

Object and Archive-based Learning

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) archives and special collections are designed to support learning and teaching within the creative arts, including media, creative writing, journalism, film, animation, fine art, photography, graphic design, and fashion. The varied material includes artworks, books, paper, digital images, sound recordings and scripts.

This paper demonstrates how UCA opens up the tangible and intangible heritages housed in its archives and special collections to engage, educate and inspire students and staff. A number of pedagogical frameworks and activities have been developed to support object and archive-based learning, using archival materials for enhancing teaching, learning and research. Students can read, touch, browse, and feel the sketches, paintings, animation, press released. Several scholars have discussed the centrality of senses involved in active learning (e.g., Biggs, 2003; Prince, 2004). Paris (2002) also argues that the experience of seeing and touching objects and discussing them with peers leads students to interpret the concrete and relate it to abstract concepts. The sensory experiences in object and archive-based learning therefore can motivate students to develop agency for learning, and incite deep thinking and active learning (Chatterjee, 2009; Chatterjee and Noble, 2009). Two case studies are presented here to demonstrate how UCA's enterprising archives serve as a force for growth, for ideas, for training, for sharing and supporting.



Case Study 1: Bob Godfrey in a HE context.

The enterprising archives have helped staff and students in computer generated (CG) art. In collaboration with the CGArts tutor (workshops embedded into the course, which was vital for student interaction), the Learning and Teaching Librarian and the Archivist introduced and engaged students with animation archives, encouraged them to reuse the artefacts, develop a understanding of primary and secondary sources and explore how they can be used. The activity was in the form of a hands-on session, with correct handling training. This day culminated with a student art exhibition in response to the archive, which was available online on the CGArts course blog.



Case Study 2: An Incubator

To make the archives more enterprising, there is a plan of turning the archive spaces into incubators for creative ideas by providing coaching, advice, meeting spaces, and research support to people interested in developing a project. In addition to creating a space dedicated to learning and research at the archive space, there is also a plan of developing a virtual information network across different HE and cultural sector.

With archives and special collections for students in photography, in the form of a presentation, group work, and hands on session students were encouraged to discuss what they thought an archive was, how to find them, how it could be reused in their work, how archival cataloguing theory can be used with Photography narrative work, how you can look after your own work. Feedback from students was positive: 'this may have pushed me into using archives', 'vast and resourceful information', 'what I find interesting is the mystery of the archive', 'using tasks to keep us interested and involved'

Enterprising Archives for Object & Archive-based Learning in Arts and Media

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Archive
explored

Lessons Learnt

Archival materials have served as mediating artefacts to inspire, to stimulate, to entertain, to educate, to historicise and sometimes politicise learning and research. They also facilitate inter-disciplinary collaborative learning, crossing disciplinary boundaries. Archival materials in this case becomes boundary objects in activity systems (Engestrom, 1987, 1999). The outreach activities designated at the UCA for teaching, learning and research has made the archives more enterprising.

More information, including subject guides and events can be found on UCA Archives website at <http://community.ucreative.ac.uk/archives>

References

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