Interviewer

So, first question. How did you learn how to teach with primary sources?

Respondent

Well, the very first moment? I guess, as a student. I was a mature student, so I was engaged, motivated and understood I guess like how to, how to think critically but back it up with research. I guess before that I was with the Open University doing a few things to test out whether I wanted to go to university or not which is funny, maybe a funny way of doing it but through that you HAVE to engage in research and underpin every idea that you have with something. So I had this strange hybrid approach between art practice, but also thinking about things in quite a science-driven approach, like testing and experimentation, but also play, which is one of the aspects that has stayed with me, that I'm looking at the learning outcomes on what we assess students on and looking at that framework, my pedagogy to bridge the gap between library research and their practical element. At the moment...well it's kind of shifting. I've only been teaching for a year and a half. But since that time I've seen the shift from students just focusing on their aesthetics and kind of using art as almost therapy for themselves and shifting away from that and asking them to think critically about their decision-making, making things more audience aware, those aspects and embedding them into deeper, deeper thinking deeper research. But also questioning debate, because that's also something that we test them on and it's something that doesn't always come up so they, they're falling short, when in fact actually they could excel IF they looked at credible sources. And I think in the past there has been in the Arts a little bit of a tussle between, like how relevant books are. And, you know, they're dating (dated?), and how they're not so live but, I don't know, with some lateral thinking and techniques and to teach them how to think laterally, but also thinking culturally in time, then being able to question things in a deeper way. I think those aspects are kind of important that come from or stem from those early engagements with study. And, yeah, it's quite there's quite a lot of like background for this. I used to be a car mechanic so problem solving for me was a massive thing but I really wanted to engage in being a practitioner in the Arts. That was my true thing. So I think that the blending between that almost quite engineering scientific element flowed into the practitioner approach, and then into academic framework and teaching. Yeah, yeah, so sorry it's quiet a deep thing when you actually when you unpick it but....

Interviewer

Great, thank you. So, did you receive any support or instruction from anyone when learning to teach with primary sources?

Respondent

I think I found it for myself initially, but it was better synthesised through PGCAP (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) which I started in October. So that gave me a better framework to put my pedagogy which I had a feeling about, but couldn't put it into words. So, it's a really good course, and it's, I think it's had a revamp or rejig so it's really beneficial for students now. Which when I look at my time as a student, I cannot take that past experience in 2006 and it's not relevant now in 2020! There's a huge shift in technology in the way that students procrastinate and the way that technology sort of interferes with their focus. That we don't have so many lectures now, and their ability to focus within, like, I think we used to have two hour lectures where we'd still be writing ideas and our endurance for knowledge was a lot higher, whereas now we're seeing a shift in the opposite direction. So, the framework in PGCAP was on blended learning so that it's more ACTIVE. And I think that's good, I think it's a positive move. It enables you to be a little bit more like... It's kind of similar to training for sports, where you're given lots of little bite sized things to, to try and improve, and then overall we have growth. Yeah.

Interviewer

So PGCAP's been really helpful for you...

Respondent

For synthesising all of those things.

Interviewer

And helping you with your teaching with primary sources and your general pedagogy.

Respondent

Yeah definitely I think with lateral thinking as well which I think you can see when you look at the reading list is quite difficult. ??motions ??links is fairly new. If you look at photography you could probably have a reading list with books that have in the title 'Photography'. Whereas in motion design, there's... I've kind of looked through ALL of them, there's I think there's two that are credible. One is for teaching and one is a historical look at motion design and the rest tend to be screenshots of work. And it just says who the artist is, who the studio is, sometimes is totally irrelevant bits that usually says what software they use which is of no use at this level. Yeah!

Interviewer

Okay, that's interesting.

Respondent

Quite frustrating but I think there's opportunity there to create books, but at the same time there are books that run parallel that you can utilise which extend critical thinking and debate. But also like their MIND to not be so narrow ???and focus. So when I started, the students were focusing on trying to find books that had like 'Motion design' in the title. They were very frustrated that there was only this one book so it took a lot to convince them to…to look at painting and find the parallel thought in painting or even, you know, cultural studies and debate and photography even, how that flows, or film and film theory, how that could be utilised, if you have sort of an abstract approach or a sort of reflective open mind, which is really difficult I think with students now. So it's kind of having that framework from the PGCAP that helps activate that deeper thinking, and maturing that brain which is kind of critical, and frameworks I think that, like critical thinking and critical contexts, those aspects of frame-working to then know what sources you need for growth. I think that's the critical element.

Interviewer

Okay. Thank you. Do you use any ideas or collections of sources or instructional resources that you receive from others?

Respondent

Yeah, like stolen! Well, I think it's an accumulation of things. So I'm quite active in talking to industry. So people who are practitioners in the field. So the one thing I quite like looking at is the sciences and how they approach things. So they approach things like testing, experimentation, but they're committed to conversations with other labs and they have a real world application. So in the arts in motion design you could use that same framework to access, like thinking and thought and cultural aspects as primary source. So those could be like podcast recordings, say conversations that we have these people but we know that that's just one aspect, so you have to have an ARRAY of conversation to create debate, otherwise you've (got) just one aspect. So, I think that's the difficult bit is having those conversations, getting people to partake and recording them and where you put them and how students can access them can be a bit tricky. I asked students quite often how much they access our Blackboard and someone say I haven't looked at it! And then you're like, Okay, so how are you starting your studies, how are you starting your research? And it usually starts with some terrible Google searches from sources that are not credible. They haven't been thought that way. So I think that's something I need to work on a lot more. But I think also Blackboard's the way that you access it and the way it operates. Knowing that students, activate other online resources like social science, where dropped down and things are much more intuitive and much more modern. So that you're getting those generations to interact with something that's maybe a little bit rusty around the edges it's not too bad but it's just a little things that that maybe stop them from accessing the extra steps to get to those resources. So I think the thing with Panopto being ??a source ??or ??success thing that I'm looking at. Because the other thing is, not all sources that I'm gathering want their information out there, so they want them protected. They want to give them to the students they want their students to grow because that benefits them as they go out into the world, but they don't want the world to know. So, Panopto is quite good because you can lock it down into Blackboard without them downloading so you can make sure that happens but also they can engage. But then, if they're not accessing Blackboard and then Panopto (because it's like a rabbit hole you have to get into!), rather than something quick. Yeah, that's a trick. That's the tricky one! But... we... industry is more open than I initially thought it was. So we are getting a lot of information, but making sure that studios are comfortable and are, you know, from a sustainable perspective, wanting to give over that information that they know it's locked down. It's really tricky.

Interviewer

So do you make your own ideas/ collection of sources/ other instructional resources, I mean bit like the Panopto, available to others in your teachings?

Respondent

Like other universities, things like that?

Errm, not at the moment. I'm quite new to teaching but I would like that to happen. So whether I journal or something or produce something that students can use but other universities could use is definitely a thing that needs to happen. So in motion design, I've looked at other universities on the surface. It's really hard to drill down in to how they're teaching and what's going on, but you do see a lot of replication of practitioners, rather than original works. So, like, I don't know if that is the case where in Education there's a little bit of a lag between knowing the contemporaries or engagement with contemporary practitioners to know that their students are effectively replicating rather than what we see is the top level of Bloom's Taxonomy which is the creation from critical thinking and engagement with primary sources and things like that. So, here, I guess because I'm new and I've not been institutionalised to a degree! I don't know how much I can say about this! But the problem I think is what I see coming in fresh, is that I think there's not enough particularly in the Arts of keeping contemporary. In science you have to be on the edge of research and you have to be like that. In the Arts I think there's not enough structure or time for us to implement that effectively. There's too much happening, there's too much, like, things that are not important that get in the way of you making progress and keeping up to date with things. So, in that regard, primary sources, having time to question, like, the actual people doing stuff in the wild, knowing the cultural shifts, which I was kind of thinking about for a long time in terms of trends because trends can be in the Arts a bit of a dirty a word, but it is actually an evolution of work. It's not... I think 'trend' is probably the wrong term to use but if you think about cultural shifts and growth and evolution, actually that's a trend when you drill it down. So I think it's necessary to have those engagements and record them and investigate. So, in terms of creation of works and materials that we use, yeah, I'm using recorded conversations. We're using Skype direct with students that are recorded so they can ask questions. We're also doing studio visits. And they're producing live work and emulating real life things like in sciences and getting real life feedback. They're using sources like Vimeo where studios are putting their work out there, and Instagram is one of these utilities as well where... almost the same as when they're in production they'll show those aspects as well so students understand the framework of making. And if you collect those and look at them all, you get a sense of where we are now, but also you can look at them per day and see the evolution of works as well, and then you can see evolution. And then you can get students, if they're engaged, you can get them to the frame of not just replicating but innovating. So, yes, primary sources - Vimeo, Instagram - are right on the edge of those. But there's a danger of surface-learning if they're not active.

Interviewer

Super, thank you. I'm going to talk about the module design now. Can you tell me a little bit of the pedagogical aims, why you developed it, how it has evolved over time?

Respondent

Yeah, so I can, I can talk about where I saw students before and then where they are now. So, before we had no industry links. There was no one who knew the contemporary field, so they're all producing from way back, which means when they go out in the world the... their employers were having to invest in them to get them up to date. And speaking to industry this summer, that was the majority of their thought. So when I showed them the work that students have done after a year of me without teaching framework, they said that that was the best work they'd seen. And then WITH a framework they couldn't believe the evolution that we'd gone through from that summer to where we are now just in....we haven't even completed a semester. So they feel that they could employ those students right now. So that... it makes a difference to be on that crest of a wave! But to also be thinking about innovation, original thinking, original ideas (that) bolstered with critical thinking from primary sources. Yeah. And from those conversations with those, those people. So it's this tide... it's like an octopus that has many strands. And many ways of psyching them up and brings??? the students. So that's the pedagogy. I'm very aware of my industry experience and a lot of pedagogical models have that at the forefront is that your, your industry experience. But I'm weighing on the side of that that could be a negative thing if you hold it too higher value that it doesn't create innovation, that it stemmed from a time period. And I think that actually could be quite negative. So, I tend to put that in the background. Actually I don't talk about it now. And the more that I think about it, the more I think it has no value, which is crazy! Like. It is, it's very rarely said, I think a lot of people bring it up. It's like you should hear me because I come from industry. But then, if you've been a teacher for two years in Motion Design where the pace is innovating at such a rate with technology, it's irrelevant it's irrelevant, six??, What... the work I did as a freelancer a few months ago, I feel is irrelevant. Because, do you know what I mean?! But what's happening now, but also what happened in the past is like... both of them are important.

Interviewer

Can I ask how you incorporate your primary sources within the course?

Respondent

In multiple levels so it's on Blackboard, so they can access it. We also have a large number of Chinese students so we use the best thing I found is quite hard to find the right sources TED Talks because you can put those into Chinese. So we have a... Most of the time our courses half UK students and half Chinese students. So I found that to be an effective way of primary source that is translated in their own language they can activate deeper learning. So, I've only just started that this semester, which has made a huge difference. But that's a slight problem when you've got Industry (people) talking, they're not clear they're not actually instructors. They're raw primary sources, and there's no translation. I think that's quite tough on half of the group. So, we are using those as well as my podcast on Blackboard. But we're also putting them into presentations that we show the students and then put them into Blackboard later for review. Also trials, taking the students directly to the library at the front end of their projects. So modelling to them sources that they wouldn't have necessarily thought about. Which takes a lot of pre-plan 'cos you have to know yourself, but also sometimes it's good to show that maybe you don't know how, when you don't know how you find those sources in the library. And I found that to be really useful because we had a comment from a student a few months ago in their third year saying that they wished they'd used the library right from the word go in their first year. And they said it has excelled their work to another level which they didn't think they could ever achieve. So... but that this is like, not just using contemporary and dislike??, because our library’s so deep. We have work that that goes back, you know, a long time! Really old books! And if you have one of those against something contemporary and combine the two, you can innovate, so it's understanding that those... uncovering some archival thing, that some older relic and giving it a shine and presenting it back into the world.

Interviewer

So they're good resources?

Respondent

Yeah, they're really good and they're starting to...but you have to model it to them. So, yeah, it's good to activate that because I was also thinking that I came across a source that thinks about universities, the mind, like how we as educators, just think about the mind, we don't think about the body, so actually physically taking them to books is quite an eye opener. Yeah.

Interviewer

Okay, so why did you decide to incorporate primary sources into the course in this way?

Respondent

I think it's... It was just a reflection on where they were and where they are now. And seeing that difference. So, obviously, I do a lot of reflective thinking and think, Okay, what, what are they missing so when I assess them, or when I go and see them I want to see their sketchbooks, their thoughts. What they are about to evidence. And then just finding their sources were not credible enough so that needed to change. So to find those before we make the brief or as I'm making it like sitting in the library as I'm making a brief is probably really is really important. But I'm...also bringing these briefs to industry saying, like, please find holes.

Interviewer

When you say 'Bringing your brief' What do you mean by that?

Respondent

So I will take a draft brief to studios...

Interviewer

A brief of what? Of motion design?

Respondent

Yeah, to show the, yeah to show the studio, like, what their thought behind it is. Because obviously they are, they are not receiving from universities students who are competent, or useful to them. They're receiving students who, who are doing things that do not connect to Motion Design, having been on courses on Motion Design, which I thought was alarming. So having those... showing them what we're doing, being open. Having it's really having a great mind-set and a maturity to say, "I am where I am now. How, how do we make this better?!" So, that informs those choices of what we use.

Interviewer

What challenges. Sorry to interrupt but what challenges do you face incorporating primary sources in your teaching?

Respondent

It's usually at student level. So, it's usually trying to find... making sure that they realise how important it is to use them. What, what change they'll expect to see if they use them. But also if they don't use them what will happen! So it's quite good that in a way that we had that problem, we could record it and show students the difference. So we contrast and show and I think that really helps (them) see the value of them coming to university and see the value of change.

Interviewer

And in this course does anyone else provide instruction? Is it you? You do the Motion Design well obviously you do the Motion Design but are there any other people who…

Respondent

Input

Interviewer

Yeah who contribute to the course and use primary sources?

Respondent

I mean you can speak to X he used to be on it and he used to contribute the primary sources as well. We are a small number so with eight students. We do get VLs in, Visiting Lecturers and studios in, so that helps to bolster... though we do find that some students, sorry studios, the depth at which they access their own evolution and thinking isn't to the degree of a university degree! But we have started to find, because it's so competitive, other studios actually accessing deeper and to the point that actually they're the same as us in the way that they access sources. They look at other works they read books, it's not just aesthetics it's more than that. So it's just finding those really and bring them in.

Interviewer

Moving on to finding primary sources, how do you find your primary sources for using in this course?

Respondent

So, there's a number of things as I said: knowing globally most of the leading studios, which is hard, super hard to do, but I think it's important to do it at a global level, because then as a university we should be looking globally. We should be communicating globally so that's a big factor in motion design your communication skills to your audiences (as) they're watching what you create. So, that can be done at a number of levels: it is conversations with studios, it's accessing community meetups! Sounds not that deep a level but it really makes a difference. So "Oh, have you met this person?" "Have you spoken to this person?" and then your framework, grows and grows and grows your connections, and your conversations are much more diverse and wide-ranging. And plus, it also feeds into those primary sources so they... It's like an exchange so you can say, "Well, have you seen this or read this or watched this?" And they'll say, "Oh no, but this is amazing! This really helps this but have you seen this?" and it's an exchange of these, where (you have) connection everything grows and gets richer. So it's really being plugged in at every level! But the one thing that I've only just... I've just had a connection with another university that do a similar thing. So we are finding the same problems and that online platforms for learning are growing rapidly and doing a better job because they can adapt and change faster, and their model of their online app platforms are at a contemporary level. And they can employ anyone at the drop of a hat to make those changes/ improvements. The one thing I have found is that they don't have a library because then online. So our ability to have a *physical* library is super important. And, but also having the library have online books as well, is REALLY good. And the fact that we can annotate within that document and use those for assessment is brilliant. So we can, we can go to a deeper level, but when students are looking "Should I pay this much for university or should I just go online?" knowing that that is plugged into platforms where actually the world is looking in and cherry picking from that pool at a cheaper level! But then the DEPTH isn't there. So, I think it's knowing that we have the depth , our students can collaborate in a physical way is something to hold on to but sources to help that I'm sort of trying to find at the moment, and establish that sort of richness of being together. And the aspect of thinking, drawing that from sources, I think is something that I need to do.

Interviewer

Okay. Do you keep a collection of digital or physical sources?

Respondent

Yeah, I'm aware that sources can disappear, particularly in this digital age where, if you're thinking about studios and what they're producing at a cultural level, screenshotting those! It sounds crude but they can disappear! Like a client can say "I want that taken down", and it'll go. Or they want to look more contemporary so all their work will disappear and then you don't have a catalogue. So, what I tend to do, which isn't the best, but it's (to) capture those, sometimes I even ask studios for their use. If I know it's protected in-house then I know that it can be... It's not the best but we can, we can sort of capture under the hood and show students things that they couldn't necessarily have seen before and to contextualise a moment in time against their own work or contemporary elements. So yeah, it's just a matter of that, and then storing them at the moment on OneDrive and then putting them on to Panopto for discussion and things. It's kind of synthesising those so once you've collected them, the access, the context, those things are really tricky.

Interviewer

So that's a fairly major challenge then?

Respondent

Yeah, it's a challenge for storage. It's a challenge when you think of global impact of servers and things you have to think about these things - energy. And, and yes access.

Interviewer

Okay, so what challenges do you face in finding appropriate sources to use, you mentioned about things dropping off platforms.

Respondent

I think that's our biggest challenge, but also having the time to have your eyes open in the world to collect them as fast as possible! Because they can appear and disappear in seconds, really. But they're of great value when you DO capture them, if you CAN capture them (they) can make a huge difference to the students.

Interviewer

So how do your students find and access primary sources?

Respondent

At the moment, badly. As I said, taking the third years to the library has made a huge difference.

Interviewer

Do you now take first years at all?

Respondent

We're going to do that!! So that's embedded in our scheme of work. And that we also have strategies for critical thinking and debate and how to evidence that. If you don't have that framework, then I would imagine from a student's perspective. "Why do I need to go that extra distance to cross the road? Why can't I just google it here?!" So, it's just making them aware of the difference and modelling it to them and giving them that workshop activation. But also you can't do it once. What you do in first year is easily forgotten in the third year, even next week. So I think it's a case of making it a HABIT. And then once it's a habit, it's established. It's just making sure that they know the value.

Interviewer

So do you specify sources which students must use or do you expect them to go and locate themselves?

Respondent

It's, I think, it's two tier, so our reading list has been... we've made it more visible in our document. So before it was tiny and on the side. And now we've made it bigger, in the middle of the document. But also we've put resources on Blackboard, and we make sure that when we launch that these are their starting points, that they start with those sources. And then when they evolve their idea their fear of collection could be could be varied so you can't... You don't want to squash them into one area because you don't want to squash innovation. So, to make sure that they can branch out is super important. So, I think frameworks for those I'm thinking about at the moment, how you do that. I think modelling that is super important too. So where there's primary sources - their credibility, those factors, weighing those up, finding the opposite, contrasting things. Yeah. It's a challenge for anyone, but...

Interviewer

So, how do the ways in which you teach with primary sources relate to the goals for student learning?

Respondent

So there are a number of aspects. I think in year three we have an element of weighing up critical debates influencing contemporary practice. So that's one of the learning outcomes that they're assessed on. So, to actually KNOW what's happening in the world, in their world, in their dispatches?? of motion design. What's happening. Culturally, what are the debates, what people are talking about, podcasts, discussions that have been recorded that we provide but also there's other sources that they use. I think the Old School of Motion's quite an active one, there's Motion Hatch which is another one that do podcasts. Again, sometimes deep-learning can come from those but sometimes it can be quite surface. So you have to be careful with those and students have to know that that could be the case and to go deeper with their understanding. They have to access books, which I think is the deepest way you can, I think, access to knowledge at the moment.

Interviewer

So do you teach your students what a primary source actually is?

Respondent

I think…

Interviewer

And if so how?

Respondent

I think, yes, to a degree with... I think we're starting that with actually visiting studios. Like going to the source of where things are created, in a way, and knowing how those things are created, where they're stemming from, so you can go deeper into that. In an academic dialogue kind of way, I think, I think we need to start that and we're looking at that in terms of their structure of critical analysis like books to help them critically engage books on theory. So the starting point of 'thought', I guess. And those kind of heritage elements, they all have to knit together. I think it's really, it's really tricky, but I think a framework for that you could probably show it in a diagram how they flow into each other and how they form a whole. So you're not just like looking on the web aimlessly, you actually know that this is a credible video/studio?? that they gain their knowledge from these aspects, that they're dependable on their dialogue, and how they communicate with the world. Knowing those factors, scratching the surface of them because some of them will be very surface driven, even though you look at them knowing there's deeper thinking there but you're not talking about them. But from an academic standpoint you can uncover them. We have a studio we quite regularly see now because we know that there's an exchange. So, my exchange with them is that my background in my own research. And then when they show work, I can say, "Well, you've chosen this you don't think... you sort of feel that it's, that it's right, but actually, it goes beyond feeling, there's a...you can put it into words and these are the words." So, and then they're like "Oh, you're right!" and then they start talking that way. And then you universally build a better dialogue, which I think is quite interesting. Anyway...! Does that sort of answer your question?! (Laughs)

Interviewer

To what extent it is important to you that your students develop information literacy or civic engagement through working with primary sources?

Respondent

It's super important because we can't assess them otherwise. We can assess them but they, they don't meet the learning outcomes. Because they need to evidence everything. They need to evidence their thought, so when they show their primary sources, which they usually do as screenshots and things like that, they rarely say where it comes from. But, knowing that myself and knowing that it's not there - it's not evidence- why they're putting that work there. It's usually on a surface level about feelings, whether they LIKE something or DON'T like it, which is primary. So it's kind of...it should be yeah that literacy of deeper knowledge (which) is really super important. So... but that's something nurtured, that we're nurturing. Usually I think it's happening more... it happens better with peer discussion, so you let them lead without knowledge, and then you pull them back into knowledge, and then you let them go again, and then you bring them back to those better sources and then you let them go again. And then you progressively see them change, and utilise those.

Interviewer

So in what format do your students engage with primary sources? What sort of format....

Respondent

So, online video, online journals, books, films in the library. Netflix! Netflix is a tricky one because you have to have a subscription. But there are some brilliant documentaries, (but) not a lot. But, Abstract (Abstract: The Art of Design) is a huge one for us, for design, thinking, strategies of working, like how MIT structure creative thoughts in sciences and how we can actually utilise that and show students that this is something you can use in the world to create huge innovation in your field. So yeah, those, those are...Funnily enough, Instagram, there's actually quite a lot there's... They use... They have like mini documentaries on there now, which is difficult so difficult because you can't.... it's not in a library you can't search you just have to know that these are dependable people now and again, they'll let you have very brilliant pieces of information. That's really difficult because it's a social platform! Whereas if it was in a book it would be better! Yeah! But it's not!

Interviewer

I'm aware of time, but do your students visit any Special Collections, archives, museums?

Respondent

We take them to the Tate fairly regularly. I don't think we do this enough but the Discovery Centre in Winchester have some brilliant exhibitions and lectures and things going on. So, whenever we can align things... because this is the other thing, they don't see value in what might happen in the future. They see the value of what they're doing right now so it's very short-sighted. So, we're trying to get them in the place where actually the information that they might access for a talk or collection that might be going on, (or) a festival. This is the other problem we have actually is festivals, that in the creative realm, they don't call them....My brain. Sorry. One moment!...a symposium or conference, they'll call it a festival, so it makes it very difficult for us to take students to, for funding (reasons), because the university don't recognise a festival as a place for learning. So there's this thing called ‘Us by Night’ that we take them to as a field trip.

Interviewer

What's it called?

Respondent

‘Us by Night’. So it's on the cusp of creative innovators, and there's lots of talks going on, but it's called a festival which creates massive problems for us to be able to hang in to that. But it's a HUGE place for primary source information, like right at the source of innovation, and happening. So I think that's a challenge for us but like we make it happen in the best way possible. I think it's something that actually academics would benefit from going to for their OWN development, for that recognition that it's not called a conference, but it's the same as the conference, it's just framework in a creative way! Yeah, so there's lots of things.

Interviewer

And when you're at the Tate or at these festivals or anywhere else do you teach them how to conduct research in those settings?

Respondent

Yes. Give them a framework, so it's usually a task sheet. So that, that really helps them activate that landing, otherwise it's surface.

Interviewer

And do your students use any digital tools to examine, interact or present the sources?

Respondent

Photography, video. Sometimes they'll video record and talk about, you know, some kind of interview-based thing. We've done that in the past as well which is good because then if you get two people together talking about it, you get a richer discussion and they're like "Oh I didn't even think about it like that." And then growth happens, it's quite interesting.

Interviewer

Do you use any collaborative annotation platforms?

Respondent

Yeah, we use Slack. It's a horrible name because it sort of suggests laziness, which I think is really bad but we use it with a studio that we know that they do really good research. So we've done a collaboration with them to produce work, and they give feedback. So it's very live, they can post their work, they can type, they can put sources in there. He can reply, he or she replies using Google Slides, which is a fantastic platform, it's kind of live, it can evolve, and it can embed sources in there so it's quite a rich...

Interviewer

It sounds brilliant! Very interesting. So to what extent are these formats and tools pedagogically important to you?

Respondent

It makes students aware of the world that they're in. I think it's super important for value that they know that they're not just doing something that's a relic of the past that they're actually part of a discussion that's happening NOW between people that are doing what they're learning to do. Yeah.

Interviewer

And do you encounter any challenges relating to the formats and tools with which your students engage with primary sources?

Respondent

Yeah, I think, well they have... well the issue happens on either the phone or the screen and usually they're accessing it via the phone. And if they have limited space on their phone for the app that we want them to use, if they've got too many apps and too many distractions, you have to think about mindfulness, also the anxiety of students, like, those are MASSIVE factors now. And when we're using technology we're drawing now from, like we use Blackboard and Panopto. Panopto is not Blackboard, it's separate and Slack is not Blackboard it's separate and the library is a separate online platform and ??? is a physical platform, and Sussed is on a separate platform! So, this web of craziness is difficult, I think, for students who suffer this technological burden or messiness, I think. For some that are honed into this and, and not emotionally engaged with their device they're much more... like "This is where I learn, not where I'm emotionally attached" to that device aspect, because they're using it for social it's very confusing I think on an emotional level as a human being. So yeah, I think that's the biggest challenge we've got.

Interviewer

Okay. Just, we're getting towards the end now. What advice would you give a colleague who's new to teaching with primary sources?

Respondent

(Chuckles) I think having a clear understanding of their subjects and a hunger for it is probably the best drive. And also knowing it's multi-layered, so you can't just...that can't just be the thing it also has to be that you know the learning outcomes, the objectives of how you're assessing and how those fit together with your subject. And then the value that the students see and it having real world impact therefore real world value. Rather than, because this is what you see I think when the rhetorics between professors and undergraduate, is that there's not an...it can be so far removed from the world, because it's quite narrowly focused, or seems it, or not accessible because it's so steeped in a different language. I think there's benefits and there's dangers, so it's kind of being aware of all of those things and weighing them up. And knowing what's sustainable, what could be a burden to students and what actually could be a help and gently feeding them, not overwhelming them.

Interviewer

Looking towards the future, what challenges or opportunities will people encounter in teaching undergraduates with primary sources do you think?

Respondent

I think. Sorry, can you...

Interviewer

Yeah, looking towards the future what challenges or opportunities do you think teachers like yourself will encounter in teaching undergraduates with primary sources?

Respondent

I think there's probably more challenges than opportunities. I think the challenges are deep-learning. So I think surface-learning is an easy thing that can happen from these primary sources, I think that's the danger. I think it needs to be bolstered and weighed up against good academic rigour that's also not so removed from the world. So depth, but not lacking in inclusion I think that's probably academic inclusion - could that be a thing to describe it?! (laughs). Yeah, I think the opportunities are knowing where you are in the world but how you synthesise that is the challenge, and how you articulate in literacy those things. So, opportunities that are instant is?? around but I think that generates surface-learning, but you can't ignore it! Is that alright?!

Interviewer

One very last question. How do you cite primary sources, how do you reference them?

Respondent

So, I use... oh I forget, it's what the university recommends for Harvard referencing. So, the online aspect I'd look at how you do that in the framework, and then, I forget what it's called, but it's on...it's what... you can just go to the library and ask them but also you can go in Blackboard and it guides you there. So I forget because it's ????? I should know the name, but I think it's ‘Cite Right’. Or ‘Cite’... something like that. ‘Cite it Right’, it could be that. Anyway, so I use that. But then, like social platforms how you do that is really tricky, but you can... Some of the things that you have online like Instagram actually does have a desktop version, so then you can copy the URL and you're able to put that in but if it disappears then how do you do that, I don't know. It's a problem.

Interviewer

Tricky.

Respondent

Yeah.

Interviewer

Okay, well thank you very much! Have you got any questions?

Respondent

Um, no, I think in terms of the library I think it's growing and it's brilliant. Like having online books so you can annotate around, because obviously you can't write on the physical books, they're quite precious! And you don't want to skew other people's thinking with your own thinking by scribbling on a book. I think maybe the thing that we're missing is the capacity, particularly at Winchester space to actually do like a workshop in the library that doesn't interfere with other people, like a room. Like Hartley has brilliant breakout spaces, which I think it's brilliant and really valuable for students to activate that multi-layered approach, where you can have an academic guide as a coach on the side, rather than them saying "You need to research...we're a research university which has no direct applications", so it's kind of, I think, those facilities would be really good.

Interviewer

So it’s using books that can't be taken out of the library in a training room within the library here?

Respondent

But also it's, it's easier, like yeah you can take out books but what if you just want to do like a day project, like a quick one as a group? Like, you could be in the library, and you could say, "Okay, we're starting here, this is your brief, and we're going to show you the start and end of projects, so we can start in here and then we can access this and then show you how to synthesise it, how to weigh things up, how to have debate, like accessing that is criticalities in a more meaningful way that you're able to cite things! You're able to append??? your debates and opinions and question them and reflect on them, as a deeper way of learning and then going into the making of things or innovation.

Interviewer

Do you think that having rooms and facilities at Winchester, like the one in Hartley in terms of breakout rooms, will help students? What would drive students and to be more in the library, so that they can work....responding to the comment that you made earlier about the student's had a wish to ????engage with the library.

Respondent

I think it would help but only...it has to be activated by the academic. If it isn't, they won't. Because this was the thing that I found in semester one this year is that I was the only academic who went with the students. So, it was noticeable the engagement of MY students after modelling to them how to utilise the library, get books out, where you could look, like lateral thinking, not just picking for Motion Design, because you’re (studying) motion design, what about all over the place like textiles, things like that, like, could that... it's never been brought into this field, but could it? Or architecture. And then all of a sudden the world opens but you have to activate it.

Unknown Speaker

Have you seen any of your colleagues... Well, because you probably presented the case "Well actually my students progress much faster or they created better materials, because probably when I took them in the library and I opened their minds" Have you seen anyone else that is trying to use your same approach?

Respondent

Yes. Yeah, few people, but obviously it's early days, and my framework is probably still a bit wobbly. Because it's in my thinking is?? influencing it could evolve more. But that's my approach as a growth mind-set person rather than a person, because you do get people who think the opposite, I don't know how you say that but where it's "You either have talent or you don't have talent, you can research or you can't research." That's not true, I don't believe that. I've seen people come and I think "You have no talent"! But like through training, and being more of a coach-on-the-side they now they have talent! No one was born to do what they do.

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