abstract: This qualitative research assesses the success of a unique upper-level course project developed collaboratively by a library faculty member and a history instructor. It resulted in a permanent online library guide and a one-hour public panel event focused on a social justice issue. We situate our assessment of the project in today’s higher education environment, which is increasingly dependent on part-time and non-tenure-track faculty, as well as within the increased emphasis on public engagement for land-grant universities.

Introduction

Robert Kenedy and Vivienne Monty’s pedagogical model, which they call “dynamic purposeful learning,” proposes that the most effective way for faculty and librarians to work together is complete collaboration that is “totally symbiotic” and extends through the entirety of a course. This type of partnership achieves positive outcomes for the student, the teacher, and the librarian. If a faculty member and a librarian can collaborate fully for years, the results can bring value to all constituencies, as Kenedy and Monty’s research attests.

Today’s higher education environment has become increasingly unlikely to provide the stability and institutional structures necessary to facilitate multiyear collaborative projects. According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), more than half of all faculty positions are part-time, and non-tenure-track positions now account for over 70 percent of all jobs in higher education institutions in the United States. Contingent faculty, whether graduate students or more traditional adjunct professors, have access to fewer resources, may teach outside of specialist fields, and often have less time to plan courses than permanent, tenure-track instructors.
This scarcity of opportunities for librarian-faculty collaboration does not mean that such opportunities should be disregarded. Indeed, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has been a model for best practices in collaborative approaches to information literacy instruction through its early adoption of a curriculum mapping program, which systematically designed a course of study to achieve the desired student learning outcomes. We argue that, in addition to these established and systematic collaborative endeavors, educators should also take advantage of short-term opportunities and remain open to onetime collaborative projects.

This article focuses on one such collaborative project, developed and implemented by a contingent graduate instructor (Julie Laut) and an area specialist librarian (Mara Thacker) during the fall 2014 semester. Inspired by such works as Jennifer Brown and Thomas Duke’s article on their collaborative teaching and research, we undertook this research project as a reflective exercise. We aimed to explore the ways in which this collaborative model met our original objectives and the extent to which the project benefited the library, the instructor, and the students.

We added one more layer to our analysis by considering how this project aligns with the renewed emphasis on engagement in land-grant research universities. Hiram Fitzgerald, Karen Bruns, Steven Sonka, Andrew Furco, and Louis Swanson discuss how three historical federal laws—the Morrill Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914—came together to create a context in which land-grant institutions, mostly large public universities, connected with citizens for the purpose of strengthening democracy. While these acts and the spirit behind them remain at the core of public universities’ missions, over time the institutions have shifted away from the applied research and engagement activities that initially grew out of these acts. After about 1950, universities increasingly adopted German models of higher education, which held that the academic mission was to advance knowledge through specialized, original research.

In the present, educators, administrators, and others have called on public universities to renew their commitment to advancing the public good, particularly by engaging with communities in new, collaborative ways. This article explores the extent to which the collaborative project we present provides a model for ways libraries and faculty can meaningfully engage with communities and advance the public good.
Background and Goals

The faculty-librarian collaboration discussed in this paper took place within a large, complex institutional context. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), established in 1867 as a federal land-grant university, is now ranked as a Research 1 institution, one that engages in intensive research activity. Its undergraduate and graduate students number over 44,000. UIUC students come from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. The academic program comprises 16 colleges and instructional units that host more than 150 undergraduate programs and over 100 graduate and professional programs.

The Department of History is a vibrant program within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with over 50 full-time and affiliated faculty members. Its stated mission for the undergraduate program is “to foster a deeper understanding of the historical processes that shape our world, to engage students in hands-on historical research, and to prepare them for a variety of careers in which critical thinking, informed analysis, and incisive writing are crucial skills.” The course highlighted in this paper was part of a departmental effort to enhance the curriculum by offering history majors the opportunity to work directly with instructors in smaller, thematic seminar courses. The topics changed from year to year to draw on the most recent research by faculty and advanced graduate students in the department.

The University of Illinois Library is one of the largest public libraries in the world with a collection numbering more than 13 million volumes in a variety of formats, languages, and subjects. The library currently employs approximately 90 faculty and 300 academic professionals, staff, and graduate assistants. Responsibilities for information literacy instruction, teaching, and engagement are spread across the public-facing units in the library and implemented by librarians within those units. Instruction and outreach are core to the library’s mission and values, as shown by the Framework for Strategic Action it adopted for 2015–2018. Point 2.A in the document states that the library should “systematize access to library experts and increase internal and external collaborations, including mechanisms for user requests for assistance and instructional support.” Subject specialists are the disciplinary experts within the library system who work with different departments and cultivate opportunities to provide library instruction to those departments.

Laut was awarded a competitive fellowship to design and teach a course titled Gendering War, Memory, and Migration: Fact and Fiction in Modern South Asia in the fall of 2014. This 300-level history course fell under the heading of Fiction and the Historical Imagination and explored the production of historical knowledge and historical memory through a study of women and gender in South Asia. Laut, an instructor with over seven years of experience teaching social studies in high schools and universities, drew on feminist pedagogy in her syllabus design and classroom methods. She invited students to cocreate the content and design of the course and challenged them to shift their thinking in new directions.

The course design for Gendering War, Memory, and Migration brought together in a global context Laut’s expertise in feminist transnational history, gender and empire, and South Asia. Students read and discussed secondary literature, primary sources, and
fiction, and they listened to oral histories. They also viewed contemporary films about South Asian women’s experience during the 1947 Partition that divided British India into India and Pakistan, the Sri Lankan civil war between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the Hindu Tamil minority from 1983 to 2009, and diasporic Asian migrations to North America. The course readings and discussions led students to consider the effect of disruption and displacement on women and gender, and how multiple narratives of these events are produced. The course also challenged students to engage with these themes in contemporary society.

Thacker joined the University of Illinois Library faculty in the fall of 2012. Outreach and engagement activities have been core to her role as a South Asian studies librarian. As chair of the International and Area Studies Library (IASL) International Teaching and Engagement Committee, Thacker developed an ongoing series of events hosted by the IASL branded as the Chai Wai series (pronounced chī wī), from a Hindi term meaning “tea or something like that.” Inspired by the cultural salons of the past, the IASL hosts two Chai Wai events per semester. The event discussed in this paper was the second Chai Wai ever held, but the series continues today as one of IASL’s most popular outreach initiatives. Each event features a moderator and three or four expert panelists drawn from the university and the surrounding community to lead a highly interactive discussion on a current global issue. Typically, an online guide is created to accompany the event to facilitate further research for audience members who develop a deeper interest in the topic. In this case, the students created the online guide as part of their assignment for the course Gendering War, Memory, and Migration. Students worked in pairs to produce one section of a complete LibGuide hosted by the library and made freely available through the library Web page for future students and researchers. The LibGuide project counted for 20 percent of students’ final grade in the course. The students also helped facilitate the discussion at the Chai Wai panel by providing framing questions to the moderator and actively participating as audience members.

The collaboration between Laut and Thacker began with a meeting in the summer of 2014 in which Laut requested feedback about the construction of an assignment for her history course. She was interested in motivating her upper-level history students to visit IASL, which she had used extensively for her own research purposes. She came to the meeting with two overarching questions: (1) What can we do to connect intellectual discussions about the past to real-world issues outside the classroom? and (2) How can we find concrete ways to make the connection between historical inquiry and contemporary issues meaningful for undergraduate history students? Laut also sought to ensure that the assignment would encourage students to effectively utilize the library to find and use high-quality, peer-reviewed resources. Concurrently, Thacker had just started the Chai Wai series and was looking for an appropriate current global topic as well as potential collaborators and panelists. As the two discussed the assignment and new developments at the library, they realized that they had an excellent opportunity for a collaborative project in which the library would provide instruction and support for the class, and the class would contribute to engagement in a public event and the accompanying online guide hosted by the library.
Literature Review

Information literacy has been a core concern of professional librarians since at least 1989, when the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Presidential Committee released a report identifying four key components to information literacy.7 By 2000, ACRL approved and adopted a document called the “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education,” which in 2016 was replaced by the “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.”8 The Framework defines information literacy as “the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”9

The ways in which librarians promote information literacy varies between institutions and indeed between librarians. Faculty-librarian collaboration is one strategy that can take many forms and be applied across a variety of disciplines. There is already a rich history of literature on the topic—a keyword search for “librarian faculty collaboration” in EBSCO’s Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts database, for example, returns 251 articles dating back to 1970.

Susan Carol Curzon writes that partnerships between librarians and faculty are powerful because librarians’ finely honed research skills and commitment to information literacy can enhance the deep disciplinary knowledge held by faculty, who also govern the curriculum and exert influence over students.10 Despite the potential in collaboration, the literature has been somewhat ambivalent over the extent to which cooperation is necessary. Barbara Junisbai, M. Sara Lowe, and Natalie Tagge identify two major sources of ambivalence: (1) While faculty agree that students need to be information literate, they are unsure whether these skills should be explicitly cultivated in content- and discipline-specific courses, or whether information literacy instruction should be delivered primarily within skills-related courses; and (2) On the premise that collaboration is preferred, opinions differ as to whether the collaboration should take the form of partnership on a campus level, an embedded liaison or team-teaching model for individual courses, or a thoughtful one-shot library session. To take this ambivalence into account, some institutions have adopted a flexible, faculty-driven approach.11

Joyce Lindstrom and Diana Shonrock wrote in a 2006 column about different collaborative models to integrate information literacy into higher education.12 They describe the characteristics needed for successful collaborations, which include shared goals, mutual respect, competence by all collaborators, and ongoing communication. In the presence of these characteristics, there are several different models for collaboration. The models range from learning communities and integration on a curricular level and
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campus-wide information literacy programs, to well-timed and thoughtfully constructed
instruction sessions and integration into individual courses. Stephanie Brasley also pro-
vides examples of collaboration from several institutions. She concludes that, although
information literacy has been a prominent concern in higher education for decades, the
need for developing these skills remains unmet.

Narrowing in on articles assessing faculty-library collaborations reveals successful
models from a wide range of disciplines and delivery methods. Erin Cassidy and Ken-
neth Hendrickson describe their collaborative effort for a graduate-level history class at
Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Their 2013 assessment shows that
the students benefited from their collaboration, but they also advocate for an iterative
cycle of reassessment to improve their collaboration and instruction. A 2017 article
provides an example of collaboration between librarians and agricultural science profes-
sors in which the librarians sought to “teach the teachers.” As with the previous article,
the authors stress the importance of continuing to reassess the successes and failures
of their initiative.

Engagement is also a popular topic in the library literature—even more so than
faculty-librarian collaboration. A keyword search for “outreach AND engagement” in
the database LISA: Library and Information Science Abstracts returned 857 results dating
back to 1997. While only two articles were published in 1997 on that topic, a decade later,
in 2007, there were 27 articles. By the end of 2017, there had already been 155 articles
published that year on outreach and engagement.

A 2012 article on engagement in higher education speaks to the centrality of en-
gagement in fulfilling land-grant missions. The authors write that engagement as a
central feature of the academy should be viewed not as short-term discrete efforts, but
rather as a long-term mechanism to help achieve the university’s most important goals.
They articulate a role for the library in advocating for administrators to work “within
historically prominent outreach units” to operationalize a culture of engagement on
campuses. Joe C. Clark expands on the idea of libraries as sites for regular outreach
and engagement in his 2016 book chapter. He describes a shift from collection-centered
to engagement-centered libraries and describes ways they can build partnerships across
campus and implement a variety of library programs that will “enrich student experi-
ence, build community, and raise the libraries’ role in contributing to student success.”

Several recent articles speak specifically to the role of subject specialists and liaison
librarians in implementing library outreach and engagement initiatives. A 2013 report
about the changing role of liaison librarians in research libraries notes, “User engagement
is a driving factor in identifying which services are, or should be, offered by research
libraries.” This notion is supported in Anne Kenney’s 2015 article, which explores some
of the challenges at the University of Minnesota Libraries in the Twin Cities related to
a shift from a collection-centered liaison model to an engagement-centered model. A
2017 article described the importance of engagement for liaison librarians while lament-
ing a gap in the literature to address the necessary interpersonal and communication
techniques required to be effective at outreach and engagement.
Methodology

Structure of Class

A typical final assignment in a 300-level history course at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is a 15- to 20-page research paper on a topic related to the course theme. The paper is produced solely for the course instructor to judge students’ research skills, analytical approach, and writing ability. After her meeting with Thacker, Laut recognized a unique opportunity to have her students conduct rigorous historical research while linking their work to concrete connections outside the classroom and offering a benefit to the entire university community. Though the course was a one-time offering, Laut wanted to take advantage of the vast library resources and her relationship with Thacker to create something unique. Instead of a final research paper, this student-led collaborative research project would investigate gender-based violence in South Asia through a variety of themes and methods. The students would then make the results of that research accessible to the broader university community through a panel discussion and an online research guide. Laut also consulted with a staff member in the Office of Undergraduate Research to get feedback on the structure of the assignment.

The final assignment requirements included a 200- to 300-word abstract summarizing each student’s self-selected research theme. The abstracts were designed to allow future researchers to understand the scope of each category and the importance of the specific topics selected by students. Students were also required to provide brief (one- or two-sentence) annotations of six different source types—a minimum of two scholarly books, two journal articles, two films (one full-length and one documentary), two newspaper articles, two Web pages, and two images. Annotations of each selected source were designed to provide quick, accurate information with which researchers could decide if the source would be useful for their purposes. Student input was gathered in class regarding which source categories to include. They were adamant that Web pages be included as a representation of the Internet as a source of knowledge acquisition. Students felt that the various media forms would offer a more intriguing and useful variety of research materials.

Students worked in pairs on the research project, which had several scaffolded steps designed with successive levels of temporary support to give students the opportunity to complete discrete tasks and receive peer and instructor feedback at regular intervals throughout the semester. Laut briefly introduced students to the outlines of the assignment in class. They then spent one full class period at the library, where Thacker demonstrated how to construct an effective search strategy; how to use the library website to find resources in a variety of formats, including books, articles, primary sources, and audiovisual materials; and how to critically evaluate resources. She also showed samples of LibGuides and discussed how library patrons use them.

Students then turned in a research proposal and preliminary bibliography to put their ideas into words and demonstrate their progress. The proposal summarized the key questions or terms they planned to investigate, the progress of their research to date, and how they planned to complete the next steps. They were also encouraged to convey any questions or problems they faced so the instructor could intervene with solutions early. Each pair of students was required to meet the instructor in office hours
to discuss these initial research findings. A week later, the revised research proposal was due, a summary of key questions and terms, an outline of the research, and remaining tasks. Two weeks before the Chai Wai event, students turned in a draft of their LibGuide abstract, a selected bibliography with a minimum of 12 sources of both breadth and depth. A week later, after student feedback, they submitted a revised abstract and brief annotations for at least two of each type of source to be posted on the guide. Revisions were still possible, depending upon instructor feedback.

After the Chai Wai panel, the students turned in extended annotations (150–200 words) on two of each type of source required for the LibGuide (12 annotations total). Because of log-in restrictions in the LibGuide software and for the sake of consistent formatting, Thacker formatted and uploaded the annotations into the LibGuide. The expectation was that annotations would be written for an upper-level audience to convey expertise and to encourage students to be more critical about the importance of each source and how it added to their overall project. The research project portfolio was the final assignment. The portfolio contained all materials produced during the research process so that student and instructor could trace the development of the project from inception to completion.

By constructing the project in this manner, we hoped the students would develop and demonstrate the ability to:

1. Utilize the many resources (online and physical) available to students conducting research at the UIUC Library.
2. Locate and analyze a broad range of reliable sources.
3. Work collaboratively to organize a multistep research project.
4. Summarize a broad range of research in language accessible to an educated reading audience.
5. Engage with the larger university community.
6. Engage in a discussion on a critical social issue facing contemporary society.
7. Reflect on how historical inquiry informs individuals’ understanding of contemporary social justice issues.

In addition to these learning objectives for the students, Thacker also had some separate goals intended to benefit the library. These included:

1. To support the university library’s mission statement, which asserts that the library “enhances the University’s activities in creating knowledge, preparing students for lives of impact, and addressing critical societal needs.”
2. To bring together a broad range of constituents from across the campus community to discuss a contemporary social issue.
3. To increase the visibility of and access to the library’s international and area studies collections.

Assessment

This study is a mixed methods qualitative study using several artifacts produced in conjunction with the course as well as audience assessment forms evaluating the library event. Following approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researchers gathered together the following for content analysis:
• Student’s reflective journal entries from September 23, following the library instruction session
• Student’s reflective journal entries from November 5, following the implementation of the Chai Wai program
• Instructor’s notes taken over the course of the semester on class discussions
• Formal university course evaluation forms collected at the end of the course
• Audience feedback forms collected at the Chai Wai event
• LibGuide usage stats downloaded from Springshare, and
• LibGuide annotations submitted by the students.

We sought to bring these discrete pieces of evidence together to get a comprehensive perspective on the success of the initiative not just from the point of view of the instructor and librarian, but also from that of the students and event attendees.

The researchers performed a content analysis of the reflective journal entries, instructor’s class notes, and course evaluation forms to identify recurring themes, especially relating to student motivation and satisfaction. They analyzed the student-generated content as well as the LibGuide for evidence that the students gained an understanding of how to identify and critically evaluate library resources in a variety of formats.

Results

Student Demographics

The course started with 10 students enrolled. Nine students finished. Five were seniors, four were juniors, and one a sophomore. All the students reported that the course fulfilled a requirement in their major but that they chose to enroll in the course itself based on personal interest. The class was balanced between male and female students. One student identified as African American, one as Mexican American, and one student was on a semester-long exchange program from England.

Student Feedback

Written student feedback was solicited multiple times throughout the course of the project through three required journal entries, one in-class written self-assessment, and the formal university course assessment tool administered at the end of the course. All 10 enrolled students completed the first journal assignment, which asked them to give their initial response to the assignment, reflect on their first meeting with the librarian, and express any concerns or questions they might have thus far. One student referred specifically to the first meeting with Thacker, whom she found “fun and engaging,” calling the experience “one of the best interactions” she ever had with a librarian. All the students used positive language regarding the assignment itself, calling it “exciting” and “really cool.” Half elaborated that their excitement about the project had to do with its “unique” character. Students looked forward to working on an “unconventional” assignment, one that was “out of the box” and “unlike anything” they had done in the past. Upper-level history courses traditionally require students to complete a large research paper, which might only be read by the professor, but students felt this project would become a “usable resource for students” and a tool to “educate people.” Students did acknowledge, however, that the public outcome of their efforts added pressure to
work hard and produce high-quality research, which made the prospect “compelling,” “daunting,” or even, in the words of one student, “terrifying.” Beyond this sense of added responsibility, one student expressed concerns about his ability to find adequate, high-quality materials that directly linked the chosen topic (economics) with gender analysis.23

Nine students completed the second required journal assignment, which was an opportunity to reflect on the panel discussion and the completed projects. Overall, students felt the panel discussion was “an excellent community event, drawing in students, professors, and other locals,” “a unique and valuable experience” that was “very interesting” and “went very well.” Several students wrote that they felt gratified to see their research discussed by experts. One student wrote, “It is an awesome feeling knowing that my work might have practical meaning outside the classroom.” Another said, “I really like the work I was doing before but now hearing others talk about it made me more proud of what I have learned and found.” Some students discussed how their experience would resonate after the semester ended. One student from England reported wanting to write her senior thesis on gender-based violence in India during Partition; this student did complete a senior thesis on the subject upon return to university in England. A third student wrote, “The Chai Wai series and other similar events are very important to this campus” and stated that he “would love to become more involved in these events by helping to organize them” in the future. Yet another journal entry demonstrated particularly well that the assignment succeeded in helping students make connections between their intellectual work and real-world issues: “I’m much more interested in taking what I’ve learned and my experience in general and thinking about these issues in the context of humanity as a whole.”

Though all the journal entries contained positive language about the panel discussion, some offered useful critique. Several felt the discussion was too short to go into depth on the many topics addressed. One student suggested that two or three panel discussions should have addressed these important issues. Another student was “disappointed that the speakers didn’t directly draw upon the questions the class had written.” Yet another student had never attended a panel discussion before and wished there had been a better explanation beforehand regarding what was expected of the students.

Eight students completed an in-class written self-assessment of their participation in the project that was the final requirement of the research portfolio. Once again, students made generally positive comments about the overall project. Two students described the process as “engaging” and “rewarding,” with another commenting more specifically that she felt it “prepare[d] us for real life work where you are not given [so much] assistance.” Another student wrote that he had learned about his “own convictions and principles.” The main critique of the assignment related to the difficulty of working in groups. Two students reported that communication with their partners was a challenge at times. Another stated that she would rather have worked independently. One student wrote that the “fluidity of the deadlines confused me at times and I wasn’t always sure what exactly was expected of me.” This comment, though an unusual critique of the
assignment, is nonetheless significant and merits close attention. The project required many smaller pieces to be submitted over the course of six weeks, and despite best efforts to have clear written and oral directions, the multiple due dates could have caused confusion.

After writing self-assessments, students discussed in pairs the pros and cons of the various aspects of the assignment—that is, the proposal process, bibliography, annotation, submission guidelines, panel, and so on—with focus on what could be improved in the future. These groups then participated in a class discussion. Students gave a range of helpful critiques. Novel suggestions made in the class discussion included a recommendation to have online submission and feedback to allow partners to access instructor comments more easily; and, somewhat surprisingly, the idea that students should write a final paper, which would allow them to link the extended annotations together and present a more cohesive picture of the research they conducted. Several students also expressed the desire to present their topics to the entire class, a request the instructor fulfilled by rearranging the last two class meetings of the semester to allow 5- to 10-minute group presentations.

Eight students completed the university’s Instructor and Course Evaluation System (ICES) questionnaire distributed at the end of the semester. Six students rated the instructor’s overall teaching effectiveness as exceptionally high, one rated it high, and one skipped the question. Five rated the overall quality of the course as exceptionally high, two as high, and there was one omission. Specific questions on the form were preselected by the instructor’s department. Those most closely related to the goals of the research assignment indicate positive outcomes. At least seven of the eight students reported the class “definitely” strengthened their ability “to express ideas in writing” and “significantly” improved their “ability to communicate clearly about this subject.” The same number reported their “efforts in this course” were “worthwhile” and that they learned “to value new viewpoints” because of it. Perhaps most gratifying, six students reported they often were “stimulated to discuss related topics with friends outside of class.”

Event Feedback

Approximately 45 people attended the Chai Wai event. Satisfaction surveys were placed in each seat during setup, and verbal reminders to return them were given at the start.

Two students reported that communication with their partners was a challenge at times. Another stated that she would rather have worked independently.

Perhaps most gratifying, six students reported they often were “stimulated to discuss related topics with friends outside of class.”
Table 1.
Results of satisfaction survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of guest</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
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</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event satisfaction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rating</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you find out about this event?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flyers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work at IAS [International and Area Studies Library]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library e-mail</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class with Julie Laut</td>
<td>7</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topics for future programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultures in South Asia (diversity through languages, castes, lifestyles, architecture, food, dance and music)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deportation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diaspora issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical performances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International versus domestic student issues</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions for improvements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introduction needed to be briefer so questions could have been asked earlier in the program.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The program needed more structure.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It would help if the speakers stood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speakers were difficult to hear; they needed to be louder.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 p.m. seems an inconvenient time to attend (as a staff member).</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
and end of the event. A total of 16 completed satisfaction surveys were collected after the event. See Table 1 for the results of the survey.

**LibGuide Usage**

The LibGuide was intended to be a permanently available online resource to increase access to and use of materials on the topic of gender-based violence in South Asia. The students generated the content for the page, except for the home page, and the librarian input the content into the software, formatted it, and published it. When this article was first being written, an internal IASL report showed that, since the guide became publicly available in November 2014, it had been viewed 1,115 times. The site continues to get traffic into the present, with an average of 52.5 monthly views since it was published. As recently as March 2017, the guide was accessed 83 times. For context, IASL currently owns 118 LibGuides, and ours is the 22nd most viewed LibGuide of that group.

**Citation Quality Analysis**

The students submitted a total of 92 citations that were included in the LibGuide. The item types included books, articles, films, images, and websites. Table 2 shows the item count breakdown.

**Discussion**

This project-based assignment largely fulfilled the goals set by the instructor at the outset of the collaboration. Students were exposed to the extensive resources available through the library system, gained important research experience, and built upon the course’s content knowledge through this multistep project. In addition, the students practiced effective writing for a broad audience (a desirable skill for graduates in all fields), and the multiple drafts allowed the instructor to help students develop clarity and consistency in their writing. Also, rather than simply encountering the library through their computers, students went into the library building on two occasions, increasing their understanding of the work of librarians and gaining first-hand experience of the role libraries can play in the university community. Most students involved in the project felt positive about the results of their own work and the impact the LibGuide could have in the long term. In perhaps the biggest success of the project, these undergraduates successfully engaged with the larger university community in a discussion on a critical social issue and had many opportunities to reflect on how historical inquiry can inform their own understanding of contemporary social justice issues.
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Table 2.
Items for which students submitted citations included in the LibGuide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item type</th>
<th>Number submitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>40 (20 scholarly, 20 nonscholarly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>10</td>
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Entering into this collaboration, the librarian had three main goals: (1) to meaningfully support the mission of the university library in enhancing “the University’s activities in creating knowledge, preparing students for lives of impact, and addressing critical societal needs,” (2) to bring together a broad range of constituents from across campus to discuss a contemporary social issue, and (3) to increase the visibility of, and access to, the library’s international and area studies collections. An additional goal, which overlapped with the instructor’s own goals, was to help the students become more information literate, able to find and evaluate library resources in a variety of formats.

From the perspective of the librarian, the assignment exceeded expectations for two of the goals: directly supporting the university library’s mission statement and increasing the visibility of, and access to, collections. The results were less obvious regarding the third goal of bringing together a broad range of constituents to discuss a contemporary social issue. While the event was well attended, it is not clear how broad-ranging the attendance was. Only about a third of the attendees returned their satisfaction surveys, and all of them were university affiliates, so there is no way to verify whether members of the local community also attended. That said, the attempt to bring in a broad constituency is representative of the library’s contribution to a broader campus mission to embrace the mandate of a land-grant institution to contribute to public good by implementing public engagement events.

Lessons Learned

This project worked especially well because of the small enrollment. Students had many opportunities to get one-on-one feedback from the instructor, and the class itself coalesced around the broader implications of the social justice issues addressed in their research. Because the librarian had to manually format and input the students’ annotations into the LibGuide software, a smaller class size kept the workload manageable for the librarian. It also ensured that the LibGuide itself was focused and user-friendly.
because too many subpages would likely be confusing for the public or casual researchers to navigate. Finally, because the students were meant to participate in the audience and frame the discussion questions, a small class was appropriate to ensure that all the students could participate and have their topics addressed while also allowing attendees from the public an opportunity to engage with the panelists.

Even with the small class size, however, not all students’ topics were adequately addressed or represented within the panel discussion. Given the student critique that the questions they prepared were not directly addressed, future iterations of this collaboration should have clearer guidelines for students. The guidelines should outline how the topics will be used and represented in the panel discussion so students can pick topics that are not only of personal interest but also easily addressed in a panel discussion. The guidelines should also provide encouragement and ideas about ways to participate as an audience member because not all students will have prior experience attending a panel discussion of this nature. Future instructors might like to include audience participation as part of the final grade.

Future instructors should consider holding joint office hours with the librarian so that the students can get assistance in using and evaluating resources and can ask logistical questions about the event in addition to getting help from their instructor regarding course content. This would further mitigate the issues involving students not fully understanding how the library event would work and help them pick topics that could be more easily addressed by the panelists. Furthermore, this might allow the librarian to intervene when the students had difficulty finding sources in a particular format to ensure that the LibGuide is comprised of resources of the highest quality, because it is meant to become a permanently available public resource.

Another improvement for the event itself would be a better way to assess the extent to which it attracted members of the public in addition to students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the university. Although it was intended to be a public engagement event, it is hard to quantify how successfully the public was engaged. One option might be to pass around a sign-in sheet at the beginning of the event that would ask people about their university affiliation and give them an opportunity to opt in to receiving e-mail updates from the library about future events. It would also allow the library to send electronic satisfaction surveys after the event, which might result in better quantity and quality of feedback. If print forms continue to be used, it is helpful to have the forms already placed on each chair and to make announcements at the beginning and end of the event to request that audience members complete them.

One shortcoming of this endeavor is that because the topic of these panel events should change from year to year to remain fresh, appealing, and current, the assignment could not be repeated with the same topic two years in a row. However, in an academic
environment where there are many part-time and non-tenure-track faculty teaching courses that may only be offered once, there are many opportunities to find different classes to partner with and in this way also support contingent faculty. The librarian could work with a different instructor and incorporate the lessons learned from the process of reflecting on the course and assessing it. Although not all feedback will transfer, the librarian will benefit from the previous experience and identify ways to improve the implementation of this collaborative event. One other possibility to enable repeated collaboration with the same instructor and course would be to pick a specific subtopic of a course as the theme of the event, leaving other subtopics for future events. For example, in this case, the course was Gendering War, Memory, and Migration: Fact and Fiction in Modern South Asia, and the library event was on the theme “Gender-Based Violence in South Asia.” If we wanted to collaborate again, we might try to choose a different subtheme focusing explicitly on war or migration, if it fits within the purview of the librarian’s subject focus on South Asia. In this instance, the desire to avoid repetition ended up being moot because the class was only offered one time, as is often the case with courses taught by contingent faculty.

The success of this collaborative, experimental project points to the value of encouraging and supporting nontenured and contingent faculty to emerge from isolated teaching environments to connect with resources and individuals. Library faculty have institutional knowledge and access to resources that can offer valuable support for these types of courses, which may only become more common if trends continue. Libraries should work alongside departments to create structures and environments conducive to this type of collaboration. Our findings demonstrate real value—a short-term project resulted in a permanent research tool and offered lifelong lessons to the students involved.

If further research of this model is taken up by other institutions or locally with a different class or instructor, a comparative study to measure the extent to which the positive outcomes are reproducible rather than individually or personality-driven would be worthwhile. Further research is needed about the broader library needs of contingent faculty and what sorts of services would be most beneficial to support their teaching and learning. Their needs cannot be lumped in with tenure-track faculty members, and as their numbers continue to grow, libraries may need to rethink their outreach and instruction support for this population.

**Conclusion**

Studying history and the humanities offers a unique opportunity for student intellectual and ethical engagement. The students involved in the Chai Wai research project honed their critical thinking skills individually and in small groups. With the support of Thacker’s expertise, they learned new research skills and practiced conveying complex
ideas through multiple forms of communication. The project also offered value to the students as lifelong learners and members of a broader community. Student feedback indicates that most class members emerged with a greater appreciation for diverse cultures and an increased capacity for empathy that will inform their everyday lives.

While student success is a shared goal of librarians and teaching faculty, this project provides discrete benefits to the instructors as well. It offers a unique variation on library-faculty collaboration that is particularly well suited to today’s academic environment, in which many teaching faculty are non-tenure-track. For contingent faculty members who often have less planning time and fewer resources to support their teaching, a project like this can be a way to leverage the library to help fill in the gaps and develop meaningful assignments. For the librarian, it is a way to connect with a population of faculty that may traditionally be underserved by the library due to the non-permanent nature of contingent faculty and the courses they teach. For both groups, it is a way to bring their expertise to the public and contribute to societal good.

Mara L. Thacker is the South Asian studies librarian, global popular culture librarian, and an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; she may be reached by e-mail at: mthacker@illinois.edu.

Julie R. Laut is the outreach and development coordinator and an acquisitions assistant at the University of Illinois Press; she may be reached by e-mail at: jlaut2@illinois.edu.

Notes

For those interested in adapting the Chai Wai model at their institutions, a chapter in the forthcoming Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Library Outreach Cookbook will have a chapter on how to plan a Chai Wai event. Readers may also contact the author to request a guidelines document to assist in planning such an event.


13. Ibid.

14. Brasley, “Effective Librarian and Discipline Faculty Collaboration Models for Integrating Information Literacy into the Fabric of an Academic Institution.”


23. This concern was directly addressed during the required one-on-one meetings between this student and Julie Laut.