

Introduce Self - Emily Willard, she/her pronouns - PhD Candidate in JSIS, also a graduate fellow in the CLASS - Comparative Law & Societies. I was an instructor for the LSJ department, and am a TA in JSIS & LSJ.

What I'm presenting - In LSJ seminar class last fall, I developed Guidelines for students to cite their personal experiences and interviews as evidence in their final research papers. The main idea is to challenge traditional concepts of who is allowed to produce knowledge, whose knowledge gets valued, and why it is valued. I made copies of the guidelines. **You can take them with you**, but please don't publish, copy, or circulate before we get a chance to talk about it more. It would be great if we could get more people to be using them, but it would be nice for me to know if you are interested. **Acknowledge students in the room** who used them, and participated in this work. After talking with them I realize that to take this a step further in challenging traditional ideas about knowledge production and putting it into practice, that we are now beginning to make this a shared project. **IF SO** - some of the students are here **IF SO** - they are happy to answer any questions during Q and A. We are in the process of discussing what a more shared project between us would look like. Happy to discuss and work on this more.

OUTLINE OF TALK: First will share my goals for this presentation, explain how my creation of these guidelines came about, and then the results of putting it into action, including feedback from students in my class.

[SLIDE] Say Purpose of presentation - Three Goals

1. Share what I did and what I learned
2. Get feedback on the guidelines
3. Connect with other people - imagine that many people are also working on this - would like feedback about who else is doing this kind of work to connect with them. Literature, departments, disciplines on campus.

How this came about -

- **INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE ON TRIAL** **Describe class** - International Human Rights trials, with the goal for students to critically engage the concept of justice, how it means different things to different people. Consider the ways that human rights trials do and do not achieve justice and for whom. And then think of alternative approaches to justice, beyond trials.
- As a part of the class, we had a several-week discussion about evidence that is used human rights trials, and the ideas of **knowledge production**. We discussed the ways in which certain knowledge is valued over other in the **western court systems**, particularly in the U.S., Latin America, the United Nations, and Europe. We looked at particular examples of the exclusion of fourth-person, or what U.S. courts consider "hearsay" as eyewitness testimony in trials. We discussed what kind of **human rights evidence** would hold up and be accepted in courts. We discussed the example of valuing of

textual records over first-hand **eye-witness testimony**, particularly government records, for example in genocide trials.

- **THEORY INTO PRACTICE** - Throughout this discussion of knowledge production, it occurred to me quite **hypocritical** to be discussing this theoretically, without putting it into action in our class. So I created a set of guidelines for students to cite knowledge they produce as evidence for their final research paper.
- **THE RESEARCH PAPER** was to pick a conflict/issue area that has/is experiencing human rights violations, and determine whether or not trials could achieve “justice” however they chose to define justice. Then they had to propose alternative approaches to seeking justice that would address some of the shortcomings of the trials.
- Came back to the question, if a student was doing research on a topic they were familiar with from personal experience, family or community history, or personally knows people who have personal experience, **how could I not allow them to use that as evidence in their paper? This would be going against our entire conversation of knowledge production.**
- I also wanted to give them an opportunity to see that they can make a **valuable contribution**, and that they have something important to say.
- Practical issue when it came to grading. I was reminded of an **anecdote** that planned the seed of this whole idea. Several years ago there was a student in a Human Rights in Latin America class. In her midterm exam, she made several statements to support her argument about conditions in Latin America, but didn’t cite her sources. She came to me in office hours and she explained that she didn’t cite sources because it was her own lived experience. How could I take points off? Yet there didn’t seem to be a way to guide her into doing some sort of citation so I knew she was speaking from her own knowledge. How would I have known if she didn’t tell me? That is why I created these guidelines.

THE GUIDELINES -

- Contains: **Introduction** which describes the purpose of the guidelines, and the background discussion of knowledge production. Why this is important
- Then it contains to main sections on citing **Personal Experiences and Personal Interviews**
- Was important to me to include their own **personal experiences**, but also the experiences of their families and communities, as well as **personal interviews** that they conduct. A variety of ways for students to produce knowledge
- I also wanted to **give them examples**, and help them think through their own positionality, think about where they are coming from, and how to contextualize their voice, and the knowledge that they produce, either through personal experience or the interview. Might be the first time, so help guide students to figure out if and how to incorporate.
- The key part, I found, was also creating clear **expectations/boundaries**. I did this by having them give context to their citation, and focusing on using it to cite specific

examples, concepts or details. Discouraging them from using the citations for more general ideas or conclusions

Based on feedback from the students, in this updated version, I have included a note about interviewing survivors of trauma and additional reading suggestions for more information.

RESULTS:

- Did survey of all of the students, questions which were included in the course evaluations, and then I did 30 min interviews with 10 students. 5 of the students did not use personal experience or interviews in their research papers, 2 used personal/family experience, and 3 used personal interviews. I spoke to every student in the class who utilized the guidelines.

Show Examples:

EXAMPLE #1- Turkish Kurds (two other similar examples Amber and Emma)

How she cited it

Then how she used it for **specific example**, adding additional evidence, then when making recommendations, able to ask directly what a person wants, grounded in what people on the ground think.

Reflections: found similar stories on kurdishproject.org, but not in scholarly articles. -Scholarly articles are written by westerners focus on general themes like nationalism -Scholarly Articles written by kurds - are afraid to write about it because of laws.

If didn't have it, would have written a different paper about nationalism more broadly without these details.

10 more papers - excited bubbling with ideas - said she was actually really glad for the opportunity to talk to me about her paper writing experience during the interview

EXAMPLE #2 - US Immigration Detention Centers - used her personal and family experience - as a mexican-american family, and a research trip she went on to the U.S. southern border to investigate human rights issues and immigration. She used it to:

1) discuss how people are often uninformed about the realities on the ground, and how lack of knowledge allows for the atrocities to continue - based on her experience and conversations in the border region.

2) How racist ideas of immigrants, particularly from mexico, and criminality create an environment that allow atrocities to continue based on her own personal family experience and interactions with her peers.

Reflections:

- Was looking at the ICE website, felt very strongly about it, if she can use this as a source, why not from the perspective of the people who are suffering
- Was able to use her own voice, felt personally invested in the paper. If she couldnt have used the personal experience, could have chosen any paper topic and it wouldnt have mattered as much. Not just repeating back other people's ideas.

BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Positive Impact (whether or not they used the guidelines)

- Considering own position in relation to research
- Everyone was thinking about credibility of sources, how to corroborate information, and the biases in certain sources.
- Enabled students to ground their analysis and consider the policy impact on every-day lives, see how policy and theory plays out in reality, in people's lives. Helps ground their work.

Challenges to address going forward

- **Goes against training from Middle School to University** - if this is not a larger, bigger institutional change, how useful is it really - not accepted widely, and it is intimidating because we don't know how to do it and we've been taught to NOT do it.
- **How to incorporate into writing** - better examples, and more coaching during whole class, how to incorporate into writing, ideas of when it is ok and when not. Connect to course readings that have examples, more examples
- Goes against training from middle school through University - how you are taught to write
- **Struggle to see value in own viewpoint** - how even as an outsider say, on a study abroad trip, you may not be able to speak from the perspective of the people you meet, but you can speak to your own perspective and that has value too. See value in the stories and experiences of their everyday lives, even in middle class U.S., about gender & race, for example. Students are also concerned about "Don't want to make it all about me." We can **improve** by Guiding students how to reflect and understand their own place in the world, and the value they bring.
- **What are the Boundaries?** How do you know how far you can take it - when is it your own opinion versus "fact" of what happened? "How much to push and where to stop?" "confused own personal interpretation versus event that occurred"

THANK YOU!

WOULD LIKE TO BE IN CONTACT

I would like to hear your reactions, ideas to improve...who else is doing this kind of work, who should I talk to.