

Archival Education Using Collections from Archival Institutions: Making Collaboration Beneficial to Both Parties

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Abstract: Since the archival profession was established in North America, many graduate schools have provided formalized archival education. Many researchers have looked at the curriculums and identities of archival programs, but there has not been substantial research on how archival education is performed. This study intends to look at the practical component in the archival curriculum for the subject of “arrangement and description.” Hands-on practices within curricula can enhance the quality of the learning process, especially for courses like archival arrangement and description. SAA articulates in its *Guidelines for a Graduate Program* that “teaching methods and technology applications should link theory to practice” for arrangement and description.

This study investigates (1) the current status of the practical components in archival arrangement and description courses in North America, (2) the major effects of hands-on practices for this course when using actual archival collections from archival institutions and how these effects are perceived by students and archivists, and (3) the necessary requirements to establish in providing hands-on experience to students in order to make the collaboration beneficial to both ends, archival education programs and archival institutions?

This study surveys the current curricula of archival studies in Master’s programs in terms of practical components in the archival arrangement and description course or any equivalents (archival representation, archival access systems, organization of archival information, etc). This study further conducts a case study of the “Archival Representation” course at University at Albany. This course uses actual archival collections from two archival institutions in the Albany area for course projects. It analyzes the course evaluations from students and performs interviews with former students who attended in this course and archivists from the archival institutions.

About the author:

Donghee Sinn is an assistant professor of the Department of Information Studies, University at Albany (State University of New York). Her research interests are based on her experiences in archives and libraries. The major research interests lie with the archival research in relation to public memory, archival use/user studies, archival memory in the digital realm, personal archiving in the web environment, topic-focused approach in information organization, and archival education with practical components. One of the approaches in her research centers on the use of archival holdings and the actual influence of archival materials in the entity of knowledge in a certain area and even more specifically for a certain historical event. She has observed the impacts of archival use on the final products of historical research by various aspects in her research studies. She is also working on

research projects that were developed from her teaching in archival program, including a study identifying and understanding the status of practical components in archival education.

She holds a Ph. D. from the University of Pittsburgh. She previously worked as an archivist at the National Archives of Korea as well as a librarian in academic libraries. In her current position, she teaches Archival Representation, Information and Knowledge Organization, and Collection Development and Management.