

# History Majors and Archival Collections: Understanding Context

**Does the DePaul University Special Collections and Archives (SPCA) instruction session designed for HST 299 classes contribute to students' ability to explain the socio-political landscape of information, including who creates it, who controls it and where to find it?**

## Learning Outcome

- Students who participate in library instruction should be able to explain the socio-political landscape of information, including who creates it, who controls it and where to find it.

## Methodology

- All students enrolled in three sections of HST 299 during Winter and Spring 2019 were invited to participate in the assessment project.
- Two internally-created surveys were administered through Qualtrics, one immediately after the SPCA instruction session to measure content knowledge and the other after students had completed a specific assignment for the class using a primary source to measure application of their content knowledge.
- We created a four-tiered rubric (0-3) to score questions on both surveys.
- Students successfully demonstrated learning if they received a score of 2 or 3 on questions 3, 4, and 5 on Survey 2 while also receiving an additive score of at least 6.

## Demographics

- HST 299 is a required course for all history majors that usually enrolls upper level undergraduate students.
- Of the 41 students enrolled in the 3 sections of HST 299, 41 students (100%) completed survey 1.
- Six students dropped the course before the second survey was distributed with only 25 students (71%) completing survey 2.

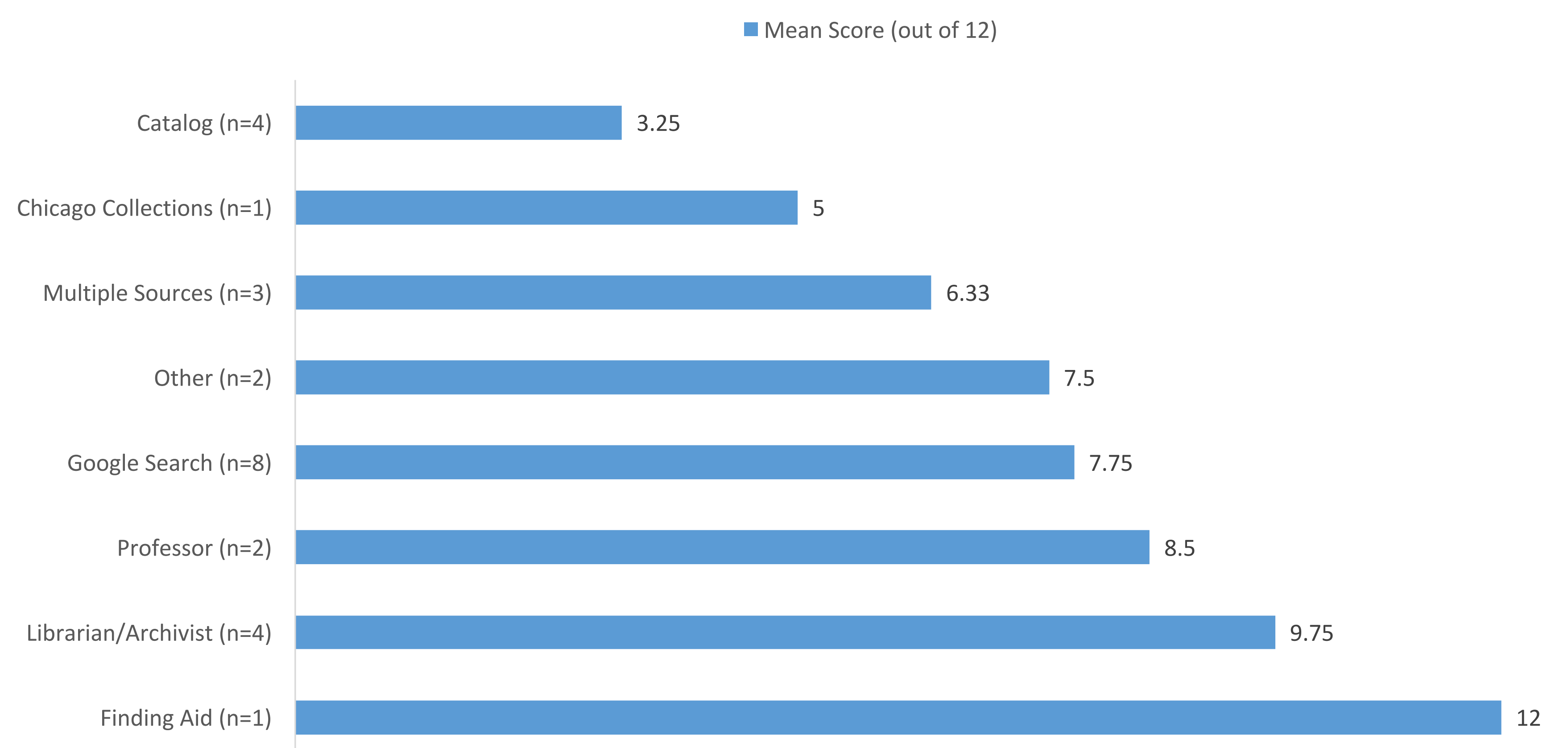
## Key Findings

- 15 students (60%) successfully met the learning outcome.
- 19 of 25 students (76%) correctly identified the creator of the primary source, which is a fundamental document analysis skill.
- Many students struggled with the terminology (finding aid, provenance, repository) presented during the HST 299 SPCA instruction session.
- The SPCA HST 299 instruction curriculum has a positive impact when students apply the information learned and visit repositories in person, use archival finding aids, and engage with librarians and archivists.

## Plan of Action

- In Fall 2019, findings will be shared with staff and the head of SPCA at a regular department meeting.
- In Fall 2019, findings will be shared with HST 299 faculty to help determine whether the curriculum meets the needs of the current and future student population.
- Findings will be shared during the December 2019 Library Instruction Workshop.
- In collaboration with instruction librarians, programmatic instruction will be reviewed and revised to ensure that vital skills, especially the ability to understand the context of source material found online, are addressed.

Mean Score of Select Survey 2 Questions: Ability to Understand Context of Primary Source by Source Location Method



## Social Media Information