

Jenifer Baldwin  
Anne Harlow  
Rick Lezenby

Temple University Libraries

# “I Am the Content”

How and Why Instructors  
Discover and Share Course  
Content

# Who We Are



Jenifer Baldwin: *Head of Research and Instructional Services*



Anne Harlow: *Librarian for Dance, Music, and Theater*



Rick Lezenby: *Librarian for Psychology and Political Science*



**Libraries**

# What We Did

## 2011-2012

- participated in CLIR workshops with Nancy Foster
- participated in *ResearchTalk* Qualitative Research Design and Analysis Conference workshops 2011/2012
- Consulted with Instructional Tech Support re Blackboard use
- Began developing interview questions
- Explored approaches

## 2012-2013

- Obtained IRB approval
- Recruited participants
- Conducted 10 one-hour faculty interviews
- Co-viewed interviews with subject specialists
- Presentation on initial experience to Temple library colleagues
- Conducted interviewing workshops for Temple librarians
- Conducted interviewing workshop at Maryland Library Association

## 2014-2015

- Analysis
- Conversation with Temple Press

# Our methods included

- structured interviews
- work practice observation (not fully realized)
- co-viewing (with library specialists)

...influenced by grounded theory

- coding and memoing with AtlasTI qualitative analysis software
- identifying themes - sorting coded quotes
- discarded initial focus on LMS

# Who We Interviewed

10 full time tenured or tenure-track  
Temple faculty in

- Art
- Art Education
- Classics
- Economics
- Music
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political Science
- Religion
- Spanish

# What We Asked

1. Show us some recent examples of content you provide to your students; things like readings, video, images, any supporting materials other than syllabus and assignment prompts.
2. How do you decide what content you'll share with students?
3. When do you usually decide what content you want to share?
4. Tell us about the very last item you shared with a class. Demonstrate for us the process of how you found this, decided on it, and shared it?
5. Show us how you acquired this item. Is this typical of how you get the content?
6. Show us how you organize this content for yourself as you collect it.
7. And how do you organize it to share it with your students?
8. Show us any other ways you share course content.
9. How much of this material are the students required to read?
10. What outcome do you expect from students' use of this material?
11. How much time do you think students spend on these materials and how do you know?

# What They Share with Students

Q 1. Show us some recent examples of content you provide to your students; things like readings, video, images, any supporting materials other than syllabus and assignment prompts.

Q 4. Tell us about the very last item you shared with a class. Demonstrate for us the process of how you found this, decided on it, and shared it?

# Instructor-Generated Content

Henry V (a pageant) [cf. Dr. Lyons notes]  
① This play is not the success that Henry IV is? The forces making the drama are not unified the way they are in Henry IV. S. conceived his greatest kings in tragic terms - (Rich. II; Claudius in Hamlet) - but in Henry V this is not so. Henry V is not a tragic hero. The form of the historical drama had been a tragic form, but in Henry V the dress is only borrowed - the tragic forces are really dead, vanquished. Henry V is, rather, one long victory - first it is a victory over treason (the plot of Cambridge, Scroop, + Grey discovered + traitors sent to death = II, ii); then a victory over the French (the central action thruout - ends with end of Act IV); then a victory in love and diplomacy (Act V). Henry V is a triumphant figure thruout - (a kind of ~~William~~ Eisenhower?) - a "fair-haired boy". And one without unresolved conflicts within him. With Julius Caesar and Hamlet already in his mind, S. finds himself less interested than before in heroes who are men of action; and yet he felt it necessary to complete the historical cycle of plays which began with Richard II. Thus it is Henry V strikes some people as a "pot-boiler". As Samuel Johnson observed, "not even Shakespeare can write well without a proper subject." (His subject is pageantry not drama.)

Lawrence Ferlinghetti's Lecture Notes

What they Share with Students

# Instructor-Generated Content

## Examples Discussed Q1

- fill-in-the-blank version of lecture notes for use during class lecture (science)
- leitmotif podcast of piece of music with instructor commentary and incipit (arts)
- instructor's home/family video uploaded to youtube (spanish)

## Last Item Shared Q4

- model lesson plan based on instructor's own research, paired with content excerpted from a textbook (spanish)
- Blackboard announcement to students about learning objectives and what to read for class (science)
- video of instructor narrating over images from Grove Art Online and ArtStor, made using GarageBand, streamed from Ensemble, delivered on Blackboard (arts)

What they Share with Students

# Library-Generated Content

- a “pre-search” assignment that was designed with their liaison librarian, and the scoring rubric (humanities)
- libguides created by liaison librarians (humanities)

What they Share with Students

# Published Content

## Examples Discussed Q1

- library-subscription ebook used as textbook (humanities)
- traditional print textbooks (science & soc sci)
- alternatives to textbooks - readings from Grove Music Online (arts)
- PDF/Word docs of published articles shared on a Google Sites page
- clips from feature films (science)
- clips from Naxos Video (arts)
- pop culture (tv, cartoon, movies) videos illustrating concepts (soc sci)
- poetry that illustrates concepts (soc sci)
- an instructional strategy excerpt from an education journal (arts)
- paper photocopies of articles from a guide book to a major figure (humanities)
- Wikipedia article converted to a pdf (science)

## Last Item Shared Q4

- a youtube video (arts)
- a NewYorker cartoon (soc sci)
- scanned chapter of a book (humanities)
- a video in Opera in Video (arts)
- a dvd borrowed from the library (humanities)
- PDF of a chapter scanned from a forthcoming book from a University press (soc sci)

What they Share with Students

# How they Decide What to Share

Q 2. How do you decide what content you'll share with students?

Q 4. Tell us about the very last item you shared with a class. Demonstrate for us the process of how you found this, decided on it, and shared it?

# I Just Know

“Well, that’s my job to know. I’m always aware of things, so if it appears to me, I’m gonna see it.”

talk

to the

experts

How they Decide

# Smart Friends and the Cocktail Party

“You’re kinda just keeping tabs of who the big people are, and what they’re saying, and who they’re citing, it’s kind of a cocktail party, you know. A social network is a little bit less cumbersome than doing a keyword search in [database name].”

“Look, I want my friends to be smarter than me. And I just got a lot of really good help. So the first time I ever taught [...Course Name...], I wrote my friend who had been a professor a couple more years than I had been. [...] And I said, you know, *what do you use?*”

How they Decide



How they Decide

# Serendipity

“I assume other people, too, become sensitive to what we see... I see the [subject] in a Laura Ingalls Wilder story ... You become sensitive to it, and so then... I’m watching the news. I’m reading the paper. I used to be reading a story to my children. It’s *Oh, I could use this.*”

# Crazy Interests

“That’s what I liked about my professors, that they did not just know about [this subject]. They knew about everything. You know, they knew about the world. They knew about their crazy interests. Shouldn’t that be what a professor is?”

How they Decide



How they Decide

# How they Organize and Deliver Content

Q 3: When do you usually decide what content you want to share?

Q 6: Show us how you organize this content for yourself as you collect it.

Q7: And how do you organize it to share it with your students?

# When do they choose?

- New courses reported as receiving little-to-no advanced planning but create accumulation of content for future
- Long established courses receive only small tweaks or timely additions
- Textbooks reported to be decided in advance and established for long haul
- Non-textbook readings, links, and images are reported as chosen *on-the-fly weekly or daily*, either pulled from accumulated bank or from instructor's own current consumption
- Some instructors do note-taking during semester that informs changes to content choices for following semester or year, some do not

# Ways they organize these materials for themselves.

- Email or drag and drop for storage on local workstation, in folders by course or topic. Some sync with DropBox or the like.
- Collaborative Blackboard site for instructors in program, uses Delicious Library to create virtual bookshelf.
- Publicly accessible Google Sites page for all readings across all courses.
- Filing cabinets or stacks of paper folders with photocopies and printouts, and pages ripped from print subscriptions.
- Cuts and pastes citations into EndNote.
- Cutting and pasting into long, running Word docs.

# Ways they deliver these materials to students.

- Posting to Blackboard or using Blackboard email function
- Print is a privileged format, handed out in the classroom, limited to what they *really* want students to pay attention
- Delicious bookmarks
- YouTube playlists
- Creating his own “podcast”
- Publicly accessible Google Sites page for all readings across all courses
- Library course reserves (infrequently mentioned)

# Expectations for Outcomes

Q9: How much of this material are the students required to read?

Q 10: What outcome do you expect from students' use of this material?

Q 11: How much time do you think students spend on these materials and how do you know?

# Reading

“I handed out the first four pages of this article and asked them to read it and answer ... a set of questions on the first four pages about how research has been done on this topic.” ... “I think it just required very close reading. I mean, actually, it was fairly easy. It wasn’t hard to do. But it did require going through the reading and underlining. I actually explained to them how to underline – unbelievable – to look for the content the question was asking specifically. But most of them got As and Bs, so they did it. I just think they found it too particular.”



Reading and Outcomes

# Their choice of content driven by

Their habits of reading and “ways of seeing” including

- reading popular press - print and online newspaper and magazine subscriptions, blogs, and / or pushed content from corresponding sites
- “personal” reading
- seeking input from colleagues and “smart friends”
- consulting citations in known works
- *browsing* library collections (stacks, re-shelves area, new books list) and bookstores
- over time, accumulating a body of known items to pull from
- making last-minute insertions disrupting “planned” readings
- favoring what is available and handy

What they don't do or rarely do to gather course content: searching or “hunting”

Implications

# Their choice of content driven by

Characteristics of the content including

- timeliness and relevance
- unbundled or unbundle-able
- appropriate level for class
- conveyance of “one main idea” (textbooks)
- “key” or “must know” content for the field (textbooks)
- illustrative of concepts
- length, depth, and insight
- capacity to reveal gaps in what is known about topic
- quality of writing / performance
- “well-established” reputation (textbooks)
- potential to be interesting, gripping, or appealing to students
- degree to which it imparts instructor’s enthusiasm for topic
- student reaction to the content

Implications

# Technological Challenges Influencing Instructor Decisions

- Bundles and silos
- Semester, fiscal, and version update cycles
- LMS tools that aren't great at what instructors need help with; e.g., content versioning and updating, single repository for use across multiple classes, quick excerpting...
- Too many new tools too to learn, adopt, only to discard
- Can content be pushed in a more automated way without sacrificing relevance or personalization?
- Magic buttons: getting from content discovery to “put into course / share with students”

# Buzzfeed for Faculty? Liaisons Influencing Instructor Decisions

- Liaisons well positioned to curate content feeds for individual faculty and programs
- Pushed content, alerts, feeds- they work!
- Content additions usually done last minute. So push content weekly
- Emphasize current-events, illustrative material, esp. from pop culture
- Explicitly address course level when organizing and promoting library content
- Make it easier for instructors to mashup published and unpublished material
- Instructors put in high amount of labor for anticipated small return. Quality counts.

# Questions

- What other implications do you see?
- Which of the findings/themes seem most fruitful for further investigation?
- Does this resonate with what you are experiencing on your campus?
- What are the leading initiatives that you think are addressing some of these issues?

# Thanks!

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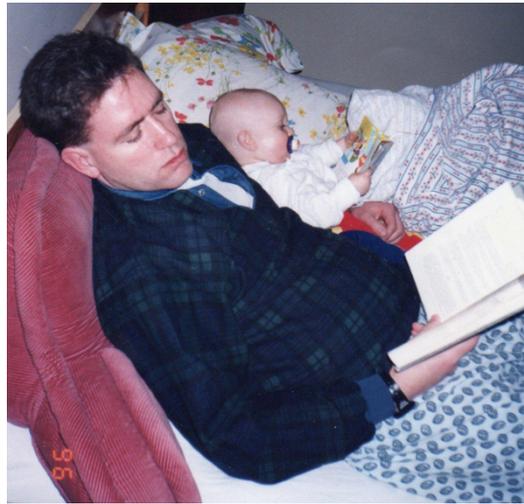
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Feel free to contact us!

Jenifer Baldwin  
Temple University  
[jbaldwin@temple.edu](mailto:jbaldwin@temple.edu)