

Access, Communication, and Learning: Physical and Digital Potentials for Knowledge-Making in Archives

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Abstract: This paper describes an initiative carried out to explore ways to enhance traditional methods of archival research in art education through both physical and networked learning. Through a case study using mixed methods including interviews, this paper concerns research engaging physical and digital archival materials linking the possibility of individual and social learning experiences occasioned by Web 2.0 with digital archives. Largely exploratory, the study simultaneously involves a unique approach to doing archival research as well as a unique pedagogical approach to facilitating a graduate course on the history of art education. This paper proposes a way to think about how researchers, within a community, can conduct historical research using archival materials, and how they can potentially share and generate new knowledge about their topics of study. Using a secure Weblog that served as a platform for sharing and communicating, notions of communication and access were the guiding concepts in developing a way to facilitate participatory research practices to generate knowledge about aspects of the history of art education and enhance access to archival materials. The questions that this paper seeks to answer are: How did the graduate students and professor perceive the interaction with archival material in both physical and digital participatory formats using the Weblog as a component to their research and teaching? What do they consider are some possibilities for the role of archives in art education history based on this experience?

About the author:

Ann Holt is a Doctoral Candidate in Art Education at the Pennsylvania State University who recently completed the Malloy Graduate Assistantship in the Penn State University Archives where she organized, described, inventoried, and made preservation assessments on their art education collections. Her research experience draws from using archives to understand the history of art education. Her research interests concern archives, access, research, and constructivist learning to generate knowledge about archival material with emphasis on archival research methods and technology to enhance communication and access.