Beyond Google

Promoting Digitized Primary Sources in First-Year Writing

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and Texas Tech University
March 15, 2013
CCCC’s Conference
Overview

• Background and Interest
• Key Term Definitions
• Examples of Items and Usage
• NEH K-12 Teaching Resources
• FYC Application
Two Worlds

• *Clark Kent*: Head of Newspaper Digitization at University of North Texas.

• *Superhero*: PhD Candidate in Technical Communication and Rhetoric (TCR) at Texas Tech.
Digitized Primary Sources

• Photographs, maps, letters, journals, newspapers, and similar materials, prepared with access points (metadata).
• Serve as a body of primary source materials.
• Usage is tracked.
Figure 1. On The Portal to Texas History, metadata organizes digitized objects for search access.
Figure 2. Photograph found through keyword search. Search terms found in metadata record are highlighted in yellow.

Description: Young boy sitting in a wagon harnessed to a goat. A young girl is standing beside him. Traveling photographers in the 1920's and early 1930's would occasionally go out and photograph children in small carts harnessed to a goat.

Creator(s): Unknown

Location(s): United States - Texas - Tarrant County - Fort Worth

Creation Date: Unknown

Partner(s): Tarrant County College NE, Heritage Room

Collection(s): Tarrant County College Northeast, Heritage Room

Usage: Total Uses: 16
Past 30 days: 0
Figure 3. Digitized bill of sale for a slave, with citation.

Overarching Question

How can we promote these digitized primary sources in higher education?
Current Classroom Use

• Texas Tech University, Dr. Ann Hawkins’ *Texas Manuscript Cultures Online*, undergraduate and graduate Book History and Research Methods courses.

• University of North Texas, Dr. Andrew Torget’s courses, History of Texas and American History courses

• Austin College, Dr. Light Cummins’ Research Methods
Primary Source Education was so important that . . .

The NEH created *Teaching with Primary Sources* (TPS) to engage U.S. universities to create K-12 curriculum for using digital primary sources.

*How can we continue the K-12 experience with primary source programs like TPS into FYC curriculum?*
When I hear this question, I think:

Let me put on my Technical Communication hat to think about this.
Pilot Study

• Inquiry into four Texas universities with programmatic syllabi in first-semester, introductory college composition courses.
## Primary Sources in Class Projects, Represented by Program Syllabi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the Syllabus</th>
<th>Texas Tech University</th>
<th>University of North Texas</th>
<th>Texas A&amp;M</th>
<th>University of Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the phrase “primary source?”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students to engage primary sources (whether using the actual phrase “primary source” or not)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include library research instruction and/or physical library tours?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include online research instruction or materials?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“You will learn how to conduct library and web-based research and document sources.” (UT)

“An artifact is any combination of words, images, and sounds that represents the values and ideology of a group of people. Artifacts provide a tangible expression of the way that a person or group ‘argues’ for a particular value or ideal.” (UNT)

“During the semester, you will practice critical thinking, reading, and writing skills; develop research skills—identifying, finding, and evaluating primary and secondary sources to use to support your own point of view.” (TAMU)

“By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze text and visuals, and compose summaries and paraphrases of those works.” (TTU)
Sources in Syllabi

- **All** syllabi include required textbooks, which *may* contain primary source examples for students.
- **Some** syllabi list “Library and Web Research” as course sections.
- **No** syllabi specifically discuss digital primary source objects.
UNT Libraries’ Digital Collections

• Are digitized according to preservation and access standards established by LoC.
• Have received millions of dollars in grants.
• Were intended, in large part, for faculty and student research.

AKA: We’re highly motivated to see these collections used!
Future Research

• Expand inquiry to individual classrooms rather than program syllabi.
• Expand scope to universities outside of Texas.
• Survey FYC educators about their use of library resources.
• Survey library liaisons about how they teach e-library resources.
Further Questions

• *If we offer library tours, ought we also offer a tour of digital objects by our libraries?*

• *Are we passively promoting an over-reliance on search engines?*

• *How can library liaisons help?*
Additional Examples

Many primary sources are available online, including:

• **American Memory Project**: Library of Congress

• **Chronicling America**: NEH, Library of Congress, & National Digital Newspaper Program Awardee States

• **The Portal to Texas History**: University of North Texas Libraries

• **The Gateway to Oklahoma History**: University of North Texas Libraries and Oklahoma Historical Society