

Podcasting the Past: Implementing Digital Pedagogy in the Classical Studies Classroom

Digital technologies are transforming education, making digital skill development a core fundamental competency for ensuring a student's success in their academic (OECD 2020) and professional (State Digital Equity Scorecard) careers. This transformation is, however, not without its challenges. It has exposed in education a rising inequality in digital literacy and technology access among both students and faculty, which disproportionately impacts BIPOC, Latinx, rural, and lower income students (e.g., Jackman et al. 2021, Fernández-Batanero et al. 2021). In response to these challenges, this paper outlines a podcasting project designed according to high-impact practices for a colloquium, titled "Shopping in Ancient Rome," which I taught in spring 2023.

By tapping into the new golden age for audio experiences that digital technologies have fueled in the last decade, this assignment asks students to work together in small groups to research a Roman shop and to produce a dynamic podcast episode that communicates their research to a diverse public audience. Success in this project requires students to communicate with and listen to their peers, who may come from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds than themselves. In the process, students increase their digital literacy by learning how to use Spotify® for Podcasters (formerly Anchor), a free online podcasting platform, and Audacity, a free, open-source digital audio editor and recording software. They also develop skills in publicly engaged scholarship, which is crucial to the future of Classical Studies as a discipline. Both the Society for Classical Studies and the Archaeological Institute of America identify the promotion of public understanding and appreciation for the Ancient Mediterranean World as key objectives. By making the past more accessible, we underscore the enduring

relevance of the past in the present and invite fresh perspectives and diverse voices, which drive innovation in the discipline. The student-produced episodes were published in spring 2023 as the first installment of the “Shop ‘Til You Drop” retail history podcast hosted by the Virtual Roman Retail project. Based on the student feedback, this project was a huge success. In addition to learning new perspectives on Roman society, students said they improved their digital skills, teamwork, and leadership abilities. This project has an easily transferable design, which, ultimately, I hope inspires others to help bridge the digital divide by integrating digital pedagogy into their Classical Studies classrooms.

Works Cited

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