ARL Final Presentation by University of Pittsburgh

- **Slide 1: Title**
  - The University of Pittsburgh (PITT) and the University of California-Irvine (UCI) worked collaboratively on the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Research Library Issues Framework (RLIF) initiative exploring the question: "(how) do the library’s special collections specifically support and promote teaching, learning, and research?"

- **Slide 2: Introduction**
  - I am Jeanann Haas, and I am going to focus on Pitt’s initiative. Pitt’s objective was to create a rubric and assessment tools that align with the ACRL-RBMS/SAA Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy. We experimented with the rubric and assessment tools in a variety of student learning engagement opportunities. Our goal was to create a robust toolkit that was adaptable across different disciplines and institutional settings.
  - We applied the rubric with Archival Scholars Research Awards (ASRA) through two successive cohorts.
  - Later we received a subaward and adapted the rubric for classroom learning.

- **Slide 3: Overview of ASRA**
  - The semester-long ASRA program matches each student in a cohort of 10-12 with a librarian or archivist and a PITT faculty mentor to engage in an in-depth research project drawing upon primary sources found in the University of Pittsburgh libraries.

- **Slide 4: ASRA 2020 Analysis**
  - Studying the Archival Scholars Research Awards (ASRA), we assessed the initial and intermediate learning outcomes of primary source literacy and used entrance/exit surveys and research outputs as assessment tools.
  - We created a rubric based on the ACRL/RBMS/SAA Guidelines and applied it to the outputs produced by the ASRA2020 cohort and found that it did not always align and therefore was often inconclusive to determine if students gained any primary source literacy skills.
  - The ASRA 2020 cohort was interrupted by COVID-19 and the remainder of the program was transitioned to an online environment.
  - We noted that the assignment prompts for ASRA2020 did not map specifically to the guidelines. The outputs were more reflective of the student research experience and did not necessarily provide insight into the skills that they may or may not have attained through this experience.

- **Slide 5: Changes for ASRA 2021**
  - We extended our research project to include the ASRA2021 cohort and revised the entrance and exit surveys to transition from a confidence-based to a knowledge-based assessment.
  - The team reworked instructions and assignment prompts that mapped specifically to the guidelines. The instructions for the Tumblr blog and Omeka assignments focused on the primary source (creator, materiality, historical context).
  - The end-of-term presentations focused on motivation for research, how primary sources contributed, supported, or disputed research questions, and whether the research question changed, pivoted, or was amplified because of what a student discovered in the primary sources.

- **Slide 6: ASRA 2021 Findings**
  - The analysis of the outputs revealed that students demonstrated an initial or intermediate attainment of primary source literacy skills in the blog posts and Omeka exhibits. They positioned their primary sources in context of place and time, discussed the creator, audiences, and materiality and physical features.
The presentations revealed that the questions about their research approach were too involved for students to have ample time to discuss in three minutes and revealed little about skills attainment. The ASRA students were adept with research and topics and were confident in answering questions about the research process. The team acknowledged that for future cohorts, prompts should focus on a select 1 or 2 aspects because of the time limitations.

Slide 7: ASRA 2021 Findings
The responses to the entrance and exit surveys revealed that the program had a proven effect on student learning. A few areas of weaknesses were identified: using databases and questions related to compliance with copyright and privacy laws. The program’s strengths included utilizing finding aids and primary sources in various capacities.

Slide 8: Instructors and Classroom Learning
I am Kathy Haines and I’m going to discuss our subaward Instructors and Classroom Learning. We applied for and were granted a subaward in July 2021. We developed a Lesson Plan that incorporated the rubric and captured instructor goals. We asked instructors to collaborate on in-class exercises and/or activities that match course objectives; share anonymized student outputs with the research team; and participate in a follow-up discussion to provide feedback on the value of the rubric in designing and assessing classroom engagements.

Slide 9: Class Visit Lesson Plan
We worked with 5 instructors from consultation through curation and design of student engagements including in class exercises, such as guiding questions, close-reading, group work and discussions. After the class visit, the team used this toolkit to measure student acquisition of primary source literacy skills and thereby assess the degree of success of the Librarian/Archivist in meeting instructor goals.

For example, this slide shows one instructor’s goal for students to view multiple versions of a specific text and learn about its materiality that allow inferences about historical audiences and how books might frame reader’s expectations. The instructor’s goals map to the guidelines for iterations, physicality, creator, and context.

During the visit, students examined curated text and completed independent work with guiding questions, co-created by the instructor and librarian. Students were then asked to share a highlighted aspect that they found interesting. Librarians observed that students were able to comment on iterations, physicality, creator, and context.

Had the discussion not shown compelling evidence of skill acquisition then we would infer that the guiding questions needed to be strengthened.

Slide 10: Instructor Interviews
After coding and analysis, we met with each instructor individually, shared the primary source guidelines, presented the rubric and lesson plan, and reviewed whether students were able to demonstrate skill acquisition.

We asked for feedback about the use of the rubric for assessment, and whether it was an appropriate tool for understanding student acquisition of primary source literary skills. We also discussed the value of incorporating the rubric more overtly into the consultation process.

After the conclusion of the individual instructor meetings we reviewed, coded, and analyzed the meeting transcripts and summarized our findings.
Slide 11: Focus Groups
- We held three focus groups with a total of twelve instructors participating. All instructors had previously brought classes to archives and special collections. We showed the instructors how we used the rubric and analyzed classroom activities and asked for their thoughts on the value of using the rubric for future consultations.
- The conversations revealed unsurprisingly a split of opinions about rubrics in general. Some did not advocate their use and others welcomed them. The former, though, had great interest in the content of our rubric and deemed it a valuable tool to think through their goals for the class visit.
- After the conclusion of the focus groups we reviewed, coded, and analyzed the meeting transcripts and summarized our findings.

Slide 12: Subaward Findings
- Our Big takeaways were the following:
  - Instructors valued the identification of goals for the class visit and sharing an abbreviated arrangement of primary source guidelines
  - The majority of instructors’ main starting point for class visits was having students encounter materials and experience awe and delight
  - Instructors value engagements such as prompts/guiding questions and are interested in seeing examples we created for other classes.
  - And, finally, Archivists and librarians are valued for their expertise and their support of primary source learning and increasingly are accepted as collaborators, with assignments that are not limited to a single class visit.

Slide 13: Conclusion
- Thank you to our team (Jeanann, Clare, Diana, Berenika, and myself) for all of our work on this project (especially through some less than optimal times with COVID), and to University of California, Irvine (Derek, Krystal, and Jimmy) for their help in the planning phase of the project. Finally, a big thank you to Gordan Danes, Sue Baughman, and ARL for their support and guidance throughout the whole process.