Introducing Rare Books into the Undergraduate Curriculum

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Abstract

A relatively recent exchange on the Exlibris listserv inspired me to write this paper. Julia Walworth, Fellow Librarian at Merton College, University of Oxford, asked about other librarians’ experiences in introducing special collections—and rare books in particular—to undergraduate students. In a nostalgic note, several members of the list responded to Dr. Walworth’s inquiry by referring to a course entitled “Fine Arts 5e” that was taught from 1915 through 1932 by George Parker Winship in the Widener Library at Harvard University. Other responses were more pragmatic in nature, addressing the needs of today’s undergraduates. Lori N. Curtis, then Head . . .

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We introduced the use of an academic data warehouse of encrypted patient information into an existing 2nd year medical school course. Exercises were developed requiring students to retrieve and interpret information regarding local disease prevalence, practice patterns, and patient characteristics. These exercises were integrated into existing weekly problem sets in a multiple-choice format.