Special report: Nine insights to boost primary source instruction

November 14, 2023
Q&A

- Use the Q&A box to type questions for the panelists.
- The chat box is disabled.
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Closed captioning

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Meet the editor

Choice is a publishing unit of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. Throughout its over fifty-year history, Choice has established itself as an authoritative source for the evaluation of scholarly resources and as the publisher of trusted research in areas of interest to a changing academic library community.

Today, Choice works to bring librarians, scholars, publishers, and the reading public together, facilitating a shared concern for the discovery, management, and preservation of scholarly information.
Meet the sponsor

JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to knowledge and education for people around the world. We believe education is key to the wellbeing of individuals and society, and we work to make it more effective and affordable through our nonprofit services.
The situation

- The shift to digital materials and the growth of distance learning has increased the use of *digitized* primary source materials.

- There is an immediate need for instruction that supports the unique characteristics of finding, accessing, and using digital primary sources in instruction.

- There is a lack of literature that helps establish a framework for the specific instruction and use of digital primary sources.
The solution

- Literature review
- Survey data analysis
- Practitioner interviews
Teaching and Learning with Digital Primary Sources

Nine insights into awareness, literacy, and collaboration between librarians, faculty, and students

The insights

1. Collaborate to boost discoverability and learning
2. Build instructional scaffolding
3. Integrate primary and secondary sources
4. Continue investing in digital source instruction
5. Boost primary source literacy
6. Create new pathways to digital literacy
7. Improve platform navigation
8. Address the issue of missing context
9. Prioritize promotional efforts
The speakers

Bill Mickey
Editorial Director, Choice, a publishing division of the ALA/ACRL

Virginia Seymour
Head Librarian of Research and Instruction, Savannah College of Art and Design

Michaela Ullmann
Head of Instruction and Assessment, University of Southern California Libraries

Michael Vath
Director, Product Management, JSTOR, a nonprofit service of ITHAKA
“Primary source literacy is the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, and ethically use primary sources within specific disciplinary contexts, in order to create new knowledge or to revise existing understandings.”

ranked undergraduate student primary source literacy as challenged or extremely challenged

1

2
Insight: Collaborate to boost discoverability and learning
15% librarians rated the collaboration between teaching faculty and the library as high or extremely high³
Tip: Teach the teacher

- Don’t take instructor’s own primary source literacy skills for granted
- Establish a process to assess and update instructor’s primary source literacy skills
- Introduce materials
- Discuss ideas for more collaboration
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For Instructors:

We welcome opportunities to teach and co-teach classes on research with Special Collections materials.

We are happy to guide instructors through the pedagogical approaches that our instruction librarians have developed for teaching primary source literacy during class visits to Special Collections.

Instruction Librarians in Special Collections teach and provide:

- Class visits in a variety of formats: from general introductions to opportunities to embed Special Collections materials and librarians in your course.
- An introduction to primary source literacy including locating and handling rare materials in Special Collections, and using rare materials in research.
- Hands-on in-class activities which introduce students to the independent research process and stimulate critical thinking skills.
- Identification of relevant primary source materials for your course topic (physical and digital materials).
- Consultation on the development of assignments requiring students to conduct research with primary sources.

Please use our Class Request Form to schedule a visit to Special Collections with your students.

Please submit your request for a class visit to Special Collections at least 4 weeks in advance to allow us time to prepare materials for your visit. Early notice is appreciated as our instruction calendar fills up quickly.

If this is your first time bringing a class to Special Collections, we require a consultation with one of our instruction librarians prior to the class visit. You will be contacted by a librarian to set up either an in-person or zoom meeting during which you will be asked to share your syllabus. During this consultation, you will have the opportunity to learn about our teaching model, as well as develop mutual learning outcomes for the visit and discuss the selection of primary sources for your class.
Tip: Teach the teacher

- Don’t take instructor’s own primary source literacy skills for granted
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- **Introduce materials**
- Discuss ideas for more collaboration
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- Introduce materials
- **Discuss ideas for more collaboration**
“They [librarians] are subject experts in finding information and I am a subject expert in whatever the content is, and combined we can focus holistically on these skills.”

Stephanie Kaplan, Professor of Art History, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)
Best practices: Build trust and join forces

- Speak the same language
- Invest in the vision
- Be consistent
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- Speak the same language
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<td>Through a second set of double doors, walk first into a black corridor and then into an intensely lit space whose floor is covered in hot red dots. Three female mannequins painted white, their bodies and hair covered with the dots, are reflected in the mirrored walls and ceilings. Curator: Michael Olijnyk, Co-curator: Margery King</td>
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Best practices: Build trust and join forces

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- Invest in the vision
- **Be consistent**
Insight: Build instructional scaffolding
Integrating primary sources into instruction using a scaffolded approach offers students the chance to practice research skills that increase in complexity and difficulty through a lesson or series of lessons. (Garcia et al., 2019, 99).
Tip: Integrate databases into primary source teaching

- Design asynchronous modules
- Teach transferable skills
- Use Curriculum Mapping for scaffolding
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Tip: Integrate databases into primary source teaching

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“One of the fundamentals we’ve found at JSTOR, and ITHAKA more broadly, is the increased prevalence and importance of helping students develop primary source literacy.”

Michael Vath, Director, Product Management, JSTOR, a nonprofit service of ITHAKA
Teaching with Primary Sources
Looking at the Support Needs of Instructors

March 23, 2021

Kurtis Tanaka, Daniel Abosso, Krystal Appiah, Katie Atkins, Peter Barr, Aranza Barrutia-Wood, Shalala Beydoun, Catherine Bazela, Cara Bertram, Coteen Boff, Steve Borrelli, Jay-Marie Bravent, Sarah Brennan, Tina Budzisz-Weaver, Margaret Burri, Liz Cheney, Carl Coker, Heather Cole, Lisa Conathan, Emily Cook, Danielle Mireia Cooper, Joshua Dacey, J. Gordon Daines III, Diana Dill, Carrie Donovan, Lori DufBi, Lisa Duncan, Sarah Evelyn, Mary Feeney, Patricia Figueroa, Rebecca Friedman, Myrna Fuentes, Danielle Gabbard, Eleonora Gandolli, Chloe Gerson, Kelly Godfrey, Melissa Grafe, Brenda Gunn, Jeannine Haas, Terese Heidenwolff, Heidi Herr, Laura Hidley, Matthew J. K. Hill, David Hirsch, Stefanie Hunker, Jamie Jameson, Emily Kader, Jessica Keyes, Paula Kiser, Joel D. Kitchens, Maggie Kopp, Andrew Laas, Bill Lands, Christina Larson, David Lewis, Sara Logue, Maureen Maryanski, Jennifer Meehan, Ruthann Miller, Rebecca Miller, Waltz, Meg Miner, Sarah Morris, Kevin M. O’Sullivans, Catherine Oliver, Barbara Olsson, Anne Peale, Matt Phillips, Roxane Pickens, Julie Porterfield, Sara Powell, Marcus Robyns, Dylen Ruediger, Dendre Scaggs, Carrie Schairer, Matthew Sheehy, Nicole Shibata, Damien M. Skeem, Holly Snyder, Linda Stepp, Matthew Strandmark, Morgan Swan, Michelle Sweetser, Gabriel Swift, Jason Tomberlin, Naomi Wallace, Berenika Webster, Ashley Werlinich, Clare Withers, Lijuan Xu
Organize your research with Workspace

Save the materials you find and easily organize your work. Log in or register for an account to get started.

Log in  Don't have an account? Register

Save images and articles to revisit
Organize your saved items with folders
Export presentations, reference lists, or share a link
Insight: Create new paths for discoverability and digital literacy
The abundance of different platforms and places to look—subscription collections, institutional repositories, subject repositories, collections on the open web, museum collections—can overwhelm researchers.

Factors that challenge digitized primary source usage:

**Discoverability**
- 72% librarians
- 44% faculty

**Lack of resource awareness**
- 87% librarians
- 52% faculty
Tip: Teach transferable research skills

Emphasize transferable skills:
● **Across resources and tools**
● Across formats and materials
● Across assignments and disciplines
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Special collections and instructional librarians “should invest the same time, care, and energy into fostering research skills for digital primary sources as they do for physical materials. Reconciling the two approaches is not only pedagogically effective but also more inclusive, more realistic, and more supple, as it allows for a wider range of engagements if one approach becomes less viable.” (Craig and O’Sullivan, 2022, 96).
Remembering Gordon Parks (1912–2006)

Barbara Baker Barrow

American Art, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Fall 2009), pp. 118-121

In the 20th century, Alfred Eisenstaedt, Portrait of Gordon Parks, 1943, filmed newscaster footage of a 1947 Japanese attack on an American ship, and a chance to hear the photographer recount how he had stayed at his camera position as the bomb fell, excited a twenty-five-year-old Gordon Parks. After his next train...
“Overall, while challenges still exist, the current state of digitized primary and secondary source availability and discovery is promising. The digitization efforts and advancements in online platforms have greatly expanded access to these valuable resources, empowering researchers and students to explore a wide range of materials conveniently from anywhere in the world.”

Librarian Survey, JSTOR/Choice Teaching and Learning with Primary Digital Resources
The next steps

Receive the post-webinar email
Download the report
Implement one insight, tip, or best practice
Questions?
Citations


