



Library Review

Sexy bibliography (and revealing paratext)

Karen E. McAulay

Article information:

To cite this document:

Karen E. McAulay , (2015), "Sexy bibliography (and revealing paratext)", Library Review, Vol. 64 Iss 1/2 pp. 154 - 161

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LR-09-2014-0104>

Downloaded on: 10 February 2015, At: 07:55 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 17 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 8 times since 2015*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

Michalis Gerolimos, Afrodite Malliari, Pavlos Iakovidis, (2015), "Skills in the market: an analysis of skills and qualifications for American librarians", Library Review, Vol. 64 Iss 1/2 pp. 21-35 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LR-06-2014-0063>

Michael Calaresu, Ali Shiri, (2015), "Understanding Semantic Web: a conceptual model", Library Review, Vol. 64 Iss 1/2 pp. 82-100 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LR-09-2014-0097>

Adedapo Oluwaseyi Ojo, Murali Raman, (2015), "Micro perceptive on absorptive capacity in joint ICT project teams in Malaysia", Library Review, Vol. 64 Iss 1/2 pp. 162-178 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LR-08-2014-0095>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by

Token:JournalAuthor:DA83CB57-C80D-4BF8-8FA7-328EEF96F3A5:

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Sexy bibliography (and revealing paratext)

Karen E. McAulay

RCS Library, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, UK

Received 30 September 2014
Revised 19 November 2014
Accepted 2 December 2014

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the advantages of applying best pedagogical practice to library-based teaching, using targeted content in order to contextualise the teaching within a performing arts curriculum. The author, dual-qualified in music and librarianship, is responsible for providing library user education and instructing readers in the use of electronic resources, literature review, related research and bibliographic skills and Scottish songbook history in a performing arts institution. A recent opportunity to take a short course, *The Teaching Artist*, prompted the author to re-examine her approach to such library-based teaching. Her observations arise from the reflective practice that was a core component of *The Teaching Artist* course.

Design/methodology/approach – The main focus of this concept paper is a consideration of best pedagogical practice, and a discussion of how best to embed it in a curriculum designed for performers and other creative artists. Turning from a role as a bibliographic instructor to that as an academic adjunct, the author addresses similar pedagogical issues in a session on Scottish songbooks, which is delivered each year to second-year undergraduates.

Findings – The author wrote a paper on user education for a librarianship journal in 1991. The present paper reflects upon the discernible differences in approach between then and now, and finds that gaining pedagogical expertise has enabled significant improvements.

Originality/value – There is comparatively little published about user education in music libraries, about pedagogical training for librarians working in this field, or about scholar-librarians availing themselves of suitable training to improve their delivery of academic course components.

Keywords Academic libraries, Performing arts, Bibliographic citation, Musical paratext, Training methods, User education

Paper type Viewpoint

Introduction

The author is dual-qualified in musicology and librarianship. Two music degrees were followed by librarianship training: a music PhD followed two decades later. These two specialisms, in a sense, combine to construct a third, as will be demonstrated shortly.

A large part of a librarian's role is sharing information-seeking skills: how to source material, scope an essay (literature review), exploit electronic resources (henceforward, e-resources), master appropriate referencing skills and learn to compile a bibliography. As a musicologist, the author's specialism is eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scottish music, with a generous dose of cultural history, and one of their unique contributions to the field is a thorough investigation of paratextual matter (introductions, dedications, prefaces, notes, indices and appendices) in traditional song and instrumental collections. Paratext has, hitherto, been in the domain of literary scholars, but the author's focus on paratext in this musical subject area is a fresh way of looking at the repertoire and, as such, is a new contribution to the field.



By combining librarianship and musicological roles, the author is placed in a good position to provide training in a third area: that of broader research skills, including nurturing some of the attributes advocated in the [Quality Assurance Agency's \(2013\) Quality Code for Higher Education](#), Chapter B4: "Enabling student development and achievement". Enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning and to make effective use of available resources is explicitly mentioned. Furthermore, whilst these priorities are relevant to students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, the [Vitae \(2010\) Researcher Development Framework](#) is specifically aimed at PhD students, and research skills such as information-seeking and bibliographic skills again clearly number amongst the various competencies expected of a doctoral graduate.

None of this is remotely controversial, of course. The issue is not so much one of the subject matter (library and research skills should go with the territory of higher education; and Scottish music in Scotland is a *sine qua non*) as the question of how to enthuse and inspire performing artists in areas that are not, to the untrained eye, much to do with performance. The parental "this is for your own good", would not cut it. Moreover, evangelical zeal can end up embarrassing rather than inspiring unless it is done well.

The present paper sets out to address this question: how can we engage and interest young performers, composers and theatrical technicians in what might be construed as merely digital or theoretical proficiencies, when there is not a whiff of rosin or grease paint in evidence? It can be argued that not only must the course delivery be as effective as possible, but the training must also be "marketed" or packaged in such a way that student learners can perceive the value in engaging with it.

Although primarily addressing the provision of library and research skills training, the author will also subsequently examine some of the differing considerations concerning Scottish musicology. A useful glossary of pedagogical terms is provided on the archived [JISC \(2012\) e-learning framework Web pages](#), details of which appear in the bibliography at the end of this paper.

Effective course delivery

Considerations of "user education" were a core component of the author's Postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship, leading to the publication of an article on the subject ([McAulay, 1991](#)) three years after taking up their present post as Music Librarian at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (renamed the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in September 2011). However, the focus had been more on the "what" than the "how" to teach library skills, noting at that time that American library schools appeared to be more advanced than the British ones in this regard, and that librarianship literature tended not to introduce much pedagogical theory.

Much more recently, a report by [Crenshaw \(2014\)](#) about Crouch Fine Arts Library's strategy (running June 2013 to April 2014) to promote music library resources does mention class sessions offering hands-on training in electronic resources, but it focuses more on marketing and promotion than pedagogical methodology; therefore, although some comparisons can be made with the present author's findings, it is not really a case of comparing like with like. Indeed, Crouch Fine Arts Library (Baylor University, Waco, Texas) found that increased marketing of key electronic resources did not correlate with the usage over the period, despite considerable ingenuity and effort on the part of the library staff. Moreover, Crenshaw's literature review found more written about marketing than about "person-to-person" methods of user training, suggesting that pedagogical methodology was

one denominator that has been subjected to little investigation or indeed development by either library trainers or those reporting the training.

The opportunity to take the short credit-rated course, *The Teaching Artist*, at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (February-May 2014) thus offered a long-overdue opportunity to update and extend skills in this area, and to add a better pedagogical understanding to existing knowledge and skills developed over many years as a librarian (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 2014). The course followed a blended learning model, combining online study via Moodle and Skype, attendance at evening seminars and occasional one-to-one meetings. It has since been revised, so that workshops are also attended online using Adobe Connect.

Because the author is employed in a performing arts institution, engaging in continuing professional development alongside other professionals in related subjects was a highly beneficial exercise. Gaining an appreciation of the educational context, different pedagogical theories and some insight into learning psychology and styles facilitated a better understanding of not only how librarians' teaching contribution fitted into the broader scheme of things in the Conservatoire but also some of the possible explanations for the difficulties experienced providing library instruction year by year. For example, John Biggs' constructive alignment theories appeared particularly suitable to the design of lesson plans, in which the students were supported, as they effectively built their own learning through guided activities; while close perusal of Khan's (2012, p. 259) *The One World Schoolhouse* resulted in the realisation that his "flipped classroom" ideas echoed other theorists' assertions that the learning experience is improved if the student is actively engaged, rather than being expected to absorb knowledge through a PowerPoint illustrated lecture. Sessions in an IT suite begin to assume an immediate appeal, providing the students with activities and opportunities to interact with both the e-resources and each other. So, too, does the concept of scaffolded learning, although there is a limit to what can be achieved in an hour-long training session.

However, as significant as these theories have been, it is fair to say that other theories, such as Gagne's "nine events of instruction" have proved most enlightening in helping to explain why so many user education events have seemed either flat or unsatisfactory in some other indefinable way (University of Florida, 2014). Indeed, understanding about deep, surface or strategic learning (Lublin and University College Dublin, Centre for Teaching and Learning: Good Practice in Teaching and Learning, 2003), allied to what Biggs (2003) describes as the phenomenon of "backwash" where students only bother to learn what they perceive will be useful for their future assessment, also helps to explain what has actually been happening.

The problem lies, partially at least, in the fact that library instruction has been delivered in splendid isolation, not as part of a series of lectures. Thus, there has been no sense that any individual event was related to any previous teaching or would be related to any future teaching. No assignments could be set, as library instruction has not been embedded within the framework of any academic course. Moreover, as already noted, comparatively little scaffolded learning can be incorporated into a single, stand-alone session without the structure of a module or teaching unit in which to embed it. With no assignments, and no feedback, there has been neither much to motivate students nor any means of establishing whether the desired learning has taken place.

A recent experimental session with doctoral students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland endeavoured to address as many of the aforementioned snags (isolated training, no assignments or assessment, little student motivation, no subsequent feedback and no significant pedagogical underpinning on the part of the trainer) as was feasible within a rather constrained timeslot, with gratifying results:

- The session was planned in detail, and discussed in advance with the course leader.
- Students were contacted in advance of the session, and requested to look at a few key e-resources.
- The course leader was present and participated in discussion.
- The session was structured, so that students discussed in pairs, reconvened to share their findings and demonstrated a few technologies in which individuals had interest or expertise. Active participation was inevitable, and group discussion was encouraged.
- Feedback sheets were completed at the end of the session (I liked; I disliked; I'd like more of [...]); in due course, students will be emailed again to ascertain whether the training proved helpful, and whether further training would be welcomed.
- The author held a debriefing meeting with the course leader; meanwhile, further suggestions had already been made by one of the students who had attended the session.

There was no doubt that the session had been much more successful, and enthusiastically received, with requests for further similar sessions in due course. Of course, delivering training on the research methodology and bibliographic citation to doctoral students was probably already destined to attract the interest of a highly skilled and self-motivated cohort, so there was less urgency in trying to give the session student appeal by an intriguing name, topic-related database themes or other “hooks” (to use a marketing term) to draw students in.

Marketing the “product”

How, then, can we make e-resource, bibliographic citation or other library-related topics “sexy” to undergraduates? What does it take to capture the attention of a highly motivated performer, composer or theatre technician in something which is not “their” subject? It cannot be denied that database searching may seem very dry and unimaginative to a young undergraduate in a performing arts institution, keen to get back to their instrumental, dramatic or otherwise creative studies. The library offers e-resources, which includes electronic journals, e-books, subject-specific or multidisciplinary databases providing online content or searchable indexes of relevant material. To the untrained eye, the library’s own online catalogue is as straightforward to use as Amazon, but there is no denying that with a little instruction, students can use it much more effectively and productively. Conversely, constructing a bibliography at the end of an extended essay can assume nightmare proportions; however, the nightmare can be avoided with timely informed guidance.

Thinking out of the box prompted a brief foray into the world of commercial marketing. How, for example, does Holland and Barrett market health foods? In common with Superdrug, Weight Watchers, the Co-Op and Honda, their marketing is

advised by The River Group (2014a, 2014b). Obviously, The River Group is about commercial profit, whilst the library provides resources and appropriate training for their exploitation, seeking value for money rather than commercial gain. Nonetheless, the marketing strap line of this high-profile company highlights concerns that are equally central in higher education, aspiring to make products “customer centric” and “contextually relevant”: “We create omni-channel content for brands that is customer centric, contextually relevant and commercially profitable”.

Common sense tells us that library training, whether in e-resources or bibliographic citation, similarly needs to be focussed on the user, and “contextually relevant” in the educational environment can be construed as meaning that the timing of the training should fit in with an existing need on the part of the student.

“Customer centric, contextually relevant”

Thus, just as Superdrug, Holland and Barrett, or Weight Watchers, target their audience with seasonal produce, so should the subject specialist librarian – in conjunction with academic staff – time training to coincide with, for example, the first major written assignment, the big essay or end-of-term paper. Writing programme notes is perhaps another area in which the library could assist first-year students, helping them learn where to find the best sources of information for this key skill in any performer’s portfolio.

The involvement and endorsement of teaching staff is crucial. They are uniquely placed to know when students will be most needful of and receptive to library training sessions, and can advise their subject librarians of any particular focus which would increase the relevance of the session to the ongoing teaching programme. Their very presence in sessions endorses the value of the training. These measures may not greatly increase the appeal of digital information handling skills, but will at least make the training timely and relevant. Ensuring that sessions are short, pedagogically well-constructed and, where at all possible, given some degree of context in the shape of advance and follow-up emails, as was done with the recent research skills session for doctoral researchers, should make the delivery more effective and hopefully more appreciated.

Librarian turns musicologist

Whilst the teaching of information skills is an accepted part of an academic librarian’s job profile, providing teaching on a more subject-related, academic basis is rather different. Thus, the author’s annual “Transformations” lecture to students on the Scottish music degree course, whilst firmly based on key historic Scottish song collections, draws in equal measure on librarianship, book and music history knowledge and understanding of Scottish cultural history, as the author shares the “transformation” of national song collections over a span of one and half centuries or more.

As with information-handling and bibliographic skills teaching, the teacher of one-off sessions can be disadvantaged by an unawareness of the context in which their single lesson is situated. In this particular case, it does have a logical academic context, but it is imperative that one seeks to establish where the lesson stands within the unit or series; what went before; and what is to be covered subsequently.

“Customer centric”? Why teach history?

Curious also to find out what excites the interest of a “traditional” musician, the author conducted a micro-research via social media before the 2014 “Transformations” class. A few “traditional” Scots and English singers and musicians (not our own students) were asked what they looked for when searching for new repertoire. Significantly, the most important factor was the subject of a song, a poignant story or perhaps a dark or tragic theme. However, no one placed any importance on the age of a song or its printed source. This suggests that we perhaps need to turn our historical teaching on its head, to a certain extent at least, so that students are introduced to historic repertoire in its chronological context, but for the purpose of exposing them to a wider, richer vein of material than they would otherwise know about. “Knowing history” is of little practical use unless the knowledge in some way informs creative practice. Few would argue that an awareness of (in this case, traditional) music history, and (traditional) music’s place in social, cultural history, is an important part of the performing musician’s background, but a scholarly discourse, unbroken by student participation, is unlikely to be particularly memorable to the singer or instrumentalist focussed on a portfolio career combining gigs, teaching and composition or recording sessions.

This year’s class began by playing a setting of Ewan MacColl’s “Thirty foot trailer” from one of the recently published Faber *The Language of Folk* songbooks (Davidson and Armstrong, 2013a, 2013b), then shared tunes in MacColl’s (1960) *The Singing Island*. It was explained to the class that these demonstrate how our perceptions of what is “traditional”, and how it should be presented in print, have changed even over the past half-century, and that it is important to recognise that all the old collections they were about to be shown were once modern interpretations in their own right. It is too easy to dismiss Victorian collections as old-fashioned and dull; no-one would suggest that today’s performers would want to perform a recital of songs from, for example, Graham’s (1848) collection for publisher John Muir Wood, *The Songs of Scotland*, competent though their classically inspired accompaniments may be. Nonetheless, their repertoire, its musical handling and the contextual notes (the paratext) all tell us something about the musical world in which they were produced, and, if nothing else, can provide performers with a wealth of material to draw upon when introducing songs to an audience – whether an anecdote about the compiler, some comment about the lyrics themselves, maybe where the tune came from, or when it first came to light.

Pedagogy

The author’s growing awareness that “sit and listen” lecture-style classes are becoming increasingly ineffectual and outmoded led to a reconsideration of the habitual structure of these sessions. On several occasions, students have been requested to perform tunes from some of the collections under discussion, but one might further achieve more student engagement by following constructive alignment principles to plan a session examining fewer sources in a more active way.

Again, the active involvement of the course-leader, whether in the lead-up to the class or in the class itself, endorses the value of the subject, and can also help steer discussion towards areas that are of interest in the course module as a whole.

Conclusion

Referring back to the author's early article on library user education shows they "glimpsed a partial answer, somewhere over the horizon: librarians should be taught how to teach" (McAulay, 1991). That early article also cited an article by Sheridan (1990), describing what was then a comparatively new practice of "reflection in action". Although the present author's subsequent practice has not been consciously reflective in any formal sense, it has nonetheless been based on reflections of what worked, or, conversely, worked less well, in the teaching opportunities that have presented themselves, and what would merit further consideration or development.

The importance of making library instruction relevant and timely was self-evident even at an early stage in the author's career; and in terms of "selling" our librarian-led sessions, commercial marketing practice completely vindicates this view. However, participation in the recent The Teaching Artist short course incontrovertibly afforded precisely the opportunities needed to provide oneself with up-to-date teaching theory; to relate that to years of experience of providing bibliographic instruction; and to arm oneself with plenty of solid arguments for more embedded teaching along sound pedagogical lines.

Can one make bibliography "sexy"? Will anyone, but a small minority, ever get truly enthusiastic about paratext in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century song and fiddle collections? Who can say, but the author would argue, that there is no doubt they are now in a far better position to take on the challenge!

References

- Biggs, J. (2003), "Aligning teaching for constructing learning", Higher Education Academy Resources Centre, available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/id477_aligning_teaching_for_constructing_learning.pdf (accessed 19 November 2014).
- Crenshaw, C. (2014), "Promoting music library resources – with mixed results", *Music Reference Services Quarterly*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 226-236, available at: www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10588167.2014.965644 (accessed 19 November 2014).
- Davidson, K. and Armstrong, N. (2013a), *Language of Folk: Initial to Grade 4 (+ CD)*, Faber Music, Pap/Com edition.
- Davidson, K. and Armstrong, N. (2013b), *The Language of Folk – Book 2 (+ CD)*, Faber Music.
- Graham, G.F. (1848), *The Songs of Scotland*, Wood, Edinburgh.
- JISC (2012), "A glossary of selected teaching approaches and techniques", E-Learning Framework, available at: <http://misc.jisc.ac.uk/refmodels/LADIE/www.elframework.org/refmodels/ladie/outputs/workshop/glossary.pdf> (accessed 27 May 2014).
- Khan, S. (2012), *The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined*, Hodder & Stoughton, London.
- Lublin, J. (2003), "University college dublin, centre for teaching and learning: good practice in teaching and learning", *Deep, Surface & Strategic Approaches to Learning*, available at: www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/development/pgs/introtandl/resources/2a_deep_surfacestrategic_approaches_to_learning.pdf (accessed 19 November 2014).
- McAulay, K.E. (1991), "But how do I tell them?", *Personnel Training and Education*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 56-63.
- MacColl, E. (1960), *The Singing Island: A Collection of English and Scots Folksongs*, Mills Music, London.

- Quality Assurance Agency (2013), "The quality code", available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx (accessed 19 November 2014).
- River Group (2014a), *Case Study: Holland & Barrett*, available at: www.therivergroup.co.uk/what-we-do/holland-and-barrett/ (accessed 19 November 2014).
- River Group (2014b), *Case Study: Holland & Barrett: Content Strategy*, available at: www.therivergroup.co.uk/what-we-do/holland-barrett-great-content-helps-drive-sales/ (accessed 19 November 2014).
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (2014), "The teaching artist 1: credit-rated short course", available at: www.rcs.ac.uk/shortcourses/teaching-artist/ (accessed 19 November 2014).
- Sheridan, J. (1990), "The reflective librarian: some observations on bibliographic instruction in the academic library", *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 22-26.
- University of Florida (2014), *Gagné's 9 Events of Instruction* (from Robert Gagné's 1965 book, *The Conditions of Learning*), University of Florida Center for Instructional Technology & Training, available at: <http://citt.ufl.edu/tools/gagnes-9-events-of-instruction/> (accessed 7 April 2014).
- Vitae (2010), *Introducing the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to Employers*, available at: www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/introducing-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-rdf-to-employers-2011.pdf (accessed 7 April 2014).

About the author

Karen E. McAulay is Music and Academic Services Librarian at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and is currently seconded for two days per week as Postdoctoral Researcher on the "Bass Culture" AHRC project run jointly between the Universities of Glasgow and Cambridge, researching accompaniment styles in historic Scottish fiddle tunebooks. Karen E. McAulay can be contacted at: K.McAulay@rcs.ac.uk

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com