

ARCHIVES & RECORDS ASSOCIATION

REGISTRATION SCHEME

LEARNING OUTCOMES FORM

Place a completed copy of this form at the front of the evidence for each credit

DEVELOPMENT AREA: 2. Private study

ACTIVITY: 2.1 Latin

DATE(S): April-July 2009

NO. OF CREDITS: 1

Description / Motivation:

The idea for this study came out of discussion with colleagues at my place of work and a neighbouring Record Office. I was planning to undertake a University module in palaeography but felt I needed to get some experience of Latin first. My colleagues had a variety of levels of experience but all felt that they would benefit from either a beginners course or a refresher course. We knew a Latin teacher who, we hoped, would be prepared to take the course. After discussion it was agreed that the two of us with little, or no experience, would work our way through Eileen Gooder's *Latin for Local History* while the others would attempt a more difficult translation for each session. The tutor would spend the first part of the evening helping the "beginners" whilst the "improvers" discussed the set text. We would all then go through the text together. It was hoped that, gradually, the "beginners" would understand more of the translations and, eventually, catch up. The course was planned for 10 weeks and we were expected to do preparation work of several hours each week. We were all also expected to have a copy of *Kennedy's Shorter Latin Primer* and James Morwood's *A Latin Grammar*.

What I achieved / learnt from the activity:

I showed the tutor the sort of translations that are used for the palaeography module and he used some similar types of exercise for our translations. These were very early grants, deeds of gift etc. However, it was agreed that what we really needed were more examples from manorial and probate records, which we are more likely to come across in a local Record Office context. The later sessions reflected this and we all (even me) were able to contribute much more happily to the joint sessions.

The main thing I learned from the period of study was that I would not be applying to do the palaeography module after all! However, I have decided instead to focus on a programme of self-study using local example texts and other available sources. I did eventually learn a basic amount of Latin and this has helped me subsequently in my work in the Searchroom.

Follow up / continued benefit:

There is still a lot more work for me to do before I could say that I had any degree of competence in Latin. However, I feel that I do now have some grounding as a basis from which to continue studying. I intend to do this as part of CPD as there are various other options, for example CDs, from which I could continue to learn. However, I realise from doing the study that, although Latin is useful, it is much more important to work on my English palaeography and I intend to concentrate on this first.

Dec 2009: I have continued to work privately on my Latin and palaeography skills, building on the foundation provided by the Latin course of study. I have done this by working through examples given in standard texts such as Hilda E.P. Grieve's *Examples of English handwriting 1150-1750* and F.G. Emmison's *How to read local archives 1550-1700*, which provide transcripts and translations. I have either done this alone or informally with a colleague, and have found that this practice has continued to improve my confidence and proficiency in working in the Searchroom.

Evidence:

Letter from Latin tutor, confirming participation in the course.

Example page from Latin translations (class)

Example page from palaeographical and Latin self-study

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DEVELOPMENT AREA: 2. Private study / professional research

ACTIVITY: 2.2 Research on health records to support the online catalogue launch and opening of a large hospital collection

DATE(S): 7/2007-2/2008

NO. OF CREDITS: 1

Description / Motivation:

One of my first tasks on joining my current post was to carry out editing work on the existing catalogue of a large medical collection which was just about to be published online for the first time. I was also responsible for preparing the collection for access by researchers in line with statutory closure periods and DP/FOI and Health Records' legislation.

I had no previous experience in this area, so I had to quickly gain an overall impression in the area before subsequently developing more detailed subject expertise. This required an intensive period of research, during which I identified and digested relevant sources of information, following up secondary references as necessary. To do this, I read up on relevant legislation (including numerous lengthy online documents on Data Protection and Freedom of Information), contacted the local County Archivist, National Archives staff and representatives of the Health Archives Group for advice, and posted queries on list-serves, as well as discussing research needs with university staff, making contact with the Health Authority and arranging research application procedures with the Local Research Ethics Committee. I also attended a Archives & Records Association' course on Hospital Records (Worcester, 9/2007) and a course on Record Care in the NHS, organised by the Archives Committee of the Liverpool NHS Trusts (Liverpool, 7/2007). I was then suitably equipped to edit the catalogue accordingly for online publication (alerting researchers to potential access restrictions on certain parts of the collection). I also wrote a collection-level description for inclusion in the Archives Hub, and designed a short leaflet introducing the collection to potential researchers.

What I achieved / learnt from the activity:

I learned that medical records can constitute a problematic area of collection management in that their preservation is random and that their current management by health and information professionals is unsystematic and irregular. Documentation covering this area is both complex and patchy in quantity. Grasping the essential points relevant to record-keepers contained within lengthy texts was very time-consuming.

However, I successfully gained an overall view of the general legislation framework into which medical records fit, and how access can be negotiated without compromising patient confidentiality. I became thoroughly familiar with standard web resources for medical history such as the Wellcome Trust website, and the HOSPREC database. As a follow-up, I compiled a brief list of essential references to summarise my findings. Through contact with University staff at the Centre for Medical History, I also came to appreciate the potential research use of historical medical records, and gained an awareness of the availability of health records in other parts of the region.

Follow up / continued benefit:

I had not previously had to use my existing knowledge of DP, FOI or Public Records closure periods to inform potential users of collections on record availability and issues on access and possible restrictions. My increased understanding of these areas has proved useful in many areas of work, and enables me to now follow current professional debate on the topic as a whole. I was able to additionally write up the results of my research in this area in a Guide to FOI, written for non-archival staff in Jan 2005 following implementation of the FOI Act, and am currently planning for a staff training session on the impact of DP and FOI on the holdings of Special Collections (Apr 2008).

Evidence:

Attendance certificate from SoA course (9/2007)

Example page from in-house Guide to FOI

Example page from bibliography of sources relating to health records

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DEVELOPMENT AREA: 2. Private study / Professional research

ACTIVITY: 2.3 Developing my knowledge and skills in oral history

DATE(S): November 2007-November 2008

NO. OF CREDITS: 1

Description / Motivation:

I became particularly interested in Oral History through my company's participation in a project where I enjoyed the contacts made with staff pensioners. There was no immediate opportunity to undertake further oral history work as part of my role, so I was fortunate to negotiate part-time working hours for one year, in order to spend one day per week pursuing my interest in oral history.

My aim was to acquire knowledge of the discipline through private study and formal training, and to develop my skills and make a practical contribution to projects through voluntary work. To this end I:

- joined the Oral History Society and the Archives & Records Association's Film and Sound Group, studied professional literature and websites, and monitored email discussion lists;
- completed the Oral History Society training course at the British Library (see credit under Formal Training Courses);
- undertook experience both as a tutor at Centre X, where I took a computer skills and life history group, and at a Museum's oral history department, transcribing interviews for a major oral history exhibition, as well as work shadowing.

What I achieved / learnt from the activity:

An unexpected outcome was that I acquired skills applicable far beyond the field of oral history. For example, volunteering at Centre X was my first experience not only of group reminiscence work with the elderly, but of teaching. I learnt to plan each session in advance, produce guidance notes, and even set 'homework', and feel that this experience has greatly improved my confidence in my own ability to guide a group. I was also able to utilise knowledge gained as an archivist, for example by introducing students into Internet research, especially using archive, museum and heritage sites to augment their own written life history work. At the museum, I gained valuable experience of working

on a major oral history project, but also learnt about aspects of using oral history material for display and the detailed assessment / reporting procedure that accompanies an HLF-funded project. Volunteering on community-based projects provided a welcome contrast to my position in a business archive, and despite some initial problems securing work experience at an appropriate level, the year was a very positive experience.

Transcription work presented many practical challenges, including old equipment, poor recording, and strong accents. The museum had no 'house style' for transcription, so I worked to develop one by reviewing style sheets produced by other organisations and by following debates regarding the level of editing, inclusion of fillers etc. I noted that there was no professional standard for transcription and concluded that this must be due to the varying purpose for which transcriptions are used. It was also interesting to see the way in which my full transcripts were edited for exhibition purposes.

Follow up / continued benefit:

Oral history is a discipline that has relevance to and attracts interest from those in a number of different professions, and it was interesting to see the overlap between the work of archivists and oral historians, as well as to share skills with museum curators and community reminiscence workers. I am continuing to volunteer as a transcriber for the Archives & Records Association's own oral history project 'Celebrating Memory' and hope to carry out interviews for this project in due course. The year greatly increased my skills in oral history, and I would be able to competently manage an oral history project in the future.

Evidence:

Example of oral history interview transcription

Example sheet from course plan for computer skills and life history course

Example sheet from museum guide to oral history transcription

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DEVELOPMENT AREA: 2. Private study / professional research

ACTIVITY: 2.5 WLPAN: Beginners' Welsh, University of Wales,
Department of Adult Education

DATE(S): 9/2007-5/2008 (4 hours per week, term-time only)

NO. OF CREDITS: 1e

Description / Motivation:

As a non-Welsh speaker, some knowledge and awareness of the language was essential in performing routine duties in a Welsh archival repository. Apart from practical knowledge of how to pronounce and write Welsh place-names to help searchers in the course of their research, skill in interpreting and standardising older place-name variants was also needed during the extensive cataloguing work I was involved with, particularly in regard to estate deeds, chapel records and maps.

What I achieved / learnt from the activity:

I attended a Welsh course at my local university, run by two Welsh-speaking tutors. Although the course was not based on a grammatical approach and was mainly aimed at promoting conversational use, my background as a linguist enabled me to acquire a basic familiarisation and appreciation of the key features of the language. This enabled me to pronounce Welsh place-names correctly and more confidently when assisting searchers and potential depositors, as well as giving me a more professional demeanour alongside other long-term Welsh-speaking archives staff. I was also able to break down and standardise older place name variants encountered in cataloguing work into their modern equivalents, enabling me to successfully complete the HLF cataloguing project to in-house standards of cataloguing.

Follow up / continued benefit:

Although I no longer need knowledge of Welsh in my present post in England, this experience of the language-learning process has been helpful in my current dealings with readers whose first language is not English, in that I am now more patient with them. The process of having to acquire a foreign language from scratch will also help me in the learning of other languages in the future which are useful to my current job (e.g. Arabic). I am now able to advise non-Welsh-speaking colleagues of cataloguing norms in Welsh if required to do so in the future.

Evidence:

Attendance certificate

Example page from archive list (showing cataloguing record containing contemporary Welsh place-names with relevant modern equivalents correctly cross-referenced)