

ARLIS/NA Reference and Information Services Section
ADSL Afternoon Chat
Instruction and Assessment
October 26, 2016

Guiding Questions:

<https://artdesschlib.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/mark-your-calendars-adsl-afternoon-chat-instruction-and-assessment/>

Stephanie: Good afternoon, all! It's just now 3, but we'll wait a few minutes for others to join in. :)

Stephanie: As a reminder, you can send chat messages to the whole group or to individual members, including the moderator -- just choose their name from the drop-down list below the message box.

Stephanie: Also, the general "guiding questions" for today's chat are on the ADSL blog, <https://artdesschlib.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/mark-your-calendars-adsl-afternoon-chat-instruction-and-assessment/>

Kim Lesley: Hello

Stephanie: Hi Kim!

Siân Evans, MICA: Thanks for having us and hi everyone!

Stephanie Grimm: To get things started, let's take an informal poll: how many are coming from an art & design school setting, and how many from a more traditional or other kind of institution?

Kathy Cowan, MICA: art and design school, MICA

Heather Slania (MICA): same

Stephanie Grimm: Art and design school, SCAD

Ellen Petraits: Art & design school, RISD

Siân Evans, MICA: same as Kathy and Heather :)

Stephanie Grimm: That seems to be the bulk of our attendees right now, so today's chat will probably pretty heavily take the a&d school perspective.

Stephanie Grimm: So, question 1: what do you think are some of the biggest challenges with teaching artists and designers?

Stephanie Grimm: Do you feel like you have as much support or buy-in as colleagues from more traditional settings (or from your own previous experiences)? Are there different expectations from the faculty that students should already have learned this kind of information "somewhere else"?

Siân Evans, MICA: They don't always initially see the relevance of research to their practice.

Stephanie Grimm: (where that "somewhere else" is never seems quite clear...)

Siân Evans, MICA: I've found that at MICA it's a very mixed bag -- some depts "get it" and others tend not to think the library is useful.

Kathy Cowan, MICA: agree with Siân, and getting library awareness into the studios. We are making progress there, I feel.

Stephanie Grimm: Sian, this is something we certainly see as well. When asking lower-division students about their experiences with the library, I've heard "I like it there, but I haven't had any art history classes yet so I don't need to use it"

Heather Slania (MICA): Having worked at traditional libraries in an instruction context I feel like we have more respect about our ability to teach information literacy.

Stephanie Grimm: How have you been approaching this at MICA?

Stephanie Grimm: (this issue of awareness and making the place for research in studio practice, that is)

Heather Slania (MICA): But yes, the challenge is them seeing research as part of the artistic process.

Siân Evans, MICA: I start all my instruction sessions with real-world examples: artists and designers whose work may not LOOK heavily researched but is.

Siân Evans, MICA: I'm also toying with ways to incorporate the structure of the crit (which they seem very comfortable in) to library instruction and would LOVE ideas if others have played around with this.

Stephanie Grimm: Oooh, that sounds like a great approach! I hadn't thought of that, but it seems like one worth exploring.

Stephanie Grimm: Do you see any particular departments or students more frequently?

Ellen Petraits: I've had success at the graduate level introducing info literacy and topics of interest to artists - topics like artists' writings.

Kathy Cowan, MICA: From my perspective as liaison to many studio art departments, and as a painter myself, I don't always see research as gathering information but more as building an internal knowledge system that may come out in many ways.

Heather Slania (MICA): In addition to what Siân said (and she does this as well), ask how people actually become working artists. Connecting what we're teaching them to successfully getting grants, residencies, etc.

Siân Evans, MICA: I feel like here we see the fibers folks a lot (thanks to Kathy's outreach) and interdisciplinary sculpture (because Chris, their liaison is embedded into all courses). We're making more in-roads with Graphic Design, as well.

Siân Evans, MICA: Oh, and drawing (another of Kathy's).

Heather Slania (MICA): I've personally had success with our Curatorial Practice MFA program and related classes.

Kathy Cowan, MICA: I got lucky with my liaison depts!

Stephanie Grimm: At SCAD we see a fair number of foundations classes, usually drawing and color theory, where there's heavy interest in our image resources. Art history too, and I've had pretty great success with the illustration and sequential art departments

Siân Evans, MICA: Art History is, interestingly, a mixed bag because some faculty would prefer to send their students to JHU's library (especially in upper level courses)

Stephanie Grimm: Fashion, too -- our liaison/head of instruction (Heather Koopmans) has a very strong connection with that department

Kathy Cowan, MICA: The Drawing people just began coming thanks to an extensive Faculty workshop that the Library held just before this semester began. It seemed to be a "game changer" for many faculty who got really hooked on the idea of bring students to use collections, incorporating research, and our instruction has literally doubled this term!

Stephanie Grimm: With those classes that might not necessarily have a strong "research" component, I've had more luck with either drop-in visits or short instruction sessions that focus a little more on visual literacy elements -- how to "read" images, and how the information found in images can be used in specific applications (character design, worldbuilding)

Kathy Cowan, MICA: And the liaison relationships, which are relatively new here, are having a big impact. We are also doing collection development for our areas (Heather's initiative) and that makes us so much more knowledgeable.

Siân Evans, MICA: I'm curious about drop-in sessions, as I think one of our struggles is one of space. Students often clam up when they come into the library (it's open concept, there's no classroom)

Kathy Cowan, MICA: Stephanie, that is a great idea!

Kathy Cowan, MICA: ... the visual literacy aspect.

Siân Evans, MICA: agreed - I like that idea a lot! Could be really good for graphic design.

Stephanie Grimm: We have lots of space issues, too -- two labs, four dedicated instruction librarians, and ~8500 students. I offered it as an option to some of our illustration and sequential art (comics) faculty at their quarterly meetings, and word spread within the department after I did a few.

Siân Evans, MICA: one of the wonderful things about being at an art school (despite the challenges) is how open many faculty are.

Kathy Cowan, MICA: that is a lot of students!

Stephanie Grimm: Agreed, Siân, that's absolutely a benefit!

Siân Evans, MICA: one of the first instruction sessions i did solo was with an art matters (freshman) class, and I convinced her to let me show Beyonce's formation, do a crit of it, and then talk about researching the black panthers (based on vey's performance at the super bowl)

Ellen Petraits: Many of our grad. depts offer a course in thesis development during the second year. Since we see most 1st year grads in a dept specific research overview, we schedule one on one meeting with grad. students to work with them in areas they have identified but have yet to research.

Siân Evans, MICA: I was shocked when she was like "sure!"

Stephanie Grimm: That sounds like an amazing session!

Heather Slania (MICA): I think one challenge for art and design students is that their questions usually don't have metadata to finding the right resource vs. a typical research question. E.g. "I need to find a book with a cool font on the cover."

Stephanie Grimm: I've definitely borrowed a Beyonce-related lesson plan from Amanda Meeks for a few classes, now, including a photography class

Siân Evans, MICA: haha some of the most common feedback i get is "more Beyonce" and "more cat gifs"

Heather Slania (MICA): The answer was, browsing the stacks, but there's usually not one set of right answers.

Stephanie Grimm: We ran into a similar problem last year -- students had to find books with very specific dimensions to make cover wraps!

Kathy Cowan, MICA: The students definitely have to be willing to pore through actual books.

Stephanie Grimm: Do you have any tricks or activities that get them interested in browsing?

Siân Evans, MICA: I've also found that students here LIKE browsing

Siân Evans, MICA: way more than i did as an undergrad

Siân Evans, MICA: I've been thinking about that one -- and i don't have any good solutions, yet. I've had them pull books and then look for other related books nearby on the shelves, but it doesn't feel super compelling.

Stephanie Grimm: We definitely introduce it, and it's always surprising and heartening to see how many enjoy it, but discovery seems to be a perpetual challenge

Siân Evans, MICA: Stephanie, do you have any activities?

Kathy Cowan, MICA: for a Fibers class, I had books set out and asked everyone to take one and go to the

stacks to find a similar one. Not sure if it was compelling!

Stephanie Grimm: I tried one with a freshman class last year that had them browse and report back on "their" major's sections, but it didn't go as smoothly as expected -- although, part of that was because they were too interested in continuing to browse!

Teresa Burk: We browse the stacks during many of my instruction sessions and the faculty really like it. Gets them over their intimidation with LC.

Teresa Burk: I also bring materials into the instruction session that they can check out at the end.

Kathy Cowan, MICA: Siân and I had pre-college students browse and pick out a book at the beginning of an orientation, but then they expected all their research activities to be based on their pick, when we instead had special collections to work with. Always learning for the next time.

Ellen Petraits: We have thematic book displays every 4-5 weeks. It really gets students to slow down and browse books they would not have seen otherwise.

Stephanie Grimm: I sometimes wonder if our move to discovery layers and "smarter" searches can be paradoxical in this way -- we make it easier to connect them to something specific but are removing that important element of serendipity and -- like

Stephanie Grimm: Ellen just pointed out -- slowing down.

Siân Evans, MICA: i wonder if doing some kind of aby warburg-esque project on browsing could be cool

Stephanie Grimm: (That is, is it really 'discovery' if you have predictive searches that are based on all of your bits of data and are only being shown exactly what you expected to find?)

Ellen Petraits: We use librarythingforlibraries book widget to capture past displays - virtual browsing, <http://risd.libguides.com/browse>

Kathy Cowan, MICA: I've been wanting to make some temporary signage for one section (like Sculpture or Drawing) to show how the section is set up -- more general books at the beginning, geographic and by artist name, then specific techniques and materials. And that repeats.

Siân Evans, MICA: I love the point about slowing down, a lot. We've hosted some great pop-ups, most recently with our graphic design dept, where over 100 students passed through and almost all the books we brought got checked out.

Siân Evans, MICA: especially for really visual material, having the books on display helps so much.

Stephanie Grimm: That sounds great, Siân -- and it's reminding me of something that (iirc) AIC's library did

Heather Slania (MICA): also our themed displays have gotten some movement (like Siân's current feminism one)

Stephanie Grimm: *SAIC

Ellen Petraits: Yeah, we have an art +feminism display every March to coincide with the Wikipedia event - the books are already out and ready to go!

Stephanie Grimm: that's excellent!

Siân Evans, MICA: that makes me really happy :) :)

Stephanie Grimm: And I see we're getting close to 4:00 -- we can keep going, but I'd like to squeeze in one last question before the formal end time

Kathy Cowan, MICA: I can stay!

Stephanie Grimm: How are you approaching ideas of "assessment" when there's not always the same kind of expectation or output as with traditional papers and project?

Stephanie Grimm: *projects

Siân Evans, MICA: we've toyed with different things

Siân Evans, MICA: at one point, we were assessing (grading) every instruction exercise

Siân Evans, MICA: but that was untenable and (in my opinion) took the focus away from pedagogy and onto assessment

Siân Evans, MICA: now, we're using an info lit test we administer to all incoming freshmen

Siân Evans, MICA: and then again as they finish their art matters (foundation) course

Siân Evans, MICA: we'd love to hear what you all are thinking about/doing

Ellen Petraits: We created this rubric for use in critiques. It's a work in progress, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qh7NjMYIbNUFfqCA0eLQYICvCdXUJ2sEp_o16usRrEU/edit. I'd love to hear from anyone who tries it out.

Stephanie Grimm: For example, I can certainly track if students have managed to locate something in the span of a class period, and if they can discuss or come up with evaluation criteria, but linking that up to "bigger" goals and ideas for their studio- or design-specific learning can be trickier

Stephanie Grimm: Thank you for sharing, Ellen!

Kathy Cowan, MICA: I've been trying to get examples of work done in the studio based on library materials. We got lucky with the Drawing group in that they plan to document the work for *their* assessment needs which they will share.

Stephanie Grimm: I've started doing a bit of curriculum mapping for my most involved departments, and using their language as much as possible.

Stephanie Grimm: And we did have a successful partnership with a printmaking class that produced a class portfolio (the theme was "text and image" and they had to produce 2 pieces in response to a text, with dedicated research time in the library)

Ellen Petraits: The categories one of our profs use to evaluate student work is very positive: emerging (1 point), developing (2pts), integrated (3 pts)

Stephanie Grimm: And we were gifted an edition of the portfolio at the end

Stephanie Grimm: We've been able to squeeze in visits to classes to see presentations a few times, too

Heather Slania (MICA): We're undergoing a big curriculum change starting with our first year program, so I'm hoping as things get built out that we'll be able to build more information literacy into each level eventually.

Ellen Petraits: That's great that you have "evidence" (the portfolio) of the impact the library had on the work - I think that's what we need to be looking for.

Stephanie Grimm: Has the library been involved in those discussions at MICA, even in a secondary way?

Stephanie Grimm: (e.g. consultations for new materials or building in library or research visits?)

Kathy Cowan, MICA: Definitely, collecting examples is important, enjoyable, and can change our approach as we see other possibilities.

Heather Slania (MICA): Secondly at this point for the broader curriculum planning, and then on an individual level for the rest.

Heather Slania (MICA): Everyone has been really great at outreach here.

Stephanie Grimm: That's so good to hear!

Teresa Burk: Thanks all for the great discussion.

Siân Evans, MICA: thanks so much, everyone!

Stephanie Grimm: We've had a few similar, individual opportunities -- one recently happened with our graduate illustration program,

Stephanie Grimm: Thank you all for participating! I'm happy to keep chatting, or perhaps to schedule a follow-up session for today. :)

Stephanie Grimm: Also, earlier I'd mentioned seeing a great exploratory thing from SAIC -- it was their biblioderive event! <http://biblioderive2015.tumblr.com/documentation>

Siân Evans, MICA: oh, yes, I've seen this!

Siân Evans, MICA: so awesome.

Stephanie Grimm: Right!? I want to steal all of these ideas.

Siân Evans, MICA: I love the saic librarians, they were our first art+feminism participants (other than nmwa)

Siân Evans, MICA: I would love to see more sharing of instructional documentation happening -- or maybe it is already and I'm just not sure where to find it

Kathy Cowan, MICA: Thanks for sharing these resources -- rubrics, linkes, etc. everyone! Might they be posted on the ADSL blog?

Stephanie Grimm: Agreed -- maybe this is something we can facilitate on the ADSL blog?

Siân Evans, MICA: I'm part of some cross-departmental pedagogical practice groups here at mica that share resources

Siân Evans, MICA: and it's great

Siân Evans, MICA: yes, good thoughts, Kathy and Stephanie!

Stephanie Grimm: Definitely! I'll be posting the transcript as soon as they send it, and can talk more with our blog moderator about how we might do this.

Siân Evans, MICA: I'm always open and willing to share as i develop more material here (i still feel like i'm playing catch up since it's my first semester)

Ellen Petraits: lots of great ideas today- thank you

Siân Evans, MICA: agreed, thank you!

Stephanie Grimm: Oh, same -- so it's always helpful to see what new things other librarians are trying.

Heather Slania (MICA): thank you everyone!

Stephanie Grimm: Thanks again, everyone! Keep an eye on the ADSL blog and listserv for more after today.

Stephanie Grimm: And feel free to send any questions or follow-up thoughts that we might address in another chat or at our meeting in New Orleans!