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#LearnAnthropologyLiveAnthropology Project

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A Reflection and Analysis of the #LearnAnthropologyLiveAnthropology Project

This project is one that was inspired by my own senior thesis work. While this is a hypothetical project, I wanted to create something that could be tangible and potentially implemented that directly impacts people in the local area. To create a concrete example in viewers' minds, I highlight one of the many small museums or collections that could be used in work like this across the state. I was fortunate enough to speak with three anthropology professors who all provided their unique perspectives and insights to working with museum collections that involve minority populations. This project portrays applied anthropology well because it engages stakeholders at multiple levels, creates equitable learning opportunities for students, and contributes to expanding knowledge and understanding of the Indigenous peoples of New Hampshire.

To discuss these three dynamics of the project further, first I will describe what I mean by stakeholders. In this project the stakeholders are the Indigenous peoples of New Hampshire, students gaining valuable internship experiences, the general public in NH, and parties in possession of collections, such as museums. All of these people will benefit from a project like this in some way or another, be it gaining public knowledge, educational skills, or further resources. In terms of equitable education, creating a hands-on class that mimics an internship will allow students of all abilities and economic status to engage with the materials. Some students may not have access to transportation or be able to afford to volunteer directly with museums because of financial work obligations. Other students may find leaving campus difficult because of accessibility needs. This course would eliminate some of the barriers that prevent the opportunities for students. Finally, this project will provide better knowledge to the

general public of New Hampshire, and these artifacts can be used to tell stories of Indigenous history.

The research methodologies of this project are inherently anthropological because the root of it centers advocacy, public engagement, and activism. These themes are integral to anthropological projects similar to archival research and creating public displays. Over the course of our applied anthropology class, advocacy and public engagement have been essential to our discussions from week to week, regardless of the topic. By engaging in research of this nature, students will be actively working to decolonize museum spaces and rewrite the colonial-dominant narrative of the history of New Hampshire.

Anthropological work like this is conducted with a pursuit of social justice in mind. There are compounding inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples and other minority communities. They constantly fight to tell their stories but policies often do not change. An important aspect of applied work is advocating for policy changes, which in this case would be changes in the curation practices of indigenous collections in New Hampshire. Policy changes are directly linked to a lot of topics we have talked about including the Flint Water Crisis and the work done by archaeologists and forensic anthropologists at the US-Mexico border regarding migration. This project also maps onto some of our classroom discussions surrounding public archaeology since collections are often the result of archaeological excavations.

In order to make the video clear and concise, I could not elaborate on every part that I have thought about over the course of the semester. If this project were to become a reality, a few key points would need to be addressed. Discussions with local, Indigenous tribal leaders, faculty members at UNH, and museum staff will need to happen for this project to come to fruition. Funding would need to be secured via different grants specifically targeting the digitization of

museum collections. In a hypothetical project, it is difficult to say exactly what professors would be able to develop for a class like this. If the class stays focused on indigenous collections, the professors should have experience working with similar Indigenous artifacts or Indigenous communities. In terms of time commitment for students, it would mimic the typical classroom expectations of two hours of outside-of-class work for every hour in class. Following these formats and guidelines of similar courses will ease the development of this project. After these additions are developed, I strongly feel that this project is one that could one day be utilized as a way to engage anthropology students at the undergraduate level in educational opportunities that expand beyond the classroom. This multi-tiered, interdisciplinary, intergenerational project will help keep anthropology accessible and relevant in the ever-changing world we live in.