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Using Open Educational Resources to Empower Student Creators

As students are asked to complete multimodal assignments in their higher education courses, librarians can guide students to the use of open educational resources (OER), as many librarians are already teaching students about copyright and how to respect intellectual property rights. Two instructional librarians designed a one-shot lesson for first-year composition students around the use of open resources, where the goal of instruction was for students to be empowered with their creative rights and to use the open resources available to them as creators.

Keywords: OER; library instruction; higher education

Introduction

In higher education, students are asked to create and remix material to communicate their constructed knowledge through various modes. Librarians are in an ideal position to support students in their learning with the use of open education resources or OER. Librarians can use OER during instruction and help students find and use the resources that are available for them to remix, use, and share. Librarians may be the point of contact for copyright instruction for their campuses and can help guide students to use open resources for their multimodal assignments, thus encouraging students to be contributors of the creative community.

At Clemson University, the first-year composition students were required to create a multimodal project that extends their research and writing in a different mode of communication (web, sound, image, etc.). Two instructional librarians collaborated to create a lesson for a one-shot library instruction session that centers on the use of open resources and empowers students to become creators.

Multimodality in Higher Education

Today's students are already accustomed to interacting with information in a variety of ways. Increasingly, they are consuming information beyond printed text - there are social media posts, video advertisements, communication through gifs. Educators have been aware of

these shifting trends spurred by the digital world and have been working on constructing understandings of multiliteracies for decades, since the publication of the New London Group's 1996 "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures," which called for modes of meaning outside of text, including visual, aural, gestural, social, and multimodal.

Multimodality (as a literacy and an approach to learning), is a response to this shift, and attends to "the whole range of modes involved in representation and communication" (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p.1). The approach is grounded in semiotics, therefore on signs and symbols, and it looks to find meaning in multiple modes of signs, including moving images, static images, sounds, gesture, speech, and text (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Communication can take on any number of modes, whether spoken, written, or visualized, and multimodal approaches ask students to consider the communication mode when both producing or evaluating work.

Composition classes in higher education often incorporate multimodal approaches within assignments and teaching (Bruer & Archer, 2016). However, Khadka and Lee (2019) found that

theoretical conversations around multimodal composing are already quite sophisticated in some respects, but the pedagogical translation of those conversations has not reached the same level, particularly among instructors new to multimodal practices, who often struggle with the question of *how* to adopt multimodal instruction in their classrooms. (p. 3)

This need could, and should, be filled by the expertise of librarians, who are already supporting a range of literacies.

While multimodal learning and production methods have been used in composition classes for 20 years, libraries have only recently begun to address this change. Sean Cordes was the first to refer to multimodal literacy in library literature, in a 2009 talk at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) world congress in

Milan, Italy. Most often, library literature addresses multimodal learning through visual literacy standards (Carlito, 2018).

Copyright Support from the Library

As students are asked to create and remix media in their multimodal assignments in higher education, there is a need for students to understand their roles in the creative community and how intellectual property rights are respected, which includes their own rights. In the library literature, this is often framed as copyright education or copyright literacy instruction. The term *copyright literacy* was first used by Professor Tania Todorova in 2012 (Secker, Morrison, & Nilsson, 2019).

Librarians have typically been tasked with helping their faculty and students understand the intricacies of Copyright Law on their campuses, either through their liaison role or with instruction, as they can provide point-of-need instruction and expertise on copyright issues on their campuses (Rodriguez, Greer, & Shipman, 2014). The ACRL Framework emphasizes the importance of understanding intellectual property laws, as well as the purpose and characteristics of copyright, fair use, open access, and the public domain (American College & Research Libraries, 2016). In higher education, librarians may offer one-on-one consultations with copyright issues or provide instruction on copyright literacy within information literacy instruction, within academic integrity sessions (Cheng & Winter, 2014), or with scholarly communication activities (Secker, Morrison, & Nilsson, 2019). This may be framed within digital literacy instruction or media literacy instruction with fair use and creative commons concepts and resources. School librarians in the K12 setting have created many resources to help equip students to learn how to respect copyright and intellectual property rights, but there is a gap in the literature for how to do so in higher education (Rodriguez, Greer, & Shipman, 2014).

In higher education, copyright instruction can come from librarians who develop their own credit-bearing courses (Ravas, 2016; Rodrigues, Greer, & Shipman, 2014), have access to a library instruction or information literacy course (Folk-Farber, 2016; Keener, 2015), or can integrate these concepts through the general education curriculum through one-shot instructional sessions. In addition, this instruction may be integrated into events, outreach, or with scholarly communication initiatives (Buchansky & Slaght, 2017; Reed, Duncan, & Haleguoa, 2017). Discussions from the opening panel of the 2017 International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress off-site meeting on models of copyright education included flipped classroom video methods, national educational campaigns, and games-based learning (Secker, Morrison, & Nilsson, 2019).

Librarians may also be teaching copyright with critical approaches, such as facilitating copyleft instruction, where alternatives to traditional copyright are taught and deconstructed. The term *copyleft* is used in response to traditional copyright, where the creator designates a broader right to use their work than maybe what was traditionally granted in the past (Dusollier, 2006). One alternative to traditional copyright includes Creative Commons licensing. Having students use creative commons licensed materials in the production of their own work allows for teachers to critically examine copyright processes, as well as allows students to be empowered with copyright procedures (Kapitzke, Dezuanni, & Iyer, 2011). In their credit-bearing course, Haggerty and Scott (2019) had students actively question traditional copyright and publishing systems in their course they designed specifically around Creative Commons licenses. In recent research, a common theme to frame copyright instruction is to focus on the rights of the student as creator (Folk-Farber, 2016; Haggerty & Scott, 2019).

OER in Higher Education

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2019) define OER as “teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium--digital or otherwise-- that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions” (OER Defined Section, para. 1). OER are often seen as a way to improve access to educational opportunities, however OER does not guarantee increased access (Cannell, Macintyre, & Hewitt, 2015). Although OER may help improve the quality of learning, there are many barriers that institutions face with their adoption (Mishra, 2017; Murphy, 2013). Cannell (2016) describes the trends within OER as an emphasis on the creation of open textbooks which may be found in the U.S. and in the U.K., there has been a focus on learning objects and the creation of repositories for OER (Cannell, 2016). Regardless, when thinking about OER, the emphasis needs to be on considering if the materials increase access to quality educational materials, reduce costs for students, and improve student learning (Mishra, 2017).

With OER, there is a social aspect needed for their implementation and in order to promote development in pedagogy (Cannell, Macintyre, & Hewitt, 2015). The use of partnerships, including community (Miller, MacIntyre, & McKenna, 2018) and campus partnerships (Cumming-Sauls, Ruen, Beaubien, & Smith, 2018), are avenues for collaboration. The academic library is another partner on campus that can help lead the way for OER initiatives (Salem, 2017).

Academic Libraries and OER

A decade ago, there was little integration between academic institutional OER initiatives with the library, even though libraries had much of the necessary infrastructure and interest (Kleymeer, Kleinman & Hanss, 2010). In recent years, however, libraries have increasingly supported the adoption of OER materials, often in the form of alternative textbook initiatives

(Salem, 2017). These initiatives can take the form of incentives for faculty, such as fellowships and grants for adopting alternative textbooks (Katz, 2018).

There is some evidence of support for the creation of materials for library instruction itself, though far less than library support for OER initiatives for other disciplines. Examples include ACRL's Framework Sandbox, which compiles activities and teaching resources for using the Framework for Information Literacy, and the CORA Project, which is a collaborative project to share online research assignments.

Instructional Planning with OER

Using OER was central to the instructional design process of the two instructional librarians. They progressed through four of the elements of the design process while developing a lesson of instruction to support students. These elements included analyzing learner needs, creating objectives, designing a strategy that addresses these needs, and evaluating the lesson (Morrison, Ross, Kalman, & Kemp, 2013). Their teaching and instructional design process were informed by constructivist learning philosophies, where students are active participants in the learning process, and the importance of social learning, where the involvement of other people in the learning process can help meet learning goals. The goals they created for the session included that 1) students be empowered to add to the creative community and 2) for students to know where to find open resources to help them for the assignment and for their needs beyond the classroom.

Learner needs

The librarians began by considering the characteristics of their target audience and what they were already bringing with them into the classroom. Their lesson on using open resources aligned with a project that students were asked to complete, and the instruction took place after students were introduced to the assignment and its requirements. The assignment was the final assignment in a series of five assignments for the course. This multimodal project

was scaffolded off of the previous writing and research assignments, but students were asked to extend their argument using multimodal composition strategies. The projects could take the form of videos, podcasts, op-eds, photo essays, and websites, and students were required to provide a Works Cited.

The majority of the students in this course were in their first or second semester of college and were traditional first-year students, arriving directly from high school. Most of the students were from schools in South Carolina. All students new to the university were required to complete a set of online modules that orient them to important issues, skills, and knowledge they need as they began their student career. These modules included communication strategies and understanding the university's core values, success strategies and key resources for new students, mental health and wellness resources and strategies, academic advising information, community standards, and information security among others. One module contained library resources that included information on how to avoid plagiarism, how to evaluate information, and how students could contribute to a scholarly conversation. The library resources module included a quiz and all students were required to complete this module about mid-way through their first semester. In addition to this instruction, the first-year writing course instilled the importance of citing sources to avoid plagiarism. It is assumed that students were quite familiar with the concept of plagiarism and the importance of citing their sources by the time the librarians worked with them in the classroom.

Task analysis and learning outcomes

In this phase, the librarians developed content based on the goals they set for the learners. In order for students to know their own intellectual rights, the librarians thought it would be helpful to situate it with some concepts that students may be familiar with. The librarians recognized the need to include information on plagiarism, copyright, intellectual property

rights, the public domain, and Creative Commons, as these concepts are complex and related. They also needed to include resources to help students know where to go to access help with these tools and what resources they could find Creative Commons licensing. From their task analysis, they created learning outcomes that included the following:

- (1) Students will be able to describe Copyright Law and plagiarism and how you can avoid breaking this law and plagiarizing
- (2) Students will be able to explain who decides how creative works can be used and how they communicate their decisions
- (3) Students will be able to identify resources with Creative Commons licenses
- (4) Students will be able to Identify where to go to get multimedia help and tools for ENGL 1030 Assignment 5

With the development of these outcomes, it was important that students connect their knowledge of copyright and plagiarism and be able to identify how these concepts are related and how they differ in their own words. As they implemented the lesson, the librarians saw the need to emphasize the difference of citing sources and having permission to use copyrighted works, as many students equated citing with permission to use content. They also wanted students to know about the power and choices that creators have with their works, including the students themselves as creators, and how creators can communicate how their works can be used. The third outcome centered on how students can identify licenses and lastly, this course had a LibGuide, so resources were available for students on this guide to extend and support their learning.

Instructional strategies and assessment

Because intellectual property rights are complex, the librarians wanted to ensure that the one-shot session they had with students was helpful for their projects both within and beyond the classroom and that was engaging. The instructional strategies they specifically used were the

Jonassen's (1988) generative strategies and included recall, integration, organization, and elaboration. They also wanted to use active learning techniques, real-world examples that involved ownership of creative works, and open resources to engage learners.

In order to meet the first learning outcome, they wanted students to be able to recall what they already knew about plagiarism and citing their sources and be able to articulate the difference between Copyright Law and plagiarism. Their initial presentation of content was to review these concepts within the lesson and then organize students' understanding of them with real-world examples that involved a contested ownership of a work. In order for students to explain who decides how creative works can be used and how creators communicate their decisions, the librarians presented a real-world example to students and asked them to decide who owned the creative work. For learners to identify resources with Creative Commons licenses, they presented online resources that could search for Creative Commons licenses and modeled how to use them and how to find licensing information. Students were then asked to practice how to use it and identify the licenses. Lastly, the librarians presented resources that would help students access open resources and then students were asked to recall the names of those resources.

The librarians planned to review the learning outcomes at the end of the session to formatively assess where students were in reaching the goals and outcomes of the lesson. This included having students recall and paraphrase the answers to the questions. The librarians planned a more formal formative assessment with a self-assessment for students to complete that included a Likert scale to rate where they were with meeting each learning objective.

Implementation and Evaluation

The implementation of the session was in two phases, where the first introduced real-world copyright examples through class discussions, and the second phase included more hands-on

learning and application that focused on filtering one primary or multiple secondary search engines, as well as finding citation information for open resources.

The librarians began the lesson by articulating the learning outcomes of the session to students. They then introduced students to a 2011 copyright dispute involving a monkey selfie and asked students to critically think and evaluate how they would rule if they were the judge in the case. The monkey selfie dispute involved a British nature photographer, David Slater, who traveled to Indonesia to take photographs of an endangered species of monkey. Slater set the camera on a tripod and several of the monkeys took photographs of themselves (“selfies”) (Stewart, 2014). The librarians then had a class discussion that establishes a fundamental idea that the creator of a creative work has the authority to make decisions on who can use the work and how. After the students have discussed, they were introduced the legal and cultural conclusion of the example: Wikimedia Commons (2014) uploaded the monkey photographs, asserting that the works were in the public domain because they were “the work of a non-human animal, it has no human author in whom copyright is vested” (Licensing section, para. 1). The United States Copyright Office published an opinion that supports the public domain conclusion (Stewart, 2014). The librarians also let them know as a side note, in 2015, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) sued Slater, requesting that the monkey be able to hold the copyright (the lawsuit was dismissed) (Rafaeli, 2017).

The librarians then introduced Copyright Law, public domain, and fair use guidelines and used a spectrum to visualize copyright and copyleft concepts. They then reviewed plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarism with a video that was created in-house. They had students apply their understanding of copyright and plagiarism by introducing them to another real-world example with a Beyoncé copyright/plagiarism dispute and asked the students to synthesize and apply these complementary topics.

Students are then guided in a practice activity of finding media appropriate for reuse and modification that supports their course assignment. The activity focused on common practical questions, including using multiple search engines and methods, and finding creator information for citations. At this point in the session, after having introduced creative copyright examples, public domain, plagiarism, and citing sources, the librarians finally introduced Creative Commons. They framed it as a decision tree, beginning with the idea that if you create your own media object (photograph, video, sound), you own the rights to the work and do not need to find licensing or permission. If that is not an option, then you can find media works in the public domain or licensed as Creative Commons. They discussed Fair Use Guidelines with students but encouraged them to find open resources because their work would be published outside of the classroom. Lastly, they reviewed what resources were available for students for help in these areas, including the library resources.

The librarians have continued to reflect and revise their lesson plan in order to meet the needs of students. They also obtained formal and informal feedback from students, instructors, and one another help guide them in their instruction. After an instruction session, they used a reflection protocol and reviewed the assessments that they received in order to revise the content and instructional strategies.

Conclusion

As academic libraries partner to support OER initiatives, library instructors can help lead the way so that OER can help to support students to communicate effectively in various modes. By teaching students how to access and use open resources, it has helped the library instructors engage students in a conversation that puts students in a position of power to create and to collaborate within a creative community. By focusing on the open resources available to students, the hope is for all librarians to equip students with resources they can use and contribute to both within and beyond the classroom.

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