Pedagogue in the Archive

Reorienting the Archivist as Educator

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ABSTRACT Emerging over the last 10 years, the concept of the *archivist as educator* has begun to redefine the professional identity of the archivist. This reorientation demands that archivists be not only the keepers of records but also the ones able to aid others – by way of teaching – in the interpretation of the records under their care. However, despite a growing literature supporting the role of archivists as teachers, there remains a hesitancy within the profession to self-identity as such. Presenting an overview of recent scholarship on the topic, this article discusses the concept of the archivist as educator and its implications. Drawing on and recontextualizing the seminal work of Hugh Taylor and consciously viewed from the perspective of an archivist, this expository article presents a call to action for archivists to self-identify as instructors.

After an overview of the literature on primary source education, the role and unique knowledge of the archivist, and the development of critical thinking skills through source interpretation, this article will present a practical approach for archivists to engage with students in the classroom. To offer a springboard for future discussion, it presents a case study, using a for-credit semester-long course taught by the author, an archivist, as an example of engaging students in active learning with the express goal of improving both their primary source literacy and their archival literacy.

RÉSUMÉ Émergeant au cours dix dernières années, le concept d'*archiviste éducateur* a commencé à redéfinir l'identité professionnelle de l'archiviste. Cette réorientation nécessite que l'archiviste soit non seulement le gardien des documents, mais également qu'il aide les autres – par le biais de l'enseignement – à interpréter les documents qui sont sous leur responsabilité. Toutefois, malgré les publications de plus en plus nombreuses portant sur le rôle de l'archiviste comme enseignant, les membres de la profession hésitent à s'auto-identifier comme tels. En présentant un survol des publications récentes sur le sujet, cet article aborde le concept de l'archiviste éducateur et ce qu'il implique. Puisant dans les travaux fondateurs de Hugh Taylor tout en les recontextualisant, et adoptant la perspective d'un archiviste, cet article explicatif met de l'avant un appel à l'action aux archivistes afin qu'ils s'auto-identifient comme enseignant.

Après un aperçu de la littérature portant sur l'éducation par les sources primaires, le rôle et les connaissances uniques de l'archiviste, ainsi que le développement des facultés de raisonnement critique par le biais de l'analyse de sources, cet article présentera une approche pratique pour que les archivistes s'impliquent auprès des étudiants dans les salles de classe. Comme point de départ à une discussion future, il présente une étude de cas, soit celui d'un cours crédité donné sur une session complète par l'auteur, un archiviste, comme exemple de participation des étudiants à une expérience d'apprentissage actif dont le but avoué était d'améliorer à la fois leur capacité d'analyse de sources primaires et leur littératie archivistique.

Hugh Taylor, influential Canadian archival theorist, practitioner, and educator, wrote in his 1972 watershed piece "Clio in the Raw: Archival Materials and the Teaching of History," that we, as archivists, must play an active role in teaching. While Taylor's work is known to many in the field, a reintroduction – specifically to his views on teaching – is perhaps overdue. Taylor felt that the archivist must "devise ways of conveying the intense pleasure which can be experienced when handling manuscripts and records groups, pleasure which has something to do with personal discovery."[1] In the nearly 50 years since Taylor's call to action, many archivists have indeed worked diligently to define a role for themselves as educators within their professional practice. Unfortunately, this has not been a universal move, and despite a growing literature supporting and advocating for the archivist's place in the classroom, some archivists remain hesitant to self-identify as teachers.[2]

The concept of the *archivist as educator* has redefined the identity of the archivist. To remain relevant and to connect with new and varied user groups, the archivist must emerge not only as a custodian but also as one able to aid others – by way of teaching – in the interpretation of the records under their care. Archivists need to continue redefining our professional roles and the mandates of our institutions. Recent years have seen the publication of numerous case studies on the integration of archival records into the classroom, offering strategies for engaging our users and opening our doors to students.[3] These works reflect a need to reorient our core work: we do more than acquire, arrange, and make available the records within our collections; we are teachers. Whether offering one-on-one assistance at the reference desk, explaining access restrictions, or

1 Hugh Taylor, "Clio in the Raw: Archival Materials and the Teaching of History," *American Archivist* 35, no. 3–4 (1972): 329, doi:10.17723/aarc.35.3-4.x2626ht453850482.

2 Magia G. Krause, "'It Makes History Alive for Them': The Role of Archivists and Special Collections Librarians in Instructing Undergraduates," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 36, no. 5 (2010): 401–11, doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2010.06.004.

3 A few book-length compendiums of case studies include Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba, eds., *Past or Portal? Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012); Anne Bahde, Heather Smedberg, and Mattie Taormina, eds., *Using Primary Sources: Hands-On Instructional Exercises* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2014); Kate Theimer, ed., *Educational Programs: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Christopher J. Prom and Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, eds., *Teaching with Primary Sources*, Trends in Archives Practice (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2016); and Nancy Bartlett, Elizabeth Gadelha, and Cinda Nofziger, eds., *Teaching Undergraduates with Archives* (Ann Arbor, MI: Maize Books, 2019).

helping novice researchers understand the relationship between a fonds' series and sub-series, archivists have long been educators.

This article is a call to action asking that we firmly claim for ourselves the task of teaching primary source and archival literacy and expand the understanding of our professional identity accordingly.[4] By drawing on established and emergent literature discussing the educative role of the archivist, this article will review constructivist pedagogy and its application, contextualizing the potential contributions of archivists with uniquely valuable skill sets.

Although archivists are experts in primary source and archival literacy – in practice – we must now work to increase our theoretical knowledge of learning and of teaching methodologies. This article proposes a direct approach to teaching with primary sources that is focused largely on the post-secondary context and draws upon the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). This approach positions the archivist to engage students in deep critical thinking by using active learning, inquiry-based pedagogy. The article then presents a case study detailing the author's experience teaching a for-credit, semester-long course about the use and analysis of archival records.

The groundwork has been laid, and now, based on the continuously changing identities and needs of users, the archivist must assume the role of educator. There is a recognized place for the archivist within the educational complex, and we need to work harder to define expectations and involve ourselves in integrating primary sources into course design and learning objectives. The "treasure tour" show-and-tell approach so long used to bring students into our spaces is not sustainable. We must continue to advocate for ourselves as educators and embrace this identity as our own.

Literature Review: Establishing the Archivist as Educator

In an address at the Society of American Archivists' 1971 annual meeting, Hugh Taylor was one of the first archivists to argue in favour of opening collections

4 The word *archivist* is used here to include those in allied professions, including records managers, special collections librarians, and any other relevant iteration of the formal title of archivist.

wide to novice student researchers.[5] The next year, he formalized his call to action in an article published in the *American Archivist*:

> Historians and teachers have always used records as a means to an end. Perhaps we, rather than they, are the ones who can introduce the student to a genuine experience by simply placing an unsorted group of papers or series with unspecified contents in front of him and saying, in effect, "enter into a dialogue with these records, this tiny fragment of thousands of tons that have been written, and ask your own questions and draw your own conclusions; expose your personality to them and see what happens; there is no right or wrong answer." I believe the result would be a genuine historical experience because it is quite unstructured and far removed from textbooks and source books which have their place in another context.[6]

An ardent supporter of the educational value of archives, Taylor carried his constructivist approach to the classroom, asking that students be "let loose among the archives"[7] to engage in hands-on interpretive work to draw their own conclusions. Pushing back against the historians' interpretations of source documents, which place these on pedestals, Taylor emphasized an unstructured approach that enabled students to form their own understanding of the historical narrative and allowed both the archivist and student alike to "learn how to learn."[8] Taylor was reacting against the trend, growing at the time, of providing history students with highly structured teaching kits of reproduced records where, although there was an opportunity to work with primary sources, conclusions were pre-determined. Value, Taylor argued, lies instead in the opportunity for students to insert themselves into the process and to draw their *own* conclusions through exposure to the rough-and-ready reality of *real* records.[9]

5 Morgan Daniels and Elizabeth Yakel, "Uncovering Impact: The Influence of Archives on Student Learning," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 39, no. 5 (2013): 416, doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2013.03.017.

6 Taylor, "Clio in the Raw," 329.

7 Ibid., 330.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 328–29.

Following Taylor and taking up his call to involve students in source analysis, the literature began to argue for a more defined role for archivists in the classroom. In 1980, Michael Cook insisted that archivists are "especially qualified to determine which sources can be most fully exploited for educational purposes . . . they are capable of assisting teachers in training pupils in the fundamental methods of archival research."[10]

Adding to this growing discussion, Ken Osborne's 1986 article "Archives in the Classroom" suggested a variety of approaches to improving the working relationship between archivists and teachers. Among other suggestions, Osborne proposed improving teacher education to raise awareness of archives and archival holdings as they relate to the teaching of history;[11] working with teachers to create classroom units to disambiguate the work and role of archivists and raise an awareness of primary sources; running exhibitions and visits to schools; working with teachers to create projects involving students in archival research; and creating archives-based teaching kits.[12] With little effort, one can imagine this list of suggestions being published today.

Osborne was in part reacting to George Bolotenko's 1983 article "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," wherein Bolotenko waded into the then-contentious debate around defining the profession by bemoaning the loss of the "archivist as historian and scholar." This era saw the archivist's professional training move away from graduate history departments toward the library sciences, which was not without controversy.[13]

Where Bolotenko proposed two roles for the archivist, those of historian or records manager, Osborne noted the neglect of a third role: the archivist as educator.[14] Osborne argued that, while archivists had established themselves as experts in historical research, records management, and preservation, they

10 Michael G. Cook, "Teaching with Archives," *International Journal of Archives* 1, no. 1 (1980): 26.

11 Osborne suggests integrating education on archival research and primary source analysis into both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs. He argues that in-service training, such as ongoing professional development, is key. Pre-service training is necessarily focused on teaching the "basic mechanics of teaching" and may not be the most appropriate venue to teach the more nuanced work of primary source analysis (29).

12 Ken Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," *Archivaria* 23 (Winter 1986–87): 16–40.

13 George Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 16, 21.

14 Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," 16.

had failed to define themselves as educators.[15] Indeed, Osborne advocated for a renewed role for archivists within the Canadian elementary and secondary school system.[16]

In 1989, Mark Greene brought this same conversation to the post-secondary context when he shared his efforts to exhort colleagues at Carleton College to incorporate archival materials into their undergraduate courses.[17] A proponent of direct engagement with faculty, Greene declared that "advancing the use of archival records in the curriculum should be considered an important part of, rather than an alternative to, the 'administrative' duties of the archivist."[18] Most relevant to us today, however, is Greene's insistence on being "nontraditional." While admitting that "the archivist as teacher may be, for some, the most nontraditional concept of all," Greene asks us not to rely on the traditional uses of materials as undergraduate students are not conducting senior research theses or long-form papers.[19] Greene stressed the importance of innovation in assignment design to better engage learners.

Eleven years later, in 2000 – nearly 30 years after Taylor's call to action – Marion Matyn echoed Greene by arguing that undergraduates should be offered opportunities to engage directly with original primary sources.[20] Matyn believed in the

15 While certainly instigated by Bolotenko's 1983 *Archivaria* piece, the debate as to the archival profession's alignment with historians and historiography has been long-standing and nuanced, especially as archivists sought to professionalize in the late 1970s. Or, as Bolotenko wrote,

> In the search for archival identity, for "professionalization" of the calling predicated on denying the historical-scholarly foundation of archivy and its transmutation into a modernized vocation replete with peculiarly distinct vocabulary and methodology, the pendulum has swung too far the other way in the separation of the archivists from the historian. (23)

See Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape," *American Archivist* 74, no. 2 (2011): 600–632; Alex H. Poole, "Archival Divides and Foreign Countries? Historians, Archivists, Information-Seeking, and Technology: Retrospect and Prospect," *American Archivist* 78, no. 2 (2015): 375–433.

16 Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom."

17 Carleton College is located in Northfield, Minnesota. Mark Greene was the college archivist at Carleton from 1985 to 1989, during which time he prepared his article. Mark A. Greene, "Using College and University Archives as Instructional Materials: A Case Study and an Exhortation," *Midwestern Archivist* 14, no. 1 (1989): 31–38.

18 Greene, "Using College and University Archives as Instructional Materials," 32.

19 Ibid., 35–36.

20 Marion J. Matyn, "Getting Undergraduates to Seek Primary Sources in Archives," *History Teacher* 33, no. 3 (2000): 349–55, doi:10.2307/495032.

value of students doing hands-on research as it "requires them to learn new techniques of discovery and creates a real sense of intimacy with people of a different time."[21] Matyn's advocacy for hands-on engagement, paired with Greene's idea of the archivist as educator and the use of "nontraditional" approaches, laid the groundwork for the ensuing place of pedagogy in these discussions.

Markus Robyns, in 2001, asked archivists to incorporate instruction on critical thinking when introducing original documents to students. Arguing that primary sources are inherently subjective, Robyns suggested they offer a unique opportunity to teach the evaluative skills necessary for the independent "critical interpretation and analysis of that information." Rather than relying on "someone else's interpretation of past events," wrote Robyns, students should be challenged by the archivist to draw their own conclusions.[22] Robyns' promotion of an active role for the archivist, and his use of critical thinking to describe a pedagogical approach, would prove influential.

In 2007, Julia Hendry reiterated and built upon Robyns' push for archivists to teach students how to critically evaluate sources by adding the concepts of inquiry-based learning and document analysis to the discourse.[23] The application of "learning through discovery" constructivist pedagogy to the elementary and secondary school classroom, Hendry argued, allows students to become active participants in their education.[24] Later that same year, Doris Malkmus, speaking from the post-secondary context, published her findings on an investigation into the use of archival records in the undergraduate classroom.[25] Her survey of over 600 American history faculty showed that primary sources were used almost universally to engage students and develop critical thinking skills.[26] Malkmus urged archivists to work with faculty to reshape the archivist's role

21 Ibid., 349–50.

22 Marcus C. Robyns, "The Archivist as Educator: Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into Historical Research Methods Instruction," *American Archivist* 64, no. 2 (2001): 365, doi:10.17723/aarc.64.2.q4742x2324j10457.

23 Julia Hendry, "Primary Sources in K–12 Education: Opportunities for Archives," *American Archivist* 70, no. 1 (2007): 114–29, doi:10.17723/aarc.70.1.v674024627315777.

24 Ibid., 119.

25 Doris Malkmus, "Teaching History to Undergraduates with Primary Sources: Survey of Current Practices," *Archival Issues* 31, no. 1 (2007): 25–82.

26 In a follow-up to her original 2007 investigation, Malkmus published the results from 25 follow-up faculty interviews on how primary sources are being used to teach undergraduate history. See Doris Malkmus, "'Old Stuff' for New Teaching Methods: Outreach to History Faculty Teaching with Primary Sources," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 10, no. 4 (2010): 413–35, doi:10.1353/pla.2010.0008.

within education by engaging directly with students and embracing "active learning modalities" in source analysis.[27]

The call for archivists to expand their roles to include inquiry-based teaching resulted in the growth of related literature. In 2011, Barbara Rockenbach applied learning theory to instances of inquiry-based archival research instruction using a series of case studies from Yale University.[28] Like others, Rockenbach saw opportunities for archivists and special collections librarians to partner with faculty and integrate collections into curricula or take the charge on their own.[29] Offering an excellent summary of the arguments to date, Elizabeth Yakel and Doris Malkmus, in a chapter in the Society of American Archivists' 2016 book on *Teaching with Primary Sources*, wrote that primary source analysis can "sharpen critical thinking skills such as analysis, logical reasoning, and use of evidence in argument. Because few primary sources present a unified interpretation of events, they help students understand conflicting points of view, complexity, and the importance of context."[30] As such, they asked archivists to increase their knowledge of learning theory and of how to best teach with, and about, primary sources.[31] They added,

27 Malkmus, "Teaching History to Undergraduates with Primary Sources," 40.

28 Barbara Rockenbach, "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning: Case Studies from Yale University Library," *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (2011): 297–311, doi:10.17723/aarc.74.1.mml4871x2365j265.

29 Recent years have seen immense growth in the area of teaching with special collections and primary sources. For a selection of works discussing the application of pedagogy to the use of archival and special collections materials in the classroom, see Anne Bahde, "Taking the Show on the Road: Special Collections Instruction in the Campus Classroom," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 12, no. 2 (2011): 75–88, doi:10.5860/rbm.12.2.354; Melissa A. Hubbard and Megan Lotts, "Special Collections, Primary Resources, and Information Literacy Pedagogy," *Communications in Information Literacy* 7, no. 1 (2013): 24–38; Daniels and Yakel, "Uncovering Impact"; Todd Samuelson and Cait Coker, "Mind the Gap: Integrating Special Collections Teaching," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 14, no. 1 (2014): 51–66, doi:10.1353/pla.2013.0041; Sarah M. Horowitz, "Hands-On Learning in Special Collections: A Pilot Assessment Project," *Journal of Archival Organization* 12, no. 3–4 (2015): 216–29, doi:10.1080/15332748.2015.1118948; Silvia Vong, "A Constructivist Approach for Introducing Undergraduate Students to Special Collections and Archival Research," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 17, no. 2 (2017): 148–71, doi:10.5860/rbm.17.2.9666; Sonia Yaco, Arkalgud Ramaprasad, and Thant Syn, "Themes in Recent Research on Integrating Primary Source Collections and Instruction," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 20, no. 3 (2020): 449–74; Jen Hoyer, "Out of the Archives and into the Streets: Teaching with Primary Sources to Cultivate Civic Engagement," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020), accessed July 3, 2020, https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol7/iss1/9; and Teresa Gray, "Special Collections in the Classroom: Embedding Special Collections in an Undergraduate History Writing Class," *Public Services Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (2020): 139–45, doi:10.1080/15228959.2020.1723461.

30 Elizabeth Yakel and Doris Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival Literacy," in *Teaching with Primary Sources*, ed. Prom and Hinchliffe, 11.

31 Ibid., 9.

however, that primary source literacy alone is not enough to enable students to work independently with archival materials within the archive.[32]

While much of the literature was focused on recognizing appropriate pedagogy and advocating for the archivist's place in the classroom, Yakel and Deborah Torres were working to define a specific type of knowledge necessary to complete archival research. In a 2003 article, "AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise," Yakel and Torres identified a set of three skills necessary to locate, understand, and interpret archival materials. Labelling these "archival intelligence," they argued that being a proficient researcher required the following: a knowledge of archival principles, practices, and theories; an ability to formulate research strategies; and an understanding of the relationship between primary sources and their descriptive surrogates, including finding aids and catalogue records.[33] Repeated by Peter Carini in 2009 and again in 2016, this information literacy–centred approach demands that students carry not only an ability to interpret and critically evaluate primary sources but also an understanding of archival theories and practices in order to independently access source material.[34]

Constructivist Thinking and Teaching with Primary Sources

Over the last century, the popularity and perceived value of teaching with primary sources have fluctuated as new voices and priorities have made themselves known. Beginning with a rebellion against the rote memorization methods of the 19th century, students and educators were drawn to the more progressive and activity-based approach of American philosopher John Dewey in the early 20th century.[35] Dewey touted the pedagogical benefits of social constructivism, which

32 Ibid., 11.

33 Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres, "AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise," *American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 51–78, doi:10.17723/aarc.66.1.q022h85pn51n5800.

34 Peter Carini, "Archivists as Educators: Integrating Primary Sources into the Curriculum," *Journal of Archival Organization* 7, no. 1–2 (2009): 41–50, doi:10.1080/15332740902892619; Peter Carini, "Information Literacy for Archives and Special Collections: Defining Outcomes," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 16, no. 1 (2016): 191–206, doi:10.1353/pla.2016.0006.

35 John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," *School Journal* 54, no. 3 (1897): 77–80; John Dewey, *The School and Society: Being Three Lectures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899); John Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), cited in Yakel and Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival

emphasizes the role of language and culture in knowledge construction; human interactivity and hands-on engagement are crucial to support learning within this framework. In contrast to behaviouralist pedagogy, which stresses measurable goal-oriented stimulus-response learning such as the memorization of facts and figures, constructivism positions individuals as responsible for their own learning. Rather than absorbing information from an outside stimulus (e.g., a lecture or textbook), in constructivism, learners create knowledge by interacting with the world around them as informed by prior experience.[36] Supported by the American Historical Association's influential 1898 report *The Study of History in School*, which acknowledged the popularity and efficacy of teaching with primary sources, Dewey's hands-on approach earned clout and popularity.[37]

By the 1920s, however, opponents to Dewey's constructivist methods criticized the use of primary sources, arguing that teachers were devoting too much class time to developing historiography skills – archival and primary source literacy – and not enough to teaching historical content.[38] The pendulum swung back again. By the 1950s, however, a new concern around the general success and competitiveness of the American mind had emerged. The Soviet launch of Sputnik spurred Jerome Bruner and the National Academy of Sciences to seek means to improve the state of science education. Moving toward a curriculum based on discovery, not knowledge, the post-Sputnik era saw an overhaul of curricula in many subjects to again embrace constructivist thought.[39]

With the arrival of the 1970s came the dawn of "new history" and the "new social sciences," which criticized the nationalistic aspect of school textbooks and again championed document-based social history. This condemnation of behaviouralist approaches to teaching sought a return to the development of students' skills, particularly those of research, investigation, and analysis.

Literacy," 14.

36 Mustafa Yunus Eryaman and Salih Zeki Genc, "Learning Theories," in *Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies*, ed. Craig Kridel (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), 535–37, doi:10.4135/9781412958806.

37 George Levi Fox, Albert Bushnell Hart, Charles Homer Haskins, Lucy Maynard Salmon, H. Morse Stephens, George McKinnon Wrong, Andrew C. McLaughlin, and Herbert B. Adams, *The Study of History in School: Being the Report to the American Historical Association* (n.p.: American Historical Association, 1898).

38 Yakel and Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival Literacy," 14.

39 Alan Canestrari, "Social Studies and Geography: Beyond Rote Memorization," in *Integrating Inquiry Across the Curriculum*, ed. Richard H. Audet and Linda K. Jordan (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2005), 22, quoted in Hendry, "Primary Sources in K–12 Education," 117.

A familiar theme re-emerged. The memorization of facts was again out of fashion.[40] Unfortunately, as before, students found the use of primary sources to be difficult, and teachers lacked the resources and the specialized skills to teach critical analysis. Despite a swell of enthusiasm, teachers carried on as before, with trusted textbooks at their sides.[41] Thankfully, a new trend within history education – one well aligned with the archivists' skill set – has recently emerged in our elementary and secondary school classrooms: *historical thinking*.[42]

In his 2011 article "What It Means to Think Historically," education theorist Stéphane Lévesque succinctly defines historical thinking as a form of pedagogy that "favours the simultaneous acquisition of procedural and substantive historical knowledge."[43] Also referred to as a discipline-based approach to history education, historical thinking asks students to employ procedural knowledge in their acquisition of historical understanding, for example, evaluating the authenticity of a source while interpreting its written content. While Lévesque was writing in 2011, these concepts predate his work. Peter Lee's 1983 article "History Teaching and Philosophy of Teaching" outlined the two forms of knowledge necessary to realize historical thinking: substantive history, or knowledge of historical facts, and procedural thinking, an understanding of the processes involved in constructing historical interpretations. To Lee, the latter concentrates on the concepts that provide the "structural basis for the discipline" and is central

40 Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," 21. Osborne's article offers an excellent and thorough review of the development of "new history." In addition to an excellent discussion around the four aims of new history, Osborne draws a delightful parallel to the 1910 work of Keatinge, who himself was an enthusiastic advocate of the problem-oriented approach to teaching history. These were never truly "new" ideas (25–26).

41 Yakel and Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival Literacy," 15; Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," 23–25.

42 Additional sources on historical thinking include Stéphane Lévesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Stéphane Lévesque, "What It Means to Think Historically," in *New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada*, ed. Penney Clark (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 115–37; Stéphane Lévesque and Penney Clark, "Historical Thinking: Definitions and Educational Applications," in *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning*, ed. Scott A. Metzger and Lauren McArthur Harris (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 119–48; Peter Seixas, "Assessment of Historical Thinking," in *New Possibilities for the Past*, ed. Clark, 139–53; Samuel S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*, Critical Perspectives on the Past (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); and Samuel S. Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," *Phi Delta Kappan* 80, no. 7 (1999): 488–99.

43 Lévesque, "What It Means to Think Historically," 118.

to historical thinking.[44] The latter also applies to archivists: we are uniquely positioned to teach *how* to interpret sources which, in turn, gives students the tools necessary to construct history.

In the years following the work of Lee, others, including Sam Wineburg and Peter Seixas, have contributed significantly to this discussion. Wineburg, in looking to create a supporting framework for procedural thought, devised three historical thinking heuristics: sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration.[45] Admitting that historical thinking is "neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development," Wineburg argues that historical thinking, by asking us to change our mental structures to revisit evidence and sources in a new light, fundamentally contradicts our natural thinking.[46] However, unless we manage to change how we think, we invariably fall into the trap of presentism, or of failing to consider the contextual circumstances surrounding a historical event or record.[47] In recent years, Peter Seixas, a professor emeritus in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia, has developed a series of benchmark concepts to help educators apply historical thinking (or specifically, its underlying procedural knowledge) in the classroom through the Canada-wide Benchmarks of Historical Thinking project. These concepts, in brief, include (1) establishing historical significance, (2) using primary source evidence, (3) identifying continuity and change, (4) analyzing cause and consequence, (5) taking historical perspectives, and (6) understanding ethical dimensions of history.[48] The widespread adoption of historical thinking pedagogy in primary and secondary school curricula has helped to develop in students an inquisitive and involved approach to learning

44 P.J. Lee, "History Teaching and Philosophy of History," *History and Theory* 22, no. 4 (1983): 25, doi:10.2307/2505214.

45 Lévesque and Clark, "Historical Thinking: Definitions and Educational Applications," 131.

46 Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," 493.

47 In historical analysis, *presentism* is the false assumption that people in the past held the same goals, intentions, attitudes, and beliefs as people today. In practice, this introduction of present-day ideologies misconstrues historic events by ignoring the contextual circumstances relevant to the interpretation of source materials. For more on presentism, see Tim Huijgen, Carla Van Boxtel, Wim van de Grift, and Paul Holthuis, "Toward Historical Perspective Taking: Students' Reasoning When Contextualizing the Actions of People in the Past," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 45, no. 1 (2017): 110–44, doi:10.1080/00933104.2016.1208597.

48 A detailed description of the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking project can be found in Peter Seixas, "Assessment of Historical Thinking," in *New Possibilities for the Past*, ed. Clark, 141–42; and Peter Seixas, "A Modest Proposal for Change in Canadian History Education," *Teaching History*, no. 137 (December 2009): 28–29.

history and a move away from a "facts and figures" methodology that favours memorization and regurgitation.

What Is the Role of the Archivist as Educator?

In reviewing the literature and reflecting on the professional role of the archivist, the question emerges, "What is an archivist as educator?"

Tracy B. Grimm notes in a 2017 case study on librarian–archivist collaboration that, over the last 10 years, college and university archivists have at last welcomed instruction into their professional practice, even becoming proponents for undergraduate research in the archives.[49] This is indeed a turning point, but at present, work remains limited in scope: in many cases, the traditional orientation session – dubbed the "treasure tour" approach by Barbara Rockenbach – is used, but this tends to highlight a repository's gems and offers only a limited introduction to archival research.[50] As Magia Krause discovered in her exhaustive 2008 study on what archivists *actually* teach, the typical orientation session takes place in the archives' reading room and covers departmental rules and procedures, including guidelines for handling and requesting materials. Attempts to incorporate conceptual elements, such as critical thinking or primary source analysis, fall much lower on the list of priorities.[51] Instead, orientation sessions remain focused on easing students into the archives' reading room; we have become proficient in soothing students' "archival anxiety," that is, their hesitancy to venture into the archives and engage in primary source research.[52] More limited

49 Tracy B. Grimm, "Undergraduate Research in the Archives: A Case Study of Collaborative Teaching and Dissemination of Aerospace History," in *Undergraduate Research and the Academic Librarian: Case Studies and Best Practices*, ed. Merinda Kaye Hensley and Stephanie Davis-Kahl (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017), 294.

50 Rockenbach, "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning," 298.

51 Magia G. Krause, "Learning in the Archives: A Report on Instructional Practices," *Journal of Archival Organization* 6, no. 4 (2008): 245–46, doi:10.1080/15332740802533263. Another study that effectively notes how undergraduate students are being engaged with primary source materials is Anna Elise Allison's master's thesis, "Connecting Undergraduates with Primary Sources: A Study of Undergraduate Instruction in Archives, Manuscripts, and Special Collections" (School of Library and Information Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005).

52 Bahde, "Taking the Show on the Road"; Sammie Morris, Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, and Sharon A. Weiner, "Archival Literacy for History Students: Identifying Faculty Expectations of Archival Research Skills," *American Archivist* 77,

operating hours, no access to shelves for browsing, materials arranged by creator and not by subject, the requirement to consult finding guides, seemingly endless access restrictions, and the ambiguous nature of archival research itself are all barriers that make the archives unlike the library, with which students have at least a passing familiarity.

Wendy Duff and Joan Cherry's 2008 study on the effectiveness of archival orientation sessions showed that undergraduate students' confidence in finding primary source material improves after a visit to the reading room.[53] These sessions, however, rarely provide more than a cursory introduction to archival literacy and focus instead on a rapid-fire show and tell of materials that are perhaps only tangentially related to the students' interests or coursework. Although these approaches tend to satisfy faculty or instructors, who see these sessions as opportunities to expose students to the archive, the archivist must redefine expectations and involve themselves in integrating primary sources into learning objectives and assignment design.[54] The "treasure tour" approach to teaching with archives is reductive and does not represent the contributions an archivist could make in the classroom.

There should be little doubt that archivists are in a unique position as educators: we hold primary sources in our collections; are trained on their use and analysis; and we are able to teach others how to access, interpret, and incorporate these materials into their work. Research has shown, however, that archivists resist self-identifying as teachers. In her own investigation into the role of the archivist as educator, Magia Krause noted three major themes defining the archivist's educative role within higher education: to convey knowledge of the collections, to instill navigational skills, and to contribute to institutional information literacy initiatives. Interestingly, despite their alignment with information literacy programming, Krause's survey respondents nonetheless do not see themselves as teachers.[55]

We need to cast aside this view of our profession and adapt to, and continue advocating for, this new role. Rather than discussing the role of the archivist

no. 2 (2014): 394–424.

53 Wendy Duff and Joan Cherry, "Archival Orientation for Undergraduate Students: An Exploratory Study of Impact," *American Archivist* 71, no. 2 (2008): 499–529, doi:10.17723/aarc.71.2.p6lt385r7556743h.

54 Ibid.

55 Krause, "'It Makes History Alive for Them.'"

as educator, much of the literature to date on the use of archival materials in the classroom has focused on the value of critical thinking to students' intellectual development. This oversight, however, does not invalidate our professional knowledge or potential contributions to this space. One participant in Krause's 2010 study on the teaching role of archivists stated that, because of day-to-day familiarity with various record types, archivists are "the best-suited people to highlight the importance of primary sources" – above professors or instructors who, despite their credentials, may lack the same exposure.[56] In a 2016 review of the critical thinking and literacy-based skills that the archivist can impart, Elizabeth Yakel and Doris Malkmus remind us that the archivist does, in fact, have a strong teaching base on which to build.[57] One-on-one instruction at the reference desk, exhibitions, public outreach, and even the maligned orientation session all count toward developing the requisite skills and confidence.

Recent years have seen a swell of literature offering myriad case studies, pedagogical strategies and approaches, possible learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and classroom management tips for students of all ages.[58] For example, the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Case Studies on Teaching with Primary Sources (TWPS) – a joint initiative between the SAA and the ACRL's Rare Books and Manuscript Section (RBMS) – presents an ever-growing list of practical examples bringing archival and special collections materials into the classroom.[59] A thread of constructivist pedagogy runs throughout the SAA examples, which emphasize hands-on active learning and critical thinking. The 2019 book *Teaching Undergraduates with Archives* presents yet another series of archivists' collaborations with faculty to bring primary source analysis into the classroom.[60] There is much to draw upon when structuring one's own approach to teaching.

56 Ibid., 404.

57 Yakel and Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival Literacy," 30.

58 See Kate Theimer, ed., *Educational Programs: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Bahde, Smedberg, and Taormina, eds., *Using Primary Sources*; and Mitchell, Seiden, and Taraba, *Past or Portal*?

59 Society of American Archivists, "Case Studies on Teaching with Primary Sources (TWPS)," Society of American Archivists, accessed June 30, 2020, https://www2.archivists.org/publications/epubs/Case-Studies-Teaching-With-Primary-Sources.

60 Bartlett, Gadelha, and Nofziger, *Teaching Undergraduates with Archives*.

The concept of information literacy has been under discussion for decades. Broadly speaking, the information-literate individual, as defined in 2016 by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), possesses a "set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."[61] As Lisa Hinchliffe writes, libraries and librarians of all types have taken on the creation of teaching and learning programs in support of their users developing information literacy.[62] Unique to the archivist, however, is our professional context: we engage almost exclusively with primary sources, and many students – having relied on textbook interpretation for the majority of their schooling – have not yet developed the skills necessary to use or interpret such sources. Archivists must continue to move toward a more user-centred approach, focused on teaching researchers the transferable skills they need to conduct research on their own, regardless of archival institution. This was the strategy adopted by libraries in the 1990s and, as Yakel argues, a parallel change is required in the archival community.[63] While librarians are experts in information literacy, it is time for archivists to play catch-up and reclaim primary source instruction for ourselves.

In an effort to define primary source literacy and develop a set of skills and abilities necessary to interpret and use archival materials, the ACRL's Rare Books and Manuscript Section and the SAA collaborated to establish the Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy in 2015.[64] The final *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*, approved by both the ACRL and the SAA in 2018, define primary source literacy as "the combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, and ethically use primary sources within specific disciplinary contexts,

61 Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016), accessed July 3, 2020, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

62 Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, "Introduction: A Lens on Information Literacy," in *Teaching with Primary Sources*, ed. Prom and Hinchliffe, 2.

63 Elizabeth Yakel, "Information Literacy for Primary Sources: Creating a New Paradigm for Archival Researcher Education," *OCLC Systems & Services: International Digital Library Perspectives* 20, no. 2 (2004): 63, doi:10.1108/10650750410539059.

64 SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on Primary Source Literacy, "2015 Sept 8 Conference Call Notes," September 8, 2015, accessed June 26, 2020, https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/ConferenceCall_2015Sep8.pdf.

in order to create new knowledge or to revise existing understandings."[65] The archivists' professional training and daily work acquiring, appraising, arranging, describing, and making records available demands that they are, in fact, "primary source literate." Interrogating evidence for credibility, trustworthiness, and accuracy and understanding how information is produced in a given context are all part of the archivist's toolkit; teaching these skills to others is a natural fit.

Yakel and Torres have argued, however, that primary source literacy is not sufficient to make a researcher a proficient user of archives.[66] In addition to the primary source literacy and domain (or subject) knowledge that they carry with them, Yakel and Torres argue that researchers need a third type of knowledge: archival intelligence.[67] The concept of archival intelligence, as part of a framework of literacies needed to conduct archival research, falls firmly in the purview of the archivist as educator.

Also termed *archival literacy*, this third type of knowledge is defined by Yakel and Torres as having three parts. The first is an awareness of archival theories, practices, and institutional rules, such as the theoretical foundations of archivy and reading room procedures; the second is an ability to revise search strategies in the face of uncertainty; and the third is the capacity to understand the relationships between primary sources and descriptive tools.[68] In practical terms, this means the capable researcher requires, firstly, an awareness of basic archival concepts, including how records are arranged and described (e.g., respect des fonds, internal and external structure); secondly, the ability to troubleshoot their research strategy as they encounter archival roadblocks or dead-ends; and lastly, an understanding of how the relationships between materials are recorded and presented to the researcher (e.g., finding aids, hierarchical arrangement). Adding to this conversation, Sammie Morris, Lawrence Mykytiuk, and Sharon Weiner in 2014 defined archival literacy as the "knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to effectively and efficiently find, interpret, and use archives, manuscripts, and other types of unique, unpublished primary sources" and proposed a

65 SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on Primary Source Literacy, *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*, 2018, 2, accessed June 26, 2020, https://www2.archivists.org/standards/guidelines-for-primary-source-literacy.

66 Yakel and Torres, "AI."

67 Ibid., 52.

68 Ibid., 54; Yakel and Malkmus, "Module 9: Contextualizing Archival Literacy," 11.

series of related standards and learning outcomes.[69] Teaching archival literacy to both experienced and novice researchers alike is a role for which the archivist is well suited, and so, it should be eagerly embraced.

The literature to date and the growing interest on the part of archivists to work in the classroom have clearly positioned the archivist as the most capable to lead education in this space. This is our wheelhouse. The archivist as educator can not only teach primary source literacy and the underlying concepts of archival intelligence but also implement pedagogical approaches to facilitate hands-on critical thinking and source interpretation. These concepts are the tenets of historical thinking: substantive content knowledge and an understanding of the processes involved in constructing historical interpretations. Primary source literacy and archival intelligence contribute directly to the latter.

Defining an Approach

Although we are experts in primary source and archival literacy – in practice – we must now work to increase our theoretical knowledge of learning and of teaching methodologies. Let us consider an approach.

First, we need to establish the most effective pedagogical strategies to engage students. This line of questioning, however, requires some disambiguation. We must first define the idea of effectiveness. What are we trying to achieve? This is not an easy task. As Magia Krause wrote, the lack of formal teacher training on the part of archivists has meant that the profession has been poor in defining a set of measurable outcomes related to the use of primary sources in the classroom.[70] She is not alone in this observation, and others have worked to better define archivists' objectives around primary source literacy.[71] This article, however, proposes a more direct approach: using the ACRL's *Framework for Information*

69 Morris, Mykytiuk, and Weiner, "Archival Literacy for History Students," 397.

70 Krause, "Learning in the Archives."

71 Several authors have proposed criteria to evaluate student learning and assess the effectiveness of archivist-led teaching. See the works of Chris Marino, "Inquiry-Based Archival Instruction: An Exploratory Study of Affective Impact," *American Archivist* 81, no. 2 (2018): 483–512, doi:10.17723/0360-9081-81.2.483; Ellen E. Jarosz and Stephen Kutay, "Guided Resource Inquiries: Integrating Archives into Course Learning and Information Literacy Objectives," *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (2017): 204; Carini, "Information Literacy for Archives and Special Collections"; Sharon A. Weiner, Sammie Morris, and Lawrence J. Mykytiuk, "Archival Literacy Competencies for Undergraduate History Majors," *American Archivist* 78, no. 1 (2015): 154–80, doi:10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.154; Carini, "Archivists as Educators"; Robyns, "The Archivist as Educator."

Literacy for Higher Education to structure achievable goals, the archivist should focus on teaching primary source and archival literacy by engaging students in critical thinking through an active learning or inquiry-based approach.

Adopted in 2016, the ACRL's current *Framework for Information Literacy* is a revision of the original *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* launched in 2000, which listed five standards and numerous performance indicators. The new framework moves away from a prescriptive set of linear skills to focus instead on six interconnected and flexible "threshold concepts," or frames, which are "those ideas in any discipline that are passageways or portals to enlarged understanding or ways of thinking and practicing within that discipline."[72] Because of their flexibility, many of the six frames are applicable to the work of the archivist as educator. For example, "Authority Is Constructed and Contextual" asks students to question the authority of sources to determine their credibility and understand "the elements that might temper this credibility."[73] This notion demands that students engage in critical thinking to question the authenticity of a source in order to evaluate its authority and relevance. A second frame, "Searching as Strategic Exploration" speaks directly to the third element of Yakel and Torres' archival literacy – an ability to understand primary sources and their descriptive surrogates – when it asks the literate student to "understand how information systems (i.e., collections of recorded information) are organized in order to access relevant information."[74]

An approach informed by the ACRL frames and focused on engaging students in critical thinking offers an effective model for the archivist teaching primary source and archival literacy. In 2016, Peter Carini wrote that the idea of using primary sources to teach critical thinking was a consistent theme in the literature, citing the work of both Marcus Robyns and Barbara Rockenbach.[75] It bears mentioning here, however, that while critical thinking, as realized through an active learning or inquiry-based approach, is an effective means to teach primary

72 Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, accessed June 26, 2020, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework. For a concise history of the development of the revised ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, see Leslie Waggener, "Milestone, Not Millstone: Archivists Teaching First-Year Seminars," *American Archivist* 81, no. 1 (2018): 165–87.

73 Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.

74 Ibid., 22.

75 Robyns, "The Archivist as Educator"; Rockenbach, "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning."

source and archival literacy, archivists should focus their efforts instead on *using* critical thought to teach literacies rather than on teaching critical thinking itself.

Asking students to learn literacies through critical thinking, then, requires a pedagogical approach suited to having students explore and interpret primary sources independently, ask questions, interact and play with archival theory, and formulate solutions to perceived problems. As discussed, this demands a constructivist pedagogical approach. Based on the philosophies of Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner, constructivism makes students the agents in charge of their learning rather than its passive subjects: students construct meanings and understandings through first-hand experience.[76] This approach, which includes active learning or inquiry-based methods and has been proven to help students gain higher-level skills such as the ability to evaluate and think critically, is most appropriate for use by the archivist as educator.[77] Archival literacy skills, specifically the intricate notions of understanding record surrogates and knowing how to reformulate research questions, are not effectively taught in the traditional classroom; they require engagement, exploration, and experimentation. As Julia Hendry wrote, such skills are scholarly habits that more closely resemble those of the professional historian.[78] In a case study applying constructivism to the use and interpretation of special collections materials, Silvia Vong outlines the benefits a constructivist approach can bring to bear in the archive. In addition to demystifying the archives for students, the use of hands-on and engaged learning can shift the perceived role of the archivist from gatekeeper to teacher and develop in students the inquiry skills necessary to produce original research.[79] These are not insignificant contributions.

To effectively engage students in learning the specifics of primary source and archival literacy, archivists need to foster an environment where exploration is encouraged. Allow students to riffle through boxes to see how records are arranged; let them question the accuracy of finding aids; or ask them why cursive handwriting is so varied and difficult to read. Do documents lie? Can

76 Krause, "Learning in the Archives," 248.

77 Rockenbach, "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning," 298.

78 Hendry, "Primary Sources in K–12 Education," 119.

79 Vong, "A Constructivist Approach for Introducing Undergraduate Students to Special Collections and Archival Research," 149.

you trust the date stamped on a letter? Take charge and guide students – gently – by asking questions just beyond their reach to force them to think and pull the answers from their surroundings. They are able. Pushing them will enable them to learn not only how to question whether a record is authentic, or how a finding aid works, or why records are arranged by creator rather than subject but also how to *think* as researchers. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, in their 1969 book *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, maintain that the inquiry method "makes the syllabus obsolete"; students "generate their own stories by becoming involved in the methods of learning."[80] This mode of thinking, where the "critical content of any learning experience is the method or process through which the learning occurs," puts the learner firmly in charge: *how* we learn matters as much as, if not more than, *what* we learn.[81]

A Case Study of Undergraduate Research Using Primary Sources

To offer a springboard for future discussion, this section presents a case study; it uses a for-credit semester-long course in which the author led the teaching as an example of engaging students in active learning with the express goal of improving both their primary source literacy and their archival literacy.

A joint offering between the John M. Kelly Library and the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, this senior-level course, "Libraries, Special Collections, and Archives," is one of the course offerings for the University of Toronto's undergraduate Book and Media Studies program. Initially launched in 2012 and mandated to teach primary source research, this course has undergone several iterations. Most recently, in 2018, with an archivist as the instructor, the course was reoriented to focus on developing archival literacy skills. Taking an active learning, hands-on approach, it encouraged student-led discovery within the archives for the final summative evaluation.

80 Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), 29.

81 Ibid., 19.

Genesis of the Course

The Book and Media Studies program, which defines its mandate as the "interdisciplinary and historical investigation of the role of printing, books, and electronic and digital media in cultures past and present," was founded in 2006. Sponsored by the University of St. Michael's College – one of seven colleges that together form the University of Toronto's St. George Campus – it is open to students from across the University of Toronto.[82] The Book and Media Studies program has grown substantially since its launch and had over 450 students registered across the major and minor options as of the 2019–2020 academic year.

In 2011, looking to more fully integrate the resources of the Kelly Library's Special Collections into program offerings, the college principal received approval to create a semester-long, half-credit elective course focused specifically on special collections and archival research.[83] A librarian was assigned to develop and teach the first iteration of the course. With a maximum enrolment of 25 students in their third or fourth year of study, the course launched in fall 2012 and focused solely on the analysis and interpretation of primary sources leading to a final research paper. While the course format and assignment structure were fine-tuned over the following years in response to student feedback, a focus on primary source literacy remained central. By 2016, however, the librarian who had initially developed the course was moving to a new role within the library, necessitating a change in leadership and an opportunity to reimagine the course itself.

In 2017, the author was offered the opportunity take the reins and immediately sought to reorient the course toward archival theory and to broaden the students' understanding of primary sources. What follows is a description of the course and its assignments as offered to students during the fall 2019 semester, the third iteration under this archives-centric approach. It is hoped that this case study presents an opportunity to reflect on how archival materials and the voices of archivists can be integrated into the classroom.[84]

82 University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, "Book and Media Studies," St. Michael's Programs, accessed June 24, 2020, https://stmikes.utoronto.ca/program/book-media-studies/.

83 The launch of this course and its close integration with the John M. Kelly Library's Special Collections was an opportunity to increase the use of the collections within the college community. Note that the special collections includes both rare book and manuscript materials.

84 A detailed description of this course and underlying pedagogy can be found in James Roussain and Silvia Vong, "From Researcher to Curator: Reimagining Undergraduate Primary Source Research with Omeka," in *Quick Hits for Teaching with Digital Humanities: Successful Strategies from Award-Winning Teachers*, ed. Christopher J.

Course Objectives and Lectures

The class met once weekly for 12 two-hour sessions in the Kelly Library, which provided easy access to the library's special collections. As in previous years, the course was open to senior-level students as an elective during their third or fourth year of undergraduate study. Enrolment, however, had now increased to 40 students.

Further to raising awareness of special collections and their uses more broadly, the course has two stated objectives: (1) to define and apply foundational concepts in library and archival science and (2) to apply critical thinking and research skills in the evaluation of primary sources to create a new work. Students were made aware of these objectives during the first lecture and offered an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. A focus on primary source literacy remained central. While a student-led exploratory final assignment offered an opportunity to realize the second objective, as will be discussed, the first objective was met through a series of lectures and class activities on three broad themes, each covered over four weeks: (1) core concepts and primary sources, (2) archives in practice, and (3) preservation and access.

With primary source literacy central to both the course content and the assignments, the first four weeks focused on defining, evaluating, and interpreting archival materials and were by far the heaviest of the semester. Foundational concepts relating to libraries (subject classification, Ranganathan's five laws of library science[85]), archives (respect des fonds, provenance), and special collections (rare books, manuscripts) were covered in week one. Week two presented an in-depth investigation as to what constitutes a primary source. Students were presented with tools drawn from diplomatics and, focusing on their contextual nature, critically evaluated a selection of primary sources. The third and fourth lectures reviewed archival terminology and included more nuanced discussions of respect des fonds, the archival bond, arrangement and description, and descriptive tools; comparisons between library and archival practice were drawn wherever possible to help students contextualize new knowledge (archivy) against their existing familiarity with libraries.

Young, Michael C. Morrone, Thomas C. Wilson, and Emma Annette Wilson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2020).

85 I highly encourage every archivist to review Ranganthan's five laws, which outline core features of a healthy library system. Many of these concepts can (and should) be introduced to archival work. See S.R. Ranganathan, *The Five Laws of Library Science*, 23 (Madras: Madras Library Association, 1957).

With definitions and theory out of the way, classes over the next several weeks looked at archives and libraries *in practice* and fell into a pattern. The first lecture hour was spent discussing a topic and the second hour featured a guest lecture by a working professional whose expertise related in some way to the week's topic. Using this model, we had excellent discussions about community archives; Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) and queer representation in archival and library collections; exhibition development and design; physical conservation; and digital preservation. Students had the opportunity to ask questions throughout and to see the concepts introduced during the first four weeks *in action*.

The proximity to the Kelly Library's Special Collections Reading Room allowed the class to easily incorporate the archival space into the course. Students attended a one-hour tour of the archives during the third week, where they were introduced to the space. The reading room can comfortably hold 20 students, so the class was divided into two groups, which alternated between the tour and the in-class lecture. To ease logistics, students were not required to register or to sign in for this first visit; all personal belongings were left in the classroom to avoid the use of lockers. As is common during such sessions, students were introduced to the staff and their roles; shown how to schedule, register, sign in, and request materials for future visits; introduced to on-site and online descriptive tools; and most importantly, instructed in handling guidelines, which were discussed in detail. This was the first time most of these students had ever heard of – never mind seen – an archive. When compared to other spaces in academic libraries, archives and special collections have far less frequently been used as sites of student instruction, and most students remain unaware of them, or worse yet, are intimidated by the process of using them.[86] As such, while the goal is to familiarize students with the space and core procedures before they return as bona fide researchers in the following weeks, it is also important to make them feel welcome.

86 Patrick Williams, "What Is Possible: Setting the Stage for Co-Exploration in Archives and Special Collections," in *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook, Volume 1: Essays and Workbook Activities*, ed. Nicole Pagowsky and Kelly McElroy (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016), 113.

Assignments

Taylor's earlier remarks about the archivist as educator were a guiding influence in answering the question of how to incorporate elements of primary source and archival literacy into the classroom: let the students discover for themselves.[87] We used a combination of rational and progressive teaching methods each week to create an active learning environment. After lecturing on a concept relating to primary source analysis or archival science, we would immediately shift gears and put these concepts into use: in addition to the larger assignments, we used hands-on activities and other active learning–oriented approaches throughout to allow students to be agents of discovery in the classroom.

Before addressing the course assignments, a note on *scaffolding* is required. A pedagogical approach drawn from constructivist learning, scaffolding is defined by Alan Pritchard as a method where support is offered to learners "at the appropriate time and at the appropriate level of sophistication to meet the needs of the individual."[88] In practical terms, scaffolding introduces a concept, then asks students to perform a related task that lies just beyond their known ability. As a constructivist approach – where learners create their own knowledge by engaging with their environment – scaffolding purposefully creates a gap in understanding where engaged learning can occur. A second strategy drawn from constructivist pedagogy is to use students' existing knowledge structures to help them contextualize and understand new information. For example, when introducing respect des fonds, we drew a comparison to library classification, to which most students were already accustomed. These strategies were used throughout the course to motivate students and drive individual learning.

In-Class Activity: Primary Source Analysis

During the second week of classes, students were asked to define, contextualize, and critically analyze a selection of primary sources. After the instructors discussed and modelled the use of diplomatics to evaluate and interpret primary sources, interrogating their authenticity, reliability, accuracy, and completeness, students were asked to do the same in small groups, which each selected a primary source and completed a worksheet (see Appendix 1). We ensured that

87 Taylor, "Clio in the Raw."

88 Alan Pritchard, *Ways of Learning: Learning Theories and Learning Styles in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 25.

students had access to a variety of materials – including letters, both individual and in sets; published books; diaries; photographs; and typed manuscripts – and tried to present as wide an array of items as possible. Students were given 20 minutes to review, interpret, and analyze their chosen items and prepare to share their findings with the class. To eliminate bias when students selected their sources, all items were placed in unmarked folders or boxes. As a scaffolded activity, this hands-on assignment had students apply their new knowledge of diplomatics to the interpretation of real objects. While many were uncomfortable and struggled to make connections (a tension that fosters deep learning), this was a highly successful activity and generated several engaged questions about the contextual nature and characteristics of records. The class discussion that followed had groups share their findings with the class so that, by the end, all major format types had been covered.

Chris Marino, in a 2018 study investigating the affective impact of inquiry-based interaction with archival materials, concluded that student confidence and comfort increases dramatically with hands-on instruction.[89] As with our tour of the archival space, it is important to stress student comfort alongside skill development in our teaching, especially when confronting the ambiguities inherent in archival research, and so weighing the affective impact of activities is an important step. A simple assignment, the opportunity to engage directly with *real* sources, introduced students to the skills necessary to complete the final assignment.

Exhibition Critique and Reflection

A recent addition to the course is a focus on public exhibitions either of or informed by archival materials. While students relate the value of primary sources and special collections to academic papers and other "serious" research, they often struggle to see other applications. The course seeks to expand this view; archival materials can indeed be used outside of academe in familiar formats and settings. All students (so far) have been to an exhibition of some sort so are aware of the experience. We all share a common understanding of what makes for a "good" exhibition, even if we are unable to articulate the exact reasoning. Using students' pre-existing knowledge to contextualize the discus-

89 Marino, "Inquiry-Based Archival Instruction," 503.

sion, the course reviewed how archival materials can be used to create public exhibitions. Following a lecture and guest speaker on the topic of effective exhibition design, students were given an in-person, behind-the-scenes curated tour of "Animalia: Animals in the Archives," a large-scale public exhibition mounted at the Archives of Ontario.[90]

The related assignment asked students to apply the knowledge gained in the course, drawn from readings, lecture content, and guest speakers, to write a short critique of the exhibition based on any aspect of their choosing, for example, the use of archival materials, visual and physical design, public accessibility, or presentation of interpretive text (see Appendix 2). Further to exposing students to a large public archive, this assignment supported, or scaffolded, the final assignment, where students were asked to apply their expertise and create an exhibition of their own.

Final Research Project

The most significant piece for both instructor and student was the cumulative final research project. Student feedback from previous versions of the course, which had until then focused on producing a final term essay, showed that students were uninterested in completing a traditional research paper. Feeling the format tired and limiting, students wanted something more engaging. Therefore, rather than being asked to write a formulaic paper, students were instead assigned an open-ended project where, working independently, they each selected a group of related records from within the Kelly Library's Special Collections. The assignment asked students to explore the records' form and content and to apply their new-found skills in primary source analysis and evaluation. There were no right or wrong answers, and as Taylor asks, students were encouraged to enter into dialogue with the records: students asked their own questions and drew their own conclusions. With an ardent focus on process rather than product, students reviewed, interpreted, and evaluated the records in the archives' reading room to extract narratives of their choosing. Informed by the theories presented in class, students also noted the records' physicality

90 "Animalia: Animals in the Archives," an exhibition curated by the Archives of Ontario (opened December 2018; ongoing as of time of writing) illustrates – drawing from photographs, video, artifact, and textual records – how our relationships with animals have changed over time. An *Archivaria* review of the exhibition is available. See Jennifer Grant, "Animalia: Animals in the Archives, Archives of Ontario," *Archivaria*, no. 87 (May 2019): 173–79.

and the application of archival theory on their arrangement and description. The assignment was unrestricted: tell a story based on what you discovered and reflect on the process.

Deliverables were equally unstructured. The first was a preliminary research proposal, which served largely to ensure students had indeed begun the assignment and had at least a rough idea of their direction. We provided detailed feedback so students could adjust their research strategies as necessary. The second and third components were the products of our scaffolded learning. In addition to preparing online exhibitions to tell the "stories" they discovered, students also submitted final reports summarizing their analyses paired with reflections on the overall experience (see Appendix 3).

This hands-on work asked students to understand and apply the archival concepts we had discussed over the semester while simultaneously acting as any other researcher to navigate the archival space: hours of operation, scheduled appointments, access restrictions, finding aids of varying quality, and the need to formulate and reformulate research questions and search strategies. Though not identified as such, this was, in effect, a constructivist approach to teaching Yakel and Torres's concept of archival intelligence: a knowledge of underlying theories and concepts structuring the archival experience, the ability to create and revise search strategies based on their discoveries, and a need to understand records through descriptive surrogates including online descriptions and the variety of finding aids available.[91] While some students found the unstructured approach and vague requirements frustrating, the final submissions were truly impressive. When students are *trusted*, *empowered*, and *supported* to apply their knowledge independently, they can certainly deliver. The responsibility of presenting just enough contextual information yet still allowing the student to experiment falls on the educator's shoulders.

Let us return for a moment to Stéphane Lévesque's definition of historical thinking as a form of pedagogy favouring the simultaneous acquisition of procedural and fact-based historical knowledge. This assignment asks students to do just that: learn both process and content while engaging in active learning.[92] Throughout the assignment, students are asked to interrogate and evaluate their sources; in brief, students are asked to be historians.

91 Yakel and Torres, "AI," 52.

92 Lévesque, "What It Means to Think Historically," 118.

In evaluating the progression of historical understanding – the ability to understand and interpret sources of information – Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby argue that acquisition of procedural knowledge (how to do history) is key to this progression. Observing a group of students presented with a variety of sources documenting a single event, Lee and Ashby conclude that those who understand sources as concrete facts are "helpless" when confronted with contradictory accounts. The activity of "history," defined for many as the telling of truth about the past, itself becomes impossible as these students are unable to accommodate multiple truths.[93] Allow us, then, to enter the fray: as archivists, the ability to interpret sources, to understand the fine difference between a *source* and *evidence*, and to verify the *authenticity* and *relevancy* of an account is core to our work and professional knowledge. We are uniquely positioned to teach students that history itself is only possible – borrowing again from Lee and Ashby – when one understands that "sources are relics of activities and transactions" that require inference and analysis.[94] Truth is only an interpretation – an interpretation made easier with the assistance of an archivist trained and identifying as an educator and able to draw students into the world of archival research.

Conclusion

Archivists have long acted as educators, whether by offering one-on-one instruction at the reference desk, helping novice researchers request boxes, or explaining access restrictions. Yet, even after more than 50 years of operating under this familiar model, we have yet to fully integrate teaching into our professional identity. As this article has discussed, this sort of complacency is no longer tenable. We have long passed the time where offering a "show-and-tell" tour of the reading room and hoping for a return visit is enough. As Tracy Grimm wryly remarks, we need to demand relevance "beyond trophy status for a university administration or warehouses for alumni nostalgia."[95]

93 Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby, "Progression in Historical Understanding among Students Ages 7–14," in *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, ed. Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 200–201.

94 Ibid., 201.

95 Grimm, "Undergraduate Research in the Archives," 301.

With knowledge to share, archivists are well positioned to assert themselves and take on central roles in the interpretation of primary sources, within both the archive and the classroom, as recognized members of the teaching community.

It remains unfortunately true that pedagogical skills and educational theory are not yet thoroughly taught in graduate-level archival science programs, and so teaching is not a supported part of our professional training.[96] In concluding this call to action, let us consider a new future for ourselves. We carry the responsibility to define and shape our professional roles and identities, and I ask that we take up this challenge as we continue to carve out our place within the heritage, culture, and information management sector.

While focused on the professional positioning of the academic librarian, Andrew Abbott writes that the "sociology of professions has yet to catch up with the wildly dynamic world of contemporary librarianship," where commonly held notions of the "library" and of the "librarian" are outdated or irreverent.[97] Are archivists not in a similar position? Public awareness of our work remains scant at best, and it is time we lean on the work done by our librarian colleagues in raising the image of our profession. In a time where budgetary pressures and ever-changing user needs and expectations are ringing the death knell of the "traditional" archivist, able to sit quietly alone in the basement and process records, we need to reinvent and redefine ourselves. Adding the role of educator to our portfolio will increase our professional weight. We must make ourselves indispensable to our institutions and society alike by adding a new facet befitting of our knowledge and practice to our professional role. We are teachers; let us leverage this role to our advantage.

The professional designation of the archivist is not without its underlying anxieties. As a relatively young field – compared to older and more established fields of medicine or law – archivy is still clamouring for professional status and a day when archivists need not defend (and define) their work in the face of budgetary cuts or "strategic realignments." We lack a widely adopted or mandatory professional designation or licensure and in the eyes of many are easily lumped

96 Richard J. Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, David Wallace, Jeannette Bastian, and Jennifer Marshall, "Educating Archivists in Library and Information Science Schools," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 42, no. 3 (2001): 228–40, doi:10.2307/40324014; Jeannette Bastian and Elizabeth Yakel, "'Are We There Yet?' Professionalism and the Development of an Archival Core Curriculum in the United States," *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science* 46, no. 2 (2005): 95, doi:10.2307/40323864.

97 Andrew Abbott, "Professionalism and the Future of Librarianship," *Library Trends* 46, no. 3 (1998): 431.

together with museum curators or librarians. As defined by organizational theory heavyweights DiMaggio and Powell, "professionalization," as a form of institutionalization, is "the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work."[98] The notion of a collective struggle, the work of a group to self-regulate, is well placed in a discussion about the emergence of the archivist as educator. Self-regulation, however, can sometimes support a ground-up shift in professional culture.

Perhaps it is worth returning for a moment to George Bolotenko's 1983 article, wherein he asked archivists not to ignore their historian roots as they seek to professionalize.[99] He proposed two roles for the archivist: either historian or records manager. In the years since, a third role has emerged. Can we not realize Osborne's call to redefine the profession to include teaching as a core tenet?[100] It is here, however, where the practical realities of this proposal surface: we need to be taught how to teach – a field unto itself. We need increased training in *how* to develop archival and primary source pedagogy. Unfortunately, as Anderberg et al. revealed through a 2015–2016 survey into Canadian and American graduate archives programs, very few institutions offer courses specific to teaching with primary sources; some courses on library instruction exist, but these are not required for archives-path students.[101] This is despite the SAA recommending that "a fully developed graduate program in archival studies must establish a curriculum that . . . prepares students to teach classes and workshops in archival literacy and the uses of archival resources."[102] There is yet work to do.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the content of graduate education diversify to reflect disciplinary expansion, and the master's degree become the de facto requirement for professional practice.[103] As a marker of occupational identity,

98 Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (1983): 152, doi:10.2307/2095101.

99 Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well."

100 Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom."

101 Lindsay Anderberg, Robin M. Katz, Shaun Hayes, Alison Stankrauff, Morgen MacIntosh Hodgetts, Josué Hurtado, Abigail Nye, and Ashley Todd-Diaz, "Teaching the Teacher: Primary Source Instruction in American and Canadian Archives Graduate Programs," *American Archivist* 81, no. 1 (2018): 201, doi:10.17723/0360-9081-81.1.188.

102 Society of American Archivists, "Guidelines for a Graduate Program in Archival Studies (2016)," Society of American Archivists, accessed June 30, 2020, https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/graduate/gpas.

103 Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape," *Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2009): 499, doi:10.1353/can.0.0194.

the development of our shared education represents a major milestone. The content thereof, however, must remain malleable and reflective of our continued disciplinary expansion: our roles are changing, and so too must our education. In a reflection on his own role in the growth of archival education programs, Terry Eastwood discusses a scenario where the profession and the academy can carry on executing their missions in "splendid isolation."[104] This scenario will ultimately disconnect the taught from the practiced and is a danger to our profession overall. Incorporating pedagogical training into our graduate education programs will indeed require a major cultural shift in how we perceive of the professional role and identity of the archivist, but such shifts are not unknown to the field. We have been a resilient and adaptive workforce. As "outreach initiatives" (read: education about what we do and why it matters) become increasingly common in archivists' job descriptions, we need the skills necessary. Let us codify a new role for the archivist and demand the necessary training in our graduate programs. Such a shift needs to be driven by demand. I argue the demand is there.

With the ethos of educating with primary sources drifting in and out of fashion countless times over the last century, in the K–12 context and beyond, one cannot assume that *anyone* has had more than a passing textbook introduction to primary sources and their unique characteristics. This is a reality, and it is where the archivist – whether a member of an academic institution or of a local historical centre – is uniquely situated to assume the identity of the archivist as educator and help fill this gap. We have work to do, but the profession and our communities of users alike will be thankful.

104 Terry Eastwood, "A Personal Reflection on the Development of Archival Education," *Education for Information* 33, no. 2 (2017): 79, doi:10.3233/EFI-170990.

BIOGRAPHY James Roussain currently is the Archivist, Outreach and Instruction, at the John M. Kelly Library at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, a position he has held since 2016. Previously, James worked at Scotiabank, where he was involved in the maintenance and deployment of the corporate records management program. In his current role, James assists students with their research, exposes students to the treasures in the Kelly Library's Special Collections, and teaches in the college's Book and Media Studies program. James is a past president of the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) and the Toronto Area Archivists' Group (TAAG). He has served on committees with the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) and is a dedicated member of the archival community. In his spare time, James is pursuing a Master of Education in Higher Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). He holds a Master of Information from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information. Recently, James co-authored a book chapter, "From Research to Curator: Reimagining Undergraduate Primary Source Research with Omeka," in *Quick Hits: Teaching with the Digital Humanities*, ed. Christopher J. Young, Michael Morrone, Thomas C. Wilson, and Emma Annette Wilson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2020).

Appendix 1
In-Class Activity: Primary Source Analysis[105]

GOAL Interpret primary sources to draw meaning and understand their contextual nature; communicate observations to others.

ACTIVITY In small groups, review the primary source you have chosen. Identify, contextualize, and evaluate it to draw out information and meaning by answering the questions below. Be prepared to present your findings to the class.

TIME 20 minutes to interpret; class discussion to follow.

Identify the source.

1. WHAT kind of source is this (photograph, diary, etc.)? What are its characteristics?
2. WHO created the source? What do we know about them?
3. WHEN was the source produced?
4. WHERE was the source produced?

Contextualize the source.

1. What do you know about the HISTORICAL CONTEXT for this source?
2. WHY do you think this source was created?

Evaluate the source.

1. Is this an AUTHENTIC source? Why or why not?
2. Is this a RELIABLE source? Why or why not?

Is this a primary source? Explain.

105 Worksheet based in part on Kathryn Walbert, "Reading Primary Sources: An Introduction for Students," UNC School of Communication, 2004, accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/appendix-reading-primary.

Appendix 2
Exhibition Critique and Reflection

Overview

Public exhibitions of primary sources are a great and engaging way of teaching the public about a particular topic. The public, however, only sees the final product: a slick exhibit with interpretive panels, artifacts, and nice lighting. This assignment asks you to reflect on how archivists get to that final product.

In this *individual* assignment, you will visit and reflect on an exhibit on display at the Archives of Ontario. This three- to four-page reflective paper will draw on knowledge gained in the course; you are encouraged to incorporate secondary sources on what makes an effective exhibit into your discussion.

Assignment Guidelines

We will be meeting at the Archives of Ontario, where we will be given a tour of the exhibit, *Animalia: Animals in the Archives*, which is being curated by historian Jay Young. We will have an opportunity to tour the exhibition, learn more about how materials were selected for the exhibition, and understand some of the behind-the-scenes work involved in mounting a major public exhibition.

Using the knowledge gained in class lectures, readings, and on-site during the curated tour of the exhibition space, write a three- to four-page (750–1,000 words) *reflective* paper. Please address the following questions:

- How are materials selected for display? How did the archivist make their decisions?
- How were the primary sources interpreted to create a narrative? Was this well done?
- What, if any, biases did you notice in the exhibit? Do you agree with the exhibit's thesis?
- Were the interpretive text panels helpful? Too simple? Too complicated?
- Was the exhibit effective in telling its story?

This is a short reflective paper offering you a chance to think about and apply what you have learned to date on what makes an effective exhibit. Please be sure to articulate your position in the thesis of your paper: Was the exhibition effective in realizing its objective? Was it done well? Poorly? Be sure to argue a position.

Appendix 3
Final Research Project

Overview

Being able to review, understand, synthesize, and produce new content from primary sources is a cornerstone of academic research. In this assignment, you will analyze a collection of primary sources and ultimately produce an online exhibit of your findings and original research.

Completed individually, this project requires you to select and review a collection of primary sources found in either the John M. Kelly Library's Special Collections or the University of St. Michael's College Archives.

In this assignment, you will read the papers (diaries, correspondence, manuscripts, photographs, etc.) of the person(s) you selected. Your job is look at the sources and reveal a "story" held within them that you want to share with others. There is no set requirement on what you must discover or share: let the records speak for themselves and create something that you think will be interesting to others.

In addition to the online exhibit, you will also submit a final report where you have a chance to give a detailed description of what you discovered in—*and about*—the records.

So, what do I have to do?

The first step in this assignment is to book a time in the John M. Kelly Library Special Collections Reading Room to sit down and look at the primary sources you have chosen. Take your time with the materials and try to really understand them. What stories emerge when you view the records? What is interesting to you? As you read and interpret the records, think about and note the following.

What can you learn about the format of the records?

1. What kind of archival materials are in the collection? Letters, diaries, notes, photographs, manuscripts, etc.? What is the format of the materials?
2. How were the records created? Pen and ink? Handwritten? On paper? Printed? What can this tell us about the record creator(s)?
3. What is the handwriting like? Is it legible and neat? Are there grammar or spelling mistakes?
4. Consider the physical condition of the records. What do the materials look like? Is there any damage? Any preservation or conservation problems?

What is the information content of the records?

1. What are the records about? What are you learning? What stories are recorded in the materials?
2. Who wrote it? Can you figure out why it was written? What can you learn about the author(s)?
3. When was it written, and where?
4. Are there any annotations or things crossed out? Notes or doodles in the margins? Why are they there?

What is the intent of the author?

1. Why were these records created?
2. Was the content ever meant to be made public, or is it personal? How do you know? Does this change the meaning of the records?
3. What stories or pieces of information are in these records that others may want to learn?

Think about the research method you are using.

1. Did you face any challenges in accessing or using the materials? What are they?
2. Did you enjoy doing archival research? What did you learn about working in an archive?
3. What secondary sources do you want to consult to help you understand the records? A biography? Histories of people affiliated with the author? Secondary sources are useful to help contextualize what you are learning in the primary sources.

What about archival theory (archivy)?

1. How were the records arranged? Were the levels of arrangement helpful?
2. Did the finding aid present both the internal and external structure of the fonds? How was this done? Was it helpful?
3. How were preservation/conservation concerns handled?

Let these questions guide your work.
There are three parts to this assignment:

Part 1 Research Proposal

Overview

After you have reviewed your chosen collection and thought about how you want to approach your online exhibition, you will submit a brief (one- to two-page) proposal that outlines your topic, some of the sources you will be consulting, and how you want to complete the assignment.

A research proposal is an easy way for you to get feedback on the direction you are thinking about taking for your project. This proposal allows you to detail your ideas as early as possible so that you can get a head start on the project.

Remember, the point of this proposal is to get feedback on your initial direction. Nothing you propose here is set in stone: you can revise your topic, research plan, etc. based on the feedback you receive or if, after reviewing the fonds/collection in more detail, you think of something else you are more interested in researching.

Assignment Guidelines

This one- to two-page (250–500 words) paper will answer the following:

- Topic: What is your chosen research topic? After reviewing the materials, what "stories" do you want to tell from the records? How do you want to structure your online exhibit?
- Research plan: What is your research plan? How will you conduct your research, and what are the types of methods you will use to analyze the items?

- Sources: What secondary sources will you consult to help you understand the records? Which primary sources are you most interested in using? Please list three to five sources that you will be using

Part 2 Final Report

Overview

This report will present your findings and analysis in researching your topic. You will discuss what you discovered, reflect on the research process, and think critically about your topic and use of primary sources. You will also critically evaluate the archivy of the records you reviewed using the concepts discussed in class.

Assignment Guidelines

This 10- to 12-page (2,500–3,000 word) paper will present a detailed description of your project, findings, and conclusions. Be sure to include a thesis statement and clear conclusion in your report.

Your report will address the following in equal measure:

1. The records
    - What are the records about? Who wrote them? What stories are recorded in the materials? Why were the records created?
    - Assess the physical condition of the records: What do the materials look like? Is there any damage? Any preservation or conservation problems?

2. The author
    - Why were these records created? Who is the author? What's their history?

3. The findings
    - What story/stories did you discover in your research? Discuss your research findings.

4. The research process
    - Did you face any challenges in accessing or using the materials? Did you enjoy doing archival research? Discuss the challenges, successes, and the overall experience.

5. The theory
    - Critique the records and their archivy based on the concepts discussed in class (provenance, original order, respect des fonds, finding aids, arrangement and description, etc.).

Use secondary sources to support your conclusions throughout.
You may use "I" in this report when reflecting on the research process.

Part 3 Online Exhibition

Overview

Using your research findings and knowledge gained in the course, you will prepare an online exhibit to tell the story/stories you discovered in the records. This online exhibit is an opportunity to present the findings you outlined in your final paper in a way that engages a broad audience.

Assignment Guidelines

Use an online platform to create an exhibit to tell the story or stories you discovered.

- Multimedia features are encouraged to engage the audience.
- Include images, where possible, of items from the materials studied. Be sure to properly cite and include copyright information for all materials used.
- Include effective captions, where applicable.
- Draw on knowledge gained throughout the course when designing your exhibition.
- Be mindful of your audience (reading level, accessibility, etc.).