

Student Employment Matters: Mapping Literacies and Learning Outcomes in Special and Digital Collections

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Abstract:

Most scholarship associated with information literacy and special collections has focused on teaching with primary sources. Often overlooked, but equally as important to augmenting the student experience, is employment in academic libraries and its relationship to information literacy in the workplace. This study presents two perspectives: first, an administrative perspective mapping student job responsibilities and activities to literacies and learning outcomes; and second, analyzing qualitative interviews conducted with undergraduate students to learn about their experiences working with special collections. Both perspectives are examined through various information literacies associated with student work in archives, special collections, and digital initiatives, including concepts from ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, and the SAA/ACRL-RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy. This research suggests that student worker experiences play a fundamental role in shaping lifelong information literacy skills. As academic libraries connect these literacy frameworks to departments that employ student workers, libraries can strategically communicate impacts on student learning, student retention, student success, and workplace readiness.

About the Author:

Erin Passehl-Stoddart is Head of Special Collections and Archives at the University of Idaho. She received a MSI in Information with a specialization in archives and records management from the University of Michigan and has a BA in history and political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has over ten years of professional experience working in academic libraries and archives. Erin is the immediate past-president of Northwest Archivists. Her scholarly interests include archival administration, instruction and outreach.