

Mia Klotz

Honors Thesis Proposal I: U.E. German Busch School & World Librarians

STATEMENT REGARDING THE GOAL OF THE THESIS

As part of the World Librarians Organization at the University of Massachusetts Amherst we work to provide free, openly licensed educational materials to schools in Kenya and Malawi Africa. Our goal has always been to expand the schools we support and through my honor's thesis I will be adding the U.E. German Busch School which is located in Nucchu, Bolivia to the World Librarians program. The school currently lacks access and funds to internet connectivity and up-to-date technology, severely limiting the educational materials available to students. My project will provide a RACHEL device—which acts as a remote area community hotspot for education and learning—to enable free access to open education resources and 15 chromebooks for the students. This semester I will focus on gathering information about the school in relation to the number of students, grade levels, and translatable content. I will also work on becoming skilled with the RACHEL device, complete trainings on how to set it up in different locations, and educate teachers on how to utilize this device for my trip to Nucchu that I will be embarking on in January of 2025. We aim to ensure equitable access to educational resources, empowering both students and educators with essential tools for enhanced learning experiences in parts of the world that lack resources and funds for education.

KEY READINGS

1. [World librarians: A socio-technical system providing library search services to offline schools and libraries in Malawi](#)
2. [World Librarians: A Peer-to-Peer Commons for Closing the Global Digital Divide. Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication](#)
3. [Ethnicity, education, and Earnings in Bolivia and Guatemala](#)
4. [Rural Education in Bolivia & the potential of educational technology](#)
5. [The School, Whose Place Is This'? The Deep Structures of the Hidden Curriculum in Indigenous Education in Bolivia](#)
6. [World Possible Teacher Training Guides](#)
7. [Bolivia-Education, health, and welfare](#)
8. [Decolonizing Bolivian education-ideology v. reality](#)
9. [Education's Power to Change Lives in Bolivia](#)

COMMUNICATION

Although I have the privilege of working every week with Theresa Dooley in the Scholarly Communications Office, we will set aside an hour each week to discuss my progress and the tasks moving forward. The expectations of these meetings from my faculty sponsor will be to discuss current progress made in my thesis proposal, such as communication being made between the school and I, as well as discussing the next steps and upcoming assignments. We also plan to discuss any new changes that can be made to better my thesis and assist one another on any issues that may arise throughout the semester.

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

No, this proposed activity does not involve live human beings. We will be in communication with and assisting live human beings as World Librarians have done in the past, but no specialized training is required for my thesis.

METHODS, APPROACH, OR PROCESS

Since joining the World Librarians team I have felt like I have truly been able to impact the lives of others while at UMass Amherst. Last year after being part of this club and seeing the impact we were making, my trip to Bolivia, where my family is from, became something else. After visiting the small, rural town of Nucchu where my grandfather is from, I saw a school that needed the resources that our other schools we were helping also lacked. Not only did I want to help them with their primary education, but if any of these students wanted to attend high school they would have to walk an hour to the closest school. So, another aspect of this partnership will allow for secondary education to be taught within their school. The proposed project aims to bridge the educational gap in Nucchu, Bolivia, by providing educational resources to the U.E. German Busch School through the partnership of World Librarians.

To begin my honor's thesis I will continue to gather as much information I can about the process of World Librarians(down to the technical level), the educational curriculum in Bolivia, and the ethical ways in which to provide educational resources to the global South without presuming their needs from a global North perspective. The key readings listed above will help me with the technicality of World Librarians as well as the educational curriculum in Bolivia(specifically Indegenious education as it applies to the U.E. German Busch School).

Through the RACHEL we have already created a library/database that is accessible to any user of the device. It includes all previous searches we have done organized in subjects such as science, math, english literature, and world history. Although we have all of this pre-downloaded content to provide them, we lack education resources applicable to their history and their culture.

That is why some of the key readings I have chosen relate to Bolivian curriculum and ways to not colonize Bolivian education through our wants and needs, but theirs.

Other information that I still need to gather relates to the information provided by the school such as number of students, grade levels, and the quality and quantity of both technological and physical resources. Communication to receive this information will be easy to obtain since I have family who visits the town of Nucchu frequently and they also have a good, already developed relationship with the teacher at this school. However, at the start of the semester I will also create a line of communication between the teacher and I through WhatsApp (free messaging and common for international texts and calls) to gather as much information from them as I can. Communication is a large part of this thesis and is necessary in order to set up the U.E. German Busch School.

Over the 2024-2025 winter, I will travel to Nucchu, Bolivia to deliver and help set up this equipment, as well as train the school's teachers on utilizing the RACHEL device and integrating it into their curriculum. The RACHEL contains materials equivalent to an entire library, focused specifically on educational resources relevant to primary and secondary schooling. By connecting this device to the laptops/tablets, all students at the U.E. German Busch School will have access to a wealth of information and tools to enable quality learning. Furthermore, hands-on training sessions will be conducted for teachers, empowering them to utilize the resources effectively within their teaching methodologies so that they can communicate with the World Librarians team on their own. Once the school is set up they will continue to work with the World Librarians club at the University of Massachusetts Amherst well after I have graduated. My team and I's hope is that by expanding our work with schools in different countries we can continue to grow the World Librarians program and potentially implement this organization into other universities across the country.

TIMELINE AND GRADING

- a. Describe a graded assignment due by the W (withdraw) date.
Read [World librarians: A socio-technical system providing library search services to offline schools and libraries in Malawi and World Librarians: A Peer-to-Peer Commons for Closing the Global Digital Divide. Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication](#). Compare and contrast previous methods to the method you are trying this semester. Write a one page analysis on the readings above and how you will implement some of their process while also adding new methods and procedures that seem fit for your thesis.
- b. Describe and give dates for other first semester assignments.

Assignment #1: Create a document that explains the procedure that will follow for the semester to send to the U.E. German Busch School. Translate this document into Spanish as well for complete comprehension. Due Date: 09/16/2024

Assignment #2: Create a test run of setting up the RACHEL device in a new location. Write down what worked and what needs improvement for next time. Then write a 1-2 page paper explaining the process and what you would do differently next time. Due Date: 10/1/2024

Assignment #3: Search for educational materials in Spanish on Youtube and other open access databases(OER Commons, Mason OER Metafinder, Openly Available Sources Integrated Search, Pressbooks Directory, and the Directory of Open Access Books) for resources that are comprehensible for the students. Create a document that ranks the open access databases in their ability to provide open access education that is in Spanish or is easily translatable. Due Date: 10/30/2024

Assignment #4:

- c. Give the date by which your second committee member will have been selected. Give the name if known.
08/01/2024 Charlie Schweik
- d. Give the date by which a first draft of your literature review will be submitted to your faculty sponsor.
10/21/2024
- e. Give the date by which a draft of your 499T/P proposal will be submitted to your faculty sponsor prior to final submission of the proposal on PATHS.
12/06/2024