INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION IN SUBJECT HEADINGS

Developing alternative vocabulary to Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) at the University of Montana

MAINSTREAM CATALOGING & CLASSIFICATION PRACTICES MISREPRESENT & ERASE INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Internationally used systems such as Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), Library of Congress Classification, and Dewey Decimal Classification use misrepresentative or offensive language, marginalize Indigenous topics, and categorize them as things of the past.

Through research, interviews, and consultations our project focused on developing alternative subject headings to LCSH that can be implemented locally. The ultimate goal is to properly reflect the identity of Native students, faculty, and staff at UM and increase their ability to access resources about themselves.

The project team developed an annotated bibliography and provided the library with recommendations for immediate changes as well as strategies for continuing the project as part of the library's commitment to inclusive collections and services.

THE PROCESS

COMPILE RESEARCH

- Identify issues in cataloging and classification of Indigenous subjects,
- Examine work on similar projects
- Use existing literature to narrow the scope of our own work

OUTREACH & INTERVIEWS

- Consult librarians who have implemented similar changes to subject headings
- Listen to the experiences and suggestions of Native scholars, librarians, and students

ANALYZE FINDINGS

- Synthesize information from previous steps to form recommendations for Mansfield Library
- Consider immediate and long term goals for the library

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

LOCAL SUBJECT HEADINGS

- Local subject headings are a temporary solution until LCSH changes or is replaced
- Adding more accurate headings will improve the search experience for Native students and faculty and inform the public on proper terms

CONTINUE OUTREACH EFFORTS

- Connect with other Indigenous communities, educational institutions, and organizations in Montana
- Use this community input to develop additional local subject headings

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Apply a cultural humility framework to all future efforts
- Continue to research and add terms that are especially relevant to the UM community