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ePortfolio: LIS 504 Reflection

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May 5, 2026

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Reflection

During my first course in the M.A. Library and Information Science (LIS) program, LIS 504 Foundations of Library and Information Services, I developed a deeper understanding of the role libraries and information professionals play in society. I am in the somewhat unique position of already working in a library while completing my degree, so before taking this class, I believed I already had a solid understanding of how public libraries function. My daily work experience had introduced me to customer service, collections, programming, and the general operations of a library. However, this course expanded my perspective far beyond the practical side of librarianship. Through readings, discussions, and assignments, I learned more about the theories, ethics, social responsibilities, and information systems that shape the profession. The course helped me connect my workplace experiences to larger concepts within library and information science and gave me a stronger academic foundation for the work I already do.

Several M.A. LIS competencies became especially important to me during this course. These included understanding foundational LIS concepts, critically evaluating information and current issues, supporting equity and access, and reflecting on professional growth. Because I already work in a library setting, I found it especially valuable to compare the ideas from class to situations I have experienced in real life. Many of the assignments helped me better understand why libraries operate the way they do and how information professionals influence communities in ways that are not always immediately visible.

One important competency I strengthened was the ability to define and apply foundational concepts and terminology in LIS. This learning outcome was especially clear in my

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assignment about postcolonialism and sovereignty. In this artifact, I discussed ideas from Robert J. C. Young and Ralph Chabran and reflected on how postcolonialism involves contradictions connected to identity and power. Before this assignment, I had little experience with postcolonial theory, and the readings initially felt difficult because of the academic language and abstract ideas. However, working through the assignment helped me better understand how information and knowledge are shaped by history and systems of power.

This assignment expanded my understanding of diversity and representation in libraries. Working in a public library has already shown me how important it is for patrons to see themselves reflected in collections and programs. However, this assignment helped me think more critically about whose voices are historically included or excluded in information spaces. It reinforced the idea that libraries are not neutral institutions. Decisions about collections, cataloging, and access all reflect larger social and cultural influences. This artifact helped me connect theoretical ideas from class to the real-world work of creating inclusive library spaces for diverse communities.

Another competency I developed was the ability to critically evaluate current issues in LIS using theory, research, and ethics. My assignment about self-publishing and its impact on readers helped strengthen this skill. In the discussion, I explained that self-publishing has allowed authors from underrepresented backgrounds to share stories that may not have been accepted through traditional publishing systems. At the same time, I discussed concerns about inconsistent editing standards and how readers determine credibility and quality.

This topic connected strongly to my experiences working in a public library. Many patrons ask for recommendations based on trends from social media platforms like BookTok, and

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I have seen firsthand how self-published works have become more visible and popular. Before taking this course, I mostly viewed self-publishing as a publishing trend. However, the assignment helped me recognize it as part of a larger shift in how information is created and consumed. It also highlighted the role librarians play in helping patrons navigate information critically while still encouraging diverse voices and perspectives.

This artifact also helped me better understand how technology changes information access and communication. Social media has transformed the relationship between readers and authors, making authors more accessible while also increasing the speed at which information spreads. Through this assignment, I learned that librarians must continue adapting to technological and cultural changes while maintaining ethical responsibilities related to access and information literacy.

Another major area of learning came from my assignment about the information landscape and the relationship between recorded knowledge, sources of knowledge, audience, location, and mediation. This artifact was especially meaningful because it helped me think more deeply about systems I interact with every day in my job. Before this course, I understood libraries mainly from an operational perspective. I knew how patrons accessed materials and services, but I had not fully considered how all aspects of the information landscape constantly influence one another.

In the assignment, I explained how changes in one area of the information landscape affect all the others. For example, the movement from physical collections to digital archives changes accessibility, audience interaction, and methods of communication. This assignment

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helped me better understand the complexity of information access and the importance of adaptability in library services.

Working in a public library has shown me that not all patrons access information in the same way. Some rely heavily on technology, while others struggle with digital resources or internet access. This assignment connected those real-world observations to larger LIS concepts about mediation and accessibility. It helped me better understand why libraries continue to provide both physical and digital resources and why accessibility remains such an important professional value.

The information landscape assignment also strengthened my academic writing and organizational skills. One of the course learning outcomes involved composing academic writing with a clear structure and APA-compliant citations. Throughout the semester, I became more confident in organizing complex ideas into a structured discussion. Although I already had experience writing professionally in the workplace, academic writing required a different style and level of analysis. This assignment especially helped me improve my ability to explain relationships between concepts in a clear and organized way.

Another important artifact from the course was the career exploration assignment about the Collections Strategies Librarian position at Colby College. This assignment was particularly interesting because it allowed me to compare my current experiences to another type of library position. Researching the role showed me how varied librarianship can be and how responsibilities shift depending on the institution and community being served.

The position included responsibilities related to instruction, collection development, collaboration with faculty and scholarship. I was especially interested in the focus on teaching

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and equitable access because those themes appeared consistently throughout LIS 504. The assignment also highlighted the importance of communication, adaptability, and collaboration within the profession. While I already understood some of these responsibilities from my own work experience, this artifact expanded my awareness of the many career paths available within LIS.

This assignment also encouraged me to reflect on my long-term professional goals. Before starting the program, I mainly viewed my library work through the lens of daily responsibilities and patron interactions. Through this course, I began thinking more intentionally about librarianship as a profession connected to research, education, advocacy, and community support. I also realized how important continued learning is within this field because technology, information systems, and community needs constantly evolve.

One of the most valuable aspects of LIS 504 was the opportunity for personal and professional reflection. Since I already work in a library, I often found myself comparing course concepts to situations I encounter at work. This helped me better understand not only what libraries do, but why they do it. The course expanded my perspective beyond customer service and daily operations and introduced me to the theoretical and ethical foundations behind library work.

Overall, the assignments from LIS 504 served as valuable artifacts that demonstrated my growth in several important competencies. The postcolonialism assignment strengthened my understanding of representation, diversity, and critical theory. The self-publishing discussion helped me evaluate changing information systems and issues of credibility and access. The information landscape assignment deepened my understanding of how information systems

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interact and adapt to technological and social change. Finally, the career exploration assignment connected academic learning to professional development and future career possibilities.

This course gave me a much broader understanding of librarianship than I had before, even while already working in the field. It showed me that libraries are not simply places that provide books or information, but institutions that influence society at large. As I continue through the M.A. LIS program, I hope to continue building on these competencies and applying both academic knowledge and professional experience to better serve library users and communities.

Artifact 1: Post-Colonialism

Using resources you find on your own, briefly discuss post-colonialism.

Robert J. C. Young explains that “postcolonialism” is when a society has achieved sovereignty across their nation. The author points out that while there may be a shift from colonial rule, the “major world powers did not change substantially” (2013). This is important, especially when you consider Chabran’s explanation of “sovereignty” being a social construct, alongside race and ethnicity. He goes on to explain that this term is contradictory, as it is essentially freedom with contingency (2016). It’s giving people back something they already had (2016).

In the introduction for *Borders and Margins: Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* the writer shares that post-colonialism is not simply replacing the past, but borrowing from it in an almost rebellious way. It is an irony, parody, and reinvention. It is full of contradictions, to Chabran’s point, in addition to uncertainty rather than a “true” cultural identity. Granted, this book focuses more on literary studies, but I feel like it can be applied here.

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<https://doi-org.ezproxy3.library.arizona.edu/10.1093/actrade/9780192801821.003.0001>, accessed 12 Sept. 2025.

Artifact 2: Self-publishing

What impact do you think self-publishing has had on the reading public?

As noted by Fulton, there is a difference between self-publishing and on demand printing, when previously I would have used the two terms interchangeably.

Self publishing has made it possible for authors from underrepresented backgrounds to publish their work since traditional publishers have historically favored white men. This makes it possible for readers to access a wider variety of stories and genres and have exposure to cultures and ideas other than one's own.

However, I do think that it makes quality control inconsistent. Self-published books may not undergo the professional editing or design process that traditionally published books do. It can be harder for readers to find well-written books, unless they are guided by professional reviews (if I had a dollar for every time a BookTok recommendation led me astray...).

Despite this, I do think self-published authors tend to be more accessible to their readers, particularly in the age of social media, which has given way to new possibilities for readers and authors to connect with each other.

Artifact 3: Information Landscape

Comment how changes in one information landscape component affect the other components. (Recorded knowledge, sources of knowledge, audience, location, mediation)

Each component in the information landscape is intertwined with others. A change in one affects the whole system, which is capable of shaping how knowledge is recorded, shared, and consumed. These must constantly adapt to each other as technologies and society needs evolve. I will use recorded knowledge as an example.

If recorded knowledge, such as books and databases, becomes outdated or updated, then it can shift what is considered credible. In addition, it can impact the audience's accessibility. It can potentially make knowledge more or less accessible. Finally, a shift from physical libraries to online archives, for instance, changes the audience's ability to interact with that knowledge.

1. Sources of Knowledge

Impact on Recorded Knowledge: The sources of knowledge directly influence what gets recorded and how. For example, if new sources emerge, like new research journals or community-driven content platforms, these may lead to shifts in the types of knowledge that are prioritized in recorded formats.

Impact on Audience: If the sources of knowledge diversify (e.g., social media or citizen science), it can broaden the audience, offering more people the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge pool. Conversely, a narrowing of sources (e.g., reliance on a few elite scholars or organizations) could limit who has access to contribute or benefit from the knowledge.

Impact on Location: The sources of knowledge may be location-dependent (e.g., regional research institutes). If these sources move online or become more globally interconnected,

knowledge access can expand. On the other hand, if sources become more localized (e.g., national journals), location constraints might become more apparent.

Impact on Mediation: New sources can alter the way knowledge is mediated. For example, academic journals mediate knowledge in a formal and peer-reviewed way, while social media might allow for informal, unverified information sharing. Changing sources can therefore shift the nature of the mediation process.

2. Audience

Impact on Recorded Knowledge: The nature of the audience influences what kinds of knowledge are recorded. A shift in audience (e.g., from academics to the general public) could lead to changes in how knowledge is presented (simplified language, more accessible formats) or what kind of knowledge is prioritized (e.g., applied knowledge over theoretical knowledge).

Impact on Sources of Knowledge: If the audience expands (e.g., through democratization of knowledge or increased online access), new sources of knowledge may emerge, such as blogs, vlogs, or open-source platforms. On the flip side, a more niche or specialized audience might restrict the sources of knowledge to academic or professional institutions.

Impact on Location: The geographical location of the audience can influence which sources and recorded knowledge they have access to. A global audience might demand knowledge in multiple languages or from various regional perspectives, while a localized audience might rely on specific national or regional sources.

Impact on Mediation: The audience can drive the mediation process. For example, if the audience is highly engaged or digitally literate, they might seek out or demand new mediation methods, such as interactive data visualizations, online forums, or user-generated content

platforms.

3. Location

Impact on Recorded Knowledge: The location of knowledge, whether it's housed in a particular country, institution, or digital platform, can determine who can access it. For example, knowledge housed in physical libraries in one country may not be accessible to global audiences unless it's digitized.

Impact on Sources of Knowledge: The sources of knowledge may be location-dependent. For example, in certain regions, indigenous knowledge systems or local experts may play a crucial role in knowledge production, whereas in other regions, academic or corporate sources may dominate.

Impact on Audience: Location can impact who is part of the audience for a particular piece of knowledge. For instance, knowledge in a specific language or culturally specific context may have a limited audience unless translated or adapted for other locations.

Impact on Mediation: The mediation of knowledge can be affected by location. Different locations might use different methods of mediation based on technological infrastructure, cultural norms, or educational systems. For example, in some locations, knowledge is mediated through traditional oral storytelling, while in others, it's through digital media.

4. Mediation

Impact on Recorded Knowledge: Mediation affects how knowledge is presented and interpreted. If knowledge is mediated through academic journals, it's usually formal and peer-reviewed. If it's mediated through blogs or social media, it may be less formal but more widely accessible. Changes in mediation tools (e.g., new social media platforms) can shift the

way recorded knowledge is disseminated.

Impact on Sources of Knowledge: The mediation process can influence which sources of knowledge are valued. If knowledge is mediated primarily through scientific journals, academic sources will dominate. However, if mediated through social media, user-generated content might rise in prominence.

Impact on Audience: The way knowledge is mediated can impact who engages with it. More formal mediation might appeal to academics or professionals, while informal mediation might attract a broader, general audience.

Impact on Location: The way knowledge is mediated can be location-sensitive. In areas with limited internet access, knowledge may be mediated through print materials or in-person communication, while in digital-first societies, online platforms dominate.

Artifact 4: Job Assignment

Group project presentation –

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v1VUCGisIIPo6q9whztdy2FS4lo4Yowv/view?usp=sharing>

Summary

As I started to write this summary, I realized that three of the four jobs were in academic libraries. This reflects my interest in exploring academic libraries as an option. These jobs reflect a wide range of professional opportunities for experienced librarians and archivists, each with specialized expertise in addition to transferable skills. The Digital Archivist at the University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections (CSWR) focuses on digital preservation and accessibility of born-digital materials. Working with archivists, curators, and library services staff, the role supports digital collection management and research initiatives. The Library Archives Operations Manager at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is a leadership position overseeing both physical and digital collections, supervising a small team, and guiding preservation, access, and outreach efforts. The role integrates community engagement, digitization projects, and programming, balancing managerial oversight with public service. The Archivist for Military Heritage at Clemson University Libraries curates and promotes collections related to military history, collaborating with campus partners and conducting oral histories. The position emphasizes outreach, education, and digital access rather than administrative leadership. A graduate degree in library or archival studies and at least one year of experience are required. Finally, the Collections Strategies Librarian at Colby College balances teaching and collection development. Reporting to the Assistant Director of Collections Management, the role emphasizes collaboration, inclusive collection development, and

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instructional partnership. Across these roles, salaries correlate strongly with leadership scope. The positions managing people, budgets, or institutional strategy have higher pay. All three require at least a Bachelor's degree and three to five years of related experience. The Digital Archivist position at UNM is appealing to me. Not only is it in a field of interest to me, it is located in the state I would like to move to. This would help me with not only achieving a desired job, but with my work/life balance as well.

Christina Amarillas Job 1: Collections Strategies Librarian

Position title: [Collections Strategies Librarian](#)

Institution/organization - Colby College (Waterville, Maine)

Brief listing of key job responsibilities

Along with the three core job responsibilities, this listing provides a percentage of how much time is spent performing that function. It is Instructions/Teaching and Learning (60%, includes working with faculty to develop curriculum), Collection Development (20%, such as assess library collections), and Service and Scholarship (20%, includes participating in publications of articles and serving on professional committees)

Location in the administrative structure (e.g., what department; reporting relationships) - This position is one of seven in the department known as Collections Management and reports to the Assistant Director of Collections Management, and in collaboration with other colleagues. The listing describes the team as "often time-sensitive, cross-functional and high-impact."

Qualifications

This position requires a MLIS degree, oral and written communication skills, three years post-MLS experience in teaching, demonstrated experience with inclusive and equity access. It is preferred that the candidate has fluency in at least one additional language to English, understanding of humanities, experience working with students, and more.

Salary

Annual Salary Range: \$53-78k

Christina Amarillas Job 2: Archivist for Military Heritage

Position title: [Archivist for Military Heritage](#)

Institution/organization - Clemson University (South Carolina)

Brief listing of key job responsibilities

focuses on collecting, preserving, and promoting materials related to Clemson's military history, as well as broader military heritage. The role involves conducting oral history interviews, processing archival collections, and collaborating with campus partners like the Clemson Corps on exhibits, events, and outreach efforts. It also includes developing digital resources and educational programming, along with providing research support and instruction.

Location in the administrative structure (e.g., what department; reporting relationships) - This position is one of seven in the department known as Collections reports to the Head of Special Collections and Archives in their Libraries

Qualifications

An ALA-accredited degree (or a related graduate degree), at least one year of archival experience, and a demonstrated interest in military history. Preferred qualifications include oral history expertise, experience in academic archives, knowledge of archival trends, and familiarity with tools like ArchivesSpace.

Salary

Annual Salary Range: \$60k

Christina Amarillas Job 3: Library Archives Operations Manager

Position title: [Library Archives Operations Manager](#)

Institution/organization - Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (Charlotte, NC)

Brief listing of key job responsibilities

Based primarily at the Library Administration Center in Charlotte, NC, but also includes some weekly reference shifts at the new Main Library once it opens. It involves managing archival collections (both physical and digital) including acquisition, preservation, and accessibility, while supervising a small team of librarians. The role also includes community outreach, digitization projects, and contributing to programming.

Location in the administrative structure (e.g., what department; reporting relationships) - Administration position

Qualifications

Candidates need at least five years of specialized archival experience and a master's degree in library or information science from an ALA-accredited program. It's mostly in-person work, but there's some flexibility with scheduling and occasional remote work. Strong knowledge of archival standards like EAD and DACS, along with systems like ArchivesSpace, is important.

Salary

Annual Salary Range: \$67,095-\$100,642

Christina Amarillas Job 4: Digital Archivist

Position title: [Digital Archivist](#)

Institution/organization - University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, NM)

Brief listing of key job responsibilities

This position is responsible for facilitating digital preservation initiatives and ensuring the long-term accessibility of digital materials. The Digital Archivist will work closely with archivists, curators, and library services staff to appraise born-digital acquisitions and support research involving digital collections. For the Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections (CSWR).

Location in the administrative structure (e.g., what department; reporting relationships) - The role is situated within the university's library system and reports to the head of the CSWR.

Qualifications

Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree and have at least five years of relevant experience; a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree and a Digital Archives Specialist certificate are preferred.

Salary

Annual Salary Range: \$4,236-5,950/month.