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## Collaborations That Work: Making Connections between Music Library Instruction and Music Theory

Charles Roush

*The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*, [charles.roush@utrgv.edu](mailto:charles.roush@utrgv.edu)

Katrina Roush

*The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*, [katrina.roush@utrgv.edu](mailto:katrina.roush@utrgv.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Roush, Charles and Katrina Roush. "Collaborations That Work: Making Connections between Music Library Instruction and Music Theory." *Notes*, vol. 81 no. 1, 2024, p. 54-65. <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2024.a934839>

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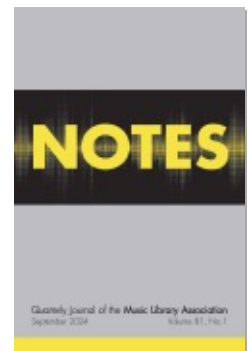
Collaborations That Work: Making Connections between Music  
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Charles Roush, Katrina Roush

Notes, Volume 81, Number 1, September 2024, pp. 54-65 (Article)

Published by Music Library Association

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2024.a934839>



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# COLLABORATIONS THAT WORK: MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MUSIC LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AND MUSIC THEORY

CHARLES ROUSH AND KATRINA ROUSH

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Library instruction works well as a component of music theory courses, and this article explores ways pedagogical approaches from both disciplines can enhance each other. Most of the ideas that follow come from reflecting on our own experiences over the years. Since 2018, we have collaborated as a music librarian and a music theory professor at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Throughout this time, we have continually refined what we focus on with students in theory classes, how we present the material, and how we assess learning. The results have been consistently positive and affirming. In this article, we hope to encourage other music librarians to reach out to the music theory instructors at their institutions, and vice versa, so that more fruitful connections can be made in music programs to benefit increasing numbers of students.

Although some music librarians do currently find ways of connecting with music theory instructors, our experience suggests that this is the exception, not the rule. At the various institutions where we studied and worked prior to our collaboration, we rarely observed library instruction in music theory courses. At a recent Texas Music Library Association conference presentation on this topic, responses from the audience during and after the presentation indicated this to be an area where music librarians wish for more inroads than currently exist.<sup>1</sup> Further, there is scant guidance from the literature regarding these aims. For example, in *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion*, the section on music theory/composition contains only one chapter, and it is largely focused on composition.<sup>2</sup> In general, presentations and publications by

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Charles Roush is the head of research and instructional services at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Edinburg Library. Katrina Roush is an assistant professor of music theory at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

1. Katrina Roush, "Library Instruction in Music Theory: A Professor's Perspective" (paper presented at the Texas Chapter of Music Library Association Conference, Denton, TX, 20 October 2023).

2. Beth Christensen, Erin Conor, and Marian Ritter, eds., *Information Literacy in Music: An Instructor's Companion* (Middleton, WI: Music Library Association and A-R Editions, 2018). This is by no means a criticism of Christensen, Conor, and Ritter's excellent volume or the chapter on theory/composition. Rather, it demonstrates a gap in this area. For context, the volume has thirty-nine total chapters.

both music librarians and music theorists are devoid of any mention of collaborative efforts with each other. Apart from our own work on this topic,<sup>3</sup> we have not seen much else advocating for such an approach.<sup>4</sup>

However, we have found that library instruction in theory classes greatly benefits students, particularly in two broad ways. First, music librarians have expertise in communicating skills and approaches that can be incredibly relevant to music theory instruction. This is true even in beginning theory classes where students may not have an immediate need for specific library resources for course assignments. By introducing students to practical strategies for interacting with information and ways to refine critical thinking (i.e., information literacy), librarians can directly reinforce concepts vital to music theory instruction. Second, there is a tremendous opportunity in making these connections with students early in their degrees. Music majors usually begin taking theory courses in the first semester of their program. By participating in these classes, librarians can start forming relationships with music students right away. As time passes, if music librarians provide further instruction, for instance, in music history classes, studios, and other environments, students will experience a more organic inclusion of library concepts and information literacy in their studies. They will be able to see these as not just something useful for an assignment in a single class, but rather as a set of transferrable skills that will be useful throughout college and beyond.

### **MUSIC THEORY AND MUSIC LIBRARIANSHIP: AN ALIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES**

Through working together, we have discovered there to be more common ground between our fields than we originally thought. This was, perhaps, not always the case. It is a regular occurrence to hear complaints of undergraduate music theory classes from ten or twenty years ago. To many music students at the time, music theory seemed dry and boring, focused on inflexible rules largely detached from the creative, interpretive musical endeavors employed in the rest of their degrees. In recent years, however, music theory pedagogy has gained ground as a research area,

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3. Charles Roush, Katrina Roush, and Norma Denae Dibrell, "Education Equity: Music Theory Information Literacy at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)," in *Music Information Literacy: Inclusion and Advocacy*, ed. Kathleen A. Abromeit and Dyani Sabin (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, forthcoming); Katrina Roush, "Applications of Information Literacy to Teaching Independent Music Analysis," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 37 (2023): 119–51.

4. Two notable exceptions are Misti Shaw, "Integrating the Framework for Information Literacy in Music Theory Course Content" (paper presented at the Music Library Association Annual Conference, Portland, OR, 31 January 2018); and Benjamin Graf and Jennifer Weaver, "Inclusive Pedagogy in Music Theory and How Libraries Can Play a Part" (paper presented at the Texas Chapter of Music Library Association Conference, Waco, TX, 4 November 2022).

leading the field in new directions. This is evidenced by the increased popularity of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy*, the founding of the biennial Pedagogy into Practice conference, and recent collections of essays and lesson plans such as *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory* and *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*.<sup>5</sup>

An intentional turn away from teaching music theory as a solely rules-based, inflexible subject is becoming increasingly pervasive.<sup>6</sup> In her groundbreaking book, *Teaching Music Theory: New Voices and Approaches*, based on surveys of hundreds of music theory instructors, Jennifer Snodgrass addresses this “outdated perception” of theory instruction. She asserts that the way many instructors now approach their classes is changing.<sup>7</sup> Their focus is not only on teaching specific content, but also on imparting broader, transferrable skills.<sup>8</sup> We have noticed three threads from theory pedagogy that tie closely with the current thinking in music library instruction: students are individuals, students need to be able to effectively communicate about music (whether in class discussions, through writing assignments, or by engaging in conversation with a larger body of research), and music pedagogy must become more diverse and inclusive.

For example, regarding the first thread—seeing students as individuals—Philip Duker asks, “What are the most important lessons that students should learn as they progress through the music theory curriculum?”<sup>9</sup> His response is to prioritize cultivating their curiosity.<sup>10</sup> Other music theorists similarly emphasize how crucial it is to connect with what excites students, as part of a larger goal of listening to students and caring about them as individuals.<sup>11</sup> This includes acknowledging that they enter the music theory curriculum with widely different backgrounds and experiences, presenting instructors with both a “challenge” and an “opportunity.”<sup>12</sup>

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5. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin, eds., *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory* (New York: Norton, 2018); Leigh VanHandel, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

6. As with any change, however, not every music theory instructor is making this shift. Though our focus here is on widely acknowledged positive directions in music theory pedagogy, there are those who continue to adhere to old models of theory instruction. This could present a challenge when using our methods to form collaborative relationships with some theorists.

7. Jennifer Snodgrass, *Teaching Music Theory: New Voices and Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 3.

8. Snodgrass, *Teaching Music Theory*, 12–14.

9. Philip Duker, “Cultivating Curiosity: Questions, Relevance, and Focus in the Theory Classroom,” in *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, ed. Leigh VanHandel (New York: Routledge, 2020), 459.

10. Philip Duker, “Cultivating Curiosity,” 459.

11. Rachel Lumsden, “Enriching Classroom Discussions: Some Strategies from Feminist Pedagogy,” in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory*, ed. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin (New York: Norton, 2018), 322–26.

12. Cora S. Palfy, “Instructing a Range of Experiences within the Music Theory Classroom,” in *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, ed. Leigh VanHandel (New York: Routledge, 2020), 376.

The second thread, emphasis on students' ability to communicate, is evident in how these student-focused goals in the music theory classroom often prompt a shift away from teaching exclusively theoretical and analytical tools. Some theorists, recognizing the need for students to better articulate their thoughts about music, are making space in the curriculum for writing, even in beginning levels of music theory.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there is an increased focus on teaching students to think "outside the box" and explore their own subjective interpretations in music analysis. These approaches emphasize guiding students as they learn how to think and communicate about music on their own terms and how to fit their ideas into a larger context of existing research. As an added benefit, broadening the focus in music theory instruction also makes room for a more diverse repertoire in the classroom.<sup>14</sup>

This ties into the third thread: diversity is a forefront priority in the field of music theory. The discipline is beginning to acknowledge that traditionally, what has been taught in core theory courses is overwhelmingly centered around White, male composers of Western classical music, with the exclusion of almost everything else. In the past few years, many in the field have recognized this for the problematic situation it is. This recent momentum is largely due to the work of theorist Philip Ewell. His article "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame"<sup>15</sup> and subsequent book *On Music Theory: And Making Music More Welcoming for Everyone*<sup>16</sup> unearth clear problems inherent in the way music theorists have espoused the lack of diversity in their field and pedagogy, and Ewell proposes steps forward to correct this.

Music theorists are largely responding to this call to action, spearheading numerous projects in pursuit of a better path forward. For example, in 2021, the Society for Music Theory began granting the Award for Diversity Course Design to several instructors each year, celebrating pedagogical efforts toward diversifying the music and content covered in theory courses.<sup>17</sup> The Theorizing African American Music conference, held

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13. Lynne Rogers, "Incorporating Writing into Music Theory Courses," in *The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory*, ed. Rachel Lumsden and Jeffrey Swinkin (New York: Norton, 2018), 300–301; and Justin London, "What Should an Undergraduate Music Theory Curriculum Teach? (And, Alas, What Most of the Time We Don't)," in *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, ed. Leigh VanHandel (New York: Routledge, 2020), 427–28.

14. Michael Buchler, "Setting Sets Aside: Prioritizing Motive, Text, and Diversity in Post-Tonal Analysis Courses," in *The Routledge Companion to Music Theory Pedagogy*, ed. Leigh VanHandel (New York: Routledge, 2020), 230–31.

15. Philip A. Ewell, "Music Theory and the White Racial Frame," *Music Theory Online* 26, no. 2 (September 2020).

16. Philip Ewell, *On Music Theory: And Making Music More Welcoming for Everyone* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023).

17. "Award for Diversity Course Design," Society for Music Theory, <https://societymusictheory.org/grants/dcd>.

in 2022, brought scholars and teachers together to explore remedies for the “erasure of African American scholars and their perspectives from the discipline of music theory.”<sup>18</sup> The pedagogical book *Expanding the Canon: Black Composers in the Music Theory Classroom*, published in 2023, provides lesson plans and practical teaching tips to help instructors reach beyond the composers, styles, and theories they are used to teaching.<sup>19</sup>

Though a number of theory instructors have been introducing diverse repertoire in their classes for some time, one of the crucial points that Ewell brings up is the need to teach diverse theories. To analyze music that falls outside the Western canon with tools made for the Western canon is to do that music a great injustice. Too often, this results in consciously or subconsciously judging the worth of any piece of music based on how well it fits into what has already been labeled music of “value.” To avoid this pitfall, it is vital that any type or style of music be analyzed based on theories that speak to how that particular music is built, how it is performed, and its surrounding social context.<sup>20</sup> Teresa L. Reed eloquently alludes to this in *Expanding the Canon*, where she conveys her story as a Black music student with musical roots in gospel music. To her, music school forced a divide between the music of her heritage and the notated music of the Western canon, which was considered the only music of value by her instructors and fellow students.<sup>21</sup> Reed elaborates:

My “born” music, a synthesis of energy, skill, and instinct, was also grounded in its own set of cultural norms related to African American memory, space, and community. Removed from this context, my native musical tongue seemed impossible to explain to people ensconced in their own superiority. Therefore, I found it safest to silence my perspective and hide this part of my musical identity . . .<sup>22</sup>

The field of music librarianship has been facing similar realizations lately, taking seriously the need for more diversity in library collections, services, and instruction. The Music Library Association’s recent strategic plan notes “Inclusion” as one of its core values and integrates diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout the document.<sup>23</sup> The

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18. “Theorizing African American Music,” Society for Music Theory, <https://societymusictheory.org/events/theorizing-african-american-music-2022>.

19. Melissa Hoag, ed., *Expanding the Canon: Black Composers in the Music Theory Classroom* (New York: Routledge, 2023).

20. Philip Ewell, “Theorizing African American Music: Beginnings (1),” *SMT-Pod 2.7*, Podcast audio, 9 March 2023, <https://smt-pod.org/episodes/season02/#e2.7>.

21. Teresa L. Reed, “Our Field at Its Best,” in *Expanding the Canon: Black Composers in the Music Theory Classroom*, ed. Melissa Hoag (New York: Routledge, 2023), 8–9.

22. Reed, “Our Field at Its Best,” 9.

23. “2022–2030 Strategic Plan,” Music Library Association, <https://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/page/Stratplanlanding>.

forthcoming book *Music Information Literacy: Inclusion and Advocacy*<sup>24</sup> further demonstrates this commitment to diversity, as does the 2022 special issue of *Notes* on race. In that issue, the article “Towards a Critical Music Information Literacy Praxis” speaks directly to a need for diversity in library instruction and other areas of librarianship. Several of its points align with the aforementioned directions in music theory: connecting with what excites students, acknowledging that they are individuals from diverse backgrounds, and intentionally examining music and research within an appropriate cultural context.<sup>25</sup> When we recognize these similar goals in music library instruction and music theory instruction, we can more effectively move forward together.

### INFORMATION LITERACY IN COLLABORATION

Throughout our collaboration, the class sessions, projects, and approaches that have focused on information literacy have worked the best—so much so that we now embed information literacy into virtually all the work we do together. When paired with the values mentioned above (meeting students as individuals, teaching communication through discussions and writing, encouraging independent thought, and investing in diversity) ACRL’s Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (Framework)<sup>26</sup> offers useful structure and flexibility. The wide applicability of the Framework has helped us align information literacy concepts with a range of music theory topics and various course levels, from entry level classes to graduate seminars. Further, the Framework encourages us to think broadly about skills and mindsets that students can employ not only for a specific course-related task, but also for a myriad of situations beyond the classroom.

At first, in new settings, relevance to course content can be a concern for music theory students and sometimes even instructors. Careful planning between the music librarian and instructor can address these concerns, as well as preparing students ahead of time for library instruction. In our work, we have found that a variety of information literacy topics apply directly to music theory pedagogy. Some of these include investigating authority in music theory scholarship, accessing music theory research of interest to students, finding and examining types of scores

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24. Kathleen A. Abromeit and Dyani Sabin, eds., *Music Information Literacy: Inclusion and Advocacy* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, forthcoming).

25. Veronica A. Wells, et al., “Towards a Critical Music Information Literacy Praxis,” *Notes* 78, no. 3 (March 2022): 319, 327–28.

26. Association of College & Research Libraries, “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education” (Chicago: ACRL, 2015).



and recordings that are appropriate for different contexts, and exploring composers' stylistic traits using Oxford Music Online.

We prefer to team-teach class sessions, as we both feel comfortable discussing information literacy. Music theorists do not often get the opportunity to teach collaboratively, and offering this option may be appealing to them.<sup>27</sup> We have found this instructional tactic to be especially helpful in relating to students. In most cases, faculty know students better than librarians because they have more regular contact with them. Including faculty in library instruction can foster trust and buy-in from students as they see their instructor participating and helping connect what the librarian says to the rest of the course content.

We approach each library session with great amounts of flexibility, which is advantageous when considering the difficult time constraints present in most theory courses. A full class session can work well with some topics and audiences. For example, when we discuss with upper-classmen the kinds of research music theorists do and how to locate it, a sixty- or seventy-minute lesson plan has been effective. However, for other topics, such as how to find recordings that will work best for a specific assignment, library instruction may only take a brief portion of a class session (as short as ten or fifteen minutes). We have found that splitting library instruction into multiple short sessions across the semester noticeably holds students' attention and allows them to internalize a few concepts at a time without becoming overwhelmed. Sometimes we meet in the library, such as when we show students where the physical music resources are held, allotting time for them to browse the stacks. Other times, we meet in the students' regular classroom, where they feel more comfortable in their familiar surroundings. In some classes, we invite questions throughout, which has been particularly effective with freshman. In graduate classes, we tend to prompt deeper discussion from students, hoping they talk more than we do.

Although we have never formally embedded library instruction in a music theory course, we apply many of the same principles of collaboration that Sara J. Buetter Manus posits as important for a successful embedded experience. We share the responsibility for a positive library instruction session.<sup>28</sup> We focus on fostering a professionally respectful, collegial relationship with each other and also with students, getting to

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27. Rachel Lumsden mentions that there can be practical institutional barriers to team-teaching entire music theory courses, but she emphasizes the importance of demonstrating effective collaboration to students when possible. Lumsden, "Enriching Classroom Discussions," 319–20.

28. Sara J. Buetter Manus, "Embedding the Framework: Using Embedded Librarian Techniques to Facilitate Music Information Literacy," in *Ideas, Strategies, and Scenarios in Music Information Literacy*, ed. Kathleen A. Abromeit (Middleton, WI: Music Library Association and A-R Editions, 2018), 44.

know them as individuals and learning what they need from us.<sup>29</sup> We function as “true partners in the educational process,”<sup>30</sup> which makes our instruction of information literacy stronger. Even if the music librarian is not officially embedded, a close collaboration with these principles in mind can facilitate a music theory course where information literacy is not added on top of the curriculum, but “fully embedded within the discipline itself.”<sup>31</sup>

### BENEFICIAL OUTCOMES

Our partnership in music theory instruction and our focus on information literacy have resulted in a number of benefits for students. As mentioned above, with this arrangement, music students begin receiving library instruction in their first year. In our experience, at this early stage, they are already curious about how the library can help them as musicians and are interested in learning about it. They have the opportunity to start building a relationship with the music librarian right away. As students continue their degree at UTRGV with more library instruction in later music theory courses, as well as other courses and contexts, they can see the usefulness of the library more broadly; it is not simply a required component for a lone course paper or project. Students also feel more comfortable approaching the music librarian for assistance outside of classes, since familiarity has been established.<sup>32</sup>

Several of our specific class sessions have especially demonstrated student-centered benefits. For example, in a recent graduate-level music theory pedagogy course, we led a discussion with students on the importance of diversity in the music theory classroom. After this session, students were asked to create a sample course assignment using the principles we spoke about, specifically taking care to treat music outside the Western tradition with appropriate methods of analysis. Student answers were varied and creative, but all showed that they took our discussion to heart and were able to apply the ideas presented to real pedagogical situations. In a different course, after talking with upperclassmen about what music theory research can look like and how to locate it, we asked them to each find two music theory articles that they found intriguing. With the articles students selected, we were delighted to see that the lesson and

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29. Manus, “Embedding the Framework,” 48.

30. Manus, “Embedding the Framework,” 51.

31. Manus, “Embedding the Framework,” 53.

32. With this arrangement in place at our institution for several years, student feedback has been positive: In both music theory and music history courses, multiple students have volunteered appreciation of library instruction to their professors, emphasizing that it has aided their studies in multiple ways.

assignment resonated with students' various creative interests, extending beyond the scope of the particular course.<sup>33</sup>

We have both grown from our collaboration, as well. First, our experience demonstrates that working with music librarians can enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of music theorists. When Katrina recognized that music librarians are working toward similar goals as music theorists, but from different perspectives, she began to think more creatively about how to reach those goals. Our collaboration inspired new ways for her to approach pedagogical topics. Additionally, she now examines more closely the information literacy concepts she already teaches, considers others she could include, and uses the Framework to help organize her thoughts and structure her lessons in conscious, directed ways.

Second, our experience indicates that working with music theorists can also enhance the pedagogical effectiveness of music librarians. Especially when it comes to diversity and inclusion, understanding the way music theorists approach their research and pedagogy can help further the aims that music librarians currently pursue. For example, when Charles first encountered Ewell's work, he was intrigued by the assertion that simply including diverse repertoire in music classes is not always enough on its own. The way any music is approached and taught must be respectful of its style, context, and compositional and performance traditions. When this proper context is lacking, the inclusion of new types of music in theory courses can actually do more harm than good.<sup>34</sup> In other words, when using Western music theory to describe music of other traditions, much of what that music has to offer is lost.<sup>35</sup>

The field of music librarianship continually helps Charles be more aware of the general exclusion of non-Western-canonical music in music schools and emphasizes why this is such an important issue to confront. But it was the approaches of music theorists that helped him consider not just whether something is included in a class, but how it is contextualized. Even if he never leads students in analysis, understanding this concern significantly affects the way he teaches. It provides a new dimension to the Frame "Authority Is Constructed and Contextual," and it helps him fold information literacy more naturally into music theory topics.

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33. We discuss more detailed, practical applications of information literacy in music theory instruction elsewhere, including references to specific concepts and frames (from the Framework), ready-made lesson plans, and student outcomes. See C. Roush, K. Roush, and Dibrell, "Education Equity," forthcoming; and Roush, "Applications of Information Literacy." Though this latter publication is only authored by Katrina, Charles collaborated in its preparation through discussions of how various concepts connect to different frames and by offering ideas for improvement of the included lesson plans.

34. Philip Ewell, *On Music Theory*, 217.

35. Philip Ewell, "Theorizing African American Music," <https://smt-pod.org/episodes/season02/#e2.7>.

### BRIDGING THE GAP WITH MUSIC THEORY INSTRUCTORS

In our experience, when speaking with other music theorists, we often perceive a lack of familiarity or precision when discussing the term “information literacy.” Those who do engage with the term often do so in a way that differs from the definition put forth in the Framework and its application in librarianship.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, we have found that many music theory instructors already teach skills related to information literacy, as evidenced by the new directions in the field discussed above. Also, it is important to remember that individual scholars have usually by necessity built strong, practical information literacy skills for themselves, skills which are essential for completing advanced degrees. They generally acknowledge that emphasizing these concepts to students will enable them to be stronger academics and more well-rounded musicians.

Thus, faculty are often significantly invested in information literacy skills and applications, though maybe not well-versed in the terminology and methods librarians use. We believe that librarians may better position themselves as collaborators by keeping this understanding in mind. Music librarians can be helpful to theorists by making improved connections between what they already teach and corresponding concepts from the Framework. We have found that this integration can occur surprisingly seamlessly. Ideally, these connections can help foster buy-in from instructors when librarians seek to create new opportunities for instruction sessions in music theory courses.

One of our biggest takeaways from working together is how to best proceed knowing that librarians and music professors both value information literacy concepts (despite differences in terminology and specific application). The Framework states that “librarians . . . can facilitate the development of information literacy by postsecondary students.”<sup>37</sup> While we agree with this, we believe it to be an incomplete approach. Many music theorists already employ information literacy in their own way (likely having had to cultivate such skills on their own over the years without explicit instruction) and teach such concepts in service to new trends in theory pedagogy. We believe that librarians mindful of this can effectively find improved common ground with their faculty colleagues.

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36. On the other hand, there are some cases where music theorists directly address information literacy as espoused by the Framework, which reinforces the natural fit between music librarianship and newer approaches to theory pedagogy. See Andrew Gades, “Desequencing the Music Theory Core: A Liberal Arts Model,” *Engaging Students: Essays in Music Pedagogy* 7 (2019); Katrina Roush, “Priming First-Year College Students for Music Analysis: Applying Concepts from ACRL’s Information Literacy Framework” (poster presented at the Pedagogy into Practice Conference, East Lansing, MI, 4 June 2022); Roush, “Applications of Information Literacy.”

37. “*Framework*,” 26.

By acknowledging and respecting each instructor's individual level of facility with information literacy concepts, in whatever form it happens to be, librarians can make great strides in finding the right fit to successfully apply information literacy to music theory coursework.

### CONCLUSION

The benefits we have seen for students fuel our enthusiasm to continue focusing on information literacy in music theory courses. It is relevant to all music students and, from their first semester, can become integral to their development as learners and musicians. Additionally, we have experienced benefits from our work together. We have both become more empathetic listeners, stronger communicators, and more effective teachers through our collaboration. Understanding each other's fields and exploring how they can support each other provides fresh perspectives on the issues we face and ideal ways to move forward.

Sometimes, progress can seem slow. Academia is often resistant to change, and we both have limited power in our current roles. Nevertheless, we have resolved to do what we can for students and effect change whenever possible. We have found that forming a strong collaborative relationship for information literacy instruction is one way we can make a difference. We shape our pedagogical efforts around an appreciation of students' individuality and the skills they need to be qualified, respectful, and ethical professionals in today's musical world.

Our UTRGV colleague Andrés R. Amado effectively sums up our feelings about this partnership: "Thinking beyond the immediate needs of the department, as pressing as they may be, allows for richer and more relevant courses that make connections across the university."<sup>38</sup> Our collaborative experiences have enriched our teaching and inspired us to find new ways to connect with students. We encourage music librarians and music theorists who are not yet working together to seek out such a relationship—for the good of students, each other, and their fields.

### ABSTRACT

This article explores ways pedagogical approaches in music librarianship and music theory can enhance each other. It emphasizes two broad benefits for students when library instruction is incorporated into music theory courses. First, what music librarians have to offer can be incredibly

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38. Andrés R. Amado, "Musicking Across Hemispheres: A Transatlantic Approach to Western Music History and Curricular Reform at a Hispanic Serving Institution," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 13, no. 1 (2023): 22–23.

relevant to music theory instruction. Second, since music majors take music theory early in their degrees, library instruction in these courses allows them to get to know their librarians right away when they enter college. If music librarians provide further instruction and outreach in various ways throughout students' college years, students will be able to see that what they are learning in these sessions is a set of transferrable skills that are not solely useful for one assignment in a single class. This is especially true when teaching information literacy.

By drawing on literature from both fields, as well as our own experiences working together, we show how the pedagogical priorities of music theory and music librarianship align. We explain how we have found success in teaching concepts from information literacy as we work toward our shared goals. The article further suggests a number of practical ideas for bridging the gap between music librarians and music theory instructors, including offering flexible options for instruction, team-teaching, and understanding the strengths each person brings to information literacy instruction.

