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## Course Journals: Leveraging Library Publishing to Engage Students at the Intersection of Open Pedagogy, Scholarly Communications, and Information Literacy

Kate Shuttleworth  
Librarian, Digital Publishing  
Simon Fraser University  
[kate\\_shuttleworth@sfu.ca](mailto:kate_shuttleworth@sfu.ca)  
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3479-2865>

Kevin Stranack  
Head, Digital Publishing  
Managing Director, Public Knowledge Project  
Simon Fraser University  
[kstranack@sfu.ca](mailto:kstranack@sfu.ca)  
<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8790-427X>

Alison J. Moore  
Digital Scholarship Librarian, Research Commons  
Simon Fraser University  
[ajm30@sfu.ca](mailto:ajm30@sfu.ca)  
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4682-5393>

### **Keywords**

course journals; open pedagogy; library publishing; scholarly communications; information literacy; undergraduate research; experiential education; peer learning

### **Abstract**

This article presents a case study for developing course journals, an approach to student writing and publishing that involves students in the production of an online, open

access journal within a structured classroom environment. Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library's Digital Publishing program has partnered with instructors in four different departments across the university to implement course journals in their classrooms using Open Journal Systems. Two models of course journals have emerged, both of which offer valuable learning opportunities for students around scholarly communications, information literacy, and open pedagogy. In Model 1, students act as both authors who write and submit their work for publication in the course journal and as reviewers who referee each other's submitted work. In Model 2, students act as the course journal editors, crafting the course journal's call for papers, soliciting content, recruiting reviewers, and managing the editorial workflow from submission to publication. This article discusses challenges and opportunities of both models as well as strategies for smooth implementation and collaboration with classroom instructors.

## ***Introduction***

Over the past decade, many researchers in library and information science have articulated the benefits of student publishing and acknowledged the opportunity this presents for academic libraries. In "More than consumers: Students as content creators," Amy Buckland posits that libraries have a role to play in "[supporting] students' participation in the scholarly community" (2015, p. 194). Academic libraries have been steadily growing into this role by supporting student journals (Buckland, 2015; Davis-Kahl, 2013; Marken & Dawson, 2017; Spiro, 2015); encouraging students to deposit their work in the institutional repository (Buckland, 2015); hosting undergraduate poster sessions or research and writing contests (Hensley, 2013; Jones et al., 2011; Jones & Canuel, 2013); and offering for-credit scholarly publishing courses (Gilman, 2013; Hare, 2019). These initiatives provide students with the opportunity to refine their work, gain recognition for their scholarly contribution and skills, and develop confidence and expertise in the publishing process (Buckland, 2015; Caprio, 2014; Davis-Kahl, 2013; Gilman, 2013; Hare, 2019; Jones et al., 2011; Jones & Canuel, 2013; Spiro, 2015).

This paper will introduce course journals, an approach to student writing and publishing that involves students in the production of an online, open access journal within a structured classroom environment. Over the past two years, the Digital Publishing department of the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library has partnered with instructors in four different departments across the university to implement course journals in their classrooms. Course journals provide librarians with a rare opportunity to collaborate with course instructors to design and deliver a course-integrated, term-length project, where the course instructor is responsible for the course syllabus, lesson plans, grading rubrics, and final assessment, and the librarian contributes expertise related to scholarly communications instruction and technical and editorial support. This paper will describe two different models of course journals, discuss the opportunities, benefits, and challenges associated with each, and suggest strategies for smooth implementation.

The course journals discussed in this paper use Open Journal Systems (OJS), an open source journal hosting software application developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) at SFU. PKP is a research and software development project focused on creating open source software for scholarly publishing. Since 2001, PKP has built OJS, Open Monograph Press (OMP), and Open Conference Systems (OCS) to assist researchers in making their work openly available. OJS is currently used by over 10,000 journals worldwide, with more than half located in the Global South. Over 30 Canadian post-secondary institutions currently use OJS in their library publishing programs (Stranack, 2017a). SFU Library Digital Publishing currently supports seven student journals, 17 faculty journals, and four course journals in [English](#), [Publishing](#), [World Literature](#), and [Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies](#).

### **Model 1: Students as Authors and Reviewers**

The first model of course journals is an alternative to the “disposable assignment” (Wiley, 2013). Rather than have students research and write a paper that is read only by their instructor, in this model, students write a paper for publication in the course journal. They peer-review each other's work and make revisions to their own article before it is published and made openly available to anyone who wishes to read and engage with it.

### **Model 2: Students as Editors**

The second course journal model invites students to design, set up, and manage a journal for their class. Students collaboratively make decisions around the design, function, and scope of the journal, and they recruit content from community members from within and outside their institution. Students are responsible for managing every stage of the journal publishing process, from the call for papers through to peer review, editing, copyright, and dissemination.

### ***Literature Review***

Course journal projects are the natural successor of a collection of scholarly literature in library and information science that focuses on the intersection of undergraduate student research and publishing, information literacy and scholarly communications, and open pedagogy, experiential education, and peer learning.

### **Information Literacy and Scholarly Communications**

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) white paper “Intersections of Scholarly Communication and Information Literacy,” published in 2013, supports the integration of scholarly publishing concepts in library instruction, suggesting that “[librarians] need to intentionally integrate the challenges inherent in the changing scholarly publishing landscape with information literacy curricula to provide high impact teaching and learning experiences” (p. 6). Course journals fill this need by bringing scholarly communications and information literacy concepts and skills into the classroom, where they can equip students to “meet 21st century challenges and to fully

participate in the transformation of their communities” (Caprio, 2013, p. 153). Further, course journals provide students with the opportunity to develop information literacy by participating as creators and curators of scholarly content. By making decisions around author rights, Creative Commons licensing, types and formats of content, and the representation of certain voices through the publication of their journal, students gain “a sense of personal investment in the process that allows for a deeper understanding of complex issues,” including information privilege, power structures, authority, and social justice in scholarly publishing (ACRL, 2013, p. 16). By involving students in the production of an online journal and asking them to contribute as content creators, course journals serve as an example of student learning at the intersection of information literacy and scholarly communications (ACRL, 2013). All six frames of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy (2016) can be identified in course journal assignments, allowing course journals to be seen as a road map for implementation of the Framework. By involving students in the journal production and publication process and encouraging critical discourse around the limitations and issues of traditional models of scholarly publishing, course journals engage students in higher-level critical explorations of information concepts as outlined in the Framework (ACRL, 2016).

By preparing their work for open publication, students engaged in Model 1 course journals “are developing their own authoritative voices in a particular area and recognize the responsibilities this entails, including seeking accuracy and reliability, respecting intellectual property, and participating in communities of practice” (ACRL, 2016, “Authority is Constructed and Contextual”). Beyond learning to identify work that has been enhanced by peer review, students gain first-hand experience in establishing credibility through expert review by participating in the review process as authors and reviewers. In Model 2 course journals, students recruit content in various formats from community members with different experiences, educational backgrounds, and expertise, illustrating the range of authority available within and beyond academia.

Both course journal models immerse students in the process of information creation by involving them in the scholarly publishing process, including the steps for submitting work through an online journal platform, participating in and receiving peer review, and disseminating the final research outputs. Students can identify the various forms that scholarly content may take, including multimedia and visual art. Additionally, students gain a deeper understanding of the value of information by exploring issues around intellectual property, accurate citation practices, and seeking copyright permissions for using other people’s work, among others. By submitting to or establishing an open access journal, students gain a deeper understanding of the importance of access to information, the limitations of paywalls, and the ways that “some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information” (ACRL, 2016, “Information Has Value”). Students explore issues around licensing and intellectual property, including exploring options for authors to retain copyright of their work through Creative Commons licensing. Through these experiences, and by “learn[ing] to make their own work more accessible,” students may “become advocates for changing the broader system, by, for example, passing student and faculty open access resolutions, and supporting legislation” (ACRL, 2013, p. 15).

Students gain hands-on experience with the concept of “Research as Inquiry” by gathering, organizing, assessing, and synthesizing information on a chosen topic for Model 1 and by shepherding this process for other content contributors in Model 2 (ACRL, 2016). Both models develop students’ awareness of “Scholarship as Conversation” by asking students to act as knowledge creators through either contributing their own work or soliciting others’ work towards a chosen theme or topic (Dawson & Marken, 2019; ACRL, 2016). By participating in peer review, students have the opportunity to evaluate others’ work and offer feedback on how effectively the work contributes to the scholarly conversation in that area (Dawson & Marken, 2019; ACRL, 2016).

By searching for information on their chosen topic in order to situate their own work within the existing literature, students in Model 1 explore the concept of “Searching as Strategic Exploration” (ACRL, 2016). Similarly, Model 2 allows students to “identify interested parties . . . who might produce information about a topic” and intentionally target their call for papers to relevant groups and individuals (ACRL, 2016, “Searching as Strategic Exploration”). In both models, students gain a broader understanding of the ways scholarly information is collected, stored, and discovered through the publishing process, and they apply keywords to their own articles so they can be located by future researchers.

### **Undergraduate Research and Publishing**

Undergraduate research and publishing opportunities contribute to students’ development in a number of areas, including “critical thinking, complex problem-solving, and written and oral communication skills and abilities” which can benefit them in their academic and professional lives (Caprio, 2014, p. 147). Many post-secondary institutions’ library publishing programs support student journals with wide acknowledgement of the potential of these journals to provide valuable learning opportunities around scholarly publishing and information literacy (Dawson & Marken, 2019; Weiner & Watkinson, 2014). Ho (2011) stipulates that “student participation in the journal production process is enormously beneficial to their intellectual growth” (p. 2). SFU Library’s course journal program brings these learning opportunities into a classroom setting where students can explore scholarly publishing concepts as part of their for-credit coursework.

While the benefits of students participating in student journal projects and undergraduate research have been well-documented, course journals offer an enhanced instructional approach which may address gaps in students’ knowledge and awareness of advanced information concepts. Riehle & Hensley (2017) note that students who were involved in undergraduate research reported “considerably higher levels of understanding related to the peer-review process than they did confidence in their ability to participate in that process” (p. 157). Furthermore, these students lacked a clear understanding of author rights and copyright issues related to their work (Riehle & Hensley, 2017, p. 165). Both of the course journal models presented in this paper provide librarians with the opportunity to deliver integrated information literacy and scholarly communications instruction which can address these gaps in students’

understanding of scholarly publishing processes and concepts. Beyond a one-shot instruction approach, librarians are embedded in the classroom at suitable points in the term, acting as a member of the course journal editorial team, and can support students in making informed decisions for their journal around such things as open access, financial sustainability models, guidelines for author rights, and the transfer or retention of copyright. A librarian might lead the class through intensive discussions around the tensions associated with open access publishing, including situations where making work fully open may not be appropriate, and where Creative Commons licensing may fall short of providing suitable options. This is especially relevant in cases where students plan to include content authored by Indigenous communities, in which case they may choose to offer authors the option of using Traditional Knowledge Labels which offer greater flexibility in terms of authorship and providing or limiting access within and between specific groups (Local contexts, n.d.).

Dawson & Marken (2019) point out that “the students that seek out publishing or editorial opportunities [with an undergraduate journal] tend to be high achievers with plans to continue to graduate school” (p. 279). Indeed, student journals are typically managed, written, reviewed, and edited by highly motivated student volunteers, often associated with a student association or society, who may have some existing knowledge of scholarly publishing. While student journals outside of for-credit courses are equal to course journals in their ability to benefit students who have the motivation, time, resources, and support to participate, course journals extend this opportunity to any student who enrolls in the course and offer additional support and mentorship from experienced instructors. Furthermore, Gilman (2013) argues that “the best opportunity to engage students in critical thinking and discussion about scholarly communication issues is within the context of an academic course or program,” since this is where the “core of the undergraduate experience” remains (p. 90).

Hare (2019) presents a for-credit course model developed around the production of a student journal, where students who work on the journal receive course credit for attending workshops exploring a range of scholarly publishing issues and skills. Course journals at SFU differ from this model due to the fact that they are embedded into existing course curricula in a range of subject areas. While this model involves a greater commitment from instructional faculty who must be prepared to work with OJS in their classroom, course journals offer the advantage of allowing for learning opportunities to take shape around the specific course focus. For example, courses following Model 1 provide students with the opportunity to submit an assignment relevant to their chosen subject area, and students in Model 2 can take a deep-dive approach into scholarly publishing within the framework of a particular area of study, such as Dr. Ela Przybylo’s Fall 2018 course in SFU’s Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies department, “GSWS 333-4: Intersectional Feminist Journal Praxis,” which examined scholarly publishing through the lens of intersectional feminist journal praxis.

### **Open Pedagogy, Experiential Education, and Peer Learning**

As inherently hands-on, open, collaborative, flexible, and learner-centric assignments, course journal projects can be situated within the theoretical framework of open

educational practices or, more generally, open pedagogy. Hegarty (2015) defines open pedagogy as having eight attributes: 1) participatory technology; 2) people, openness, trust; 3) innovation and creativity; 4) sharing ideas and resources; 5) connected community; 6) learner-generated; 7) reflective practice; and 8) peer review (p. 4), all of which are embodied to a certain extent in either one or both of the course journal models. Both course journal models meet Hegarty's (2015) attitude of "participatory technology" by using open source software for journal management and publication and by creating content to be shared openly, using a Creative Commons license. Students are also encouraged to incorporate Creative Commons content into their own work, providing ample opportunities to learn the importance of open licenses as well as how to find and evaluate them.

Hegarty's (2015) second attribute of "people, openness, and trust" is realized in both models through the creation of a learning community among the students, instructors, and librarian who work together on a common project to make a scholarly contribution to the topics under investigation. This safe, supportive environment can provide a stepping stone into other forms of open communication in the future, such as forum posts or blogging, since the students will have gained experience in expressing themselves in an open environment as well as with providing constructive feedback to peers. According to Cronin (2017), students who participate in open educational practices report "feeling more connected to one another and to their lecturer, making connections between course theory/content and what's happening in the field right now, sharing their work openly with authentic audiences, and becoming part of their future professional communities" (p. 22).

Course journals support Hegarty's (2015) third attribute, "innovation and creativity," by allowing students to share their work on an open, mobile-friendly platform, with opportunities through post-publication commenting (e.g., using a tool like the Hypothes.is plugin), for ongoing social learning and community interaction (Stranack, 2017b). Stommel (2018), as well, emphasizes the opportunity that open pedagogy offers for creativity and relationships, writing that it "pushes, in fact, on the very notion of static 'resources' in favour of tools that emphasize student contribution and dialogue" (para. 10).

Weller (2014) writes that "openness is a philosophical cornerstone . . . [which] is present in the technology adopted, in the resources referenced, in the activities students undertake and in the teaching approaches taken" (p. 11). Hegarty's (2015) fourth attribute, "sharing ideas and resources," is fulfilled in both course journal models by students openly sharing their work. This also provides an opportunity to move away from Wiley's (2013) "disposable assignment." Instead of writing for a single reader, students are writing for a potential audience of thousands and will receive feedback from their peers as well as from a much broader community of readers.

In course journal Model 2, Hegarty's (2015) fifth attribute, "connected community," is met by the students forming their own learning community first within the classroom and later by reaching out to the wider community, beyond the walls of the institution. With students creating content, whether text-based essays or multimedia digital projects,

Hegarty's (2015) sixth attribute of "learner generated" is a major component of Model 1 course journals. By encouraging students to reflect on their learning, perhaps by writing an introduction to the course journal or participating in a reflective writing assignment, course journals may support Hegarty's (2015) seventh attribute, "reflective practice."

Finally, Hegarty's (2015) eighth attribute, "peer-review," is achieved by having the students review one another's work or the work of community members. This process helps strengthen students' writing skills, but perhaps even more importantly, builds their confidence in providing and receiving constructive criticism. The traditional double-blind peer review process was used in the Model 1 course journals that we supported, and open review was explored in the Model 2 journal, *Intersectional Apocalypse*. The students described their choice to conduct open peer review as an opportunity to

uplift and nurture knowledge in all forms, including through our peer review process. To do this, we believe it is imperative to push the boundaries of what peer review is and how it is conducted. *Intersectional Apocalypse's* peer review process offers a collaborative, workshop-like experience through open peer review. Rather than having papers reviewed by an anonymous "Someone," peer review will be done by literal peers—fellow journal contributors, encouraging contributors to engage with each others' work and to collaborate on the creation of the journal. (*Intersectional Apocalypse*, 2018, para. 1)

Teaching peer review through course journal projects also creates an opportunity for peer learning. Peer learning is a social constructivist approach which focuses on students learning from one another in purposefully collaborative environments (Boud, 2001). According to Boud (2001), "students learn a great deal by explaining their ideas to others and by participating in activities in which they can learn from their peers" (p. 3). In Model 1 course journals, by conducting peer review of one another's work, they are able to see what their peers have written, help them strengthen their work, and receive feedback on their own writing. By working together in this way, students learn to provide constructive feedback, but also discover how to effectively respond to critique. In Model 2 course journals, students work together as a team in developing their new journal, each taking on distinct roles, but in collaboration with their peer partners, with frequent opportunities to discuss, inquire, and explore their common project together.

By ensuring that students have the opportunity to "explore the phenomenon under study—to form a direct relationship with the subject matter—rather than merely reading about the phenomenon or encountering it indirectly," course journal projects embody the ethos of experiential education (Vadeboncoeur, 2002, para. 1). Unlike a traditional lecture environment, this model provides students with hands-on, problem-based experience where they can encounter solutions through exploration and trial-and-error. Peer review is a good example of this; rather than simply lecturing to students about how peer review works and its value to scholarly communication, course journals provide students with direct, hands-on experience in doing peer review, having their own work reviewed by their peers, making revisions to their work based on those reviews, and seeing the improvements in their work. The benefits of experiential learning can also be used by librarians to negotiate with instructors for a more



embedded presence by the librarian in a course, moving away from the one-shot information literacy session to something more integrated and meaningful.

### ***Implementing Model 1: Students as Course Journal Authors and Reviewers***

Model 1 course journals are a good fit for writing intensive courses, as a significant amount of student time is devoted to writing, reviewing, and revising their text. Courses that focus on a major media project such as a video or podcast would also be appropriate as the online journal can support multiple formats. Course journal projects work well in upper-division elective classes, and less well in first or second year survey courses: this is because upper-division classes usually have smaller class sizes, students are more familiar with disciplinary norms, and their writing and communication skills are more developed. Course journals are best suited for elective courses because this will ensure that students who do choose to enroll are fully committed to the project.

In a course implementing a Model 1 course journal, it is important for the instructor to outline how this course will be different than regular courses—that rather than producing final papers, students will be writing open access journal articles for the course journal. In Fall 2017, the SFU Library Digital Publishing Department collaborated with Dr. Hannah McGregor, a professor in SFU's Publishing program on her course, "PUB 371: The Structure of the Book Publishing Industry in Canada," to produce an open course book project using OJS. When students enrolled in the course, they were advised that "in lieu of a final exam or essay, 50% of the course grade will be based on a book project to be hosted on SFU's OJS system" (McGregor, 2017a, para. 2). This set the tone for the term so that students had a clear understanding of the expectations and anticipated workload for the course.

Dr. McGregor's assignment outline, below, provides an example of how course journal projects can be presented to students:

**Task:** The main assignment for this course is our group book project, hosted here: <http://journals.sfu.ca/courses/index.php/pub371/>. We'll be working with SFU's Open Journal Systems, open source journal management and publishing software developed, supported, and freely distributed by the Public Knowledge Project. Students will work through the full editorial process of putting together a collection of essays including peer review, substantive and copy editing, layout, and publication. The content of this book will be student-produced work that might include (but are not limited to) essays, podcasts, videos, timelines, maps, and other digital projects on the book publishing industry in Canada. Students will be evaluated not only for the quality and rigour of their own final submissions but also for their participation in the full editorial and production process.

**Goal/purpose:** This assignment is an opportunity to both engage creatively and critically with the topics of the course and to develop some skillsets pertinent to book publishing, including work with a digital publishing platform, editing one another's work, and producing a final product. Bear in mind that, as this is our

first time trying this project, emphasis will be on process rather than final product (McGregor, 2017b, para. 1-2, emphasis in original).

Once expectations have been set early in the term, the library works with the instructor to coordinate a library instruction session where the Scholarly Communications Librarian and departmental librarian visit the class as a team to talk to the students about their assignments. Depending on the nature of the course journal, topics of this instruction session could include search strategies, citation practices, the scholarly publishing process, copyright, and licensing. As members of the course journal editorial team, the librarians also provide students with a brief walkthrough of the OJS submission process, and the students register as authors and reviewers for the journal. Working individually or in groups, students are encouraged to work with the instructor and librarian(s) to choose a scoped research question or topic that they are authentically interested in pursuing. This increases student motivation and engagement with the course material (Kilpfel, 2014) and means they are more likely to be proud of their openly published contribution.

When the students have completed the first draft of their assignment, they upload their work to the course journal in OJS.<sup>1</sup> Then, acting as the course journal editor, the instructor assigns each student one or two of their peers' drafts to review. After an in-class discussion on the peer review process and how to provide constructive criticism, the students review each other's work. The instructor reminds students that they are being graded on the quality and constructiveness of their review. If necessary, the Scholarly Communications Librarian visits the class again to discuss the review process and how it improves the quality of research as well as to assist students in uploading their review to OJS. More advanced courses could also discuss some of the criticisms of the peer review system, introduce the concept of open review, and ask students to reflect on their own experience with the process. The instructor checks over and grades each students' review and, once satisfied that it is constructive, returns it to the author.

Students are then given the opportunity to improve their article based on their peers' and instructor/editor's feedback. After their revisions are complete, they write an abstract, assign keywords, format their article in the style of the course journal—using an article template if available—and then upload the final copy of their paper to OJS. The instructor reads the submissions, grades them, and approves the final copies for publication. Working with the Scholarly Communications Librarian, the instructor creates HTML and PDF versions of each article and assigns each article a DOI. Courses with a technical component, such as in the digital humanities, might ask the students to format their final version into HTML or XML. Once all of the articles are published, the new issue of the course journal is complete. Students are then encouraged to archive a copy of their article in the institutional repository.

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<sup>1</sup> Should the instructor choose to have their students submit to a plagiarism detection software, at this point in the process they could make use of OJS 3.0's built-in iThenticate plug-in. For more details on this process, please see Smecher, 2018.

## Benefits of Model 1

From an instructor's perspective, this model of course journals increases both student engagement with the course content and the quality of student output. In the introduction to her English 435 course journal, [\*Making Nineteenth Century Literary Environments\*](#), Dr. Margaret Linley reflects that the

essay form [functions] as a laboratory and gymnasium for the mind, where those with the desire to learn may practice, test, and experiment with ideas and expression. [Our journal] is a showcase of such thinking and communication as process, activity, and energetic exercise. Collectively and individually, the student essays represent a thoughtful and original endeavour. (2017, p. 4)

Because course journals encourage students to make their work publicly available to anyone who may wish to read it, they significantly raise the stakes of student research and writing. Rather than writing for their instructor, an audience of one, students know that anyone with an internet connection could read their work, which may reduce incidents of plagiarism as the risk of detection are magnified significantly in an open environment. Typically, this results in increased effort and attention to detail, which usually in turn results in higher calibre work that students and instructors can refer to as examples of what high-quality student writing looks like.

However, the output of a Model 1 course journal is not necessarily an essay or article. Course journals provide students the opportunity to think critically and imaginatively about what meaningful scholarship looks like to them. In the introduction to her students' course journal, Dr. McGregor remarked

the sheer diversity and creativity of this collected volume—which we have been calling a book, understanding the slipperiness of that term in the 21st century—are a testament to two things: the remarkable work students will produce if set free from the essay as the only format in which to think about course materials, and the flexible potential of the Open Journal System for publishing student work . . . working iteratively across the semester, students were able to further their understanding of the publishing industry by participating in a version of it. That so many opted for something other than an essay is no slight to the value of that form, but a reminder that there are many mediums in which thinking happens, and that education, like publishing itself, always benefits from trying new things. (McGregor, 2017c, p.3)

From a student's perspective, Model 1 course journals offer an opportunity not very many courses do: a second chance. In most "normal" courses, final papers are due in the last week of term. Students often write rather furiously in the few weeks (or days) leading up to that final week and then submit their work once the deadline has arrived. It's likely that no one else has read their work before it is submitted to their instructor, and it's even more likely that it will not be read by anyone else after it has been submitted. However, by setting a much earlier, mid-term deadline for a first draft of the article, and by incorporating peer review and instructor feedback into the assessment

process, this course journal model means that the instructor is building in time for students to revisit their work and make it better based on their peers' feedback *before it is graded*. Students who have written articles for course journals have also commented that they are happy to have high-quality, professional copies of their work that they can point to if they choose to apply for admission to graduate school. Two of the four SFU-based course journal classes threw launch parties to celebrate the publication of their work.

### Considerations and Challenges for Model 1

While there are significant benefits associated with running a Model 1 course journal, there are also substantive challenges that cannot be ignored. For example, course journals require more work and more time from everyone involved, but especially for the instructor and for the librarian. This model is particularly well-suited to courses with a single, major assignment, such as a final paper or project, where each assignment component can have a portion of the overall grade. For example, students could receive a percentage of their final grade for their abstract composition and keyword selection for their first draft, for their peer review comments, and for their revised paper. This model would be too time-consuming as a single assignment among many others in a single course.

Student privacy and concerns about having their work “follow” them after it has been made publicly available presents another challenge of this course journal model. For many students, writing for the public, as opposed to their instructor or TA, raises the stakes in a way that they may not be comfortable with (DeRosa & Robison, 2017). They may just want to take a class out of interest or to complete their degree; they might not be interested in producing something that can be read long after they graduate. That is why we recommend that students be provided with the opportunity to contribute to the course journal using a pseudonym or, in some cases, not participate at all and to submit a more traditional assignment without penalty.

Students should also be informed of their right to have their open article “closed” at any future point if they no longer wish to be associated with that piece of work. While typical scholarly articles are not usually “closed” or removed except in the case of an official retraction, a student’s contribution to a course journal is not an example of a typical scholarly article. The importance of preserving the scholarly record has to be balanced with our goal of supporting students in participating safely and confidently in open access writing and publishing, and to that end, we must trust them to best know their own needs.<sup>2</sup> As DeRosa and Jhangiani (2017) note, “it is important to point out here that open is not the opposite of private,” and that students “can (and should) control how public or private they wish to be, [and] how and when to share or license their work” (para. 19). If a student who contributed to a course journal no longer wishes to be associated with their article, they can contact the SFU Library Digital Publishing

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<sup>2</sup> The challenge of balancing openness and privacy in open educational practices is also explored in detail in Cronin’s “Openness and praxis: Exploring the use of open educational practices in higher education” (2017).

department, and the Library will remove the full text of their article (leaving intact the bibliographic information) or remove both the full text of the article and the bibliographic information and post an “item removed” notice in its place.

Rather than waiting for students to raise these privacy concerns on their own, we encourage instructors and librarians to intentionally facilitate the following classroom conversations:

- What is your “digital identity”?
- What are the risks of openness? Who might be more at risk than others? How might people experience online environments differently, based on their gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or class?
- What does “being published” mean?
- What is the “scholarly record”?
- What does it mean to “unpublish” something and when does that typically happen (i.e., a retraction)? How common are retractions?
- What does that say about the reliability of the information we are reading?
- What are the rights of an author? What are the rights of a student?
- What is our ethical position and why?

### ***Implementing Model 2: Students as Course Journal Editors***

In Model 2, students form groups which each take a focused approach to one element of journal publishing. These groups research and present options and recommendations for each stage of the publishing process. Students collectively design and launch the journal, submitting their own content if desired while also recruiting content from community members beyond their class.

In Fall 2018, Dr. Ela Przybylo collaborated with SFU Library’s Digital Publishing program to implement this course journal model in her course in SFU’s Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies department, “GSWS 333-4: Intersectional Feminist Journal Praxis.” The course was described as “a project-based course that bridges academic and popular feminism, art and text, feminist practice and theory, scholarship and activism” (Przybylo, 2018, p. 1). Dr. Przybylo’s course syllabus (2018) explains that “students will be asked to collectively develop—from start to finish—an inaugural issue of an undergraduate journal that [will be launched] via Open Journal Systems Software” (p. 1).

The focus of each of the student groups within the class may vary depending on the goals of the course and the journal. However, generally in a Model 2 course journal the students are responsible for the following:

- Selecting a journal theme and articulating the scope of content.
- Creating a call for papers and sharing it through various channels to reach intended audiences.

- Selecting a method of peer review and developing guidelines which ensure equitable opportunities for submissions to be considered for publication. Students may assign peer reviewers and/or conduct the peer review themselves.
- Developing style and referencing guidelines and copy-editing submissions to ensure consistency throughout the journal.
- Selecting design elements for the journal's look-and-feel, creating logos and other graphics, developing copyright guidelines, and ensuring that submission images are used in accordance with these guidelines.
- Developing guidelines for author rights and transfer or retention of copyright. Students may choose one or more licenses for the distribution and reuse of content or allow authors to select their own.

This model offers flexibility in the types and formats of content collected and published by the journal. While students may choose to submit their own work created for another class or in their personal time, Model 2 is not based around the submission of student work. Students instead develop relationships with and recruit content from contributors outside their class who could be other students and instructors or individuals from the wider community beyond the institution. Submissions can take a variety of formats, including written articles, multimedia such as audio and visual recordings, or visual art.

Since students work in the back end of OJS to set up and manage the journal, the Scholarly Communication Librarian visits the class at various points in the term to provide instruction on the technical elements of customizing the journal appearance and functionality. In addition, librarians provide much of the same instruction as they do for Model 1.

The course concludes with the launch of the new journal, which may be shared through social media and other channels. Dr. Przybylo's class ended the term with a celebration of the launch of their journal, [\*Intersectional Apocalypse\*](#). The students and instructor incorporated their own visual design elements into the journal website and created MP3 files for each published submission to allow for greater accessibility of the content (Uren, Tsang, & Rai, 2018).

## **Benefits of Model 2**

This model offers benefits to students, librarians, and instructors due to the opportunity it affords to accomplish learning outcomes related to scholarly publishing and information literacy. Students have the opportunity to engage in a critical approach to scholarly publishing and gain hands-on experience with stages of the publishing process which they may not be involved with as authors or peer-reviewers. Depending on the nature and goals of the class, students might follow a traditional scholarly publishing approach, or they may take the opportunity to challenge conventions and examine power dynamics in traditional publishing models. By coincidence, this course was running during the same time that the HAU Journal controversy was taking place, providing a rich case study of what can go wrong even in open access journal publishing (caogris, 2018). By researching, analyzing, and selecting the specifics of submission requirements, peer review, author rights, and copyediting, students learn

about the underlying processes that currently drive scholarly publishing and can discuss the implications of these as they relate to the sharing of knowledge within and outside of academia. In a final report detailing her course journal project, Dr. Przybylo describes how

[through] this project, students experimented with feminist praxis, intersectionality, and collaboration, forming a “networked pedagogy” as well as friendships while undertaking the elaborate, lengthy, and detail-oriented process of creating a journal. In the words of a popular slogan from the women in print movement, they learned that “freedom of the press belongs to those who own the press” [Adair & Nakamura, 2017, p. 261]. (Przybylo & Shapira, 2019, p. 4)

By soliciting content from community members, students gain valuable skills in communication and relationship-building. They can support the dissemination of community stories and creative outputs which might otherwise remain outside of the public sphere. It also serves to reduce the barrier that often exists between the classroom/university and the community/“real world”. At the same time, the library can develop stronger connections with students and faculty members who develop an increased awareness of library services and support for scholarly publishing and copyright.

## **Considerations and Challenges for Model 2**

While this model alleviates the concerns students may have about making their own work publicly available, Model 2 course journals present challenges such as setting up and launching the course journal in the short timeframe of a single semester; ensuring continuity and sustainability of the journal beyond the four-month course; and recruiting content from community partners beyond the classroom and institution.

In order to complete the conception, design, development, content recruitment, review, revisions, publication, and launch of the journal in a single four-month semester, the course moves rapidly through a series of smaller assignment deadlines. For example, the call for papers will likely be launched by approximately the third week of the term, with the deadline set for around week six. Peer-review, author responses, copy-editing, and final proofing all occur on an accelerated time frame unlikely in a traditional peer reviewed journal. Since Model 2 course journals may be used to solicit less-traditional scholarly content, such as artwork and poetic prose, the short submission timeline allows for submissions that are shorter than standard journal articles or those which were completed prior to the course either as artistic endeavours or as assignments for other courses. The design and set-up of the journal in OJS, along with much of the decision making around the journal’s policies, may occur during the submission, revision, and editing phases of the journal project.

Simultaneously building the journal website while soliciting content may raise challenges for recruiting quality content from contributors who may prefer to submit their work to a more established venue. Framing the publication as clearly student-led, and soliciting content from individuals who may be seeking a less traditional outlet can help

to ensure that content recruitment is successful. Furthermore, instructors may be able to support students by initiating and facilitating contact with key community partners and leveraging their own networks to find external support for the project on behalf of students. Students can share the call for papers with their own peers and also have the option of submitting their own content for publication in the journal.

Course journals published through SFU Library continue to be hosted and made available after the completion of the course, regardless of whether the journal continues to publish new issues. However, a sustainability plan for journal content is recommended, including strategies for continuing to publish in Model 2 journals after the completion of the course as well as a plan for archiving dormant journals for long-term preservation. A Model 2 course journal can become a student journal after the completion of the course if there is a student team willing to take on the ongoing editorial tasks of sustaining the journal. Alternatively, another instructor in the department may choose to make use of the journal created in Model 2 to run a Model 1 course journal in their own class, allowing students to publish their own work in subsequent issues.

## ***Discussion***

From the library's perspective, this type of intensive project requires strong relationships with course instructors and dedication from the library to provide instruction and support throughout the term. Collaboration with librarians who have different expertise is key, since instruction for the class may include copyright, scholarly communications, digital publishing, and subject-based research support. Additionally, library systems support may be required to host and provide support for OJS, and the class may be limited to the WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) functionality of OJS, since support for custom coding is unlikely. Many libraries may not be able to support more than one or two journals in any given term, so the opportunity for widespread uptake is limited unless this capacity can be increased.

As awareness of course journal opportunities and successes grows amongst instructors, we hope that SFU Library's course journal program can be implemented in future classes and in a range of subject areas. This would give rise to further opportunities for embedded classroom instruction, which provides opportunities for sharing student work and teaching scholarly publishing concepts while challenging students to confront ethical considerations in scholarly publishing. As new SFU journals emerge following each of the models described, policies and Memorandums of Understanding will need to be developed in order to set clear boundaries and expectations for course instructors, students, and the library. These policies will cover such things as sustainability, transition plans for moving a course journal to another instructor or to a student group for future publishing, and the long-term archiving and preservation of content for journals that remain dormant after the completion of the course.



## **Conclusion**

While this paper has outlined two models for course journals, there are no doubt other ways that course journals or OJS and other open source software tools can be implemented in the classroom. For example, at institutions where librarians teach credit-bearing courses, librarian involvement in course journal projects might include developing course outlines, assignment descriptions, and evaluation tools.

Though this paper describes ways that course journals may be applied to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy (2016), future research may choose to explore the Framework in more detail against the two course journal models, including taking a critical approach to identify ways that course journals may build on or enhance Framework concepts. Furthermore, future course journal projects would benefit from assessments of student learning to determine students' fluency with threshold concepts around information literacy and scholarly communications.

Bringing OJS into established, for-credit courses provides library publishing programs with an opportunity to be meaningfully connected with and integrated into the classroom environment, partnering with instructors and mentoring students, all while accomplishing key professional information literacy instruction goals. Students who engage in course journal assignments develop skills in scholarly communications and information literacy, and participate in experiential education, peer learning, and open pedagogy, all of which can benefit them as future scholars, citizens, and social justice advocates. These courses provide a nurturing and inclusive environment which have the potential to mentor students who otherwise may not have the opportunity or inclination to be involved in scholarly publishing activities through participation in a student journal outside of an established course.

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