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## Book Review

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Chan, L. et al. 2002. Budapest Open Access Initiative. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Accessed: 18 November 2015]

**Xu, L. 2021. *Engaging undergraduates in primary source research*. London: Rowman & Littlefield. 136pp. 978-1538138915. £73. Hbk.**

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*Engaging Undergraduates in Primary Source Research* (2021) is an interdisciplinary text focusing primarily on the importance of teaching undergraduate students to use primary sources beyond the traditional realm of archives and special collections, and it places a strong emphasis on the necessity of collaboration between librarians and departmental teaching staff. The concept of 'primary source materials' is suitably broad in this book, and includes materials such as Chinese scroll paintings, historical maps, baskets, quilts, census records, and gravestones, to provide an understanding of certain communities and to challenge the traditional voices we hear in mainstream academic publishing. The book encourages course designers to look beyond the archives and expand on what they traditionally think of as a 'primary source' with the hope that this will facilitate meaningful discussion around power structures, authority and neutrality.

The book outlines ten case studies from institutions across the US who have collaboratively structured their course assessments around exploring primary sources, and have built in bespoke information literacy (IL) instruction from the library. Each chapter includes an introduction outlining the institutional context and an overview of the course, as well as the motivations for using primary sources within their chosen field. They provide an outline of the library sessions that were involved, which are extremely detailed and are essentially a digestible lesson plan, making it easily replicable for other librarians who might want to engage in similar collaborative practices in their own institutions. They also summarise the course outcomes and assessment details, and provide reflections on the success of the course, a useful insight as it incorporates the perspectives of both the librarian and the faculty members. The projects outlined can be easily adapted and made applicable to any educational sector to create valuable learning opportunities for students, and the scope of the book is suitably broad, ranging from articles exploring scientific literacy, historical-music production, gender and sexuality. The book is critical in nature, opening immediately with an examination of systems of power through the lenses of race and gender, as well as exploring authorship and authority within archival practices and the impact this has on knowledge production and consumption within academic spaces.

The book begins by examining a course using Zines for teaching and learning activities through a specialised unit on research and writing skills, with the aim of focusing on underrepresented and marginalised voices in academic spaces. Students analyse a range of Zines, research the social justice issues said Zines are associated with, evaluate the Zine as an appropriate alternative medium to traditional academic materials and alphabetic models of knowledge production, and then create their own Zines linked to the issues they are most interested in. The chapter highlights the potential for embedding creativity in IL teaching and also highlights the importance of including Zines within library collections, whilst also giving valuable advice on how best librarians can source them. Other chapters adopt a similar approach in using primary sources to explore issues of social justice. This can be seen most notably through Ohio University who designed their course with the aim of providing students with a unique opportunity to learn about power structures and to correct preconceived notions regarding the

lasting effects of colonization. They do this through an assessment entitled 'Biography of a Primary Source' whereby students examine the nature of primary sources, the connections between primary and secondary materials and the importance of using both to provide context to their arguments and to critically examine author voice, authority and informational value. Other institutions use a broad variety of both digital and physical objects as primary sources, such as anatomical descriptions of the throat and respiration processes to learn about the structure of seventeenth-century music at the University of Virginia, as well as architectural treatises on stage design to gain an understanding of early modern acoustics.

The book discusses interesting ideas, such as *open pedagogy* and *un-grading*, concepts designed to share power with students with the goal of creating more democratic classrooms, building environments of trust and creating conditions where students can take risks in their research without worrying about the outcome or grade, and there are some activities designed specifically for students engaging in research for the first time. There are also trends throughout the book of institutions deliberately encouraging the use of digital objects such as Tweets or Facebook posts with the aim of making links between primary sources and digital literacies, ensuring a range of skills are taught alongside course content.

Almost every chapter in the book uses the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* as the basis for their course creation to ensure that IL is explicitly built into the pedagogy of the courses, as opposed to the typical one-off sessions academic librarians often deliver prior to an assignment where they are expected to teach IL in its entirety in less than 60 minutes. As a result of this, it provides excellent practical examples of activities which can be used in IL instruction, such as encouraging students to examine their own practices as consumers of information through a close examination of the same content across three different mediums, in order to highlight the ways in which we engage with information changes, even when the value remains the same. There are also activities encouraging students to read primary sources as stories which require evaluation, rather than seeing them as explicit truths, and activities centred around critical reflection on history and the impact it has on the present moment.

Although the book focuses solely on US universities, the activities, frameworks and assessment outcomes are applicable to a wide range of library sectors, rendering it a useful read to those working in public libraries, local studies libraries, and school libraries, as well as special collections libraries and archives. The book provides practical examples of ways in which librarians can actively collaborate and co-teach alongside their respective institutional departments, and this is a vital element which can be applied to all librarians working in any sector.