

Exploring Communities

Summary

Perhaps more an exercise in visualization and format, this activity is designed to help students explore the nature and content of information resources. It is also designed to scaffold student inquiry in a way that encourages and makes explicit the benefits of iterative search and analysis. Students are prompted to identify information contained within primary source documents and subsequently search for and organize secondary source documents related to that information. The activity builds on the capabilities of a visual mind mapping tool called, [Coggle](#). While the technology provides certain amounts of flexibility and affordance, no technology should ever get in the way of student learning. If the learning curve is too much, students could use other preferred mind mapping technologies. Of course, the activity could be performed using paper and pen as well. Sometimes an analog approach is simplest and best.

Learning Objectives

- Students develop an understanding of the differences between primary and secondary source documents.
- Students identify information contained in primary source documents that can be used to explore and develop insight about the historical context of the analyzed documents.
- Students exercise analysis skills that may promote self-directed forms of inquiry.

Class Materials

While this activity was developed to integrate with the IDEAL Archives Alive! Assignment, the activity could certainly be revised to support student work with a variety of information resources and formats. Please contact Undergraduate Engagement Librarian, Katie Hassman (katie-hassman@uiowa.edu) if you'd like to explore ways to integrate this type of activity into your lessons plans and assignments.

Outline for Class Activity

- Students create a [Coggle](#) account and, after identifying a document they wish to annotate with DIY History, place the document title and document url in the center of a new Coggle.
- As students transcribe their document, encourage them to notice pertinent dates, phrases, names, etc. that might help them better understand the historical context surrounding their documents. Point students to this [DIY History Subject Guide page](#) as an example of how to locate potentially relevant concepts and terms within a primary source document.
- The next step is to ask students to develop a better understanding of the historical context of their chosen document. The Libraries have a wealth of resources that can help students explore topics related to their documents. The Libraries have also developed a variety of tutorials that can help students explore Libraries resources. As students locate resources

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related to their document they should add them to their Coggle. The Coggle should function as a visualized, annotated bibliography of sorts -- a place where students can collect and then organize (and re-organize) the resources they find related to their transcribed DIY History document. As students locate and add resources to their Coggle they should develop an organizational scheme based on instructional goals. Depending on the instructional goals and learning outcomes of your assignment, you might encourage students to organize their resources according to a variety of schemes.

- NOTE: You'll want to demonstrate to students how to change colors of branches within Coggle during an in-class session prior to assigning this part of the activity.
- After completing one pass at their Coogle bibliography, students should be prepared to have conversations about the distinctions between primary and secondary source documents.
 - Conversation prompts:
 - How would you describe the differences between primary and secondary sources?
 - When and/or why do these differences matter?
- If students completed the Personal Knowledge Communities activity, you might ask the students to take their Coggle work one step further, and for each resource provide a brief description of: the document format; the author and a description of why the author is (or isn't) a trusted authority on the topic; a list of intended communities/audiences; and a description of why the author is (or isn't) a trusted authority on the topic.

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