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Spanning Boundaries to Identify Archival Literacy Competencies

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Spanning Boundaries to Identify Archival Literacy Competencies

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Outline

Problem

Methods

Results

Discussion and Recommendations

...Librarians and archivists engaged and partnering with campus and community

...Collaboration, cross-disciplinary research to create new knowledge, chart a course for partnerships with deep, lasting impact

The Problem

No standard list of expectations regarding knowledge, skills, and abilities history majors should master to find and use archives and primary source materials effectively

The Problem: Why is it important?

- ✓ Primary source materials essential for historical research
- ✓ History faculty expect undergrad history majors to know how to conduct archival research
- ✓ Each archival repository unique
- ✓ Procedures for finding relevant archives, organization of materials different than library
- ✓ Requires specialized knowledge

The Problem: Why is it important?

The literature on teaching “archival literacy:”

- Students learn from primary sources
- What history teachers teach about archival literacy
- American Historical Association “Tuning” project

“Archival literacy” is contextual application of information literacy

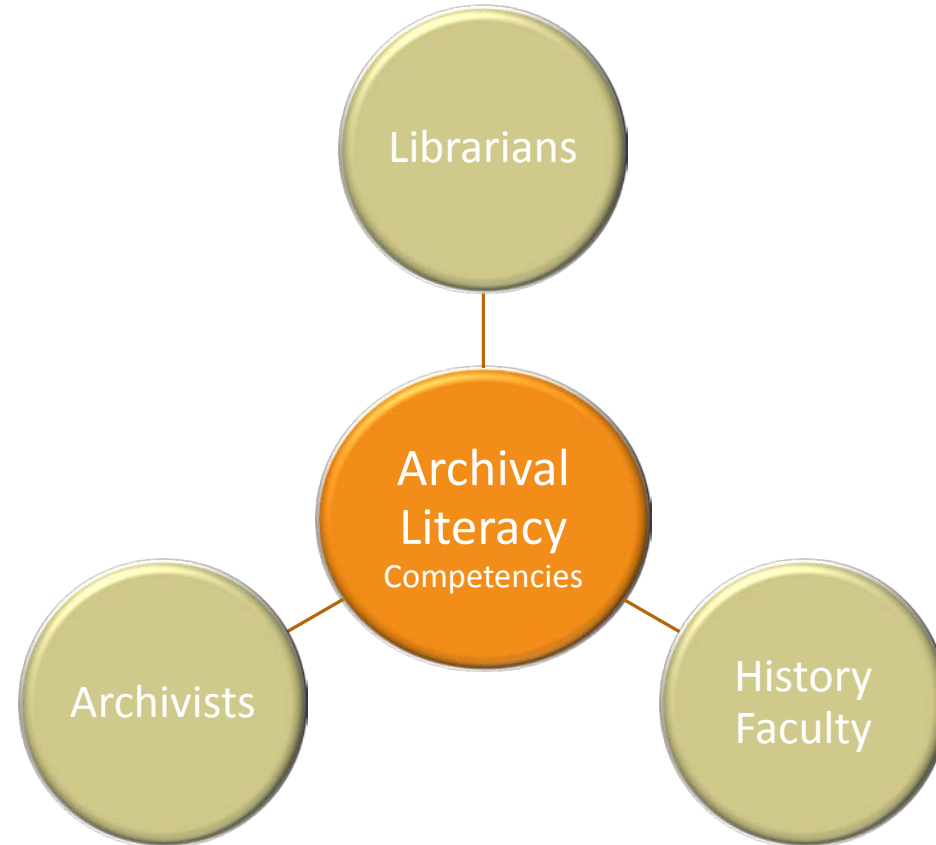
Methods: Phase 1

Developed draft list of archival literacy competencies that undergraduate history majors should master before graduation

Fall 2012 and Spring 2013

- Interviews with selected Purdue History faculty
- Recommendations from Purdue archivists
- Review of history course syllabi
- Comments from history department faculty, graduates
- Report on Phase 1 in *American Archivist* in late 2014

Methods: Multiple stakeholders



Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Categories of Competencies

- Accurately conceive of primary sources
- Locate primary sources
- Use a research question, evidence, and argumentation to advance a thesis
- Obtain guidance from archivists
- Demonstrate acculturation to archives
- Follow publication protocols (knowledge creation)
- Advanced Skills

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Accurately conceive of primary sources (select examples)

- *Define and articulate differences between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources*
- *List common types of primary sources used in conducting historical research*
- *Articulate the value of primary sources to historical research, communicating a real or imaginary example illustrating value. Explain why historians are expected to use primary sources in their research and scholarship*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Locate primary sources (select examples)

- *Distinguish between types of repositories that collect primary sources, including libraries, archives, museums, and special collections*
- *Give examples of some kinds of materials held in different types of archival repositories, such as religious archives, business archives, university archives, government archives, etc.*
- *Describe how to locate and use archival finding aids*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Use a research question, evidence, and argumentation to advance a thesis

- *Evaluate and synthesize information and arguments from both primary and secondary sources for evidence*
- *Recognize historical styles of handwriting and outmoded printed scripts or fonts*
- *Articulate common biases in primary and secondary sources*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Obtain guidance from archivists

- *Explain the role and potential value of the research consultation with archives staff*
- *Communicate a variety of information needs effectively to archivists, both orally and in writing*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Demonstrate acculturation to archives

- *Describe the differences between archival records, personal papers and manuscripts, and rare books*
- *Describe the care and handling processes for using original physical materials. Explain both why these processes are necessary and why they are important*
- *Articulate the ways in which experiencing and handling original primary sources differs from use of digital or other facsimiles*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Follow publication protocols

- *Explain the differences in copyright for published and unpublished sources*
- *Cite different types of unpublished primary sources such as documents, photographs, and artifacts, using more than one style of citation*
- *Specify some common restrictions placed on unpublished materials and justify such restrictions by giving the legal and ethical reasons for them*

Draft Archival Literacy Competencies

Advanced Skills

- *Recognize common preservation, organization, and archival processing techniques to distinguish the way materials have altered since being acquired by a repository.*
- *Describe some ways in which archival repositories function in other countries and how access to primary sources may differ in those countries*
- *Produce a scholarly work that incorporates primary and secondary sources as evidence and is suitable for publication, both in writing and in a formal oral/visual presentation or demonstration*

Methods:

Phase 2 Research Question

Do faculty in history departments, archivists, and history liaison librarians at colleges and universities in the U.S. agree that the draft list of archival literacy competencies developed by Purdue University represent those that all history majors should master during their undergraduate education?

Methods

Sampling Strategy

Stratified random sample of US higher education institutions

Used 2012-13 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data set

Eligible institutions:

- active; degree-granting; non-profit; baccalaureate, masters, doctoral/research, or research institution according to 2010 basic Carnegie classification

Methods

Sampling Strategy

1

- Searched institution web sites for contact info

2

- Search Society of American Archivists member database
- Excluded institutions that did not have archives or SAA member archivist

3

- Emails to contact archivist and librarian asking to participate

4

- If agreed, sent canned message for them to send to history faculty

Methods

Participating institutions

Institution Type	Participation Goal	Invited	Agreed
Baccalaureate	41	71	25
Masters	41	91	27
Doctoral/research	18	65	20
Total	100	227	72

Results

123 responses, 59% history faculty

7 respondents were both archivists and librarians

Results

- Acceptance of all competencies
39% respondents (little difference by institution type; more archivists and librarians)
- Deletion of competencies
Varying opinions on which to delete
- Additions to list
Online archival competencies
Diplomatics and records creation

Discussion

→ Good response from history faculty

→ Not all competencies necessary

→ If 1/3 respondents thought a competency was too advanced for undergraduates, we moved it to the “Advanced Skills” section

Recommendations

- 1. Increase collaboration between history faculty, archivists, and librarians**
- 2. Contextualize archival literacy in history courses**
- 3. Assess instruction and students' mastery of archival competencies**
- 4. Develop practical institution-agnostic tools and tutorials to teach archival research skills**

Thank you!

Comments?

Questions?