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Course Design, Images, and the Class-Curated Exhibit

This article discusses the restructuring of a literature course to include a student-curated exhibit featuring rare, illustrated volumes from the University of Rochester's River Campus Libraries. Faculty and library staff offered an experiential learning project for students to develop skills in the areas of primary source literacy, basic exhibit design, visual and textual analysis, process writing, and public presentation. We reflect upon the challenges and opportunities of project management and offer three models for integrating rare books and exhibit curation into a range of courses across disciplines.

For students accustomed to primarily writing research papers and taking tests, curating an exhibit challenges them to think differently about audiences and how their research can be conveyed visually and cohesively.[1]

The epigraph from Davy and Schindler highlights the opportunities and the challenges associated with incorporating an exhibition assignment component into a literature class. Both faculty and students are forced to rethink the conception and production of assignments to begin to develop competencies beyond those typically practiced when reading and analyzing literary pieces. Davy and Schindler also assert that student curation of exhibits exposes students to how historians, archivists, and museum professionals work in the real world.[2] In addition to this point, a class-curated exhibit can also be viewed as a creative, multimodal expression of scholarship in which the students "analyze documents and through them tell a story…bringing the primary sources to a wider audience."[3] This overall approach to student-curated projects participates in the move toward more collaboration among faculty, students, and librarians, the further development of pedagogical approaches such as experiential learning or project-based learning, and the creation of additional opportunities for a wider audience to engage with special

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1. Jennie Davy and Amy C. Schindler, "Student Curators in the Archives: Class Curated Exhibits in Academic Special Collections," in *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections,* ed. Sarah Theimer (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 36.
2. Ibid., 31.
3. Ibid., 31.

collections. Moreover, the integration of an exhibition-development assignment has significant pedagogical value because students learn and practice transferable skills and produce a physical product that showcases and disseminates their research to the broader university community. In short, adding a special collections-based project to a literature course offers students, faculty, and staff members the chance to diversify their skill-sets and their roles as learners and teachers.

This article contributes to the ongoing conversations about interdisciplinary collaboration and pedagogical innovation related to rare books and special collections. In terms of teaching literature, it approaches the subject by exploring the restructuring of a Spanish literature class to include a student-curated exhibit featuring rare, illustrated volumes from the University of Rochester's River Campus Libraries. From a library perspective, it provides a model for how library staff, faculty, and students can pool resources and expertise for curricular and exhibition design, as well as for the better integration of rare books and special collections into undergraduate coursework. Together, as faculty member and librarian, we share our experiences planning and implementing a student-curated exhibit for a semester-long class, entitled "Don Quixote: The Book, The Myth, The Image," dedicated, in part, to the close reading and analysis of both parts of the novel, published in 1605 and 1615, respectively.

The course had always incorporated one rare books session, though in rather perfunctory and tangential ways, prior to this new iteration. Using that session as the point of departure for brainstorming, a group of instructional partners designed a semester-long project that integrated editions of the novel with skill-building in the areas of primary source literacy, basic exhibit design, visual and textual analysis, process writing, and public presentation skills. All of this culminated in the student-curated exhibition, an accompanying digital exhibit, and a public inaugural event, specifically designed to showcase the students' analyses of the illustrated editions. The purposeful combination of skill-based tasks (including label writing, exhibit narratives, theme selection, and longer written exercises) with the dissemination of students' analytical work proved to be a productive exercise. We offer three collaborative models that could be adopted or adapted to complement established courses or to construct new ones integrating rare holdings. Finally, we discuss some of the challenges of project management and thoughts for improvement as we reflect on the project and look ahead to repeating it in the future.

In a variety of professional fora, librarians, archivists, and scholars have advocated for more consistent undergraduate engagement with rare books. They have also discussed the benefits of collaborative work that incorporates rare books and

special collections in the undergraduate classroom.[4] In 2006, while employed at our institution, Pablo Alvarez discussed and offered examples of the successful integration of rare books sessions into existing undergraduate courses.[5] Mitchell, Seiden, and Taraba's edited collection offers several case studies of collaborative teaching among faculty, librarians, and archivists.[6] Two of these studies model the partnering of faculty and librarians to coordinate the mounting of class-curated exhibits.[7] In addition to the study by Davy and Schindler, Marsee and Davies-Wilson describe the benefits and challenges of coordinating student-curated exhibits from a pedagogical perspective, focusing on how exhibit projects can play a role in achieving course objectives, while increasing student engagement and retention.[8] We situate this exhibit project within the larger context of experiential learning,[9] broadly conceived as learning by doing. We view it as an example of how project-based learning can practice and hone transferable skills.

From a librarian's perspective, working with faculty to plan and develop a class-curated exhibit is a way to engage in curricular innovation and knowledge creation. This line of thinking about librarian-faculty partnerships coincides with the view of West, et al.: "In the process of exploring collaborations as a means for achieving library priorities and goals, librarians begin to take on the role of collaborative partners rather than support service providers."[10] As colleagues in instructional design, librarians further enhance student learning experiences and maximize the integration of special collections use in course development and research. From a faculty member's perspective, this collaborative relationship informs, enriches, and expands curricular learning opportunities for students. Additionally, when students realize that the kind of thinking and writing done in class has tangible applications, the rationale of the assignment becomes more readily apparent. Regardless of the collection, library, or institution, cooperative projects have the potential to

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4.   See Susan M. Allen, "Rare Books and the College Library: Current Practices in Marrying Undergraduates to Special Collections," *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship* 13, no. 2 (1999): 110–19 and Stephen Max Miller and Marjorie Markoff Warmkessel, "Bibliographic Instruction, History of the Book, and Post-Structuralism: An Unlikely Combination Helps to Expand the Critical Thinking Skills of Undergraduates," *Research Strategies* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 59–65.

5.   Pablo Alvarez, "Introducing Rare Books into the Undergraduate Curriculum," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural History* 7, no. 2 (2006): 94–104.

6.   *Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives*, eds. Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba (Chicago, Ill.: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012).

7.   Marianne Hansen, "Real Objects, Real Spaces, Real Expertise: An Undergraduate Seminar Curates an Exhibition on the Medieval Book of Hours," and Laurel Bradley, Kristi Wermager, and Gabriel Perri Silberblatt, "Exhibiting Artists' Books: Three Perspectives from a Curatorial Seminar," in *Past or Portal: Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives,* eds. Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba (Chicago, Ill.: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2012).

8.   Mickey Marsee and Dennis Davies-Wilson, "Student-Curated Exhibits: A Vehicle Towards Student Engagement, Retention, and Success," *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education* 30, no. 2 (2014): 80–90.

9.   David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Pearson FT Press, 2014).

10.   Brandon West, Kimberly Hoffman, and Michelle Costello, *Creative Instructional Design: Practical Applications for Librarians* (Chicago, Ill.: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017), x.

influence the structure of courses and to facilitate the move from strictly theoretical considerations to the practical "brass tacks" of implementation. The exhibit-as-assignment model expands options for project-based learning, especially in the humanities classroom where individually authored papers are the norm.

Background

In 2016, the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of Spanish novelist Miguel de Cervantes provided the impetus to rethink the role rare books could play in the *Don Quixote* course and beyond the confines of the classroom. Prendergast approached librarian Kristen Totleben with the desire to commemorate Cervantes and his work, after having participated in an event honoring the similar anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, which principally featured presentations by faculty members. Given that the *Don Quixote* course was to be offered in the following semester, we brainstormed about how our commemorative project could best incorporate student work in meaningful ways. Totleben approached the Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation (RBSCP) staff to gauge the feasibility of and their interest in collaborating on a student-curated exhibit project. We decided to build on the kind of rare books experience that had always been a part of the course, by including an active learning component. We wanted to emphasize and expand on the integration of student writing and skill building with the observation and analysis undertaken in the session. By the end of the project, the group included a wide array of collaborators, not all of whom worked in the library: the Modern Languages and Cultures Librarian, the Special Collections Librarian for Rare Books and Conservation, the Exhibits Manager, Digital Scholarship Lab staff, Modern Languages and Cultures faculty, and the students in the *Quixote* class.[11]

From its inception, a focus of the course has been how the image of the protagonist and his sidekick, Sancho Panza, have been adopted and adapted since the novel's publication. During the one rare books session we offered, the Special Collections Librarian presented a brief history of the book as object, and students examined a sampling of the illustrated *Quixote* volumes from the collection. Among other exercises, students compared and contrasted the physical qualities of the volumes such as their binding, gilding, quality of the cover, size of the volume, and quantity of image plates. They also discussed representations of the same scene sharing their observations about the artists' rendering of facial expressions, how faithful the image was to Cervantes's description, and the implications of the artists' interpretation. Since the course had always incorporated a rare books session, the challenge was how to build upon it and how to best integrate the library's

collection of varied illustrated editions of the *Quixote*[12] into the coursework in analytical ways that would lead to an exhibit.

Critics have noted that *Don Quixote* is an incredibly visual novel, "as the text's visual appeal constitutes one of the bases of the modern narrative, for Don Quixote's visions are the raison d'être of his adventures and the spur of the novel's dynamics."[13] Cervantes's descriptions are detailed, and he has a penchant for representing vivid scenes. In addition to the pictorial qualities of the text, the images artists create to depict a moment or episode in the novel serve as interpretations and in some cases have become iconic. Cervantes scholar Rachel Schmidt writes that the visual choices artists make become "most graphically, a rewriting through imagery of the text" and that the "aesthetic, social, or literary emerge from a consideration of the different interpretations" influenced by a text's historical context, among other issues.[14] Studying editions from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries in addition to the modern edition used for class reading, the students analyzed the text through a variety of interpretive lenses: images from different editions, the historical context of various editions, provenance, differences in translations, and artistic representations of Don Quixote. The course always incorporated objects and images from the web, books, or other sources to stimulate class discussion. Exploring more fully the representations of characters and the visual interpretations in the illustrations of the rare editions was a natural outgrowth of a well-established focus of the course.

After our initial meeting to discuss the broad parameters, we convened early in the summer to plan the project's implementation for the fall semester. The Special Collections Librarian was rightfully concerned with the need to limit the scope, as there are more volumes of the *Quixote* in the collection than can be properly displayed for the class sessions or that would fit in the available exhibit cases. As a result, we decided to limit the selection to offer a sampling of editions from different centuries and distinct types of images. Some of the other logistics that determined how we could proceed included: the availability of four portable exhibit cases that could be displayed in RBSCP from mid-November through the beginning of January. These details affected how the students would be grouped (four students per case) and when we would need to schedule the hands-on sessions and the exhibit's inaugural event. This timeline determined the deadlines for the various components of the exhibit.

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12.   This is a common way, among specialists, to refer to Cervantes's novel. We use it throughout the article for stylistic variety.

13.   Carmen García de la Rasilla, "Teaching Don Quixote through Images," in *Approaches to Teaching Cervantes's Don Quixote*, 2nd ed., vol. 134, eds. James A. Parr and Lisa Vollendorf (New York, N.Y.: Modern Language Association of America, 2015), 119.

14.   Rachel Schmidt, *Critical Images: The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, Quebec: MQUP, 1999), xv, available online at ProQuest Ebook Central [accessed 29 May 2018].

Rationale of the Exhibit as Assignment

Jessica Lacher-Feldman asserts that exhibit curators should consider how "exhibit development might fall into the realm of research" and how this type of interpretive work goes beyond the materiality of the holdings to consider their "symbolic, historical, intellectual, social, and cultural significance. Exhibition curatorship is scholarship."[15] In the observation, background research, and original analysis of the books and their illustrations, students generate a work of collective scholarship when they combine what they learn in class with their interpretations of primary sources. Like the preparation for reading response assignments, close reading activities, and research papers, the process of exhibit curation intrinsically includes the activities that comprise research. Fuller opines that the "history of scholarship is intimately tied to that of editing and curation," and he emphasizes the public function of scholarship.[16] When implemented in the undergraduate context, as an exhibit-as-assignment project, students' work parallels the processes that professionals (archivists, historians, curators, and scholars more broadly) undertake to conceptualize and create new ways of interpreting and sharing knowledge. Further, students practice producing a work of scholarship by participating in the research process: selecting an object, researching and analyzing the chosen object in discussion with peers, narrowing thematic focus, developing a critical point of view through written interpretation, and, finally, disseminating their work.

This course always focused on the implications of the historical, aesthetic, and political contexts when considering *Don Quixote* and already incorporated a survey of the cultural products the novel and its main characters have engendered: souvenirs, a ballet, a Broadway musical, and various motion picture adaptations. Therefore, we outlined a project to emphasize how the illustrated volumes themselves shaped how readers and viewers might understand the novel. This perspective was fundamental to how we conceived all the constitutive parts of the project. The ACRL, RBMS, and SAA's "Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy" suggest offering students "an opportunity to learn firsthand how primary sources are used for original research."[17] In the exhibit-design project, the books themselves are the primary sources. The use of primary sources in relation to *Don Quixote* deepens the students' literary and historical perspectives while reinforcing the fundamental importance of a work or object's social and cultural context. To highlight how curatorship is a form of research and

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15. Jessica Lacher-Feldman, *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries* (Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, 2013), 9–10.

16. Steve Fuller, "Research," in *Encyclopedia of Research Design*, ed. Neil J. Salkind (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), 1249.

17. Association of College and Research Libraries' Rare Book and Manuscript Section and Society of American Archivists Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy, "Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy," available online at
https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/Guidelines%20for%20Primary%20Souce%20Literacy_AsApproved062018_1.pdf [accessed 7 August 2018].

scholarship, we structured the assignment and its related exercises in a way that maximized the students' interpretive work, which was expressed to fit within the norms of a library exhibit. Our goal was to have them practice and hone skills that were transferable beyond the project and course. These skills included time management, analytical skills, and project collaboration, all of which Lacher-Feldman mentions.[18] We sought to have students apply their comparative analysis skills to text and image, thus stretching their own conceptions of literacy.

Interpretation of Text and Image

Close reading is a skill that must be practiced consistently and continuously over time for readers to gain confidence in analyzing a primary text before incorporating secondary critical sources. This course encourages students to think about issues of language and translation by considering specific word choice as well as the interpretative nexus of word and image. Students practice close reading of the text from the first class session. Throughout the semester, images of all kinds are also used to encourage a critical response to the text and elicit more nuanced interpretation of the visual nature of Cervantes's novel. Students must consider not only an artist's own reading of the novel or of a particular scene, but also the time period in which the artist was working. Illustrations reflect the limitations of the media at that time, prevailing artistic trends, the cost of creating woodcuts and reproducing images. Students were encouraged to focus on a specific image and shape interpretative possibilities by using one word to characterize the image or one emotion that an image elicited.

In addition to class discussion, for further guidance, students were provided with handouts from Writing Commons' "Breaking Down an Image"[19] on how to approach the interpretation of an image. We practiced some of the basics of this kind of critical work throughout the semester. When it came time to examine the rare volumes, students were asked to consider aspects like the focal point, the background, and the perspective of the image. They were reminded that the context and the intended audience should always be considered. The focus on the illustrations allowed for students who may not have been able to read the language of some editions (Spanish, French, German) to engage with the volumes on a distinct interpretive level. Based on their reading of the text in English and/or Spanish, each student could analyze specific illustrations. Hands-on engagement with the rare editions also provided an opportunity to discuss physical aspects of books, a topic the students are familiar with since Cervantes describes Don Quixote's library and the volumes of chivalric tales in detail. We share the approach proposed by Schmiesing and Hollis that "studying rare materials provides a unique opportunity

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18.   Jessica Lacher-Feldman, *Exhibits in Archives and Special Collections Libraries* (Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, 2013), 107–08.
19.   Jenna Pack Sheffield, "Breaking Down an Image," *Writing Commons*, available online at https:// writingcommons.org/breaking-down-an-image [accessed 20 August 2018].

for students to reflect on the effect that the physical form in which a text appears has on the reader's perception of it."[20] We move beyond this essential point of departure by focusing on what the illustrations and artistic choices suggest about an artist's own interpretation of the primary source text. Moreover, returning to one of Rachel Schmidt's propositions, we can think about how the choice and style of illustrations has the potential to reshape or refocus the interpretation of the text for a broader audience and for specific cultural or political purposes.

Although many people have not read the entire *Quixote*, they recognize its iconic characters and scenes. This is a key point of entry for students because they often have an idea of who Don Quixote is based on the play *Man of La Mancha* or Pablo Picasso's image that depicts the knight and his squire in the foreground with several windmills looming in the distance. Given the misconceptions about what the characters symbolize, we discussed how the exhibit could push its audience beyond the stereotypes by teaching the spectators about lesser-known themes. Thus, the exhibit's goal would be to move the audience to consider aspects other than the iconic windmills or Don Quixote's insanity, resulting in the exhibition's main title: "Beyond Windmills: Commemorating Cervantes, Representing Don Quixote." The illustrations were the logical focal point of each exhibit case. Student groups, which were randomly formed by choosing numbers from a hat, were tasked with identifying a one/two-word theme for their case, composing bibliographic labels for the rare volumes, and writing exhibit narratives. Students were reminded that they could not assume that a spectator would have read the novel; their narrative had to help the audience focus on the images. This kind of writing insists on concise analysis while finding a balance with context and plot summary.

Curricular and Exhibit Planning

As this was a pilot project, we planned the exhibit-based activities as a unit within the syllabus because it required the least reorganization of the course. The exhibit-as-assignment was given a weight of 15 percent of the course grade, which was the equivalent of an exam or paper and communicated the seriousness of the work we would undertake. Planning throughout was done in conjunction with the Special Collections Librarian and the Exhibits Manager. In the first few meetings, we discussed the following:

1) *How extensive would the exhibit be, given the time strictures within the syllabus?* As noted already, exhibit space and case availability quickly set some of the parameters. We determined that two sessions in special collections would be sufficient, when coupled with the student groups meeting outside of class and in-class discussions of some of the logistical details.

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20.   A.H. Schmiesing and Deborah R. Hollis, "The Role of Special Collections Departments in Humanities Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching: A Case Study," *Libraries and the Academy* 2, no. 3 (2002): 466.

2) *Which editions would be used and why?* At the recommendation of the Special Collections Librarian due to space limitations and to facilitate the management of the project, we limited the students' choices of volumes and illustrations. Our choices were based on the desire to have examples from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries as well the uniqueness and number of illustrations in each edition.[21] For example, a nineteenth-century French edition with illustrations from Gustave Doré are particularly iconic. This two-volume set has more than forty images, as did other editions, so we preselected five images from each, having the student groups choose the central image of their case from among them. Once they chose their main image, a complementary image was selected from a different edition to help balance out the case visually. The secondary image was a different artist's interpretation of the same scene depicted in the main image or one that was thematically connected.

3) *How do we integrate the students' work on the project into the existing course syllabus being sure to complement the focus of the course?* Our strategy was to coordinate the image selections by group to allow the students to get directly involved with the creation of the exhibit within the period of a month. We wanted to have the content choices predetermined so that less time was allocated to narrowing the scope of their project. The goal was for students to have more time with the rare books assigned to each group and, in effect, a more limited number of images to analyze them effectively and lay out the exhibit.

Although we were all concerned with the preservation of the editions, we agreed that preservation and accessibility do not have to be mutually exclusive. We coincide with what Lankes proposes about great academic libraries: "They see the missions of preservation, access, and inspiration as joined."[22] As a way to mitigate wear and tear on the volumes and to facilitate group work beyond the operating hours of the department, Prendergast and Totleben photographed the illustrations for easy access to a digital version.

Instruction and Workshop Sessions

There were two sessions in RBSCP. The first was designed as a relatively traditional "introduction to rare materials" session planned and conducted by the Special Collections Librarian. Because most of the students had never visited the department, this session combines an overview of RBSCP with a dedication of most of the class to the *Quixote* volumes. The objective of the first 75-minute class period was to help students begin to consider the book as object, including attention to the binding, the kind of paper, illuminations, illustrations, size, kind of cover, poten-

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21.   For a complete listing of the books used in the exhibit, please see "Appendix B: Exhibit Image Labels" or the digital exhibit, https://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/cervantes400/ [accessed 7 August 2018].

22.   David R. Lankes, *The New Librarianship Field Guide* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2016), 136.

tial owners, and audiences of distinct editions. This session immediately followed assigned readings in which students read and discussed several secondary sources about how *Don Quixote* was interpreted by German and English Romantics. They also learned about how the Royal Spanish Academy of Language partnered with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts to produce a definitive *deluxe* illustrated edition in the eighteenth century.[23]

The former series of readings inspired multiple interpretations of the *Quixote* based on certain intellectual and cultural movements; they emphasized how the reception and analysis of the same text could shift over time. The latter reading primed the students to think specifically about how a text is illustrated and packaged might connect with the political and cultural aspects of national identity. We also included a few non-*Quixote* editions to provide an overview of different kinds of texts (incunabula, manuscripts) over the centuries, as the oldest *Quixote* edition at the time was from the eighteenth century. The students were familiarized with the RBSCP department, rules and procedures for the books' care and handling, such as the use of supports to protect the books' binding, and basic exhibit procedures.

One week prior to the second session, the students were randomly divided into four groups and given the exhibit assignment description (see appendix A: Exhibit Assignment) and given the copies of the five images from which they would choose their central one. To approach the curation process and incorporate the practice of targeted analytical skills, the groups would conduct specific, focused assignments to facilitate the organization, analysis, and, ultimately, the display of the rare materials.

The second rare books session was a workshop dedicated to learning how to curate an exhibit case and a close examination of their selected images / volumes. The Special Collections Librarian and the Exhibits Manager gave short presentations on how to create an exhibit case, with an intended audience in mind. Students walked through the current exhibits in the department for ideas on layout, labels, and narratives. To facilitate the hands-on organization of the exhibit cases, each group was given butcher block paper cut to the case's dimensions and mock versions of their bibliographic label and analytical text in the font size that would be used to allow them to conceptualize the space and then decide how they would arrange and display the content. Each group worked with their volumes, identifying the artist and / or engraver of their images and contemplated the best way to organize the space. We all circulated among the various groups to help direct their attention to

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23. Rachel Schmidt, *Critical Images: The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, Quebec: MQUP, 1999), 7, available online at ProQuest Ebook Central [accessed 29 May 2018].

details, keep them on task, and answer any questions they had during the process. At the end of class, Prendergast took photographs of each group's arrangement and sent them to the Exhibits Manager, so the exhibit cases could be set up exactly as the students had organized them (the cases were holding another exhibit when this session took place). To synthesize the cases as a cohesive exhibit, Prendergast and Totleben wrote the introductory narrative.

FIGURE 1. Courtesy of Ryan Prendergast.

Specific Assignment Activities

Student groups were given some class time to confer and share ideas, but they were expected to meet and communicate outside of class to complete their tasks. The sequence of assignment activities was organized as follows:

For curating the exhibit cases, the students were required to: select a central image, analyze the image in 150 words, choose a one/two-word theme based on their analysis of the central image, compile the bibliographic information for each volume included in the case for exhibit labels using MLA citation style (the required citation format for all assignments in the course), and arrange the items in the case. Before the opening of the exhibit, we reviewed and edited the bibliographic labels. Exhibit narratives/ analysis drafts were read and commented on by the course instructor, then they were rewritten and finalized by student groups.[24] Because the Exhibits Manager would oversee the final arrangement of each case, including the formatting of all exhibit text, his schedule helped establish deadlines for the student groups' contributions.

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24.   For an example of an exhibit case with images and labels, see https://humanities.lib.rochester. edu/cervantes400/exhibits/show/creation [accessed 13 August 2018].

For the public inauguration of the exhibit, students composed a 650-word analysis about the group's chosen images and theme. Using PowerPoint to display images and main ideas for the audience, the presentations were based on their reading and interpretations of the novel and their case's main image. One student from each group presented their analysis. Students were reminded that a presentation for a wider, nonexpert audience required some context and specific framing of the episode depicted in the image.

After the public event, each group wrote an extended analysis of approximately 1,000 words about their theme and images. This allowed the students the space to offer more detailed and developed observations than previous writing assignments permitted.

Writing, Presentation, and Group Work

As already mentioned, the incorporation of the rare illustrated editions of the *Quixote* in a more intentional and comprehensive way was a natural extension of the course's existing structure. However, the coordinated assignments that led up to the exhibit offered far more opportunities for students to grapple with what the physical book represented in centuries past. This included the essential roles of the craftsmen and artists for illustrated and nonillustrated texts as well as the place of the writing and reading of recreational literature. In terms of the illustrations, seeing the choices made by artists in their original context, as opposed to what an Internet image search might yield, gave students a sense of the scope and scale of the visual in a given edition. A felicitous result of this project occurred in class after completing the exhibit assignment. Students had much more incisive comments about the physicality of books and the labor that produced a volume in the seventeenth century when we read a part of the novel in which Don Quixote visits a printing shop in Barcelona and talks extensively with the people working there.

Writing Skills

Like Davy and Schindler in their experience facilitating student-curated exhibits, we "found that label editing exercises and discussions were helpful in teaching students how to edit their own writing."[25] In subsequent assignments, students practiced elaborating, revising, and editing their interpretative analyses in a longer paper and in their public group presentations. Having the student groups compose three analytical interpretations of differing lengths of the same image had practical, pedagogical, and scholarly motivations. We did not want the exhibit narratives to contain a lot of text (150-word version). The public presentations, held during the 75-minute

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25.   Jennie Davy and Amy C. Schindler, "Student Curators in the Archives: Class Curated Exhibits in Academic Special Collections," in *Innovative Practices for Archives and Special Collections,* ed. Sarah Theimer (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 36.

class period, allowed time for all groups to present their analyses (650-word version) and let the audience ask questions and peruse the exhibit cases. The final analysis (1,000-word version) allowed for a deeper and broader interpretive exercise.

A work of scholarship is only useful to a larger audience if communicated in a clear, accessible form. Therefore, being able to write in a succinct and precise fashion is an essential skill that students practiced in different ways throughout the class. Most humanities students are accustomed to writing longer analyses, so having to condense and prioritize their ideas for the limits of an exhibit narrative or a public presentation is a critical skill and a communicational challenge; the exercise hones writing skills beneficial far beyond a literature course.

Student Collaboration

In literature classes, students often read in isolation and write individual analytical papers. While they may work in pairs or groups during class-based discussion or activities and collaboration is common in special collections-based student work, they often are not responsible for crafting original, graded group work in a humanities class. Inevitably, students will work in collaborative contexts in graduate or professional school and/or in business and industry. The sooner they are challenged to participate in and negotiate the dynamics of group work, the better prepared they will be for future academic and professional endeavors. Group work on the exhibit was a natural and logistical component of creating a collective work of scholarship; each group negotiated duties and shared responsibility throughout the stages of the project.

Each group member was held accountable for sharing the workload and to make sure the fellow members did their fair share. Each student individually graded him/herself and each group member at the end of the project. They included a narrative about their contributions as well as those of each group member (from brainstorming, to volunteering to present publicly, to drafting and editing the written aspects) and to justify the assigned grade. While it is common to accept that students are responsible for their own learning, they can also be responsible for certain aspects of the evaluation of themselves and their colleagues. These evaluations were factored into the overall grade for the project.

Public Event

Organizing a public event as an integrated piece of the assignment allowed for students to practice and showcase essential critical and interpersonal skills that have applications beyond the classroom. Another goal of the public presentation was to bring together faculty and student presenters. With faculty members from French and Russian discussing the influence of Cervantes and *Don Quixote* on their respective literary and cultural traditions, the students in the class were exposed to

different critical approaches and shared the same forum. They occupied the role of "experts." This kind of student-faculty hybrid event may be less common but provides the opportunity to explore distinct interpretative approaches.

We chose the Humanities Center as the venue because it had a presentation space with seating for fifty with an adjacent area for the exhibition cases, which facilitated their viewing before and after the event. Because the center and RBSCP are on the same floor, the cases were easily moved. The Exhibits Manager facilitated moving the cases and the Special Collections Librarian answered further questions about the materials for attendees. By using this venue, we connected more students and faculty to the newly established Humanities Center, the libraries' rare *Don Quixote* holdings, and the Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation. With the students presenting their work and with the rare books as their objects of study, the event highlighted the collection and the potential for more humanities undergraduate research via curricular and library programming.

The opening event was attended by 30 people, including students (beyond those enrolled in the class), faculty from Modern Languages and Cultures, and library staff. The event was held during one of the course's class sessions to assure no scheduling conflicts for the students, which may have limited attendance of other students and faculty. Totleben welcomed everyone, and Prendergast introduced the presenters and coordinated the question and answer session. The discussion after the presentations focused on everything from the students' analysis, to *Don Quixote*'s enduring legacy, to the planning and implementation of the project.

Digital Exhibit

Well into the event's planning and execution, it occurred to us that creating a virtual exhibit would extend the reach of the physical exhibition. We did this to preserve it as a model for possible future iterations of the assignment. We also wanted to showcase the editions to the broader university community and beyond.[26] The students benefited from the option to link to the exhibit on their résumés since they were named as guest curators. Because this virtual component was added after the physical exhibition plans were well under way, students were not involved in its creation. Colleagues from the Digital Scholarship Lab photographed the illustrations and designed the site within two weeks. We asked them to have the online version mirror the physical exhibit as much as possible. In the future, students with proper training will assume some of these digital responsibilities.[27]

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26.   Kathleen McGarvey, "Events Pay Homage to Cervantes on 400th Anniversary of His Death," *Newscenter* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester, 2016), available online at www.rochester.edu/newscenter/events-pay-homage-to-cervantes-198612/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

27.   River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester, "Beyond Windmills: Commemorating Cervantes, Representing *Don Quixote*" (2016), available online at https://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/cervantes400/ [accessed 29 May 2018].

Three Models for Course Adaptation

We undertook the course-exhibit integration project with a bit of naïveté. As we have outlined throughout this article, we divided the tasks according to expertise with the common goal of facilitating the students' analytical work within the established timeline and given the logistical limitations. We were fortunate to have display cases and space available for the exhibition with relatively short notice. Most important, we benefited from the generosity and professionalism of colleagues in all of the participating library and academic departments. We recommend planning this kind of an event at least a full year in advance to ensure appropriate scheduling and availability of resources.

As a way to look forward and to consider other options for the course and exhibit assignment, we offer three models for engaging in this kind of course-based exploration of artifactual, visual, and digital literacies. These provide a scaffolding of approaches that other librarians and faculty members can adapt according to their own pedagogical goals and available institutional resources. Recognizing that staff support and access to rare materials greatly differ from institution to institution, projects of this kind do not have to be based on many volumes. These rare book or object-based integration models can be used across a range of disciplines for any kind of curriculum involving exhibit curation of primary sources.

1. *The "add-on" model.* This model conceives of the project as an appended unit to an existing syllabus with course content staying essentially the same. This version is what we used and requires the least amount of retooling of a course. By rethinking the grade distribution to include a project-based unit, groups of several students undertake the analysis of a rare book or object, either of their choosing or as assigned. The breadth of the project and number of objects can be scaled up or down according to time constraints or resources. Project components might teach and practice the skills of book handling, primary source literacy, object analysis, process writing, oral presentation, or the creation of a digital product. The project's tasks can be adjusted to fit the instructor's course objectives.

2. *The "reconstructed course" model.* This version involves rethinking the purpose of the images or objects in a course that traditionally relies more heavily on literary analysis, and it can include some or all of the aspects of the "add-on" model. Here, the explicit discussion of the objects is expanded to a daily or weekly priority so that the curriculum is more patently interdisciplinary. Secondary readings would include more about visual analysis or interpretation of illustrated editions of the texts in question. It could involve an approach to the text where literature and criticism, art history, and, perhaps, studio arts might be integrated. Students would explore boundaries between textual and

visual interpretations, adaptations, and their interrelatedness. They would read more sources to explore the historical context of these texts and their materiality: "The effect of this juxtaposition of visual and textual narratives upon a reader can be studied indirectly through the analysis of the historical artifacts of reception—the illustrations and commentaries on the text themselves."[28] There would be more rare books sessions, an art historian and an historian could be guest lecturers to familiarize students with the historical periods, the practice of visual analysis, and the possibilities of the final project (digital or physical). Close reading and critical analysis skills would still be central to their work, and the students would practice them multimodally via the creation of a video or other scholarly manifestation in lieu of the traditional research paper. This project could be done in groups or independently.

3. *The "images first" model.* The course is entirely revamped, making images the point of entry and the focus of most or all of the course assignments. It incorporates some or all of the "reconstructed course" model. Art would be the primary driver of instruction with the text and historical context serving as foundational and background information. Here, the end-of-semester project would culminate in a digital exhibit populated by student-generated analytical and creative content. As McLurken notes, "these projects can be dynamic, cross-media, innovative and new, while still adhering to rigorous standards for citation and scholarship."[29] As students would create a digital scholarship project, more discussion and time would be devoted to the process of its creation and development. Assignments would be geared toward producing content for a digital exhibit, and metadata for the objects of analysis would be discussed while constructing it. In class, students would discuss and select the descriptors or other types of information they wish to label or tag the images or other online content. The choices in the metadata would be driven by their research inquiries. For instance, if they were studying the facial features of Sancho Panza in different illustrations across the centuries, which descriptors would be chosen to characterize and label the images? The contents' organization within the context of the history of a given text, artistic movements, and other thematic elements would be explored, classified, and analyzed. Students might use software such as Omeka or Scalar and be trained in handling the rare books to acquire a hybrid of skills for the creation of digital scholarship. Selected pieces would be digitized by the library's Digital Scholarship Lab. In determining the focus and purpose

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28.   Rachel Schmidt, *Critical Images: The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal, Quebec: MQUP, 1999), 11, available online at ProQuest Ebook Central [accessed 17 May 2018].

29.   Jeffrey W. McLurken, "Teaching and Learning with Omeka: Discomfort, Play, and Creating Public, Online, Digital Collections," in *Learning Through Digital Media: Experiments in Technology and Pedagogy,* ed. R. Trebor Scholz (Orono, Maine: The Institute for Distributed Creativity, 2013), 138, available online at https://dmlcentral.net/wp-content/uploads/files/Learning_Through_Digital_Media.pdf [accessed 17 May 2018].

of the research project, we would evaluate tools to decide which would be most appropriate for adoption. This interdisciplinary, hands-on approach would allow students to build on their digital literacy and scholarship skills.

Conclusion

Starting with an intention to showcase and engage with the library's rare *Don Quixote* editions to commemorate a significant anniversary of Cervantes' death, this project led to broader ideas and outcomes than expected. It made us think more specifically and intentionally about the marketable, transferable skills students gain from this kind of practical, publicly disseminated assignment. We considered how it could be a part of an experiential learning opportunity in a literature course and imagined interdisciplinary connections to enrich understanding of a canonical literary text. We discussed tangible ways for students to experience the text as they read it, creating an innovative approach to observing universally recognized characters and images. The assignment helped students conceive of exhibit work as research and begin to understand how curators must make specific, deliberate choices to communicate the themes and goals of an exhibit clearly and succinctly.

Learning more about RBSCP resources and working closely with library staff made the library feel more familiar and welcoming to Prendergast's students, a sentiment they expressed in class discussions upon completion of the project. One student remarked, "The rare books section of the library used to feel so exclusionary and inaccessible before I took the course, but now I feel so much more comfortable there. I will definitely go back there if only for my own enjoyment!"[30] The project changed some students' perceptions of RBSCP, rare editions, and the ability to access them. Speaking specifically of the analytical work of the assignment, another student said that "working with different *Don Quixote* editions taught me how literature can never be viewed through one lens only. Each edition and each translation of Cervantes' text redefined and reshaped its meaning for me."[31] For most, this was the first time they critically observed and analyzed a book as an object, its materiality, and its historical context in such deliberate ways. Working with the books and noticing the textual and visual interpretations gave many of them a new approach to reading the novel.

This project is an example of the types of experiential learning that librarians and faculty can provide their students. Class-curated exhibits are a way for students to participate in academic conversations by "creating tangible items from the intangible knowledge creation process. They are using these creative technologies to aid

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30. River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester, "Working with Rare Materials to Commemorate Cervantes's 400th Anniversary" (2016), available online at https://www.library.rochester.edu/news/cervantes%E2%80%99-400th-anniversary [accessed 17 May 2018].

31. Ibid.

memory, spark debate and reward the creative urge."[32] This model can be adapted to other institutions, regardless of their sizes or collections. Through intentional, coordinated project management, we connected what we have with the course's curriculum. The assignment offered opportunities for students to work with the rare *Quixote* holdings and made them accessible through the physical and digital exhibits. By rethinking how we can use rare materials as part of curricular innovation, we challenged ourselves and our students to approach materials from other perspectives, and we built the foundation for more collaborative work in the future.

With the benefit of hindsight and as a form of reflection and self-assessment, we offer a list of areas that could improve project planning and management in similar settings.

1. We cannot emphasize enough the need to schedule and plan ahead. Because a variety of parties and departments were involved in this undertaking, the coordination of the various project components was a challenge. Deciding the scope and focus of the exhibit early on will facilitate a number of the subsequent decisions.
2. Establish clear norms for exhibit labels, including preferred bibliographic citation format, length of exhibit narratives, and other norms.
3. Students could certainly have more freedom and a different level of participation in future iterations. As noted throughout the article, faculty and librarians made several choices to determine the exhibit's shape and scope to facilitate the creation of the final product.
4. Communicate explicitly to the students from the beginning of the semester how the exhibit work is an outgrowth of the interpretive literary study in the course. We took for granted that all of the students would make these connections. As a corollary, make sure the exhibit assignment parameters clearly demonstrate the course's learning outcomes.
5. Assessment. Prendergast gathered anecdotal evidence regarding the students' experiences with the exhibit assignment through discussion in class after the project and assignments were completed. While most students expressed that they both enjoyed and learned from the experience, one student did not see the point of the assignment at all. The standard course evaluation did not elicit any specific feedback. A separate evaluation or survey, distributed immediately after the groups finished their work, would yield specific and useful feedback. It could be included as a part of the group member evaluation and grading form.

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32. David R. Lankes, *The New Librarianship Field Guide* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2016), 122–23.

APPENDIX A. Exhibit Assignment

Don Quixote: The Book, The Myth, The Image

Fall 2016—Group Presentation/Exhibit Curation/Writing Assignment—Semester Long

As part of the course, each group will be responsible for selecting and analyzing an image from a limited pool of carefully assembled images from the holdings of the *Quixote* in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

The culmination of this work will result in both a public exhibit (that will begin in early November) and presentation of the group's work at an event held during class time on Wednesday, November 16 (during class time in the Gamble Room, Rush Rhees Library).

Exhibit Requirements:
- Write a short blurb (approx. 150 words) for exhibition case that offers a brief analysis of selected image; proofread very carefully. This will be on display and open to the public in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library. Your names will be included in the case.
- Assign a theme to your case (based on class discussion, perhaps).
- Arrange/curate the exhibit case for the group.
- Include bibliographic entries in **MLA format** for any books/images used in the exhibit (rare or otherwise). Also note if from Rare Books or elsewhere.
- Each group will be assigned an image of Cervantes that must be incorporated into the exhibit case (this exhibit is commemorating the 400th anniversary of Cervantes's death).

Presentation Requirements:
- 650-word presentation for the event plus PowerPoint/slide presentation with image and bullet points, other info
- 5 minutes

Extended Analysis Requirements:
1,000 words

Timeline:
- Select image: ASAP
- Write short blurb for exhibit/select theme, etc.
- Have presentation text prepared

- Select complementary materials for exhibit case and label accordingly
- PowerPoint/Prezi/Google Slides due: November 14
- Presentation at event: November 16
- Hand in longer paper: Before Thanksgiving break

Rare Books Sessions: September 19 and October 10—in Plutzik Library (in Rare Books, Special Collections & Preservation—2nd floor, Rush Rhees)

APPENDIX B. Exhibit Image Labels

For the digital exhibit, refer to https://humanities.lib.rochester.edu/ cervantes400/

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quixote.* Translated by Judge Parry. New York: John Lane, 1900. Artist: Walter Crane

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote.* Translated by T. Smollett, M.D., vol. 1. Dublin: John Chambers, 1796. Artist: Antonio Carnicero, Engraver: John Hall

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Vida y hechos del ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha.* vol. 1. Londres: J.Y.R. Tonson, 1738. Artist: John Vanderbank, Engraver: Gerard Van der Gucht

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quixote de La Mancha: Translated from the Spanish.* Translated by Mary Smirke, London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies by W. Bulmer and Co., 1818. Artist: Robert Smirke

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *Don Quixote de la Mancha: The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha.* Translated by Peter Motteux, vol. 2. London: Nonesuch Press, 1930. Artist: E. McKnight Kauffer

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *The History of That Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote de la Mancha.* Translated by P.A. Motteux, vol. 1. Edinburgh: John Grant, 1902. Artist: Adolphe Lalauze

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *L'ingénieux hidalgo don Quichotte de la Manche.* Translated by Louis Viardot, vol. 1. Paris: Libraire de L. Hachette et Cie, 1869. Artist: Gustave Doré, Engraver: H. Pisan

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*, vol. 2. Madrid: En la imprenta de la Academia por la Viuda de Ibarra, Hijos y Compañía, 1787. Artist: Antonio and Isidro Carnicero, Engraver: Fernando Selma