Pedagogical Strategies for Fostering Pluralism in Archival Studies

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Archival Pluralism in the Classroom

Archival pluralism recognizes that there are multiple ways of being and knowing in the world, and thus different ways of conceptualizing archives as evidence and property.[1] As educator and students, we present our views on digital pedagogies that engage with archival pluralism and that have challenged us to become culturally competent: to strive to function effectively in information environments serving populations from diverse backgrounds.[2]

Digital Pedagogies Employed

In one course, students created digital stories on the meaning of diversity in their future careers as archivists and librarians; topics ranged from identifying the value of Latino cultural literacies in LIS (Figures 1 & 2) to the role archives play in supporting Native American language preservation.

In another course, students collaborated with faculty and curators to create digital exhibits documenting local communities using the platform Scalar (Figure 3).

Relational Reflexivity

We used relational reflexivity[3] as a method to derive different interpretations of the impact the pedagogical strategies had in developing cultural competency, and to determine how they could be improved. These interpretations were analyzed for patterns and meaning.

Conclusion

Digital pedagogies require that we think more critically about users and their interactions with digital objects. If there are multiple ways of being and knowing in the world, then the manner in which we conceptualize the “use” of archives is just as diverse. Understanding how communities want to experience the archives is a facet of archival pluralism we must research and explore further.

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References