Interviewer

To kick off then, um, how did you learn how to teach undergraduates with primary sources?

Respondent

Oh, my word. How do I learn? Well, I started in a really low role, like a demonstrator. And so I had to DEMONSTRATE how to do stuff. So a lot of it was kinda learning on the job, I'd say. Obviously I later went on and did the PGCAP (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) but by that point I kind of knew everything. I would say it was more about. I learned by like student engagement, you know, and the students want to get engaged with something so it's got to have some tangibility. And so it tended to be, give them things to work FROM would be a great... Often for first year undergraduate students, for example, is that they don't understand, you know if you just said "You've got kind of a game idea", they would have no they'd have nowhere to go, they'd have no idea, or they would just come up with very terrible ideas! So by giving them sort of constraints which happened to be sources of things, or stuff or an activity or whatever, that that is how you start to unlock this, it's how you get them to understand how ideas are generated. And ideas are generated out of our experiences and our ability to look, see, hear and wherever and stuff like that. So, you can't... You could say to a student, "I want you to make an animation", you know, but, and you could say I want you to do a walk cycle, but it would it be so… it's so much better if we take you to a ZOO and say "Here's some animals, film them capture those resources, utilise that" and then suddenly it opens up. So a lot of it is link...A lot of it is locking down. So, I guess I learnt through the fact that it is clear that students need somewhere to START otherwise they don't know where to go. It's not until the third or final year, or even a master's level you can kind of be really open and let them kind of run with stuff. But then by that point they've learned to find their own primary sources! And actually that's what they're doing. So, for me, and I had a couple, I've worked with a couple of really great people. So, I worked for a while with a guy called A (name) you know who runs an advertising branding course at B (place). And he did loads of, he did a bunch of workshops and activities that were really exciting and I've utilised a lot of that kind of work. He knows, I've told him! But so one of the… an example, and this is just to kind of give you the clue of how I learnt, was observational DRAWING is a really important technique for students to learn. And often the thing they think of is that it's when they think of drawing they think it's about creating a great drawing. But when it's about OBSERVING it's about being observant, you know, you're learning to LOOK, actually, you're not learning to DRAW. But the act of using the pencil on the paper helps to reinforce this act of looking. So he had a great workshop where he just got in, like, 12 random objects. We had like an old Makar? car, you know, a bottle of wine, and then did a really structured process for how you unpick what those things are, so like okay "Draw intent, you know, with 10 lines”, some of that kind of stuff. The other thing would be "Document all the symbols that are on here", and then using that information, you could start to decipher where the object might have come from, it's kind of value in the world, you know. And so there's loads of history that can come out of an object, which is kind of based, which again is more based on the radio 4 programme which is History in a Hundred Objects or whatever. So then what we do is do that workshop and then point them to also that radio programme, you know, so then you're getting them to see that you know you can HEAR histories, you can also unpick histories, and they do! And there's lots of ...So I learned on the job! (both laugh). That's a long answer!

Interviewer

That's really interesting! So, apart from learning on the job. Did you receive any support or instruction about how to do that so to speak?

Respondent

Well, I must have done. Yeah, I must have done. I mean obviously there's been mentors at various points. But I mean I started teaching like 20 odd years ago just about, so at that point it's just like, do it, you know. It was again in an art school, it's like just DO stuff. So, I mean, you soon knew when things were going right because students...I mean feedback’s obviously massive now, but even then you'd know if it was rubbish. So you'd try and improve, I guess. Obviously I've done PGCAP (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) thing here. Because, at some point, everyone was... there’s a HEA (Higher Education Academy) requirement, so everyone had to sort of do that. That was hell. I struggled a lot with that. But they loved what I DID, I just wasn't very good at following learning outcomes myself, because they're a bit more prescribed maybe than an Art school one in that sense. And I've been out to observe other people's stuff and then becoming an external examiner and an external advisor in other Institute's I've seen other projects, and you know most of us have been in Art schools or media related places and everyone's pretty open to sharing, actually. Yeah, and I'm a big advocate of open education resources. So a lot of that has always helped me in terms of just looking at those kinds of things online. I mean a few groups that are very open, and I've been a big fan of Creative Commons. So a lot of it was online resources or Open Education stuff and then just talking to people about the practices they undertake. And some of that actually has just been, umm the good thing about that actually, and there's some people working with some of these things. I know people who are working a Moodle and that kind of stuff, making more resources is actually sometimes it's just being able to say, "Oh, I do similar things and actually what I'm doing is all right", because it's being done here there and you know MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) , and stuff like that. But then that's me. I mean I actively seek out all those open resources. I think they are important, I think, things like Moodle Net which is this network of stuff, which I know that the person who's leading that project. So I'm not saying we should invest in that, it's open source anyway! But it's kind of like these collections of resources have happened, which is what you're talking about I think in general is a collection of primary resources that you can then remix, reuse, so that you can enhance your own teaching. So I guess I've had a lot of help from the web!

Interviewer

Okay. So, I think you've possibly answered this question which is do you use any ideas or collection of sources or other instructional resources that you received from others.

Respondent

Yeah, it would be all those things. Open education resources. I don't have any particular ‘go to’ places these days, they're sort of all over the show, which I think what that Moodle Net is trying to sort of be - a bit more of a network where it comes together, yeah.

Interviewer

And do you make any of your own ideas and collections of sources? You mentioned that you're a very a big advocate of open access. Do you make yours available to others?

Respondent

Yeah, I don't mean... I've always... my stuff is always either been under a Creative Commons licence or now or recently with stuff I'm building, which are education tools, they're free and open source software. So that's free as in, you can see the source code, you can do all the stuff ??, as in free beer on free speech, you know, whichever way around it. So I've yes definitely yeah wherever I can, I always try and record stuff and put that somewhere. And I've never really had any formal conversations about how open my stuff is to the university but they've never had a go at me about it!

Interviewer

So when you say you've recorded stuff and you've put it somewhere, where do you tend to put it?

Respondent

So well I started trying not to put it on YouTube because obviously it's owned by Google. But now, stuff on YouTube, actually. Panopto, and then often I will make it a public link, but then I have to be aware because the university policy obviously after so many years it will delete from certain things. So I've got a couple of Panopto courses that don't do that. So often I will move stuff into there and then I'll just make the Panopto link public and just link to that, or I'll try and put the video on YouTube. But YouTube mainly now, just because it's easier. Yeah, it's easy in that sense, unfortunately it's Google but it's easy.

Interviewer

So thinking about your specific course that you do, why have you developed it, how have you developed it over time?

Respondent

Oh, my word! I end up rambling! So why? Okay! 'Why' is an interesting one for lots of reasons. So I was always in the web and interaction design and that kind of stuff is always really interesting to me and that's my background predominantly, although I originally did a degree in animation and that had led me through to coding and whatever. So I'd seen the power that you get to create your own things and release them through the web effectively. And I've always been a gamer really actually. But that has always been kind of an aside thing, but I'd seen at various points the power the games could have for creativity and creative making. There was a game in 2003-2004 a ? called LittleBigPlanet, which enabled you to basically create stuff but with a PlayStation controller. And again, when you look back at things you suddenly join lots of dots that you didn't realise were there. So I'd always been using tools were quite creative through technology, but it wasn't necessary code, because that can be quite a barrier. So I was intrigued. So I'd been working here doing more UX and user experience stuff, and was interested in how we interface with computers and technology as more and more things become connected. And then a lot of those things are starting to become sort of games or gamification or just things that were playful. So it would become interesting and there was starting to become a storytelling method. So this interesting thing was happening. Games is obviously huge now, and it was big anyway, but now it's the biggest entertainment industry on the planet. $152 billion last year is what it was valued at. So we had started to get some illustrative? students who were making games and they're using them as storytelling devices. And I... one of the reasons I loved animation after I did my degree was because it was a medium that you could control. And you could tell stories through it and it might have some impact by current?? because where games is going I could see that games are becoming this medium for storytelling and communicating quite powerful ideas. I think obviously the future will be that games will be LEADING in the area. And randomly it appears to be, I don't know you'd have to ask one of the ex-head of schools, I was asked to put together a games design and art programme for the school. But I was given real free rein of what that might be, which was really great. I'd written previously an animation course at another Institute, that someone then went on to run. And I kind of thought I was doing the same thing! I'd write something and I'd carry on and there were talks about running some sort of some interaction design pathways and things, and I'm not, you know, although I've done external stuff around gamification I've never made a game, as in a game game, you know. But around 2007 or something, and this is a while ago, and so the games course start in 2013-2014 but in 2007, an app called Unity came out on the Mac platform. And there was a lot of democratisation actually of games tools and this one in particular because I'd always use Macs, and this was suddenly a tool that had come to a creative platform. Whereas previously it was on a, what I call, a technology platform: Windows. And at that point I remember discussing with a friend of mine where I was working that we could do a really interesting games course. But we weren't at the right level. But when I was here and it was asked that we could do it, I was at the right level to be on, not only to be able to have the experience to write a programme that could be fun, engaging and experiential and all that kind of stuff, but could also do something different in the game space. And I think being in a Russell Group University means that we can do that. So there's 200 plus games courses, most of them, cater for the triple A industries, the stuff you see in Tescos, Grand Theft Auto and all that rubbish. But at a Russell Group university we shouldn't be doing that, we should be going "Where's games gonna go?" If there's, you know there's 2.6 billion people playing those games and they are definitely not all teenage boys. In fact, there's less of them than people realise, maybe we can you know there's something else happening. And so we can try some stuff out so does that answer the question?

Interviewer

Yes it does brilliantly. Thank you. So, in this course how do you incorporate primary sources in your course?

Respondent

Yeah, okay, well we talked a bit about it. I guess maybe I'll talk about some of the modules, because that might be easier for me just to recall some of the stuff we do. And we've tried lots of different things out. So, I guess the first one... Let's start with the first one. So the first project we do now still, we use a number of sources ???, So what I want them to do in the first project is to come up with a game world. And so to build that you obviously need to have some starting places and those kind of things. And it's to give them the idea that once you've got a few things in place the worlds build themselves. So one of the examples I would give, and then I'll explain how we use sources, but then this is a source as well I guess, is say if you take the game like Mario. If you unwind it and just say Mario is an Italian plumber. And suddenly the whole world builds itself. That's why there's pipes, that's why there's turtles that's why he looks the colours he does, that's why he's in the environment he is. Sure there's a silly story overlaid where he's always the prince/damsel in distress nonsense. Right? But the world can build itself out of 'Italian plumber'. And so we send the students to the Barbican. So that's the first primary source, which it's not technically brutalist architecture, but for the sake of argument let's just keep it in that space. And so, they go there, and we give them a series of tasks to gather from that space. Some of that is drawings, some of that is videoing some of that is sound recording, some of that is writing down their experiences, you know, of what it feels like in that space because there's quite obviously stark lighting, stark building. We also get a little tour from the lady there, (she) explains why it was designed the way it is and why the walkways are up high and the idea of the space and the gardens, and I can't remember a lot because I don't go on the tour anymore, I'm doing other stuff! But it's so much history and specific planning around that building so there's loads of stuff that they can take. They then obviously take all their original resources from the activity. And then we get the library in who present a series of books which will be about predominantly brutalist architecture. And form follows functions, so Bauhaus sort of stuff for them to then extend that resource. And that's kind of...and from them they build a pitch for what their game might be and often it will may revolve around lighting, like puzzle games around light because there's lots of light or it might be somewhere?? to history around. There are some things around the boat??, the original WW2 (World War 2), space dock?? Well, you know, I mean. It was built because of things around... There was something there before the Barbican that relates to WW2 if I remember. So there's some histories. They also one year they were able to see like architectural drawings and things from the original space, and then that... so some of the students would then transform that into ideas around, sort of, you know, grids and compartmentalization so it's a trend??? They're not building Barbican the game, they're using those experiences and those sources to translate into different types of ideas and the key for that, and this is more a longer bit and maybe off the primary thing, is to show them that you can have about a million ideas in the same starts, and it's like those starts can seed lots of things IF you follow these paths of research, which is you know the books. A lot of that is introducing, having experiences followed by "Here's how you access the library!" in a controlled... and the lady brings physical books over and shows us them you know, and "Here's how you get on the web" so then they can look up research papers so it's those kind of things. So a lot of our projects, particularly in the first year, tend to revolve around that type of thing, to setting up an experience and maybe a text or series of resources that are related to the theme, probably. I mean, most of them sit within that, almost the same parameters. Let's think.

Interviewer

And I was going to say, can you just explain briefly WHY you're incorporating primary sources in that way?

Respondent

Well predominately because it's one of… they're not going to learn...I don't want them to really learn about the Barbican, I want them to learn a bunch of other techniques and tricks and things whether that's drawing or kind of magpie gathering of information. So what I'm doing is trying to set up an experience to actually, they kinda don't realise what they're learning. And then because we get them to document that. So they would document in sketchbooks or they move into blogs, and they do reflection upon their experience, then that's when they start to realise "Oh, I learned all these skills" and then suddenly they realise those are quite applicable. And a lot of is getting them to understand critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. And the best thing to do is set up some constraints, give them some parameters to fit within, and that has to come from a source of some description. And I think we talked briefly about...I think I'd struggle for anything to be anything other than a primary source all the time actually for us because we're not...we're kind of translating a lot of things, you know.

Interviewer

So what are the challenges... are there any other challenges in incorporating them?

Respondent

I mean the challenge is finding the TIME to gather an appropriate set of resources that provide a journey. So I talked briefly about doing like the Canterbury Tales, as a source to start them off and then the student's go on a trip and they do a bit of the pilgrims walk and I provide them some mediaeval sort of bits, but it's like trying to FIND that material was quite tricky. It's like okay I remember some of the Canterbury Tales. We did before as well with Romeo and Juliet and we've done a lot of stuff with books, often narrative texts. We had poems this year for second years, but it's kind of like having enough... digging into those enough for you to say “Is there enough DEPTH for the students to really run with this and see where they're going to go?” So for me sometimes it's just I don't have the time to find those sources. I don't think you could ever change that without... I think that's why sometimes projects stay the same. Particularly when we're doing lots of project-based learning, is that it's a big piece of work to create projects like that and if it's working, then you don't really want to change too much because suddenly it's an issue. I'll give you one where we have changed it just as another example. So we had a crazy golf project here every year. So there's two reasons for doing that, picking that as the primary source. The primary source was crazy golf the genre. One of those is because you can narrow down a player. So you can start to say "Okay is it like..." There are actually if you play what they call mini golf in a kind of competitive sense and they are a particular breed of individuals! And then also there's obviously families that go and play crazy golf you know, we see in America, they've got... there seems to be one at every petrol station or whatever. So that gives you an experience you can design towards. And the other reason we do it is they get to build like a digital version, they do this all in teams. But we also got them to build a physical course as well. And what that was about was that was for them to learn. So they weren't learning how to make crazy golf courses, they were learning how to design for players and an audience, and they were learning how to make 3D models. But often that's really tricky and can be really boring. But again we gave them some parameters. We had a couple of books around conditional design and some modular design processes, so you can take a square and you can use that to build. So we give them a bunch of constraints and there will be books as well. So they are obviously primary sources! And they love it because they're not you know we're not just doing 3D modelling workshops, and they're not... And when they do sculpting, again for example, we get them to physically make models. And yes, again we might give them again resources for that and that might be from films and whatever. So, we changed that project to be an augmented reality project this year. And thankfully I gave this to one of my staff and said, "Find the resources that are going to make this happen." And so she spent a lot of time working it out. But the thing was you????augmented reality project for a couple of reasons. One is because it's interesting technology, something's happening with it, it's certainly more interesting than VR, and students are quite interested in those things. So, I'm like okay. But you could teach them how augmented reality works if you show them some workshops, which is pretty boring. You know, it is. So what we decided…well, it was sort of in a moment of madness we... I realised that because this Z (name of school) is 150 years old this year and we're doing some pieces, is that there's an archive of history that exists. That exists on this campus predominantly which is where we have mainly been. But it's a physical, it existed physically at some point. Well we can bring that back to life through augmented reality, so we can augment the entire campus with this history. So those students can be working from the archive of materials, it's the history of Z (name of school). Some of that exists physically, some of that exists in the town hall here, some of it no longer exists. It's obviously in photographs, so it's a whole archive. And we're basically saying, "Here's an archive of stuff. We want you to think about that and transform the campus by bringing this stuff to life." So the worst way of doing it might be, and we've never done it, you know I've never done this project so it's a risk, the WORST way of doing it might be they hold up their phone and we see a poster from 1967 that happened to be there right? That could be the worst way, which is probably how most augmented reality things are. But what we're going to ask them do is like, okay, you know, "How can you respond to that as an artist as a maker, so that people have an experience?" So again, we're taking them to instead of making them walk the Pilgrims Way or whatever, we're taking them to do escape rooms, which is a team based puzzle game that they play, but obviously they do lots of problem solving, team learning. And the idea is again to try and push the boundaries of that technology. So, but that's a BIG piece of work. So that's why we often will kind of try not to tweak things up too much. The other thing we do, and again these are just some primary sources, we use a series of Hitchcock and Kubrick films as a starting points for game mechanics. So we ask students to look at a camera move or an actor moving there and rather than making Rear Window the game, we look at what's the parameters that's in that? What might be a mechanic move, it's the movements of those people or maybe it's the way the camera's been directed or like The Shining, if the camera's following a path, how does that become a game mechanic? And then extrapolating that out to be a new idea. So it might be a 'waves' sort of movement, suddenly it becomes what would be Flappy Birds or something but he started from just thinking "Oh, this is quite a nice movement". So, well a primary sources could be our bodies! We do a lot of filming and the students will film each other to make resources but that's particular for all genre so I don't know about ???really...

Interviewer

That's great. So you mentioned that you send someone else up to the Barbican with your students and stuff so who else is… Who else do you use on your module for...

Respondent

I mean, so we have a lot of guests from the industry, from innovative organisations. So we'd have like so... Over the next semester, I mean, we've got lots of people to come, we have a musician come and they will often provide maybe some music, those kind of things. We often have people come and talk with their primary sources, so C (name) will come who's the CEO of Y (name of a game). She will come with data around kind of the issues that revolve around that and students will often write in response to those things actually as academic essays. We've got a games journalist who comes and just talks about what it's like to work in the field. I mean, he is a primary source he is, and he's telling you about his sources and how it works. And for most of those ones, students will respond in either reflective blogs or in academic texts, because it might be a thematic thing they're interested in, which then in turn, actually informs their making. I think that's predominantly in the third year? Do we get anyone else in? I mean, again we've had companies come in. Companies come in with their...I don't know if this counts, but they come in with their sources, like often a problem they're trying to solve. So we've had the National Health Service come and talk about an issue they've got around, maybe, mental health, or well-being. And so the students will respond to that. So that again it's probably data-based? Same with... we had National Air Traffic come in because they were trying to, like, one of the big problems they're struggling with is that the airways are quite difficult to navigate. But they could be, as much as flying an aeroplane is bad in terms of carbon output whatever they say, but there's better ways of flying through the air that they currently can't utilise because of certain laws or people worried about their village being flown over. But actually if they allowed the occasional plane to fly over the village, the village might exist in 20 years time rather than be completely destroyed in the climate crisis. So, we get companies in. I don't know whether those things count or not.

Interviewer

Yeah, that's great. Thank you. And so, moving on to finding primary sources. How do you go about finding them?

Respondent

Well, I don't use Google but I use a search engine that respects my privacy! So I tend to use a ...I tend to… it's TALKING to people. I tend to discuss ideas, we tend to discuss ideas. So it's yes, okay, there's some searching but actually it's conversation. You know, go and talk to the library, I talk to my team. We're trying to think of stuff that will be FUN and engaging and get the students MAKING. And so then we're like okay "How do we get them to make?" So we want them to make this thing. How do you utilise the thinking through that making process. So I would say it's conversation and then yeah, some decent searching. I use DuckDuckGo. But you can obviously search against Google and I tend to just use a number. This is the thing. It's a number of different searches. Some of that might be web, you know some of the library's catalogue stuff for keywords, some of it might be DuckDuckGo or then Google 'cos you get different results. So, for me, the big trick with that is that kind of understanding the digital literacy stuff. And also following things, whether that's on Instagram or Twitter or in other networks. Again, I do less of that now because both of those are toxic mediums as far as I'm concerned. So I tend to now... I mean, I'm on a thing called Micro Blog, which is basically a blogging platform, but it has a social element in, but it's a chronological timeline, it's not messed around with, but what you're actually seeing is just people's blog posts and some of them are short, some of them along. So I'm following more and more blogs again, using an RSS reader. So that's pretty unique I'd say. I would suspect most people are using Google and Twitter to start! But talking to people. You know I've got some small like Slack groups, where it's just educators who are doing interesting things. And podcasts, those things. So I was listening to a podcast yesterday, a GDC (Game Developers Conference) one, it's about marketing Indie games. We're about to do a whole thing with the third years and they have to market their product. This is a new one that's come out, and it fits perfectly with what we've been trying to do anyway. So I'm... now I'm going to be... that podcast will be the primary source for the start of that project, followed by someone who's going to come and do a branding workshop and someone's going to come in and talk about how you advocate through social media.

Interviewer

Brilliant, thank you!

Respondent

It's one of those things, you know, where you can't turn your brain off! You stay up and don't go to sleep! What am I doing?!

Interviewer

Do you keep a collection of resources? Digital physical...in your teaching and what are the challenges?

Respondent

Well, the challenge is finding it again actually. So yeah I do keep a collection, and it tends to be just folders of stuff. I often have found that I've taught, or delivered something and I've forgotten I have done it. And then I'll be trying to research another tool or topic and realise I've written half of it before, which is so annoying and so frustrating. And in physical, I mean obviously I get a lot of books sent through and try and kind of get through those. I've got audible stuff so I try and have audio books have a lot of things now. And there's a couple of... I subscribe to a couple of things I call Stack, and I can't remember what the other one is called, but they send you like random interesting contemporary magazines around different subjects. So there's one on like female skateboarding was the one I got this month. And then there's another one which is like the history of Glasgow. And I just...you get one different one every month. So, yeah, and the Guardian, subscribing to that is, like, you know, so, yes, I keep both. But the worst thing is finding it, resurfacing those things. Because I record a lot of my talks, I have in the past found actually that's been... that source for me has been so beneficial for me to redo that talk. Because, at that time, when I created it, I'd have been deep in the weeds of what it really is all about. And then a year will go by, it's not out of date but it's great information and I want to resurface that and maybe tweak it a little bit, but not a lot 'cos some things are pretty static in terms of that. But then I'm spending my time doing a new talk so I need to remember the detail and I found myself just listening to myself give the talk at double speed the year before. And again because I'm in games a lot of the primary sources are quite ephemeral, they come and go quite rapidly. And so, we have Slack for games. So that's a messaging platform where I can share those materials. And one of the reasons I have a paid version that I can't migrate to Teams or anything the university would like me to do, is because that's pretty good at search, but what it's better at, is I can scroll through the timeline to this time last year and I'll find materials I was sharing with the students that are relevant again and I've got some new material. So I go okay, as of December 2019 what did I do? Okay, I was finding these things because I knew that and they're just as relevant but I've got some added stuff. I don't think anyone's cracked how to really keep those resources together appropriately, the way that you navigate them and stuff is difficult. I mean I'm creating some things myself to do stuff but, yeah, that's a long answer to your question.

Interviewer

Yeah, that's good. But how do your students find and access primary sources?

Respondent

That's interesting, probably the same way and then obviously through Blackboard through me setting up the meeting or the event or the activity. And hopefully, by doing that they start to understand that it is just a process, you know, and that's it. I mean loads of them listen to podcasts, a lot of them listen to like, YouTube seems to do some quite lengthy stuff now. I'm trying to point them to... again, one of the things we're doing the first year is to talk about what is the difference between like you know, "Why would a book be more useful than a web page?" And it's explained that it's been gone through some sort of editorial curatorial process right? And that gives it a level of gravitas obviously. So it's often for students is trying to point them back to some of those things and go "Okay yeah, that thing looks great on designing web but is there a FutureLearn course that does it instead? Or is there a LinkedIn Learning thing?" Some are more commercial and so there is not necessarily the level of rigour in that sense, because we've all had books that are blooming terrible, and say things you think: “Who actually researched and signed this off?” So often it's just they're finding the same stuff but the main thing is trying to encourage them to find stuff that's gone through some scrutiny and some rigour you know, that's all.

Interviewer

When you're wanting to get them to find primary sources and things, do you direct them? Do you give them the specific sources or do just expect them to just go off and do their own thing?

Respondent

Well it's progressive. So at the very beginning we've directed. We've had to actually do more direction than we used to in the past. Students come very much, particularly when they're progressing straight from ‘A’ level, with an expectation they will be GUIDED. And we have to slowly unwind that guidance a lot slower than we used to. So in the first year, we have very prescribed activities for each week and we give them reflective questions and things and tell them. Week two, one of the questions is, "Have you been to the library?" No! And then we say that's a scaffolding framework for kind of how you could then go forward to do it yourself so we slowly on. So the answer is we scaffold and slowly remove the scaffolding as quickly as we can but we're finding actually you have to do quite a bit more scaffolding in the beginning than we used to in the past. I'm going to blame ‘A’ levels at school for that! In the UK anyway.

Interviewer

So that's the answer to what challenges you face basically in doing that is the standard that they're coming in?

Respondent

Their standard is great. The problem is it's so regimented, and they've been taught to pass exams so they don't have any other thinking skills that go along with it. They're great, they could write essays better than me, that's for sure. You know they're getting amazing ‘A’ levels in that sense. But, to do something creative and to go out on their own if they haven't... they just freak out, they don't know what they're doing. And they expect, and also they expect everything to be... They're worried about what they're going to get as a mark all the time. And a lot of Art schools didn't used to worry about that kind of stuff you just pass or fail, those kind of things, and of course that's come more and more through. And so my main thing is that we struggle with is undoing that damage actually. That they're playing to the exam, there's these rules, whereas actually what I say to them is "If you creatively investigate and think and find things and respond to those things and reflect upon that response, you can get great grades, but you'll also have a great experience and you have great things that you've made and to not worry about the number at the end. To be just thinking about this journey." And they are worried because they don't... It's much more open. So that's the struggle now is just trying to make them trust we're going in the right direction and that it's going to be quite open and quite free and also they need to learn some stuff OUTSIDE of what we show them. Now when we show them maybe a piece of software, and we were showing them like a fraction of what that thing is possible, and we're saying "There's LinkedIn Learning, you can go and learn these skills here. We're going to focus on critical thinking and design thinking while you're in the studio spaces, so we're not going to do much more of that, but if you want to go and learn it here's a source." And because again they're used to school or whatever is nine to five, that's where all the learning happens, they don't realise that learning happens ALL the time and that they can take some ownership of it. And that may be on, you know, I often say to students when they sit in the cafe rather than discussing I don't know whatever TV programme, Love Island or some nonsense, I don't know what they watch, but they could discuss something that's a little bit more interesting! Create a review magazine or something you know.

Interviewer

So, how does the way in which you teach with primary sources relate to the goals for students' learning in your discipline?

Respondent

Well, they often...to some degree they often don't. Well, there's a couple of...well some of them you know it depends. That's not true is it? That's wrong. I said it earlier, so if we're teaching observational drawing, then we give them artefacts physical objects that we ask them to deconstruct in a particular way. And what we're getting them to learn is not really anything about those objects at this point, but ways of understanding the world. So ways of seeing in particular, so you might use you know John Berger texts, John Berger videos, and then we get them to do an exercise embeds that type of thinking, which gets you to think about how we see stuff and how why semiotics and all that kind of stuff. But often we don't...Those things are all embedded, and I don't think the students would ever leave going "I learned semiotics", but they did. But they learnt it in a way that it becomes a natural process in their making. Other times it might be just a vehicle for something else. So, if we're sticking them on a bus, and they're walking from halfway to Salisbury or wherever, it's the *experience* that becomes the manifestation of making new ideas, so that they're not tangentially linked in that sense. Does that...?

Interviewer

Yes, thank you. And you do teach your students what a primary source is?

Respondent

We do mention it yeah. I mean we talk about it. We kind of... it tends to be talked about in the remix sense as well, actually. So I do a talk about remix culture and so then I do a thing about...we get various remixes of like Romeo and Juliet or something. So, West Side Story. So we kind of talk about that, how that would be primary, secondary? But I think because when we've talked a little bit about it, we don't even say we go near secondary sources in that sense. Maybe they are secondary in that they aren't the original text or something but then we're not...it's primary to us in that sense because we're doing something else with it, but yeah..., There's other staff who'd probably answer that better. I remember having a weird conversation one meeting where someone was mixing up primary and secondary sources and it was really confusing the heck out of everyone! But eventually they suddenly realised they've gotten themselves in a muddle! Well what would be other secondary sources? Give me some other examples that you consider as a secondary source.

Interviewer

Well I've already given you the one about the books.

Interviewer 2

Anything that's been remixed and that is not the original, so a video of you recording your talk, that is the primary source, because it's the recording of the talk. But then if you then modified it and you change it and things and edited it or...

Respondent

Shortened it or something.

Interviewer 2

That will not... well no, if it's reusing on another thing. So I'm gonna go talk when I'm show you. My talk them becomes secondary

Respondent

Oh, okay. Yeah.

Interviewer 2

Okay, it's like when it's been mediated by something else and changed.

Respondent

Okay. I mean I point them to a lot of TED Talks. I often to do that to be fair! I mean I have citations. So that I guess to the students is, because I'm showing them, it's secondary isn't it in that sense if we've got Marshall McLuhan or whatever citation? Yeah, we sort of tell them. Yeah, maybe I should tell them more explicitly! Or maybe it's because I don't fully understand!

Interviewer

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

Respondent

Okay, tell me what you mean by those two terms because I think I know but I don't want to...

Interviewer

Well the development of information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgments about the information that you found.

Respondent

I mean that's massive because there's obviously fake news and all that kind of stuff. And in terms of how that works, particularly the third year, they are...we're trying to create games for good, games for social change, games of agency, games that get people to THINK. And that could be global issues, political issues, that might just be health and those kinds of things. And so in doing that, you have to obviously be aware of what information you're starting from. So we've had students do... a student does a project on homelessness, for example, that's one of the projects we got. I can give lots of examples. So, the first primary source was seeing homeless people. And they were like "Why do I notice all these homeless people and I walk to uni?" And then they went and looked at a lot of the data from Gov.uk, and they built that into a presentation to showcase the data. And that then manifested itself into a game that was designed to get people to think about that subject matter. It was just a great game. And in the game, whenever someone played it, there was an understanding of a sense of loss because you lose a character halfway through the game, and you're back at the same environment but the game is much harder because you no longer have this person with you. And that is to represent the loss of a home in terms of the same interactions. Voting or whatever suddenly becomes way much more difficult when you don't have a fixed abode. But most people just came away thinking that it's about if you lose something or someone during your journey, that things are not good. And it had a great emotional response. So they're crucial. They need to understand and they need to know how Google searches. I mean I have a talk about how a Google search colours what they see. It's so...I'm really interested in surveillance capitalism. So my thoughts around that are quite strong in terms of what the students need to understand, I think is really important. I mean, I think it's so... especially when a lot of our students are using digital technology to create the things and people are interacting with our stuff through digital technology. Most people don't understand the manipulation and ad revenue business models driving all of that technology and that is a problem, because we are also expected to put most of our knowledge into these systems, and that knowledge is thus in the, you know the same as a computer, is extending me as an individual. And so I think it's really important to know that. I don't think...I think we are battling against the fact that they should have been told us at eight years old, and understand what it means to seek out... Yeah, and also to understand...there's loads. I watched, there's a web comic collector yesterday which was about the fact that you're predisposed to certain information. It starts you thinking about the untruth that George Washington's teeth were made out of wood or something and it turns out they're made out of our things. And then it also turns out that some of those teeth were probably from slaves. And suddenly, if you thought George Washington was a really good guy you might suddenly have this different picture and it was interesting. So there's like loads of work to be done on that. That web comic gets very sweary so I'm not going to recommend it!

So yes, the two things are totally embedded.

Interviewer

So, what formats do your students engage with primary sources?

Respondent

So what do you mean by formats?

Interviewer

You mentioned books.

Respondent

Books, podcasts, videos, journals, physical things like exhibitions, museums, objects, experiences, so being somewhere. Some of it's making, you know, actually. I've got one student team making a game, effectively it's a mindful game, you don't actually do anything in the game you just have this nice journey, and you're on this canoe and not much happens and you can interact with stuff, but it's based around the ideas like some mindful techniques but embedded. So rather than being like Headspace, the game, it's got this other stuff. So they're going canoeing on Monday to get that experience, so they can embed it in the game, that's a primary thing I guess. One of the students watched a YouTube video on how to make an oar out of waste wood. They gathered a bunch of wood and made a physical it looks amazing oar! But they're making a video game, so they're engaging in primary sources in lots of ways! (laughs)

Interviewer

So you also mentioned about them going to the Barbican and obviously all over the place by the sound of it. And you also mentioned that you send someone else off to the Barbican with them nowadays. But is someone else teaching them there or is it? So when you go to the Barbican or wherever, is there someone there who is showing them stuff or is it the person who takes them?

Respondent

It's both. So the tutor who is taking them has often set up a series of tasks related to investigating that space. So the more kind of creative design stuff. And then we often have a tour there which will be with a tour guide. And then that person will explain very specialised stuff. And in all of them, we've always tried to do that. So when we went to Canterbury and when we did the Canterbury Tales and we went to Salisbury, we had someone meet us there at the cathedral to talk about some of the stuff. So there's always a specialist involved somehow, even if there is a member of staff. We tend to have set up, like the escape rooms. We're going to go to the escape rooms, and the students are going to play that game. There's going to be someone there who's going to explain it. They're also going to explain to us how they designed some of these puzzles because that's something that we also need to learn more about! And then we'll run a workshop where we unpack that experience, and we show them another...you know from a text of how they create, it's this thing called experience mapping where you can map an experience over time and then when you're making a game, obviously it's all about that. And if you're building in a physical escape room, they've got 45 minutes to... gotta get out of the room, so you have to ensure that there's peaks and troughs in their enjoyment and that kind of stuff.

Interviewer

So do your students use any digital tools to examine or interact with or present the sources?

Respondent

Yeah, we do. I mean, the thing is we use loads! So we've got a bunch of different things we've tried. So, we will often use like quiz things, so there might be some interaction where we maybe present some sort of topic or theme, and they will do some quick quizzing. We've got Slack which they can SHARE resources which is, I mean sharing resources is the most important thing for us actually. I think sharing is hugely important in terms of learning. And because we're in that community we can DO it. And then we have other tools where they will respond to each other. So often I'm working predominantly with the third year now. So they will give presentations and then we have some tools where they can respond in real time to those presentations so they can give instant feedback. Often that's teed up with some questions. So I'll be asking, well what I tend to say is using PowerPoint to present the thing is the easy part actually, but it's the people in the audience at that point it's the third years who've got to then say " Okay, where can they take this? What primary sources should they go to next?" So that might be "Okay go and look at this film. Go and read this book, find this journal." And so they type that into a system where they give real time responses. We used Etherpad in the past, which is like Google Docs and Word is a bit like that now. But I'm developing my own tools ??? the spacialisation of that information. So it's what they call a spatial hypertext tool. But to begin with, they type into that and then when they're finished, what you can do is you can go to spatialized view of that data, and you can start to arrange things in which would be in like a networked graph, effectively. And that's NEW and I'm just testing that, but that's particularly aimed at design education and that reflective practice. So we've got... What else do we use? I mean, they will do their own podcasts, so they record ones. I often do one with them with the third years every year so we record and we ask them some questions and that's digital. The thing is, everything you do is digital these days, so they use Blackboard, obviously, they use all the university systems, use LinkedIn Learning. We use OneNote, we've tried some shared OneNote things which has been quite good. Obviously we use OneDrive to throw all the ??? So all the students will upload all the... The big thing, and this is for me though, is the Community of Practice is really important. And so those resources need to be available for everyone. A lot of the problem with most systems is it's siloed information. So they might, for example, they might have used Trello to do their tasks and that tends to be, unless they SHARE it, it tends to be just to themselves. So what I'm trying every time I think about it is, "How do we put it somewhere that everyone can access it and everyone can then respond to it?" So if all the PowerPoints are before the talk, uploaded to OneDrive, everyone can see them in advance, they can open them on their own machines if they want to, they can interact directly with that thing whilst they're presenting. And that for me, you know....And we've used things like Twitter before, hashtags on Instagram. I can't, you know, it's just ridiculous! I mean we use them all, it's just mind numbing!

Interviewer

So do you have any challenges related to the formats and tools?

Respondent

Silos! That's the main thing for me. It's like those...You know, so, again, as an example, because, and this is one of the reasons the tool I'm building is free and open source and you can turn it on, its private, it has a bunch of respect for your ownership of data. But I went to a conference, and often those conferences will now use Twitter as the back channel right? Now I refuse to participate in Twitter anymore because I think it's toxic. It's clearly got its own agendas with the timelines are being manipulated for advertising purposes, and most things on there are pretty argumentative in the end, but at this conference they say okay here's a hashtag use it right? And I'm excluded from that party basically because I don't want to participate and for me that's, that is an inclusive design concern that it's not inclusive, and that's a choice for sure but some things we don't have a choice. And so for me it's that state. It's two things. Most digital tools are owned by Silicon Valley technology companies that think what white men know best is the best. So that's bad because it's not true, because it's not you know they don't know best, and I am a white middle aged man and I like technology, but I know that that's nonsense. So most of those technologies are owned by Silicon Valley, and nearly all of those are built around the business model of surveillance capitalism. And people don't understand what that means. And that's and that's why they're siloed, and the secondary part that I was concerned with is that data. So, as a quick example, we went to a Digital Education Working Group. And we were going to use Padlet to basically create some Post-It note things. And I said "We should use my tool." And they were like "Well why? We've got the thing." So I said "Well it's free and open source and it will give me a chance to test it in this kind of environment to see if it would work." We used my tool, it worked fine did exactly what we needed which is basically to gather some digital Post-It notes, which is one of the elements of it. I then went and looked at Padlets’ terms of conditions afterwards, and bearing in mind we're in the Digital Education Working Group right so we're pretty savvy I would think! We would have given up the IP addresses of all our devices, the information of what type of devices we have into that system right now. It wouldn't surprise me and I'm not, you know, that information, likely could be shared to third parties which it says it can be, so it can be shared to a third party supplier that sees that we're all running five year old Macs. So there's a group of people in the University of X (name) who are all running five year old Macs. Suddenly we've got supplies phoning up our IT department saying, "Hey, we've got a really good deal on Macs.” You know, so...

Interviewer

So, you've got a meeting in two minutes!

Respondent

Great brilliant! Sorry.

Interviewer

Have you got a second? What advice would you give colleagues who are new to teaching with primary sources?

Respondent

For me it's getting a great mentor now actually. Finding someone you can shadow. So one of the things I did with B (name of person) and it was hard work, and I hope she appreciated it, I'm sure she did as she's doing her PGCAP (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice) was basically I continue to run the first year for the first year that she was here. She just co- taught it with me. And so I shared those materials, and then we did it and I explained at various points throughout the year what the motivations were and why. And then I said "Okay you can do whatever you want, because I don't want you to deliver my teaching, that would be horrible for you, but you know what we do and how we excite and engage the students." And so then she's run with that and is creating some great resources. In fact, you know, stuff better than me, because I was still doing four jobs at the time anyway. And so that for me the advice is find someone you can shadow, just to get some appropriate... Just to see how it's done from some experienced staff. I kind of just do this stuff because I've been doing it and it's hard for me to articulate some of the why's, where's and whatever because I just kind of learned on the job, most of it, to be fair. So, yeah, that's my advice - find someone. Get your line manager to find someone you can shadow for a good period but in a co-teaching fashion, so there's ownership at the beginning and then hand over ownership. Not just like watching someone teach, and then being expected to deliver the same thing. Of course that would be terrible. Whereas I was sharing the stuff with B (name of person) in advance, explaining why we were doing the thing that we're doing, running the workshop so she could see it, getting her involved, bringing her in, you know, and then when things weren't maybe working explaining what you could do, you know, and then being open to have conversations afterwards. And looking at student feedback, that's really important. Getting as many of your students you can to fill in those feedback things honestly and appropriately and not worrying about that. And then using your balance to see what could and couldn't work. I mean this year, great feedback on one of the more lecture-based modules. I've been trying to get out of that mode for ages and this, but it's a lot of information. But I know we can deliver it much more interactively, but it's having the TIME to do that. But I'm feeling the feedback has really gone again so we'd like to have more interactivity more likely other sessions. And it's like, yeah, I definitely can do that. So there's... but it's having the time. But yes, student feedback, listen to it in an appropriate way, tease out what they're actually saying because they say that and get someone who's got some experience you can watch and work with.

Interviewer

Brilliant.

Respondent

Is that all right?

Interviewer 2

Can I just really quick one and it's about how do you reference and cite different sources? Do you follow standards? What about for videos and...

Respondent

I try and do everything with Harvard referencing protocol where I can, and that includes all sources. The thing I struggle with often is finding the blooming page number. I used to use an app called Papers and ReadCube, which is like EndNote, but not as horrendously horrible. But most of those don't work very well either, you know. So I find it a pain. Often I'm just like, if I'm really struggling, I just put on the information, the link the URL, it would be like, okay, you know, but of course what I'm saying the students Harvard reference all your essays and wherever, and then I haven't had the time to Harvard reference it, they're like "Blooming heck, you've just slapped a link on." And I'm "Well I didn't have time to Harvard reference the YouTube link, you just need the YouTube link." So yeah, I try and follow the Harvard referencing system, because that's what the University of X does.

Interviewer

Thank you. Good, thank you very much.

Respondent

Cool.

Interviewer

It's really helpful.

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