Over the past year and a half, I have been pursuing an MLIS focusing on Youth Services and Web Design. Since beginning my degree, I have grown to understand what it entails to be a librarian and have gained a more precise direction of the specific library career I want to pursue. In each course I took, I gained valuable skills and knowledge for my future career path. I believe that this e-Portfolio highlights those skills and knowledge and represents the five goals and their outcomes needed to graduate. Within this reflective essay, I will focus on what I saw as my most significant learning experiences, what artifacts included in this e-portfolio I view as my best, how my perspective of libraries has evolved, and the direction I see my career heading.

There were many moments throughout my classes that I felt were significant learning experiences. One of the first moments was when I had to choose a topic to research and present for my Core Values, Ethics and Issues in Library and Information Profession course (LIS 701). For this assignment, I chose the topic of reluctant readers and school libraries. For the e-Portfolio, the research paper meets goal 4A, and the poster board presentation demonstrates goal 5D. This research and presentation project is significant because it is a topic I am passionate about personally and professionally. I was able to take what I had done for this class and then be a guest speaker and talk about this topic to college students who are studying to be teachers. Taking what I had learned and studied and shortly after be able to then present it outside of my class made me even more excited for my career choice, and I realized that I could do this outside of a graduate classroom setting.

This experience of taking what I had learned in my classes and then actually do it in another environment helped me feel more confident in what I had learned. Another significant moment of this was through my Storytelling for Adults and Children course (LIS 718), where I not only told a story to my Dominican class, but I had several opportunities to share those same

stories and others in elementary classes. I fell in love with storytelling, so being able to share this love with students who were the age demographic for the stories made me so happy. This happiness was in seeing that it resonated with the children and not just hearing my classmates' thoughts on my storytelling. When taking LIS 718, I also took History of Folk and Fairy Tales for Youth (LIS 815). These two classes paired together so well and allowed me the chance to dive even deeper into folk and fairy tales to then share them in a storytelling setting. Now I am constantly looking for folk and fairy tale collections representing other cultures and countries to add them to my collection and share them with others. Storytelling will be a part of my future as a librarian and even in my personal life when I tell these stories to my young nieces and nephews.

There are several artifacts found within my e-Portfolio that I consider my best. One of which meets goal 3A and is the website I designed and created for my Advanced Web Design course (LIS 786) and my History of Folk and Fairy Tales for Youth class (LIS 815). I would also consider this website an artifact demonstrating goal 3A since I designed and created it for my e-Portfolio. I see these two websites as some of my best work, illustrating how much I grew in web design. I learned how to code with HTML, CSS, and research best practices for websites to ensure that they are user-friendly and aesthetically pleasing. There were many trial and error moments for both sites where I grew frustrated and then overjoyed as I could figure out what I needed to do for my vision to become a reality. Goal 3A is about designing resources and tools that facilitate access to information, and I feel that these websites do exactly that. My website, "The World of Folk and Fairy Tales" provides background information on different tales, provides some stories in their entirety, and another section of annotated bibliographies for those who want an overview on whether a collection is worthwhile. This website can continue to grow

and expand with resources and tools for people to utilize, whether they are a librarian, educator, student, or someone who just likes folk and fairy tales.

Another artifact that I am proud of would be the grant proposal I created for my Curriculum and School Libraries class (LIS 725) which meets goal 2D. What makes me proud of it is the actual world application and how it addresses a need in a school. Through this assignment, I interviewed a teacher to determine the information needs of her classroom and school. From this interview, I could develop ideas that she could immediately use to benefit other aspects of her curriculum. I am also proud of my grant proposal because it gave me the experience and knowledge on how to write grants for my career that would best serve my patrons and library. Any time I could immediately transfer what I learned in the classroom into a real-world experience made me so excited, proud, and helped the lesson stick even more.

Goal 1A focuses on the historical context and dynamic nature of the library profession's core values and ethics. For this goal, I chose a discussion post that focused on three articles discussing cataloguing ethical issues in the library from my Organization of Knowledge class (LIS 703). I am proud of this artifact because it opened my eyes to problems that I was unaware of beforehand and made me think critically about how we, as librarians and information professionals, catalogue books and people. In this profession, we must be aware of our work's impact on others, especially how we catalogue and label books and people. There is a fine line between providing information and swaying people away from choosing that resource. Through this artifact, I focused on the nuances the library and information professionals face and how we can react to changes in society concerning ethical issues and practices.

When I first considered returning to school and pursuing an MLIS, I only knew about public libraries and school libraries. Through my time at Dominican, I learned about the other

types of library professions available and began to narrow down which specific path I wanted to take. Although I had decided early on, I wanted to pursue the two certificates of Youth Services and Web Design. I did not grasp just how much a librarian interacts with technology in their work. I fell into the majority of people who hear "I am wanting to be a librarian," they think that all I would do is talk about and check-in/out books. After my first class, when I told people about wanting to be a librarian, I could explain what this career entails.

I have always seen libraries as portals to other worlds and a better appreciation for this world. My time at Dominican has taught me that a librarian is an educator regardless of the specific type of library. A librarian can be a patron's most prominent advocate, guide, and teacher in all that they do. The library is not "going extinct," but instead, it can be the community center and provide outreach for its community. A teacher-librarian is not only a resource for the students but also the teachers. A librarian can provide resources and tools not only for the English and Social Studies teachers but also for Math, Science, and any class through their knowledge of books and technology. My perspective of libraries and information centers has expanded, and I view it as the opportunities for what they can do as limitless, excluding budgets and staffing.

Currently, I will begin my career this fall as a K-8th grade librarian and media specialist at a Chicago Catholic school. So for the foreseeable future, my career will be working with the students, staff, and parents of this school. The school has two separate campuses, one for K-4th and the other for 5th-8th. As such, I will have two individual library facilities to oversee and run. I am excited and nervous about this opportunity as I get to put what I have spent the last year and a half learning into practice. Plus, I will have the chance to be a teacher-librarian and see if this is the lifelong library career I want to pursue before I start taking courses to receive my teaching

licensure. I plan to return to Dominican University to begin the school librarian program after this first year at my new job. While in this job, I will have the ability to curate two separate library collections, learn new technology (such as 3D printers), and incorporate storytelling into my lessons. I enjoy working with these ages of students, and now having a career that allows me to teach them about books and technology is something I am still in shock over.

As I will be starting my first year as a teacher-librarian, there is a lot to learn and even reacquaint myself with from the classes I took at Dominican. I will practice topics and skills I discussed and studied, such as coding, reluctant reader practices, grant writing, and ensuring that I have a diverse book collection. Although I am not sure how long I will be at this particular location, I know that I will grow exponentially as a librarian in my knowledge of books and emerging technologies.

However, there is another direction that I see my career taking at this time in concert with being a school librarian, and that is to be a storyteller. As I mentioned earlier, I fell in love with storytelling, the act of bringing a story to life, especially tales that had lost some of their magic when authors transcribed them onto paper. It brings me so much joy to see the captured attention of the audience and then them being able to share their versions of the tale. When I have been a guest speaker for classes, I could share the background, message, or highlight differences of the story from ones that may be more well known. I was able to choose tales that matched the curriculum topic the teachers were teaching and assist the teacher in finding resources to share with their class. In every classroom I visited, I walked away being so excited and more sure that this was another career that I wanted to pursue and incorporate as a librarian. I plan to continue telling stories both at my work and volunteering as a guest speaker with the school I told stories to this spring.

There is so much that I have learned throughout my time at Dominican. I am sad that my time has come to an end as there are still several courses that I wish I could take. However, that does make me look forward to returning to receive my Illinois teaching license. In this reflective essay, I only noted a few artifacts that I saw as significant, but in reality, I chose each artifact because that assignment, paper, or discussion post caused me to reevaluate what I thought I knew, taught me something completely new, or tapped into a passion of mine. There are several classes where I did not use their content as a part of this e-Portfolio, but that does not take away the lessons I learned from them. Some courses were building blocks, such as my Internet Fundamentals and Design class (LIS 753), or they are ones I am finishing up at this moment but will be using those skills almost immediately, like my Library Materials for Young Adults class (LIS 722). Each course I took has prepared me for this new chapter that is starting this fall. I am confident that there will be moments where a lesson I learned in class will suddenly re-enter my mind when I need to implement it in my job.

I began this program knowing that I wanted to be a librarian, most likely a youth or children's librarian, either in a public or school library. Now I will be starting my career as a school librarian who gets to work with K-8th grade students. My ideas of what it means to be a librarian have expanded. But the root of my vision is the same. I always want to create a community where every person who walks through the doors feels encouraged and empowered to explore books, resources, and the library's events.