Keywords

An Introduction

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I. What Is a Keyword?

In contemporary usage, the term “keyword” generally refers to a type of data or metadata. The Oxford English Dictionary’s primary definition is “a word serving as a key to a cipher or code,” one that provides “a solution or explanation” or one that is “of particular importance or significance.” Dating from the mid-eighteenth century, these usages represent keywords as data that unlock mysteries. The OED’s second definition is a term “chosen to indicate or represent the content of a larger text or record” in an “index, catalogue, or database.” Dating from the early nineteenth century, this usage represents keywords as tools for information retrieval within various archiving systems. This second meaning points toward the most familiar usage of the term today. Keywords are forms of metadata that authors, librarians, book indexers, concordance makers, web designers, and database builders add to a print or digital text to guide users to significant clusters of meaning. The interactive information ecologies of “Web 2.0” extend this usage in interesting ways. They enable consumers of information to produce their own metadata, which can then be visualized as keyword clouds or tag clouds. Metadata becomes a user-centered and interactive means of organizing, customizing, and sharing data.

When you look up a term in Keywords for American Cultural Studies, you will find that these definitions are both resonant and limited. The essays you will encounter synthesize a great deal of information about the historical and contemporary meanings of terms that structure the fields of American studies and cultural studies. By discussing how the meanings of those terms have developed over time, they may unlock some mysteries and crack a few codes. In this sense, the essays help readers to understand the concepts they encounter and to chart relations among them. But Keywords for American Cultural Studies is not a reference guide written for novices by academic cryptologists revealing the secrets of American studies and cultural studies. Nor is it an effort to set or fix the meanings of words on the basis of past usage, as a dictionary might. While many of the essays open by referring, as we do here, to usage histories archived in dictionaries such as the OED, they do so not to anchor the meanings of words in their past deployments but to remind readers that words change their meanings over time and across space. They then explore and explain the social and historical contexts of those usages, trace the genealogy of debates over key terms that have structured the fields of American studies and cultural studies, and speculate about the ongoing significance of those debates. As a whole, Keywords for American Cultural Studies aims to map the fissures and fault lines of the past, present, and future, treating the terms within it as sites of unresolved conflict and contestation.

II. Where Does Keywords for American Cultural Studies Come From?

The understanding of keywords central to this publication—both the print book and the digital site—is rooted in the writings of the British cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams. Upon his return from World War II, Williams became interested in how the meanings of certain words, which he only later
called “keywords,” seemed to have shifted during his absence. Two books that were to hold great importance for the emerging field of cultural studies resulted from this experiential insight. The first, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1958), traced a genealogy of the complex and contradictory mid-twentieth-century usages of the word “culture” through nearly two centuries of writings by British intellectuals concerned with the antagonistic relations between political democracy and capitalist industrialization. The second, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), collected 134 short essays (151 in the 1983 revised edition), all of which gloss shifts over the same two centuries in the meanings of terms ranging from “behavior” and “charity” to “sensibility” and “work.” As Williams explained in his introduction to the first edition of *Keywords*, he wrote these short essays in his spare moments and originally conceived of them as an appendix to *Culture and Society*. Only later did he develop them into a separate publication, as their sum grew in scope and complexity and as he began to understand and articulate the methodological stakes of the project he had undertaken. *Keywords* is, Williams insisted, “not a dictionary or glossary of a particular academic subject. It is not a series of footnotes to dictionary histories or definitions of a number of words. It is, rather, the record of an inquiry into a vocabulary” (15).

“Vocabulary” is in many ways the unacknowledged keyword of Williams’s introduction. His use of that term can help us to explain how *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* works and to clarify how it differs from more conventional reference books. Williams deployed the term in order to distinguish his project not only from those of dictionary editors and glossary makers but also from the research and writings of academic philologists and linguists, who examine the formal and structural components of language systems and their evolution. In contrast, Williams focused his keyword essays on what he called “historical semantics” (1976, 23), emphasizing the ways in which meanings are made and altered over time through contestations among the usages of diverse social groups and movements. “What can be done in dictionaries,” Williams wrote, “is necessarily limited by their proper universality and by the long time-scale of revision which that, among other factors, imposes. The present inquiry, being more limited—not a dictionary, but a vocabulary—is more flexible” (26). This underlining of the flexibility of a “vocabulary”—as opposed to the universality of a “dictionary”—points to Williams’s general premise that language systems develop and change in relation to local and practical usages. Dictionaries, glossaries, and other reference books rely on experts and reproduce a discourse of expertise by downplaying the creative and unpredictable aspects of interactive and idiosyncratic forms of meaning making. Vocabularies provide a counterpoint to this reliance on experts and expertise. They treat knowledge as a process that is responsive to the diverse constituencies that use and revise the meanings of the keywords that shape our understandings of the present, the future, and the past. To return to our opening conceit, they think about keywords as metadata produced socially and historically in relation to specific communities of users and emerging forms of practice.

*Keywords for American Cultural Studies* shares a number of these fundamental premises with Williams’s volume, as well as its other successors (Bennett, Grossberg, and Morris 2005) and the various *Keywords* volumes published by NYU Press (Nel and Paul 2011; Schlund-Vials, Vo, and Wong, forthcoming; Adams, Reiss, and Serlin, forthcoming; Adamson, Gleason, and Pellow, forthcoming). It provides an accessible and readable introduction to some of the central terms and debates
that shape the study of culture and society today. It circles around the keyword “culture” in the same way Williams’s two volumes did as they explored that central term’s interactions with neighboring concepts such as art, industry, class, and democracy. And it insists that our understanding of these terms and the interactions among them can be enhanced—rather than settled or shut down—by a heightened awareness of their historical genealogies and the conflicts embedded in differing and even contradictory uses of those terms.

At the same time, there are several aspects of Keywords for American Cultural Studies that distinguish it from Williams’s Keywords. Most obviously, it is a collaborative enterprise involving more than ninety authors working across a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields that overlap with—but seldom map neatly onto—either American studies or cultural studies. Most importantly, its exploration of culture and society is explicitly linked to a nation (the United States) or, at times, a geography (the Americas).

The keyword “America” is thus essential to our project in two ways. First, the term in all of its mutations—“American,” “Americas,” “Americanization,” “Americanist”—has to be defined in relation to what Williams called “particular formations of meaning” (1976/1983, 15). “America,” in other words, is a category with particularizing effects that are as central to how we think about the possibilities and limitations of the field of American studies as the universalizing term “culture” is to our understanding of the shape of the field of cultural studies. Second, contemporary disagreements over the category’s field-defining function point toward a wide range of debates related to what is now commonly called the postnational or transnational turn in American studies. Just as the universalizing referents of Williams’s own project have been troubled by subsequent work in cultural studies that has rendered explicit his tendency to assume a narrowly “British” (largely white, working-class) readership and archive for that project (Gilroy 1987), the category “America” has been troubled within American studies in part through the field’s interactions with cultural studies, though more pressingly by its engagements with new “formations of meaning” emerging from shifting patterns of migration and immigration, existing and evolving diasporic communities, and the neoliberal cultural and economic phenomena associated with financialization and globalization. The fact that twelve of the words in this last sentence—“culture,” “white,” “class,” “America,” “migration,” “immigration,” “diaspora,” “community,” “economy,” “neoliberal,” “finance,” and “globalization”—are titles of essays in Keywords for American Cultural Studies indicates how rich and complex this research has become.

In our editorial conversations with our contributors, we have attempted to draw out this richness and complexity by insisting—as Kirsten Silva Gruesz does in her essay on “America”—that authors specify when they are talking about “America” and when they are talking about the “United States.” It is an editorial decision that has produced some useful results. Nearly all of the essays reach across U.S. national borders to track usages of terms such as “America,” “South,” and “West” and across disciplinary formations such as political philosophy and social theory, where terms ranging from “neoliberalism” and “politics” to “secularism” and “religion” may be inflected in particular ways in the United States but cannot be subsumed under either an “American” or an “Americanist” rubric. Similarly, terms that might from one perspective be viewed as a subset of American studies (or cultural studies focused on the United States) are consistently shown to have transnational histories and future trajectories. Essays on “African,” “Asian,” “mestizo/a,” “Latin@,”
“indigenous,” “Indian,” “cooler,” “black,” and “white” all map cultural formations and develop lines of inquiry that are neither exclusive to the United States nor exhausted by U.S.-based versions of ethnic studies. Transnational understandings of keywords such as “diaspora,” “migration,” “immigration,” “youth,” and “naturalization” similarly push us to reimagine the political geographies of the United States, as well as the nation-based intellectual geographies of the institutions that study it. And they indicate the involvement of our contributors in a wide variety of critical interdisciplinarities, ranging from queer studies to indigenous studies to community studies.

A final difference between the two projects is evident in the fact nearly all of our contributors have followed our editorial lead by referring in their essays to American studies and cultural studies as two separate fields of inquiry, even as our title seems to name just one: American cultural studies. The point of this analytic separation is to stage an ongoing encounter between the two fields. That encounter is not new, of course, and critical engagement with the usage history of key terms ranging from “pastoralism” (L. Marx 1964/2000) to “gay” (Chauncey 1994) to “racism” (Fields and Fields 2012) has been as central to American studies as it has been to cultural studies. As Michael Denning (2004) observes, the reasons for this parallel development are complex. Both American studies and cultural studies emerged in the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s as critical responses to reductionist versions of literary formalism and Marxist materialism, and both advocated for cultural criticism as a means of reconstructing a usable past oriented toward a more democratic and socially just future. Yet the two fields also evolved differently, with cultural studies taking on the question “What is culture?” while American studies focused on the question “What is American?” Denning suggests that the first question proved more useful than the second since it opened inquiry onto a wider range of cultural forms and forms of political action. Since Denning drew this conclusion in the mid-1980s, the field of American studies itself has turned toward those modes of inquiry, partly as a result of its encounter with work in cultural studies on questions of region, migration, and diaspora but also due to the engagement of both fields with other forms of intersectional analysis, including work produced in the new interdisciplinary formations that emerged from the social movements of the 1960s and have evolved significantly since then, such as ethnic studies, postcolonial studies, disability studies, working-class studies, and women, gender, and sexuality studies.

III. What Does Keywords for American Cultural Studies Do?

Keywords for American Cultural Studies provides readers with a map of the shifting terrain created by several decades of work located at the intersections of American studies, cultural studies, and other emergent interdisciplinary fields. A rigorous encounter with these relatively new intellectual and institutional formations requires recognition of one of their central lessons: all forms of inquiry and sites of institutionalization, including academic departments, conferences, and journals, police their boundaries by leaving something—and often someone—out of the analytical frame. This boundedness is not simply a result of the limitations of time and space. Exploring its causes is central to the core methodology of those fields, all of which stress the importance of reflexivity with respect to the social and political commitments of readers, interpreters, and researchers, as well as their temporal and spatial positionalities. For this reason, it is critical to understand Keywords for American Cultural Studies not only as a map of contemporary scholarship or lexicon of critical terms but also as a methodological
provocation to think about inquiry in ways that are self-reflexive, open-ended, and future oriented. All of the essays frame and pursue research questions that are situated responses to shifts in contemporary political, social, and institutional life. We want to provoke our readers to do the same by encouraging them to think critically and creatively about how knowledge about “America” and its “cultures” has been, is, and should be made. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* is, in this sense, both a guide to some of the best existing research in and across the fields it maps and an argument for maintaining and enhancing a commitment to critical and interdisciplinary approaches to the future evolution of those fields.

In *Keywords*, Williams demonstrated his commitment to a self-reflexive and future-oriented approach to inquiry by including several blank pages at the end of his book. These pages were intended, as he put it, “not only for the convenience of making notes, but as a sign that the inquiry remains open, and that the author will welcome all amendments, corrections, and additions” (26). We share this desire to mark the boundedness—and openness—of the inquiry, though readers will find no blank pages at the back of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. Instead, we want to underscore the obvious point that many keywords of American studies and cultural studies do not appear here. Take as an example the keyword “individual.” A reader who in high school was exposed to the old saw that “American” (read: U.S.) culture is characterized by an ideology of “individualism” might at first be dismayed to find no essay on that term. But that reader might then look for—or be guided to—terms closely related to the concept of individuality: most clearly “subject” and “identity” but also “interiority” and “body.” From there, he or she could move either to keywords that qualify and constitute individuality, such as “race,” “ethnicity,” “gender,” “sex,” “normal,” and “disability,” or to keywords that name places and concepts within which “individualism” is contested and constructed, such as “family,” “religion,” “corporation,” “state,” and “city.” This line of inquiry could then bring the reader to “public” and “community” for broader framings of the missing essay on “individual.” And he or she might even end up reading the essay on “society,” recognizing that individualism is always in tension with social norms. At this point, the reader would have a much more nuanced understanding of what other keywords and concepts are necessary to map the relationship between “individual” and “society.”

We imagine that this hypothetical example will strike some readers as persuasive, while others will remain skeptical of our editorial choices. In relation to both groups, we want to echo Williams by extending an invitation to our readers to become collaborators in keywords projects that extend beyond the essays in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. We ask you to revise, reject, and respond to the essays that do—and do not—appear in this publication, to create new clusters of meaning among them, and to develop deeper and richer discussions of what a given term does and can mean when used in specific local and global contexts. To this end, we offer the following, necessarily incomplete list of words about which we, as coeditors of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, would like to hear and read more: activism, age, agency, alien, anarchy, Arab, archive, art, book, bureaucracy, canon, celebrity, character, child, Christian, commodity, consent, conservative, country, creativity, creole, debt, depression, derivative, desire, development, disciplinary, education, elite, equality, European, evolution, experience, expert, fascism, feminine, fiction, folk, friendship, hegemony, heritage, heterosexual, history, homosexual, human, imagination, individual,
intellectual, Jewish, justice, liberty, literacy, local, masculine, management, manufacture, minority, mission, multicultural, Muslim, native, nature, opinion, oratory, patriotism, performativity, place, pleasure, pluralism, policy, popular, poverty, pragmatism, print, psychology, radical, reality, representation, republicanism, reservation, resistance, revolution, rights, romance, security, segregation, settler, socialism, sodomy, sovereignty, subaltern, text, theory, tourism, tradition, transgender, translation, trauma, university, utopia, virtual, virtue, wealth, welfare, work.

This already too-long list could go on for pages, and even then it would be easy to conjure other possibilities. Whether keywords projects take the form of classroom assignments, research and working groups, edited volumes, or public forums, they must remain open to further elaboration and amendment not simply due to dynamics of inclusion and exclusion or limitations of time and space. Rather, their incompletion is methodologically central to any self-reflexive and future-oriented understanding of how research is conducted and how knowledge is made, both inside and outside academic settings. Claiming the ability to map complex fields of knowledge while also maintaining a critical approach to how the questions and problems that constitute those fields are—and should be—framed requires both intellectual modesty and an openness to further collaboration. One useful response to this modesty and openness may be a critique of what is included in and excluded from this publication. We welcome this response, and we also want to encourage all of our readers to take this response a step further by making something new, whether that new thing is as minor as a conversation or classroom assignment or as major as an edited volume, digital archive, or public initiative. The true measure of the success of Keywords for American Cultural Studies will be its ability to clear conceptual space for these future projects, as readers, scholars, teachers, and students develop new and challenging research questions in dialogue with others who may not quite share a common vocabulary but who do know something about where conflicts and debates over meaning come from, why they matter, and how they might matter differently in the future. We look forward to reading and hearing about the results of these inquiries.

IV. Why Is Keywords for American Cultural Studies a Print-Digital Hybrid?

When we published the first edition of Keywords for American Cultural Studies, we knew that our gestures toward creative response and open-ended inquiry would be empty if we did not follow through on them. This knowledge led us to design, with the generous and generative assistance of Deborah Kimmey, a digital supplement to the print book where readers could work individually or collaboratively to create new keyword essays. The Keywords Collaboratory—which was later administered and developed further by Elizabeth Cornell—was our Web 2.0 version of Williams’s blank pages. It was an experiment designed to supplement the print volume by catalyzing collaboration and publishing responses to the essays the book did and did not contain. As we discuss in our “Note on Classroom Use,” the experiment worked, at least in some college classrooms where students collaborated on a variety of assignments that asked them either to supplement existing essays or to create new ones. Like our authors, students developed different approaches to the keywords they had been assigned. Some of the essays in the book and some of the responses to course assignments are explicitly argumentative and polemical, while others are more descriptive and ecumenical. A few are willfully idiosyncratic, and several hint at implicit
disagreements among their authors. Yet across all of this work, the reader will find scholarly writing that models critical and creative thinking and authors who simultaneously analyze and evince the ways in which keywords are, as Williams put it, both “binding words in certain activities and their interpretation” and “indicative words in certain forms of thought” (1976, 15).

In our planning for the current edition of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, we extended this experiment by talking about the publication as a “print-digital hybrid,” a term we used with NYU Press even before we knew exactly what it would mean. This commitment resulted in the current publication, with sixty-four essays appearing in the print volume and another thirty-three on the digital site. Three of the essays—on “digital,” “media,” and “technology”—form a thematic cluster that appears in print and on the site. When linked to the print book, the site provides four opportunities that the print book could not: it enables us to publish more essays without expanding the physical volume beyond a manageable and affordable size; it allows for a broader circulation of the essays that appear on the site; it enables an interactive indexing of all of the essays in the publication; and it opens the possibility of multimodal composition and postpublication response.

Most important, though, the site allows users to supplement and expand on the existing essays in ways that print books preclude. Readers and users can work individually or collaboratively to assemble and publish responses and additions to what we offer in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. Readers interested in these possibilities—especially instructors of courses—should consult our “Note on Classroom Use” for ideas about how to get started.
Note on Classroom Use

We emphasize in “Keywords: An Introduction” that one of the primary aims of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* is to provoke readers to engage in self-reflexive, open-ended, and future-oriented forms of inquiry as they conduct research on and make claims about “America” and its various “cultures.” We want our readers to respond to the online and print essays by revising them or adding to them and, in doing so, supplementing the collective argument of the whole. In order to make good on this desire, we built a website (http://keywords.nyupress.org) as a complement to the first print version of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* in 2007. This site included an interactive forum, which we called the “Keywords Collaboratory,” where readers could work individually or collaboratively to create new keywords essays. Between 2007 and 2014, over five hundred readers used the site to that end, with the vast majority of those uses taking place in the context of college courses in which all or parts of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* were assigned. These courses included first-year writing sections, large undergraduate lectures, small upper-division seminars, and advanced graduate courses. They focused on topics ranging from American studies and cultural studies research methodologies to gender and ethnic studies to video-game studies. Our goal in this “Note on Classroom Use” is to catalyze further experimentation on the site, now that *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* is a fully print-digital publication. To this end, we focus on classroom use of the print book and digital site, though we also welcome other possibilities, including revisions and additions produced by individuals and collectives located inside or outside higher education.

Syllabi and assignments from courses that have used *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* are available on the website, as are selected essays, published there after being edited and reviewed by us. We have learned from this emerging archive that keyword essays can play many different roles in courses. It is possible to assign them to provide background for other materials that students are reading or research that they are undertaking, though this approach tends to be successful only with advanced students who are prepared to digest the critical debates they encounter. In discussions with instructors who have used *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* in introductory or survey courses, we have consistently heard that it is important to *teach* the essays by providing some time in class to unpack them, rather than simply assigning them and assuming their immediate legibility. The reason for this caution is not that the essays are particularly dense or jargon laden. Rather, instructors have found that students need to learn how to approach a keyword essay, to understand it as a specific genre of writing and mode of inquiry. If this preparatory work is not done, the risk is that students will misread the individual essays and the publication as a whole as a reference guide whose aim is to define or fix the meanings of terms. If they adopt this approach, they will be frustrated, largely because the essays quite deliberately take a more critical, self-reflexive, and speculative stance in relation to their objects of inquiry. We wrote “Keywords: An Introduction,” in part, to provide a resource for instructors who want to teach *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* as a methodology, not just a mapping of clusters of important concepts and terms.

Other instructors have moved beyond using *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* as a map of the
fields it surveys or a primer in critical methodologies. With great success, they have asked students to produce keyword projects of their own, accepting the invitation we offer to our readers to respond to the publication by producing new knowledge themselves. Some assignments ask students to revise or supplement published keyword essays; others invite them to create essays about terms not included there. Both types of assignments have often begun from a version of the prompts we asked our authors to use in constructing their essays:

- What kinds of critical projects does your keyword enable?
- What are the critical genealogies of the term, and how do these genealogies affect its use today?
- Are there ways of thinking that are occluded or obstructed by the use of this term?
- What other keywords constellate around it?

These prompts were intended to spur our contributors to map the contemporary critical terrain as they see it developing through their keyword. They can serve a similar purpose in relation to student work, so long as students understand that their compositions will be more limited in scope than those published in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* and will draw on significantly different (and usually smaller) archives. Our contributors work primarily with historical and contemporary research in American studies, cultural studies, and related fields. For students assigned to compose a keyword essay, the primary archive is often materials encountered in their particular course. Since the meanings and connotations of keywords are never settled and depend significantly on the local context in which they are used, students can write original essays based on these types of materials. They can produce essays on terms that may not be keywords for the broader field but are crucial sites of debate and conflict within the scope of an individual course’s subject matter.

Instructors have taken a wide range of approaches to assigning students to compose a keyword essay, but most have broken the process into two stages:

1. *Archiving usages of a particular keyword.* Many assignments begin by asking students to archive usages of their keyword. Archiving can involve simply copying or typing out every sentence students read that uses their keyword, though the archive need not be textual. It can also involve images and sound, conversations overheard on the street, or exchanges on a bus. Depending on the course, the process of archiving can build core skills in close reading, participant-observation, and other forms of data gathering. These processes usefully focus on the nuances of language and inflection in students’ readings and interactions but can also reveal the tensions and contradictions in that language, underscoring the crucial point that keywords are sites of contestation. It can be useful to ask students to keep a usage log in which they record the spatial and temporal location of a specific use of the term.

2. *Composing a keyword essay.* This portion of the assignment typically asks students to tell a story about the various usages they have logged of their keyword. From reading essays in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, students should already know that it is rarely possible to produce a linear narrative about a complex term; the effort to do so themselves underscores this point. Especially in an interdisciplinary context in which students are asked to make sense of an array of materials that use different vocabularies and methodologies, the effort to bring together the varying usages of a single keyword can make the content of the course clearer and more coherent. Ethnographic assignments can serve a similar function by
asking students to attend to the contexts of specific usages. Depending on the context and objectives of any given course, these types of assignments can be completed either individually or collaboratively and may involve written, visual, or multimodal composition strategies.

While instructors have structured their assignments in a variety of ways to suit their specific course goals, we do provide a location on the digital site that is designed to catalyze these sorts of activities: the “Keywords Collaboratory.” Dozens of courses have used the Collaboratory, allowing students to grasp and internalize the intellectual and theoretical points implicit in a keywords project. Sometimes students have been divided into small working groups of three to five, each focused on a different keyword that runs through or is central to the course. Sometimes an entire course or seminar has worked together on a single keyword. In each case, the students need to be taught to collaborate both on the ideas and on the mechanics of the essay composition, whether it is written, audio, visual, or some combination of the three. This approach tends to jolt students out of the idea that writing and composition has to be the solitary and individualistic activity typical of college classrooms, especially in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. The Collaboratory is, in this sense, an illustration of a point made by some of the most ardent advocates for the digital humanities: digital work tends to push scholars in the cultural disciplines toward more collaborative research methodologies and composition practices. It also makes clear one point that college instructors labor to teach: the audience for classroom assignments is not limited to the person who is assessing those assignments. The Collaboratory teaches this lesson since it is open to the broader public, not only to the students in the course but also to anyone who wanders onto the site. Instructors using the Collaboratory have found that an orientation toward a larger public encourages students to think more carefully and, often, more ambitiously about their writing and composition choices.

We urge instructors to go to keywords.nyupress.org to look over the technological options, sample assignments, and syllabi provided by instructors who have used Keywords for American Cultural Studies in the past and to consider adapting them or inventing new assignments. If you devise your own, you will find on the site a way of sharing it with others, along with tips about what worked and what did not. The site is meant to promote collaboration not just between students in a single course but also among instructors. We urge you to experiment with using the Collaboratory to link students and courses across two or more institutions by developing assignments through which they can work together on the same keyword or keywords. In any one of these contexts, your own students can learn more effectively by contributing to the production and dissemination of knowledge at the core of research and scholarship.