

Applications of Information Literacy to Teaching Independent Music Analysis

BY KATRINA ROUSH

Undergraduate and graduate music students learn many tools beneficial for music analysis, and they practice applying these tools to music in their music theory classes. However, they often struggle to perform useful analysis on their own without the guidance of an instructor. They can have trouble understanding that analysis should communicate their personal interpretation of a work, and they may not realize that independent analysis usually requires some preparatory work (analytical research), such as discovering if others have analyzed the work and learning new analytical methods. This article shows that there is a strong connection between various steps in the music-analytical process and information literacy, as presented in the Association of College & Research Libraries' *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* ("*Framework*"). It takes several tenets from information literacy and demonstrates how they map onto analysis and analytical research, using the *Framework* to structure this discussion. Eight short, practical mini- lesson plans are included, along with brief discussions of their purposes and student feedback regarding their effectiveness.



Introduction

Undergraduate students in a typical music program learn many tools necessary for music analysis, and they practice applying those tools to musical examples. However, they often graduate without knowing how to approach analysis beyond the controlled environment of their music theory classroom. Graduate music students tend to receive more opportunities to engage in independent analysis; but if they have rarely encountered this in the past, sudden expectations to produce convincing analyses without much assistance can feel overwhelming to them.

In my experience as a faculty member, I have found that both undergraduate and graduate students frequently feel at a loss as to what a full analytical endeavor actually entails—that is, they have some analytical tools, but they do not know how to approach analysis, how to access published analyses (or that these even exist), how to learn and apply new analytical tools outside of a classroom setting, and how to deal with conflicting ideas about the same piece of music. They often do not understand that music analysis is an expression of their own ideas about how a piece of music works; they do not understand that analysis is interpretive and personal. As an undergraduate student myself, I learned the typical analytical tools for Western classical music, and I even remembered how to use them when I graduated. But the first time I was asked to write an analytical paper in graduate school, I had no idea where to start. Beginning

an analysis without assistance was never addressed in my undergraduate curriculum. Though my personal experiences as a professor and a student are anecdotal and are certainly not universal, they are not unique.

So, what can instructors do to prepare students to perform analysis independently? First, they can present analysis as a richer experience than simply finding answers about a piece of music by applying analytical tools. Analysis is creative, interpretive, and personal.¹ Students should understand that analysis parallels performance in some ways: it is their communication of a specific interpretation of a piece of music, informed by other interpretations but nuanced in a way that only they can express. Second, it is important to acknowledge that the act of analyzing a piece of music cannot be done without some amount of preparatory work, which this article indicates with the term “analytical research.” Analytical research involves steps similar to those that music theorists take when preparing an analysis for publication. Each person’s process looks a little different but often includes similar actions. The analyst identifies interesting facets of a piece through listening and studying the score. Then, they may look for other analyses of the work, to ensure their ideas have not been explored before and to spark more creativity, building on the work of others. Before deeply analyzing the piece, the analyst needs to choose methods that they will use. The most useful methods may be ones they are not yet familiar with, and they may need to find them and learn about them. With all this existing research—or perhaps lack of existing research—in mind, the analyst often creates an analysis in such a way as to fill a gap in the collective knowledge of the field. If the analysis is to be published or presented, the analyst cites the research they consulted in footnotes and a bibliography. Each step described here necessitates certain research skills, from locating scores and recordings, to finding and applying new analytical methods, to citing others appropriately. Even if the analyst is not preparing a publication and is analyzing music for themselves (which is where most music students will eventually be), understanding the current landscape of similar analyses and learning new modes of analysis will strengthen the usefulness of their analytical work.

A number of music programs are working to address this problem in creative ways. For example, some professors are implementing innovative methods to teach students how to write analytical essays that move beyond blow-by-blow descriptions, such as Samantha Inman² and Lynne Rogers.³ The University of Texas San Antonio

1 See, for example, the analyses in Hatten (2016, 237–52).

2 Inman (2017, 43–64).

3 Rogers (2017, 93–112).

formed a Theory Club where any students who are interested in diving deeper into music theory research can meet outside of class to discuss creative analytical ideas.⁴ Butler University has an annual day-long Theory Exhibition where students in advanced undergraduate music theory courses present posters, all of which include citations,⁵ based on their semester projects analyzing form. These initiatives and others like them certainly make a difference. Still, this problem seems to run deep. Many undergraduate and graduate students struggle to approach music analysis on their own, even though they may be expert musicians in the areas of performance, conducting, composition, and education.

This article proposes a new approach to teaching students how to *think* about music analysis and analytical research based on the Association of College & Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* ("Framework").⁶ Although many non-music disciplines and some areas of music study have been applying concepts from the *Framework* to their pedagogy for years, a formal application to music theory and music analysis has not yet been developed. This article takes several tenets from information literacy, as defined by ACRL, and shows how they map onto analysis and analytical research, using the *Framework* to structure this discussion. The goal is for these ideas to be practical and nearly immediately applicable for theory instructors. To this end, eight mini-lesson plans are included in the Appendix, which are intended to take up part of a typical class period. They can be taught as is, adapted to suit various curricular needs, or considered as a starting point for new pedagogical ideas. This examination of various applications of the *Framework* to teaching music analysis is organized around how these mini-lessons have worked for my students and their potential to work for others.

The Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

ACRL defines information literacy as "the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."⁷ In practice, information literacy

4 Beavers (2023).

5 Jeffrey Gillespie, email message to author, January 26, 2023.

6 Association of College & Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015).

7 *Framework*, 26.

reflects skills that most academics deem essential for higher levels of research, learning, and contribution to their fields. These skills include critical thinking, the location and use of quality resources, appropriate citation use, information assimilation, knowledge creation, metacognition, and metaliteracy. Individuals who exhibit a proficiency in information literacy know that quality of information is more important than how much they find or how quickly they find it. They understand not just how to locate sources, but how to handle them in “effective and responsible”⁸ ways. For example, instead of choosing the first few articles from a database search, they look through many articles to find the most applicable ones, refining their future searching strategies based on the results they see. They understand not just how to manage citations but why this is a crucial aspect of research. Instead of looking for research to back up their conclusions, they search for a variety of perspectives and draw conclusions based on evidence and the expertise of others. They know how to conduct research independently, how to learn without an instructor, and how to reflect on their own abilities, goals, and growth.

In 2016, ACRL published the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* with the goal of promoting information literacy among college students, equipping them to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”⁹ To this end, the *Framework* highlights six core concepts, or “frames,” to foster information literacy in students (Example 1).

- **Authority is Constructed and Contextual**
- **Scholarship as Conversation**
- **Research as Inquiry**
- **Searching as Strategic Exploration**
- **Information Creation as a Process**
- **Information Has Value**

Example 1

The six frames of the *Framework*.

The *Framework* was born out of an earlier document from ACRL, the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (“*Standards*”). Published in 2000 to address the need for more standardized information literacy education in colleges and universities, the purpose of the *Standards* was to “pinpoint specific indicators that

8 Snyder, Sampsel, and Farmer (2018, 5).

9 ACRL, *Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report* (1989).

identify a student as information literate.”¹⁰ When most people think about library instruction, this skills-based approach is usually what they picture: librarians visit classes and attempt to teach students research-related skills, such as “[accessing] needed information”¹¹ and “[using] information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.”¹² Eventually, ACRL reworked their approach to include a broader application and more flexible structure, replacing the *Standards* with the *Framework*.¹³ Unlike the *Standards*, the *Framework* does not prescribe learning outcomes or claim to be able to determine when a student has become “information literate.” Rather, it was purposefully built to be highly adaptable in response to a quickly-changing academic landscape, and its organization around concepts rather than specific skills facilitates this well. The structure and intention of the *Framework* allow “flexible options for implementation,” applying to both goals of different institutions and needs of different disciplines.¹⁴

In fact, a variety of disciplines have already adapted the *Framework* successfully, and more and more publications have arisen to address practical application of the *Framework* to college-level instruction. A number of these publications are companion documents created by ACRL to help some disciplines incorporate the *Framework* for their specific pedagogical needs.

Some companion documents tie the *Framework* to similar standards in individual fields. Sociology’s companion connects ACRL’s *Framework* to the five essential concepts of the Sociological Literacy Framework, with a goal of helping bridge the gap between librarians and sociologists.¹⁵ Similarly, the companion for politics, policy, and international relations seeks links between competency guidelines from their professional societies and those indicated by the *Framework*.¹⁶ The companion for social work discusses each frame in the context of how it relates to the field’s

10 *Competency Standards*, 5.

11 *Competency Standards*, 9.

12 *Competency Standards*, 13.

13 When the *Framework* was published in 2016, ACRL officially rescinded the *Standards*. For a more detailed explanation of the shift from the *Standards* to the *Framework*, see Snyder, Sampsel, and Farmer, in Abromeit (2018, 3–5).

14 *Framework*, 7–8.

15 “Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Sociology.”

16 “Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Politics, Policy, and International Relations.”

existing documents outlining appropriate professional standards, values, practices, and education for social workers.¹⁷

The flexibility of the *Framework* is essential not only between disciplines but sometimes within them. For example, the companion for women's and gender studies explains that the field encompasses so many issues that it "does not share a common set of disciplinary standards or learning outcomes."¹⁸ It lists "Actions and Attitudes" desired of students for each of the six frames that allow for a flexible application of concepts. In addition, STEM fields have their own companion, with the goal of expanding the *Framework* to centralize learner-centered pedagogy in its specific disciplines.¹⁹ Authors such as Melissa Mallon have applied the *Framework* to the education of business students through case studies.²⁰ Lijuan Xu and Nestor Gil explore how information literacy can impact studio art pedagogy.²¹

Music analysis and analytical research, as defined in the introduction, are perhaps most closely linked to the discipline of writing and literature, as exhibited in its *Framework* companion from ACRL. The *Framework* helps contextualize analysis of texts as knowledge creation within a larger scholarly conversation. Quite a bit of this maps onto music analysis:

"As with many disciplines, literary research involves a conversation between one person (e.g. an author, scholar, student, etc.) and a host of other people (e.g. publications, scholars, peers, etc.) across time and space about a 'text' or ideas relating to that text.... In order for these conversations to take place, scholars need to have an understanding of the breadth and depth of research necessary before, during, and after this conversation. Part of this research is thinking through the approach to the text that a scholar will be taking because different approaches to theory and interpretation will require different tools and methods, and/or modes of reading and writing....Those embarking on this research—whether as a novice in an introduction to composition class, an intermediate in a creative writing course, or an expert in an upper-level seminar—have the potential to create new knowledge not only through their own original ideas, but also by engaging with tools and resources available in a growing number of hosts, platforms, formats, and even disciplines."²²

17 "Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Social Work."

18 "Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Women's and Gender Studies."

19 "Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics."

20 Mallon (2015, 127–29).

21 Their approach and subsequent reflection could be valuable to a discussion of how librarian integration can benefit even non-research-focused fine arts courses by emphasizing concepts from ACRL's *Framework*. Xu and Gil (2017, 122–36).

22 "Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education:

In music, as in most other disciplines, the current conversation about the *Framework* is taking place mainly among specialist librarians. Committed to advancing information literacy among music students, the Music Library Association is currently in the process of writing its own companion to the *Framework*, though it has not been approved and disseminated yet.²³ However, a number of books and articles have been published to this effect, aimed mainly at music librarians with tips for how to use the *Framework* to enhance their instruction in music classes.²⁴ For the most part, music librarians tend to assist with music history and research methods courses, as this is where the majority of students conduct music research that requires library use. Questions about how to find information, how to evaluate sources, and how to responsibly create new knowledge fit well into these more traditional music librarian instructional roles.

But music librarianship has been pushing recently to incorporate information literacy into other music courses. The flexibility of the *Framework* has been useful in beginning to take those steps. Courses that might not need to use the library heavily can still benefit from information literacy, and the *Framework* provides a useful starting place for those conversations between librarians and faculty. For example, a number of publications suggest ways to integrate information literacy into music therapy courses, teaching students to find resources for clinical use, write annotated bibliographies, and apply their findings to case studies.²⁵ Others have designed ways to create engaging modules focused on information literacy in online music instruction.²⁶ One especially noteworthy essay even outlines a number of insightful applications of the *Framework* for performance and composition.²⁷

Despite these recent advancements, almost no research has been published about how librarians and music theory instructors could use the *Framework* to collaborate most effectively.²⁸ With the current focus on information literacy as flexible concepts

Research Competencies in Writing and Literature.”

23 Charles Roush, email message to author, August 24, 2023.

24 See, for example, Conor, (2017, 346–54); Abromeit, ed., (2018); and Christensen, Conor, and Ritter, eds., (2018).

25 For example, see Fiore and Roth, in Christensen, Conor, and Ritter (2018, 172–74); Geist and Williams, in Christensen, Conor, and Ritter (2018, 169–71); and Masko, Thormodson, and Borysewicz (2020, 143–49).

26 Scott (2018, 287–305).

27 Snyder, Sampsel, and Farmer, in Abromeit (2018, 3–13).

28 In my research for this article, I found only two sources that mentioned integrating information

rather than as specific skills, this collaboration is long overdue. Applying the *Framework* to music theory pedagogy beginning in the first semester of college, and continuing throughout the music theory sequence and into graduate school, can help students build the information literacy skills they need for successful independent analysis. With this focus of instruction, students can learn to approach analysis and analytical research with confidence, curiosity, and open-mindedness. Eventually, they can gain the ability to evaluate their own conclusions without the assistance of an instructor. For music theory faculty, it can feel as though they are always fighting the clock (or the calendar), with so many concepts to teach in so little time. The flexibility of the *Framework* makes the frames easy to incorporate into existing curricula without sacrificing much preparation or class time, while making a significant impact on the success of students' future analytical endeavors.

Methodology

- Authority is Constructed and Contextual
- Analysis as Conversation (Scholarship as Conversation)
- Analysis as Inquiry (Research as Inquiry)
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

[Frames not used: Information Creation as a Process; Information Has Value]

Example 2

The four frames addressed in this article and how they are renamed, when applicable.

This article proposes innovative ways to approach four of the six frames of the *Framework* from the perspective of music theory pedagogy. I specifically chose these four as the focus, because they seem to apply best to music analysis and analytical research. As indicated in Example 2, I renamed two of the frames to more pointedly suit discussions about analysis, though the principles in those mini-lessons are strongly connected to the original frames.

The following sections provide ACRL's definition of these four frames and explain each as it is laid out in the *Framework*, followed by some ways in which the frame can be applied to analysis and analytical research. Then two mini-lesson plans for each frame are presented, accompanied by a brief discussion of each. Additionally, I taught each of the eight mini-lessons in one of the following music theory courses at literacy into music theory pedagogy: Gades (2019); and C. Roush, K. Roush, and Dibrell (forthcoming).

the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in the Spring 2023 semester: Music Theory I (beginning undergraduate), Musical Form and Analysis (upper-level undergraduate), and a graduate tonal analysis course (non-theory master's students). To gauge the effectiveness of these lesson plans and gather ideas for future implementation, I solicited feedback from students with a survey directly after teaching the lesson. The survey asked students to write about something they learned from the mini-lesson, something they found especially helpful, anything they still had questions about, and any suggestions for improvement.²⁹ The discussion of each mini-lesson concludes with selected student feedback.

The lessons are appropriately called “mini-lessons,” intentionally created to take up less than a full class period. Ranging in suggested length from fifteen to forty-five minutes, the mini-lessons can be integrated into a longer lesson plan or attached as a supplement or add-on to any class period. The lesson plans are practical and flexible while covering a broad range of information literacy topics. It should be noted that they are not built for instructors to teach them all in a single course. Even though they do not take up an entire class period, eight new lessons are next to impossible to add to most existing courses. Instead, they can be used intermittently as suits the instructor, class, and curriculum best. Instructors can integrate them into their current curriculum throughout several semesters, teach one whenever extra class time is available, or present them outside of class time (such as during a colloquium, professional development series, or other designated student meeting time). The hope is that as more instructors become aware of the usefulness of the *Framework* in teaching music analysis and analytical research, the more ways they will find to weave the frames organically into their pedagogy.

The *Framework* does not specify an order that the frames should be discussed or implemented. As evidenced in the following sections, in my own use of these lesson plans as supplemental mini-lessons, I do not teach the frames in any particular order, either. Instructors should feel free to integrate the frames in whatever order and in whichever classes work best for their students. This article orders the four frames to facilitate a logical discussion of their various applications. This specific ordering of the frames also highlights some connections between them, as each frame is not completely discrete from the others, as may first appear to be the case. In fact, I have found this to be a benefit of how the frames function. They tie seamlessly into each other without my having to do much extra work to make these connections apparent to students.

29 All post-lesson feedback that is included in this article is done so anonymously with each student's express permission.

Frame: “Authority Is Constructed and Contextual”

“Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.”³⁰

The frame “Authority Is Constructed and Contextual” encourages students to consider how to evaluate sources of information and to ask questions about what makes a source good in a particular situation. Students should investigate authors and creators of various resources to determine if they are authorities (experts) in the topic of the resource. Authority should be considered differently depending on the type and scope of what students need to know. Students are constantly navigating a barrage of information. This frame helps them figure out what is valuable for them, what is not, and how to tell the difference.

The concept of bias plays into an evaluation of authority. Students should understand that bias does not have to prompt a value judgement—everyone has bias—but it is important when considering an authority to acknowledge what biases that authority has. When students know where someone is coming from, they can make more informed decisions about their level of authority on a topic. Similarly, students can examine their own biases, asking if these biases started with people they have considered authorities in their life. Since students are budding authorities in their own right, understanding their own biases and where they may have originated helps them become more responsible authorities themselves.

In addition, this frame provides an exceptional starting point for a discussion of systemic bias. Students can begin to address why they believe certain people have more authority in certain areas than others. It is crucial for students to question how decisions about authority are made at higher levels, who tends to be excluded, and why this is the case.

“Authority Is Constructed and Contextual” is useful for analysis and analytical research in a number of ways. Instructors can discuss issues of the Western canon with students, examining where it comes from and who has historically had the power to make decisions about what music is “valuable” to perform, study, and analyze (and why). Instructors can use ideas from this frame to point out the contextual usefulness of different resources and different types of scores or recordings. When reading about

30 Framework, 12.

music or finding scores, it is important to think about where the information comes from (i.e., to learn about the author, publisher, editor, organization, institution, database, website, etc.). If the origin of the information is difficult or impossible to determine, students should see this as a red flag. This frame helps students acknowledge their biases and the biases of others, including certain views and assumptions of different schools of thought. Bias can impact what musicians choose to analyze, what methods they choose, and the conclusions they draw.³¹ Examining aspects of authority in authors necessitates the differentiation among facts, theories, and opinions; instructors can similarly caution students against asserting analytical ideas that lack sound reasoning and examples. As they grow as musicians, students will learn to function as responsible authorities in their fields.

LESSON PLAN #1: Bias and Authority

The goal of this mini-lesson is for students to express their opinions about different pieces of music and then to examine where these ideas originated. What authorities in their life have influenced how they think about music? Students should also recognize that other people likely think of them as music authorities and that they should take this responsibility seriously.

I taught this lesson near the beginning of the semester in Music Theory I to plant the seeds of these ideas early in music students' college journeys. One trend among post-lesson student comments was that it caused them to think about how Western classical music was not the only music worth studying. A few students expressed how useful it was to ponder who they looked up to as authorities in music, realizing where their biases come from and how they could impact their own future students.³²

This mini-lesson caught at least one student's attention more significantly than even I had expected. A few days after attending this class, they expressed a desire to continue this conversation further one-on-one with me. They asked why we primarily teach classical music in music school and whether this is still useful for today's musicians. This opened the door for a fruitful discussion of the benefits and limitations of the way formal music instruction has worked historically in the United States. We discussed

³¹ For example, Philip Ewell discusses at length the racial bias implicit in analyzing music outside the Western classical tradition using Western classical music theory. For one instance of this, see Ewell (2023b).

³² Because the class was mostly full of music education majors, I was able to personally connect to them by addressing the effect they could have on their future students. During the discussion in the lesson, several students mentioned past or current teachers as being authorities who influenced their biases, opening the door for the realization that they have an opportunity to become responsible authorities as teachers.

steps that music educators are making toward necessary change, the reality that systemic change is usually slow, and the actions we can take now to value more musical traditions. Similarly, there was a trend in the post-lesson feedback that this lesson brought up questions from a number of students about why music school in general is classically based, whether this is good, and if it can be changed. I could imagine this lesson providing a useful starting point for deeper discussions about canon, including who has historically made decisions about what kind of (and whose) music is valuable and how we might expand the canon to decenter whiteness and maleness.

LESSON PLAN #2: Evaluating Sources

The goal of this mini-lesson is to encourage students to consider the source of musical information they find. Does it come from an authority? How can they determine the level of authority someone has on a specific aspect of music? Students are encouraged to think about specializations within fields; “musician” or even “music scholar” is a broad term.

I taught this lesson in Music Theory I, and students especially enjoyed the analogies. Though many scenarios exist in which someone could be an authority on both car repair and cooking, most students in my class found it humorous to imagine asking the specific car authority they chose about recipes. However, the class became more somber as students earnestly considered what they would do if faced with a serious medical concern. Because they connected emotionally to the non-music examples, they remained attentive and engaged while we discussed the application of these concepts to music research.

Student participation in the brainstorming activity was the most exciting part of this mini-lesson. My students came up with ideas for determining musical authority that I had not considered, such as evaluating someone’s performance ability. One student mentioned that they knew a music teacher who thought the guitar was overrated. This launched a discussion of when it might or might not be useful to approach that specific music authority with questions. Other ideas included determining someone’s educational background, finding and evaluating their publications, and asking trusted authorities for advice about other possible authorities.

Frame: “Analysis as Conversation”

“Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.”³³

This frame, originally named “Scholarship as Conversation” in the *Framework*, emphasizes situating new research within existing research. Though this concept is not new, shifting its focus so that students think of themselves as members of a larger conversation provides a nuanced view that communicates more clearly how research is advanced over time.³⁴ In this frame, students’ voices and other historically marginalized voices, often due to issues surrounding race, gender, and class, are elevated. Finding sources that disagree with each other is welcome rather than daunting, and building upon existing research does not necessitate full agreement with that research. To this effect, the frame encourages students to clearly indicate the ideas they engage with through proper citations, to think critically about the information they encounter, and to acknowledge why different perspectives are essential and in which contexts they are most useful.

Rachel Elizabeth Scott adapted the name of this frame to fit her pedagogical application of it in her article “Performance as Conversation.”³⁵ I am using a similar tactic here by renaming the frame “Analysis as Conversation.” The purpose of this renaming is to claim that the principles from this frame clearly apply to analytical situations. Just as conversations are personal, so are analytical perspectives. Students sometimes struggle with asserting their ideas in analysis, especially if they see disagreements in other sources. “Analysis as Conversation” encourages students to consider those disagreements carefully³⁶ but not to shy away from their own unique contributions if they add to the conversation. In fact, as long as students use analytical tools appropriately and back up their claims, “contradictions” in analysis are particularly valuable because they highlight different interpretations of musical works and broaden our understanding of them.

Expert analysts learn to live and thrive in the “discomfort” of contradicting ideas and gray areas. This can be a difficult concept for students, as many of them incorrectly

33 *Framework*, 20.

34 One author agrees that the concept of a conversation works well to get students to understand how scholarship grows. See Scott (2017, 249).

35 Scott (2017, 239–50).

36 This frame overlaps with some ideas from “Authority is Constructed and Contextual.”

but understandably think that music theory is a black-and-white, right-or-wrong subject. This can be an unfortunate byproduct of early and even intermediate stages of music theory instruction, where instructors traditionally impress upon students the importance of correctly writing scales and key signatures, following part-writing rules, resolving tendency tones, and labeling chords. Integrating lessons about information literacy in general, and “Analysis as Conversation” more specifically, throughout the undergraduate theory curriculum can help alleviate students’ discomfort with nuanced interpretations and ambiguous passages of music. It can encourage students to engage with the conversation of analysis, even if it is uncomfortable for them at first. The conversation lives in the gray areas. Music students need to know how to build on others’ analytical conclusions, question them, take them in different directions, bring in other voices, and back up their own ideas.

LESSON PLAN #3: Situating Your Perspective

The goal of this mini-lesson is to guide students through a critical evaluation of two articles on the same artistic work. Students should see how the sources differ in authority, scope, and intended audience. From this, they can decide how to engage with the articles as if they were going to analyze this work themselves. The lesson can focus on any two sources on the same artistic work, as long as they approach the work from different perspectives. The artistic work could be a piece of music, but it could also be another type of work that students interact with in their daily lives, such as a book or movie. Though selecting sources that are just opinions or value judgements about the work could facilitate this lesson, it is probably best to find articles or reviews that address whether the work in question is important—or whether analysis of it is necessary—and why the author believes this.

I taught this mini-lesson to a group of upper-level music majors in their last few weeks of their last music theory course, Musical Form and Analysis. The article excerpts I gave them³⁷ did not necessarily disagree, but they approached an album from widely different perspectives. Additionally, the articles were of two significantly different types. One was peer-reviewed and the other was not; one was written by a music theorist and the other was not. Both excerpts had some analytical thoughts about the music and the larger ramifications of the album to the intended audience of the articles.³⁸

37 Ewell (2019); Singleton (2015).

38 It should be noted that searching for different articles that fit well into the lesson could significantly increase the preparation time for this lesson plan.

While some students seemed unsure that the less “scholarly” article was worthwhile, one student spoke up about a hypothetical music education scenario in which both articles would be valuable. This caused the other students to reconsider their earlier dismissal of the article. In their survey feedback after this lesson, students indicated that they felt more confident in critiquing a source to determine whether to use it and how to do so appropriately. One student said that the lesson taught them to “categorize information for research and see what information is useful.” Another said that the most helpful part of the lesson was “finding out the credentials of authors and what audience they are writing for.”

LESSON PLAN #4: Conversations with Sources

The goal of this mini-lesson is for students to understand that they do not need to agree with everything an author says. To achieve this, students practice engaging with a source about music with points that may not align with their opinions. Then, they decide if they do, in fact, agree with all or part of the article’s points. This mini-lesson emphasizes that students do not have to—and should not—take everything they read at face value, even if it is “scholarly.” An important part of this lesson is having students articulate in writing what they think and why they think it, backing up their ideas, a crucial skill for performing analysis effectively. It also reinforces that their thoughts and ideas about analysis are valuable and can contribute to a larger body of scholarship. They should take from this lesson an understanding that a conversation with sources includes asking themselves if they agree or not, and why. In addition to directly engaging the frame of “Analysis as Conversation,” the frame “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” should play into students’ decisions about whether they agree with a source.

I taught this lesson the last week of the semester in the graduate tonal analysis course, because I wanted to try it with advanced students with well-developed critical thinking skills. I specifically chose an article with a philosophical bent to encourage various responses from students.³⁹ Directing them to work in pairs allowed them to work through some ideas verbally before committing to them in writing. Many post-lesson comments showed that students engaged with a number of specific skills during the activity. They mentioned “focusing on the purpose of the article,” “researching the author,” “[articulating] the strengths and weaknesses of an article,” and “understanding bias . . . and how that can color an argument.” Pointing directly to

³⁹ The article I chose was Yob (2010, 145–51). It should be noted that searching for a different article that fits well into the lesson could significantly increase the preparation time for this lesson plan.

the goal of this lesson, one student wrote, “I learned that I don’t have to [agree] with everything I read.”

Frame: “Analysis as Inquiry”

“Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field.”⁴⁰

This frame, originally named “Research as Inquiry” in the *Framework*, helps students see the big picture of research. It encourages students to determine an appropriate scope of investigation and choose various research methods based on their goals. Students learn to formulate questions based on gaps in research and to break down complex questions into simple ones. Emphasis is placed on organizing information in meaningful ways and synthesizing meaning from multiple sources. Through this process, students need persistence and flexibility, embracing intellectual humility and asking for help when needed.

I have renamed this frame “Analysis as Inquiry” to indicate that many of its concepts regarding research can seamlessly map onto musical analysis. Students need to be able to fit analytical inquiry into manageable projects. They should learn to ask questions about musical works, understanding how each concept presented in class has direct implications for answering questions about music. When presented with multiple analytical tools, they need to be able to choose appropriate tools to answer different analytical questions about different types of music. In addition, they should realize that ambiguity in analysis is an opportunity, not a problem. As students pursue analytical work from these perspectives, their discoveries will produce even more questions, sometimes requiring them to change course or rethink their ideas. Analytical projects that students complete can also point to future project ideas, curiosities, and investigations.

LESSON PLAN #5: Let Music Guide Analysis

The goal of this mini-lesson is to demonstrate that not all analytical methods work for all pieces of music. Students should learn that they need to choose methods based on the goals of the analysis and on the problem or question in front of them. The piece should help guide the analysis; in other words, students should start their analytical process with the piece, not with the desired method. This realization will help them choose appropriate analytical approaches to music when they do not have an instructor to tell them which ones are appropriate.

⁴⁰ *Framework*, 18.

In this mini-lesson, students experience the “problem” of Roman numerals not working for a piece. Students do not actually analyze the piece in this lesson, but they come up with ideas that would help them do so. This lesson plan works well when placed right after learning Roman numerals but before moving on to other specific analytical methods. In my experience as an instructor, I have found that students tend to default to Roman numerals when asked to analyze a piece. This lesson specifically helps students realize in their first semester of music study that there are many ways to analyze music and that Roman numerals are not a useful tool in every scenario. They should not have the impression that analysis must be harmonically based or that all pieces worth analyzing have a Western tonal foundation.⁴¹

I taught this lesson in Music Theory I the week after we covered how to use Roman numerals. Students enthusiastically participated in this lesson. Somewhat to my surprise, they understood right away that Roman numerals would not work for the piece, and they quickly came up with a variety of other musical features that sparked their curiosity in this example. Some ideas included accents, phrasing, timbre, and patterns. Students commented in post-lesson feedback that they learned that “there are different ways to analyze music,” “not every form of analysis is applicable to every type of music,” and “music should be analyzed how it’s written.”

LESSON PLAN #6: Narrowing the Scope

The goal of this mini-lesson is to teach students to structure an analytical topic to fit different sizes and types of projects. To limit analytical inquiry to make it manageable, students need to examine their goals and their intended audience and then break complex ideas into smaller, simpler ones that they can more easily explore. First, students should decide what they want to say. Then, they can decide how to limit their analysis. What ideas do they have, and which ones should they examine further? Practicing narrowing the scope of analysis to various lengths in this lesson demonstrates that the same process can be applied to different types of projects.

I taught this mini-lesson in the graduate tonal analysis course because one of the major aspects of the course was analytical writing. Since it was early in the semester, the students had very little to no prior experience with analytical writing, but their first assignment was due soon. Post-lesson student feedback showed that the mini-lesson did indeed help them feel more confident for their upcoming essay assignment. A high percentage of students identified discussion with peers as helpful in formulating their ideas. Another comment that came up numerous times was that the activity helped

⁴¹ Interestingly, one graduate student referenced this tendency in a comment for Lesson Plan #6.

them think about how to focus on a specific topic. Students mentioned that the lesson made them realize “how little music you need to look at to write 500 words” and “even [a] small segment, passage, or phrase has a lot to say.” Addressing a different way to narrow a topic, one student said they wanted to learn “to take a more expanded view of a musical excerpt. I am really vicious with going in to harmony deeper than it should be done.”

Frame: “Searching as Strategic Exploration”

“Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.”⁴²

If “Analysis as Inquiry” looks at the big picture, then “Searching as Strategic Exploration” directly addresses the steps needed to get there. This frame explores how to search for information and adapt searching strategies along the way. As students improve their searching strategies, they are able to find even more valuable information. Usually, a single search, such as in a library catalog or database, does not immediately reveal all necessary or useful resources. This frame teaches students patience with the process. They might have to refine their searching strategies, and this should be expected and appreciated. Research is rarely about finding the “right” answer to a question. Instead, quality research relies on the researcher to compare and evaluate sources. Students’ research processes should account for the complexity of different perspectives, overlapping with ideas in “Analysis as Conversation.”

Although research papers in music programs are traditionally considered the domain of music history courses, research is also applicable to music analysis. For students to be in conversation with other analysis, they must be able to find articles, books, recordings, scores, and other music resources. Analysis, like research, is rarely about finding the “right” answer. Students should value the analytical interpretations of others and find worth in comparing and evaluating various ideas about music. As budding analytical authorities, students can find and use more complex tools the more they explore existing analytical research.

LESSON PLAN #7: Creating a Research Log

The goal of this mini-lesson is to teach students to keep track of how they search for sources to avoid redundant searching and to develop new searching strategies.

⁴² *Framework*, 22.

When students intentionally focus on where they search, specific keywords they use, how they limit searches, and what they find, they can refine their searching abilities both for the present analytical research and for future projects. Ultimately, this mini-lesson's focus is centered not on what students find, but rather on how they search. The research log should document their exploration by recording thought processes and actions taken. It should show clearly what was successful and what was not.⁴³

I taught this lesson in the graduate analysis course to begin a new unit on popular music analysis. We had not yet read any sources on the topic, but we had begun discussing how to join analytical conversations as part of the frame “Analysis as Conversation.” Post-lesson student feedback indicated that they found the activity useful and illuminating. One student commented, “When looking for sources you need to spend time finding what works best for your project.” Another simply stated, “This lesson helped me become more organized with my research.”

LESSON PLAN #8: Information Need

The goal of this mini-lesson is to prompt students to determine their information “need.” In other words, they will ask themselves what they need to know to answer their questions and where they need to go to find that information.⁴⁴ In analytical research, information need helps determine how much research must be done, what types of sources should be consulted, and how many layers of information must be uncovered. Sometimes, information need indicates that various perspectives are necessary to provide context to students’ analytical questions and claims, overlapping with “Analysis as Conversation.” The concept of information need as it relates to analytical research is especially practical for music students’ futures. What would they need to know to analyze a piece before introducing it to their middle school band? What would they need to know to analyze a piece in order to enhance their performance of it? What would they need to know to write an analytical paper to present at a conference? What would they need to know to write an analytical article for a peer-reviewed journal? Where would they find these different types and scopes of information?

I taught this lesson in Musical Form and Analysis. Post-lesson student feedback was positive overall and exhibited deep engagement with the lesson. The most

⁴³ If this mini-lesson seems overwhelming to students, one suggestion is to give them a research log that has already been started and ask them to add to it, instead of asking them to create one from scratch.

⁴⁴ Mallon (2015, 129).

common comment was that students enjoyed the analogies, which helped them connect with the concept of information need for analytical research. Other comments indicated that the mini-lesson caused students to think more deeply about planning their research and how much time different types of research could take. One student mentioned, “I learned how to structure my research better when it comes to finding information and what information will be best for my research,” and a second student commented that “even though you have a lot of research, you will not use everything.” Another added, “We shouldn’t just choose the first link we see and expect it to be great for our research.”

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that using ACRL’s *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* to structure lessons applying information literacy to music theory pedagogy helps students develop the skills necessary for independent music analysis. The specific mini-lessons included ask students to examine bias in themselves and others and scrutinize others’ level of authority for particular concepts, which affects analytical assumptions and conclusions. They teach students how to evaluate analytical ideas and how to fit their own ideas into the larger conversation surrounding analysis. Students learn from the mini-lessons how to choose appropriate tools for their analysis, how to limit the length and depth of certain analytical projects as necessary, how to search for existing analytical perspectives most effectively, and how to determine what information they need for their analysis and how to find it.

Personally, as I taught these mini-lessons in the Spring 2023 semester, I observed several unintended effects beyond the scopes of the lessons themselves. Although I waited until the end of the semester to teach Lesson Plan #4, “Conversations with Sources,” its principles were easy to work into class discussion for weeks beforehand. The language of this frame, specifically the concept of conversation, helped me consistently communicate to students the importance of contextualizing their own analytical ideas. In Lesson Plan #5, “Let Music Guide Analysis,” beginner students immediately took to the concept that Roman numerals are not always appropriate analytical tools. However, some graduate students were simultaneously struggling to escape that mindset. This reinforced that this lesson is important to teach early in the music theory sequence, before students construct the idea that, because music theory courses tend to spend so much time teaching principles of harmony, it must be the most important thing to consider in analysis. One of the extra advantages of Lesson Plan

#7, “Creating a Research Log,” is that it provides an opportunity to introduce students to library resources they may not know. Instead of teaching students about searching strategies and then asking them to apply them, this lesson allows an instructor to demonstrate those same skills in service to the practical task in front of students—to address their information need.⁴⁵

Overall, students’ response to the mini-lessons was positive. In post-lesson feedback, they reported learning the concepts intended by the lessons, thinking more deeply about new ways to approach analysis, and making connections between information literacy concepts and analytical research. As more instructors implement information literacy into the music theory curriculum more fully, the hope is that the attitudes and approaches that students internalize about how to conduct independent analysis will transfer naturally to future undergraduate courses and to graduate school. Lessons centered on music theory information literacy will help students become better analysts and scholars, responsible members of the music community who think critically, research ethically, and engage with diverse voices as part of the conversation about music.⁴⁶

Currently, many music theory faculty are significantly rethinking their pedagogy, especially the traditional focus on limited types of music and concepts. Essential components of this consideration encompass inclusivity, diversity, and de-centering whiteness,⁴⁷ all values strongly supported by the *Framework* and already heavily emphasized by some fields. For example, music theory instructors may find useful many of the “Actions and Attitudes” highlighted in the *Framework* companion for women’s and gender studies, including “creates new meaning by engaging across multiple perspectives,” “seeks marginalized voices in respectful ways,” and “questions traditional forms of authority.”⁴⁸ As the field of music theory continues to engage in productive conversations about diversity and equity in the discipline, the time is ripe

45 This is a similar pedagogical approach to Mallon’s lesson plan for business students. She presents realistic case studies that lead students to seek resources; this provides an opening for her to teach students about relevant resources in a meaningful context. Mallon, (2015, 127–29).

46 The ideas presented in this article would benefit from a longer study in the future, tracing students’ progress over the course of several semesters to verify the long-term benefits of incorporating information literacy into teaching music analysis.

47 Philip Ewell is most notably at the forefront of these important discussions. See, for example, Ewell (2020) and Ewell (2023a). See also Robin Attas’s work, including Attas (2022) and Attas (2019). Especially noteworthy in taking practical steps to diversifying music theory pedagogy is Hoag, ed. (2023).

48 “Companion Document: Women’s and Gender Studies,” ACRL.

to integrate concepts from the *Framework* throughout various levels of music theory instruction.

Additionally, the *Framework* provides ample opportunities for music theory faculty to collaborate with music librarians or other instructional librarians. Many librarians are familiar with the *Framework*, and the field of library science often focuses on implementation of it in its conferences and publications. According to Laura Snyder, Laurie Sampsel, and Lesley Farmer, “information literacy is on the forefront of most music librarians’ minds and is a topic revisited with regularity.”⁴⁹ Most sources regarding music information literacy are written primarily by and for librarians. Though faculty can certainly benefit from the ideas presented, more thorough investigations into the practical application of information literacy for faculty are needed. Collaboration between faculty and librarians, in both practical instruction and formal research, will only strengthen the positive impact of information literacy on music theory pedagogy. With the core concepts of the *Framework* as a backdrop, librarians and music theory instructors can head in the same direction for the betterment of students.

The goal of this project was to implement ACRL’s *Framework* into music analysis pedagogy to better equip music students to perform analysis on their own. But the process revealed that information literacy provides even more benefits to students beyond their musical lives. The flexible and broadly applicable concepts in the *Framework* help build transferrable skills in students. Attitudes and abilities emphasized by the *Framework* such as critical thinking, writing skills, intellectual humility, open-mindedness, identification of misinformation, and understanding a broader picture of research will benefit students in every area of their lives and in any jobs they wish to pursue. The inclusion of information literacy in the music theory curriculum can help highlight the importance of music theory pedagogy for the twenty-first-century musician. Additionally, the flexibility of the *Framework* will allow for the continued integration of information literacy in the future, its implementation easily adjustable as students’ needs change.

The *Framework* also has the potential to afford instructors a valuable mindset shift. Even if they do not explicitly implement information literacy lessons such as the ones in this article, they can incorporate the concepts into their everyday teaching in small yet significant ways. They can talk about authority frequently to students, discuss how research is in conversation with other research, and encourage students to examine many methods of analysis—and perhaps search for new ones—before

49 Snyder, Sampsel, and Farmer, in Abromeit (2018, 3).

analyzing a specific piece. It is possible to communicate the information literacy concepts central to the *Framework* to students in all kinds of ways in every music theory course, even without special lesson plans.

The longer I teach music theory, the more I rely on the *Framework* because I recognize the value of its organization around concepts, its flexibility of implementation, and its goal of discipline-specific application. This article has shown that there is a strong connection between information literacy and music analysis. If instructors allow the principles of the *Framework* to shift their approach to music theory pedagogy, they can access increased creativity and clarity while teaching concepts of information literacy. In turn, music students will acquire the ability to conduct independent music analysis with greater confidence, critical thinking, and focus. Learning to analyze music in increasingly valuable ways is a lifelong endeavor. Information literacy can help equip students to continue this journey on their own after graduation, when they are no longer guided by an instructor.

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Lesson Plan #1: Bias and Authority

Frame: “Authority is Constructed and Contextual”

Suggested length: 30–40 minutes

Level of Class:

This works well with beginner students who are already familiar with the concepts of authority and bias.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will identify some of their own biases and learn to recognize bias in themselves as budding authorities in their fields.
2. Students will identify whose authority they trust about musical styles, genres, composers, artists, etc.

Introduction:

- Review the concepts of authority and bias.
 - Authority: A person’s level of expertise on a topic, or an expert in that topic. An authority in one area is not always an authority in other areas.
 - Bias: A personal perspective that contextualizes each person’s work. Bias is always present but is not always negative. However, it should be acknowledged.

Activity:

- Ask each student to provide one musical style, genre, composer, artist, piece, etc., that they think fits into each prompt you provide. Some suggestions for prompts:
 - Scholarly music, music essential for musicians to know, music they do not expect to study in music school, serious music, fun music, boring music, culturally significant music, nostalgic music.
 - Choose the number of prompts based on class size and desired lesson length.
- Collect students’ answers and make lists to show them the various answers for each category. Are they similar or contradictory? Why did/might different people give conflicting/contrasting answers?

Discussion:

- Ask students to reflect on their own answers to the activity. What kind of biases do their answers reveal about them? They are becoming authorities on musical topics, and soon (if not already), their students, peers, and non-musician family and friends may look to them as authorities. This comes with a certain level of responsibility to acknowledge their own biases.
- Where do their ideas and opinions come from? This question is especially important for prompts regarding “scholarly,” “serious,” or “significant” music. Whose authority do we trust to make these decisions? What kind of biases might they have?
- Discuss how all music can be worthy of examination, since all music has value in some way.

Lesson Plan #2: Evaluating Sources*

Frame: “Authority Is Constructed and Contextual”

Suggested length: 15–30 minutes

Level of Class:

This works well with beginner students.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will decide if a source of information is reputable.
2. Students will choose authorities to provide information based on the context.
3. Students will apply these skills to searching for information about music.

Activity – Examples of Authority:

- Ask students to think of someone they would go to for help in the following scenarios:
 - You’re having car problems.
 - You’re making dinner and have questions about how to follow the recipe.
- How did students know who was an authority on these issues? Did they choose the same person for both problems? Discuss how authority is based on the context.
- Now think about a more serious scenario:
 - Your doctor tells you that you need surgery, but you want a second opinion. Where do you go or who do you ask?
- Discuss how a more serious question requires more careful scrutiny of authority.

Discussion – Application to Music Research:

- Discuss applications of these same principles to music research.
- One possible example: music professors may have expertise in one area but not another, even if both areas are related to music.

Brainstorming Activity:

- On the board, write down some ways students think they could determine the level and type of someone’s authority in music. Possible answers could include educational background, peer-reviewed research, performance ability, work experience, endorsement from other trusted authorities, etc.

* Ideas in this lesson plan were sparked by Steven Hoover, “Establishing and Applying Evaluation Criteria,” in *Teaching Information Literacy Threshold Concepts: Lesson Plans for Librarians*, ed. Hazel McClure, Patricia Bravender, and Gayle Schaub (Chicago: ACRL, 2015), 74–78.

Lesson Plan #3: Situating Your Perspective

Frame: “Analysis as Conversation”

Suggested length: 20–40 minutes

Level of Class:

This is best with intermediate students. Beginner students could also benefit if the writing samples are easy enough for them to understand.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will explain the value of situating their analytical perspectives in existing scholarship.
2. Students will critically engage with scholarship based on their evaluation of its authorship (authority), publication details, and intended audience.

Suggested Writing Samples (others can be used instead):

- Give students these excerpts to read either in advance or during the lesson.
 - Ewell, Philip A. “Introduction to the Symposium on Kendrick Lamar’s *To Pimp a Butterfly*.” Music Theory Online 25, no. 1 (March 2019): Paragraphs 1–2. <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.19.25.1/mto.19.25.1.ewell.html>
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Introduction:

- Emphasize that differing perspectives and even disagreements are valuable in analysis.

Activity/Discussion:

- Students should write down their thoughts about each excerpt, asking/considering:
 - Who is the author? Do they have authority (expertise) in this area?
 - What is the publication name and/or site?
 - Is the publication peer reviewed?
 - What seems to be the goal of the publication?
 - Who seems to be the intended audience?
 - In what situation might this information be useful?
 - How do the articles differ? Do they complement each other in any way?
- When students are done reading, ask them to share their thoughts with the class.
- Discuss how each article contributes to the conversation about the artistic work, even though they are different. Their perspectives relate to the goals and audiences of the publications. Ask students if they would consider using each article, and in what contexts.

If Time Allows:

- Show students how to find some of the details invoked by the questions above.

Lesson Plan #4: Conversations with Sources

Frame: “Analysis as Conversation”

Suggested length: 30–45 minutes

Level of class:

This is best with advanced students, such as a low-level graduate course.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will critically engage with a text to decide if they agree.
2. Students will articulate why they agree or disagree with a given text.
3. Students will understand that they do not have to agree with everything they read, even if it is scholarly and/or peer reviewed.

Suggested Writing Sample (others can be used instead):

- Yob, Iris M. “Why Is Music a Language of Spirituality?” *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 145–51.
- Assign this to be read in advance of the class.

Introduction:

- Discuss how situating analytical research within an existing body of knowledge is an engagement in a larger conversation. Engaging in this conversation sometimes means challenging others’ ideas. Disagreement among scholars, when done respectfully and responsibly, is crucial in furthering knowledge.
- Some questions to ask to critically evaluate sources:
 - Is the author an authority on this topic? What biases do they have?
 - How does the author situate their own work within the existing conversation?
 - How does the author build their argument and back up their claims?
 - Do other sources agree/disagree?

Activity:

- Divide students into pairs for this activity. Each pair should write a 1–2 paragraph response to the reading, imagining that this is a full response article. They should consider:
 - Where did the article come from?
 - Do you want to bring anyone else into the conversation?
 - Do you support or refute the author’s points?
 - Use good examples/arguments to back up WHY you agree or disagree.
- At the end, ask each pair to share their thoughts with the class.

Lesson Plan #5: Let Music Guide Analysis

Frame: “Analysis as Inquiry”

Suggested length: 15–20 minutes

Level of Class:

This works best right after students learn how to use Roman numerals.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will recognize when harmonic analysis would not be effective in explaining how a particular piece works.
2. Students will identify appropriate modes of analysis based on the musical, historical, and/or stylistic context of a piece.

Musical Example (others can be used instead):

- Steve Reich’s *Clapping Music*.
- The chosen example must be difficult or impossible to make sense of with Roman numerals.
- Listen to the piece as a class while following the score.

Discussion Questions:

- Would applying Roman numerals to this piece be an effective way to begin to analyze it? Why or why not?
- What other musical features stand out that aren’t harmonic in nature?
- How might we discuss the recording/score using these more prominent musical features?

Activity:

- As a class, compile a list of musical aspects of the piece that could be examined further to analyze it.
- Compile a second list of reasons that Roman numerals and harmony are not helpful methods of analysis in this case. Discuss why not every analytical tool is useful for every piece.
- You do not need to actually do any further analysis; just identify ways you could.

Follow-up (optional):

- At the end of the semester or in a future semester, return to the bullet points created today and ask students to complete a more in-depth analysis of the piece, appropriate to the piece and style, using the more advanced tools they have acquired.

Lesson Plan #6: Narrowing the Scope

Frame: “Analysis as Inquiry”

Suggested length: 30–45 minutes

Level of Class:

This works well in a class where analytical writing is assigned, before students begin their first major writing assignment.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will break complex analytical ideas into smaller, simpler ones.
2. Students will appropriately limit the scope of their analytical inquiry to fit various paper lengths.
3. Students will appreciate the necessity of intellectual humility and getting help when needed.

Musical Example (others can be used instead):

- Arcangelo Corelli’s *Christmas Concerto*.
- The chosen example should be somewhat complex with many analytical possibilities.
- Give everyone a score, and listen to the example several times throughout the lesson.

Activity:

- Divide students into groups of 3–4 students each.
- While students are working, walk around the room to see if they have questions. Encourage them to practice intellectual humility and ask for the help they need.
- Assign students a broad analytical topic to work with, such as “rhythm and meter.”
 - Make clear to students that they are not going to actually analyze the piece in this lesson. They should make a plan as to how they would approach an analysis of the piece using this topic.
 - If desired, design this lesson as an early step of an analytical writing project focused on this piece.
- First, students should decide in general what they want to examine. Then, they need to decide how to limit their scope based on the length of paper.
 - Students should find several main points they could make about the piece that fit within the given topic.
 - Then, they must break these points down into analytical questions/ideas that would work well for specific lengths of paper.
- Ask students to limit their analytical inquiry to ideas that would fit into a typical 20-minute conference paper.
- Next, ask students to limit their inquiry even further to ideas that would fit into a 500-word essay.
- To conclude, students should share with the class how they decided to limit their topics to the different lengths. If anyone had trouble fitting their ideas into the scope of the project, ask other students to suggest ways to help.

Lesson Plan #7: Creating a Research Log

Frame: “Searching as Strategic Exploration”

Suggested length: 30–45 minutes

Level of Class:

This works best with advanced students who know how to search for analytical articles.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will create a research log when searching for sources.
2. Students will understand the value of a research log.
3. Students will adjust and adapt their search strategies as they go.

Musical Example (others can be used instead):

- “Strut Your Stuff” by Stone City Band.
- The chosen example is most effective if it does not fit well into analytical methods they already know.

Activity:

- Divide students into groups of 3–4 students each. Make sure each group has access to a computer or other device that will allow them to search for sources online.
- Play the musical example.
- Ask groups to come up with one question or curiosity about the work. They will search for sources that address their question/curiosity in some way.
- Each group must build a research log.
 - The research log should document where they’re searching, how, and when. What did they find? Where did they find it? Was it useful? This should be as detailed as possible.
 - The research log becomes a record of what they’ve thought about and what actions they’ve taken so that they could pick up the project later and build on it.
- As they work, encourage students to reflect on what methods are working best and to adjust their future searching strategies accordingly.

Considerations for the Instructor:

- This lesson is a great place to introduce various resources, how to access them, and how to use them.
 - This lesson also provides an opportunity to invite a librarian into your class.
- Focus not on what the students are finding, but rather how they’re finding it.
- Emphasize to students that they may not find what they’re looking for right away. It’s important to be able to adjust your strategies.
- Make sure students are considering authority when choosing sources.
- If desired, assign the activity as a homework assignment that leads to class discussion.

Follow-up (optional):

- If students end up finding quality sources that especially interest them, you can incorporate them into future lessons or assign them as readings.

LESSON PLAN #8: Information Need

Frame: “Searching as Strategic Exploration”

Suggested length: 20–30 minutes

Level of Class:

Any level of student could benefit from this lesson.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Students will determine what they need to know when working on a music-based project.
2. Students will decide where to begin looking for the information they need when working on a music-based project.

Guiding Questions:*

- “What do you need to know?”
- “Where can you locate the information you need?”

Activity #1:

- Divide the board into 3 segments that correspond to the following scenarios:
 - You are planning a lunch for you and a friend.
 - You are planning a holiday meal for 10 family members.
 - You are planning a wedding.
- Ask students to brainstorm what they would need to do to plan these events. What do they need to decide? Where do they need to go? What do they need to prepare? Write their ideas in the corresponding segments on the board.
- This should show that different sizes and scopes of projects have different needs, and different needs require different processes (sometimes more complex).
 - Emphasize that not only do different events require a different amount of work, but the most planning-intensive and expensive event (the wedding) necessitates a comparison of different options; no options work best for all weddings.

Activity #2:

- Now do the same activity with these 3 new scenarios, focusing on the guiding questions:
 - You need to find how many operas Puccini wrote.
 - You are writing a final analysis paper on an aria from Turandot.
 - You are writing a dissertation about phrase structure in Puccini’s operas.
- Students should identify the different types and amount of information they will need for the different projects. Write their ideas in the corresponding segments on the board. Discuss some of the places they can go to find this information.
 - Emphasize that the type and scope of the information need determines the type and scope of the research required. The dissertation necessitates a much more complex type of research, whereas the number of Puccini’s operas can be found with a quick internet search.
- Lead students in a brief discussion about weighing options and comparing sources. Analytical research is not about finding the “right” answer, but about deciding what is useful.

* *Framework-based questions taken from Melissa Mallon, “Approaching Problems Like a Professional,” in Teaching Information Literacy Threshold Concepts: Lesson Plans for Librarians, ed. Hazel McClure, Patricia Bravender, and Gayle Schaub (Chicago: ACRL, 2015), 129.*

