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Teaching Archive Skills: A Pedagogical Journey with Impact

Archives and Records: The Journal of the Archive and Records Association

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Karen Watson, Special Collections Archivist

Karen qualified as an archivist in 2010 and took up the post of Special Collections Archivist at the University of Sussex in 2017, becoming a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in 2018. Karen is responsible for the day to day management of the Special Collections team, care of the University's Special Collections and developing and delivering teaching sessions for HE students.

Kirsty Pattrick, Mass Observation Projects Officer

Kirsty is responsible for managing and developing the current Mass Observation Project and supporting partnership research projects across both phases of the Mass Observation Archive; generating new material, increasing its use amongst academic and non-academic communities, collaborating with partners and building its profile for learning, teaching and research. A large part of her role is teaching students in Higher Education across different disciplines, introducing them to archives and developing their research skills using this unique collection. Kirsty joined Special Collections in February 2011 and became a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in 2013. Her role is funded by the Mass Observation Archive Trust.

Teaching with Special Collections: A Pedagogical Journey with Impact

This article considers the pedagogical practice of the Special Collections staff team at the University of Sussex and the impact of the group visit experience on student learning. It addresses our current group visit teaching offer to students at the University of Sussex and our move to a more student led active learning approach. It considers the use of the 'pedagogical toolkit' including technology within the classroom, and the creation of a document identification form to encourage critical thinking. Our aim for any group visit is to provide a positive first experience and get students enthused about using archives. In 2017 we undertook our own impact study, detailed within the article, to follow the student journey with the intention of finding out if students returned to use archives for their studies as a result of their group visit. Moving forward, this article considers our future activities in response to the impact study and institutional initiatives.

Keywords: impact, higher education, archives, skills, pedagogy

Introduction

In 2013, the Special Collections department moved location from the University of Sussex Library building on campus to a new purpose built archive resource centre, The Keep. The Keep partnership brings together University staff and its collections including the papers of Virginia and Leonard Woolf, the Mass Observation Archive and the papers of Rudyard Kipling, and the staff and collections of East Sussex Record Office and Brighton and Hove Royal Pavilion and Museums. It is a short walk from the University campus and is designed to open access to collections of local, national and international interest. The Keep has been a key factor in the changing pedagogical design of our group sessions. Moving location away from the main University campus has influenced our contextual relevance to the students. This means we must be clear about the purpose of our teaching sessions. We need to explain to students why they are at The Keep, what The Keep is and how can it can be of use to them. We prioritise answering these questions as our aim is to generate interest and enthusiasm in primary sources, to get students to consider archives as a resource and to feel comfortable and

confident in using primary source material. Using archives can inspire, motivate and provide the means to learn and practice the skills of critical thinking, evaluation and analysis which are considered transferable skills for a graduate. Providing a transferable skills set is valued by students as Daniels and Yakel discovered in a survey of archive use by university students.¹ We aim to use pedagogical design to create opportunities for students to learn these skills in our sessions, by not teaching subject specific detail but by encouraging a student led discovery approach to the archives.

Current teaching offer

Having moved to The Keep, we are now able to access a wide variety of collection resources that enables us to offer more sessions and attract non-traditional disciplines. Our current teaching sessions for undergraduates and postgraduates are on a request basis, usually for a single seminar session. In the academic year 2016-17 we provided 49 sessions for higher education students, 13 of which were for undergraduates. In the following year, we provided 58 sessions with 36 of these for undergraduates. The students were taking modules in the following subject areas: English, Media, History, Sociology, American Studies, Art History, Design and Material Culture, Digital Humanities, International Accounting and Corporate Governance, Linguistics, Childhood and Youth Studies and Photography. The diversity of disciplines reflects how we use the collections and innovations to make them relevant, but it goes beyond this to a desire from tutors to have students use primary sources. It also indicates the willingness of the tutor to schedule a session that might not fit exactly with their subject specialism but supports a broader primary source and transferable archive skills agenda. Forming and maintaining relationships with individual tutors over time has proved vital in allowing us to increase our involvement within sessions through demonstrating knowledge and skills.

The sessions are designed to encourage active learning, for students to be hands-on, and to participate in exercises to support their critical thinking skills. We provide top tips for accessing archives and signpost further information. In most sessions, there is use of our 'pedagogical tool kit' comprising videos, technologies and handouts that are described in detail later in this article. The sessions usually fall in to one of two scenarios. The first scenario is an introduction to The Keep, using archives and how to handle documents as part of a tutor led session. Sessions are usually two hours with student numbers ranging from eight to 40 with the average around 15. The room is set up with three or four islands of tables that have different items from the archives on them. After the introduction, the students are put into small groups and spend around 15 minutes looking through the documents on each table. The use of small groups is suitable as students are encouraged to talk and share findings with each other, which can provide a supportive atmosphere in unfamiliar environments like The Keep.² The rest of the session after the introduction is led by the tutor who may have questions for the students to answer that relate to that week's topic or reading. We have found that although the sessions are planned as tutor-led, the actual involvement of the tutor can vary. Increasingly the Special Collections staff member is involved throughout by answering questions, looking up items on the catalogue as well as invigilating use of documents. This is a good example of the confidence we have gained through achieving the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCert HE) and sharing those outcomes with other staff. The PGCertHE is taken by all staff at the University of Sussex who have teaching responsibility. Successfully completing the course means gaining a recognised professional qualification and fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. Having this qualification means as a staff group, we are able to take flexible approach and react to what is taking place in the session.

The second scenario is that we lead the whole session, often in the presence of the tutor. Conversations with tutors in preparation, enable us to make a choice of documents that is relevant to the subject, but these sessions have a broader remit to introduce students to archives and get them thinking about using archives for their assignments. The format of the session is generally the same with the introduction and table islands for small group working. However, as Special Collections staff are leading the session, we also do a group activity aimed at getting students to look closely at the same document and answer questions relating to the document. This is an activity designed to introduce and practise critical thinking as using primary sources is a key way to introduce these skills. Barry K Beyer describes critical thinking as ‘the process of determining the authenticity, accuracy and worth of information or knowledge claims’.³ We use documents for the group exercises that are representative of texts a student may encounter within an archive. One example is a letter from Rudyard Kipling to his children’s former governess requesting bed socks. It is handwritten but legible so students are not put off attempting to decipher it. A copy of the letter is handed out for people to work on in pairs for five to ten minutes and then we take questions, talk about challenges, read parts of the letter out loud and ask the students to think about what they know about the document and what else they might want to find out.

The document analysis activity is then repeated within small groups when students move around the tables on which original documents are displayed. The purpose of the second activity is to reinforce and practise the skills that were introduced through work on the shared document, combining this with document handling skills. This is a way of mitigating the negative effects of the ‘one shot’ approach that is common in information literacy teaching and is our current experience with students. Mery, Newbury and Peng suggest that the one shot can provide only an introduction to

library skills and that sustained use of the skills is required to gain competency.⁴ By repeating the document analysis activity within the session and feeding back to each other and the class, the students are able to practise and gain confidence with their new skills.

We are very aware that we try to fit a lot of information into the short space of time that we have with the students. Feedback forms completed by students at the end of each session indicate that the majority of those attending have not used an archive before. To help overcome this knowledge deficit, we try to link explicitly what we say to the current experience of the students by using clear language and examples that we hope they can identify with. We talk about the difference between finding something in a library, which we know all students have some prior knowledge of, and finding something in an archive to enable students to anchor the learning in their own experience. Brookfield suggests that making these connections between unfamiliar concepts and the experience of the learner is a key part of adult learning (andragogy)⁵. We also state the benefits of using archives to provide originality in assignments. This further expands on concepts of andragogy that adults are competency-based learners and want to apply their knowledge and skills to their immediate circumstances.⁶ This is an area we are working on as providing direct examples of successful student use of archives will emphasise their relevance within the curriculum.

Pedagogical toolkit

Resources

During the past two years, we have created resources and introduced technologies to assist our pedagogical practice. We were aware that there is a lot of information that needs to be given out at the start, which relates to the building and the context of the

session. We agree with Peter Carini who acknowledges that archives and special collections are ‘by necessity restricted, mediated environments’ and though it is essential for the student to understand this concept, using it as a starting off point is not the best way of enabling interaction with the repository; the use of primary sources is a better introduction.⁷

We created short videos on an ipad featuring the Special Collections Archivist demonstrating handling techniques, the inside of the store and experiencing being a researcher. We wanted a way to show the other areas of The Keep that students would experience as individual researchers, not just the group space in which they have their session. Feedback forms (see example Appendix A) indicate that the storage area is an interesting place that students would like to see but we are not able to take every group into the store because of staffing, security and the day-to-day running of the building. To mitigate for not being able to take the students into these spaces and to make the transfer of information more dynamic, we show the videos within the session. The short films are not professionally made; we used a handheld device with basic editing software. The handling video especially has gained good feedback from Special Collections staff when using them within the classroom. They are able to repeat information in the video and refer back to it especially when students are actually handling the documents. Using phrases like ‘as you remember from the video...’ has proved a useful pedagogical tool for reinforcing the importance of appropriate handling. These interactions move the relationship between the teacher and the student towards a more teacher/student interaction strategy approach as defined by Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse.⁸ The reinforcement of the technique whilst students are handling the documents themselves is a good formative feedback opportunity and does not interrupt the flow of the session.

The member of staff who appears in the films has been reluctant to use them in sessions, but this situation can be used to pedagogical advantage as the class shares in any perceived embarrassment and it works well as an icebreaker and injects humour into the room. As Eric Evans asserts about the use of visual material, it is not just that visual material can aid remembrance of the content, but it is also the transition within the lecture pace if it is accompanied by a personal anecdote or joke; this may stimulate recall and provide the stimulus for the students to go back to their notes.⁹ The videos were easy and quick to create, but as Exley states, ‘learning resources need to be designed with inclusivity in mind’ so a goal for the next academic year is to make sure that the videos are subtitled.¹⁰

Document ID form

The creation of the Document ID form (see Appendix B) was inspired by a collaborative lesson with a Teaching Fellow in the English department and reading on Object Based Learning. What makes Object Based Learning fit well with archives is the concept that ‘the use of objects not specifically related to the learner’s discipline can open up their wider understanding and engagement with a variety of issues, themes and contexts’.¹¹ The Teaching Fellow had used archives in her own research and was keen to get her MA students thinking archivally. We collaborated to choose which documents and objects would be part of the session that matched with her criteria; a ‘wow’ item, an oversized item and an inaccessible item, examples being Virginia Woolf’s engagement diaries, an elephant folio edition of Audubon’s *Birds of America* and a hospital casebook which is closed for 100 years (tied up with archive tape to highlight restricted access). This lesson was structured so that the students came in to find the items placed on tables in the room with no other contextual information available and then gradually more about them was revealed through descriptive catalogue records. The responses

from the students were detailed, varied, and revealed close observation of the items. We started thinking about how we could engage this level of observation and critical thought in sessions with less specific agendas and less focused tutors, so created the Document ID form. The use of an object identification form is standard practice in design studies and is used by Kirstin Hardie in her lessons using Object Based Learning.¹²

The Document ID form is designed to foster critical thinking skills as well as providing structure and instruction for activities within the session. From Robyns writing about critical thinking and the use of archives, it is clear that the form takes students through what Robyns terms the external and internal criticism of the document. External criticism is the process of verification of the document and the authentication of evidence.¹³ This is represented in the Document ID form by the questions such as what is it? When was it written? Who was the author? The information discovered from answering these questions informs the internal criticism of the document which is the evaluation and interpretation of the content.¹⁴ The internal criticism is captured in the Document ID form by asking if more context or information is needed and why do we have it? Outside of Robyn's model, we include a question about how the document makes you feel. This introduces ideas around potential emotional impact that some documents can have and allows the student to engage with the document on an individual level.

We use the form to try and foster an inquiry based learning approach whereby students are encouraged to learn in an active way. Prior to the use of the form, we would introduce each item on the table to the class, for example, 'this is a letter from the Monks House papers between Leonard Woolf and Virginia Stephen in 1912' and then we would briefly describe the scope of the Monks House papers. This can be seen as an

information transmission or teacher focused approach.¹⁵ The students then feel that the staff member is the expert and the focus is on fact. However, an inquiry based learning approach gets students to use the Document ID form to prompt their own investigation. They can use staff as an information source, enabling them to work towards finding the answer themselves. By handing the power of discovery and investigation back to the student, they are enabled to make their own decisions regarding the document and its usefulness, and this can feed in to a student's self-confidence and motivation towards the subject.¹⁶ We have found this to be a more rewarding approach for students and staff as we often discover new things alongside the students.

Padlet

Padlet is an online resource, a virtual pinboard where you can upload text, images and links. Our use of Padlet came about through necessity as the University moved to a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Canvas, in September 2018. Before this, our involvement with the VLE consisted of information pages about Special Collections and a commitment to post list of documents used in sessions with links through to the catalogue as PDFs. The intention was to encourage students to come back and do independent research by providing easy links to what they had looked at in the session. Our information pages did not sit well in Canvas so we had to think up a quick solution for the start of the new academic year. Using Padlet, we create a unique URL that is specific for each group. This is shared with the class at the start of the session and can be added to the course page in the VLE by the tutor. The Padlet pinboard typically has our Powerpoint slides, a list of documents available in the session with links to the catalogue, a link to The Keep website and any other subject specific information, our videos and information about referencing. We have tried to foster interactivity with the Padlet pinboard, by encouraging students to upload photos during the session. This has

worked best when there is a specific task or question that needs to be answered, rather than posting out of general interest. A good example of its use was by third year undergraduate drama students who were creating a performative piece using documents and photographs from the University's own historic archive. They used the Padlet as a place for sharing pictures and ideas as they worked in smaller groups. We have also found that the Padlet enables us to provide the same amount of resources and contextual information for non-Sussex student groups as the URL is not hidden within an institutional VLE.

A non-traditional discipline and feedback

Special Collections was contacted by a Teaching Fellow from the MA in International Accounting and Corporate Governance in the Business School. They wanted to know if we could run a session for 40 accounting students to raise awareness of resources for their assessments. Within the session, we used our toolkit and the group document analysis task. We incorporated an element of flipped learning whereby a member of the class leads an element of the session. One participant was a fan of Rudyard Kipling, so they were invited to talk more about him during the session. We had curated the document selection using archives of all the partners at The Keep including accounting books from the 1790s, Restitution documents from 1950s and gardening diaries and accounts from the Leonard Woolf archive. The majority of attendees were overseas students in the business school and the classroom practice of these students challenged our perceptions. As of June 2019, the University of Sussex website states that Home/EU students make up 76% of the student body while 24% are overseas students. Use of mobile devices within sessions is growing and we found that in this session, they were used primarily as a translation tool, a magnifying tool and to access extra information. Feedback forms indicated that reading handwriting is a difficulty, and though this is

quite a common comment, it may be in this case because translation applications do not recognise handwritten texts as well as they recognise typed ones. Overall, feedback from the session was positive and resulted in a news item for the Business School on the University website in May 2018. One student is quoted in the news item as saying ‘I had no idea we had access to such archives, now I know they are available to me, I’m encouraged to use them when researching a topic’. This theme occurs regularly in the feedback gathered at the end of sessions and reinforces our decision to take a broader approach focusing on our aim of positive experiences, transferable skills and confidence to return. When we focus on what we want students to take away from our sessions, our goals align with the findings of Daniels and Yakel who concluded that ‘simply learning that archives existed and were available for their use, was a revelation to many students’.¹⁷

As mentioned, the feedback forms have provided valuable information to inform future sessions and the answers have indicated a commitment from students to return to The Keep. However, they only captured feedback at the time of the session. We had no way of knowing if the student then used primary source material in their essay and/or arranged a visit to The Keep in the following weeks. As we are not involved in the assessments of the students that come to our visits, we do not know if the sessions result in successful use of the archives in essays and outputs. Our solution was to undertake an impact study which provided us with a methodology to follow a selected student cohort and engage with tutors and staff.

Impact, will they come back?

In 2017/18 an evaluation study to measure the impact of HE group visits to Special Collections at The Keep was undertaken. This study was inspired by the ‘Impact evaluation in libraries’ methods (led by Sharon Markless of Kings College) explored by

the Research Libraries UK Associate Directors Network (RLUK ADN) in July 2017 as part of their focus on impact.¹⁸ The methods enable libraries to consider their priority objectives and indicators of impact, such as statistics, case studies and observational data. This network event was attended by the University Librarian who subsequently tasked Special Collections with looking at the impact of our group visits sessions on students and staff.

The Impact Story – Methodology

Telling an impact story for Special Collections involved exploring a range of methods that would measure impact against our outlined objectives.

Objectives

The outlined objectives for our group visits were:

- To increase engagement and group visits across disciplines
- For students to have the intention of using archives in the future
- For students to use archives within their assignments
- Recognition of the research skills students can gain through a group visit

The impact indicators we used to measure these objectives were:

- The range of disciplines booked for group visits
- Student feedback and intentions to use archives in the future
- Skills gained recorded in student and tutor feedback and expectations of future visits
- The students' use of archival resource material in assignments
- Reader registration (all users of The Keep who order items from the store are required to register)

- That the tutor returns with a new group

The range of methods captured both qualitative and quantitative data. The study was staff intensive, yet proved fruitful in providing insight to the longer-term intentions and outputs of students' use of archives. It was led by Kirsty Patrick but involved support and input from the Special Collections team to capture the data. The study covered the academic terms of Autumn 2017 and Spring 2018.

The Case Study Method

Three different discipline journeys were tracked as case studies: BA Media and Cultural Studies (Second Year), MA Childhood and Youth Studies and MA Applied Linguistics. In each case we used the feedback forms completed by students at the end of a group visit and one-to-one meetings with tutors following the group visit to assess the impact of our session. Each case study focused on a different strand of our teaching offer either in format or delivery. For the media students, this was a large cohort we were providing repeat group visits to 120 students over a one-week period. The MA Childhood and Youth group visit was a joint collaboration between the tutor and Kirsty Patrick built upon a digital archive project and introduced students to both physical and digital collections. The third case study used a particular collection, the Mass Observation Archive (MOA), to explore language variation across time and required the production of resource packs to enable more in-depth analysis during the three hour session.

Tutors reported that the broad introduction to archives, The Keep and the MOA worked well. Many students noted within their essays particular documents they had viewed and what this told them, for example, a particular diarist and when Mass Observation was founded. The opportunity to follow through a group provided valuable

feedback on our current offer, student learning and tutor expectations. It also provided the staff team with greater context to how the student visit is positioned within the module and challenges faced to incorporate such visits into the module.

Surveying students and tutors

To capture student feedback, a variety of methods were used to evaluate immediate reactions and post-visit reflections. (Numbers of responses/forms in brackets):

- Student feedback forms at the end of the visit from the three selected case studies (110)
- Use of an online survey questionnaires sent post-visit to all students who had provided their email in the register, (179) and tutors (3)
- Meeting with individual tutors, post-visit (3)
- Cross-check review of student e-mail addresses from the all visits where students provided their email in the register against registered users to The Keep and any return visits (222* email addresses, 58 registered as a reader of which 13 visited a total of 28 times)
- Anecdotal evidence from staff conversations with students researching in The Keep Reading Room

*There is a higher figure for this method as we collected email data from all our group visit participants if they provided it on the class register.

Tutors vary with their intention and expectations of a visit and are often interested to hear how other sessions have been delivered and that we can be relatively flexible to tailor to their requirements. Following initial feedback from the tutor after their session a Google feedback form was sent post-visit. Tutors (from the three case studies) commented on the value of their students being introduced to archives, the

opportunity to handle a diverse range of material and the relevance of this to their module.

Subsequent meetings with tutors after their visits, revealed that students had referenced Mass Observation in their essays and all tutors referred to the research skills students had gained by visiting. Building relationships with tutors has been key and the offer of coffee and cake on campus was well received. It took time and an understanding of their workloads, especially given the strike action in 2017 over pensions which impacted on teaching through the winter term. However, the opportunity to meet for a chat about the sessions initiated a time for reflection on their part too. The dialogue provided the opportunity to discuss what we can offer to support the development of their visits; pre-visit talks in a seminar or lecture and more tailored sessions and tasks.

Surveying Special Collections staff

Staff answered a short series of questions (by e-mail) on their recent group visits. This provided a useful reflection on various elements within sessions: use of multimedia, group tasks and room layout. Staff felt the main challenge was the students' knowledge and understanding of how their visit linked to their module and its purpose. It provided a measure of how engaged students were at particular points within a session, for example when tasks initiated student feedback and discussion or barriers to particular types of documents. If time had allowed it would have been useful to have more one-to-one meetings and/or a focus group to explore some of the points raised further. However, the questions on e-mail and subsequent conversations proved effective and time efficient. Each staff member was able to draw upon their recent groups and examples of learning outcomes from the sessions.

“We’ve found getting people to look at the same document for a couple of minutes creates a good buzz in the room and again provides a change in voice and a chance for the group to warm up.”

“Different stations and students working in small groups to present findings to their peers. Anything active where students take responsibility for their learning.”

“The videos seem to get a laugh and people remember them - some people have recognised me "from the video". They also break up the session and provide another voice.”

What we learnt

We were pleased to receive positive and constructive feedback. The findings provided valuable insights into the engagement, learning and outputs from the student group visits. The data collected demonstrated that the objectives of the impact study were achieved. Over 90% of students stated their intention of using archives in the future and reference to archives/archive material was demonstrated within essays. Feedback showed that the visit made students feel that archives are an accessible resource for them to return to, with helpful staff on hand. Tutors highlighted the relevance of material, the useful, knowledgeable and enthusiastic input of staff and the importance of gaining basic research skills through engagement with original (and digitised) archive material. All tutors who participated stated their intention to bring their classes again.

We learnt from students and tutors that the one minute films of staff demonstrating handling and showing the Reading Room worked well, sparking interest for a further ‘behind-the-scenes’ look and information on staff roles. Padlet worked well to provide links to resources and students utilised it by uploading photographs of documents they found interesting. According to tutors, pre-visit communication was

good, with relevant materials enabling enriching sessions. For staff, the value of this study was the constant reflection and review of sessions as they were delivered. It sparked conversations between colleagues after sessions, reflecting on tasks that worked well, the level of student engagement and areas we would like to improve.

For the students, comments on how useful they found the session included:

“Learning about archives and why we should use them; I will definitely consider them for my dissertation”

“I’ve never seen archives before. Today I learned why archives exist.”

“It was very informative. I learnt a lot about The Keep and what archives are.”

“Less intimidating, seems more useful now we know how it works.”

Comments from tutors included

“Ultimately coming, seeing and handling had a great impact on the students”

“As Politics, rather than History students, I wasn't sure how relevant they would find it, but they loved it and were quickly able to see how the sources could be used to help their dissertations. I know several are planning to come back in their own time.”

Further recommendations and comments included:

“I would like to have a tour of different sections of the archive.”

“Include examples of people who have used the MOA for their dissertations/essays.”

“More ways to get involved – volunteering, events? Maybe leaflets for tours/events?”

Limitations of the impact study

Following the student journey proved time consuming. For the post-visit online questionnaire, it required inputting all e-mail addresses into a spreadsheet and then sending these at various times to maximise responses. We received just over a ten percent response rate which is in-line with other library surveys and gleaned additional feedback. Some comments were more constructive as a result of reflection and possibly conversations or seminars which had taken place in the interim. Anecdotal evidence was captured in the Reading Room by front-line staff along with a measure of how many students had returned to The Keep to view materials after their visit. One member of staff reviewed the 222 student e-mail addresses. This method proved heavy on staff time as it required checking if they had registered and then if they had visited and what they looked at using an excel spreadsheet and information gathered from The Keeps's Reader Order Management system.

Although the case studies were chosen as they showcased our different teaching offers, this was not reflected within the impact study objectives. If we ran the study again, an objective about the use of a digital archive within a session would be relevant (MA Childhood and Youth case study). We also added together the students email data with that collected from other group visits so we are not able to definitively say that any students from these three case study groups returned as registered users without further work.

The length of the study across two terms meant that a full conclusion of impact could not be reached. For example, we could not capture a quantitative figure on how many students referenced archive material in assessed work. Also, students could have accessed digital archive resources where statistics were not available to track an individual from a group visit to their online use. Another challenge is that some tutors

do not mark the assignments, so where we have relationships, we still may struggle to know the full impact.

Conclusion and moving forward

The findings of the impact study showed that our current pedagogical practice has impact and that impact is valuable. As well as meeting the objectives of the impact study, the data shows that we meet our core aim to provide a positive first experience and get students enthused about using archives. The impact study was a timely piece of work to prompt us to consider our pedagogical practice five years on from moving to The Keep.

Teaching space

At the time of writing, the economic climate of local authority cuts is challenging for The Keep and has impacted, amongst other areas, on the availability of room space. To sustain our group visit programme and be proactive, we will need to explore the delivery of sessions on campus and how we can offer our hands on approach, potentially without the original documents. If we are without our unique selling point of the original documents our pedagogy becomes even more important. The evidence gathered through the impact study has given us the confidence that students will return to The Keep to use collections independently after their initial group visit. We will look to undertake a further impact study in light of any sessions delivered on campus in the future.

Accessibility

Throughout this article we have not mentioned the accessibility of our collections and resources for students. The Keep is a physically accessible building and we now need to look at other areas of accessibility such as presentations, room layout, pre-visit

information and reasonable adjustments. In a recent session with 13 doctoral students we were made aware of four students with additional needs. It can be assumed, therefore, that in a regular class of 20 there is going to be more than one student with additional needs, declared or undeclared which of course could be wide ranging in scope with physical and mental challenges. We are just beginning to look at this but it has to inform our pedagogy moving forward. We will be working on our pre-visit information so it includes images of the rooms and staff along with short films touring the public space to enable all student visitors to feel comfortable about where they need to go, what is expected of them, what will take place and the overall purpose of their visit.

A student guide to archives

In response to student's request to see examples of how students have used the archives in their essays, we asked a recent graduate to produce a guide based on her own experience of using the MOA for her undergraduate history dissertation. Our intention is to make this guide available (online and in print) and review its usefulness. We ideally would like build upon this and gather more student voices across disciplines and academic attainment.

Building relationships with the Library teaching and learning team

We intend to create lesson plans for our teaching sessions. To assist with this, we are looking to our Library Teaching and Learning team and their approach to information literacy teaching. They have a programme of sessions and operate a proactive rather than reactive offer. The Library has recently put together a teaching group for all staff teaching library research skills which includes Special Collections. Currently in

development is a piece of work to link to student learning objectives at all levels. This group is proving a valuable source of support, mentoring and sharing of best practice.

Our place in the University

Moving forward, we are supported in our endeavour to increase our teaching presence within the University. The University of Sussex 2025 Engage For Change Strategic Framework available on the University website explicitly mentions the role of The Keep to ‘ignite innovative world class teaching and learning across disciplines’. We would like to see Special Collections teaching embedded within the relevant modules taught at the University, perhaps for assessment, as this would guarantee use. This is challenging and requires the tenacity of tutors, timetabling administrators and an awareness of The Keep. It requires Special Collections staff to be flexible, skilled and to really think about the best way to achieve learning outcomes.

Word count: 6426

¹ Daniels and Yakel, “Uncovering Impact”, 420.

² Exley and Dennick, *Small Group Teaching*, 3.

³ Robyns, “The Archivist as Educator”, 367.

⁴ Mery, Newbury and Peng, “Why One Shot Information Sessions Are Not The Future”, 4

⁵ Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*, 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 92

⁷ Carini, “Information Literacy for Archive and Special Collections”, 202.

⁸ Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse, “Relations between teachers’ approaches to teaching”, 58.

⁹ Evans, *Rethinking and Improving Lecturing in History*, 8.

¹⁰ Exley and Dennick, *Small Group Teaching*, 165.

¹¹ Hardie, *Wow: The Power of Objects*, 20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

¹³ Robyns, “The Archivist as Educator”, 379.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse, “Relations between teachers’ approaches to teaching”, 62.

¹⁶ Duff and Cherry, “Archival Orientation for Undergraduate Students”, 502.

¹⁷ Daniels and Yakel, “Uncovering Impact”, 418.

¹⁸ Information from a workshop attended by member of Library Management Team

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