FROM PASSIVE CONSUMERS TO PASSIONATE CREATORS:

Undergraduate Students and the Research Process

Margy Macmillan
ISSOTL Conference 2015
The Assessment Seminar

• **Round One** - 96 first / second-year students

• **Round Two** - 30 third-year students

• **Round Three** - 96 final-year students

• **Round Four** – 111 first-year students
The Difference Time Can Make

1\textsuperscript{st} yr:
“I know going into it kind of what my point of view is, and then you look for articles and other sources that kind of fit.”

4\textsuperscript{th} yr
“The ability to ... intelligently differentiate good research form poor research, and how to compile that into my own opinion. How to take many different views, and come up with sort of my own”
Rewards for Research

• Extraction
• Learning
• Transformation/Transfer
• Joy/Passion
Extraction

• “It feels like they’re just like, ‘OK, here’s this paper’ and they make it so broad; they don’t pinpoint exactly what they want ... ‘Do this, find your articles, and back up what you’re saying,’ and you don’t even know what you’re saying.”

• “So really it feels like I’m regurgitating research. None of it is really my writing.”

• “The more deep comprehendible stuff that they like really want you to find, I had troubles pulling that out.”
Learning

• “As much as I hate them it’s been papers hands down. With all of the research and referencing and that, it definitely expands your knowledge bubble huge.”

• “But you do learn, and you’re never going to forget that stuff because you go into it “

• “Because you learn a lot more than you would just having someone tell you about it. You have to go out and look for what it is.”
Transfer

• “And I like being kind of more knowledgeable about it so I can harp all of my friends and stuff for having unprotected sex.”

• “I still use my research methods that I learned there and to know how it’s scholarly and all that stuff. So that was one of the most useful skills I have gained here and just really finding resources that I can turn to even if I don’t know something.”
Transformation

• “I thought that our justice system was stupid but then I actually did a paper on it and it helped me to learn there are reasons why some people can’t be sentenced to like, life or something.”

• “There’s different kinds of feminism and I kind of discovered what type I most fit with. I discovered that I thought I could change things through media and communication”
Joy/Passion

• “I love doing research, which is why I am in History. ... the information you learn from papers are amazing”

• “Like, the research is actually fun; I have fun learning this”

• “I never knew how much I liked research before I came to the university. Just doing all these different assignments, I’ve found that I just love to learn”
Critical Factors

• Engagement increases when students **choose topics**
• Students appreciate ‘going deeper’
• Students appreciate becoming experts, sharing knowledge
• (Some) students enjoy challenging their own perceptions
Ideas for Assignments?

Margy Macmillan
Library
ISSOTL Conference 2015