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Research

Redefining the Pedagogy

Service-Learning in Libraries and Archives

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Service-learning has become an established pedagogy in higher education classrooms. With a push in recent years to offer classroom experiences that offer more than static lectures, service-learning incorporates three main elements into its model; experiential learning, contribution to the community, and reflection which merges theory with practice for a unique learning experience. Service-learning can also be found in early models of library science education. This article will highlight service-learning projects in both libraries and archives that used innovative methods to create partnerships in the community. It will also argue that both libraries and archives should not be overlooked when considering these projects and can be valuable resources for successful service-learning partnerships.

Service-learning has become an established pedagogy in higher education. With changes in literacy over the decades coupled with changes in learning styles, the idea of strict classroom learning in higher education began shifting as service-learning became a more popular model of teaching. Many universities have embraced adding service-learning components to their courses or have established committees, whole departments, or even designated coordinators that solely focus on this topic. There are numerous examples of service-learning projects and benefits in higher education settings, yet libraries, and especially archives, have been slower to adopt this movement. However, librarians and archivists are changing the conversation and beginning to play a more pivotal role in service-learning projects and finally becoming recognized for their efforts on this forefront.

Literature Review

The literature review is not intended to be comprehensive and exhaustive about the history of service-learning as that would be beyond the scope for this article. Instead it will provide a brief overview of the concept of service-learning for reference, discuss how it relates to libraries and library and information science (LIS) education, and illustrate the ways in which libraries and archives are implementing it.

Stanton, Giles and Cruz's (1999), *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future*, describes in detail the movement's history through higher education and provides reflections from pioneers in the field. A section of their book is devoted to action and gives recommendations on how to implement service-learning in future policies and practices. Bringle and Hatcher's (1995) research was largely responsible for stating that the development of service-learning courses fell on the faculty's shoulders since they are primarily responsible for curriculum development (p. 112). Their article provided practical readings, a theoretical basis for service-learning and faculty development activities.

Service-learning as noted by Kuh (2008) is a high impact education practice in which this style of learning is "positive for all types of students" (p. 17). Kuh's research concludes that students will experience meeting diverse people through other methods such as "learning communities, courses that feature service learning, and internships and other field placements," making the case to diversify educational opportunities (Kuh, 2008, p. 15). Eyler and Giles' (1999) seminal work, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*, focuses on exactly what kind of learning happens with service-learning by analyzing both the outcomes and the process. The book is complete with both quantitative data and qualitative stories and provides sections on methodology, results, participant information, and survey instruments to help gauge and replicate successful service-learning projects. Eyler (2002) further highlights academia's need for service-learning to fulfill gaps in the curriculum especially as they relate to civic action but notes there can be a disconnect about how successful service-learning is for students and communities (p. 522-523).

Connecting service-learning and libraries, Roy, Meyers, and Hershey's (2009) book, *Service Learning: Linking Library Education and Practice*, highlights ways to incorporate service-learning into library education. An overview of service-learning in LIS education is discussed along with a chapter on service-learning from three different perspectives; administration, faculty, and student viewpoints. The work is a practical guide to implementation of service-learning for LIS students pursuing a variety of careers in school media, public libraries, and academic libraries.

Brzozowski, Homenda, and Roy (2012) seek to differentiate between the concept of fieldwork and service-learning. Additionally, they highlight the importance of service-learning projects in LIS education and how library students performing service-learning projects in public libraries with community members can do so successfully.

Sweet (2013) links service-learning to information literacy and provides a comprehensive history of the service-learning movement and its evolution in higher education. Sweet (2013) goes on to describe the synergy between service-learning and information literacy by stating that "service-learning, combined with information literacy adds value to each and transforms both" (p. 270). Lastly, Sweet (2013) provides a list of "emerging best practices" for libraries to follow when implementing service-learning at their institution (p. 270-271).

Nutefall's contribution to the scholarly record for service-learning and libraries is one of the more expansive recent works. In Nutefall's edited work, *Service Learning, Information Literacy and Libraries* (2016), individual chapters cover a variety of topics including a brief history of service-learning, discussion about theory and pedagogy and provides lists of practical examples. The literature review delivers a basic summary of the most prominent articles regarding service-learning and libraries and devotes a chapter to the future and sustainability of service-learning in academic libraries.

Other solo articles seek to explain the ways in which libraries can be used in service-learning projects. Chesnut's (2011) case study using the library as the client, highlights a successful partnership between a university's marketing department and the library. Nutefall's earlier work (2009) also focused on faculty/librarian partnerships with a writing course that added a library research component to the students' service-learning experience.

Relating to archives, Gilliland (2011) cites a UCLA required graduate course in the Master of Library and Information Studies program that encompasses "diversity, power relations, and social justice" in the curriculum (p. 203). Additionally, the course includes a service-learning component with students "embedded in community organizations in various diverse and grassroots settings" for further exposure to these real-world issues (Gilliland,

2011, p. 204). Bross (2016) notes the power of collaborations between academic departments, archives, and community partners with graduate students completing a processing project via the university archives which in turn helps community partners with little funding and staff to complete such an endeavor.

A closer look to the literature, however, reveals a number of gaps and shortcomings. While service-learning is well documented in higher education and examples with partnerships in academic departments and various disciplines abound, as it relates to libraries and especially archives, there is less documentation and even gaps in the scholarship. Riddle (2003) noted there was a lack of scholarship on both the library and service-learning side about research projects combining these two groups and concluded there was “simply a research void abutting these two areas of higher education scholarship” that were “virtually oblivious to the other” (p. 71). Sweet (2013), Nutefall (2016), and Livingston (2018) commented on the problems with the scholarly record too with Livingston specifically noting that a “limited amount of literature in the archival field addresses service-learning” (p. 220). Livingston (2018) further stated that future research was needed to assess “student learning outcomes in archives” with service-learning and suggested “additional case studies documenting how archives implement service-learning programs will be useful in establishing best practice guides for the profession” (p. 224). While there are more articles citing service-learning projects with libraries, a limited amount of literature relating to the archives field is present and no comprehensive literature review written on this subject could be found. What does exist are mainly solo articles, case studies, blogs, and published internet sources citing service-learning and archives with less formally published journal scholarship.

Service-Learning Overview

Sweet (2013) notes that our country’s earliest institutions of higher education were founded with principles of educating students to “become active, democratic citizens” (p. 247). The history of service-learning can trace its conceptual roots back to when the land grant movement established the public university that taught students more practical curriculums such as how to “recognize and redress social injustices” (Sweet, 2013, p. 248). As the climate changed in the 1960s and 1970s with immigrant education and civil rights efforts, colleges and universities were forced to be more socially relevant and responsive to compelling issues such as poverty and segregation (Stanton et al., 1999, p. 2). According to Stanton et al. (1999), the earliest definition of service-learning was found in the publications of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in 1969 which described it as the “accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth” (p. 2). Additionally, the SREB was concerned with “developing learning opportunities for students that were related to community service, community development, and social change” (Stanton et. al., 1999, p. 2).

Service-learning’s early practitioners made their marks in experiential education or learning through experience. American educational reformer John Dewey’s 1910 book, *How We Think*, laid the foundation for experiential learning and emphasized the role of personal reflection on experiences while “stressing the importance of the balance between work and play (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 26). Practitioners borrowed theories from other educators and philosophers such as Albert Bandura, Paulo Freire, and David Kolb as their pedagogical foundation which led them to see service-learning aligning within a liberal arts education (Stanton et. al, 1999, p. 4). The combination of community service with academic excellence was not meant to have “competitive demands to be balanced through discipline and personal sacrifice” but rather to “connect study and service so that the disciplines illuminate and inform experience, and experience lends meaning and energy to the disciplines” (Stanton et. al, 1999, p. 4).

Service-learning joins the components of community action, or the “service,” with efforts to learn from that action and connect to existing knowledge, or the “learning” (Stanton et. al, 1999, p. 2). There are countless numbers of

definitions for service-learning with most having several commonalities. One regularly cited is Bringle and Hatcher's (1995) definition of service-learning which states it is:

a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (p. 112).

Various authors also note that service-learning is different from fieldwork which mainly focuses on skills, in that "it involves providing a service to a community" and gives equal parts to student learning and community service (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 24; Roy et al., 2009, p. 9). Frequently confused with other forms of experiential learning such as practicums or internships, service-learning is "embedded into standard course offerings" for credit with real-world projects that connect students with community groups and organizations (Ball, 2008, p. 71). While internships are more focused on immersion in the workplace and require longer hours, service-learning tends to build on community efforts and allow students to share their experiences through reflection (Livingston, 2018, p. 218). Service-learning avoids the "one-way approach" of a group or individual who only has services to give or volunteer but instead, "the needs of the community, rather than of the academy, determine the nature of the service provided" (Stanton et. al, 1999, p. 3). Additionally, service-learning rejects the standard model of education with professors simply lecturing to students whose eyes are glazed over from boredom. With service-learning, the notion of a "classroom as graveyard-rows and rows of silent bodies" is swapped for an active pedagogy of theory and practice (Butin, 2010, p. 3). Service-learning, therefore, incorporates three main elements: experiential learning, contribution to the community, and reflection which merges theory with practice for a unique learning experience (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 24). Service-learning not only benefits the students but is "beneficial for the rest of the people taking part in this teaching process: teachers, community members, the whole community, and the Administration" (Berasategi, Alonso, & Roman, 2016, p. 424).

The implementation of service-learning in higher education tends to fall on the faculty or instructor as it is their responsibility to create or revise courses that add in service-learning components (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, p. 112). Faculty often find service-learning opportunities through various mediums such as involvement with their community, personal advocacy for a particular issue, political activism or experience in related pedagogies (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112). To support service-learning in higher education with resources and help, organizations such as Campus Compact directly assist colleges and universities with campus-based civic engagement projects. Established in 1985 as a group concerned with the future of American democracy, Campus Compact wanted higher education to get back to the roots of its historic mission in preparing students to "achieve public goals and solve public problems," as educators felt they were moving away from service for the public good (compact.org). Campus Compact prepares campuses to "develop students' citizenship skills and forge effective community partnerships" by providing resources for faculty and administrators to successfully "pursue community-based teaching, scholarship, and action in the service of public good" (compact.org).

Service-Learning in Library and Information Science Graduate Education

In library and information science (LIS) programs, librarians and archivists learn the fundamentals of information literacy. Historically, LIS programs incorporated a service-learning like model into their early curriculums. The School of Library Economy, a library school developed by Melvil Dewey in 1896 out of Columbia University, now defunct, acknowledged that "lectures and reading alone will not achieve the best results in training for librarianship without the conference, problems, study of various libraries in successful operation, and actual work in a library" (Roy et al., 2009, p. ix). At the Illinois Library School in 1907, students could add a month of field work at a public library and rotate between circulation and reference work which included a journal reflection at the end of the process

(Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 29). However, in the 1920's, fieldwork became obsolete in library curriculums in a "push to make the profession more scientific" as it was believed fieldwork was "not academic enough in nature" (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 29). Service-learning is not without some critics of the model. Early skeptics of the movement such as Robert Hutchins saw it as "tainting research and learning" where more modern scholars have labeled it as "anti-intellectual" (Roy et al., 2009, p. 2). This precursor to service-learning as we know it today, fell by the wayside in LIS education for decades but returned to the curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s. It no longer debated the usefulness or legitimacy of the practical experience but more so on how it could be refined and rethought (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 30).

The American Library Association (ALA), founded in 1876, is the oldest and largest librarian association in the world. ALA's mission is to "provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all" (American Library Association, 2017). For LIS programs to successfully go through the accreditation and re-accreditation process, ALA's policy manual states graduate programs must:

ensure that their student bodies, faculties, and curricular effect the diverse histories and information needs of all people in the United States. Collaboration between these programs and local libraries and community-based organizations serving diverse populations is to be particularly encouraged (American Library Association, 2018).

Essentially, through this policy, although not requiring it, they are strongly suggesting a component of service-learning be incorporated into the graduate school experience.

Overall, despite drawbacks and challenges, service-learning has been a positive experience for those involved. Not only is the experience positive for LIS students but faculty benefit too. Roy et al. (2009) notes that service-learning connects "students with their need to learn, faculty members with their need to stay refreshed and connected to today's work environment, and librarians who need to help prepare new librarians (p. viii). LIS curriculum infused with service-learning helps meet two needs: "the need to understand the communities in which they live and the need to help build those communities" (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 30). By providing this experience, students will begin to understand that "libraries are charged with meeting the needs of their diverse community" and as a LIS professional, they will already have gained the skills to be part of this community building experience (Brzozowski et al., 2012, p. 30). Additionally, service-learning in their LIS program will expose students to the "diverse audiences they will serve in their professional lives" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112).

Service-Learning in Libraries and Archives

Libraries have changed the way they convey information to become "well organized and comprehensive collections of information resources, individual learning spaces, and research support services" with spots that encourage collaboration and community (McDevitt & Finegan, 2018, p. vii). Kranich, Reid, and Willingham (2004) noted that now is the time for libraries, and especially academic ones, to be "agents of democracy" as "architects and bridge builders" by continuing to promote and support civic literacy and engagement (p. 382). Bringle and Hatcher (1995) stated they "speculate that this [service-learning] would be more likely to occur in disciplines for which there is a predisposition toward an ethic and practice of service (e.g. social work) than in other disciplines (e.g., engineering)" (p. 112). If following this definition, positions in libraries and archives should follow suit as they often include outreach, engagement and service-oriented portions of their jobs. So other than an education component in graduate school, how can service-learning translate to the working world of libraries and archives?

Library as Client

In the era of decreased budgets, service-learning projects work well when giving students in class real-world experience which in turn provides a service or product to a willing and needy community partner. One example from Northern Kentucky University showed a successful relationship between a marketing class that used the library as their client to apply in-class theories and market research to assist in developing a marketing and communication plan (Chesnut, 2011, p. 61). In two separate instances of marketing classes working with the library, students evaluated a previously administered library survey, hosted focus groups about library services, and provided recommendations for improvement in the areas they evaluated. Takeaways from the partnership were that the classes “provided insightful market research data at a very low cost to the library, as well as a valuable experiential learning opportunity for the students” (Chesnut, 2011, p. 64). Overall, the students were able to provide a “fresh, unbiased viewpoint because they were not affiliated with the library” and gained real-life experience while directly helping the library community (Chesnut, 2011, p. 64).

As a graduate student at my own institution of East Stroudsburg University and pursuing a second master’s degree in the Professional and Digital Media Program through the English department, I had a chance to participate as a service-learner using my own library as the conduit. In the fall of 2019, as part of the graduate class for credit, Seminar in Professional Writing Styles and Approaches, one of our assigned projects was to complete a service-learning project. We could choose any type of agency or organization to work with including your current employer. I spoke to the Chair of my department and developed a project that would benefit the library. We had always wanted to start a library blog, so this was the perfect project to jump start that initiative. I proposed writing six blog posts on various topics that we thought would benefit anyone reading the blog and were developed from frequent questions we received. While I am the archivist and special collections librarian at my institution, part of my duties includes library work such as teaching library instruction sessions, being a liaison to various departments on campus, and reference work. I created posts about basic services provided in the library, primary vs. secondary sources, the university art and sculpture collection, the difference between peer-reviewed vs. popular sources, the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz collection (a special collection), and institutional records in the university archives and special collections. While Chesnut (2011) argues that one could have a bias if they are affiliated with their own institution, I would argue the exact opposite (p. 64). Being part of the Kemp Library community gave me the insight and knowledge about the exact type of information literacy gaps we had. Knowing and understanding the community for which I was doing the project, only enhanced my awareness of their information needs.

Embedded Librarian or Archivist

If faculty are responsible for teaching service-learning, where does that leave librarians and archivists in the conversation? In many of the projects, librarians and archivists are the go-between the faculty and the community involved with the project and are the conduit to the service-learning component. Libraries can either be the place to experience service-learning or to obtain the resources necessary to be successful with service-learning (McDonnell, 2017, p. 189). As previously mentioned, service-learning courses and projects are often left up to faculty to develop. While academic librarians and archivists can have the rank of a faculty member, they often do not traditionally teach semester-long courses. So how can they accomplish successful service-learning projects without formally teaching? One way is as an embedded librarian or archivist.

In a presentation about embedded librarianship in 2016 at City University of New York (CUNY), one of the presenters shared the results of a survey they conducted about embedded librarians. One of the questions asked respondents to define what they believed were characteristics of an embedded librarian. The presenter noted that two recurring responses to that question were “geographical elsewhere-ness” and “pedagogical partnerships” showing that the librarian was very much part of the course or project, yet not necessarily defined by boundaries specific to a place

such as a classroom or library (Almeida, Gray, & Matsuuchi, 2016). Additionally, the librarians embedded within the classes were providing instruction, information literacy and remote resource delivery in order to provide more experiential learning and collaborative work with the students (Almeida et al., 2016) In fact, it has been shown that “students who work with librarians during their service learning class are more likely to use more and a wider variety of sources than those who did not work with a librarian,” strongly making the case for the embedded librarian. (McDonnell, 2017, p. 44).

While not designed specifically as a service-learning course, an American Environmental History course for credit at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania used an embedded archivist throughout the semester (Fic, 2018, p. 291). The archivist’s role in the class was to prepare students for archival research to a population that had not been exposed to primary sources before and who would be completing “extensive source analysis and independent archival research” (Fic, 2018, p. 291). Concerned the students who had never been exposed to historical research would not be able to complete the project required of them in the short semester timeline, the embedded archivist created a series of archival workshops that “transformed a group of undergraduates with no historical research experience into budding scholars capable of making meaningful contributions to the existing body of knowledge” (Fic, 2018, p. 291). The embedded archivist concluded that having been involved with the semester-long for credit class allowed the students to slowly absorb the material which gave them more confidence in using archival materials, analyzing literature and conducting archival research (Fic, 2018, p. 295).

Digital Repositories

Straddling the world of libraries and archives are digital repositories. These are typically used by academic institutions to host and store institutional works by faculty and students such as articles, theses, archival materials, and other types of projects. UMass Amherst used their digital repository ScholarWorks and created a section for community engagement projects which were accessible and open to the public. Librarians partnered with faculty members to “build and maintain teaching and research resources in either print or electronic form” (Miller & Billings, 2012, p. 112). Since the output of the materials was so diverse, the digital repository allowed them to upload various types of items including primary sources, supplemental materials, and course syllabi (Miller & Billings, 2012, p. 116). Additionally, ScholarWorks enabled them to “improve mechanisms for tracking and reporting activities and impacts associated with community engagement initiatives” (Miller & Billings, 2012, p. 115). By using the digital repository, information was easily disseminated, calculable and accessible which in turn made the community engagement projects more visible.

Projects in the Archives

While there are numerous case studies, literature reviews and documented examples of service-learning projects specific to libraries, those for the archives do exist, but are less abundant. Straus and Eckenrode (2014) noted that gaps “exist in the scholarly literature examining the role of service-learning in discipline specific courses” and more specifically, the “humanities courses in general, and in history courses in particular” (p. 255). As stated previously, there is no comprehensive literature review on service-learning related just to archives with Livingston (2018) specifically noting a lack of literature about service-learning in the archival field (p. 220). While there are published journal articles and works about service-learning and archives, much of what exists does so via blogs, websites, and other digital mediums.

One successfully documented project related to service-learning and archival work is the Literary Narratives of Black Columbus (LNBC) at Ohio University which is preserved under the umbrella project of the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN) (Comer, Harker, & McCorkle, 2019). In the service-learning devised course for credit, students assisted African Americans of Columbus, Ohio in documenting their literacy practices and views via audio and video interviews. Students were exposed to a host of marketable skills such as how to conduct interviews, perform

digital media recordings and engage in data analysis. Specifically relating to archives, students learned “cataloging and archiving primary sources for public access; designing archival materials for wide accessibility (e.g., transcribing and captioning audio and video); [and] searching digital archives” (Comer et al., 2019). Not only did students get exposed to primary sources or first-hand accounts of history, they in turn were creating primary sources when they interviewed, transcribed, and submitted the literacy narratives to the DALN (Comer et al., 2019). Overall, students learned valuable critical thinking skills, created diverse literacy narratives and helped to preserve an online community archive (Comer et al., 2019).

In a project collaboratively designed by archivists and historians at La Guardia & Wagner Archives along with faculty and librarians of LaGuardia Community College, the group worked together on a project combining the use of archival resources to create Wikipedia entries. In 2015, an English professor and archivists paired up to choose a collection that would allow students to do archival research and give them digital writing experience at the same time (Matsuuchi, 2017, p. 47). Eventually, they settled on using the Mayor Edward I. Koch collection because his tenure as New York City mayor coincided with “major changes in urban development as well as the trauma of the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic” (Matsuuchi, 2017, p. 48). Rich primary and secondary sources in the collection allowed them to research and write Wikipedia entries about the HIV/AIDS epidemic specific to New York City. Additionally, the Wikipedia entries would “serve as a portal to key archival documents, oral histories, media and reports” which are often difficult to cull in one area and would allow for students to write entries specific to their fields of study (Matsuuchi, 2017, pp. 48, 49). Furthermore, the students participated in a local Wiki Loves Pride 2016 event to strengthen “entries related to LGBTQ histories, arts and culture” and presented their project at the national Wikipedia Conference in 2016 (Matsuuchi, 2017, p. 53). Overall, the project not only helped the larger community learn about the HIV/AIDS crisis in New York City at that time period but gave the students real-world skills working with primary sources, online publishing, and conference presentations.

In a similar project using Wikipedia, a writing class at Ohio University teamed up with the archives and special collections to do archival research and edit entries about the university (Vetter, 2014, p. 37). The project melded both “digital, as well as physical, community engagement” and created a cross-disciplinary approach to service-learning (Vetter, 2014, p. 37). Students performed original research in the archives and special collections, formed relationships with the curator and made special collections materials more visible in the Wikipedia forum (Vetter, 2014, p. 38). The study ended with a survey to gauge the effect this type of project had on the students. Vetter (2014) found that overall, students enjoyed engaging collaboratively with another discipline, were more motivated to produce good writing, made helpful relationships during the project and were excited that others would discover the once hidden archival materials on Wikipedia (p. 48-49). From the library and archives aside, the project raised “awareness of library archives and special collections” and showed the impact that “cross-disciplinary relationships and pedagogy” had on both groups (Vetter, 2014, p. 49).

Tangential to the conversation about service-learning are community archives and the archivist as activist. Community archives are defined as “archives that have been created, maintained, and controlled by community members within their communities” which “embody the fruits of activism and communities working together to document their histories” (Wakimoto, Bruce, & Partridge, 2013, pp. 295, 293). By collecting materials from a community that has been underrepresented, the archivist is becoming the activist and is directly working alongside the community. In the establishment of several queer archives in California, the archivists in selecting and working with those communities, becomes the agent of rhetoric and voice for that community. Archivists can then employ “archival practice for social justice, which is inherently activist in nature” (Wakimoto et al., 2013, p. 295). While missing the education and reflection component, action and community engagement are still apparent.

In an example with community archives from Purdue University, American studies graduate students worked with original materials from various community partners, groups, and organizations to “make inventories,

offer useful descriptions of collections, and when necessary take preliminary steps to preserve the materials” (Bross, 2016, p. 398). They ended the class with not only a paper, but a broader reflection of how they made a difference to the community as they envisioned their “service-learning relationship as one of ‘neighborliness’” (Bross, 2016, p. 398). As a result, there was a “greater historical consciousness in the community and deeper knowledge on the part of students about the promises-and the limits-of archival research,” which were all added benefits (Bross, 2016, p. 399). Regarding other collaborations, Livingston (2018) summarized how the Walter Stiern Library at California State University, Bakersfield, began collaborating with its history department to use archives in its curriculum for service-learning projects which ultimately led to a rebirth of their archival education program (p. 217). Livingston noted (2018) their archival program went from “solely a collecting archives to a teaching archives” (p. 217). Public history students learned about archival theories but also participated in active learning by processing collections, writing finding aids, and creating exhibitions all while directly helping various community members and projects (Livingston, 2018).

Impact

Does service-learning benefit all or only some? And what is its impact if any? In 2002, Eyler noted that studies were mixed as to the overall impact service-learning had on students (p. 518). While most cited service-learning as being beneficial especially to “attitudes related to social responsibility,” Eyler (2002) noted those benefits were “generally small” and that many studies were inconclusive (p.518). Those small benefits are due in large part to the actual experiences the students are having as they vary greatly in how service-learning is conducted via instructors. While some are having “intensive community experiences with close integration into academic study,” others are experiencing “briefer ‘add on’ service activities largely unconnected to classroom discourse” (Eyler, 2002, p. 518).

Students too have cited complaints about service-learning. In a study conducted at De Paul University in Chicago, over 2200 students were surveyed over a three-year time period about their experiences with service-learning in classes (Rosing et al., 2010, p. 473). Findings concluded that complaints of service-learning could be categorized into three areas: “criticisms about the community site, concern about community site choices and time and scheduling criticisms” (Rosing et al., 2010, p. 475). While community partners were often enthusiastic about service-learning projects, many students said sites and staff were not organized for their arrival (Rosing et al., 2010, p. 475). Others complained they had no say in the site of assignment while others would have preferred more choices in their location (Rosing et al., 2010, pp. 475). One student stated on the survey that “community service should not be chosen by students. I think it should be assigned by the professor,” showing the range of differing student desires. (Rosing et al., 2010, p. 477). Time became a factor as well. Students mentioned it took too long to complete the service-learning projects or had other issues with time such as travelling to the site, all of which were perceived barriers in their service-learning experience (Rosing et al., 2010, p. 477).

Arguing that service-learning does employ academic excellence and have benefits, an LIS graduate student reflected on their service-learning experience noting it “led to some of the deepest learning” in their education (Bloomquist, 2015, p. 169). Bloomquist (2015) also affirmed that weekly reflections were a key piece in her service-learning experience which she stated, “elevated it from being merely a catalog of my experience to being a true learning catalyst” (p. 170). Speaking from my personal experience of having participated in a service-learning project in a graduate class for credit, I can attest that it was one of the more engaging assignments. The amount of work required included weekly readings, setting up the project, research for the blog posts, and finishing with a final portfolio and reflection. The workload was not light in any sense. What I did acquire and learn through this experience was a newfound interest in the overall subject of service-learning which has led me to want to pursue it further for my thesis and other projects. Additionally, connections made with my professor has led to talks about collaborating on creating a service-learning component for a technical writing class that would involve the use of the university archives and special collections. Overall, the service-learning project opened my eyes to how important and rewarding civic

engagement with a community can be. While service-learning is not without faults, overall, the literature speaks in favor of service-learning as it has clearly “demonstrated its rigor and impact” and can “successfully withstand critique and questioning” (Nutefall, 2016, p. 126).

Conclusion

Service-learning can work for many disciplines and is no longer tied only to certain majors or fields. People are thinking outside the box as to how service-learning projects can be administered and by whom with librarians and archivists are part of that conversation. However, the scholarly record should reflect more of the projects happening within libraries and especially archives than it currently does. Archivists specifically must answer a call to action for more scholarship to be written in the field about the high-impact education practice of service-learning using archival materials. Librarians and archivists should continue to be more creative in their approaches such as embedding themselves into a semester-long course, using primary sources for engagement, posting community projects to digital repositories, becoming activists within a community or simply creating projects that not only benefit students and faculty but a larger community. It is apparent that libraries and archives can provide rich service-learning opportunities in higher education and are worthy outlets for partnerships.

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