

Educational Programs: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections. Edited by Kate Theimer. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. 195 pp. \$55.00.

Educational Programs: Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections, edited by Kate Theimer, brings together a collection of 13 case studies that explore the challenges of using archival and special collections materials to teach kindergarten through high school-aged students (probably the most challenging of all age groups to target), undergraduate and graduate-level students, and educators. Included in these explorations are the challenges of soliciting support from teachers and faculty, with examples of the sometimes creative approaches used to garner that support.

In her introduction, Kate Theimer explains that each of these studies was chosen specifically for its ability to showcase a range of audience types and strategies, and because it “. . . demonstrate[s] ideas that could be transferred into many other settings” (p. vii). Volume 6 in the series *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections*, this book provides ideas and inspiration to teachers and faculty wishing to incorporate the use of primary sources into their curricula and aids archivists in exposing new audiences to their collections and expanding their outreach services.

The institutions represented in the case studies range from small to large; the projects created targeted students and educators, and involved collaboration and pedagogy. Depending on one’s interest and needs, there are plenty of options to choose from for inspiration. Examples range from class-curating exhibits in academic special collections departments to engaging primary school students with the personal papers of Alfred Wainwright, and from conducting workshops for educators and faculty to embedding archival materials into digital history projects. Practitioners are bound to find something valuable to emulate among these varied cases.

In addition to collaboration and pedagogy, the case studies are structured to include sections entitled “Planning,” “Implementation,” “Results,” “Lessons Learned,” and “Conclusions.” In some of the studies, the period between planning and implementation was rather short, but the authors seem flexible with making changes along the way, or upon reflection, at least beginning to plan for changes in future iterations. This reflects an attitude of jumping right in, experimenting, and figuring out what works and what does not, which in itself presents a level of excitement. Some of the case studies followed programs spanning two or more years, which offers the reader a more comprehensive look at lessons learned and changes implemented to improve the programs. Either way, each case study can be considered for its approach and adjusted to suit the needs of the reader’s institution.

Regarding the “results” of each of the case studies, the theme seems to be a lack thereof. Unfortunately, most results reported are anecdotal. Perhaps this could be a “lesson learned” and an incentive to provide participants in future iterations with solicited evaluations to better serve staff and participants. Not until the final case study, Robin M. Katz’s “Documenting and Sharing Instruction Practices: The Story of TeachArchives.org” do we begin to see what the possibilities are for reporting results. Using Google Analytics, TeachArchives.org is able to generate real numbers that support the

effectiveness of the program. In all fairness, however, an obvious difference exists between obtaining numbers from a website that offers resources for teaching with primary sources and developing one's own program with limited prep time and resources, and then following up with attempts at feedback from participants and faculty. Then again, establishing a formalized evaluation is something for all to work toward.

Educational Programs is a must-have for any archivist, special collections librarian, educator, museum professional, or anyone else who works with primary resources and is striving to provide greater exposure to their collections or enhance their teaching, programming, or curricula. Examining the case studies individually, readers could easily find at least one intriguing or inspiring program to use with their own collections. The "lessons learned" in each of the studies are quite informative and beneficial, and they may keep others from encountering similar pitfalls. As a whole, Theimer has done an excellent job at compiling exciting and encouraging examples, ensuring that all readers will be stimulated to try something new.

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