Foreign Languages as Instruments of Professional Development in Consulting Archives

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Abstract: - Professors in different universities have various levels of awareness, interest and experience in alternative assessments. Without entirely giving up the traditional methods of testing and grading their students, nowadays teachers tend to change focus from knowledge to skills, aiming at higher communicative competence. New purposes, new materials and new didactic techniques call for new modalities of evaluating the outcome of the educational process. Among these new modalities one can find oral interviews, tasks of story or text retelling, assessments of writing samples, projects and exhibitions, experiments and demonstrations, tests with constructed-response items, portfolios and diaries of teacher observations summarising data related to group performance and group progress. All these methods are trying to keep up with the ever quicker rhythm of our daily life, with tomorrow’s necessities and with technological progress.

Key-Words: - foreign language teaching, professional development, consulting archives, electronic records

1 Introduction
This study emphasises the idea that teaching foreign languages has recently emerged as a priority not only for the personal individual development, but also, and mainly, for keeping up to date in one’s profession, in view of recent IT progress and considering the constantly reshaping hierarchies within the new information order.

In such a context, consulting archives becomes a tool that must be readily available to an increasing number of specialists from various fields of research, and electronic archives have proved to be a shaky ground so far.

Our opinions are based around the simple premise that we cannot provide access to records which we do not have and that issues of record capture and storage continue to be inextricably linked to those of access.

2 Problem Formulation
Today's archivists risk being put on trial by future generations for failing to preserve the political, social and cultural memory of the nation during the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

2.1 Areas of interest
Online access to research aids and digital collections of scanned documents attract headlines - and deserve praise - but do little to address the fundamental problem most archives have: simply not capturing and preserving today’s electronic records needed for assembling tomorrow’s archives.

This perspective does not seek to offer solutions to the issues raised by electronic records management, but to point to certain areas of interest. Future researchers may face problems which stem from record selection and appraisal based on storage media rather than content.

The prospect of collections being split along similar lines and managed by commercial IT companies as opposed to professional archivists also generates wide debate.

It is also worth exploring the dangers of allowing a preoccupation with new technology to distort professional priorities to the extent where money for new IT projects can be found and yet irreplaceable original documents are being destroyed due to lack of funds and an over-reliance on once cutting-edge, but now obsolete, technology.

The challenges of web access to original archive records constitute the most demanding issues facing cultural institutions worldwide, whether in the field of government or private records.

All cultural institutions find themselves in different stages of developing digital access programs. Through its mandate, the National Archives of Canada, for in stance, is unique among national archives, as it has the task of recording memory through the acquisition of government and private records in all media.
2.2 Digital versus traditional archives

This presentation will address the issues raised by theoretical discussions revolving around digital initiatives in relation to traditional archival methods of acquisition, selection, description and control, considering the following key questions:

- How do we balance and jostepose the requirements of the traditional scholarly researcher vis-à-vis the changing and rapidly growing demands for public-funded institutions to provide digital access to non traditional researchers?
- Will the demands of servicing both traditional and non-traditional users of archives, in addition to the pressures of public funding, further challenge or conflict with the development of collections and the acquisition policies of cultural institutions?
- Will the artificial accumulation of records in selected digital groupings, based on web access, challenge the integrity of the context and provenance of original archival records and possibly marginalise traditional archival descriptive practices?
- In addition, will publishing archival records on the web complicate existing complex copyright laws and raises potentially contentious issues over ownership of intellectual property rights?

To date, a lot of the discussion regarding the establishment of electronic and, especially, e-print archives has been taken up with issues of gatekeeping: whether or not people should pay for access to archived material, and how the standard and legitimacy of academic research can be maintained after the transfer to the electronic medium, via new forms of peer review.

However, the consequences of electronic archiving for the mode of legitimating the academic community are even more drastic now. Particular interest is focused on the challenge posed by electronic archiving methods to the accepted, conventional forms of culture and interpretation, because they place the normal and the usual in a strange and disorientating new context.

This challenge seems to be a political one, as well. It is perhaps worth making clear at this point that electronic archiving is political in the sense that it conforms to some already established and easily recognized criteria of what it means to manage political bias and to do politics. It is also political in the sense that - as Bill Readings explains in The University in Ruins - cultural studies consider the university without resorting to nostalgia for a national culture or to a discourse of consumerism and excellence, which are increasingly taking over the contemporary university.

3 Problem Solution

Consulting archives is productive and relevant in any field of research and activity. A scientist sharing the common heritage which is available to anyone at their convenience is a dream come true that which increases the quality and speed of progress worldwide.

3.1 Electronic archives for cultural studies

An electronic archive of cultural studies texts and materials provides a means of doing precisely this. Rather than deciding the question of cultural studies in advance, the new context of electronic archiving forces researchers to see cultural studies in an original way, to account for it and judge it anew, thus keeping the question of cultural studies open (what it is and what it is not, what it is legitimate to ascribe to cultural studies, etc.). Given that cultural studies may implicitly show a certain political commitment, what is contained in any such electronic archives risks some bias, at least as it is commonly conceived and most easily recognized.

3.2 E-archives in biology

The issue of archives is relevant in any field of activity: for instance in biology, where dominant discussions on the relationship between information & biological technologies largely ignore construction and practices in the classical concept of archive.

There is a rich heritage of biological classification and organization that both informs, and is being reconstituted, in current bio-informatics practices. It is worth examining similarities and differences between different archiving technologies - photography & digital DNA data-basing practices - for identifying and surveying biological difference.

3.3 E-archives for police investigations

The central question is how do various media & archival systems produce and identify difference?

The relationship between criminality, race and gender has a long history in the state archives, starting in the mid-19th century. Paris Police archive and the work of Francis Galton developed systems that integrated optics with statistics in medicine, criminology, and anthropology, thereby coupling visual identification of difference with classification and knowledge production.

This is an archival logic that played an important part in the classification of criminality, race, deviant behaviour, sex offences, and colonial frustration. Today, the latest criminal archival system is digital, and based on DNA.
Since the late 1980's when DNA fingerprinting first entered the American court system, the proliferation and utilization of this technology has increased exponentially. In the 1990's DNA data banking and surveillance systems have been instituted in all the states in the USA and throughout global policing organizations such as INTERPOL.

3.4 E-archives for medicine development

This technology is also prevalent in the corporate realm through pharmaco-genomic programs and private research projects on mental illness, breast cancer, and other pathologies.

As the digital databank replaces previous archival regimes of human identification, scientists are forced to admit that the changing modes of production and the media impact may introduce unwanted manipulated subjectivity. The integration of information and biological technologies creates specific structures of debate, evidence and observation that need to be investigated. Such new ensembles structure the way evidence is produced, the narrative structure of debates, the optimum time intervals, and, finally, the possible outcomes.

These objectives are not restricted to individual cases, but rather create specific issues and relationships between race, gender, nature, and behaviour. A study of DNA fingerprinting and data-banking in comparison to previous photographic archives in the criminal justice system is a place to examine these relations between structures and political organization. Such a study might provide opportunities for inquiry into how observation and classification practices are reformulated/conserved through different archival and media procedures.

3.5 E-archives for marketing & advertising

Over the last decade a potent mixture of economic, technological and cultural forces has placed photographic archives at the centre of a new type of global business: the visual content industry. Dominated by trans-national corporations, it supplies most of the images used in advertising & marketing, controlling vast fields of image-production and distribution through its ownership of historical and photojournalistic collections - as well as the digital rights to much of the world's fine art.

Based on extensive fieldwork, a minute study of such issues would attempt to map the core dynamics of the visual content industry: digitization of photographic production, storage, duplication and distribution procedures; commercial & organizational consolidation through the voracious acquisition of photographic archives and image-producers; enhancement of image malleability, simultaneously undermining image-integrity and artistic authority; formation of new markets for mass-produced photographic images and alternative modes of usage and consumption; diversification of image-content and style, coupled with the systematic reproduction of hegemonic constraints. Arguing for complex relations of continuity and discontinuity with pre-digital practices, such research addresses key ideological and ethical questions concerning the fate of the visual archive in the new information order.

3.6 Audio-visual archives: TV and the radio

RAI audiovisual archives include several million documents spanning from the first radio transmissions in 1924 to the latest television productions. Most materials have significant cultural and social relevance, representing a daily chronicle of the past 50 years. In 1997, RAI launched a corporate wide project aimed at designing and developing a centralized infrastructure for the preservation and management of its audiovisual heritage, counting on the possibilities offered by the digital technology. Special attention has been paid to access and use, as the archive in the broadcast environment is the most valuable resource for documentation, inspiration and footage retrieval.

This led to the development of the so called Multimedia Catalogue, a documentation repository that includes retrieval and browsing functionalities of both textual and audiovisual information (still pictures, soundtrack and motion video) related to radio / TV programs contained in RAI archives. Since 1998, when the Multimedia Catalogue started its operation, more than 100,000 hours of television and 90,000 hours of radio have been documented and made available to journalists and producers operating in the corporate environment. In agreement with RAI's public role, an analysis was performed on the feasibility of enlarging access to the Multimedia Catalogue outside the company, with focus on educational and institutional communities.

At this moment, an archive including all cultural moments is perhaps impossible; the codex, the manuscript and the printed form are becoming obsolete in the material world. In an attempt to preserve, make public and digitize our cultural markers, we have moved to a seemingly open space that provides both a public and a private forum for publishing, displaying and viewing these cultural markers. Such a space is the cyber world of hyper-linked documents, scanned images and digitized, searchable documents.
3.7 Postmodernism and archives

Can there be post-modern archives? Why this question? Maybe because, despite the fact that a lot has recently been written about the shifts and transformations in the field of theatre studies in terms of the questions posed regarding the archives, the investigation itself still takes place within the epistemological and ontological domain of a modernist archive - a storage room for the documents of the past. Already in 1969 (English version-1972), Michel Foucault argued in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* that history "undertook to 'memorize' the monuments of the past, transform them into documents, and lend speech to those traces, which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say." This process of transforming events into documents and, finally, into monuments has been problematized by historiography - a practice which can be defined as a mode of thinking taking place in the open, specifiable, dynamic field of potentialities as well as enunciative possibilities and its strategies for perturbing the order of traditional history. Suffice to mention the work of such thinkers as Jacques Ranciere, Michel de Certeau, Jacques Derrida, or Giorgio Agamben in order to realize the degree to which the archive, events, and facts have been split open by an intellectual inquiry. Taking a cue from Foucault, de Certeau, Derrida, and Agamben, in my presentation, I would like to shift the discussion regarding the historical archive from evaluating its position or function vis-à-vis academic research towards perceiving an archive as the general system of the formation and transformation of statements. That is to say, the archive should not be defined as a place housing a text of what is uttered (de Certeau), or in terms of its economy which reveals how the law becomes institutionalized as law (Derrida), but should be seen as a moment of enunciating the taking place of an event (Foucault).

Researchers should work on the non-coincidence between facts/truth, verification/comprehension, knowledge representation (scientific views, analysis, and education), culture (social/political interaction), & memory (software as message or commercial representation), and between the Self & the Other.

With the advent of accessible networked technologies, in the context of e-commerce and higher education, a shift in the paradigm of the scholarship and information sharing has come. This shift, from fixed to fluid, is perhaps just a turning of the prism. The anxiety of impermanence, and the battle cries of ownership are symptomatic of the new frame of reference. The underlying current in discussions of the new information order focuses precisely on this mutation of the material state of information. And the new properties of the fluid state of information are in constant motion. The rhetoric surrounding information futurology should not be a debate between a paper-bound or paper-less culture. Rather, the new object of interrogation should be on the motion - now faster than before, of information in a networked environment.

Information professionals, scholars & students are no longer dealing with slow paced linear learning but with active and creative study focused on resourcefulness and active/collaborative attitudes.

4 Conclusion

In conceptualizing the archive in the new information order, the contributors to this discussion must consider the change in the motion of time in permanence (preservation of media paper, film, and digital objects). Security in a digital repository also is a key issue. A digital repository is an institution, like a library or a public records office, which preserves digital objects. The purpose of the security policy is to describe how to protect digital objects in the repository. In order to preserve the intellectual content of digital objects, the objects themselves, information about the objects, and information about the usage and access restrictions to the objects will need to be protected. Technical means to provide the ability to use the intellectual content of the objects, and to satisfy usage and access restrictions, will also need to be protected. In order to maintain all these conditions, the archiving institutions will need continuing technical/economic/political support. We must consider, on an intellectual level, the way we move information - through its use, storage, organization, dissemination, and retrieval.

**References:**