Assessing Student Learning and Engagement in Archival Instruction

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About Special Collections

- One FTE librarian
- ~20,000 volumes, 2,500 linear feet of archival materials
- Collecting areas: Upper Mississippi Valley history, Augustana College/Quad Cities history, history of the book
- Conceived as a humanities laboratory
The Year of Assessment
I wish the Special Collections Librarian had talked more about...

- A Specific Event in History: 41
- SpecColl Holdings/Operations: 10
- One of the Items Used in Class: 10
- Incorporating Materials into Research: 11
- Directional Information (Hours, etc.): 20
- How to Analyze Primary Sources: 30
- How to Locate Materials: 11
- Physical Access: 7
- Online Resources: 4

My favorite part of today’s session was...

- Using a Specific Resource: 73
- Using Historical Materials in General: 59
- Learning about Augustana History: 39
- Introductory Exercise: 22
- Hands-on/Active Learning: 13
- Learning about Special Collections: 2
- Group Discussion: 8
- I Hated Everything: 8

n = 224, blank responses removed
Student Survey

Q10 What would encourage you to use Special Collections again in the future? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 113  Skipped: 111

- Knowing more about what kinds of resources Special Collections has. 77
- Increased access to digitized content that doesn't require me to come to the library. 71
- Interesting events or exhibits in Special Collections. 61
- More/longer open hours. 46
- Advice about how to incorporate primary sources into my research. 41
- Help or encouragement from my professor(s). 39
- More practice analyzing primary source documents and photographs. 22
- Help from or consultations with the Special Collections Librarian. 13
- Other (please specify)

Faculty Survey

Q3 What would encourage you to incorporate Special Collections into your courses? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 19  Skipped: 19

- More information about available resources, subject areas covered, and access policies. 12
- Help designing an assignment using Special Collections materials. 9
- Ideas for incorporating materials into non-humanities courses (STEM, vocational classes). 10
- Bringing primary sources to my students in my classroom, rather than coming to the library. 2
- Dedicating a portion of a class period to an instruction, rather than a full class period. 4
- Better outreach/communication on the part of the Special Collections Librarian. 1
- Access to digitized content or remote resources I can use in the classroom. 5
- A better understanding of how primary source literacy fits into a liberal arts education. 2
- I have no interest in using Special Collections materials in my courses. 2
- Other (please specify)
• Every session incorporates a written deliverable
• Graded against a rubric (based on Horowitz, 2013)

Fall Term Worksheets
• 10-12 questions
• Average score: 57%
• Lots of blank answers

Winter Term Worksheets
• 5-7 questions
• Average score: 64%
• More complete worksheets

Spring Term Worksheets
• Largely essay-based
• High engagement
• Worksheets not collected
- Aimed to determine the impact of archival instruction on student learning
- Grew from a 2013 ACRL Assessment in Action project
- Six classes participated
- Students were assessed in the following areas (based on Horowitz, 2013)
  - Observation
  - Interpretation
  - Materiality
  - Evaluation/critical thinking
  - Engagement/cultural understanding
Pre-test document

Post-test document

To the Faculty:

On Tuesday evening, October 25th, 1934, students of our institution, after being informed of the negative decision of the board of directors with reference to their petition for the continuance of intercollegiate basket-ball at Augustana College, made a demonstration in favor of basket-ball in order to impress the officers of the institution with their desire in this respect. The first part of this demonstration took place at the homes of Dr. E. N. Lindberg, Prof. S. I. Anderson, Prof. A. S. Anderson, and Rev. A. T. Ebanks, and the second part at the R. I. & P. depot, Rock Island, Ill., against two members of the Board, Rev. P. W. Limberg and Dr. Kieneman.

In this demonstration officers of the institution and the board of directors as a whole were grossly insulted by participants in the disturbance. The following day, Wednesday, Oct. 26th, a great number of students, in accordance with a resolution passed at a mass meeting, continued in their course of insubordination by staying away from recitations; some of the students also proceeded to hinder others from going to recitations. By Thursday morning, Oct. 27th, order was restored and all students returned to work.

On Thursday, Oct. 27th, a committee was appointed by the General Faculty to make investigations of this disturbance, especially of the one on Tuesday evening, Oct. 25th. The result of their arduous labor is now given in a report which...
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Average, out of 4 possible points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
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<tr>
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No statistically significant differences 🙁🙁🙂.
## Results

### Average, out of 4 possible points

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### Overall score

- Pre-test: 2.2
- Post-test: 2.4

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**No statistically significant differences 😞**
Lessons Learned

• Assessment is doable!
• Talk yourself up
• Shorter worksheets
• Change things up
• We **KNOW** Special Collections research improves critical thinking, we just have to prove it.
Thank you!

Questions?

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