

# Tracing Women Pedagogues: Applying “Data Feminism” to a Data Discovery Project

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## Abstract

Linked Women Pedagogues (LWP) is a data discovery tool that traces the intellectual influence of underrepresented women who taught in rhetorical studies (including its related fields of composition, business writing, oral communication, and community literacy) from the late nineteenth to the middle twentieth centuries, along with their other affiliations and activities, at home and abroad. This project highlights the difficulties of tracing, reflecting many aspects of what D’Ignazio and Klein (2019) call “data feminism,” which is a framework for combatting the hegemonic forces that get repeated and amplified in certain branches of information sciences that privilege certain ways of storing data. These forces can, in turn, diminish the validity and quality of stored data overall.

The search through source texts (e.g., *English Journal*, course catalogues, etc.) and databases (e.g., WorldCat, VIAF, HathiTrust, SNAC, DBpedia, etc.) for primary, secondary, and tertiary evidence about women who may have written, taught, or administrated in one or more areas of the field reveals clues to these women’s careers. However, much information is either difficult to find or nonexistent – even when broad-reaching databases are utilized. When a pedagogue has a partial record in one or more sources, her comprehensive professional identity, or her connections to other identities or texts, is undiscoverable due to data obstruction. This poster illustrates one workflow for overcoming the limitations, applying data feminist principles to information retrieval so as to inform a research process that makes the relationships between women, their institutions, their texts, and their roles, more visible.

## Acknowledgements and References

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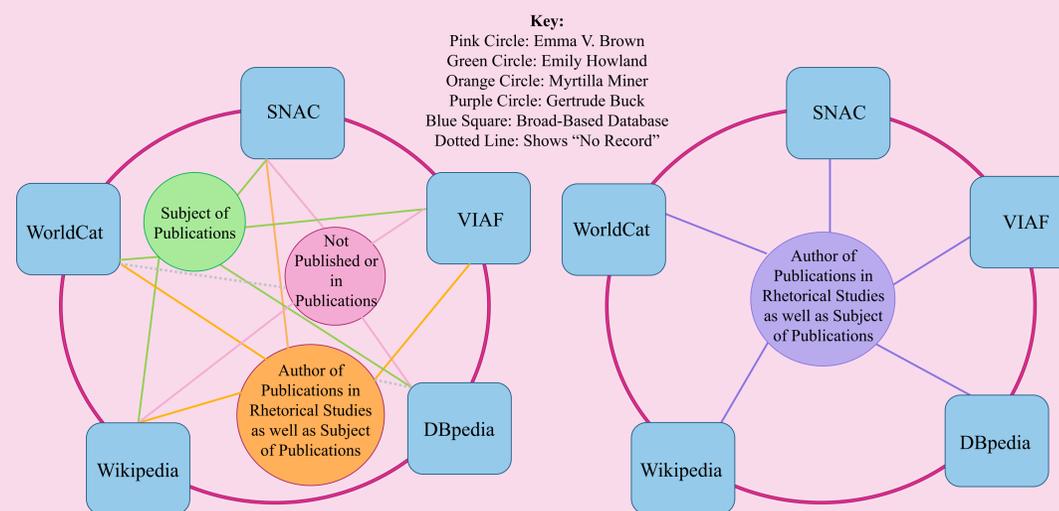
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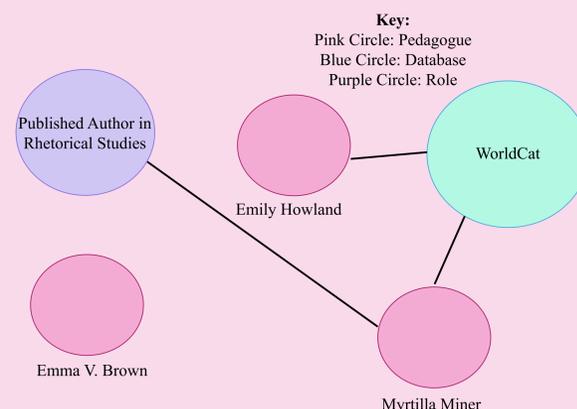
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## Methods

This visualization depicts connections between pedagogues themselves, their educational institutions, roles, and databases. Each node is enlarged based on the number of connections that can be found in various databases, connecting nodes to one another. For example, Wikipedia houses the most information, forming many of the connections that can be seen between the pedagogues and other nodes. This also emphasizes how information in various pedagogues may “hide” women and their accomplishments. Myrtilla Miner, though a prominent educator, is not found in DBpedia. One can see how many pieces of information are found in one database, but not in another, demonstrating how “gaps” in data can occur, hindering incomplete illustrations of these individuals.



The visualization above exemplifies the inequalities that privilege one pedagogue over another. Above, Gertrude Buck is shown to connect to various databases, as not only is she a published author, she also has publications. Compared to Emma V. Brown, a woman of color, she has a significantly higher number of connections and can be “seen” much more clearly, illustrating how a pedagogue is favored for publishing, even when she may be successful in other aspects of her careers.



This visualization explains how tracing women pedagogues through published citations can limit their visibility. Emily Howland can be found in WorldCat as other authors have published texts about her. Myrtilla Miner is shown as being the most visible, being a published author and having her works cited in WorldCat. Emma V. Brown is essentially invisible, given how women linked to publications are privileged over those who are not.

## Results and Discussion

### Examine Power

- Analyze hegemonic forces that impact data retrieval and privilege particular forms of information.
- Review the power dynamics that dictate how pedagogues are located and found through the use of a broad-based data tool.

### Challenge Power

- Combat data bias that prioritizes some pedagogues over others by making their legacies more visible.
- Develop a more well-rounded understanding of data collection and analysis by searching for information connected to women in rhetoric, helping to uncover linked institutions, publications, and other aspects of their career.

### Consider Context

- Render visualizations to display information connected to pedagogues, unearthing information that tends to “hide” particular women or leads to gaps in data networks.
- Utilize workflows that examine the “hidden” aspects of a pedagogue, such as women who have not published any materials, and ways to uncover their information without leads resulting from publications.
- Search for women and their affiliated texts in various digitized publications (*The English Journal*; *College English*; *College Composition and Communication*; etc.), and continue to find other facets of their influence in databases.
- This notion is also exemplified by searching for new pedagogues in broad-based databases by using a key term (*rhetoric*; *grammar*; *business writing*; etc.) plus the phrase “and women” or “woman”, in order to learn what makes female pedagogues more or less visible.

### Make Labor Visible

- Create complex visualizations to present to an audience based on data collected in spreadsheet that record thirty data points for each discovered pedagogue (including but not limited to their publications, roles, date range).
- Eventually create a navigable crowd-sourced meta-database that individuals can openly contribute to and review.

