafter Standards),[2] The Music Library Association's (MLA) endorsement of the "MLA Information Literacy Instructional Objectives for Undergraduate Music Students" (2005) (hereafter Objectives),[3] and the adoption of the "Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education" (hereafter Framework) by ACRL in 2016[4] with MLA following suit in 2019.[5] All three documents provide a scope and direction for user education. The Standards and Objectives provide concrete, assessable learning outcomes. In contrast, the Framework describes interconnected knowledge practices and dispositions to guide the approaches and habits of mind necessary to successfully navigate today's information environment. This shift in approach is important not only because of the unprecedented access to and exponential growth of information in general, but more concerningly because our "online information environment [is] increasingly political,

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1. Leslie Troutman, "User Education," *Notes* 56, no. 3 (2000): 620.
2. Association of College and Research Libraries, "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education," 2000, https://alair.ala.org/bitstream/handle/11213/7668/ACRL%20Information%20Literacy%20Competency%20Standards%20for%20Higher%20Education.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
3. Music Library Association, "MLA Information Literacy Instructional Objectives for Undergraduate Music Students," 2005, www.musiclibraryassoc.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/BI_MLA_Instructional_Objecti.pdf.
4. Association of College and Research Libraries, "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," 2016, https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.
5. Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, "May 14–16, 2019 Middleton," www.musiclibraryassoc.org/resource/collection/7647655B-ACC5-4EE8-8DC1-0AA1BE29335A/May_14-16,_2019_Middleton,_WI_Final.pdf.
6. Erin Conor, "Re-Envisioning Information Literacy: Critical Information Literacy, Disciplinary Discourses, and Music History," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 9, no. 1 (2019): 30.

monetized, and surveilled."[6] However, the Framework is also much more difficult to implement because it is not a straightforward checklist or rubric. The complex, entwined nature of the Frames echoes the very nature of information organization, access, and discovery today. With a goal of supporting music information literacy instructors in implementing the Framework, the MLA Instruction Subcommittee's Framework Working Group is creating a Music Companion to the Framework for Information Literacy at the time of drafting of this essay, which will provide practical suggestions for teaching to the Framework in music contexts.[7]

In addition to the introduction of the Standards, Objectives, and Framework, a considerable amount of scholarship has been released in relation to user education and music specifically. In a comparison of *Notes* and *Fontes Artis Musicae,* two of the leading scholarly journals for music librarianship, Kirstin (Dougan) Johnson notes, "The rise of the internet spurred librarians to create and use information literacy programs," which has had a corresponding impact on scholarship. Prior to 2000, only three articles had been published on the topic in these journals.[8] Since 2000, there have been thirteen.[9] In a similar comparison of *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, fourteen articles on music information literacy instruction or pedagogy were published 2000–2022, two of which are important annotated bibliographies and literature reviews by Michael J. Duffy.[10] Three edited collections have been published during this time as part of MLA's Basic Manual Series and Technical Reports Series.[11] These volumes offer theoretical grounding and explication as well as practical application of music information literacy instruction. There have been numerous presentations about user education at the annual meeting of the Music Library Association and its various chapters, too. Of course, these are not the only venues where music library instruction scholarship appears, but they do provide an illustrative snapshot of the general growth and importance of music information literacy instruction and its

7. Angela Pratesi et al., "A Teaching Flight: New Initiatives and Services from the Instruction Subcommittee" (presentation at the Music Library Association Annual Meeting, online, March 2022).

8. Kirstin Dougan, "A View of Music Librarianship as Seen Through its Journals: A Comparison of *Notes* and *Fontes Artis Musicae*, 1977–2007," *Notes* 66, no. 4 (2010): 720–1. doi:10.1353/not.0.0369.

9. In *Notes*: Troutman (2000); Cary and Sampsel (2004); Christensen (2004); Abromeit and Vaughn (2004); Pierce (2004); Manus (2009); Pierce (2009); Sauceda (2015); Conor (2016); Sasser (2020); Sampsel (2021); and Wells et al. (2022). In *Fontes*: Conor (2017).

10. In *MRSQ* 2000–2022: VanderPol and Taranto (2002); Duffy (2004); Pierce (2004); Stone (2011); Wells (2012); Scott (2013); Scott (2014); Stone and Sternfeld (2014); Doi (2016); Kordas and Thompson (2018); Duffy (2018); Duffy (2019); Sampsel and Taft (2021); and Abbazio and Yang (2022).

11. Beth Christensen, Erin Conor, and Marian Ritter edited *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion* (2018). Kathleen A. Abromeit edited *Ideas, Strategies, and Scenarios in Music Information Literacy* (2018). *Music Library Instruction* (2004), edited by Deborah Campana, featured the scholarship of Gregg S. Geary, Laura M. Snyder, and Kathleen A. Abromeit.

scholarship in the academy during the first decades of the twenty-first century.

INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL PRAXIS

Like other specializations in the field of music librarianship, music library instruction is informed by developments in related areas of research and practice. Music librarians regularly adapt and adopt knowledge and techniques that have not yet become part of the published scholarly record within the discipline. Likewise, library instructional praxis uses approaches and methodologies from the field of education to develop pedagogically sound instruction that is more equitable and inclusive of all learners.

In particular there is a great deal of scholarship in the broader field of librarianship that engages critical approaches to learning. Books about critical library instruction,[12] feminist pedagogy,[13] critical library pedagogy,[14] and critical information literacy[15] tease out these approaches. Within music librarianship, Veronica Wells, et al. define critical music information literacy as "the set of skills and knowledge which awakens learners to the oppressive power structures and systems we inhabit in order to smash the hegemony of capital, materials, and methods involved in the study of music."[16] Erin Conor explains: "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."[17] Critical approaches also give students greater agency in their own learning process.

One specific pedagogy that increases equity and agency in the classroom is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Begun in the 1990s and first published in 2002,[18] today the UDL framework calls for instructors to

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12. Maria Accardi, Emily Drabinski, and Alana Kumbier, eds., *Critical Library Instruction: Theories and Methods* (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010).

13. Maria Accardi, *Feminist Pedagogy for Library Instruction* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2013).

14. Nicole Pagowski and Kelly McElroy, eds., *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook, v. 1 and 2* (Chicago: ACRL, 2016).

15. Annie Downey, *Critical Information Literacy: Foundations, Inspiration, and Ideas* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2016).

16. Veronica A. Wells et al., "Towards a Critical Music Information Literacy Praxis," *Notes* 78, no. 3 (2022): 320.

17. Conor, "Re-Envisioning Information Literacy," 28–43.

18. "Timeline of Innovation," *CAST.org*, accessed 30 March 2023, https://www.cast.org/impact /timeline-innovation.

"provide multiple means of" "engagement," "representation," and "action and expression" to create learners who are "purposeful and motivated," "resourceful and knowledgeable," and "strategic and goal-directed."[19] More recently, Andratesha Fritzgerald has taken these concepts a step further to explain how they can be used for antiracist instruction.[20] While UDL is clearly a critical pedagogy with uses in any mode of instruction, it can be particularly helpful when designing online or hybrid instruction, where technology-mediated teaching presents unique challenges (and advantages) for engagement, accessibility, communication, and individualized direction and intervention. Universal Design Learning can be used in conjunction with other pedagogies to create meaningful learning experiences.

Other pedagogical practices and design approaches have gained importance in library and information literacy instruction, especially backward design. First published in 1998,[21] Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins brought the concept of backward design to instructional practices with their book *Understanding by Design* in which they call for instructors "to focus first on the desired learning from which appropriate teaching will logically follow."[22] In other words, instructors begin by identifying the learning goal, then work backward to create learning experiences—lessons, activities, and assignments—that lead to the desired outcome. Library instruction benefits greatly from using backward design because it helps the library instructor focus their limited student engagement time so it has the greatest impact.

As library instruction programs have developed and grown, there has been a need to train librarians in pedagogy and instructional practices. The Association of College and Research Libraries held the first Immersion Program in 1999, which addressed that professional development need.[23] This annual library instruction-focused program guides attendees through the process of developing their knowledge and skills as teachers, creating or improving assessment, or building or reimagining a library instruction program, with different tracks emphasizing different aspects of library instruction. The program has adapted to changing demands and needs

19. "The UDL Guidelines," *CAST.org*, accessed 30 March 2023, https://udlguidelines.cast.org/.

20. Andratesha Fritzgerald, *Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning: Building Expressways to Success* (Wakefield, MA: CAST, 2020).

21. Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998).

22. Jay McTighte and Grant Wiggins, *Understanding by Design*, expanded 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005), 14.

23. "ACRL History," Association of College & Research Libraries, accessed 30 March 2023, https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/history/history.

during its two decades. Though it has been on hiatus since 2020, the planning committee still exists.[24] Hopefully, the program will return.

TECHNOLOGY FOR USER EDUCATION

Troutman made an evergreen observation when examining technology as it relates to user education and music librarianship:

> Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) arose alongside our first online catalogs. As the personal computer became commonplace in the library, we longed to take advantage of this new tool for library-instruction purposes. Besides, a substantial portion of our clientele seemed fascinated by the technology. Unfortunately, the rapid pace of technological change meant that the CAI program we spent weeks creating was obsolete the following year—the software antiquated and the hardware out the door.[25]

While the goals of user education have remained consistent, the technology we use is continuously in flux, sometimes changing at an even quicker pace than the year it took for Troutman's CAI program to become obsolete. Trying to summarize or pinpoint the many technologies used regularly in libraries would be an exercise in futility because they will inevitably change before this issue of *Notes* is released. For that reason, instruction librarians must constantly find new ways to engage with technology to aid in user education. Technology for user education can be categorized into four areas: (1) librarian specific technology, such as the Springshare platform (LibGuides, LibWizard, LibCal, etc.); (2) non-library tools that are used to enhance user experience, such as learning management systems (Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas, etc.), (3) interactive digital tools (Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, Zoom, JamBoard, Prezi, Canva, YouTube, the Google Workspace, etc.), and (4) outreach tools[26] (social media, virtual exhibits, etc.).

Classroom instruction requires librarians to design an instructional experience to introduce new concepts, build upon previously learned skills, and help students develop academically. Outside of the classroom, librarians still consider user education when designing information resources such as instructional videos, tutorials, LibGuides, creating promotional or

24. The 2020 program was canceled per Anne Behler, "Immersion Program Committee FY20," uploaded 24 July 2020, https://connect.ala.org/acrl/viewdocument/immersion-program-committee-divisio?CommunityKey=d91e8edd-bf94-4aa7-bb8b-2422db18fe69&tab=librarydocuments. It has not been reinstated as of spring 2022 per Nicole Pagowski, "Updates for Next Year," 14 April 2022, https://connect.ala.org/acrl/communities/community-home/digestviewer/viewthread?GroupId=96472&MessageKey=9be374b5-006c-4abc-bf6e-b4f27b38036a&CommunityKey=d91e8edd-bf94-4aa7-bb8b-2422db18fe69.

25. Troutman, "User Education," 623.

26. Katie Buehner, "Style and Substance: Creating Effective Outreach Materials for Print and Web," in *Outreach for Music Librarians*, ed. Scott Stone, Music Library Association Basic Manual Series. (Middleton: Music Library Association, 2019), 13–26.

outreach materials, and exhibits or displays. It became even more critical to understand how to leverage technology and repurpose tools to engage with users due to the quick transition to online instruction and services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many continue to find uses for emerging pandemic technologies as we return to campus and in-person activity. To echo Troutman, "technology will continue to have a profound effect on the way learning happens in our educational institutions."[27]

CONTENT AND DISCOVERY

Since the last special issue of *Notes* on the current state of music librarianship, the amount of information available online has exploded, which has significant implications for user education. In the year 2000, Google had not quite become ubiquitously synonymous with search (e.g., "I tried googling *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* but couldn't find it"). Libraries could subscribe to RILM Abstracts of Music Literature from multiple online platforms. JSTOR was only five years old. IMSLP (2006),[28] Google Books (2004),[29] Naxos Music Library (2002),[30] Wikipedia (2001),[31] the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001/2002),[32] and the Music Modernization Act (passed 2018),[33] did not exist. The information landscape has expanded radically and splintered in the last two decades, but that "abundance comes with a cost."[34] The norms, expectations, and laws governing information have changed, creating new and significant challenges for discovery, understanding, and use, and thus, user education. Discovery layers like Primo, Summon, EDS, and Worldcat Discovery attempt to provide a more familiar search experience for library users with the use of a single search box and aggregated index. The challenge lies in teaching patrons search techniques and knowledge practices to use discovery tools effectively *and* the scope of content that is and is not included in any given tool, especially as less experienced users expect a few quick searches should provide them with the information they seek. While it is true that vast quantities of human knowledge and creation are readily available

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27. Troutman, "User Education," 627.

28. IMSLP, "About Us," accessed 30 March 2023, https://imslp.org/wiki/IMSLP:About.

29. Google, "Google Books: 15 Years of Preserving Knowledge from Around the World," YouTube video, 3:19, 17 October 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz_vG9b9dv0.

30. Matthew Gurewitsch, "Bounty on a Budget," *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, 26 August 2013.

31. "Wikipedia," *Wikipedia*, accessed 30 March 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia.

32. "Read the Declaration: Budapest Open Access Initiative," *BOAI*, accessed 30 March 2023, http://openaccessprod.wpengine.com/read/. The Declaration dates from February 2002, but the first summit occurred in December 2001. "Background," *BOAI*, accessed 30 March 2023, https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/faq/#background.

33. "2000–Present," *Copyright.gov*, accessed 30 March 2023, https://www.copyright.gov/timeline/timeline_2000-present.html.

34. Erin Conor, "Re-Envisioning Information Literacy," 29.

online (for free or as licensed content), much still remains solely in a physical format or hidden from our online discovery tools. Content and discovery, what exists and how we find it, has always and will always be where the need for user education begins.

PAST AND FUTURE PREDICTIONS

Twenty-four years ago, Leslie Troutman predicted:

> In twenty-five years . . . four issues will form the heart of user-education discussions in the coming decades: the design and evaluation of instruction opportunities formed in direct response to the needs of our user communities; a commitment to continuing education for the librarian; the innovative and creative use of technology; and library instruction for diverse populations, whether physically in the library or in distance-learning situations.[35]

Troutman was right. As demonstrated, some key themes in library instruction for user education have been instructional design, evaluation, and professional development, with an emphasis on centering learners. Educational technologies are now a norm and expectation. While no one in music librarianship would have predicted a global pandemic necessitating a complete and abrupt shift to online instruction, technology made it possible to carry on. All of these themes will have continued salience well into the future and an impact on a larger percent of librarians.[36]

As we think about what music library instruction may look like in another twenty-five years (when at least one of the authors of this essay hopes to be retired), we can expect changes outside of user education to have significant impacts on library instruction. These will include the way we use technology; the discovery tools and methods we use; how we access information; the kinds of physical and digital collections that exist; and changing metadata standards. Format options and preferences; digital rights management, end user licensing agreements, and purchasing options for libraries; open access and open educational resources; copyright; digital tracking and user privacy; and curricular changes and priorities. All of these factors within and outside of libraries impact user education, and they must work together to successfully support our educational missions and music inquiry. We can also expect to see changes

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35. Troutman, "User Education," 626.
36. Due to the length requirements of this essay, we're unable to truly address the increase in instruction responsibilities that are required of today's music librarians. See Joe C. Clark, "Job Trends in Music Librarianship: A Nine-Year Analysis of the Music Library Association's Job List," *Notes* 69, no. 1 (2012): 44–58; Joe C. Clark, "What Employers Want: Entry-Level Qualifications for Music Librarians," *Notes* 69, no. 3 (2013): 472–93; and Misti Shaw and Susannah Cleveland, eds., *Careers in Music Librarianship IV*, Music Library Association Technical Reports and Monographs in Music Librarianship Series, 39 (Middleton, WI: Music Library Association, 2022).

in pedagogical methods that are informed by both educational research and shifting standards. It will be interesting to see how learner needs change as we begin working with students who went through primary and secondary school under the Common Core and again after it is inevitably replaced.[37] It is difficult to imagine the stresses and pressures on higher education today not having a significant impact on our praxis in the future.

The path forward will have its challenges, but there is reason for hope. Music library and information literacy instruction has come a long way since the formation of the first music bibliographic instruction committee in 1978.[38] While education can have many purposes, the joy of learning is one. There is justice when every learner can discover, understand, and create. It is a privilege to be part of someone's learning process that comes with the responsibility to teach so that learning is a liberating act.

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37. Dana Goldstein, "After 10 Years of Hopes and Setbacks, What Happened to the Common Core?" *New York Times*, 6 December 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/06/us/common-core.html.

38. Troutman, "User Education," 621. The first Music Bibliographic Instruction Committee was part of the Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association. The Music Library Association followed suit in 1983.