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Final Reflection Essay

LIS 4000

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**Reflection #1**

When I answered the first reflection prompt, I expressed some concern about returning to education because I had a tough time in the past with concentration and study. During my undergraduate education, I remember picking away at an assignment for weeks, consistently losing enthusiasm for the subject, and stressing over it up until the hour that it was due. I was astounded to find, upon returning to education, that I could not only focus on one assignment for enough time to get more done at once, but I was more considerate about managing my time. In doing so, it was easier for me to determine when I could afford to take a break from working and not jeopardize my assignments, causing me to feel remarkably better balanced than I remembered being before. Additionally, this reflection and growth came during a time where I went through a big job shift and lived in consistent chaos as my home underwent multiple renovations. It was incredible to me that I did not experience debilitating anguish while balancing school with everything else, but I think it speaks to my personal growth that I have done a lot of work to prioritize well-being and mental health in my life.

Upon finishing my first quarter of graduate school, I think my initial worries pushed me in a productive direction. I went into my coursework carefully and applied myself in a capacity that surprised me. I am still getting the hang of the subject, but I think my understanding of librarianship has evolved while reaffirming the enthusiasm and excitement I began the program with. I still think Library and Information Science is a good area of study for me, and I can see myself, more than ever before, getting heavily involved in the profession and enjoying it immensely. Finally, I think I am beginning to feel comfortable enough to contribute more to class discussions, which is something I have struggled with for as long as I can remember.

**Reflection #2**

This prompt was primarily anecdotal, so I do not have much to add to the experience I described. The reflections I shared concerning the situation had been a center of thought for a while regarding my values, so I think they remain as they are. I learned a lot about how I approach a situation that makes me feel concerned or uncomfortable, and now I know how to put that into words and apply those lessons to my professional life.

As far as intellectual freedom, I think I have a better understanding of how important that concept is to the profession of librarianship, why it is so important, and how to maintain that principle. Having instances such as watching *The Speaker* to explore all sides of intellectual freedom has given me much to think about, and I will continue thinking about it through my LIS journey.

**Reflection #3**

I maintain that advocacy within librarianship is a priority, and I tried to convey this point in the third reflection prompt. There is so much more to librarianship than I previously thought or assumed, and it is a profoundly multifaceted discipline. Getting involved in anything possible is something that speaks to me, coming from a family and, in some ways, a culture where it is expected to be involved in any club, organization, association, or position that you can to give everything you have to the community. My parents and much of my extended family have always been in church organizations and committees, veteran outreach groups, nonprofits, volunteer shelters, and more. Subsequently, my upbringing was full of club events, fundraisers, volunteer work, Girl Scouts, 4-H, school groups, church groups, etc. My new journey into library science brings me full circle to the idea of doing anything possible to make your effort count and improve the community and the world for yourself and others. I think it’s somewhat poetic to end up there. The prompt was not specifically about advocacy, but exploring how I learned about all the work a librarian is expected to do brought out that thought process for me.

**Reflection #4**

Being the most recent, there is not much that I can update about the fourth reflection, which I wrote about library considerations within my community. The issues that pose problems and special considerations in a public library in a town like mine remain as they are. Through this exercise and the course content related to it, I gained further understanding of such considerations for diverse patronage in libraries and how much thought is required to create the best possible experience for patrons and librarians. It was interesting to me to apply these thought processes to an environment that is familiar to me, as I had not previously given much thought to the innerworkings of my local library. Thinking about this gave me a relatable window into the profession.

Funnily enough, however, the concept of limited space came up again for me and reiterated that point I made about my town. At the time of writing this, I spoke to a friend of mine last night whose mother works as a paraprofessional in a middle school library, which is in the same part of town as the public library. My friend relayed to me her mother’s concerns about finding spaces for people and/or offices in the school, and how many are being moved into the library because it is one of the biggest spaces. This reinforced how difficult it can be in a historic town like mine, where there is minimal space to expand or add upon any building, and how anything added causes pandemonium when trying to find space. Additionally, I failed to note how funding can be the icing on the cake for issues such as these because I doubt that either the middle school or the public library would be able to expand if they had the space, to begin with. Finally, if I can venture to poke fun for a moment, the proposed plan that the school has for reorienting their space sounded so idiotic that I cannot help but think a group of librarians would be much more capable of solving the problems.

**Conclusion**

Thinking about my values and how I can apply them to my personal and professional life is not a new concept of thought for me, but I think it serves me to have opportunities to formally ponder it. The things that I believe in can be turned into goals in librarianship just as they can be personal goals. For example, one of the values that I articulated in this class is allowing growth, which I never realized was such a priority for me, but it absolutely is. I believe in allowing growth and the journey of lifelong learning that comes with being a person. In the same way, adaptability and lifelong learning are key goals in librarianship. I am discovering more ways that my own values intersect with the profession of librarianship every day.

This first quarter in my LIS journey has been very formative for me. For the first time in a long time, I learned a lot about something that I had limited previous knowledge of, and I believe the things I learned will stay with me for a long while. I definitely feel more confident in my schoolwork and my direction. I was worried about attending school, even online, while working full time. Thankfully, at least so far, I have grown more secure in my time management and balancing my life in order to achieve all that I want to achieve. I have been lucky to have great professors and fellow students in my first quarter that have helped me to feel this way. This has surely been a great start to my graduate school journey and I cannot wait to continue!