

AMERICAN PROJECTS: WHERE LITERATURE AND TECHNOLOGY INTERSECT

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RESUMO: A intersecção de temas como a inclusão de tecnologia através do uso de recursos primários da Internet e a experiência afro-americana permite que o processo de ensino e aprendizagem de literatura inclua o acesso a documentos raros na sala de aula. *Documenting the American South* (DAS - Documentando o Sul dos Estados Unidos), da Universidade da Carolina do Norte em Chapel Hill, e *The Antislavery Literature Project* (TALP - O Projeto de Literatura Antiescravagista), da Universidade do Estado do Arizona e da Universidade do Estado de Iowa, são exemplos dessa intersecção. Eles oferecem a professores e estudantes recursos abrangentes e diversos para serem usados na sala de aula e, mais relevante, apresentam-lhes perspectivas variadas da experiência afro-americana contribuindo para uma formação consciente das questões raciais e da liberdade. Ao apresentar esses projetos gratuitos, mais pessoas estarão envolvidas em expressar e discutir sobre essas questões, não somente relacionadas com o contexto norte-americano, mas também com um ponto de vista mais global, que os acessarão a partir de outros países com finalidades educacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tecnologia; Literatura; Projeto

ABSTRACT: *The intersection of themes such as the inclusion of technology through the use of a Web-based primary source and the African American experience allows the teaching and learning process of literature to include accessing rare documents in the classroom. Documenting the American South (DAS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and The Antislavery Literature Project (TALP) at Arizona State University and Iowa State University, are examples of this intersection. They offer teachers and students extensive and diverse resources to be used in the classroom, and, more importantly, present students and teachers multiple perspectives on African Americans' experience and contribute to an education consciousness of racial issues and freedom. By presenting these free projects, more people will be engaged in expressing and discussing these issues, not only related to the American context but to a more global point of view and will access them from outside the United States for educational purposes.*

KEYWORDS: *Technology; Literature; Projects*

Introduction

Since its creation, the Internet has given a multitude of resources and opportunities in many different areas to teachers and students to improve their teaching and learning pedagogical methodologies and approaches, and to people to expand their knowledge around the world. However these improvements in technology and efforts in the use of communicative and collaborative tools do not transform anything, if countries, despite being poor or rich, do not establish policies concerning and promoting technology in education. These policies regard teachers' professional development, and evolve supporting and sponsoring projects launched by universities and other research institutions.

Moreover, there are some other limitations related to technical issues and to copyright policies which prevent numerous texts, images, audio and video primary documents, data or educational/pedagogical material to circulate freely. One of the venues in the Internet that solves most of these concerns are some open-access digital archives, like the ones which are the subject of this article, i.e. *Documenting the American South* (DAS) and *The Antislavery Literature Project* (TALP).

DAS, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and TALP, at Arizona State University and Iowa State University, explore and share the African American experience through the intersection of technology and literature. This intersection is possible through Web-based primary and secondary sources which allow literature teaching and learning processes to include extensive and diverse resources like rare books or documents to be used in the classroom. Also and more importantly, they present students and teachers multiple perspectives on African Americans' experience and contribute to an education consciousness of racial issues and freedom.

The purpose of this article is to analyze how the open-access digital archives DAS and TALP are teaching and learning tools for the African American experience, as they contribute to the discussion and awareness of racial issues and freedom. These projects as Open Educational Resources (OER) can engage people from other parts of the world to discuss these issues in global perspective by comparing and contrasting realities other than the ones in/from the United States. Likewise, confronting and confirming certain opinions about the issues, as they are exposed to different points of view, people can acquire knowledge. The theoretical framework used to achieve this goal is constructivism: from its roots with Jean Piaget to Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and Seymour Papert.

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Open-access digital archives can be one example of OER. They are a concept that may be included in Open Source Software (OSS) and Open Access (OA). Their most important aspect derives from the idea of openness that means free availability to the use of resources worldwide. Although the concept existed, the term OER was first used at a 2002 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) meeting, in the Forum on the Impact of Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries. According to Jan Hylén (2006, n.p.), in his report "Open Educational Resources: Opportunities and Challenges", participants "defined OER as: 'The open provision of educational resources, enabled by information and communication technologies, for consultation, use and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes.'" This is not, however, the definition currently in use. OER "... are digitized materials offered freely and openly for educator, students and self-learners to use and re-use for teaching, learning and research" (HYLÉN, 2006, n.p.). Digitized materials can include "[f]ull course, courseware, content modules, learning objects, collections and journals" which, prior to their availability through a "[s]oftware ... [that] support the development, use, re-use and delivery of learning content", get "intellectual property licenses" (HYLÉN, 2006, n.p.).

At the 2004 Second Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation, and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, OER acquired another nuance, according to a delegate, to share "... knowledge worldwide to increase human intellectual capacity" (JOHNSTONE, 2005, n.p.). She summarizes the definition to include:

- Learning resources — courseware, content modules, learning objects, learner-support and assessment tools, online learning communities
- Resources to support teachers — tools for teachers and support materials to enable them to create, adapt, and use OER, as well as training materials for teachers and other teaching tools
- Resources to assure the quality of education and educational practices. (JOHNSTONE, 2005, n.p.)

Yet, in 2006, during the 20th International CODATA Conference, Fun-Den Wang calls attention to the need to "equalize access to knowledge" as it has not become reality worldwide. According to Wang's view (2006), understanding and stimulating the use of OER is directly linked not only to what was mentioned previously, but also to sponsoring high-quality academic content and to removing barriers.

Hence, learners can access the universe of OER, and more specifically of digital archives, to support and enhance education with course texts and extra materials used inside and outside a classroom. Each archive provides democratized access to written, pictorial, audio and video materials or documents as they can be accessed by anyone, no matter how distant one is from the physical building, if it exists. This democratization also occurs when time is concerned, because there is no need to worry about open hours; and all information is allocated in digital format which does not occupy much space and is compatible to any up-to-date system or software. Moreover, it is tailored according to its needs, interests or goals, and to the languages involved. People can zoom or stretch them to examine with more accuracy and pay close attention to the writer's handwriting, stylistic form, cross-outs and notes and, in some documents, people are also able to consider additions and editor's notes. In order to have these resources available, the responsible technicians and staff need to capture, organize, store, distribute, share and preserve the intellectual production of a chosen period or person, a geographic area, or an area of expertise.

These resources, some of which are only possible through the digitized texts, demand different pedagogical methodologies, as they change significantly teaching and learning dynamics in a classroom environment and ask for an active exploration of the primary source (SAEED, 2006). In this environment, the emphasis has to be on the process of acquiring knowledge, be student-centered, and emanate from student's previous knowledge (DALGARNO, 2001). Among the existing educational theories, constructivism best suits this educational environment and purposes.

Digital Archives and Constructivism

The roots of constructivism date back to classical antiquity, but Jean Piaget and John Dewey developed theories which led to its evolution. Piaget believed in a logical construction of knowledge, while Dewey thought it had to be grounded in real experience. Digital sources allow individual or group inquiry and access to real-world issues (ROES, 2001). Then, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and Seymour Papert added new perspectives to constructivist learning theory. Vygotsky introduced the social aspect of learning through collaboration with peers. Since the last decade of the twentieth century, researchers have created tools and digital environments which invite collaboration by structuring and supporting materials to contribute to instructions in the classroom. This information gathered and organized as a partnership effort from different and multidisciplinary professionals improves and enhances learning opportunities and experiences in the classroom, and is a way to innovate, discuss, and reinvest in teaching approaches and perspectives (BASS et al., 1998).

Bruner believed in learning as an active social process which prior knowledge helps to build new knowledge. Furthermore, these environments encourage active students to discover and construct knowledge through multiple learning styles and learning technologies development to obtain satisfactory outcomes, promote understanding, and focus on learning as a constant variable and as nesting and interacting frameworks (BARR and TAGG, 1995). The teacher's role in a constructivist student-centered environment is to guide students into testing, understanding, connecting, reflecting, and solving problems they encounter, i.e. teachers need to abandon "familiar perspectives and practices" and to adopt new ones as designers of learning environments (BROOKS and BROOKS, 1993, p. 25).

The third contribution to constructivism is Papert's use of computers in teaching and learning environment. This requires not only investment in technology itself, but also in teacher's professional development. Meaningful instructions targeting the development of thinking skills demand integration between technology and academic disciplines.

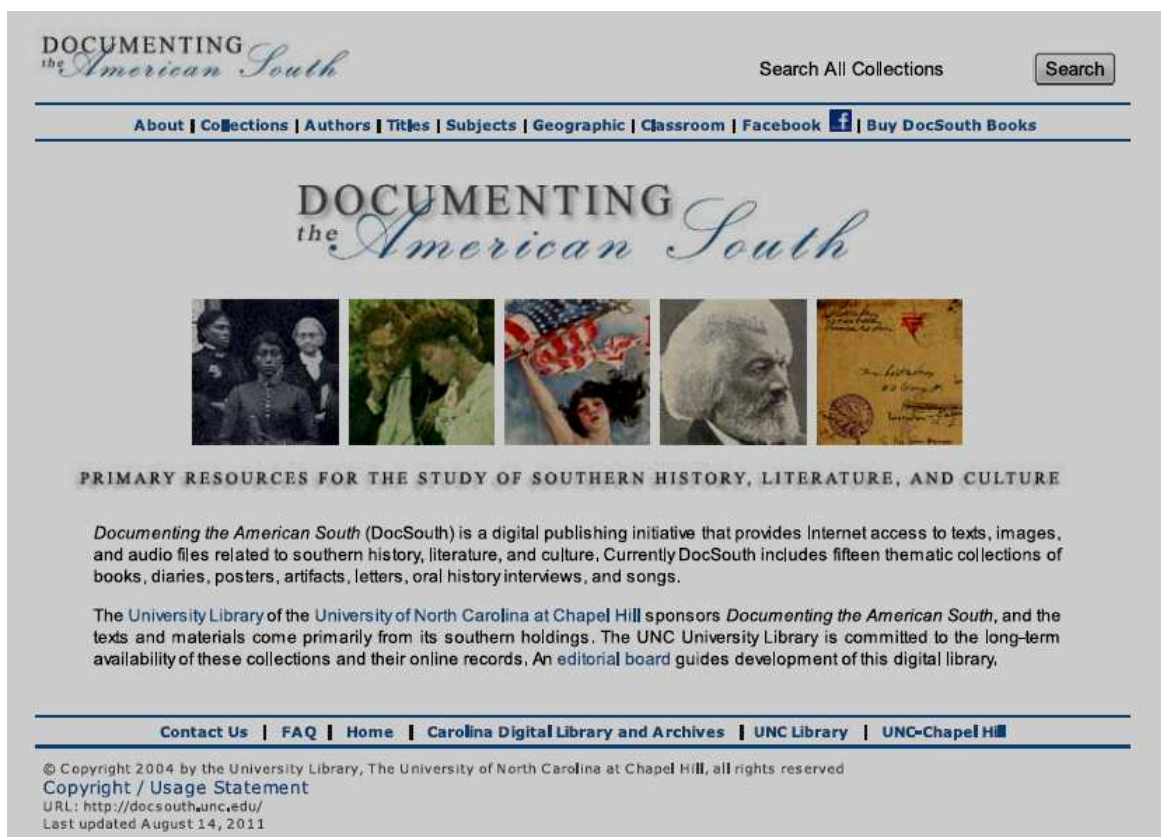
For this to occur, teacher educators must follow three crucial steps.

1. Identify exemplary digital libraries and sources of innovative teaching in Arts and Sciences.
2. Restructure teacher education pedagogy through adaptation of digital library resources.
3. Extend innovations to K-12 teaching practice through continued support of the graduates of teacher education programs and through collaborations with practicing teachers. (BOLICK, HICKS, LEE, MOLGEBASH and DOOLITTLE, 2004, p. 201)

Moreover, in Henry Becker's report (2000, p. 2), he relates the success in using computer technology in the classroom with some conditions such as workplace, skills, class schedule and equipment availability, as well as "a student-centered, constructivist pedagogy". Furthermore, as Rachel Vannatta and Nancy Fordham pose (2004), this success observes a combination of technology training and time commitment as well as risk-taking approach.

The analysis of both digital archives DAS and TALP will provide examples on how an archive can contribute to a constructivist teaching and learning pedagogy “such as developing student responsibility for selecting and carrying out learning tasks, emphasizing group work involving discourse, and the use of projects, products, and performances for outside audiences” (BECKER, 2000, p. 28). Their stories and history of the African American community in the United States presented there can be associated to the main pillars of constructivism. First, they connect readers and researchers to the real world. Then, researchers can elicit meaningful questions which can be answered collaboratively. When researching to participate on a collaborative task or not, one’s analysis depart from what one already knows. Finally, teachers, through their experience and technological knowledge, can guide students in order to obtain the best results from their efforts.

About Documenting the American South (DAS)



The image shows the homepage of the Documenting the American South (DAS) website. At the top left, the logo reads "DOCUMENTING the American South" in a serif font. To the right of the logo is a search bar with the text "Search All Collections" and a "Search" button. Below the logo and search bar is a navigation menu with links for "About | Collections | Authors | Titles | Subjects | Geographic | Classroom | Facebook | Buy DocSouth Books". The main heading "DOCUMENTING the American South" is centered on the page. Below the heading is a row of five small images: a group of people, a person in a field, a woman holding an American flag, a portrait of a man, and a handwritten letter. Underneath the images is the text "PRIMARY RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND CULTURE". Below this text is a paragraph describing the project: "Documenting the American South (DocSouth) is a digital publishing initiative that provides Internet access to texts, images, and audio files related to southern history, literature, and culture. Currently DocSouth includes fifteen thematic collections of books, diaries, posters, artifacts, letters, oral history interviews, and songs." Another paragraph follows: "The University Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sponsors Documenting the American South, and the texts and materials come primarily from its southern holdings. The UNC University Library is committed to the long-term availability of these collections and their online records. An editorial board guides development of this digital library." At the bottom of the page is a footer with links for "Contact Us | FAQ | Home | Carolina Digital Library and Archives | UNC Library | UNC-Chapel Hill". Below the footer is the copyright information: "© Copyright 2004 by the University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, all rights reserved. Copyright / Usage Statement URL: http://docsouth.unc.edu/ Last updated August 14, 2011".

Image 1: Documenting the American South

DAS presents southern history, literature, and culture from the colonial period until the first decades of the twentieth century. One of its goals is to provide access to narratives which are representations of southern socioeconomic differences, political perspectives, and life experiences. These narratives, however, go beyond the views of the southern elite that dominated print culture and they focus on not so influential people such as women, African Americans, enlisted men, and laborers. Others might access the archive for background and contextual references for creative projects and for personal reasons.

There are currently sixteen thematic collections of primary sources that offer a variety of perspectives on the past:

1. *North American Slave Narratives* gather stories of African Americans struggling for freedom and human rights from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries;
2. *First-Person Narratives of the American South* is a collection of diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, travel accounts, and ex-slave narratives written by Southerners;
3. *Library of Southern Literature* shows a wide range of literary works of the American South published before 1924;
4. *The Southern Homefront, 1861-1865* presents documents related to all aspects of southern life during the Civil War, including maps, broadsides, photographs, printed works, Confederate currency, and manuscript letters and diaries;
5. *The Church in the Southern Black Community* offers a collected history of the way southern African Americans experienced and transformed Protestant Christianity into the central institution of community life, including autobiographies, biographies, church documents, sermons, histories, encyclopedias, and other published materials that present;
6. *The North Carolina Experience* tells the story of the Tar Heel State through a wide variety of print and manuscript materials, including histories, descriptive accounts, institutional reports, fiction, and other writing;
7. *Oral Histories of the American South* shows selected oral history interviews gathered by the Southern Oral History Program;
8. *North Carolinians and the Great War* illustrates how World War I shaped the lives of different North Carolinians on the battlefield and on the home front, as well as how the state and federal government responded to war-time demands;
9. *The First Century of the First State University* gathers materials that document the creation and growth of the University of North Carolina during the period 1776-1875;
10. *True and Candid Compositions: The Lives and Writings of Antebellum Students at the University of North Carolina* presents documents written primarily by students attending the University of North Carolina between 1795 and 1868;
11. *The Colonial and State Records of North Carolina* includes documents and materials from throughout the country and from several European repositories covering the earliest days of North Carolina's settlement by Europeans through the ratification of the United States Constitution;
12. *Driving through Time: The Digital Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina* features historic maps, photographs, postcards, government documents, oral history interviews, and newspaper clippings that document the development and impact of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the most visited site in the National Park system;
13. *Going to the Show* documents and illuminates the experience of movie going in North Carolina from the introduction of projected motion pictures (1896) to the end of the silent film era (1930);
14. *The James Lawrence Dusenbery Journal (1841-1842)* chronicles Dusenbery's senior year at the University of North Carolina. Additional manuscripts, images, music, and essays extend the journal by documenting Dusenbery's family and subsequent medical education, as well as the daily life and literary and musical tastes of his mid-nineteenth-century classmates;
15. *North Carolina Maps* presents historic maps from three of the state's largest map collections: the North Carolina State Archives, the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill, and the Outer Banks History Center. The maps range in date from the late 1500s to 2000;

16. *Thomas E. Watson Papers* presents the correspondence, book manuscripts, speeches, publications, scrapbooks, diaries, photographs and photograph albums of Thomas E. Walton, a lawyer, populist politician, popular author, and influential publisher.

About *The Antislavery Literature Project* (TALP)



Image 2: The Antislavery Literature Project

The TALP provides public access to a corpus of antislavery and antebellum American literature and history in the nineteenth-century, crucial to understanding the African American experience, US and hemispheric histories of slavery, concepts of civil liberties, political events, and early human rights philosophies. There is a complex and contradictory range of voices, from journalistic reportage to sentimental poetry, from racial paternalism and stereotyping to advocacy of interracial equality, from religious disputation to militant antislavery calls. It is the first body of American literature produced by writers of diverse racial origins and consequently represents the origins of multicultural literature in the United States. It encompasses slave narratives, lectures, travel accounts, political tracts, prose fiction, poetry, drama, religious and philosophical literature, compendia, journals, manifestoes and children's literature. The body of antislavery poetry is both vast and nearly unknown. They, along with slave narratives, give attention to issues related to freedom, movement, family, and community. To fulfill its teaching mission, it provides digital videos and teaching guides that interpret antislavery texts available to researchers in English, French and Chinese. These multilingual collections contribute to an educational consciousness of the role of many antislavery writers in creating contemporary concepts of freedom. Moreover, Cary Nelson observes that "Neither history itself nor the individual text ... had any meaning apart from the effort to reinterpret them within contemporary historical, social and intellectual contexts" (1997, p. 40).

These teaching guides provide introductions and instructional materials for selected antislavery texts:

- Jeffrey Brace's *The Blind African Slave* includes discussion questions and timeline;
- Early African American *Antislavery Sermons* include timeline of early African American religious history and discussion questions;
- Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is accompanied by a Chinese translation of the text and a teaching guide with a cross-cultural interpretation of Jacobs and relates *Incidents* to Chinese literature;
- Boston King's *Memoirs* presents a digital edition and a video/audio reading;
- Henry Clarke Wright's *The Natick Resolution, or, Resistance to Slaveholders the Right and Duty of Southern Slaves and Northern Freemen* includes a digital edition as well as a video/audio reading.

Educational Resources

According to what was presented about constructivism, the approach on this section will be on how the digital archives DAS and TALP can help readers and researchers connect African American literature and history to the real world, create a collaborative environment which encourages meaningful questions to be answered, build new knowledge, and guide students, readers or researchers to fulfill their goals. Resources can be searched or browsed by a variety of categories such as genre, timeline or subject and accounts can present a range of voices such as journalistic reportage, evangelical sermons, militant antislavery articles or sentimental poetry. They provide information to supplement classroom material and resources for exercises to develop students' skills in interpretation and research.

1. Real World Experience

Collections like the ones in DAS and TALP can enliven the past for readers and researchers by "open[ing] new windows onto an old subject" (TALLY, 1996, n.p). The narratives shown below exemplify the constructivist theory in relation to real world experience. The first example is from *North American Slave Narratives* from DAS. It offers firsthand accounts of nineteenth century slave narratives, which are a reflection of the real world of that time.

NORTH AMERICAN SLAVE NARRATIVES



Guide to Religious Content in Slave Narratives

Compiled by
Marcella Grendler, Andrew Leiter, and Jill Sexton

Many Southern blacks, slave and free, who had access to evangelical Christianity, embraced it eagerly, adapting it to fit past and present experience. Slave narratives document the gamut of their religious experience and practice. The narratives reveal the duality of black religious experience: the white-controlled message and practice, and the "invisible institution" the slave community established across the South embodying its own religious ideals and aspirations. Some report the conversion so central to evangelicalism. They capture the joy of being "in the spirit" and the rich sense of personal value religious commitment brought. Many individuals persisted in religious practice despite severe punishment. The narratives show how slaves interpreted the Bible, especially the Exodus story, as a metaphor for their own difficult lives and as promise of eventual liberation.

African Americans noted the hypocrisy that sometimes characterized white Christianity, pointing out the contradiction between God's Word and slaveholders' cruelty and inhumanity. "Slaveholders hide themselves behind the Church. . . . A more praying, preaching, psalm-singing people cannot be found than the slave holders of the South," declared William Wells Brown (1814-1884). The Reverend William H. Robinson (b. 1848) offered mock family prayers: "grant us all a large increase of slaves . . ." and a mock sermon to slaves: "God's wisdom is displayed in the system of slavery." Many objected to the oft-repeated recommendations of obedience to the established order.

This guide is intended as a starting point for researchers interested in learning more about the religious experience of African Americans during slavery. It is not a comprehensive index of all religious content in the almost three hundred slave narratives included on our site. References are limited to descriptions written by slaves of religion and religious practice during the period of slavery.

Clicking on the linked page numbers will take you to the cited pages within the entire text. The number in parentheses after the page number is the size of the file.

Image 3: North American Slave Narratives

The second example is from *Contemporary Slavery* from TALP. In this case, these narratives have the purpose of showing that slavery is not a subject of the past. It occurs now even though in a different form. These stories engage students to develop critical thinking through the use of original, real world experiences/evidences.

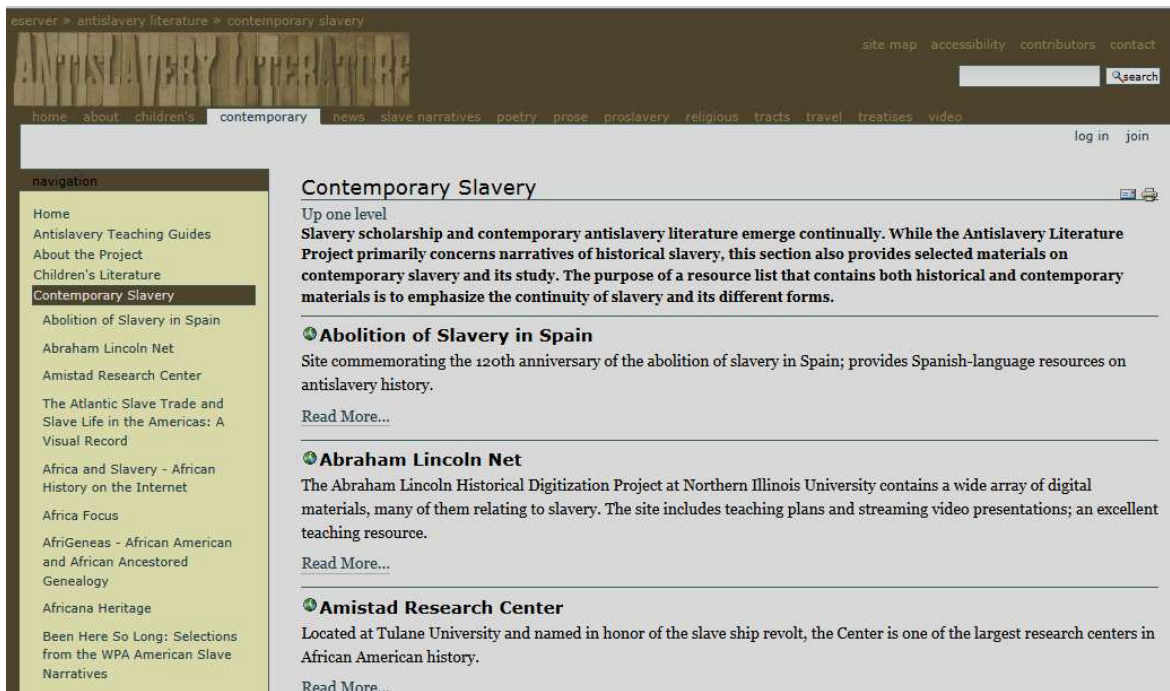


Image 4: Contemporary Slavery

2. Collaborative Environment and Meaningful Research

When students work with primary documents like the ones presented in DAS and TALP, they learn to evaluate evidence and to understand and contextualize it as what they encounter in these digital archives is raw material. This environment can inspire them to make their own discoveries which are challenging and intriguing tasks, but can also provide multiple perspectives on the historic past. According to Andrew Milson, “[t]he research base has indicated that students learn history most effectively when they are engaged in asking historical questions, collecting and analyzing historical sources, and determining historical significance” (2002, p. 348). Hence, these discoveries lead students to develop argumentative language and reflective considerations as well as to gain appreciation of the problems related to using these sources, to analyze points-of-view, and to recognize literary devices.

Both digital archives can help teachers and students to do research in an area of American literature that has been unexplored, as literature of slavery and emancipation in the canon is represented by two or three representative texts. Some black and white writers in these collections publish a common cause, a discourse and an aesthetic that incorporate issues related to individual, racial, and national conscience, opposing to social relations such as black and white or white and white.

The first example is a “Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Born a Slave in St. Domingo” from *North American Slave Narratives* from DAS. It is a firsthand account that can help students understand, from the perspective of a slave, life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as prepare them to discuss issues related to racial issues and freedom.

DOCUMENTING
the American South

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Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee, 1780-1865
Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Born a Slave in St. Domingo.
 Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Company, 1854.

Full Text ([2], 124 p., [1] leaf of p., ca. 150K)

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Image 5: Hannah Farnham Sawyer Lee, 1780-1865, “Memoir of Pierre Toussaint, Born a Slave in St. Domingo”

The second example, “The Slave-Mother,” is a long poem on a fugitive slave-mother, by John Collins, from *Poetry* from TALP. In this case, the poem from the nineteenth century is not a firsthand account, but it describes the struggle of a slave woman to help her child to escape slavery. It is a clean example to students of a different perspective of the effort against slavery and of an individual consciousness. This can be explored to build students’ argumentative discourse.

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The Slave-Mother

A long poem on a fugitive slave-mother by John Collins, published for the 1855 Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Fair in Philadelphia. Digitized by the Antislavery Literature Project.

- XHTML format
- Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format
- Microsoft Word format

John Collins (1814-1902) was a Philadelphia writer who self-published several verse works, including *1970: A Vision of the Coming Age*, *Crania Americana: or, A Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America* (1838), *Views of the City of Burlington* (1847), *The City and Scenery of Newport, Rhode Island* (1857), *The Art of Engraving on Metal, Wood, and Stone* (1858), 'Elegy on the Death of Abraham Lincoln' (1865 broadside), and 'The Drunkard's Song' (1863? broadside). He published various works as an illustrator.

'The Slave-Mother' recites the story of a fugitive slave who, when captured near Lake Erie, denied her infant child in order to prevent its return to slavery along with her. Subsequently, a local judge ordered her release and she escaped to Canada together with her child. This faintly Longfellow-esque poem transforms the story of a fugitive into a romantic adventure and story of maternal devotion.

- Joe Lockard

Image 6: "The Slave-Mother"

3. Prior Knowledge

Before asking students to do a research, teachers need to explain or give them the context within which they will build their new knowledge and interpretation, as primary resources were not originally designed to provide immediate answers to questions. The former need to acquire a general understanding of the period and subject of study, as well as any other information that might be helpful to access the archival material, to identify and interpret usable information. Besides textual and contextual knowledge, it might be helpful to discuss with students techniques for deciphering maps, pictures, photographs or any other product they can find interesting.

The first example is a document on "Social Relations in our Southern States" from *Library of Southern Literature* from DAS. This document reflects on social conditions, life and customs of the nineteenth century slavery in Southern states. In order to help students understand and discuss the issues presented in this document, teachers should prepare them with a contextual background.

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Daniel R. Hundley (Daniel Robinson), 1832-1899
Social Relations in our Southern States.
 New York: Henry B. Price, 1860.

Full Text (367 p., ca. 780K)

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Funding from a Chancellor's Grant for Instructional Technology supported the electronic publication of this title.

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Image 7: Daniel R. Hundley (Daniel Robinson), 1832-1899, “Social Relations in our Southern States”

The second example is the essay “Color-Phobia” by an abolitionist from *Treats, Essays, Speeches* from TALP. This nineteenth century essay refers to racism as it was common among abolitionist literature. In this case, students should be prepared to understand the concept of phenotypical racism as well as the concept of phobia which is referred in the essay. This can be explored to help students understand questions related to phobias, specially the increasing homosexual and racial ones in our society.

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- Irish Sympathy with the Abolition

Color-Phobia

An 1838 anti-racism essay by New Hampshire abolitionist Nathaniel Peabody Rogers. Digitized by the Antislavery Literature Project.

- [XHTML format](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat \(PDF\) format](#)
- [Microsoft Word format](#)

In nineteenth-century United States, the term 'color-phobia' referred to phenotypical racism and was common in abolitionist literature. It largely died out of use by the end of the nineteenth century, although occasional uses appear during the 1920s and 1930s. The replacement term became the more scientific-sounding 'negrophobia', which entered popular usage after the Civil War.

One early use appeared in British abolitionist Granville Sharp's denunciations of the United States as "Full of color-phobia!...It is exhibited in legislation, in custom and in feeling. The man is deemed a fool or a villain who is free of it." Charles Stuart, *A Memoir of Granville Sharp* (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836, 76). William Lloyd Garrison's essay "American Colorphobia" denounced this as an animating principle of US civil society and compared the United States unfavorably to Europe where "complexion is not regarded as a crime." *The Liberator*, June 11, 1847. Generally, abolitionists employed the term as a measure of opprobrium, as where Giles Stebbins condemned northern supporters of colonization as being "seized with color-phobia" *Facts & Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character and Influence of the American Colonization Society* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1853, 105). During the Reconstruction, Charles Sumner offered an 1869 Senate resolution condemning the Medical Society of the District of Columbia for its exclusion of "colored physicians" on grounds of "color-phobia" although the resolution initiated a Senate investigation of the Society; its condemnation of color-phobia ultimately failed to pass. *The Works of Charles Sumner*, vol. XIII (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1880, 186-188).

Nathaniel Peabody Rogers (1794-1846), author of the present essay, was a New Hampshire attorney and editor of the antislavery newspaper *Herald of Freedom*. Rogers was a voluminous essayist and one of the most compelling stylists of the antislavery movement. He was an adherent to Garrisonian abolitionism.

The present essay originally appeared in the November 10, 1838 edition of *Herald of Freedom* and was later collected into *A Collection from the Newspaper Writings of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers* (Concord, NH: John R. French, 1847). The volume was re-published as *A Collection from the Miscellaneous Writings of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers* (Boston: Mussey & Co., 1849). For a brief biography of Rogers by a contemporary, see Parker Pillsbury, *Acts of the Antislavery Apostles* (Boston: Cupples, Upham, & Co., 1884, 28-46).

In this passionate essay, Rogers compares color-phobia to disease and relies heavily on the trope of inoculation. He writes that the cure is anti-slavery and the remedy "was discovered by Dr. William Lloyd Jenner-Garrison" (44), referring to the British scientist Edward Jenner who introduced vaccination against smallpox. By describing racism as a curable disease, Rogers joined Sharp who a few years earlier had written of the prospect of "white men of the United States, most of them just cured of the color-phobia, uniting in a noble and rapidly increasing phalanx" against slavery (*Memoir* 79). This racism, according to Rogers, underlay mobocracy and anti-abolitionist violence. Color-phobia, he argued, endorsed inaction or half-measures against slavery. He concludes "In short, it abhors slavery in the abstract – wishes it might be done away, but denies the right of any body or any thing to devise its overthrow" (46).

Rogers' exposition of "color-phobia" anticipates in many ways more recent discussions of heterophobia. See, for example, Albert Memmi, *Racism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 43, 117-121).

- Joe Lockard

Image 8: "Color-Phobia"

4. Guidance

As discussed earlier, digital archives were not designed or adapted to fulfill students' needs or interests, rather to provide entire documents for anyone interested in the subject. On the one hand, it is a wonderful opportunity to expose students to these resources, but, on the other hand, they may easily get distracted and lose their focus or get frustrated. In order to avoid waste of time and effort, teachers need to guide them to the development of the task and to build autonomous knowledge. Teachers should also visit the archives with students, to guide them on where to go to find the information or document they need. The first step is an appropriate selection of the material. Sometimes, these archives give ideas or entire activities to teachers. The following examples show how this is presented in DAS and in TALP, respectively:

CLASSROOM RESOURCES







Welcome to the *Documenting the American South* Education page. This page is designed to highlight the rich educational resources available through *DocSouth*. We invite students and educators alike to explore and contribute to the development of these pages by sharing what they discover, learn, and teach.

Stories of the American South

The **Stories of the American South** are based on historic artifacts found in the special collections of the Wilson Library and digital content provided by Documenting the American South.



We invite you to explore, reflect, and think critically about the people, places, and events that have shaped North Carolina and the American South.

Using DocSouth in Class

- [Teacher's Toolkit](#)
- [Guide to Citing DocSouth Materials](#)
- [Other Southern Americana Sources](#)

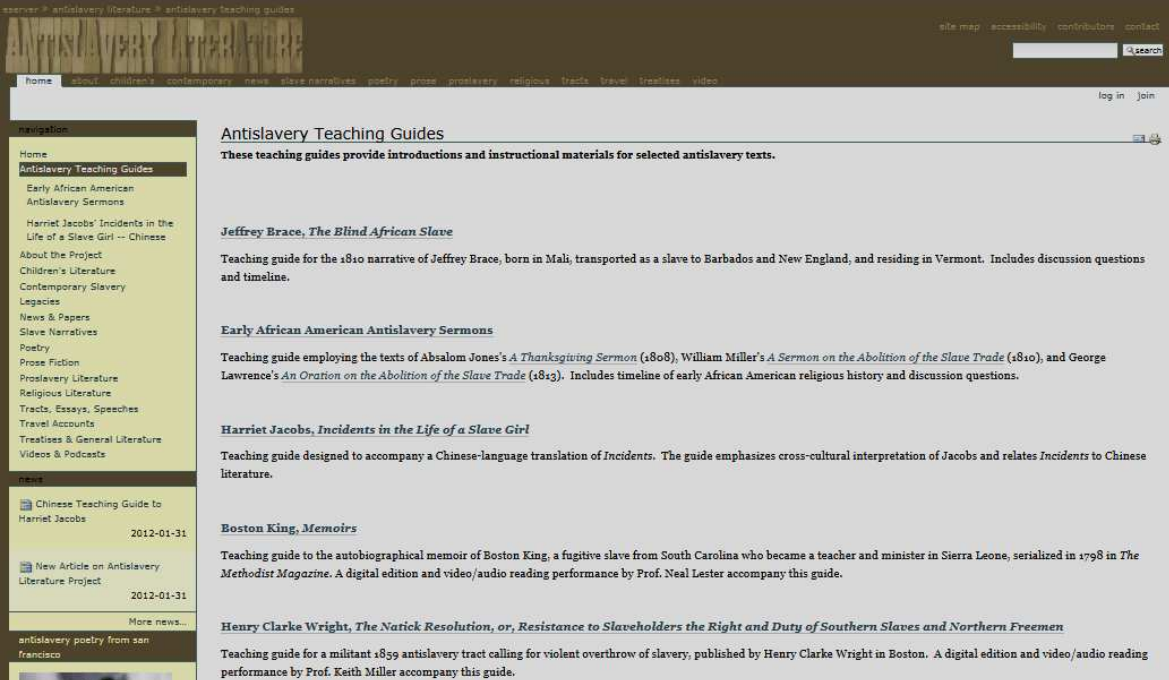
Lesson Plans

- [US History](#)
- [NC History](#)
- [African American History](#)

Digital Narratives

- [Digital Historical Narratives](#)
- [Digital Historical Narratives in the Classroom](#)
- [Getting Started](#)
- [Other Resources](#)

Image 9: Classroom Resources



The screenshot shows the 'Antislavery Teaching Guides' page on the 'antislavery literature' website. The page features a navigation menu on the left and a main content area with several teaching guides. The guides listed are:

- Jeffrey Brace, *The Blind African Slave***: Teaching guide for the 1810 narrative of Jeffrey Brace, born in Mali, transported as a slave to Barbados and New England, and residing in Vermont. Includes discussion questions and timeline.
- Early African American Antislavery Sermons**: Teaching guide employing the texts of Absalom Jones's *A Thanksgiving Sermon* (1808), William Miller's *A Sermon on the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1810), and George Lawrence's *An Oration on the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (1813). Includes timeline of early African American religious history and discussion questions.
- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl***: Teaching guide designed to accompany a Chinese-language translation of *Incidents*. The guide emphasizes cross-cultural interpretation of Jacobs and relates *Incidents* to Chinese literature.
- Boston King, *Memoirs***: Teaching guide to the autobiographical memoir of Boston King, a fugitive slave from South Carolina who became a teacher and minister in Sierra Leone, serialized in 1798 in *The Methodist Magazine*. A digital edition and video/audio reading performance by Prof. Neal Lester accompany this guide.
- Henry Clarke Wright, *The Natick Resolution, or, Resistance to Slaveholders the Right and Duty of Southern Slaves and Northern Freemen***: Teaching guide for a militant 1859 antislavery tract calling for violent overthrow of slavery, published by Henry Clarke Wright in Boston. A digital edition and video/audio reading performance by Prof. Keith Miller accompany this guide.

Image 10: Antislavery Teaching Guides

These two archives present the information differently, but it is always helpful when teachers find usable parts including excerpts, lesson plans, contextual background and other ideas. Then, teachers need to coach their students on how to use them more effectively, i.e., creating a bridge between the content and the goals of a task as well as making resources accessible to them (EDELSON and GORDIN, 1996, n.p.). The lack of

accessibility is often related to the length of the text, i.e., students do not easily locate or identify an excerpt from the collection to use in class when the text is too long. Another problem related to accessibility is readability which is associated to the fact that the language may be difficult or obscure to students. Then, activities have to be well planned, manageable and engaging. Students typically work outside class, in groups and report their findings to be discussed in class. These findings and discussions will help them understand issues associated to racial relations and freedom in the United States as well as help them to be open to discussions about these issues in Brazilian society.

Conclusions

This article discussed the teaching and learning tools of two digital archives: *Documenting the American South* (DAS) and *The Antislavery Literature Project* (TALP) and their contribution to the understanding of racial issues and freedom in the United States, that can be used by anyone with a computer and an Internet connection, with information that can be searched or browsed by a variety of ways. With the materials available, these archives expose people to different points of view, and help them to acquire knowledge and because they are OER, they can bring these discussions to a global perspective as people can compare and contrast realities and opinions about what have been presented.

Furthermore, these archives can be perceived through the constructivist theoretical model. To the purpose of this article, only four points were explored to help students fulfill their goals, i.e., the connection to the real world which can be examined in firsthand narratives; the collaborative aspect which helps meaningful questions to be asked as students can learn to evaluate, discover and understand new aspects and analyze multiple voices; the prior knowledge helping to build a new one, because before exploring these archives students need to understand concepts and contextual key information to interpret the information they will find; and teachers' guidance and task-based exercises are essential to create a learning environment which helps students to browse and investigate information in these big archives that were not designed for them.

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