

## Portfolio Reflection 2

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## **Specific Competencies**

**A1) Students will demonstrate understanding of basic principles, concepts, and terminology related to the creation, organization, management, access, and use of knowledge and information and will demonstrate the ability to apply them to practical problems.**

**A2) Students will demonstrate understanding of the nature of research, research methods and the role of research in library and information science and additionally, demonstrate the ability to apply research findings to practical problems.**

**A3) Students will demonstrate understanding of the use of information and communication technologies including social aspects of information in providing information resources and services in libraries and other information environments.**

**B4) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the principles of organization and representation of knowledge and their application to library and information collections and services in their areas of career interest.**

**B6) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the management of information resources, services and organizations and apply this knowledge to their areas of career interest.**

**B7) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the roles of interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and community collaboration and alliances in the provision of library and information services.**

**C8) Students will demonstrate an understanding of how diversity contributes to the library and information professions and analyze information issues from diverse perspectives.**

**C10) Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize and analyze ethical issues and dilemmas in library and information settings and propose reasoned courses of action.**

The planning and implementation of the MA LIS coursework is accomplished in a manner that efficiently lends itself to working within the department competencies. With minimal reflection I can find demonstrated knowledge of most competencies in each of the courses that I have completed since beginning my degree. Having sampled a variety of coursework and having meandered along a path from the beginning of matriculation through the mid-point of my degree, I am starting to focus on more tangible interests and goals in a way that makes me feel the path forward is more defined. Reflecting on my past coursework and recognizing some specific competency-related learning and assignments has helped me to realize where I have come from, what I have accomplished, and where I am going next. Several projects in particular have obvious connections to department learning competencies which are highlighted in my reflection and have paved the way for my planning and learning in the second half of the program.

An extremely pertinent function of an academic librarian or a librarian in any setting is the ability to understand the nature of research, research methods, and the role that research plays in the library setting. It is also essential to understand how research can be used to help find solutions to ethical and timely issues in an information environment. LIS 506, Research Methods for Library and Information Professionals, offered my classmates and I the opportunity to propose a research study around a topic of our interest that is important to a modern information environment. In our case, we decided to focus our research proposal on analyzing the most effective methods to market outreach and public library offerings to young adults and teens in Pima County, AZ. The real problem of balancing financial resources to most effectively drive participation in library offerings is an extremely pertinent topic today. The competency of

being able to analyze key issues in library science and potential approaches to these issues influenced our interest and choice in this research. Based upon our proposal, we determined that this would be an effective way to study an issue in the public library that could add actionable steps to efficiently use resources to drive participation.

LIS 671 offered a rich array of assignments that allowed me to discover real-world, practical examples of information organization functions or processes. Creating an archival finding aid and a digital EAD finding aid allowed me to experience practical archival work as it relates to digital preservation and curation. Both of these assignments, the Finding Aid Assignment and the EAD Finding Aid Assignment, were meant to allow us to demonstrate the understanding of basic principles and concepts of working in a digital archive. They also allowed us to understand some of the information technologies that provide information resources and services to the library and archival setting, touching on two competencies. They demonstrate knowledge of the principles of organization and representation of archival knowledge from a digital and physical perspective, as finding aids are the primary resource used to organize, access and use archival resources. For these reasons, I found these assignments to be vital in my understanding of how finding aids are used in the archive or special collections library.

The third impressive assignment from LIS 671 was the Preservation Policy Assignment, which required us to research, evaluate and report on the digital preservation policy of three digital repositories of our choice. This allowed us to demonstrate our knowledge of the management of information resources and in this case, digital resources and data. Digital resources and data are managed and organized in every information organization and the

knowledge of how to manage these resources is vital with the increasing use of technology and born-digital material. I found this assignment to be an important practice in learning about current topics in academic libraries especially, as many of these institutions are tasked with organizing and making accessible mountains of digital resources to patrons.

Two of the relevant degree competencies ask for a demonstrated understanding of how diversity contributes to the library and information professions and the ability to recognize and analyze ethical issues and dilemmas in these settings. LIS 550, Information Environments from Non-Dominant Perspectives, was an essential course that informed me about many of the challenges and failures of information environments and professionals in creating diverse histories, memories, and opportunities for indigenous and marginalized communities. The focus of LIS 550 was to recognize these gaps in our collective resources and histories and discover actionable steps and responsibilities as a professional to close these gaps. In our Community Analysis Project, I was able to use research methods to find and analyze an information organization from a marginalized community to discover how this particular community tells their story from their voice. The need for these community archives and institutions are due to a historical dampening of black, brown, feminist, and other marginalized perspectives in information environments, which creates an ethical dilemma that we as professionals need to help rectify. Diversity in information organizations is extremely important and contributes to our cultural history while providing a more accurate history and memory. My community analysis paper allowed me to reflect on community archives, an African-American archive in particular, and how these archives can remain sustainable in the future with support from these particular communities and collaboration with professionals outside of those communities.

Combined with this particular course, LIS 540, Introduction to Archives, was another course that continued my exploration of community archives. Granted, this course covered the basic principles, concepts, and terminology of the archive as its focus competency, but it also continued my understanding of how diversity contributes to the archival profession. Additionally, it continued my understanding of the nature of research and research methods with an annotated bibliography as a part of our final project. An annotated bibliography is a research method to summarize articles as they pertain to research, and it is a widely used method in the process of conducting research. This method is a method I have used and will continue to use going forward in my classes throughout the remainder of my degree.

The second part of this project was a presentation that I created on “Sustainability in Community Archives”. It was a VoiceThread discussion based upon the articles that I had summarized in my annotated bibliography and constituted my continued analysis and study of community archives. Recognizing the importance of the contributions by diverse communities and their challenges to be represented in mainstream information organizations was an important aspect of this course. I continued my study of community archives and their collaborative methods within mainstream archives as a framework for sustainability. Diverse stories are essential to round out the actual history of people, and understanding how these communities can survive and grow is essential to changing the balance of representation in our information institutions. The competency regarding the roles of interdisciplinary and community collaboration is a very relevant description for this course and for my research. Community archives, the research shows, are more sustainable for a longer period of time when they collaborate with a larger variety of organizations, including traditional archives.

Finally, LIS 515 Organization of Information, was a technological introduction to organization in the information environment. This class was an introduction to Marc, XML, databases, and other technical necessities in information environments. This course was an introduction to the basic principles of management, organization and access to information on the technical side. Our final group project gave us the opportunity to crosswalk from one metadata schema to another and create a combined RDFa code for these schemas, and it is a side of information organization that I had never experienced. Although, upon reflection, this isn't an area that I would pursue further, learning the basic information about databases, schemas and how to create code reflecting these categories is an important skill that is a large component of information organizations.

In essence, each and every department competency is presented in the selection of courses that I have completed. However, certain assignments touch on a few specific competencies more directly and when reflecting upon a few of these goal and objectives, I have provided relevant examples from completed assignments that align specifically with these objectives. Being that this is the first portion of my coursework, I feel that the variable nature of the assignments has allowed me to create a well-rounded educational path. However, I also feel that I have started to analyze the intricacies of my completed classes and how the learning fits in with my personal and professional goals going forward.

The initial time in my degree program has been sampling and exploring the different aspects and opportunities of a profession in an information organization. In the past I have been employed in governmental, educational and business positions specifically, so I lacked a clear learning objective when I began the MA LIS program at the University of Arizona. This isn't to

say that I lacked objectives and interests, they have just become more refined and focused over time. My first personal objective and goal was to explore the possibilities of a library and information science degree as it relates to a future job through personal exploration in a variety of coursework. Second, I wanted to narrow my learning path to focus on a few specific categories of interest and begin to seek out coursework and leadership opportunities in those areas. Finally, I wanted to balance this focus with a variety of learning experiences that can make me an ideal candidate for more opportunities while still following the narrowing path from my second goal. My experience with the first half of my degree has allowed me to be on target to achieve all three of these goals.

At this point in my coursework and experience in the program, I have sampled a variety of learning themes. Outside of the introduction course, LIS 504, I have chosen to examine courses and learning categories that relate to archives, digital preservation and curation, public and academic librarianship, research, and instruction in the library. One of the common outcomes of these courses has been that most skillsets and learning relate to almost any position in information institutions. However, I feel that through my introductory coursework and my research proposal from LIS 506, and my LIS 550 Information Environments from Non-Dominant Perspectives class, I have a clear idea of the challenges and opportunities in a public library position. Additionally, courses such as Introduction to Archives LIS 540, LIS 671 Digital Preservation and Curation, LIS 506 Research Methods for Library and Information Professionals, and LIS 515 Organization of Information were essential for me in sampling not only archival environments, but research and academic environments as well. In conclusion, I have sampled a variety of paths in the information professions and have achieved my interest and goal of exploring potential opportunities.



Next, I wanted to narrow my focus and interests from exploration and discovery to highlight a few specific areas or themes. My experiences in my archival classes such as LIS 671, LIS 540, and my work in analyzing community archives in LIS 550 have been very influential in curating my interest in archives. I applied for and started a Student Archives position at the Arizona Geological Survey in the Fall of 2020 that has allowed me to gain archival experience and sample the profession. These situations and courses enhanced my archival interest and helped me narrow my choices and achieve my second goal. Another underlying theme in my first portion of the degree has been recognizing my strengths and how they apply to information science positions. I have had a variety of inspirational and skilled teaching role models in my coursework, along with some models I would choose not to emulate. My past experience as a high school teacher along with my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction is a strength that has relevance to academic and public library positions. Reflecting on my personal teaching experience as a teacher and my current experiences as a learner have helped me to realize that I may fit into an information profession through my demonstrated abilities in teaching. These two revelations are examples of meeting my second goal in narrowing my focus and interest in the degree program.

My final goal was to create a well-balanced educational plan and to create a focused framework to choose additional coursework. I have chosen to seek additional qualifications and take additional coursework in archives and library instruction. My next semester coursework includes Managing the Information Organization LIS 608, LIS 581 Information Literacy Pedagogy, and LIS 583 E-Learning for Librarians. These support my interest in information literacy and teaching in libraries and are required components in the Certificate of Instruction and Teaching for Library and Information Professionals that I will seek as demonstrated

evidence of my skills for future employers. I will also seek an Archival Studies Certificate due to my interest in that theme, which I have discovered in my studies during the first half of my degree program. Along with the archival certificate I have continued in my student archivist position to gain real-world experience as an archivist. Going forward, I will take the remainder of my coursework in these two disciplines while balancing the remainder of my time in general subjects of work in an information environment. I plan on taking Collection Management LIS 560 and LIS 530 Metadata Management along with my information technology elective. I will also seek out a relevant professional experience in the form of an internship that focuses on archives or instruction. I feel that I will have accomplished my final specific learning objective and goal because I will have a more focused path in teaching and archives and a well-balanced perspective on LIS professions as a whole.

Specific learning through the first half of the degree has been varied, well-rounded and exploratory. It has been a positive scenario in that it has allowed me to determine areas of interest and areas that I do not need to explore further due to lack of interest. Attached assignments demonstrate not only a knowledge of different perspectives of information institutions, but different methods of assessment. They also show the acquired learning and demonstration of learning competencies that I have achieved in the coursework and assignments. These assignments and classes have helped me to reach personal goals and objectives in addition to the learning of the required competencies. Exploring and seeking a variety of opportunities in information environments through this education is the first objective achieved through the first half of my degree. My second goal of narrowing the focus and defining specific interests has been achieved. I have a defined path with a clear framework for coursework and for earning the Archival Certificate and the Certificate of Instruction and Teaching for Library and Information

Professionals, and I will add additional coursework to experience a well-balanced resume of skills. This will ultimately allow me to have a greater degree of success in finding a future position, advancing in a future position, and enjoying my opportunity for life-long learning and growth.