Feeling Democracy: Connecting **Students with Civics** using primary sources and government documents

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Credit to my colleagues

Radical Science Writing: An Interdisciplinary Book Arts Approach – Visual Literacy Today. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2022, from https://visualliteracytoday.org/radical-science-writing-an-interdisciplinary-bookarts-approach/

Raynes, I., & Heiser, N. (2019). Cartographic Literacy Through Object-Based Learning: The Value of Primary Sources in Instruction. Journal of Map & Geography Libraries, 15(2–3), 187–209. https://doi.org/10.1080/15420353.2020.1739188

Background:

- Affective teaching:
 - Affective learning is concerned with how learners feel while they are learning, as well as with how learning experiences are internalized so they can guide the learner's attitudes, opinions, and behavior in the future (Miller, 2005)
- Experiential learning
 - Experiential learning is an engaged learning process whereby students "learn by doing" and by reflecting on the experience.
- Critical Pedagogy:
 - Teaching and learning as a political act

Background

- Small survey of students in library seminars at CU showed:
 - Students don't know what government information means
 - Are intimidated by government information
 - Often underestimate government sources
- Formative assessment in CU seminars shows:
 - Students like touching things
 - When students connect to an object they often wanted to know more about it
 - Students gravitate toward older items at first, but after spending time with items this bias lessens

In practice

- Picking items of interest
 - Old
 - Weird
 - Current events
- Being tangible is important
- Pictures help, but not always
- Library smell
- Context
- What next?



Case studies

- ENVS 3020 (upper division Environmental Studies writing class)
- Election outreach
- Alumni engagement event



ENVS 3020

- Classes of around 30 students
- Have worked with professors closely for years
- Assignment based around a grant proposal
- They visit multiple librarians



Election outreach and Campus Alumni event

- Large groups walking past table
- Students, faculty, staff, and community members
- Similar goals, slightly different approaches
- Partnered with Archives and Rare Books
- Alumni event had campus admin

100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment Dicussion Panel



Keys

- Civics is participatory
- Acknowledge barriers
 - Both in terms of access and feasibility
- Give people time to process
- Know your audience
- Interesting items are more important than relevant items
- Pictures aren't everything



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Within the yard of the old jall, a new building was evected, containing 16 individual colls, eight in each of two stories, for the confinement of the "more hardened offenders." A description written in 1798 pictures these colls as harsh places indeed:

"In every cell, there is one small window, placed high up and out of reach of the convert; the window well seemed by double iron grating, so that, provided an effort to get its true successful, the persua could be precive neither between nor earth, on account of the thickness of the wall. The criminal, while confined here is permitted to accurcine one of beach, table, or even held, or anything also but what is hardy messary to support 116, without a risk of endagering his beath

Questions and works cited

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