***Profile a Playtext***

**1 hr 15 min session**

**General Goal:** By introducing students to the wider contexts of a play’s printing history, this assignment underscores the human decision-making in modern editions while exploring the crosscurrents and limitations of a given research tool.

**Specific Objectives:**

* Students determine dates, locations, influences, and core and changeable characteristics of a play’s printed history
* Students write a similar “entry” about their modern edition
* Students determine advantages to *Shakespeare Documented* and limitations; discuss other research tools that can fill in limiting factors

**Pre-assignment:** get to know *Shakespeare Documented* **(**[**www.shakespearedocumented.org**](http://www.shakespearedocumented.org)**)**

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**10 Minutes**

* Ask students if they know where their modern edition comes from, who made it, and what factors influenced its making
* Using Description for First Edition of Othello, (<http://shakespearedocumented.org/exhibition/document/othello-first-edition>), briefly touch on difference between quartos and First Folio, prominence of the printer’s name, and different versions of play

**20 Minutes**

* In small groups, students “profile” the printed *Othello* using any/all of its holdings in *Shakespeare Documented* only, highlighting basic facts, any cultural highlights worth noting, and problematic moments in the play’s printed history

**25 Minutes**

* Groups share their findings
* In class discussion, guide conversation about what was easier, harder, and impossible to find through *Shakespeare Documented*. Where might students go to find such information? What further questions do they have from their research?

**20 Minutes**

* Back in their groups, students begin to create a mock entry for their modern edition, including the earlier history of the text they just researched.

*Required Resources*

Access to [www.shakespearedocumented.org](http://www.shakespearedocumented.org)

Computer/laptop access for students

Modern editions of *Othello* (bringing in a variety of editions can enrich this lesson)