A Space for Practice: International Learning Initiatives

Rachel King
king314@purdue.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/purc

Recommended Citation
King, Rachel, "A Space for Practice: International Learning Initiatives" (2019). Purdue Undergraduate Research Conference. 15.
https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/purc/2019/Posters/15

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
**ABOUT THE COLLECTION**

The Space for Practice is building a useful collection of materials related to applied and practicing anthropology. A major contribution to this effort came from a senior practitioner at Purdue, Dr. Riall Nolan, who provided materials dating back to the 1960s. While the topics represented in the collection are varied, they focus primarily on different areas of practice and applied anthropology. There are many resources on development, project management, methods, corporate culture, teaching, and intercultural communication. Many of the books do not directly discuss anthropology, and this represents an important theme of the Space: learning how to apply anthropology to real-world situations and challenges.

My role in the development of the library is to sort the books into categories and catalogue them in an online system that will allow aspiring applied anthropologists and practitioners who utilize the Space to check books out. When I first got involved in the Space for Practice development project, I did not know what my role would be. I got involved with the transportation of the library, then research on library building and online cataloguing (see timeline below). Much like the Space itself, my role in its development has evolved over time.

**CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CONVERSATION**

- Purdue’s aspiring applied anthropologists and practitioners can use the collection by browsing the stacks for inspiration, but they should not look to them for answers and to find direction; they are rather for exploration and further investigation of pre-established interests.
- Different parts of the collection are relevant to different groups. The methods and theories categories (to be used as tools for applied work) are relevant broadly, whereas the resources on the anthropology of institutions (universities, corporations, the military) are relevant to those interested in such areas.
- The collection can inspire curiosity and provide a baseline of knowledge for students to investigate their interests in greater depth.

**USING THE COLLECTION: QUOTES FROM A SENIOR PRACTITIONER**

As part of Dr. Nolan’s involvement in the project, he provided some suggestions on how to use the collection.

- “The answers are not going to be found in the books, I think the books are going to be the things you go to after you’ve figured out a few things. That’s not to say that browsing isn’t a good idea – sometimes random choices can be illuminating, but it’s better to form an idea first.”
- “Some of these books are useful not for telling you what to do, but telling you how to approach it.”

"Don’t worry about whether it’s anthropology or not; ask yourself how you can use anthropology to address it," because “every so-called scientific problem is a human problem.”

- Dr. Riall Nolan

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to Dr. Riall Nolan for his major donation to the collection and for providing ideas on how to use and organize it. Thank you to Dr. Sherri Briller and the rest of the Space for Practice development committee for guiding and helping me with this project. Finally, special thanks to the Margo Katherine Wilke Undergraduate Research Internship from Purdue’s College of Liberal Arts for funding this work and related travel, and to Purdue Anthropology for providing me with travel funding.

**NEXT STEPS**

- **Bring the collection to life:** Develop a library policy and loan system using the online cataloguing system to allow students to check books out.
- **Continue to sort books:** Create cohesive categories as we continue to receive additional resources.
- **Incorporate online resources and visiting practitioners:** Add a virtual library of recordings of video calls with practitioners.
- **Connect with Purdue Libraries:** Continue to work with our anthropology liaison in the libraries, Dr. Kendall Roark, who is an applied anthropologist by training to link this library with the broader university library system.