Feeling The Feels: Using Zines As Primary Sources In Student Research

Dawn Stahura, Salem State University
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Dawn Stahura
Liaison Librarian &
Zine Librarian
Simmons College
think this is the gospel. There is so much racism in public health, and so many health disparities. I just want you to know that every thing you read is not a FACT ok? Statistics don’t explain the whole story. I just don’t want you to think that this stuff is the gospel.

ALL my Best Friends have Herpes: COCOA/PUSS Zine #2
Trigger Warning! This zine addresses issues of body image, eating disorders, and sexual consent. I cannot stress enough how important you are in this world so please take care of yourself.
Also, the scholarly articles treated patients with eating disorders as just participants and did not have any descriptions about what they feel, what they have trouble with, or how they developed their issues. Ultimately, after I read zines I also read some blogs written by patients because I was more interested in how they felt and how they lived their everyday lives.
BIKINI KILL
GirlPower

REVOLUTION GRLS STYLE NOW

SOME INFORMATION with someone who is interested. Say you know how to play
another, ask your girlfriend if she'd like to learn to play so that you could
be together. If she wants to, help her learn in a supportive and non-threatening
way. (Avoid calling her dumb or expecting her to learn super fast)

SURVIVE IN THE FACE OF INSURGENCY. No matter how great your accomplishments,
remember that you are not a magically designated "special" person. Yes, you do
your own individual history to your work and you are super cool — but
they still make it hard for others to join in on the fun.

SEE PHOTOGRAPH that includes more than just hetero sex. This can be queer
self-portrait or a sex act. Sex more than just about making conversation
or fucking take place. If video is in your medium of choice, you could have the
same "acknowledge the camera's presence and the fact that they are being
acted. Portray women as people you're three dimensional and have desires.
...are not always the object of desire or fear sex inclined objects. Let the
affair have the people are real by showing them doing other things together
without fucking. You could also make your real story by manufacturing in front
a camera on a tripod, loving yourself is cool.

REJOICE PRIVILEGES given to you as a member of an "identity" group. If you are
any of these categories then you get a certain amount of privilege from
me: White, Male, Adult, Christian, Mormon, middle class, middle
...female...—feminist...—young. Learn how your behavior
Your privileges affects people who do not fall into the same categories as
women who do, but communicate with them and listen to people then they talk to you.
Faculty Response to Using Zines in the Classroom

I enjoyed this project, but this project opened their eyes to their own creativity. Students wrote zines about Gender Identity, Racism, Homelessness, Body Images, and Education to name a few. I was so impressed with the amount of work and thoughtfulness they put into this assignment. The students were eager to learn because they were able to connect to the topics in the class through the medium of art. I truly believe this improved my course evaluations and made this class more enjoyable for the students. Inequalities is a tough course to teach and it.
Zines!

Last Updated: Oct 7, 2015 | URL: http://simmons.libguides.com/zines

WHAT IS A ZINE?

"please listen to me you mother f*ckers, i, unlike the hundreds of boy fanzine writers all across america, have a legitimate need and desperate desire to be heard. i am making a fanzine not to entertain or distract or exclude or because i don't have anything better to do but because if i didn't write these things no one else would either". --Tobi Vail, Jigsaw #3 (1991)

Zines are...

Self-published, usually in small batches. Anyone can make one.

Distributed by their makers (either independently or through zine distributors) by hand, at zine fests, and by mail.
A year ago I started the Zine Collection at Simmons with just $100.

A year ago I decided to approach one of my Sociology faculty members with the idea of incorporating zines in her class. She and I are both from the Riot GRRRL era and produced our own zines. She was game. We decided to test pilot zines with her Inequality course which has a mixture of sociology students and nursing students. We hoped this would allow her students to connect more with the material.

Why zines?

Zines give a unique glimpse into our research in a way nothing else can.

Why?

We are more than just statistics.

I always tell students to remember that when they are glossing over the methodology section because it is boring to read, that those participants, those numbers are actual people. People who joined the study or clinical trial for a specific reason.

Maybe they are a young breast cancer survivor.
Maybe they have AIDS and want to try a new pharmaceutical drug.
Maybe they are anorexic and out-patient care is not working.

I'm not saying that statistics are not necessary.

They are. They paint a much needed picture.

But they are not the only color we can use.

We need stories.

We need that human element that ties us to the research.

Zines do that.

Using zines as primary sources allows students to experience the topic they are researching in a real way.
Students come to understand what it means to have AIDS from someone who is writing about it in their zine.

These are the stories that are not censored. They are deeply personal. Zines therefore live in a different landscape than the scholarly articles we have our students find and the popular magazine articles they read on the side.

Zines have no gatekeepers yet you won’t find a more authentic resource. They are kept legit by the desire for the zinester to share their story, to help someone cope with the same topic, or to connect with others to form solidarity and a sense of belonging.

It is a community of creators. A community of primary source creators.

They are the pathway to understanding complex and challenging subject matters.

They provide unique voices and perspectives that are not reflected in mainstream media or in databases and reference books.

Students understand primary sources when discussed in this way because they are already creating their own primary sources with each tweet they send, each FB update, each new tumblr post. They just don’t articulate it in this way.

But once that light goes off, they get it.

So what about Saher’s class?

The students broke up into groups and each chose topic under the umbrella of inequality. Some wrote about homelessness in Boston, others wrote about living with disabilities, and then there were zines about racism and non-gender binary.

Based on the students’ reflective papers, they all loved creating zines and found it very challenging yet rewarding because they were able to articulate their research in a way that impacted more than just their professor. Their zines could be passed around, sent to distros, or left in random places. They could also be used as teaching tools at rallies and protests.

Because zines are something everyone can do, there is no technological barrier to their creation thereby allowing anyone with a desire to make a zine to do so and contribute to the conversation that is happening around them. To critically think about what they are consuming and then critique it by adding their own thoughts.
It’s research for everyone.