

Innovating with History: How an Archival Intervention Diminishes Snow's "Dangerous" Divides

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What a humanities educator might call a constructivist approach to education—requiring students to build their own learning methods and assess their own understandings—might be labeled *critical thinking* in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The idea that critical thinking in STEM is different from critical thinking in the humanities reflects C. P. Snow's two cultures divide. This article explores how a collaboration between an instructor of science and technology studies and an archivist and user services librarian shows that even a limited, hands-on experience with primary source materials can have demonstrable effects on engineering and science students' assumptions about the value of history for studying STEM. Qualitative and quantitative assessment of the students' written responses to questions about archival research and its impact on STEM disciplines demonstrated students' increased readiness to conduct critical thinking.

DOI: [10.37514/DBH-J.2015.3.1.05](https://doi.org/10.37514/DBH-J.2015.3.1.05)