

Illinois Wesleyan University

From the Selected Works of Meg Miner

August 31, 2020

Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources at Illinois Wesleyan University

Meg Miner



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Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources
at Illinois Wesleyan University

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August 23, 2020

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PREFACE

Illinois Wesleyan University's (IWU) involvement in this project began in summer 2019. The interviews were conducted before the second week of February 2020, close to the time that the first notice was shared with the IWU community that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 had reached Chicago. The author reviewed and coded the transcripts during the early months of the pandemic and acknowledges that the effects of the campus shut down and stay-at-home orders may have influenced her perceptions of the subjects' remarks. While she believes those circumstances have not biased her analysis in the Findings section, their influence is intentionally present in the Conclusion and Recommendations sections of this report.

BACKGROUND

This report contains a summary of IWU's participation in Ithaka S&R's *Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources* study.¹ That work is "an exploratory examination of the pedagogical practices of humanities and social sciences instructors teaching with primary sources at the undergraduate level. The goal of the study is to understand instructors' undergraduate teaching processes toward developing resources and services to support them in their work."²

IWU joined with colleagues from 25 academic institutions, two of which are located in the United Kingdom, for this work. IWU is located in central Illinois and is an independent undergraduate-only learning environment with a liberal arts emphasis and a tradition of professional and pre-professional programs. Two other participants in this project also offer undergraduate-only liberal arts programs.

The author consistently seeks to increase the use of the University's archives and special collections and has developed partnerships with faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences some of whom are contributors to the present work. However, she recognizes that faculty regularly use primary sources outside of the collections maintained by the library and engaged in this study to increase her understanding the range of primary sources faculty use.

IWU has a tradition of faculty-student research partnerships dating at least to the 1960s when a departmental research honors program began. Almost a century before that, the campus president demonstrated a strong desire to engage with the community by building a sidewalk across the muddy fields for students to easily reach downtown Bloomington. Campus and community connections have evolved over the years into formal programs that higher education now recognizes as high-impact pedagogical practices. At IWU, these include Honors Research (recognized at an annual Convocation since 1966), a campus-wide annual research conference (established in 1990, complete with keynote speaker), the Action Research Center (ARC, established in 2003), and the Course Cluster program (established in 2013).

The research conference is a discipline-based showcase of student scholarly and creative works held each spring.³ The projects undertaken through the ARC are community-driven and

¹ The project acknowledges that disciplinary definitions of primary sources differ. For the purposes of this study, we sought out "the pedagogical use of texts, films, or artworks as witnesses to a historical period or cultural milieu, including manuscripts and editions being studied as cultural artefacts...." See Appendix A for a complete copy of the project definition that was made available to each interview subject.

² Ithaka S&R, "Implementation Guide: Writing the Protocol" *Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources*, 2019 (p. 12).

³ All programs and some of the products from the John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference are available at <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>.

often span more than one student's tenure at IWU. Multi-semester projects allow community businesses and organizations to propose a research need and then faculty and staff mentor students in a service-learning project. Course Clusters are designed to promote interdisciplinary thinking by having interested faculty center their courses around a different topical theme each year. Course Cluster goals include providing opportunities for experiential learning and connections with community initiatives as small group, rather than individual, projects. The library hosts a formal closing event each semester where the students present the results of their coursework in a conference presentation format. Everyone on campus is invited to attend and to learn more about other disciplinary perspective of the annual theme.

Librarians serve as liaisons to all departments on campus and facilitating different aspects of these events are part of that work. Curricular and co-curricular events also give librarians insights into the broader ecosystems that faculty and staff engage students with and so might use the resources and services available through the library. In short, librarians' abilities to closely connect with the curricular and community initiatives offer opportunities for increasing the impact of the outcomes identified in this report.

METHODOLOGY

The author initiated IWU's involvement in this project in February 2019 and one additional librarian signed on prior to the time of submitting an exemption request to IWU's Institutional Review Board in May 2019. Both attended a summer training session with the Ithaka S&R team and then distributed a participation request to ten faculty in fall 2019. Ultimately, five faculty agreed to be interviewed about their use of primary sources in the classroom using the "Semi-Structured Interview Guide"⁴ created by Ithaka S&R and implemented by all institutions participating in *Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources*. Two IWU participants were untenured, holding the rank of Assistant Professor and the remaining three were tenured full Professors with one holding an endowed professorship. Between them they have 124 years of experience teaching undergraduates at IWU.

Some of the interview subjects had experience teaching before their tenure at IWU. One faculty member taught undergraduates for less than ten years and two had experience teaching graduate students at previous institutions but that was for fewer than five years combined. All but one are in different departments in the Humanities and that one is in a department in the Social Sciences. One of the Humanities faculty members holds an additional position in an interdisciplinary studies program. All teach at different course levels within their disciplines and those courses often include non-majors for those disciplines due to IWU's emphasis on the liberal arts experience. All of the participants also teach in writing-intensive courses⁵ which are offered at any course level. Students must have a 100, 200 and an upper division writing-intensive course prior to graduation. Only one interviewee does not teach a writing-intensive course at the 100 level.

The interviews took place individually during January and February of 2020 and most were completed in less than one hour. The interviews were recorded and received a numeric identifier prior to sending them to a transcription service that has an approved confidentiality

⁴ The complete interview guide is available in Appendix B.

⁵ Writing Program, Illinois Wesleyan University. These "courses teach the conventions of writing within a specific discipline or for a specific purpose, focus attention on writing as a process, and encourage students to use writing as a tool for discovery and learning." See https://www.iwu.edu/writing/courses/writing_intensive.html. Accessed July 2, 2020.

agreement with Ithaka S&R. Once transcribed, the author anonymized responses from each faculty member before sharing the transcripts with Ithaka S&R staff. As part of their interview agreement, participants were asked to share one syllabus for a course that they use primary sources in. Two faculty discussed 200-level courses, one of which is writing-intensive. Three faculty discussed 300-level courses and two of these are writing-intensive. The syllabi and the interview recordings will be destroyed at the completion of this project.

In spring 2020, the other library faculty member engaged in this project announced he had taken a position at another university and so the remainder of the project was completed by the author. Responses in all transcripts were assigned open codes based on the grounded theory methodology of Strauss and Corbin⁶ as required by Ithaka S&R. The author attended an online coding refresher workshop in spring 2020. After initial coding, the author reviewed each transcript again and analyzed codes to identify categories they might be grouped in. Each grouping was again analyzed to determine common themes. Those themes comprise the findings of this research. The author includes an analysis of the findings in the Discussion section. Those observations are distilled in the bulleted Recommendations list which contains the ways in which library faculty may support their departmental colleagues' work at IWU.

FINDINGS

It is evident that one of the ways these faculty show that they care deeply about their work is by consistently seeking ways to enhance learning opportunities for their students. Primary sources are not present in all courses for each of these faculty members but the faculty clearly find unique opportunities with them and are eager to discover more. Based on the analysis of the interview transcripts, the findings are grouped as follows: the value and purposes of teaching with primary sources, discovery methods, challenges encountered, and culminating products for course assignments.

VALUE AND PURPOSES OF TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

Faculty find value in using primary sources for their evidential characteristics, their ability to connect students to their own and other cultural pasts, their potential for developing analytical and observational skills, and their contributions to providing unique classroom experiences.

The interview subjects consistently emphasize that they find value in the ability of primary sources to connect students to historical viewpoints or artifacts of material culture in their own time or compared to others over time. Each faculty member cited some human connection to an era or topic as being a significant reason for making an encounter with primary sources part of their courses. They hope their students will connect on an emotional as much as intellectual level because primary sources "are very close to the person."

Beyond that, this connection comes through the appreciation of the human experiences contained within or represented by primary sources. In one course, the topic revolves around the struggle for changes in political leadership as a result of war. This faculty member uses primary sources because "human artifacts tell a story, tell a very compelling story." The benefit of this level of understanding is also present for another faculty member who provides a survey of different media used for objects of material culture and wants students to see "that people made

⁶ A. Strauss and J. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Los Angeles, 2014).

this stuff.” In this case, the course goals call on students to understand how ideas and techniques used to produce material culture are borrowed and transformed cross-culturally and over a span of time. In both of these cases faculty teach with primary sources that are physical objects and digital facsimiles of objects.

Another faculty member values the authentic presentation of people’s lives that is possible through the use of primary sources. Without using primary sources, “You’re not really studying what people are doing.” This faculty member employs works in translation of historic texts, all addressing a cross-cultural practice, and has students make comparisons of the issues and practices found in the different texts to equivalent groups in other times or places. In some classes, this extends to analyzing contemporary practices found in the United States today.

Whether it is human ideas or the human hand, primary sources serve as evidence of artistic, cultural and political change over time. The interview subjects believe the humanity represented by these sources will allow students to recognize connections to their own lives.

Development of specific skills is also important to these faculty members. They find that primary sources are useful in facilitating students’ ability to draw inferences and come to conclusions about specific subjects. Faculty cite analytical skills such as thinking critically, recognizing biases, and shifting viewpoints on cultural values. In one course, the faculty member commented that understanding that viewpoints shift based on the perceivers’ values—in the text or time period or in the students themselves—is a desired outcome. Examining sources from different points of view also helps students to become “aware of the historical and political factors that influence” the source.

Another faculty member used the phrase “critical empathy” to describe something students might develop regarding the people they are studying. In this class, students examine their own reactions to the events in the contemporary moment of the primary source and are challenged to describe whether or not they identify with the individuals in the source and why. These analyses come from reading texts in translation about specific social practices from different countries.

Other important skills are strengthening existing, or developing new, observational skills and acquiring terminology used in specialized disciplines or practices. Students in the course described for the previous analytical attribute demonstrate their observational skills by identifying variations or subtleties between cultural practices in close reading of texts. They are given primary sources of cultural practices in different times and places and make determinations on aspects that distinguish or connect these practices.

In two other courses, engaging with physical artifacts and/or their digital facsimiles reinforces learning by engaging multiple senses: sight, touch and sound. This close engagement also allows for discerning difference between visual representations of artifacts and what may be observed in the presence of artifacts. Identifying these differences in the appropriate terminology is the goal in these courses.

Faculty achieve these goals with the full range of primary sources one can imagine. In a course taught for second language acquisition, artifacts, songs and digital images of paintings, posters and people in the areas being explored are used to help students develop and broaden their vocabulary. A similar use of artifacts and images is made in a course that looks at design developments over time. Texts offer ways to look for legal and cultural perspectives that may change based on societal norms across time as well as across regions.

The faculty find value in providing students with opportunities for collaboration with their peers, colleagues from other disciplines or institutions, and with the community. One

faculty member specifically mentioned using some assignments as a means for students' self-directed development in a group environment. In this case, students work with their peers on examining, understanding and presenting on topics supported by primary sources.

Students with more confidence may also provide role modeling for less confident students in this type of group assignment. Each student within a group (of five or fewer) has an opportunity to identify an area of known strength for their contribution to an assignment, so making this choice allows more reluctant participants to exercise agency in the group.

Faculty introduce students to physical and virtual repositories and, when the goals of a course call for it, these encounters include providing an overview of what may be found in these places, either by the faculty member or the curator of those collections. This is perceived as offering out-of-the-ordinary classroom experiences that will increase student engagement. In some cases, a deepening of community connections is also possible by having students travel to parts of the surrounding area that they may not have explored on their own.

Two faculty discussed future course development plans to work with a local history museum on creating oral histories with community members. These faculty discovered this need through two different means: one through a campus presentation by another faculty member who is involved in a local history effort and another through a staff member at the museum who was providing information for a current class project. In both cases, the faculty members' primary goals are to provide students with first-hand accounts for their course assignments. The recordings students make become a deliverable to the museum and are a form of community engagement that faculty feel will increase students' interest in the course.

Across disciplines, primary sources serve the goals of faculty members in this study at multiple levels. These faculty have a shared belief that primary sources offer a variety of ways to discuss their areas of interest; to develop students' transportable skills; and to provide students with a deeper, more engaging understanding of course content.

DISCOVERY METHODS

The most common discovery method involves faculty attending disciplinary conferences and workshops and reading what their colleagues are writing about. As they do this, they remain alert for sources that may help them meet their needs. The interviews did not explore what faculty do about acquiring sources identified in this way.

Two types of computer-assisted searches were identified as means of discovery. Three of five faculty search Google to find sources they can use for their courses, including one who looks for syllabi online from faculty teaching similar courses. Another uses local and global catalog searches for subjects or keywords.

Only one physical method of discovery was mentioned: browsing book shelves for sources. In this case, a catalog search will often not be useful due to the type of content being sought: the faculty member is seeking sources that speak to the cultural attitudes in a time period. These qualities are not going to be found in a catalog and this faculty member encourages students to browse library book shelves both to familiarize themselves with locally available sources as well as to identify the cultural shifts that take place in them over time. The faculty member also utilizes professional literature for this area of interest but does not have students use the literature to discover new sources.

Source discovery is often done by faculty on behalf of their students rather than as a goal of the course through independent research for an assignment. The sources faculty provide to their students range from the item to the repository levels. One faculty member who does not

require source integration from pre-selected sites nevertheless expressed “that [the discovery and subsequent use] is just one of these wow moments that is great to see.”

In the case of virtual items and collections, faculty cite the difficulty of finding exactly what they want in one place and so they often create their own lists to point students to. Two interview subjects also download facsimiles from online locations and incorporate them into either PowerPoint for lectures or the course management software, Moodle, for ease of student access on demand. These downloads offer an additional benefit to faculty by allowing them to organize specific digital objects into the relevant points-of-time in their course syllabus. This is perceived as a time-saving strategy and an assurance that the students will be viewing the right sources at the right time of the semester.

All but one faculty member mentioned that they build these kinds of collections and retain them for repeated use in future courses. This is another time-saving method for courses that are taught regularly and on topics that do not require frequent updates except to introduce some newly discovered source. The faculty who have built these physical or virtual collections do not express difficulty maintaining or storing them. The one who does not have a permanent teaching collection is teaching a course that is closely related to a professional area of interest for creative works. Each work is unique and so are the sources needed each time. That faculty member finds value in taking students on the path of what informed a previous research product but not through a static list. “It’s more just like showing them and telling them about those research experiences.”

Faculty often instruct the students themselves on where to find sources suitable for their goals and sometimes bring others in for ancillary aspects such as how to cite primary sources. Only one interview subject stated that they were teaching students to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. The other four mentioned finding the specific sources to provide to students so that students would be certain to encounter the ones that complemented the course objectives.

In the case of two faculty who mentioned having librarians or curators visit to show students how to find primary and secondary sources for their courses, one involved search strategies that would facilitate student learning about behaviors and settings of historic eras. One other had worked closely with a liaison librarian while developing another course as part of a campus-wide Information Literacy initiative funded through the Mellon Foundation.⁷ The knowledge that the Works Cited in secondary sources can be used to identify primary sources is a method this faculty member learned during that collaboration and now teaches to students. However, it was also noted that students seemed to lack the ability to retain strategies taught for one course or assignment and apply them to another.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Faculty noted three types of barriers to overcome in teaching with primary sources: their perceptions of student abilities and interest, the availability of curated sets that meet their needs,

⁷ “Integrating Writing and Information Literacy in Assignments,” “New or Revised Courses,” and “New or Revised Writing Intensive Courses” were part of an initiative sponsored by the IWU Writing Program, 2012-2015, and funded through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. A faculty body outside of the Writing Program evaluated applications in a competitive review process and awarded funds to a total of 40 proposals across all three types. Applicants were not required to partner with librarians but 22 did include library colleagues in their planning processes.

and their confidence about their own abilities to find the right set of materials to create new courses.

Perceptions

There is a belief among some of the faculty interviewed that students in upper level courses are more suited to understanding the nuances of course content delivered through primary sources. This is where the analytical skill development assignments emerge. Two faculty members prefer to have students choose which sources, out of preselected materials, to use in a given assignment and others base their assignments on specific sources. Choice of sources affords students an opportunity to pick a research topic that is interesting to them and so is viewed as a way to engage non-majors.

Two faculty signaled their belief that non-majors were more difficult to engage in their course content overall and so did not have the same expectations for these students. Students within faculty members' disciplinary majors are perceived as responding positively to the faculty expectations for learning and creativity in source use. These perceptions present challenges to faculty. They must ensure all of their students learn the course content while balancing their desire to engage students in explorations of that content with interesting primary sources.

Sometimes, even unique sources cannot pierce the indifference of an unengaged student, regardless of major. The "idea of immersing yourself...[by going in] the library and just lose yourself in there. It's not there anymore." Three faculty mentioned meeting this challenge by designing primary source assignments that involve student interactions through group projects. One faculty member has students create an artifact inspired by some attribute of things they have been studying. All but two of the courses discussed here need to address IWU's writing-intensive criteria and here, too, faculty mention difficulty engaging students regardless of major. In addition to a lack of student curiosity in research as a whole, one faculty member noted that students often do not accept the idea of research as a creative activity or that writing is a tool of discovery.

Source Availability

Source variety and availability are also a challenge. Prepackaged sets or published, edited collections (artifact, print and/or digital) have value for two of our interview subjects. Two other faculty rely on known digital or physical repositories and one uses a local repository plus the knowledge of subject specialist librarians or curators. The latter cited the benefit of having access to information professionals or curators who also have a breadth of knowledge about primary sources: "[The librarian] was really instrumental with having kind of just a broader base of [knowledge about] what the resources were....[to] help students with all of their really individual interests." This faculty member felt that in addition to a specialized, deep knowledge of a specific topic, a cross-disciplinary awareness of sources benefits students when it comes to advising them on their assignment topics.

Another difficulty for faculty using repositories' collections comes from identifying areas of the collections for their students to use versus allowing enough time for students to explore collections and identify primary sources that may interest them. In one case, the faculty member adapted a year-long course that is typically offered in graduate school programs. The need to condense this content resulted in the observation that "it's really as much about what I don't teach as what I do teach....So I have to be very selective in how I offer and what I offer to students."

Ability to develop new areas of expertise

A final challenge mentioned was the lack of expertise and time to develop courses that are within the discipline but outside of a faculty member's direct area of expertise or research. This was the case for only one of the interview subjects but the author is aware of others who express similar challenges. This faculty member expressed interest in exploring a course topic from the point of view a geographically and temporally different culture and is frustrated that curated, scholarly collections on the subject are lacking. There is a lingering perception that the materials on this topic must be held somewhere due to previous success in finding a published collection of sources for a culture within the person's research experience.

CULMINATING PRODUCTS

Even though the five interview subjects do not devote a portion of class on searching for and understanding the natures of primary sources, they do expect source integration into the products of their course assignments. Some faculty also find value in having students create primary sources in addition to studying and using them.

Three faculty mentioned a desire to inspire students' creative sides with the products that result from their use of primary sources. Traditional research is still involved, if not explicitly named. In one case, the faculty member avoids using the word *research* due to student reactions to it and prefers to talk about "joyfulness in the discovery." Other faculty conveyed the same view on assignments when discussing how they allow for creative expression as a way of engaging students. Such individual expression also serves to keep faculty engaged with the topics they teach repeatedly. All of these faculty cited at least one example of a student surprising them with a creative product for an assignment or in a class discussion.

One assignment requires students to create or take on a persona in a specific time period and location they have studied. The students don't have to enact that persona but they do have to have researched and understood enough of the course content to look for aspects that can be presented with their delivery of the persona through some artistic expression, a presentation, or formal writing.

Three faculty assign group-based projects that require students to compile an "archive" of their findings. These archives can take the form of a digital or physical exhibit. The students then present their archive to the class and discuss the process of creating it. One of the interview subjects has taken advantage of the library's ongoing guest curation offers and has had students choose suitable exhibit space in the library for their culminating projects.

In another class, individual students write an interpretation of an assigned text that includes an analysis. Using their own opinions of what is happening in that time, the students explore the nuances of the texts and the evidence they find in them.

Some students must create a journal of their observations about the course topic throughout the semester and then analyze their entries based on what the discipline's literature says about it. On a regular basis, these students bring their findings into class discussions, applying their work to the course or assignment topic. The faculty member sees this as a self-directed learning experience that has the benefit of peer input in real time.

Students in another course are required to conduct oral histories with individuals identified by the faculty member. In this case, students deliver two products. One of them is a written analysis by the student about a particular element the student finds interesting in the

interview and that meets the criteria for the assignment. The other is the complete oral history recording itself which they donate to a relevant repository.

Methods of delivery include traditional and digital platforms and tools for presentations. Specific tools mentioned include blogs, Pinterest and Pixton. One faculty member uses a Bingo-style game with images projected before the whole class for a real-time evaluation of student knowledge of its relevance to the course and ability to assign the right term(s) to it. Physical exhibits, completed by a small group, with an accompanying paper that explains the work and each student's role in it are also used by this faculty member. One faculty member requires a formal research paper while another mentioned a recent shift from formal papers and presentations to allow for more individual expression. For the rest, any format is acceptable if it conveys the information required for student learning objectives.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this project indicate there are multiple opportunities for librarians to support faculty working with primary sources. This discussion will address four common themes: preparing students to use primary sources, exploring new instructional collaborations, supporting faculty discovery of primary new sources, and offering new ways for students to present their work with primary sources.

Preparation for Use

None of the faculty interviewed specifically teach their students that some components of what they are using in their course of study are called "primary sources." Encounters with primary sources are a means to an end for course content delivery. This finding seems contradictory when compared with the value faculty place on connecting students with evidences of humanity in many forms. Additionally, several faculty express disappointment that students do not understand primary sources. This was especially noted as an issue with non-majors who these faculty may only encounter in one course. Further conversations with departmental faculty can explore how widespread this experience is. However, since so many disciplines treat the definition of primary sources differently, it is worth considering the educational value of increasing opportunities to explain that there are differences in meaning in a given context to the interdisciplinary audience that so many IWU courses serve.

One faculty member who is new to using primary sources and interested in expanding their use expressed concern over students not being able to tell if content found online has been manipulated. Here again is an opportunity for liaison librarians and curators to offer instruction on where credible, unaltered facsimiles of sources or born-digital primary sources are found on the open web and how to identify the attributes that contribute to the trustworthiness of sources.

A related concern revolves around Humanities courses that require students to create original works. Students need to know how to tell when they build their work on another person's if the transformation is great enough to qualify as a new work and when to know that paying royalties for an adopted source is more appropriate. IWU faculty may benefit from a renewed understanding of this concept through workshops or from in-class discussions with the University Librarian who is also the campus Copyright Officer.

A final faculty concern relates to the ethical implications of taking images offline for classroom use or assignments, even ones that will not be publicly accessible. The worry is that although students are made aware of intellectual property rights, they may not fully appreciate that they have, as one faculty member stated, "a real responsibility to make sure that [they] know

what it is [they are] citing or using” within or outside of their course requirements. This is another opportunity for faculty to seek assistance from information literacy professionals. The ethical use of any source is a staple of scholarly work and the ease with which copying information from online collections is possible underscores the importance of metadata gathering both as part of ethical practices and as time-saving measures. In the rush of finding suitable materials for their work, students may forget to collect where the images originated and have to recreate their searches when they are formalizing their scholarly works. Librarians have experience with informing their communities in the concept of ethical uses of information and are well-suited for this role.

New instructional collaborations

The work of the 2018 SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy (JTF-PSL) can guide discussions on instructional opportunities for primary source analysis and more additional aspects of their ethical use. The analytical skills that faculty already value align well with the Analytical Concepts of the Core Ideas expressed in the JTF-PSL *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*.⁸ In addition to insights into analytical skills, the *Guidelines* offer ways to address Theoretical Concepts that faculty likely value but did not mention in the interviews for this project. Concepts like understanding authority, power and the context for source creation are part of the long-established Information Literacy movement and are also present in the *Guidelines*. IWU recognized the importance of information literacy by adding it to the Teaching and Learning section of the campus Strategic Plan in 2014.⁹ One can assume that in a content-driven course, time needed for additional instruction is a concern for inviting broader exposure. However, librarians can easily apply the relationship to primary sources of these existing concepts into their instructional opportunities.

While they do not offer their students instruction in finding and evaluating primary sources, faculty do note that encounters with their liaison librarians or other curators are helpful in navigating collections they have identified. Librarians are also offering students instruction in finding and evaluating secondary sources and the need for citations during research. It will be important for library liaisons to work with faculty to understand that the well-documented and now widely-accepted value of information literacy skills are transferrable to courses where primary sources are used.

Not all faculty mentioned having librarians instruct students on discovery methods such as exploring professional literature and other forms of secondary sources in a research session. Only one faculty member commented on using citation analysis as a discovery strategy for identifying new sources. This is an information literacy concept more broadly and if reinforcing this concept is desired, it does not need to be limited to primary source discovery. Scaffolding from initial course levels through upper divisions and throughout the curriculum may reinforce this concept and serve as a remedy for this knowledge gap.

⁸ “Core Ideas,” *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*. SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force, 2018, <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/GuidelinesForPrimarySourceLiteracy-June2018.pdf>. Accessed 8 August 2020.

⁹ “IWU 2020,” *Illinois Wesleyan University Strategic Plan*, 2014. Record Group 5-2/8/18, Tate Archives & Special Collections, The Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL.

One can also easily connect the Theoretical Concepts in the JTF-PSL *Guidelines* with IWU's stated commitment to social justice.¹⁰ Faculty who have students read texts for variations in cultural or legal practices in different time periods present an opportunity for discussing how dominant cultures record and preserve certain narratives and exclude others. Introducing the concept of archival silences into this discussion of this kind of privilege could benefit the development of this skill. To illustrate this point, we might engage in a discussion about cultural practices in colonized parts of the world that have often been systematically and intentionally destroyed. Curators can bring knowledge of the gaps in their own collections to acknowledge the role that both physical and virtual repositories and collections play in perpetuating these narratives.

Supporting faculty discovery

The expectation that all sources needed on a given topic should already be available is an understandable source of frustration. The concept of archival silences mentioned above presents library liaisons with opportunities to make faculty aware that collection creation is not possible with cultural heritage materials that do not exist in publicly accessible locations.

New discoveries of sources thought to have been lost do occur, though. Examples of this include the Islamic manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali, long-hidden in private homes,¹¹ and the latest of the now-four authenticated Mayan manuscripts in codex form from Yucatan.¹² Collection managers often face user expectations that all materials should be identifiable for exploration and immediate use. Librarians and curators can use the inability to find curated sources as opportunities to open a dialogue about the production of public collections. The difficulties inherent in dissemination of these works, especially by under-resourced governmental or scholarly institutions, also present teaching opportunities.

Librarian involvement can aid faculty interested in emphasizing human connections through primary sources by leveraging our professional connections to identify sources in local communities. For example, the author conducts annual site visits to local repositories as a means to understand services and collection strengths available in the area. These collections are highlighted for courses with assignments that could utilize them.

Faculty mention discovering sources they might use through a number of informal methods such as conference presentations and workshops. Each department has a library liaison who manages a budget allocation for that department and faculty may make resource purchase or subscription requests through these liaisons.

Presentation of student work

Student presentations for course assignments represent a final area of faculty concern in this discussion. Several faculty members mentioned disappointment in being unable to engage all of the students in their courses with the content that the faculty find valuable. These faculty

¹⁰ "IWU Statement," Illinois Wesleyan University, <https://www.iwu.edu/about/mission.html>. Accessed 8 August 2020.

¹¹ Worrall, Simon. "'Badass Librarians' Foil al Qaeda, Save Ancient Manuscripts." *National Geographic*, 12 June 2016, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/06/badass-librarians-joshua-hammer-timbuktu-manuscript-al-qaeda/>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2020.

¹² Blakemore, Erin. "New Analysis Shows Disputed Maya 'Grolier Codex' Is the Real Deal". *Smithsonian*, 15 Sept. 2016, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/maya-codex-once-thought-be-sketchy-real-thing-180960466/>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2020.

noted that they offer students opportunities for creative expression in completing their assignments. One way that librarians already support this aspect of curricular work is by hosting research showcase events such as the ones mentioned in the Background section and by providing exhibit spaces in the library. When classes use this exhibit space, the author collaborates with the students on preparing these materials by providing display label and artifact supports and giving an overview of exhibit preparation strategies.

Some of the ways the student apathy challenge manifests itself are beyond the sphere of influence available to librarians but we may investigate new digital humanities tools available as a way to complement the creative expression that faculty offer in some primary source assignments. In 2018, the library subscribed to the digital exhibition platform Omeka, and the author has built sample exhibits designed to introduce faculty to its potential.¹³ A visiting Digital Humanities Scholar also led workshops in spring 2019 and a librarian created a resource guide to support the continuation of that work.¹⁴ The author also uses freely available digital humanities tools like Knight Lab's *TimelineJS*¹⁵ to convey discoveries about IWU history. Appealing to digital natives' creativity with an array of digital humanities tools may increase faculty interest in investing the time to explore these opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have altered common practices used when teaching with primary sources. The IWU faculty who shared their time with this project already make extensive use of digital facsimiles to broaden the range of materials they share with their students. They disseminate their primary source course content virtually through website links shared directly or curated in the course management software Moodle, and through images uploaded to Moodle or embedded in PowerPoint presentation. Digital sources are connected in Moodle to specific times in the semester and so help faculty control content discovery. However, these faculty also value physical artifacts or tangible media and actual site visits to local and regional repositories to provide students with experiences outside the classroom. By emphasizing the physicality of material culture, these tactile and in-person experiences strengthen the connections to humanity that IWU faculty value. Supporting this value will be the most challenging during the pandemic.

Librarians and curators of material culture in the Teaching with Primary Sources community are exploring ways to reinforce the connections they have established between their communities and their collections. One tactic is a virtual visit complemented by kits of sample materials and facsimiles that are sent to students in advance and do not have to be returned. Others involve using high definition document cameras for showcasing artifacts and then providing verbal suggestions for comparisons to convey the missing sense of touch and smell. Some aspects of these ideas require financial resources that may not be available to every institution.

¹³ Miner, Meg. "Apollo 8 and IWU," <https://iwuhistory.omeka.net/exhibits/show/apollo-8-and-iwu/overview> and "IWU Responses to COVID-19," <https://iwuhistory.omeka.net/exhibits/show/covid19>. Accessed 8 August 2020.

¹⁴ Davis-Kahl, Stephanie. Digital Humanities Workshop, <https://libguides.iwu.edu/dhworkshop/>. Accessed 8 August 2020.

¹⁵ The *TimelineJS* homepage is available at <https://timeline.knightlab.com/>. Examples created by the author are available at <https://blogs.iwu.edu/asc/2019/03/14/iwu-firsts/> and <https://blogs.iwu.edu/asc/2020/07/19/interactive-multicultural-history/>. Accessed 8 August 2020.

At Illinois Wesleyan, the author is planning to transport a small selection of historic texts to the classroom for a fall 2020 Humanities course. The class would usually interact with a wide range of artifacts within the special collections reading room. Social distancing for more than three researchers is now not possible in special collections, so the session needs to take place in the assigned classroom space. Students will receive nitrile gloves before working with a limited set of physical artifacts that will also be quarantined afterwards. Students will be encouraged to make appointments to use folio-sized and other texts in special collections. Identifying additional methods for collection sharing will certainly occupy much of the intellectual efforts of the author and other professionals in libraries, archives and museums for the foreseeable future.

The time in which this project is occurring also overlaps with a renewed interest in social activism. Librarians are well-versed in social justice issues such as equity of access, representation and the power dynamics involved in the industry of information transmission. If we are not already doing so, we should be looking for ways to share this message with new audiences. Our students and communities as a whole should know that they are the creators of primary sources for their own times. They have power and agency in ensuring that the future will know of their current experiences.

Regardless of format or formal class involvement, all audiences need to learn that much of the human experience is not present in institutional collections due to the power structures that created those repositories. The way those collections were formed reflect the injustices perpetrated through societies, both locally and globally. We must also acknowledge such occurrences in our own institutions and identify ways to remedy them. We must also work to ensure that the way we share our collections is equitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Long before the pandemic, cultural heritage professionals worked to expand primary source literacy in order to provide users of all types with the skills needed to identify authentic primary sources and use them properly. This aspect of the work will not change fundamentally but there are opportunities for departmental faculty to increase the involvement of librarians in their courses. Library faculty who are versed in information literacy represent untapped resources for departmental colleagues to bridge gaps in the analytical, ethical and theoretical concepts as found in the *JTF-PSL Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*.¹⁶ Information professionals should be considered among the array of available resources when faculty prepare new courses or seek new sources for existing ones.

Librarians and curators may be able to support faculty by identifying published sets of primary sources, online collections, or even topical bibliographies. They may also assist in enhancing students' understanding of several aspects of the uses of primary sources in the production of scholarly works. Beyond being willing to help students succeed in completion of course assignments, IWU librarians share our colleagues' passion for preparing life-long learners. Information professionals are vocal advocates, willing partners and role models, ready for classroom collaborations. They are well suited to teaching methods for finding, analyzing and critiquing primary sources. The following recommendations will aid in achieving our shared goals:

¹⁶ *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*. SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force, 2018, <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/GuidelinesForPrimarySourceLiteracy-June2018.pdf>. Accessed 8 Aug. 2020.

- Identify additional campus units using primary sources.
 - Since distinguishing between primary and secondary sources varies by discipline, a wider campus discussion may reveal a need for engaging all campus units in a primary source literacy initiative.
- Offer primary source discovery instruction to departmental faculty and their students.
 - Library faculty are available to provide instruction on finding and using secondary sources like bibliographies and reviews (for web-based collections as well as books) to identify primary source collections on different topics.
- Increase student awareness of the range of librarians' consultation services.
 - Students should be encouraged to seek out librarians for the cross-disciplinary knowledge that may benefit those who are unsure of how to approach assignment topics.
- Introduce departmental faculty and students to the concept of archival silences.
 - Campus and local curators can bring knowledge of the gaps in their own collections to conduct exercises in imagining whose views are missing and lead to a broader understanding about the production of community and scholarly sources.
- Increase departmental faculty awareness the range of librarians' involvement with other departments.
 - Librarians serve as liaisons to multiple campus units and so can make connections between faculty in other disciplines that may complement course delivery through team teaching.
- Assess the need for instruction on secondary sources beyond those designated as writing intensive courses.
 - The criteria for *Information Literacy Outcomes for Writing Intensive Courses* at IWU¹⁷ call for students to develop skills in "Following the citation trail in bibliographies and work cited pages." Scaffolding from initial course levels through upper division levels and across the curriculum may reinforce this concept and serve as a remedy for the knowledge gap expressed by one faculty member during this project.
- Make departmental faculty aware that purchasing options extend to informal means of discovery.
 - Faculty should be encouraged to notify their library counterparts, who manage funds allocated to each department, about sources discovered through informal means such as conference presentations and workshops as well as through their professional literature.
- Make departmental faculty aware of the extent to which librarians work with people and collections in the surrounding area.
 - Faculty should be aware that librarians forge informal networks among peers in the local community and may be able to offer insights into the wealth of perspectives that members of both the IWU and local communities have to offer.
- Promote the availability of digital humanities tools.
 - Faculty who welcome creativity in the products they accept for student research should consider the range of digital humanities tools being used across IWU disciplines.
- Broaden the use of library exhibit spaces.
 - Even during the pandemic, students, faculty, and whole classes may act as guest curators and make use of the physical exhibit space within the library at any time.

¹⁷ Sweet, Chris. *Information Literacy Outcomes for Writing Intensive Courses*. The Ames Library, Illinois Wesleyan University, https://libguides.iwu.edu/ld.php?content_id=3644832. Accessed 8 Aug. 2020.

APPENDIX A

Defining “Primary Sources”

We are defining primary sources as historical or contemporary human artefacts which are direct witnesses to a period, event, person/group, or phenomenon, and which are typically used as evidence in humanities and some social science research. We are talking about sources analyzed as cultural artefacts rather than as data (as in a psychology study) or as inspiration for literary or artistic composition (as in a creative writing class).

For the purposes of this study, in literature, film, philosophy, and art history courses, we are *excluding* the main text(s), film(s), or artwork(s) being studied in traditional formats. This is because this type of “teaching with primary sources” is a universal pedagogical method – a literature course in which students do not read literature is virtually inconceivable – and would therefore make the scope of this research too broad by its inclusion. *However*, the pedagogical use of texts, films, or artworks as witnesses to a historical period or cultural milieu, including manuscripts and editions being studied as cultural artefacts, are in scope.

For example, the study of a modern print edition of *The Canterbury Tales* in an English literature course would be out of scope. However, asking students to examine a digitized fourteenth-century Chaucer manuscript in the same course – in order to understand the codicological contexts in which the text circulated – would be in scope. So would assigning an excerpt from *The Canterbury Tales* as evidence for pilgrimage practices in a late medieval history course.

We are interested in teaching that facilitates student engagement with primary sources in a range of formats, including physical objects, print editions, photocopies or facsimiles, digitizations, audio and video recordings, in-person interviews and ethnographic observations, and born-digital objects. Instructors do *not* need to engage with the unique collections held at your institution to be included in this study.

Excerpt from p. 4 of Ithaka S&R, “Implementation Guide” *Supporting Teaching with Primary Sources*, 2019.

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Background

Briefly describe your experience teaching undergraduates. *Examples: how long you've been teaching, what you currently teach, what types of courses (introductory lectures, advanced seminars) you teach*

- » How does your teaching relate to your current or past research?

Training and Sharing Teaching Materials

How did you learn how to teach undergraduates with primary sources?

- » Did you receive support or instruction from anyone else in learning to teach with primary sources?
- » Do you use any ideas, collections of sources, or other instructional resources that you received from others?
- » Do you make your own ideas, collections of sources, or other instructional resources available to others? If so, how? If not, why not?

Course Design

I'd like you to think of a specific course in which you teach with primary sources that we can discuss in greater detail.

- » Do you have a syllabus you're willing to show me? I will not share or reproduce this except for research purposes.
- » Tell me a bit about the course. *Examples: pedagogical aims, why you developed it, how it has evolved over time*
- » Explain how you incorporate primary sources into this course. *If appropriate, refer to the syllabus*
- » Why did you decide to incorporate primary sources into this course in this way?
- » What challenges do you face in incorporating primary sources into this course?
- » Do you incorporate primary sources into all your courses in a similar way? Why or why not?

In this course, does anyone else provide instruction for your students in working with primary sources? *Examples: co-instructor, archivist, embedded librarian, teaching assistant*

- » How does their instruction relate to the rest of the course?

- » How do you communicate with them about what they teach, how they teach it, and what the students learn?

Finding Primary Sources

Returning to think about your undergraduate teaching in general, how do you find the primary sources that you use in your courses? *Examples: Google, databases, own research, library staff*

- » What challenges do you face in finding appropriate sources to use?
- » Do you keep a collection of digital or physical sources that you use for teaching?

How do your students find and access primary sources?

- » Do you specify sources which students must use, or do you expect them to locate and select sources themselves?
- » If the former, how do you direct students to the correct sources? Do you face any challenges relating to students' abilities to access the sources?
- » If the latter, do you teach students how to find primary sources and/or select appropriate sources to work with? Do you face any challenges relating to students' abilities to find and/or select appropriate sources?

Working with Primary Sources

How do the ways in which you teach with primary sources relate to goals for student learning in your discipline?

- » Do you teach your students what a primary source is? If so, how?
- » To what extent is it important to you that your students develop information literacy or civic engagement through working with primary sources?

In what formats do your students engage with primary sources? *Examples: print editions, digital images on a course management platform, documents in an archive, born-digital material, oral histories*

- » Do your students visit special collections, archives, or museums, either in class or outside of class? If so, do you or does someone else teach them how to conduct research in these settings?
- » Do your students use any digital tools to examine, interact with, or present the sources? *Examples: 3D images, zoom and hyperlink features, collaborative annotation platforms, websites, wikis*
- » To what extent are these formats and tools pedagogically important to you?
- » Do you encounter any challenges relating to the formats and tools with which your students engage with primary sources?

Wrapping Up

What advice would you give to a colleague who is new to teaching with primary sources?

Looking toward the future, what challenges or opportunities will instructors encounter in teaching undergraduates with primary sources?

Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know?