Take a Hammer to your Hard Drive: Facilitating Metacognition among Humanities Graduate Students
Reflecting on the role of digital tools and methods in contemporary scholarship is becoming a necessary part of graduate education in the humanities, yet these pedagogies are not embedded in the classroom.
Metacognition
Community-building through discussion of shared metacognitive problems such as

“How can I develop a system for organizing my research photos that is sustainable for me, given what I know about my abilities and inertia?”

“I have two digital tools in hand that do about the same thing, how can I tell which one is better suited, not only to my research question, but also to my habits and preferred approaches as a scholar?”
Toolshops

2 hour, informal, drop-in workshops centered on a theme, such as image management, timelines, and collaboration.

- Acute problem-solving and open-ended inquiry.
- Time for individual consultation
Physical Experience of Machines and Tools
Situated Learning Theory

Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons...Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities.

Research Management
Cloud
- Google Drive
- Box
- 3 Gmail Accounts

Mobile
- Texts
- Email
- Outlook

Handwritten
- Notebooks
- Sticky Notes
- Printed Sheets of paper

Desk-top Docs
- Word
- Excel

Citation Manager
- Mendeley
Annotations, subject specific
Conf/talk notes, excel formulas, proj ideas

Old notebooks
Class pdfs (printed)
Scrap/edits

My writing, proj ideas

 Zotero
Keep g-drive pocket
Images
Archived docs
By class
My writing
By subject
Working docs

Pdf's
By subject
By journal

G. calendar
Email
tags
Homework
todos

Writing
(more personal)
Big moleskine
Lil moleskine
Teal moleskine

Mendeley
Evernote
 Tried & failed
Metacognition in the Credit-Bearing Curriculum
From a Learner’s Perspective

The Charge:

Find every instance of your topic (staged violence in art) around the globe since 1960

Find your place in that conversation

Write

Also, “a timeline might help”
The Tool:

Section of Tiki-Toki timeline
From a Learner’s Perspective

Exposure

to an array of tools available to meet my immediate need

Experimentation

use my own data in multiple tools without fear of losing it,
“What does this button do?”

Practice

Space and time in the VMW as I begin implementing the tool for my own work
Toolshop as a Productive Metacognitive Environment

From narrow problem-solving to understanding the bigger picture of conducting research and learning

Meets needs not met in classroom instruction or committee advising
What makes this type of reflective practice possible?

A non-evaluative environment, where:

- My situation and skills accepted and validated, and I accept and validate others

- VMW instructors model an empowered curiosity: “I don’t know. Let’s think about it together”

- We rely on one another to share expertise and struggles with a range of digital tools
Kate Joranson, Head, Frick Fine Arts Library
k.joranson@pitt.edu

Kiana Jones, Fine Arts Librarian, Frick Fine Arts Library krg51@pitt.edu

Alison Langmead, Director, Visual Media Workshop, History of Art and Architecture and School of Computing and Information
adlangmead@pitt.edu

Nicole Scalissi, PhD Candidate, History of Art and Architecture nfs14@pitt.edu

Aaron Brenner, Coordinator of Digital Scholarship
abrenner@pitt.edu

All at the University of Pittsburgh