Diversity in LIS Education:
Are We Preparing Students for the 21st Century Workplace?

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Why Study Diversity in LIS Education?

Our project attempts to determine whether a selection of top information schools, as determined by the 2013 US News & World Report is adequately preparing LIS graduates for the 21st century workplace. We address possible omissions, areas for improvement, and potential intergration of diversity related content into exisiting courses.

Methods

We conducted a literature review in the fields of LIS education and diversity in education. We collected syllabi for courses relating to or containing diversity in LIS content from the 5 schools selected.

We used a coding criteria created by Dr. Sheryl Dowlin as the framework for our analysis of the syllabi. This is *Diversity Awareness Curriculum Plan Coding Criteria.*

There are 5 levels of diversity awareness contained in this coding criteria (listed in order from highest to lowest level of awareness):

- Affirmation/Solidarity/Critique
  - Respect
  - Acceptance
  - Tolerance
- Monocultural (intolerance)

Results

- 20% of schools - Level 1 (Monocultural)
- 80% of schools - Level 2 (Tolerance)

Recommendations

- Inclusion of a diversity statement as part of all class syllabi
- Ensure that students know that the classroom is a safe space for discussions of diversity
- Ensure that diverse voices are an integral part of the classroom experience
- Ensure student engagement with local community members
- Provide training for faculty, staff, and students on engaging with issues of diversity

Resources

Banks, J. A. (2001). Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching. There is a 2015 edition.

Du, M. R. R., Buttlar, L., & Caynon, W. A. (1994). *Multiculturalism in libraries*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press

Milner, H. R. (2010). Culture, curriculum, and identity in education. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Next Steps

Our project is a conversational starter for individuals interested in addressing issues in LIS education and practice.

Engage with other researchers who are also addressing these issues and coordinate efforts in order to prevent unnecessary duplication.

Prepare and make available a list of resources for instructors interested in better engaging with issues of diversity in the classroom.

Selected References

ALA Office for Research & Statistic. (2014). *ALA Demographic Studies* [pdf] Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/research/sites/ala.org.research/files/content/initiatives/membershipsurveys/September2014ALADemographics.pdf

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. G. (1993). Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Mestre, L., & Association of College and Research Libraries. (2009). *Librarians serving diverse populations: Challenges and opportunities*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Wheeler, M. B. (2005). *Unfinished business: Race, equity, and diversity in library and information science education.* Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press.

Winston, M. D. (January 01, 2001). Communication and teaching: Education about diversity in the LIS classroom. *Journal of Library Administration, 33,* 199-212.

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