

Centering Underrepresented Voices in Describing and Analyzing Archival Materials

Devan Ray Donaldson

Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering, Indiana University Bloomington,
USA

drdonald@iu.edu

ABSTRACT

This work-in-progress poster examines the pedagogical integration of examples centering underrepresented minorities in the teaching of archival description and the analysis of archival materials in two graduate-level courses: Archives and Records Management and Advanced Archives. In the former, students explore metadata and description standards like MARC21, EAD, and LCNAF through hands-on assignments using collections that highlight the lives and work of Black and Indigenous creators. In the latter, students engage with computational archival science techniques, analyzing datasets such as the Maryland State Archives' Legacy of Slavery collection and records from WWII-era Japanese American incarceration camps. These case studies are selected to demonstrate the relevance and necessity of inclusive archival practices. Pedagogical rigor is grounded in critical archival studies (Caswell & Cifor, 2016; Cook, 2013), computational thinking in LIS (Marciano et al., 2018), and constructivist learning theory (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). This work addresses the ALISE 2025 theme of “Decolonizing Pedagogies” by showing how archival education can empower students to surface silenced voices and challenge dominant narratives in cultural heritage description and analysis. Insights from student reflections and classroom discussions underscore the value of these methods in fostering critical awareness and professional responsibility in future archivists.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Archives; Pedagogy; Students; Metadata.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Archival description; Underrepresented minorities; Inclusive pedagogy; Computational archival science; Metadata standards.

Copyright 2025 by the authors. Published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2025.2101>

REFERENCES

- Bada, S. O., & Olusegun, S. (2015). Constructivism learning theory: A paradigm for teaching and learning. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 5(6), 66-70.
- Caswell, M., & Cifor, M. (2016). From human rights to feminist ethics: Radical empathy in the archives. *Archivaria*, 81, 23-43.
- Cook, T. (2013). Evidence, memory, identity, and community: Four shifting archival paradigms. *Archival science*, 13, 95-120.
- Marciano, R., Underwood, W., Hanaee, M., Mullane, C., Singh, A., & Tethong, Z. (2018, December). Automating the detection of personally identifiable information (PII) in Japanese- American WWII incarceration camp records. In *2018 IEEE International Conference on Big Data (Big Data)* (pp. 2725-2732). IEEE.