

Connecting K-12 Educators with Regional Digital Heritage

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Abstract

This talk will discuss a grant-funded, community-based research project that invited grade 9-12 teachers into a public library archive to learn how to integrate both physical and digital archives into their high school classrooms. Using Place-Based Educational Theory (PBE), research on the value of primary source education, and known factors that contribute to archival anxiety and obstacles to archival use, we developed a program that would help teachers feel confident in creating lesson plans that map to the required state curriculum for history classes. We also collected our own evaluation data from teachers pre- and post-workshop. This workshop accompanied a separate, larger-scale survey that asked teachers about their comfort using archival materials in their classrooms.

A collaborative team, made up of two instructors and two graduate students from UNC-CH, partnered with Durham Public Library's North Carolina Collection to create this workshop as a way to support teachers --and through them, students-- in not only gaining access to archives, but creating lesson plans that incorporate primary sources in reasonable ways with few obstacles. We also added an educational approach, PBE, to our workshops so that teachers could incorporate proven educational theory alongside primary source instruction, helping to justify the way primary sources can aid educational approaches. Place-Based Education "incorporates the meanings and experiences of place in teaching and learning and can extend beyond the walls of the school" (Theimer, 2015, p. viii), which we find works well in tandem with regional archival materials. During our panel, we will report on our research around this workshop, how we conducted it, and data gathered from the evaluations the teachers reported, helping create research-based justifications for targeted archival outreach such as this.

About the authors:

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