

Designing, Implementing and Evaluating a Service-Based Learning Curriculum For A Masters of Archival Studies Program.

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ABSTRACT

Born-digital materials, combined with the large amount of analog information that is being digitized and stored electronically, has created a demand for today's archivist to be skilled in both archival and information technology knowledge and skills. Graduates of Archival Studies Programs are expected to have a diverse set of skills in both *traditional archival studies* and *information technology*. In response to these demands, Clayton State University, the Georgia Archives and the National Archives and Records Administration conceived, designed and implemented a Masters of Archival Studies which integrates archival studies, technology skills and service-based learning into every course in the curriculum. *Service-based learning* is an approach to education that integrates community service with educational components an academic program. Service-based learning provides active engagement and access to the students who learn by doing. Students are able to apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations and must make decisions. In challenging situations service-based learners also have to teach and share their knowledge with the community organizations. This poster details how the innovative program and curriculum were developed and implemented. In addition, the tools which are used to assess the effectiveness of the service-based learning model throughout the curriculum will be discussed.

BACKGROUND

The Master of Archival Studies at Clayton State University is a result of a unique collaboration between Clayton State University, the Georgia Archives (GA) and the National Archives and Records Administration Southeast Region (NARA/SE). The program incorporates traditional archival science and education with the sophisticated digital technology skills needed by the modern day archivist. The curricula also integrates service-learning – a method of teaching, learning and reflecting that combines classroom curriculum with community service so that the students can maximize the educational experience and graduate with the archival and technological skills needed in the modern day archival profession.

The three organizations in addition to sharing a common goal of creating a Masters of Archival Studies also share a common location. All three organizations are located in close proximity which affords increased interaction which is advantageous to the program.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – CSU, GEORGIA ARCHIVES & NARA

During the process of putting together the program the 3 organizations formed an advisory committee composed of CSU graduate faculty from the College of Arts and Science History Department and the College of Mathematical and Information Sciences Department of Information Technology, the Georgia Archives' Director and government services coordinator and the NARA/SE Archives Director.

From its inception the advisory committee insisted that the proposed program go beyond the traditional archival education supplied by history-trained or Library and Information Science-trained archival graduates to incorporate a broad panoply of technological skills and a systemic ubiquity for the digital preservation of information as well as incorporate service-based learning throughout the curricula. The committee also recommended due to the strong technological emphasis incorporated throughout the curricula the MAS program be located in the Department of Information Technology in the College of Mathematical and Information Science at CSU. The proposed Masters of Archival Studies would require 45 semester hours of course work including practicums, internships and a thesis. Local archival organizations would serve as collaborative sites for field experiences and interships.

TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS INCORPORATED THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULA

- advanced database skills including creating as well as working with existing databases
- advanced web development skills including multiple web development tools, both commercially available and open source tools, including web 2.0 tools
- digitization skills – imaging, scanning, ocr, transcription, audio, and multimedia
- knowledge and understanding of multiple file formats including legacy formats and the problems of converting data formats
- extensive knowledge of formatting tools both commercial and open source
- understanding of security and security methods for computers and networks: including message digesting, encryption, & backups
- forensic data tools
- text analysis tools
- metadata tools including metadata mining tools
- understanding of Unix, Windows, and Apple Macintosh operating systems and file formats
- privacy and intellectual property issues
- understanding of systems and networking protocols

SERVICE BASED LEARNING

To ensure that the traditional curriculum integrated with information technology skills would provide the knowledge and skills needed by the students and archival community the committee decided to also integrate service based learning into the curriculum. *Service-learning is a method of teaching, learning and reflecting that combines academic classroom curriculum with meaningful service throughout the community.* As a teaching methodology, it falls under the philosophy of experiential education. More specifically, it integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good (NSLC, 2010).

GOALS OF SERVICE BASED LEARNING

- Enhance students' understanding of the archival profession
- Enhance students' understanding of the archival and technological skills needed

EVALUATING THE OUTCOMES OF SERVICE BASED LEARNING

- Student attitudes, satisfaction, experiences, learning, competence, civic engagement, career plans
- Alumni professional development, civic engagement
- Faculty attitudes, satisfaction, experiences, learning
- Faculty professional development and teaching competence
- Community site attitudes, satisfaction, experiences, learning
- Client attitudes, satisfaction, experience, behavior
- The value of partnerships, service availability, quality of life
- Administrators' attitudes, satisfaction, experiences, learning
- Academic mission, priorities, curriculum, civic engagement

EVALUATION TOOLS

- Achievement and attitude testing
- Content analysis of student reflection journals, course email discussion list discussions, community site evaluations, course syllabi, faculty curriculum vitas
- Instructor and course evaluations administered at the end of each course
- Interviews (in person, Skype, phone etc.)
- Learner assessments
- Needs assessments
- Observation
- Pre/post tests on specific competencies and/or attitudinal measures
- Written and on-line surveys (by students, faculty, community partners, administrators, and service recipients)

APPLYING THE SERVICE-BASED LEARNING COMPONENTS

The service-based learning is applied through projects which are integrated into each course. In addition to projects for the Georgia Archives and NARA/SE community organizations also provide the service based projects. The community organizations run the gamut from small historical organizations such as the Train Depot in Hapeville, Georgia to large research archives such as the Pitts Theology at Emory University. During a semester the students work with the various organizations and complete service based projects which incorporate the archival skills and applied technology skills taught during the semester.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<http://cims.clayton.edu/mas/>