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Spring Break in the Archives

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Spring Break in the Archives
Spring Break in the Archives
2009 AAACE Conference
Cleveland, OH

Presented by C. Rhodes, C. Guerere, R. Worsham, C. Stokes, D. Sterner and Dr. W. James
Thursday, November 5, 2009, 10:00 – 10:45 am
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• Five adult education doctoral students and their faculty advisor received a grant to conduct historical research at the Charters Library of Resources for Educators of Adults at Syracuse University.

• The purpose of the study was to develop a “detailed, readable history of the first 10 years of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education.” (CPAE)
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• In today’s presentation, we will describe our experience of conducting archival research and offer recommendations to future researchers.
  – What did we learn about archival research?
  – What did we learn about the field of adult education?
  – What lessons can we share with colleagues?
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“Learning is the transformation of experience into **knowledge, skills, and attitudes**” (Jarvis, 1987, p. 164).
Preparation for the Trip

Different levels of:
- Expertise
- Experience
- Interest
- Extracurricular Responsibilities
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• How did we address those challenges?
  – Background folders
  – Charters Library of Resources of Educators of Adults website
    http://library.syr.edu/digital/guides/a/AlexanderNCharters/collections.htm
  – Scheduled individual free time
Reflections and Experimentation during the Process

• The Research Process
  – Original research strategy ineffective and inefficient
  – Overwhelming quantity of material
  – Need for individuals to quickly develop expertise
Reflections and Experimentation during the Process

Everyone adapted their own research strategies and worked together to create an overall plan.

Dr. James changed her expected role as lead researcher and became a facilitator and guide.
What made this a meaningful experience?

- Increased connection with the field
- First-hand accounts brought history to life
- Once-in-a-lifetime experience
- Serendipitous lessons
- Development of personal bonds
Our Recommendations

Before you go,

1. Find out what resources are available
2. Develop a good relationship with the archival librarian and staff
3. Ask about site’s protocol and schedule
4. Choose convenient accommodations
Our recommendations

• **During your trip,**
  1. **Be flexible**
  2. **Conduct a daily debriefing**
  3. **Identify group member’s learning style and assign tasks accordingly**
  4. **Schedule downtime for each group member**
Our recommendations