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(Conceptual) Conversion: Reworking Archival Curriculum to Incorporate the Multiverse

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{ Conceptual } Conversion

Reworking archival curriculum to incorporate the **multiverse**

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Goals

- Informally test the "Educating for the Archival Multiverse" conceptual approach in course design
- Devise a course with portable components that are not dependent on localized practices

752 (778) Archival Outreach: Programs and Services. 3 cr. G.

An introduction to archival outreach and reference services for sustaining an archival program committed to public service. Prereq: grad st; L&I Sci 650(681)(C) or cons instr.

Class Structure: Half on concepts, half on application/processes

Concepts (drawn from PACG): access, ownership, trust, evidence, accountability, authority, professional responsibility

Concepts:

Part A: Introduction

1. Goals/purposes
2. Information-seeking
3. Technologies
4. Course Projects (paper or plan)

Part B: People

1. Stakeholders (Researchers, donors, records subjects, funders, workers, admin)
2. Domains/Hjorland
3. User groups
4. Fundraising and community relations

WISE consortium class based at UW-Milwaukee
Fully online and asynchronous
37 students across US and in New Zealand
Half conceptual, half applied
Pedagogical goal of supporting students while disrupting their existing mental frameworks with the intent of enabling intellectual growth
The first thing I did was make a list of all the concepts that I thought related to the topic of archival outreach.

Concepts from the Multiverse

Objective 2: Expand Existing Curricula to Focus on Core Archival Concepts and Values as Well as Processes

Rationales

such as *trust, evidence, accountability, authority, access,* and *permanence* can ~~*authority, access,* and *permanence* can form the bases of curricula rather than archi-~~ val processes such as appraisal, arrangement, and description around which cur- rent, often highly linear, curricular standards and hence programs are struc-

Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group. "Educating for the Archival Multiverse." *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (April 1, 2011): 69–101.
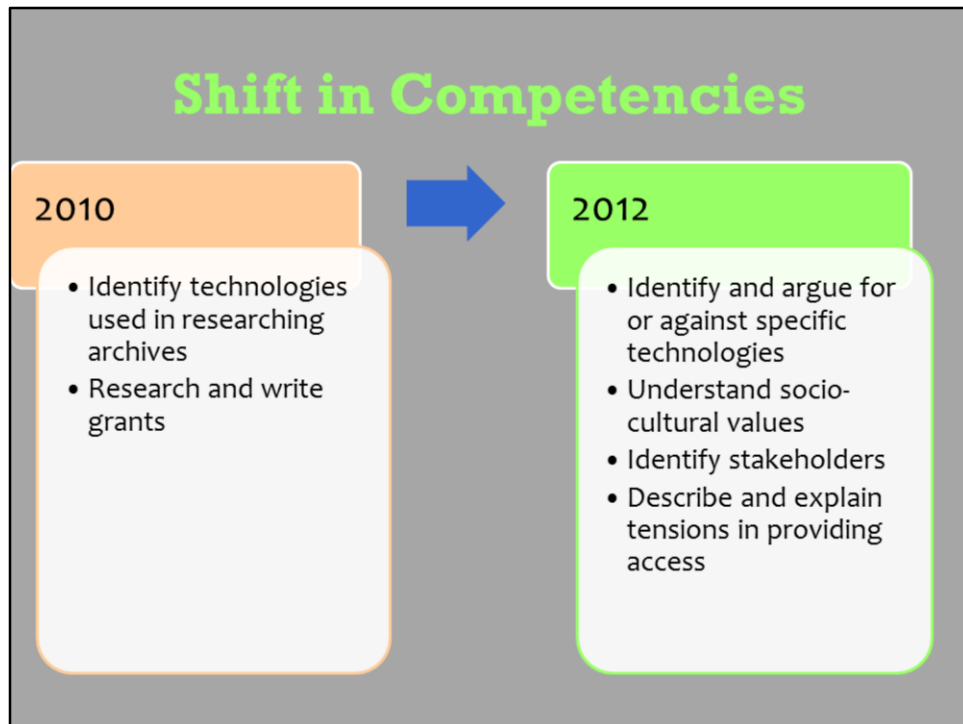
This slide is only a sampling of the shift of competencies identified in the syllabus. 2010 had 4 competencies, 2012 had 8.

The major addition in 2012 directly addresses concepts.

Shift in Competencies

Understand and define core LIS/Archival concepts such as Information-Seeking Behavior (ISB), Access, Ownership, Trust, Evidence, Accountability, Authority, and Professional Responsibility as they pertain to the processes/archival functions of outreach and reference.

This slide shows a close match between the *multiverse* ideas and the language in the syllabus.

Sample Modules

WEEK 6: February 29
Access: Part I

TOPICS: History of archives services, Uses of archives continued

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES: Access as a principle, Accountability

WEEK 7: March 7
Access: Part II

TOPICS: Rights (-to know, -of access, -to privacy), cross-cultural perspectives on rights

ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES: Rights – donors and creators, Privacy

One of the Week 4 discussion prompts:
In what ways do the archives you're familiar with display archival authority and symbolic meaning or fetishism? What is the archive actually authoritative in? How might this perception of authority and symbolic meaning affect the varied stakeholders (archivists, administrators, donors, patrons, creators, subjects, others)?

Week 6 discussion prompt (Ketelaar's archive as time machine had been assigned):
What metaphors can you think of for the archive? Why does each metaphor work and how could you leverage these images for outreach and/or reference?

Week 7 discussion prompt:
What rights should archives protect? Does it matter whose rights you are considering? Should you protect them in all circumstances? Explain your stance.

Assessments

#	Assignment	%	Due Date(s)
1	Discussion	20	Weekly
2	Class Activities (5% each)	15	Three times during the semester
3	Encyclopedia Entries	10	Student selected
4	Case Study Summary	5	Student selected
5	Paper or Outreach Plan (Choose 1)	50	Week 15, May 11
	5A) Proposal	5/50	Week 3, Feb 15
	5B) Paper outline or plan summary	10/50	Week 7, Mar 14
	5C) Final paper or plan	35/50	Week 16, May 9

Activities: 1) self-test on internet use amongst Americans and New Zealanders followed by research and discussion of statistics about internet use and technology adoption

2) Synchronous reference interviews in pairs

3) Exhibit visit and analysis in home community

Encyclopedia Entries

- Self-selected

- Wiki-based

- Includes: Description, origins, historical context, utility for outreach, related concepts, key resources

- Week 3:
  - Reference Interview
  - Information Behavior
- Week 4:
  - Archival Authority
- Week 5:
  - Authenticity
  - Participatory Archives
  - Rights of Records Subjects
- Week 6:
  - Access as a Principle
  - Accountability and Archives
- Week 7:
  - Privacy
  - Rights of Donors and Creators
- Week 8:

Students selected their own entry and work in teams of 2. If a teammate dropped out, I would grade the solo effort more leniently.

Outcomes

- Initial resistance to the word "fetish" but voluntary adoption by late term activity analyzing exhibits (i.e. **disruption of mental framework resulting in intellectual change** and **facility with concepts**)
- 2 students obtained employment during the course of the class and attributed their success partially to the class
- Lively and often insightful discussions
- Students also learned specific analytical skills and methods

Evaluation comments were very positive overall. Several students wrote that they felt they had really stretched with this class and felt more confident and prepared as a result.

Initial Conclusions on Efficacy

- holds great promise even in settings where the focus has been on skill development and application

- seems to have strengthened two students' job qualifications – the "theoretical" approach can thus be pragmatic.

- seems to have worked even in a multi-national, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual class.

- Can work alongside skills-oriented instruction