Community Literacy Journal

Volume 18 | Issue 2 Article 5

October 2024

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Abstract

Merging community literacy and archival research pedagogies, this article presents a qualitative study of students' reflections from a course that involves partnering with a community organization to research their archives. The article considers students' reflections about, first, learning archival methods and, second, applying these methods in a community setting. Alongside development in key areas of archival methodology, students stress the importance of sharing their research in a way that benefits the organization. The article, which is intended for teacher-scholars interested in or already involved in teaching similar courses, concludes by exploring two implications for community-engaged archival research pedagogies.

Keywords: archives, community-based learning, undergraduate research, reflection, invention

It was on a relatively mild day in March 2022 that I first brought students in my "Community Literacy and Public Rhetoric in the Archives" course to Neighborhood House. Located on a narrow, densely packed street not far from the center of Morristown, New Jersey, Neighborhood House has served residents for over 100 years. The organization's origin as a settlement house remains plainly evident in just how intimately enmeshed the physical structure is with its surroundings. On this day in March, however, I wasn't contemplating the scenery. Instead, I was focused on giving pointers to a student about how best to parallel park on the crowded street.

I was also focused on ensuring that everything for this initial site visit went according to plan. Neighborhood House is a notable community partner for my university's Center for Civic Engagement, and I didn't want to mess up that relationship. So, in the preceding days, I'd spent time coordinating carpools, mapping out the 15-minute drive from campus, and doublechecking the schedule for our visit with my contact at Neighborhood House. My students, meanwhile, were figuring out where to meet up with their carpool companions and how to manage collateral impacts to their class and/or work schedules. At the time, none of us were probably thinking all that much about what we wanted to get out of this community-based learning experience, which would involve multiple visits to Neighborhood House and to the organization's archives at a nearby public library.

I imagine this hyperfocus on logistical minutiae, especially for an initial site visit, is not uncommon for fellow teacher-scholars involved in community literacy courses. I begin with this anecdote because, in hindsight, it points to the benefit of assigning regular reflections throughout the semester. These reflections made up the bulk of the writing that students completed for the course and, thus, aided my ability to evaluate their efforts. More importantly, these reflections functioned as formative self-assessment for students. They served as what Kathleen Blake Yancey calls "constructive reflection" by facilitating for students "the process of developing a cumulative, multiselved, multi-voiced identity" regarding their experiences in the course (14). Specifically, the reflections invited students to pause amidst the commotion and take stock of what they were learning about archival research and community literacy, two subjects that most students identified as entirely new areas of consideration in their academic lives.

During that semester, these regular reflections offered me convenient glimpses at what students were finding interesting or challenging about the combination of archival research and community-based learning. Now, a few semesters removed from the course, they provide a trove of qualitative data regarding student learning. The reflections are especially valuable because they document the step-by-step impact of our involvement with Neighborhood House as described by students themselves. In "A Convergence of Expectations: Literacy Studies and the Student Perspective in Community Partnerships," Grete M. Scott laments that evaluations of community literacy initiatives "are nearly always from the perspective of the teacher or university administrator, and the data taken from student reflective writing and course evaluations at the *end* of the semester" (85). Scott's critique suggests there are overlooked benefits to examining the formative or in-process reflections that students compose *during* the semester. While summative reflections, or the products of what Yancey deems "reflection-in-presentation" (14), are surely beneficial, they are also the places where students are likely to provide neat and tidy narratives that avoid the messy details of their learning. Following Scott's implicit suggestion, then, I am drawn to analyzing reflections composed *during* the semester because I believe they contain the more unfiltered student-generated insights about participating in a community literacy course grounded in archival research.

What emerges from the reflections is a strong indication of my students' growth as community-based, or, really, community-aware, archival researchers. The reflections confirm and, also, complicate what Wendy Hayden has observed about the benefits of archival pedagogies. In a 2015 article, Hayden argues that "it is not so much the material of undergraduate research projects but the methods used—the ways of reading, inquiry, lack of closure and easy resolutions of questions, relationship between student writers and their research—that could reconfigure how we think about a pedagogy for undergraduate research" (422). Hayden's point about the methods of archival research superseding the material can clarify what we as teachers want students to learn from courses that entail research in academic archives. But what happens when, as with my course, students breach the boundaries of academia and head into the community? What happens when we merge archival research with commu-

nity literacy? Analyzing the reflections of my students, I find evidence of a more delicate balance between methods and material. Neither takes precedence when we "reconfigure" archival research for community-based learning.

Furthermore, the material of my students' research assumes a fascinating double meaning in that it refers both to the archival material they studied and to the material spaces they visited as part of the course. As my students were learning *how* to conduct archival research by tapping into the well-established body of archival scholarship in Rhetoric and Composition (Gaillet; Glenn and Enoch; McKee and Porter), they were simultaneously considering *why* their research matters to particular people and particular places. In this way, my students were enacting what Whitney Douglas terms "archival research as community literacy practice," which is challenging precisely because it counteracts the urge "[to move] archival work into academic forums" and, instead, embraces the need "to cultivate habits of mind that enable us to locate ourselves within our communities" (38). By working with members of Neighborhood House to learn its mission, understand its origin, and appreciate its contemporary service, my students were pressed to consider how their skills as rhetorically savvy archival researchers could support the organization's efforts to document and make use of its rich history.

In the next section, I describe the course and explain the reflections I assigned, which I called archival researcher journal entries. I elaborate on the point made above about the extent to which formative reflection exercises are crucial to accounting for how coursework of this sort impacts students. Then, in the subsequent sections, I analyze the archival researcher journal entries. I consider my students' reflections on, first, learning archival methods and then, second, applying these methods in a community setting. In my students' interactions with Neighborhood House, what takes on the greatest methodological importance is inventing ideas for how to share what they are learning from their archival research in a way that benefits the organization. I conclude by considering two implications for community-engaged archival research pedagogies: the binary between academic, on-campus archives and non-academic, off-campus archives and the expectations for what students—in the case of my course, undergraduates with little or no previous archival research experience—can accomplish in a semester. Ultimately, I hope my article can be used by other teacher-scholars interested in facilitating community-based archival research to foster distinctively situated learning experiences for students.

The Role of Reflection in My Community-Engaged Archival Research Course

I first taught an archival research course at Drew University in Fall 2019. At that point, the course focused entirely on research in the on-campus archives. In 2021, I was approached by the director of Drew's Center for Civic Engagement about a grant opportunity through Project Pericles, an organization that promotes civic learning in higher education ("About"). The grant offered me the chance to reimagine the archives course as one involving collaboration with a community partner, namely Cor-

nerstone Family Programs & Morristown Neighborhood House. As explained on the organization's website, Cornerstone was founded in the early nineteenth century to serve those affected by the War of 1812. Neighborhood House was founded near the end of that same century and, according to the website, "has its roots in the Settlement House Movement […] where leaders joined with their neighbors in underserved diverse neighborhoods to focus on reform through social justice and the fight against racial discrimination." The two organizations merged in 2013 ("Our Legacy"). The archives for Neighborhood House are held at the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center in the Morristown public library. The center recently acquired the archives for Cornerstone, but, at the time of my course, those materials were waiting to be processed. So, my Spring 2022 course was concerned exclusively with Neighborhood House, which, as indicated by its history, was its own social service entity until only very recently.

Intended for advanced English majors but open to other majors as well, the Spring 2022 course satisfied a college-wide requirement for off-campus, immersive experiences, so I was mindful about accommodating a range of students. Indeed, while most of the 13 enrolled students were English majors, the course included students majoring in History and Art History. As a teacher-scholar committed to place-based pedagogy, I was excited to provide students this opportunity to partner with an organization that plays a key role in the civic life of a nearby community. I noted in my Project Pericles grant application that I was particularly interested in asking students to focus on how Neighborhood House has supported the literacy development and community involvement of its clients. Furthermore, while there is a longstanding partnership between Neighborhood House and Drew's Center for Civic Engagement, that partnership had yet to involve archival research. Thus, the course augmented this partnership; it provided Neighborhood House with a team of archival researchers and reinforced Drew's commitment to providing undergraduates with authentic civic engagement experiences.

Regarding course content, I recognized that both archival research and community-based learning might be new for students, so I emphasized regular reflection exercises in the hopes of clarifying what students would be expected to accomplish during the semester. Reflection was the primary source of educational continuity for students. I wanted them to concentrate less on polished final projects and more on the process of acclimating to the combination of archival research and community-based learning. The reflections came in the form of archival researcher journal entries, or, more simply, ARJ entries. I informed students that these entries would be visible only to me and would provide them with the means to document their development as community-aware archival researchers. Ten ARJ entries were assigned throughout the semester with the expectation that students would write 200-400 words for each entry. I designed prompts for each entry that asked students to respond to assigned readings, record their research discoveries, and/or plan their next research steps. Readers can refer to the Appendix for the ARJ prompts and additional details about my study.

We did not start visiting Neighborhood House until the mid-way point of the semester. The first half of the course was spent reading about archival research methods in Rhetoric and Composition and conducting research in the on-campus archives, which I viewed as necessary preparation for students. During these initial weeks, I asked staff at the archives to curate selections for my students of nineteenth-century pamphlets and nineteenth- and twentieth-century periodicals. While the subject matter of the pamphlets and periodicals was generally unrelated to our eventual engagement with Neighborhood House, these materials, which derive from notable collections at Drew's archives, allowed my students to get experience with archival analysis. The first five ARJ entries document this half of the course. The final five ARJ entries document the latter half of the course when we split our time between classroom sessions, visits to Neighborhood House, and archival research trips to the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center. In contrast to their curated research in the on-campus archives, students were able to follow their interests and examine, for example, documents related to fundraising, records of volunteer recruitment, curricula for literacy programs, and plans for the construction and maintenance of Neighborhood House's facilities.

The ARJ entries showcase the active and emergent learning of my students, which can be inadequately documented and, thus, insufficiently understood by faculty in both community literacy courses and archival research courses. Scott makes this point the centerpiece of her article regarding faculty perceptions of community literacy projects: "[W]hen I asked participants about students' literacy expectations and responses to service learning, they seemed unable to give clear answers. Most of them instead told me how much their students enjoyed the service learning experience" (84). From my perspective, a cause for this is that, as faculty, our ability to perceive student learning in community-engaged courses can be obfuscated amidst other concerns such as the logistical ones I mentioned in my introduction. Furthermore, faculty reliance on end-of-semester narratives is likely to generate facile claims about student enjoyment rather than nuanced portraits of student learning. In a 2017 article, Hayden notes a related problem for archival research courses, namely that formal academic writing assigned at the end of a project does not always offer a satisfying means for students to demonstrate their learning. Hayden assigns blog entries because she "find[s] students produce better writing in the blogs than in previous analytic paper assignments that can sound stilted in their attempts to meet what they feel are the expectations of the genre." Hayden then works with students to inject the "more conversational and creative" tone of their blog posts into their "more traditional" academic writing (146). While the reflective intent of my ARJ entries mirrors the purpose of Hayden's blog entries, I did not frame them as a precursor to formal writing. Instead, echoing Yancey's terminology, I recognized the ARJ entries as "constructive" in their own right. Scaffolded over the duration of the semester, the reflection exercises helped my students make meaning out of their experiences in a community-engaged archival research course.

While it might be tempting to treat them as transparent depictions of student learning, these reflections are even more interesting to me because they are com-

plicated rhetorical artifacts documenting the recursive, untidy business of learning. As such, I was compelled to analyze the ARJ entries in a systematic fashion, reading them through multiple times for the sake of this study. My initial pass involved no attempts to mark or code the entries. Upon re-reading them, I developed a coding system to identify shared themes and insights. I was looking, in essence, for pieces of a common experiential narrative, one undoubtedly influenced by my decisions regarding the course structure and the ARJ prompts, but also, hopefully, imbued with students' idiosyncratic thoughts and desires. I returned to the ARJ entries for a third time to confirm that my coding system worked. Satisfied with my efforts, I noticed that ARJ #1 through ARJ #5 effectively document my students' reflections on acclimating to archival methods, while ARJ #6 through ARJ #10 effectively document my students' reflections on becoming community-aware archival researchers. Analyzing these ARJ entries is my primary focus in the remainder of this article.

Students on Reading, Connecting, and Questioning as Archival Methods

When reviewing ARJ #1 through ARJ #5, which span the first half of the semester when students were learning about and practicing archival research in the on-campus archives, what stands out it is how students articulate their growing sense of confidence as archival researchers in a manner that aligns with the common archival methods Hayden identifies in her 2015 article. To organize my analysis, I distill these methods, which Hayden lists as "the ways of reading, inquiry, lack of closure and easy resolutions of questions, relationship between student writers and their research" (442), into three overarching categories: reading, connecting, and questioning. *Reading* covers students' abilities to interpret content found in the archives, *connecting* covers their abilities to leverage their positionality as researchers, and *questioning* covers their abilities to embrace an open-ended, investigatory sensibility. The appeal of the ARJ entries is that students fashion their own language to reckon with what they are learning about archival methods. In so doing, they signal what they find important about archival research and hint at what will be foundational for their eventual engagement with Neighborhood House. For this reason, throughout my analysis of the ARJ entries, I maintain a keen concentration on students' actual words and quote extensively from their reflections to explicate their coming to terms with the three methodological categories of reading, connecting, and questioning.

An initial challenge for students was figuring out how to read when conducting archival research. Though many were English majors and, thus, had ample training in interpreting fiction and nonfiction texts, students discerned that archival methods require different interpretive moves. But this did not diminish their enthusiasm for tackling the challenge. In ARJ #3, composed about a month into the semester around the time that students were analyzing the curated selection of nineteenth-century pamphlets, Elsie writes, "I loved being able to look through documents and imagine what it would have been like to read these at the time they were published, and how the content holds up (or doesn't hold up) to modern standards." Lenny offers their own take on the interpretive moves required for archival research: "I should expect

to find [my] values challenged, and perhaps even abandon, or put aside, my own beliefs while in the headspace of archival analysis." This evocative imagery of entering a different "headspace" strikes me as a potentially disorienting shift, but that is not the case for Lenny, who, even at this early stage, has come to anticipate that reading for archival research requires temporal dislocation and a momentary letting go of contemporary attitudes. Contrary to complaints about students' myopic interpretative tendencies, I am impressed by the power of archival methods to help students like Elsie and Lenny articulate and appreciate the benefits of contextually grounded reading practices.

With that said, students were also eager to connect with their archival research on a personal level. Specifically, students grappled with Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch's advice that archival research is "always partial and always interested" (21). Contained in a chapter from *Working in the Archives* that I assigned at the start of the semester, Glenn and Enoch's advice regarding how to manage and even capitalize on bias was mobilized by students far more willingly than I expected. I anticipated pushback from students instructed to believe that research is only ever practiced in an objective, neutral fashion. Instead, in early ARJ entries, students cautiously embrace the advice. One student, Blythe, identifies "letting go of the idea that bias is bad" as the "most challenging aspect" of the Glenn and Enoch reading, but also accepts that one's perspective might actually "support the legitimacy" of a research project. Another student, Remy, acknowledges that "we have our own questions and inherent biases, possibly helpful and/or harmful, which guide our research," and then offers themselves a practical tip to remember: "I will try to take note of what type of research I gravitate towards and see if I can expand my research to be more inclusive as well as see if the potential bias is helpful." Spending time early in the semester in the on-campus archives allowed my students to begin negotiating with personal interest, which, as Glenn and Enoch make clear, is something even experienced archival researchers must consider. I am glad this negotiation began in the early ARJ entries because I wanted students to have confidence about this matter, and maybe even a set of practical tips like Remy, for our research interactions with Neighborhood House.

The emotional labor of archival research was another methodological matter associated with connecting on a personal level that I wanted students to confront while working in the on-campus archives. In ARJ #2, composed after my students' first foray into the archives at Drew, Remy and Wanda document positive experiences, with Remy noting that their "initial visit to the archives was quite thrilling" and Wanda reflecting that they were not as "overwhelmed as [they] thought [they] would be." Conversely, Blythe documents a negative experience that is not uncommon for archival researchers: "I found myself making upset faces at the material I had in my hands because of how these pro-slavery individuals were talking about the horrific institution that was slavery." That my students were experiencing the emotional highs and lows of archival research was reassuring because, in my view, it equipped them with a degree of resolve that they could take with them into the second half of the semester. Lenny's ARJ #2 captures the ambivalence that I hoped students would learn to relish: "I had initially experienced a mixed feeling of both excitement and intimidation. My

excitement was rooted in the anticipation to discover something that aligned with my interests and capability to analyze, while my intimidation was caused by the expectation to find something good and worth talking about."

This ambivalence, ideally, invites development in the third methodological category, questioning. The willingness to embrace an open-ended, investigatory sensibility begins with the thrill of novelty that students report when first immersed in archival research. "The best way I can put it," Soren writes in ARJ #1, "is it seems more dynamic than I initially thought or at least the research process is more alive. I had imagined that archival research is just like going into a library and finding a book you need […] but the process is much more complicated." Soren's insight suggests a burgeoning appreciation for the indefinite horizons presented by the archives. In ARJ #3, Elsie elaborates on these horizons, noting "it is important to remember that each document can become a part of a different story or narrative depending on who is looking at it." Elsie, along with many peers in the course, took readily to the role of archival storyteller as described by Lynée Lewis Gaillet in her contribution to *Working in the Archives*. In response to the dearth of "codified information on archival research that we, as a profession, offer new scholars" (29), Gaillet provides a list of "tasks and questions […for] examining data" (34). Gaillet's chapter greatly facilitated the growth of my students' confidence with archival analysis, and I think the notion of storytelling was especially appealing because, rather than feeling like they were in search of a single objective truth in the archives, students recognized they could use questioning to explore multiple subjective possibilities.

As the first half of the semester wrapped up and as we finalized plans for visiting Neighborhood House, my students expressed comfort with the inquiry-driven entanglements of archival analysis. In ARJ #5, Blythe writes, "Analysis is definitely not easy when looking at these more dated pieces […]. However, this more mysterious element within the materials makes it more fun because I have to work in a more complex way as a researcher." This remark from Blythe is notable because, earlier, Blythe was stymied by troubling pro-slavery content in a nineteenth-century pamphlet. Yet, within a few weeks, Blythe nurtured a thoughtful approach to conducting and even enjoying archival analysis. Wanda uses ARJ #5 to generate advice they can use in the future: "I will have to remain lenient and accommodating of the differing natures of each archival visit if I want to be an optimal archival storyteller." Like Remy's practical tip about negotiating bias, Wanda's self-coaching exemplifies students rendering archival methods in their own terms and reveals the depth of learning that archival research can generate.

In this section, I have considered how my students constructed personal understandings of archival methods that, while derived from scholarly sources, are formulated to match their own experiences with *reading*, *questioning*, and *connecting*. How would these experiences, which up until this point were limited to on-campus archives, translate to our experiences with Neighborhood House? What would happen as my students moved from a "headspace" concerned primarily with reading, connecting, and questioning into one that also involved inventing ideas for resources that

could bolster Neighborhood House's mission? I examine this in the next section by analyzing responses to ARJ #6 through ARJ #9.

Students on Inventing as a Method for Community-Engaged Archival Research

My students' ARJ entries from the second half of the semester reveal that reading, connecting, and questioning in a community setting were significantly influenced by development in a fourth methodological category: *inventing*. This category is represented at the end of Gaillet's list by the following advice: "Decide how to tell your story. What is your stance? Who is the audience? How will you organize and disseminate the findings?" (36). The fact that it concludes Gaillet's list, number eleven of an eleven-item list, signals that inventing, or thinking creatively about how to share one's findings, can arrive late in the archival research process. Yet, figuring out the story you want to tell, including details about why and to whom you are telling it, can reshape one's overall methodological approach. Inventing should be a paramount consideration for community-engaged archival research in particular because, as Douglas proposes, treating this research "as a collaborative act of rhetorical invention" encourages us to "create new knowledge and representations of that knowledge *alongside* community members" (33). Community partners can be audience members for our research, but they can also be essential interlocutors, helping us ground our stories and stances in material realities.

For my students, inventing became most palpable when visiting Neighborhood House and exploring their archives because, even more so than when we were in the on-campus archives, students found it counterproductive to maintain distanced and dispassionate perspectives. Students wanted to use their research to demonstrate their earnest commitment to serving the organization. The ARJ entries from Soren, Marty, and Blythe offer a representative portrait of what my students experienced during these weeks with Neighborhood House, so, in this section, I focalize my analysis through their reflections.

ARJ #6 was assigned after our initial visit to Neighborhood House, and some students, like Soren, quickly found a spark for their archival research through touring the physical site and talking with representatives from the organization. "I had this image of […] a glorified daycare with parents dropping kids off when they can't take care of them during the day," Soren writes in ARJ #6, "but it was much more than that. […] I'm most interested in how the things they offered to clients evolved, like when the services they offered grew and how that affected their retention of clients and bringing in new ones." With their expectations disrupted, Soren recalibrated their commitment to researching the organization's archives. As I will explore later in this section, Soren became quite interested in Neighborhood House's fundraising efforts.

In contrast to Soren, Marty responded to the mid-semester shift with trepidation: "This will be a far different experience than our work at the Drew archives where we had [the archivist] prepare a selection of documents for us." Marty concludes ARJ #6 by noting that they are "worried" about the research "feel[ing] overwhelming." Marty

seems to suspect that our structured visits to the on-campus archives created a false sense of confidence. Yet, in ARJ #7, composed after our initial visit to the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center that maintains the Neighborhood House archives, Marty's trepidation eases as they begin the by now familiar activity of archival research: "Once I pulled out a folder [of archival materials], the process became much less daunting. Reading through the statements, budgets, and plans that I found was really exciting because it was like I was getting a glimpse into what it was like to work at Neighborhood House as it was fifty years ago." So, for Marty, getting into the comfortable habits of archival research, specifically the methods associated with reading, permits them to smooth out this transition to a different research venue.

Though following an arc similar to Marty, Blythe ultimately finds direction by contemplating invention. In ARJ #6, after visiting the site, Blythe writes: "There is so much history behind Neighborhood House […that I think] it would be hard to narrow down my research to a few findings." Unsettled by the many possible avenues for research, Blythe's reaction following the initial site visit is a sharp contrast to Soren's. But this changes when Blythe visits the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center and begins to consider how to, in the words of Glenn and Enoch, "consciously and carefully activate the materials in the archives" (25). In ARJ #7, Blythe elaborates on this realization: "It is my job as an archival researcher to 'activate' the materials, as Glenn and Enoch say. […] Activating is more than reading and resharing, but rather bringing a piece of history to life so that a modern-day audience can interact with it." This shows Blythe's growing confidence as an archival researcher who can make methodological adjustments by thinking creatively about sharing their findings.

Blythe's interest in sharing their findings anticipated the final assignment for the course. Drawing on Douglas for inspiration, I asked students to work on their own or in small groups to create proposals for sharing what they learned about Neighborhood House's history. In her article, Douglas describes working with colleague Eric Turley to research a famous suffragist from Nebraska and then using their findings to support a community organization that was producing a touring theatrical performance about voting rights (30-31). Douglas' article reflects upon and theorizes this "generative community literacy practice" (31), and it presented my students with a model for thinking creatively about what they could offer to Neighborhood House as community-aware archival researchers. In addition to encouraging creativity, I had my students read Heidi A. McKee and James E. Porter's "The Ethics of Archival Research," which relies on interviews with prominent archival researchers in Rhetoric and Composition, to consider how personal motives can be both valuable resources and necessary restraints for inventing. In the section of their article about motives, McKee and Porter assert that "[p]ersonal interest in pursuing a line of inquiry is, of course, a vital starting point for any successful project, but 'because I am interested in …' should not represent the entirety of your rationale for purpose and motive" (64). McKee and Porter pose questions for archival researchers to consider, one of which seemed the most consequential for my students: "Does what I am doing or planning to do have value and benefit beyond my personal interest and, if so, to whom?" (65). Reckoning with the "value and benefit" of what could be done with archival research

did not put a damper on my students' inventing; rather, it added a dose of practicality to how they sought to enact their roles as community-aware archival researchers.

Students started to brainstorm ideas for their final assignment in ARJ #8 after reading and discussing Douglas' article. Soren, who researched Neighborhood House's finances and recognized how vital fundraising was to the organization's efforts to promote literacy and community involvement, considered cataloging past fundraising initiatives to offer ideas for future ones. Marty speculated about digitizing important organizational documents like meeting minutes and annual reports to make them easily accessible to the executive leadership and the staff at Neighborhood House. Blythe, who researched the role of volunteers, saw the potential to compose a report outlining the popular motivations for volunteering at Neighborhood House in the hopes of helping the organization attract and retain a large cohort of volunteers.

Following this brainstorming, I asked students to use ARJ #9 to reflect on how their understanding of motives via McKee and Porter could enhance their proposals. The responses for ARJ #9 were the lengthiest of the semester, signaling students' interest in this aspect of their research. Soren's motives again indicate the significance of visiting the site: "[My research] started really as just an assignment for this class, but after we went for our first visit it made me realize how important this organization was for the community and I got pretty invested in it. […] I think that this organization means so much to so many people that keeping it well funded would be very important." Marty and Blythe were more influenced by personal connections. Marty explains: "I grew up around childcare. My mother has run a preschool and kindergarten program on the first floor of our house for more than 20 years. So, I've been exposed to programs similar to that which Neighborhood House offers my whole life." Meanwhile, Blythe notes: "Even though I was born and raised in the US, my parents immigrated here from Colombia. In this way, I have been exposed to both cultures and have been able to learn what it is like to immigrate to this country. This is why I am so thankful for and interested in Neighborhood House's work." With McKee and Porter's discussion of motives a clear influence on their thinking, these students maintain a subjective stake in their research while brainstorming creatively about how their research can benefit the organization.

With the final assignment, I asked for fully developed proposals rather than fully realized projects because of the constraints imposed by the semester. My students, many of whom began the semester with no archival research experience, did not have the time or the means to bring their projects to fruition. Is this a satisfying end for an undergraduate course that merges archival research and community literacy? Also, what about the implicit and, admittedly, unintended bifurcation of academic and non-academic archives generated by the structure of my course? In the concluding section, I consider these implications, beginning with the latter.

Implications for Community-Engaged Archival Research Pedagogies

In ARJ #10, the final reflection, I asked students to write about something they learned in the final weeks of the semester that they wish they had learned earlier.

Marty offers a perspective that, when I first read it, cast a momentary shadow over the entire enterprise of merging archival research and community literacy:

> Getting hands-on experience in both the place we're researching and the archives that houses their documents was a really useful experience. It changed my perspective from that of an outsider, simply reading about archival research, to actually doing it myself. We did have our trips to the Drew archives earlier in the semester, but those felt further removed from the subject matter we were researching.

To me, Marty's end-of-semester appreciation for "hands-on experience" is a necessary companion to Lenny's evocative "headspace" imagery from ARJ #3. After all, this "headspace" is never entirely in one's head; there is always a material component. Archival research always happens some*where*. What is perplexing, though, is that there was a material component to the early weeks of the semester when we left our classroom to visit Drew's archives. But, for Marty, this on-campus research generated a feeling of being "removed from the subject matter," of scrutinizing things from a safe scholarly distance.

On one level, Marty's comment confirms the benefits of community-based learning and indicates that archival research means something different when you can become, following Marty's logic, an insider by exploring the material site that is the subject of your research. On a more critical level, Marty's comment suggests that my course reinforced the binary between academic and non-academic settings. This binary is, as Donna M. Bickford and Nedra Reynolds insist, an enduring issue for community-based learning experiences that, by focusing on activities beyond the campus, "may simply reinforce the notion of the ivory tower for [students] or lead them to believe that, while the community may need their services, the university does not" (244). I think this explains the ideology at work in Marty's comment. For Marty, researching in Drew's archives seemed less real because the campus was not framed as the site in need of archival researchers. Neighborhood House was framed as the site in need, and this was conveyed, albeit unwittingly, in the way I structured the course.

The implication for community-engaged archival research pedagogies is that we ought to address this binary directly with students. One possibility is to elucidate for students, where possible, the links between the campus and the community. For instance, as I noted, Drew's Center for Civic Engagement has a history of partnering with Neighborhood House. Helping students recognize their roles in continuing this history could circumvent the issue that Bickford and Reynolds identify. Furthermore, the Neighborhood House archives presented opportunities for researching deeper historical ties between the organization and the university. In ARJ #8, Lenny writes about finding archival documents that describe the volunteer efforts of Drew students in Neighborhood House's Sunday School. Though Lenny did not follow this Drew-specific research trajectory, it could be something I showcase in the next iteration of this course. While I would not require students to focus on Drew-specific research, showing them that such trajectories exist could help to undermine the imagined barriers between their campus and the community.

The other implication I want to address in this conclusion regards expectations for what can be accomplished by undergraduates in a course that blends archival research and community-based learning. Elegant examples of fully realized projects from courses like mine can be found, such as Erin Brock Carlson's place-based work with her students in West Virginia. But, because my course aimed both to introduce students to archival research methods and to get them implementing these methods in a community setting, I felt it unrealistic to expect fully realized projects. I did not want to rush my students through the acquisition of skills in reading, connecting, and questioning nor did I want them to hastily conclude their research. Instead, by focusing on invention, my course emphasized what Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch define as "strategic contemplation" in that it asked students "to withhold judgment for a time and resist coming to closure too soon in order to make the time to invite creativity, wonder, and inspiration into the research process" (85). Lingering with invention resonates not only with strategic contemplation but also with the ongoing, unfinished nature of archival research. I believe that, based on my analysis of students' ARJ entries and my experience teaching the course, invention was a meaningful culmination of student learning. Sticking with proposals allowed invention to stand as a substantial milestone on its own, signaling to Soren, Marty, Blythe, and others that inventing can be, and perhaps needs to be, an intense but rewarding phase of community-engaged archival research.

Still, because the proposals remained a class assignment and were never formally shared with Neighborhood House, my students arguably missed out on experiencing the full effect of inventing with/in the community. To remedy this, when teaching the course again, I could add a session where students share their proposals with Neighborhood House representatives, get feedback, and then submit a revised proposal. Those proposals the organization finds exceptional could be mobilized and supported outside the parameters of a college course. A model for this approach is described by Jeanne Law-Bohannon and Shiloh Gill Garcia in their contribution to a recent collection about archival pedagogies. Law-Bohannon and Garcia explain how, supported by a donation from a private foundation, "a pilot class assignment" evolved into a multifaceted initiative "that collects oral history […] and complementary artifacts" about the Civil Rights activism of the Atlanta Student Movement and "then curates them in a digital collection" (264). Another remedy could involve introducing students to the broader range of writing that supports and enables archival research. I could derive a model for this approach from Jonathan Buehl, Tamar Chute, and Laura Kissel's contribution to the aforementioned collection about archival pedagogies. Promoting the idea of "archives as professional writing spaces" (180), Buehl, Chute, and Kissel remind us that archives are sustained by many genres, including publicity materials and grant proposals (182-184). Students in a future version of my course could write for and about the Neighborhood House archives rather than Neighborhood House itself, which might end up benefiting both the organization and the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center that maintains the organization's archives. I prefer the latter approach because students could work dynamically with multiple community partners to brainstorm strategies for preserving the history of an organization that has contrib-

uted so much to civic life in a campus-adjacent community. It would reinforce collaborative invention as a worthwhile phase of community-engaged archival research, worthy enough of being the end for my particular course.

Though they might have ended the course without fully formed projects, students did arrive at fully formed conclusions about the impact of participating in this community-based learning experience. "When we visited Neighborhood House," Elsie explains in ARJ #10, "it was great to see the ways that they have evolved over time without having to go through physical documents, though that was helpful in my research. I appreciated the human aspect of the learning we have done in this course, as we were able to talk to people who have worked in Neighborhood House and can tell us real accounts of their experiences." Clearly, for Elsie, though interest in Neighborhood House was bolstered by research in the archives, it was neither limited to the archives nor did it necessarily originate there. While interested in Neighborhood House's past, Elsie was just as interested in learning about and supporting the organization's present and future. To this point, on our final visit to Neighborhood House, I recall Elsie stopping by the front desk to ask for information about volunteering for the organization during the upcoming summer break. This anecdote serves as a fitting conclusion for this article because it signals that, while students can accomplish quite a lot *during* a course that merges archival research and community-based learning, what matters as much as anything is what students consider doing with their time and energy *after* participating in such a course.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the staff at Neighborhood House, especially Holly Dinneny, and the staff at the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center, especially James Lewis. I'm grateful for the support of Project Pericles and Drew's Center for Civic Engagement. I'd also like to acknowledge Candace Reilly, Manager of Special Collections at Drew, who guided my students through their initial archival endeavors. Speaking of the students, I appreciate their efforts and insights, and I'm proud that their words shine most brightly in this article. Lastly, I dedicate this article to Maureen A.J. Fitzsimmons, a friend and grad school colleague who got me thinking about archival research in the first place.

Appendix

Details about the study: Eleven out of the 13 enrolled students consented to have their ARJ entries collected for my IRB-approved study. To maintain confidentiality, when I cite the entries in this article, I use pseudonyms and they/them pronouns. On a lark, I had ChatGPT generate random pseudonyms to add another layer of confidentiality. My analysis of the ARJ entries started once the course ended. I gathered them electronically from our learning management system and assembled them in separate documents, one for each numbered ARJ entry.

Prompts for the ARJ entries:

ARJ #1

For this first entry, reflect on your initial experience in this course. From reading the syllabus to exploring *The Drew Acorn* during our first meeting, from reading the *Working in the Archives* excerpts to exploring the "Silva Rhetoricae" website during our first full week, what have you learned about archival research in writing and communication studies?

Some questions you might consider: What stands out to you, and why? What are you looking forward to, and why? What confuses you, and why? What might be challenging and how might you mindfully tackle these challenges? Be specific and reference our readings and activities as necessary.

ARJ #2

Tell me about your initial visit to the archives for our course. How was it? What did you find? What garnered your interest, and why?

Beyond that, address one or more of the following:

- Review the list of tasks on pages 35-36 in Gaillet's chapter. Which of those tasks have you done? What haven't you done? What do you still want to do, and why?
- Review the steps outlined on the prompt and consider where you're at in terms of completing the pamphlet analysis. In the words of Glenn and Enoch, what do you think you need to do to "activate" the material you've found?

ARJ #3

Address one or more of the following questions:

- What did you learn from the pamphlet analysis about being both an archival analyst and an archival storyteller?
- If you had an extra day to dedicate to the pamphlet analysis, what would you do with that extra time, and why?
- What did you learn from listening to your peers during the show-and-tell?

ARJ #4

Tell me about your initial visit to the archives for the periodical analysis. How was it? What did you find? What garnered your interest, and why?

Beyond that, address one or more of the following:

- Consider the lessons you learned from the pamphlet analysis. How can you take those lessons and apply them to the periodical analysis?
- Review the list of tasks on pages 35-36 in Gaillet's chapter. Which of those tasks have you done? What haven't you done? What do you still want to do, and why?
- Review the steps outlined on the prompt and consider where you're at in terms of completing the pamphlet analysis. In the words of Glenn and Enoch, what do you think you need to do to "activate" the material you've found?

ARJ #5

Address one or more of the following questions:

- What did you learn from the periodical analysis about being both an archival analyst and an archival storyteller?
- If you had an extra day to dedicate to the periodical analysis, what would you do with that extra time, and why?
- What did you learn from listening to your peers during the show-and-tell?

ARJ #6

Tell me about your experience during our initial visit to Neighborhood House.

Consider addressing one or more of the following questions:

- What did you learn about Neighborhood House that most interested you?
- What aspect of Neighborhood House's history (including the many different types of services it has offered to clients over the years) are you most interested to explore, and why?
- What challenges do you anticipate in studying archival materials related to Neighborhood House?

ARJ #7

Tell me about your initial visit to the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center. How was it? What did you find? What garnered your interest, and why?

Beyond that, consider addressing one or more of these questions:

- Review the list of tasks on pages 35-36 in Gaillet's chapter. Which of those tasks have you done? What haven't you done? What do you still want to do, and why?
- Consider what you did for the pamphlet analysis and periodical analysis. How might your previous experiences in this course help you with researching the Neighborhood House archival materials? In the words

of Glenn and Enoch, what do you think you need to do to "activate" the materials you've found?

ARJ #8

Tell me about your second visit to the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center. How was it? What did you do to build on the research you did last week? What do you still need to learn about the Neighborhood House materials you've been studying?

Beyond that, consider addressing the following:

- Inspired by Douglas' account of her community engagement project, what do you think you could do with the archival materials you've studied in order to promote and publicize the history of Neighborhood House?
- What are you most interested in sharing with our community partners at Neighborhood House when we return next week, and why?

ARJ #9

Tell me about the ethics of the archival research and community engagement project that we're undertaking with Neighborhood House.

Specifically, consider your motives by addressing one or more of the following questions (which I've adapted from pages 64 and 65 of McKee and Porter's article):

- What are your motives for conducting this research involving Neighborhood House? How do your background and experiences shape the questions you're asking and the conclusions you might draw?
- Why is it important on a personal level for you to research Neighborhood House? Does what you're studying have value and benefit beyond your personal interest and, if so, to whom?

ARJ #10

Reflect on your work over the last few weeks and your visits to Neighborhood House and the North Jersey History & Genealogy Center. What have you learned that you wish you had known earlier about being an archival researcher involved in a community-based learning project?

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Author Bio

Jens Lloyd is an Assistant Professor at Drew University, where he also currently serves as Director of First-Year Writing. Specializing in composition theory and pedagogy, Jens has a particular interest in place-based approaches to research and teaching. You can find some of his scholarly writing in *Rhetoric Review, Literacy in Composition Studies*, and *Reflections: A Journal of Community-Engaged Writing and Rhetoric*. He also contributed a chapter to *Bordered Writers: Latinx Identities and Literacy Practices at Hispanic-Serving Institutions,* an edited collection that received the CCCC Advancement of Knowledge Award in 2021.