Space, Materials, and Threshold Concepts:
A Report of CAML 2014 Session E

By Andrew Senior

CAML Session E: Friday, May 30, 2014

Carolyn Doi (University of Saskatchewan): "Listening in the Library: Considerations for Space and Equipment"

Becky Smith (Memorial University): "A Binding Experience"

Laura Snyder (Mount Allison University): "'Threshold Concepts' and Information Literacy for Music"

Carolyn Doi (University of Saskatchewan) opened the second Friday morning session with a presentation on a Spring 2013 project to revitalize an audiovisual listening space at the University of Saskatchewan's Education and Music Library. Prior observations had established the area was underused and, with single-occupant carrels and outdated or malfunctioning hardware, was no longer suited to the varied needs and activities of its users—including, for example, accommodating laptops and score reading. Beginning with a needs assessment and consultation process, the project then focused on transforming the area into a more flexible social space, removing the carrels and fostering creativity through added group listening facilities, new equipment, software, and comfortable seating. During the presentation, Doi used plans and photographs of the space, equipment, and furniture to provide further detail as well as to offer helpful information gleaned from the process. She noted that in spite of some challenges encountered during project implementation, there was ultimately an observed increase in usage, with feedback from students and faculty being, for the most part, very positive. A future plan for the space is the proposed addition of tables that were originally part of the 2013 project but could not be included at the time.

In the following presentation, Becky Smith (Memorial University) outlined a new procedure for binding and processing scores and parts implemented during 2013 at Memorial University's Music Resource Centre. Historically, score processing had not been a priority and many items—

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subject to repeated wear and tear—were in varying states of disrepair. Smith highlighted the steps taken, such as the examination of 250 high-use items, to identify which material should be retroactively processed. As well, she described the priorities established for treating new scores going forward, including a small proportion of scores to be sent for professional binding. Additional pre-project planning followed: everything from selecting suppliers and costing supplies, to establishing workflows, refining binding methods, and providing training for the Music Resource Centre staff. Smith noted that finding a space-saving binding design was an important aspect that ultimately influenced the decision to employ a clear pamphlet style of binder. Scores were prioritized into four categories and work began in the summer of 2013, with students successfully binding around 500 scores in a month. To date more than 800 scores have been completed to positive response.

Finally, Laura Snyder (Mount Allison University) explored threshold concepts and information literacy with regards to music in the context of the ACRL draft *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. She spoke of the potential benefits threshold concepts could bring to information literacy as they offer new ways to approach the learning process with a greater emphasis on conceptual understanding and not simply on skills acquisition. Building on the work of Meyer and Land around the transformative, integrative and ritualistic nature of threshold concepts, Snyder noted how learning to read music becomes ritual knowledge and highlighted how students move through liminal stages in their musical training to become musicians. Employing the Limbourg Brothers' painting *The Fall and the Expulsion from Paradise* to propose Adam and Eve's banishment from the Garden of Eden as the "archetypal" threshold concept, her observation that Adam and Eve—newly adorned with fig leaves—would, henceforth, forever be subject to the exigencies of fashion, brought a moment of hilarity to the proceedings. Turning her attention to the ACRL draft framework, Snyder responded to each of the draft threshold concepts, such as "Scholarship is a Conversation" and "Authority is Contextual and Constructed," before highlighting what she perceived as an absence of concepts relating to primary sources and ethical use of information. She concluded by outlining the potential challenges—such as how to avoid over-simplifying complex concepts and how to adapt concepts to the current 'one-shot' information literacy practice—as well as the collaborative and diverse instructional opportunities presented by the implementation of threshold concepts.