

2-7A Theory and Practice: the professional placement as a learning experience

Ann Gow, *Humanities*, **Adele Redhead**, *Humanities*

The MSc Information Management and Preservation is a double accredited, professional preparation Masters programme, designed for those wishing to enter the world of archives, libraries, digital curation and records management. As part of the programme students have a placement in a repository to develop their graduate attributes and professional competencies, attitudes, and values. This paper will explore the learning experience from the perspectives of place; for students, academic and professional staff.

The placement is designed to not only support the effective learning opportunities in a professional environment but embeds digital technology and peer assessment to further develop competencies and graduate attributes, such as transferable skills. Students are placed in a range of locations, from traditional archives, through to repositories of born-digital collections. Central to the experience are the collections that students engage with to develop a collection level catalogue, using Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and XML to deliver the content. This digital output is the basis of the assessment, designed to embed both subject knowledge and practical experience of the real-world professional environment. A peer assessment element further develops skills within the professional sphere, building competencies in critical reflection of peers' information management and digital curation skills.

Central to the programme is the blend of theory and practice, using place as key element in the learning process. Students engage with academic staff and professional archivists in the classroom (a traditional learning space), while the placement element has been developed by academic staff, it is delivered by the professional network of key staff associated with the programme. Aims and learning outcomes are developed in partnership to ensure effective learning in the placement, while delivering professional opportunities to the students and engaging the profession in the ongoing and future of academic approaches to information management. Accreditation encourages and recognises excellence and development by certifying the achievement of best practice, and thus cements the partnership of students, academic and professionals.

References

<http://www.fine-art.leeds.ac.uk/news/on-placement-with-the-inclusive-archive-project/>

<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/digital-education/category/learning-spaces/>