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Assessing Archival Instruction Through an Active Learning Survey

Claire Du Laney

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Assessing Archival Instruction Through an Active Learning Survey

Southeastern Archives Association and the Society of Georgia Archivist Summer Symposium 2024

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University of Nebraska at Omaha Archives and Special Collections

June 13, 2024
### Survey framework

**UNO Libraries Instruction SLOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SAA Learning Objectives and Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy, 2018</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate their information need</td>
<td>Conceptualize</td>
<td>B. Articulate what might serve as primary sources for a specific research project within the framework of an academic discipline or area of study;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify key concepts and terms in their research questions; Select appropriate resources for their research.</td>
<td>Conceptualize</td>
<td>C. Draw on primary sources to generate and refine research questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the resources available for their research; Examine search results and adjust searches as needed; Choose sources that are relevant to the scope of their research.</td>
<td>Find and Access</td>
<td>B. Use appropriate, efficient, and effective search strategies in order to locate primary sources. Be familiar with the most common ways primary sources are described, such as catalog records and archival finding aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess information for accuracy, reliability, and validity, and critically analyze for context, intention, and audience.</td>
<td>Interpret, Analyze, and Evaluate</td>
<td>A. Assess the appropriateness of a primary source for meeting the goals of a specific research or creative project. B. Critically evaluate the perspective of the creator(s) of a primary source, including tone, subjectivity, and biases, and consider how these relate to the original purpose(s) and audience(s) of the source. C. Situate a primary source in context by applying knowledge about the time and culture in which it was created; the author or creator; its format, genre, publication history; or related</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mapping Student Learning Outcomes Chart, created by author
Spring 2022 HIST 2980
History Instruction 2/10/2022
CLAIRE DU LANEY  JAN 27, 2022 03:15PM

Before Class: What are some questions you have at the beginning of class?

No I have not. — ANONYMOUS

Yes, I work at a museum so I need to reference our archives often — ANONYMOUS

Primary Source assignment: What did you learn? What was challenging? What was easy?

It was challenging to answer some of the questions about audience because our source was a personal diary — ANONYMOUS

Once again documents that I never even consider have been preserved here and they’re always interesting to see — ANONYMOUS

From this I learned how Holocaust survivors came to Omaha and what they did here. A challenge was ensuring exactly what to look at and focus on. It was easy to stay interested and to look at things — ANONYMOUS

Before Class: Have you used archival material for research or a project before? If so, what were things you liked and what were some challenges?

Can I just talk to anyone in there? Or like just you? — ANONYMOUS

No questions. — ANONYMOUS

Before Class: Have you researched with archival items/ primary sources at any point before this class?

Nothing really. — ANONYMOUS

Little to nothing. — ANONYMOUS

Not much. — ANONYMOUS

Not a lot. — ANONYMOUS

Not a lot currently. — ANONYMOUS

Not really. — ANONYMOUS

Never. — ANONYMOUS

I have not yet. — ANONYMOUS

I have not. — ANONYMOUS

The challenging part was who was the audience, that’s a generation he was speaking to? Fellow survivor? To me, it was ambiguous. It was easy to find out who the author was and what place he had in society — ANONYMOUS

SOC 3700: Archives and Special Collections
CLAIRE DU LANEY  FEB 10, 2021 10:37PM

Nothing at all

Before Class: What do you know about archives or special collections materials?

Not really. — ANONYMOUS

Not a lot. — ANONYMOUS

Not much. — ANONYMOUS

Never. — ANONYMOUS

No I have not. — ANONYMOUS

I think I have. — ANONYMOUS

Yes. — ANONYMOUS

Nothing. — ANONYMOUS

Nothing. — ANONYMOUS

Not really. — ANONYMOUS

Not at all currently. — ANONYMOUS

Not much. — ANONYMOUS

Nothing. — ANONYMOUS

Not a lot. — ANONYMOUS

Before Class: Have you initially think of when you hear the term “archives”?

Old stuff. — ANONYMOUS

Old and peculiar. — ANONYMOUS

Old books. — ANONYMOUS

Something similar to a library but with older. — ANONYMOUS

Older types of work. — ANONYMOUS

Older or unique things. — ANONYMOUS

Older work. — ANONYMOUS

I think of history. — ANONYMOUS

Older work. — ANONYMOUS

Personal or community based information. — ANONYMOUS

Older. — ANONYMOUS

I think of work from a long time ago. — ANONYMOUS
2019 Fall-2022 Fall Aggregate Questions

Questions from all classes (4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>All counts</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are some questions you have at the beginning of class?</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you know that you can schedule research appointments with Librarians?</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have you used archival material for research or a project before? If so, what were things you liked and what were some challenges?</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How confident are you in researching the course topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding Aids: what were some of your thoughts in searching the finding aid databases?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can you tell if a source is credible? Is it ever appropriate to use a blog?</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does peer-reviewed mean?</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have questions about working with primary sources?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Database Question: Take three minutes and search for an item about your research topic. Makes a few quick notes about how you are entering the search terms and using the filters. What did you learn about the databases and how you search?</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations: Do you feel confident writing footnotes and citations for the materials you will work with?</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>what were some challenges about database research you didn't expect?</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a favorite database?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Early Padlet Questions

• Q1: Before Class: What do you know about archives or special collections materials?

• Q2: Before Class: Have you researched with archival items/primary sources at any point before this class?

• Q3: Before Class: What do you initially think of when you hear the term "archives"?

• Database Question: Take three minutes and search for an item about your research topic. Makes a few quick notes about how you are entering the search terms and using the filters. What did you learn about the databases and how you search?

• SQ4: Before Class: Have you heard the term digital history or digital humanities? If so, what do you know?

• SQ6: What were some challenges about historical research you didn't expect?

• SQ8: Assignment question: which course assignment (abstract, book review, annotated bib, etc) has been the most interesting, helpful, or challenging? Why?
Spring 2021: Introduction to LGBTQ+

Q1: Before Class: What do you know about archives or special collections materials
   - Answer summary: Students had no prior knowledge, or did not want to share any prior knowledge of archives and special collections materials

Q2: Before Class: Have you researched with archival items/primary sources at any point before this class?
   - 6 students, or 30% had conducted primary source or archival research before this class

Q3: Before Class: What do you initially think of when you hear the term "archives"?
   - 91% responded with the traditional "old" or some variation. Only 1 student responded with "personal or community based materials"

Q4: After Class: What did you learn about archives and archival research?
   - 2 students learned about searching; 5 talked about the collection and purpose of ASC; 1 student talked about materials being available and accessible to all

Q5: After Class: What did you enjoy the most from this class? What do you wish was done differently?
   - 2 students mentioned the Queer Archives specifically; 2 talked about the class engagement and conversations; 2 talked about search methods; 1 talked about empathy in archival research

Q6: After Class: What were some challenges about this research you didn't expect?
   - 100% of responded talked about having to do more work in conducting research than they expected
Fall 2021- Fall 2022: History Courses

Research Methods Fall 2021
- Q3: Before Class: Have you used UNO Libraries' databases? What has been your experience?
  - 3 of 8 students or 38% had prior database experience
- Q7: Database search: What was challenging? What was easy? What was your favorite database?
  - 1 student responded that sifting through all the results was a challenge when using databases.
  - 50% said the library catalog was their favorite database; 50% said JSTOR. One student who answered JSTOR also said ASC
- Q10: Archives search: What was challenging? What was easy?
  - 5 total responses. 4 of the 5 students responded that the challenges were there amount of data and knowing how to search, with 2 of those 4 respondents being actively nervous or intimidated. 2 students responded that they felt more confident or excited to learn more.

Research Methods Spring 2022
- Q1: Before Class: What are some questions you have at the beginning of class?
  - 6 of 10 respondents or 60% did not have questions prior to class. 1 student asked about photo storage, 1 asked about ASC holdings, and 2 asked about research logistics
- Q2: Before Class: Have you used archival material for research or a project before? If so, what were things you liked and what where some challenges?
  - 80% of respondents have never used archival materials before.
- Q3: Primary Source assignment: What did you learn? What was challenging? What was easy?
  - 3 respondents said identifying the audience was a challenge; 2 said answering the activity questions were a challenge (lack of context for the document); 2 said that knowing how to find items and answers were challenging; 1 responded that they had no idea of what was preserved in ASC.

Senior Seminar Fall 2022
- Q3: Before Class: Have you used archival material for research or a project before? If so, what were things you liked and what were some challenges?
  - 2 of 10 respondents or 20% had never used archival materials before. 80% had specifically microfilm. I am assuming that the 80% represent those that have taken HIST 2980 in-person and the 20% took it online (if they took it) during COVID
- Q4: Before Class: How confident are you in researching the course topic?
  - 100% of respondents felt some level of confidence in researching their course topic
- Q9: Database Question: Take three minutes and search for an item about your research topic. Makes a few quick notes about how you are entering the search terms and using the filters. What did you learn about the databases and how you search?
  - 8 of the 11 respondents or 72% said that using Boolean operators was useful to have learned. 1 respondent had a question about the Boolean operator "OR", and 2 noted the nuance of specific vs board keyword searches.
Feedback from Intro to Aviation and Aerospace Fall 2022

- Felt the session was very informative and thorough
- A bit overwhelming since it was a “first” for many of them regarding extensive literature search – not sure how it could be broken down further though; I think this would happen regardless given the assignment and information required
- Great pace and instruction
- The environment/room made a difference for most students
- Actual examples (that you went through that were given by the students) were useful and practical
- Differentiation between primary and secondary sources was insightful
- Some mentioned providing a step-by-step reference guide as a tangible to take once the session was over so they could reference on their own (not sure this exist though)
Qualtrics Survey and Modified Instruction slide

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

Session Overview:
- **Library Services**
  - Interlibrary Loan
  - Research Appointment
- **Resources at Criss Library**
  - Catalog
  - Databases
  - Research Guides
- **Archives and Special Collections**
  - Department overview
  - Finding Aids and working with Primary Sources
  - Using collections outside of UNO
- **Research Project Components**
  - Digital Literacy and source selection
    - In-class searches
  - Citations
    - Zotero
  - Annotated Bibliography
  - Historiography

Instruction Powerpoint slide, 2023
Confidence in Finding Primary Sources

Prior to Instruction, HIST2980, 2023F

Q5 - How confident are you in finding and using primary sources in an assignment?

1=not confident, 5=very confident

Post Instruction, HIST2980, 2023F

Q18 - Has your confidence in finding Primary Sources changed?

1. Increased Confidence (ex: This has clarified things)
2. No, same level of confidence
3. Decreased Confidence (ex: I'm more confused now than before)

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4
Confidence in Finding Secondary Sources

Prior to Instruction, HIST2980, 2023F

Q6 - How confident are you in finding and using secondary sources in an assignment?

1 = not confident, 5 = very confident

Post Instruction, HIST2980, 2023F

Q12 - Has your confidence in finding Secondary Sources changed?

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<td>10.00% 1</td>
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<td>0.00% 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>40.00% 4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Showing rows 1 - 6 of 6
Final Thoughts

Post Instruction, HIST2980, 2023F

Q24 - Has your confidence in conducting historical research changed?

- Increased Confidence (ex: has clarified things)
- No change level of confidence
- Decreased Confidence (ex: I’m more confused now than before)

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<tr>
<td>No change level of confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decreased Confidence (ex: I’m more confused now than before)</td>
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<td>Has your confidence in conducting historical research changed?</td>
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