

ACRL/RBMS-SAA Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy
ALA Midwinter Meeting 2015, Boston
Sunday, January 10, 2016
10:30 am-12:00 pm
Location: Boston Convention and Exposition Center; Room 259A
DRAFT MINUTES

Visitors welcome!

Task Force members present: Anne Bahde, Julie Grob, Sarah Horowitz, Robin Katz, Bill Landis, Heather Smedberg, Morgan Swan.

Task Force members absent: Sam Crisp, Gordon Daines, Sammie Morris, Leah Richardson, Lisa Sjoberg.

Visitors: Emilie Hardman (Harvard University), Kate Hutchens (University of Michigan), Lois Fischer Black (Lehigh University), Elizabeth Williams-Clymer (Kenyon College), Amanda Rust (Northeastern University), Elizabeth DeBold (Folger Shakespeare Library), Alena McNamara (MIT), Reina Uhler (NEDCC), Shannon Supple (University of California, Berkeley), Russ Taylor (Brigham Young University), Desiree Alaniz (Simmons College).

1. Call to order
2. Select recorder for minutes (Landis)
3. Introductions
4. Charge and scope of work
 - How inclusive can we be? Refine and focus on college/university students but don't ignore other audiences; consider broader frameworks and curiosity about the past associated with variety of audiences.
 - How to distill guidelines/standards from the existing literature that's already out there on this broad topic.
5. Discussion of draft definitions of Primary Source Literacy (and primary source, and literacy)
 - The group discussed problematizing literacy as a term:
 - Literacy as a term could be seen by some see it as either all or nothing, when we know that's not the case and we don't intend to draw a line in our work between illiterate and literate states of being.
 - Fluency, competency offered as alternatives to the term literacy. Look at current synonyms for 'primary source' and 'literacy' for alternatives.
 - The term literacy is known and used in the field and faculty reach out to libraries wanting help teaching visual or information literacy.
 - The concept of metaliteracies is also prevalent and different kinds of literacies are designed into the ACRL Framework.
 - Faculty in many disciplines are comfortable with or at least conversant with the term.
 - It will be important to acknowledge and address this problem of terminology in our draft documents
 - Do concepts of literacy/facility work as well for rare books as they do for archives.
 - Crucial to have a statement on form in relation to primary sources.
 - Primary sources are an overlapping venn diagram with lots of other kinds of literacies (visual, digital, etc.).
 - Also have to foreground the relationship between disciplinary uses and the effectiveness of the use of primary sources.
 - Sarah's definition: relationship of primary sources and the discipline you're working in.
 - A lot of support for Sarah's definition: "A person with primary source literacy has the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to effectively and efficiently find, interpret, evaluate,

and ethically use primary sources, with particular attention to the whole object, within the context and structure of the discipline in which they work and their research question.”

- Think about background skill set of engagement with cultural history. Get beyond coupling with “research question” and broaden the notion of questions and the role of questions in a more encompassing way. Non-linear relationship between questions and sources. How to deal with the notion of sources prompting questions.
- Primary source as a term is often associated primarily with special collections/archives. Our guidelines can’t speak just to our silos, but need to encourage collaborations and partnerships outside of special collections/archives - general and specialist librarians - faculty - etc.
- We want people to know how to use our collections, but we want/need to do something broader than just how to use special collections/archives.

6. Discussion of what our first draft should look like

- Start with issues we’ve been discussing form vs. “primary source” and work outwards from there. Need to avoid staying at too generic a level, which might make these guidelines are not actually useful on the ground. Break out knowledge, skills, attitudes. Draw connective line between guidelines and grounded needs of people who are trying to design instruction sessions.
- Clear, concise scope at the outset of our guidelines will be important. Be careful not to go down too many rabbit holes.
- Consider a 1-page extracted pull-out of key concepts that can be more widely circulated.
- Consider Peter Carini’s conceptual organization as a way to organize our guidelines.
- Need to help colleagues who teach when they start to reach out to faculty to discuss what they want us to do in sessions with their students.
- Guidelines should help us to create learning outcomes and assessments so that we can feel confident that our interactions are successful.
- Go through all subgroup reports and pull out concepts that we think are key/core/important elements, those that are more focused on learning objectives/outcomes, and those that inform a definition.
- Important to map librarian/archivist ‘literacy’ points/notions to pedagogical goals from other disciplines (e.g., ‘how to do historical research’ from AHA articles).
- Challenge to create definition/guidelines that can be applied to any form of information resource.
- Where does object materiality fit in? Is it a key concept? Is it always important in primary source literacy or only when relevant to a particular project/question?
- “Can’t have 20 core values” - be conscious of need to filter key concepts down to as concise a list as possible.
- While the form of the document may logically follow the intellectual work of organizing ideas, it will be an iterative process and so Heather will create a brainstorming document - task force members can add thoughts on form as they work on early stages of compiling content/ideas.

7. Discuss communication and feedback plan

- Orbis Cascade Alliance having symposium on teaching with primary sources in mid-March.
- Morgan presenting in April
- Tools for collaborative feedback on draft documents - Digress.it is no longer supported, CommentPress may be a viable alternative - HS will talk to RBMS Web Team about support tools
- Once we have drafts in need of public comment, consider hosting a webinar to invite stakeholders to discuss the draft document

8. Other business? None

9. Next Steps:

- Heather will create documents for 1) key concepts, 2) skills/goals/outcomes/objectives, and definitions and then let each TF member extract concepts.
- Devise work plan for accomplishing this work
- Timeline for work: Mid February deadline to have 4 documents and comment on them.

- Get conf calls biweekly on our schedules through June - have one soon and then start up again in mid February.
- Task force use Sarah's definition as working definition. Float it out there for feedback/comment while we're moving forward with guidelines.
- Come up with a way to explore alternatives to 'literacy' as a term. Especially focus on non-librarian/archivist audiences - maybe just individual conversations?

10. Adjourn