A reading room full of researchers – a goal of modern archives

Archives, to know them is to love them, or at least not be afraid of them.

What follows is the work of my colleagues and I at the University of Oregon to make research in primary sources an integral part of the information literacy program.

Mary provided a rich explanation of the standards, outcomes, and best practices of information literacy.

One of the outcomes of information literacy competency standards is the ability to know the difference between primary and secondary sources.

However, the fundamental standards and outcomes in information literacy are found throughout the access and use of archives, as we all know.

- Find, evaluate, and make use of information
- Promote critical thinking and advanced research skills

This was a start, but we wanted to do more →

Info. Lit program at UO – 2002-2003

- 667 presentations to groups
- 9734 participants in group presentations
- 55 professional staff

Ongoing work to incorporate primary sources into curriculum

- Library instruction course
- Bibliographic instruction with a traditional undergraduate course
Perceived need

- Demands
  - Increase requirements in final papers
  - Centerpiece of honors college thesis
  - Interest from departments & professors during development phase.

- Personnel
  - Myself: PS lectures for LIB 101
  - Heather Ward: LIB 101 & bibliographic instruction courses

- Objectives
  - Students will learn how to access & use a variety of PS
    - Learning how collected and organized
    - Effectively using access tool to find relevant PS materials
    - Learning the unique requirements for accessing archival materials
  - Students will be able to incorporate PS into their research
    - Critically assess and select relevant sources
    - Learning to place PS in their context

- Plans
  - Research – similar classes
  - Requirements of brand new courses
  - Cross-listing
  - Publicity blitz

Demographics: 13 students,
  - 6 seniors, 3 juniors, 1 sophomore, 2 postbac/continuing
  - 3 history, 2 journalism, 2 psych/soc, international relations,
    poli. Sci., women & gender, French

Brief description of course: repositories & collections, access tools, formats, materials handling, ethics, FOIA, government information, censorship
Brief description: final project – collection description and a research paper based on collection.

Information literacy outcomes and the class experience
- Knowledge of context
- Clear understanding of creator and biases
- Ability to evaluate sources

Addressing different modes of teaching and learning
- Hands on – class to sources, or sources to class
- Questions to prepare in advance of class, based on readings or for speakers
- Pair, share & report / small groups
- Oral presentations – large & small
- Written assignments
- Video/audio

[LIB 399 What worked, what did not? – Slide 8]

Successes
- Access
  - T – increased PS awareness
  - S - Getting into the archives – wanted even more time
- Involvement
  - T - Student interaction
  - T - Class Discussions
    - Make it specific, “what if?”
  - S – Archives in the news
  - S- Discussion time
- Skills & Information Gained
  - S – Guest Speakers
  - S – Breadth of Information covered

Student Quotes
“Internalize the materials and practiced what we learned in class.”
“Taught me things I would have never have known – recommend.”

Areas for Improvement
Mechanics
- Group project
- Some of the assigned readings tedious
Large monitors in classroom
Paper quality
Caution: If looking for processed collections, not realistic

[LIB 399: Future Plans – Slide 9]

We will teach the class again
   Hopefully winter 2005
   Discussions of how class worked
Building upon experience
   Include speakers with research experience outside of history
   More hands on work
   More small group discussion
   Clarify expectations of final project

[Picture of Peace & War – slide 10]

[the University in Peace & War – slide 11]

Brief description of course
   Examine the campus during the protests of the 1970s and
   comparing it to the political atmosphere

Role in Course
   Made unprocessed collections available
   BI to class with ongoing consultation on resources
   Final project presentations
      Conclusions from their research experience

What worked
   Breadth of uses of sources
   Limited to one year
   Course “archives” constructed using Blackboard
   Student interaction during research

What didn’t work
As with many BI opportunities
   Not as integrated into course development
   Expectations of professors re: access & operation
   Low quality scans from photocopies
Future plans
    Preparing ahead
    Tackling earlier years preceding student unrest

[Conclusion – Slide 12]

These were two different examples of integrating PS research skills into a curriculum

They have greatly raised awareness of PS within the info. Literacy program, as well as within the university with both students and faculty.

Progress is gradual but positive and we hope to build upon these projects by refining them and creating other opportunities.

Time investment was large, but pay off equal to it.

“Thank you for teaching this class. It has been a very valuable learning experience for me. I think this class ought to be a required course for new students and all majors.”