The Beatles
An Open Learning Experiment
Gordon Thompson & Ben Harwood
Skidmore College
OLE: An Open Learning Experiment
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Subvert the idea of a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)
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• Rather than broadcasting with limited interaction, invite a selected audience into a virtual classroom where they can interact with the faculty member and campus classroom students.
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• Video clip: deconstructing a particular moment in this music history
OLE: An Open Learning Experiment
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Focus on building a learning community.
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• Inviting parents, alumni, and college community members into the classroom.
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• Inviting parents, alumni, and college community members into the classroom.
• Connecting classroom students with virtual students.
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Reinforcing classroom instruction with virtual instruction.
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Reinforcing classroom instruction with virtual instruction.
• Complementary attributes of real-time interaction and virtual availability.
OLE: An Open Learning Experiment

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- Inviting parents, alumni, and college community members into the classroom
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Reinforcing classroom instruction with virtual instruction
- Complementary attributes of real-time interaction and virtual availability
- Positive reinforcement of knowledge base
OLE: An Open Learning Experiment

Focus on building a learning community
- Inviting parents, alumni, and college community members into the classroom
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Reinforcing classroom instruction with virtual instruction
- Complementary attributes of real-time interaction and virtual availability
- Positive reinforcement of knowledge base
- Contextualizing personal opinion, participant memory, and documentation
Class Website
Rubber Soul: Beatlemania Peaks, 1965-1966

At one time, all we wanted to do was make a record and that would have done us. People always think you go about dreaming that you’re going to be a star—well, I think that’s daft.

George Harrison (Beatles 2000: 185)

Sometime in the spring of 1965 while filming Help!, John Lennon, George Harrison, and their significant others attended a dinner at the Hyde Park Square home of prominent dentist, John Riley (see Boyd 2007). Harrison, having heard rumors of the dentist’s promiscuity, remained deeply suspicious when their host entreated them not to leave after the meal. Not to disappoint, Riley chose this opportunity to dissolve potent doses of diethylamide of lysergic acid—contained in four carefully displayed sugar cubes—in the after-dinner coffee of his guests. Relatively unfamiliar with its effects, the dentist watched them for signs of behavioral change, possibly hoping that the renowned drug would reveal itself a powerful aphrodisiac. He had obtained the drug from an American collaborator of Timothy Leary (Spitz) but had refrained from ingesting the drug himself. Harrison insisted—against the dentist’s pleas—that they leave the elegant townhouse after the coffee to catch a set at the Pickwick Club by an old friend from their Hamburg days, Klaus Voorman. On the short drive to Soho, the drug seeped into their consciousness and, for uncounted hours, the world alternately amazed or terrified them. (See Beatles 2000: 177). They would not take the drug again until a stop in California during their 1965 North American tour, but it contributed to their continued withdrawal from Brian Epstein’s carefully manufactured public persona.

LSD manifests itself through a variety of possible symptoms, including the development of “subjective spaces and individual microworlds” in which the individual fixates on their own interpretation of reality (Grof, 11). Dylan’s ability to tap his personal crises and turn these experiences into songs appealed to Lennon and Harrison, and LSD helped gain them access to their own idiosyncratic and personalized worldviews. Lennon had already begun to engage his private demons in his songs, revealing those unique and revelatory memories of formational experiences and life-altering relationships. Ever since 1964 when Dylan had told him to listen to the words, Lennon had discovered and explored his special gift for language so that his compositions commenced to telegraph his both his interest in surrealism and his alienation and isolation. Indeed Lennon in this era embraced songwriting as a vehicle for self reflection, expression, and psychoanalysis; eventually reasoning and arguing with himself through his lyrics. But Lennon also later reflected that LSD left him feeling like “nothing; I was shit,” such that he lost his self-confidence (Beatles 2000: 180).
"Day Tripper" (Lennon and McCartney: Northern Songs) [0:00]

Recording: 16 October 1965 in Studio Two, EMI Recording Studios, London
Release: 3 December 1965 (Parlophone R5389) with "We Can Work It Out"
Musicians: John Lennon (lead vocal, rhythm guitar, tambourine), Paul McCartney (lead vocal, bass guitar), George Harrison (lead guitar), Ringo Starr (drums)
Production: Produced by George Martin with Norman Smith (balance engineer) and Ken Scott (tape operator).

Notes and Quotes:

Text:
Got a good reason, for taking the easy way out. Got a good reason for taking the easy way out now.
She was a day tripper, a one-way ticket/Sunday driver yeh. It took me so long to find out, and I found out.
She's a big teaser, she took me half the way there. She's a big teaser, she took me half the way there now.
Tried to please her, she only played one night stands. Tried to please her, she only played one night stands now.

Form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intro</td>
<td>introduce underlying riff, Fender guitars, add bass, tambourine, and drums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A verse</td>
<td>McCartney sings first phrase (double-tracked) with Lennon joining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B refrain</td>
<td>3-part harmonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intro</td>
<td>reintroduce opening riff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A verse</td>
<td>as in verse above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B refrain</td>
<td>as in refrain above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bridge</td>
<td>repeat guitar riff at new pitch level, build with backing vocals and guitar solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intro</td>
<td>as in intro above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A verse</td>
<td>as in verses above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B refrain</td>
<td>as in refrains above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coda</td>
<td>as in intros above, repeat riff and fade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rubber Soul

Schedule
16/06/11
"Day Tripper"

Stephen James. Paul McCartney didn't want radio play too long before the release of a Beatles record because he didn't want people to get tired of it before they could buy it, which is, of course, very clever. Therefore, he made it a rule that no promotion manager, either from EMI or myself, could take the records around to the BBC until a week or maximum 10 days before the release. The moment you took the record in, you see, they would put it on immediately. So we weren't allowed to take the records around, even though we had copies. It was a matter of saying, "Hey, you'll never believe it, but the next Beatle record is great! Unfortunately I can't let you hear it." (Pritchard and Lysaght, 205)

Miles. A good example, one which combined both sex and drugs, was their next single, "Day Tripper," co-written in October 1965 at Kenwood. (1997: 209)

McCartney. This was getting towards the psychedelic period when we were interested in winking to our friends and comrades in arms, putting in references that we knew our friends would get but that the Great British Public might not. So "she's a big teaser" was "she's a prick teaser." The mums and dads didn't get it but the kids did. "Day Tripper" was to do with tripping. Acid was coming in on the scene, and often we'd do these songs about "the girl who thought she was it." Mainly the impetus for that used to come from John, I think John met quite a few girls who thought they were it and he was a bit in arms about that kind of thing. "She Said" was another one. But this was just a tongue-in-cheek song about someone who was a day tripper, a Sunday painter, Sunday driver, somebody who was committed only part to the idea. Whereas we saw ourselves as full-time trippers, fully committed drivers, she was just a day tripper. That was a co-written effort; we were both there making it all up but would give John the main credit. Probably the idea came from John because he sang the lead, but it was a close thing. We both put a lot of work on it. I remember with the prick teasers we thought, "That'd be fun to put in." That was one of the great things about collaborating, you could nudge-wink a [209/210] bit, whereas if you're sitting on your own, you might not put it in. You know, "I'd love to turn you on," we literally looked at each other and, "Oh, dare we do this?" It was a good moment, there was always good eye contact when we put those things in. (Miles 1997: 209-210)

Lennon. "Day Tripper" was [written] under complete pressure, based on an old folk song I wrote about a month previous. It was very hard going, that, and it sounds it. [69] It wasn't a message song. It was a drug song. In a way, it was a day tripper—I just liked the word. [70] (Anthology, 199)
Constructing the OLE

• Pre-production
  • Hybrid versus replacement course redesign

• Production
  • Lecture capture recording options

• Post-production
  • Video editing, curation and publishing platforms
Mise-en-scène - production studio v.1
Mise-en-scène - production studio v.2
“A Hard Day’s Night”: The Chord
“A Hard Day’s Night”: The Chord
“A Hard Day’s Night”: The Chord

Student responses: 400 word “reflections” on the videos and lectures
“A Hard Day’s Night”: The Chord

xxxxCxxxx 9 March 2017 at 3:54 am

In the subject of the video lectures “A Hard Day’s Night” and “‘A Hard Day’s Night’: The Chord”:

“A Hard Day’s Night,” in my mind, has always felt like one of the few truly quintessential Beatles songs in their expansive discography. It could be because I’m pretty sure my father played the A Hard Day’s Night album a bit more than the other Beatles albums, so I’m just more familiar with it, but I think a more suitable explanation is simply because the song has an overwhelmingly “Beatles” sound to it. That is to say, it’s quite catchy, there’s a bit of excited screaming (a musical tactic employed by the Fab Four in many of their songs), and the lyrics are just unique enough to have that Lennon-McCartney feel to it (with the addition of Ringo, in this case). With that being said, it didn’t surprise me that this song came up during class. However, I was surprised by the complexities of the song, brought to light by the lectures.

Despite the fact that “A Hard Day’s Night” is only two minutes and twenty-nine seconds long, it’s filled to the brim with a plethora of both interesting backstories and musical intricacies alike. First of all, I never knew that the song was written around the title and I was unaware of the fact that the title of the song was inspired by one of Ringo’s malapropisms: “[Ringo] said in an interview: ‘We’d worked all day and we happened to work all night. I came up thinking, it was day, I suppose, and I said, “It’s been a hard day…” and I looked around and saw it was dark, so I said, “…night!”’” (Guesdon and Margotin, 128). Furthermore, what shocks me is the fact that John went home that night and wrote the song almost in its entirety, “[r]ecalls John: ‘The next morning I brought in the song’…It was recorded the next day and the announcement was released to the press: the movie would be called A Hard Day’s Night” (ibid.). In mid-April, almost completely finished with the filming of their movie, a film title and title song appears out of seemingly thin air. They might have been cutting it a little bit close in order to avoid the cheesiness of a movie being called Beatlemania.

When it came to recording, “Paul was singing the high notes...since John could not manage to do so” (ibid.), so throughout the song, John and Paul sing off and on as the lead, which wasn’t normally done by the Beatles. More fascinating than that was the technique utilized for the guitar/piano solo: “George Martin] slowed down the tape recorder by half to facilitate George’s solo, which he doubled himself on the piano, both of them playing together in unison and one octave lower” (Guesdon and Margotin, 131). Learning about this little trick made me realize how complicated the solo really is in this song—something I had never considered before or possibly just taken for granted. Of course, a reflection on “A Hard Day’s Night” wouldn’t be complete without touching on “The Chord” that opens the song, and thinking back, that single chord could be the reason why I feel this song is such a signature of the Beatles. Watching the video lecture that dissected that very chord was eye opening, as again, I think I must have taken it for granted. I never really thought about how many instruments playing however many chords and variations of chords in combination it would take to recreate one of the most recognizable starts to any song. Finally, I was astounded to find out that “[t]he song was...recorded in three hours” (ibid.), for the majority, which is incredible. I never knew such a short song could have such a rich foundation.

Welcome to “The Beatles: An Introduction,” an Open Learning Experiment

This is Skidmore’s first attempt at opening our classrooms to students beyond the physical Skidmore campus. Here, we’ve taken a popular 100-level introductory course that I am offering during the fall semester of 2013, broken it’s lectures down into its smaller components, and made it available to the Skidmore community: alumni and parents, as well as to students who are in the classroom. We understand this course as an articulation of Skidmore’s commitment to building a community of life-long learners.

One of our purposes has been to test the available technology in the hopes that what we learn will be applicable to other instructors so that we can make more of these available. Consequently, as you move through the videos, you should find that their form gradually changes as we experiment with cameras, microphones, file formats, lecture lengths, image placement, video editing, and many other challenges we faced. The lectures both imitate the classroom presentations upon which they are based, as well as take advantage of the format to do things that would be difficult to do in a live context.

I have had significant help from Ben Harwood of Academic Technologies at Skidmore, as well as from student John Schneider. They have put in numerous hours and encountered innumerable challenges as we waded into this project. It could not have happened without them.

We hope you enjoy this learning experience.

Gordon R. Thompson
Professor and Chair, Department of Music
The Beatles: An Introduction and an On-line Learning Experience

This experiment in opening a classroom to students from beyond the physical Skidmore campus takes a 100-level introductory course, breaks the lectures into smaller components (I've called them “videopods”), and makes them available to alumni, parents, and current students. This "Open Learning Experiment" (OLE) serves as an articulation of Skidmore's commitment to building a community of lifelong learners. Some of you will want to...

"We were just a band that made it very, very big."

Recent Blog Posts
Read about the course

Sep 24, 2013
THE BEATLES: AN INTRODUCTION AND AN ON-LINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
This experiment in opening a classroom to students from beyond the physical Skidmore...
Assessment

• Required comments
• Low stakes quizzing
• Self-paced mastery learning
Assessment – Quizzes: “Just in time feedback”
Assessment – Formative: Incorrect Answer
Assessment – Formative: Correct Answer
Assessment – Summative Feedback Options

Results

Your Score: 19.25% (31 points)
Passing Score: 50% (80.5 points)

Result:

× You did not pass.

Review Quiz  Print Results  Retry Quiz
## Assessment – Print Results & Answer Key

### Beatles-3-Recordings

#### Jane Doe

<table>
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<th>Date / Time</th>
<th>Student Score</th>
<th>Passing Score</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<td>April 17, 2017 9:50 pm</td>
<td>19.25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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### Beatles-3-Recordings

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Student Answer</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Who is the principal songwriter?</td>
<td>Paul McCartney</td>
<td>Ringo Starr</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Where was the core of this song originally written?</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What instrument appears here on a Beatles recording for the first time?</td>
<td>electric 12-string guitar</td>
<td>electric 12-string guitar</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Year originally released?</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Who is the principal songwriter?</td>
<td>John Lennon</td>
<td>John Lennon</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>On whose malapropism is this song based?</td>
<td>Ringo Starr</td>
<td>Ringo Starr</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What was unusual about how the solo was recorded?</td>
<td>Slower tape speed</td>
<td>four-track</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Year originally released?</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Which song provided the basic musical idea for this song?</td>
<td>&quot;Watch Your Step&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Baby, It's You&quot;</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Who is the principal songwriter?</td>
<td>John Lennon</td>
<td>Paul McCartney</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What happens at the beginning of this recording?</td>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>count in</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Year originally released?</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>What songwriter inspired this composition?</td>
<td>Bob Dylan</td>
<td>Paul McCartney</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Who is the principal songwriter?</td>
<td>John Lennon</td>
<td>Paul McCartney</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>What happens at the end of this recording?</td>
<td>flute solo</td>
<td>vocal harmonies</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Year originally released?</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Who wrote this song?</td>
<td>George Harrison</td>
<td>Dick James</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>In which specific context did United Artists release it?</td>
<td>film sound track</td>
<td>Parlophone LP</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>What does George Harrison introduce in this recording?</td>
<td>volume pedal</td>
<td>distortion pedal</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment – Review Quiz

Who is the principal songwriter?

- Mitch Murray
- George Harrison
- Paul McCartney
- Ringo Starr
- John Lennon

Incorrect
Introduction

The Beatles: An Introduction
Gordon Thompson
Skidmore College
Department of Music

09/11/2013

The Videopodcase; ethnomusicology; the course; Open Learning Experiment

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Analytics – v. 2
Student Engagement
Student Engagement

33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.
Student Engagement

33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.

50% of the class watches the video-pods.
33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.
50% of the class watches the video-pods.
99% of the class uses the test quizzes.
33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.

50% of the class watches the video-pods.

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• Results
Student Engagement

33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.

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99% of the class uses the test quizzes.

• Results
  • 2013 class average on quizzes: B
Student Engagement

33% of the class has family members signed up to use the materials.

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- Results
  - 2013 class average on quizzes: B
  - 2017 class average on quizzes: A-
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