Modernism Redefined: How to Make Meaning in the Classroom

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Background

So often, it is beginning to feel like too often, educators have begun to hear that what students need are "21st-century" skills. Usually, it is said and left unexplained, as if everyone knows just what they are and how to implement them. Most of us aren't even sure that all of our students have mastered 20th century skills, let alone beginning to think about what 21st century skills to teach. In this unit I aim to address one of the aspects of what I am told is a 21st century skill, collaboration, though I am pretty sure it has its roots in the centuries that preceded it. Perhaps it is the place in which the collaborative research will take place - the Internet - that makes it a 21st century skill.

What I hope to accomplish with this skill is to have students develop research skills in the creation of knowledge. My means for accomplishing this is to have students wrestle with that time period when so many meanings began to change - Modernism. But instead of merely uncovering what is traditionally held to be the definition of Modernism, I want the students to create their own understanding, one that takes into account more than the traditional view that it was just the arts that underwent a large upheaval. I want them to explore the changes that took place in all the disciplines and by drawing upon that information, redefine and reframe the meaning of Modernism.

Over the past fifteen years I have had the opportunity to teach Modernism to my students quite frequently. I have taught most often in the AP English classroom but I have also worked through it with standard and Honors students as well. In that time I have re-worked my methods and how I cover it several times but I have by and large stuck to a fairly familiar script. In part I did this because the topic itself is so large and has such depth, but I also did it because of the limitations of the classroom, the time that I could allot to it, and then finally the few resources that I had available to me. This approach worked fairly well since it neatly dovetailed with the standard party line concerning Modernism.

For many years this worked quite well, at least in the sense that I became fairly adept at dispensing the knowledge that I thought they needed. In a way, I became something that the Modernists hated - a source of all wisdom, the authority figure in the room. My top-down approach enabled me to convey information but I am not sure what it did for the students. They took notes, and perhaps learned some cultural history but I could not escape the feeling that it was at a remove. I also could not escape the feeling that they struggled to appreciate how radical that time was, how much that because of Modernism not only did everything change, but it changed everything. Rarely though did they seem to grasp the significance and the dynamics. And other than listening to a lecture, it did not give them experience with any immediate skills that they could employ.

What I am seeking to do in this unit is to try and change that. I want to create an approach to Modernism that attempts to give them a sense of how momentous a shift it was during that time period as well as gives them some experience in doing research to find out information that then must be synthesized into a meaning. In short, I want to use the study of Modernism to do the very thing it was trying to do, make meaning out of the "new" world in which those artists, thinkers, and writers were living.

First, let me give you some insight into my school setting so that you can have a clearer understanding of what resources I am using. I am currently the English department chair at a brand-new high school in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools system. My school, which opened in the fall of 2010, is situated in the northern end of our county that makes the demographic rather homogenous. My school is about 88% Caucasian with a minority population that is mainly 12% African-American. Our free and reduced lunch population is also low for our district since it is around 20%. I teach the AP English Language and Composition classes (four of them) and have 120 students. On paper, It looks like that I should have a relatively easy time of it, but to my surprise, most of my students are unprepared for the level of rigor required in an AP course. With that lack of preparation, the numbers now become a little more daunting as I sought ways to teach them the necessary critical writing skills without burying myself in papers. I began to search for collaborative methods of instruction, but ones that could adapt themselves to the level of rigor I felt that I needed. In my exploration, I came across Project-Based Learning and I have modeled my unit after some of its basic principles as I sought for a way to challenge all of my students to build stronger critical reading and analytical writing skills. I think that I have found something that will do just that as well as meet the standards of the new Common Core Standards. In the end I want this to be an experience where they must take multiple sources and then pull them together in order to create meaning. Along the way, we hope to re-define Modernism.

The Canonical Route

Most brief studies of Modernism, the ones in critical glossaries and literary handbooks consulted by teachers, tend to give a rather standard and similar view of Modernism. The view given aligns with the treatment of it in most American and British literature textbooks. As an example I will use the one from Ross Murfin's *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, a source that I have used multiple times. Murfin's definition of Modernism invokes the usual suspects in the usual time frame. It begins "in 1914 with the outbreak of World War I and end(s) in 1945 with the conclusion of World War II". He defines it as "a revolutionary movement encompassing all of the creative arts … during which artists and writers sought to liberate themselves from the constraints and polite conventions" of then Victorian society. He then goes on to discuss the usual list of aesthetic innovations and changes in thinking that most of us associate with Modernism: stream of consciousness, revisionist mythologizing, psychological symbols, fragmentation, and a breaking of sexual taboos in their art. He points to several smaller movements that occurred under the larger umbrella of Modernism, such as Dadaism, expressionism, and surrealism. He gives us a list of the usual literary figures; T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and D. H. Lawrence, the ones that inhabit most high school literature books (in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools adopted texts all of these authors

are included in either the American Literature or British Literature books).

Also mentioned, though only briefly, are non-literary thinkers and creators from other fields. Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, Pablo Picasso, and Igor Stravinsky all get a quick reference. While this is partially understandable – it is a glossary of literary terms – the lack of attention given to these thinkers suggests that Modernism can be discussed apart from its much larger context. The same is true in the CMS textbooks as well. Freud is the most prominent name given, with a half page discussion of his theories of the subconscious. What makes this stand out is that more and more attention is given in the text to attempting to make connections to major historical events, yet there does not seem to be any attempt to make the connections overt.

My own researches into Modernism have added a few other names that I give to the students in my discussions with them, names that are not necessarily associated with literary Modernism such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Karl Marx. My impetus for this began small, as a way of fleshing out the thoughts that were around during the time period in order to give the students a window into the thinking of that period. I even added PowerPoint slideshows of images of the canonical artworks of the period - Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase,* Cezanne's *Mt Ste Victoire* series, Monet's *Waterlilies*, Seurat's *Sunday in the Park* just to name a few.

All of these things I could connect and fold into a definition of Modernism that resembles the one that was passed down to me: Modernism was a time period in which values were overturned, beliefs challenged, new ways of seeing were called for, and old truths were overthrown. The key question seems to be, in an unstable universe with no Absolutes anymore, how does man make meaning? This I would pose to my students as the key question of Modernism. What I failed to realize was that in doing so I was doing exactly what Modernism purported to overthrow, I was establishing an absolute truth, a correct version of Modernism.

Over the past two years I have begun to realize that my classroom version of Modernism was a narrow and rigid one that did not begin to capture the life and times of that period in the remotest. Some of this new way of thinking came from trying to put more history into my Film class. As I began to realize the extent and rapid growth of cinema in the early part of the 20th-century, I begin to dimly see that the world of that time was rapidly shifting, and thanks to mass technology, shifting in ways that affected large numbers of people all at once. No longer did those in positions of power feel the shift first but now the masses could experience what was once the domain of the privileged. And not just cinema, electric light changed the way people saw, the train altered the way they heard, and the car changed the way that they got around. Because life was undergoing such pointed shifts in the very way we lived it, art of that time period was subject to changing as the lives of its creators changed. I began to realize that my classroom needed a redefinition of Modernism.

The Classroom

In my sixteen years as an English teacher, I have slowly come to appreciate that many of the skills that I take for granted when I read a text are in fact quite rare among students. This is not because they are not smart young men and women, rather I point to the rise of standardized

testing. Instead of recognizing the value of the close reading skills that intelligent adults use, we instead have clamored for some means by which we could measure a student's achievement. In order to do that we have reduced complex ideas and differing points of view to multiple-choice questions. As a consequence of demanding that our children and their growth be measurable by a given metric, we have sacrificed teaching them how to think about complex issues and synthesize responses. The reasons for that are wide-ranging but I think that it is safe to say that a large part of the reasons have to do with the cost of teaching complexity - it is difficult to measure growth in this and usually to do so requires the student to write which again takes time to teach and then to grade. Thus it is much easier to relegate measurement to multiple-choice tests. The results of an accountability-based testing culture are just starting to come in and while I will not pretend to have the last word, I do think that it is telling that someone of the stature of Diane Ravitch, professor of the history of education and former assistant secretary of education under George H. W. Bush, has reversed her position on standardized testing, among other educational fads (see her latest, and quite startling book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*).

One of the interesting developments in the past ten years has been the increase in the amount of time it takes for the average student to graduate from college. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, four-year colleges graduate less than 60 percent of their students in six years. Many factors account for this dismal number - finances, personal reasons, etc... - but some of it has to do with the fact that students who have grown up with standardized testing are not ready for much of what counts as college work. In large part this is due to the curricular changes in the public high school where critical thinking skills, which are hard to measure, are not developed to the degree necessary for college work.

One of the great ironies of all this is that students are not being taught how to synthesize information at precisely the time in history when more information that ever before is available to them via online sources. At the very time that it seems that it would be easier to teach critical synthesis because of the influx of technology, we, instead, treat technology in the classroom as a panacea for our educational ills. Instead of using it to acquire information to represent all sides of an argument, we have chosen to use it in a way that is familiar, to present top-down instruction. We use it as a vehicle to deliver knowledge to our students for them to consume rather than as a tool to teach them how to produce knowledge.

My response to a situation like this is that we take a page from the Modernist book and begin to use the technology to create our own meaning, learn how to use the tools at hand to fill in the gaps and explore new ways of doing things. Marinetti seized on the power of speed and volume to write new manifestoes calling for an overthrow of tradition. George Melies and Edwin Porter took the new means of controlling light and used the camera to write new forms of narrative. And it was not only those areas affiliated with the arts. Linguistics changed (Saussure), number theory (Frege), chemistry (Boltzmann), physics (Planck), biology (de Vries), all changed in ways that irrevocably changed our world. Modernism is not limited to the canvas, the material to be sculpted, the notes on a page, no, Modernism, if it exists at all, is the radicalization of seeing, of thinking, of being that was invoked by all of the changes that were taking place in the early 20th century. In order to attempt to fully understand it, the approach must be made that at the very least makes an attempt to include the interdisciplinary changes. (Perhaps a way of thinking

through this could start with Martin Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" from the book of the same name).

So the question at hand is, what does that look like for the classroom? As stated earlier, I am a high school English teacher and while I may not - at the AP level - be encumbered with state tests for my classes, I am still cognizant of the fact that these students are aiming to go to college and in doing so they are going to begin to try to make sense of the world. One of things that I think that I can do in my room then is to teach them how to make meaning, how to articulate - both orally but especially in writing - their thoughts, and how to argue for their particular view. It seems to me that if I can do that then I have fulfilled my obligation as an educator to our democracy. I am convinced that a study of Modernism would give me the opportunity to work with my students and help them develop sophisticated skills of manufacturing meaning.

The Making of Meaning

The broad overview of this unit is that it is based in independent student research that leads to collaborative writing and creation. The goal of my class would be to create a website that would provide a visitor with a variety of portals to explore the various areas where knowledge changed and contributed to the time period we call Modernism. I use the web for a variety of reasons. One of the most pragmatic is that North Carolina is revising its curriculum to take into account what are being called 21st century skills. This new curriculum begins to take into account the increasing digital times in which we live and suggests that teachers begin making more use of these technologies in both teaching as well as allowing the students to turn in more digital work. Therefore my goal would be to have my students collaborate on the creation of a media-rich website that tries to invoke, through image, text, podcast, and video, the intellectual, cultural, and everyday atmosphere that the authors, artists, and thinkers of that time period lived in.

The overarching practical goal of this unit is to create a wiki site that will allow visitors to explore various aspects of life and thought during the time period that most of us would refer to as Modernism (1880s - 1940s). The site will be comprised of short essays, researched, written, edited, and revised by the students that will be accessible through links that are, in a sense, uncovered by the students. The purpose is to get them to move past the canonical definition of Modernism and to get to the roots of what shaped those thinkers and artists; to get them to begin to question and make connections between what was going on in the broader culture, and even everyday life, that had an influence on how these thinkers and artists thought and created. In order to create this, the students will get opportunities to work on their research skills as they spend time exploring the intellectual history of academic disciplines and their major thinkers. From this they will write short research pieces that will be edited by peers and revised collectively. Then they will act collaboratively to decide where there are areas of overlap between the disciplines and the ideas of various thinkers. Out of these collaborative discussions will come the literal links on the wiki page. By making use of the open-ended nature of the Internet this unit seeks to get the students out of the typical classroom scenario and engaged in the collaborative construction of knowledge that is rapidly becoming the hallmark of 21st-century skills.

The site itself would have two main organizing principles: first, how are sensory perceptions

altered, and secondly, how does this shift our intellectual understandings? Focusing on both senses and the intellect will allow the students to make an easy connection, since the site features an appeal to the personal (what did it feel/sound/taste/smell/look like during that time?) as well as allows them to work inter-disciplinarily since the intellectual understandings of the world coincide nicely with their other high school academic subjects. The students will pursue a line of research into several of these areas (probably one sensory and one academic) and their assignment will be to trace out some of the changes that occurred to these concepts during that time period. This beginning research will serve to get them into the library where we can begin working on the basics of good research skills. From there they will compile notes which will eventually be used to write a draft of an explanatory essay that endeavors to give the reader a sense of what it was like to create in that time period. The emphasis though should be on what are the things that are changing the ways in which people perceive. In their attempts to demonstrate the changes that are taking place they will be encouraged to take advantage of all the digital tools that are at our disposal in the classroom.

A quick example should begin to suggest the possibilities. One of the sensory changes is the invention of electric streetlights. As cities become, in a sense, more visible, what are the effects on people? How would lights change the way people approach one another? does crime go up or go down? what does it do for shopping and consumerism? does it encourage more leisure time or more work time? what do they do to the way people see things? what does it mean for our perception of darker colors? lighter colors? how do the lights affect our social interactions? To answer these questions is going to require the examination of information outside the normal channels for a high school classroom. To answer the above would require the digging into crime statistics, urban growth patterns, patterns of social norms, analysis of pictures, photos, and films to see how light altered the framing of things, etc....

The point is to try to get the student to do research that begins to give an indication of what life was like and then to apply this knowledge to the various artistic fields. The hope is that by becoming familiar with the context in which the art was made that then the student while have a means to access the art to try to give it meaning. Taking them through as much of the culture as possible and drawing connections to the art ought to also provide the student with a way of understanding Modernism without having to be told what it means by a teacher. In this way I try to provide a means by which they can make a meaning for this era themselves.

The overarching goal through this process is to take the student through the steps of gathering information, having them wade through it and assess its values, then synthesize it together to create something, hopefully both written and visual, that can then serve as a research tool for others. The creation of a dynamic, media-rich site that is cross-linked internally so that one avenue of inquiry in the site will lead to others will require the students to work together on a timetable to pull this off. There will be design components, organizational decisions, and editing of each other's writing. All of these decisions play a role in the effectiveness of conveying the information so that this project will respond to the requirement of teaching rhetoric to the AP English 11 students.

Ultimately, the goal is to provide a forum for the exploration of the ways in which the backdrop against which and within an artwork is made gives us a glimpse into the world that the

artist was able to perceive. By looking at the world that the artist was in and trying to understand how they saw and heard life, we can wrestle more acutely with how they perceived the world. By accumulating as much information as possible about what the everyday-ness of life was like, the quotidian existence of the artist, then the students begin to create a groundwork on which to approach the culture and the artwork. This in turn should open up the ways in which student can begin to make some of the possible meanings that the artwork could have.

Defining Modernism Teaching Guide

There are several organizational things that need to be done before turning the work over to the students. One of the goals for the unit is that the teacher should be involved on the front-end and then fall into more of a coaching or facilitating position. A common phrase in educational circles these days is "21st century skills" and one of those skills is to be able to work in a collaborative environment towards a common result. This unit is designed around the principles of Project-Based Learning to help foster that environment in the classroom. These principles, listed below and taken from the ERS Focus on Project-Based Learning provide an over-arching framework for the unit though you should use them as a guide to craft the unit in the way that works best for your classroom.

> Project Based Learning Design Principles
> Principle # 1: Begin with the end in mind
> Principle # 2: Craft the driving question
> Principle # 3: Plan the assessment
> Principle # 4: Map the project
> Principle # 5: Manage the process

The previous pages explain what this unit conceives as the end, the wiki-like Internet site that allows for an exploration of the many facets of the Modernist era. The whole unit in fact is driven by the question of how to define Modernism in a way that attempts to take into account as much of the cultural intellectual, and aesthetic atmosphere as possible. Having begun with the end in mind, all that is left is the planning, mapping, and managing.

The first move is to make the research categories for Modernism. By doing this for the students, they can begin with a series of guideposts. For most of my students this is the first serious research that they have done and if I can show them how I derived the categories, it helps them later on in the year when they have to do their own individual research paper. My research categories are listed below and are crafted to give as much room as possible within them while still being specific enough to provide avenues of research. I have also structured my category divisions to coincide with the core classes (Core Categories) that high school students have to take. From there they will choose from the Aesthetic and Cultural Categories, both of which are designed to supplement the school-based knowledge with the experience of everyday life and culture. This division is designed to encourage interdisciplinary thinking as well as provide them with the option to work with a subject that appeals to them. The student groups are first divided by the Core Categories, then they can choose two of the Aesthetic Categories, and finally they can choose one of the Cultural Categories. This method of dividing the topics to be covered ensures that the traditional way of understanding Modernism, thorough an aesthetic lens, will be

there along with connections outside of the arts as well To go along with the research categories I also give the students a research low chart or guide to help them begin their researches (see appendix).

Core Categories
Physics
Chemistry
Biology
Math
History
Literature

Aesthetic Categories
Painting
Photography
Sculpture
Film
Music - Classical
Music - Popular

Cultural Categories
Politics
Cultural events
Consumerism

Once the class has been arranged, the instructor will need to go to a site like pbworks.com and set up a wiki account for your class or classes, depending on how many classes are participating in doing this. If the school can subscribe to a large internet space, such as Apple's Mobile Me plan, then the students could build their own site since Apple gives an account 20 gigabits of memory on their space. My school district does host websites for teachers but they only allot 20MB of memory space. With some of the larger media files that students will hopefully create, 20MB is too small a space so I use outside resources. Pbworks will start with 1-2 GB and you can increase that for only a nominal charge. Since pbworks comes in a template that while malleable, looks a lot like Wikipedia, it is helpful to look at some Wikipedia entries that are fairly complex so that you can begin to get an idea of the direction you want to encourage the students to go in. The Wikipedia entry on Modernism itself is a useful resource as is an ongoing project at Yale University called "The Modernism Lab," a project crafted out of a class and comprised mainly of undergraduate contributions., Both the Wiki site and the Yale site are well-organized and provide access to a wealth of primary sources though they both favor a fairly canonical reading of Modernism. They also function better as endpoints, places to go to be taught Modernism rather than a place to go to create a definition of Modernism.

When you begin to talk about the project with the students you should emphasize the public nature of the work that they will be doing. The pbworks site that they will create is a public site and thus they need to hear (and hear it often) that their work is entering a larger, public conversation about the nature of Modernism and thus they are writing and creating for an

audience outside of the classroom. For my class these ideas about writing are ones that we have been working with since they link up with the kind of work they need to be doing for the AP English Language and Composition exam's synthesis question. The structure of this question reinforces the idea that in their writing and rhetorical strategies they are taking part in a larger conversation. The public nature of this work provides additional impetus to do well beyond just a grade.

The next step is to explain the nature of the project and include the job descriptions so they clearly understand the work they are being asked to undertake. The project description should include much of the above with the emphasis on this being a project where they *create* meaning rather than being told what things mean. This is a chance for them to begin engaging in "real-world" intellectual work, for them to become *producers* of rather than the traditional "student as consumer" of intellect. In order for them to do so they will need to sign up for one of "jobs" listed below.

Researcher/Editor - the job that most students will have is as a researcher. These students will be responsible for researching a topic, defining it, and discussing it with their peers in other groups so that they can begin establishing connections. These students will also be responsible for editing each other's work inside the group since they will receive both a content grade as well as an expression grade. These are the students who will comprise the research groups.

Wiki Editors - these students, usually five or fewer, form their own little group and are responsible for the organization and layout of the of various research groups' work. These are the students who will spend the most time on the wiki site, building and arranging the various entries. Because of the time-consuming nature of this position, I exempt them from having to do research on a specific category. Instead I hold them responsible for writing introductions to each category as well as an overall introduction to the whole site.

After choosing the wiki editors, for each class you will need to divide the students into six roughly equal groups by Core Categories. You may want to let the students choose the discipline they want to work in since this might suggest that they would already have an interest. However you choose to do it, these students will be responsible for conducting the research on their chosen/assigned aspect of Modernism. Each of these groups should be of mixed ability and each needs to have a student who will function as the point-person for the research done in that discipline as well as being responsible for directing the editing and revision of the group's work.

They will need some initial instruction on how to research their given topic and I suggest that they use the Flow Chart found in the Appendix. To help facilitate this they have three avenues that they could pursue. First I schedule a day in the library with the media specialist. By approaching the librarian(s) beforehand you can lay out the framework of what you will be expecting the students to do and I have usually found that when I did that, they were only too happy to help. I have the librarian address both what is available in the library catalog and what is online in the databases. I attempt to emphasize the importance of knowing your way around a library so that the students will be able to use texts as well as the Internet.

The second approach they should pursue is to go to the instructors who teach that discipline in

the school and interview them about the discipline's history. In this way they begin to see that the knowledge in one class is not confined to that class but instead is fluid and dynamic, crossing boundaries in search of new connections. This disregard for boundaries is in fact part of what Modernism was about so their research begins to replicate the experience they are researching.

The third approach is to go online and in a more general way research the history of the discipline during that time period. This is most students' default research position and one that I try to get them to move past. I strongly emphasize the first two approaches, often giving them more grading weight so that they have to do something besides going straight to the Internet. However, given that the final product is an Internet site, I do acknowledge the importance of understanding how information is assimilated on the Internet. It is also helpful for them to see how other sites that have something to do with Modernism organize their information.

At this stage, once they have done the research, they need to begin the writing of their researches. These write-ups should be in the form of short, succinct explanations of anywhere between two and six pages that focus on all or some aspect of the Core Category. These papers would be linked to other papers that make the case that the changes in that particular Core Category had effects that reached beyond just that particular discipline.

The End Result

The visitor to the site would be greeted by a brief and traditional overview of Modernism as well as an explanation of how that definition fails to capture the breadth and depth of Modernism. They are then guided to various avenues that they can proceed along to explore what else was happening during this time period in other fields. The goal is to create a research - oriented site that through its usage practically forces a visitor to consider new avenues to approach Modernism.

Once this is accomplished, you can take this newfound knowledge on the road and have the students test out their definitions. In Charlotte, I will take them to the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art and have them tour the collections, which span a time frame of the late 1890's to the early 1970's. The question then becomes: does their definition of "Modern art" hold up? Can it effectively be applied to actual artworks in the world as opposed to those selected for them in their textbooks? Often, if the museum is contacted in advance, they can provide a museum guide who will engage with the students and help them test out their definitions. This helps them to understand that these conversations happen outside of the classroom and in "real-world" situations. It also helps them to begin to see an actual place where academic issues matter. By taking advantage of the museum, and perhaps using it for additional discussion and/or writing, the work in the classroom begins to take on a different dimension. And maybe in these conversations our students will develop their "21st-century skills."

Appendix: Research Flow Chart
The following is an organizational guide to use in moving the students through the unit.

Research a Discipline from the Core Category list. Describe the accepted beliefs and practices that existed before the change that came as a result of the ideas of the major figure being discussed.

Find a Key Figure from that category, someone that revolutionized the field. Provide a brief biography that situates them geographically, intellectually, and culturally.

Describe the Key Idea of this figure; what was their big contribution to shaking up the field or altering the intellectual landscape of that discipline. Include a description of their major work, if that is what did it.

Describe the Change that came over the field as a result of this idea. When, where, and what difference did this person and their ideas make in the study of this discipline.

Make Connections to other fields/disciplines. For this, the student will need to go to the other groups and make inquiries to see how wide-ranging the ideas of this thinker became. These connections will lay the groundwork for the links between categories on the wiki site.

Visual Representation - either with alone or in junction with their peers form any group the student needs to prepare a visual representation of the new information provided by this thinker, the change that is brought about by this thinker/idea, and/or the idea of this figure. This representation needs to be in a form that can be loaded onto the site.

The student should compile an on-going bibliography of the works they have consulted in pursuing this research.

Annotated Bibliography

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music.* Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press. 1985.
In this radical re-evaluation of the history of music, Attali uses music as a herald of new political and social formations. In doing so he deals specifically with Modernism as well as provides a useful model for thinking about the interrelationship between art and society.

Boyer, John and Michael Godfrey. *Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Catalog.* Charlotte, NC: Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. 2009.
The catalog for this brand-new museum in Charlotte, NC, almost demands a re-frameing of Modernism in that the works discussed from the collection exceed the traditional framework of Modernism, and yet a case is made for them as Modernist. The curators force us to re-examine our preconceived ideas and re-think the traditional canon.

Clarke, Suzanne. *ERS focus on project-based learning.* Alexandria, Va: Educational Research Service. 2009.
This short and useful primer on the basics of PBL gives you the framework needed to begin designing your own projects. Its advantage is its open-endedness, its disadvantage is its lack of precise and detailed instructions and examples but it does have a useful bibliography.

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the observer: on vision and modernity in the nineteenth century.* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 1990.
A close examination of the ways that vision and seeing changed in the late 19th century. Crary makes the claim that how we saw affected what we decided to see. In this way he offers a new approach to modernity.

Danius, Sara. *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2002.
While rooted in literature, Danius makes a persuasive case that as technology was changing so were our senses and the ways in which we perceived knowledge. She makes a strong case for the examination of this intersection as it reshapes the traditional thinking about the role of technology in Modernism.

Dempsey, Amy. *Styles, Schools, and Movements.* New York: Thames and Hudson. 2002.
A brief, useful, and yet thorough look at the numerous different schools and groups that made up Modernism. Dempsey gives a brief overview and then suggestions for further study. It is also nice that she has cross-referenced the artists so you can follow their involvement.
Everdell, William. *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1997.
An incredibly useful volume, written in intelligently yet free from academic jargon, that makes the case for expanding the disciplines that we look at when we look at Modernism. Everdell moves temporally through various academic disciplines, including those we don't often think of in relationship to Modernism such as chemistry, math, and biology. He also brings into the frame the World's Fair, the rise of cinema, and even the thinking that lead to concentration camps. He deftly shows the interrelationships between these events and brings us a new way to see

Modernism. Highly recommended.

Gitelmann, Lisa. *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1999.
While a bit theoretical at times, it is a useful overview of the technologies of representation from Modernism that would be most immediately appealing to English teachers. She covers the ways in which new technologies provoked experimentation among writers, including many who tried new ways of organizing knowledge that fell by the wayside. This makes it a useful study of the kinds of changes that were taking place.

Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood. *Art in Theory 1900 - 1995.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1994.
A large and thorough compendium of primary sources that stretches well past what most consider Modernism. This makes it especially attractive since it allows a reader to trace lines of thought.

Knapp, Laura G., Janice E. Kelly-Reid, and Scott A. Ginder. *National Center for Educational Statistics, HYPERLINK "http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010152rev"*
http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010152rev
A useful resource for examining the data that follows teachers around.

Marcus, Greil and Werner Sollors. *A New Literary History of America.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 2010.
What makes this particular new and useful is that it moves through the literary history of America by looking at specific cultural moments and artworks that push the traditional boundaries. It opens up the view that culture, albeit art or literature, is created in the midst of larger forces and events that play a role in shaping those works. Plus nearly half of the entries fall under the general time frame of Modernism.

Murfin, Ross and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms.* Boston: Bedford Books. 1997.
A resourceful handbook that provides thoughtful overviews of significant terms and ideas in literary thought. A great starting point for the uninitiated.

PBWorks.com. "Homepage."   HYPERLINK "http://pbworks.com" http://pbworks.com
There is no better place for those new to wikis. These folks will help you every step of the way with online tutorial and all the resources to get you started to create an online space for you to collaborate.

Ravitch, Diane. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System.* New York: Basic Books. 2010.
A one-time proponent of standardized testing and school choice reverses her previous stands in a well-researched and thoughtful examination of the negative effects that testing and choice have had on education. A good place to begin thinking about what is important in education at an especially important time.

Scholes, Robert. *Paradoxy of Modernism.* New Haven CT: Yale University Press. 2006.
A long-time scholar of Modernism begins to move out of the mainstream and examine cultural and literary works that were thought to be "low art." In taking them seriously he makes the case that these often overlooked works have a place in creating that which we call Modernism.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 1986.
An informative case study of how a specific technology shaped the culture it that invented it. In many ways he provides a model for the kind of research that this unit aspires to have the students do. While he goes into more depth, it is worth looking at because of the connections that he draws between technology and culture.

Thompson, Emily Ann. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America 1900 - 1933.* Cambridge MA. MIT Press 2002.
Overly detailed for classroom use, there is still much here that can be useful as she explores how the ways in which sound technology began to alter the kinds of sounds that were heard. Literally tracing how new modes of building, new building materials, and new designs shifted composition and performance, Thompson makes the case that technology had a large role to play in the construction of Modernism.

Wikipedia. "Modernism." HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism
Given the way that Wikipedia entries are created, this is about the most canonical description of Modernism that you can find. It is a great starting place that this unit seeks to move beyond. In the best-case scenario you might be able to get a student to add something to it. It would be an interesting assignment to see how long it stayed up.

Yale University. "The Modernism Lab." HYPERLINK
"http://modernism.research.yale.edu/index.php" http://modernism.research.yale.edu/index.php
An excellent model for this unit since it is created by students and seeks to expand the general study of Modernism. It is both full of useful info and a good template for organization of the site this unit seeks to create.

Endnotes

Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms.* (Boston: Bedford Books. 1997), 218, 220.

 Diane Ravitch. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System.* (New York: Basic Books. 2010), 15 – 31, 93 – 113.

 Laura G. Knapp, Janice E. Kelly-Reid, Scott A.Ginder. *National Center for Educational Statistics, HYPERLINK "http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010152rev" http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010152rev*

 William Everdell. *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1997).

 Suzanne Clarke. *ERS focus on project-based learning.* (Alexandria, Va: Educational Research Service. 2009), 7.

 Wikipedia, HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernism .

 Yale University, HYPERLINK "http://modernism.research.yale.edu/index.php" http://modernism.research.yale.edu/index.php .