

# Igniting Diversity: Actionable Methods and Ideas for Advancing Diversity in LIS Education in the US

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The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) appointed a five-member Taskforce in 2011 to pursue the development of an ALISE Statement on Diversity. Two years later, the ALISE membership voted unanimously to adopt the statement. In an effort to move the statement from mere words on paper, the Taskforce provided actionable models and ideas in an “ignite” session on diversity. In this collaborative piece, four members of the ignite diversity panel share their ideas, experiences, and methods for advancing diversity in the classroom and beyond. Professors Renate Chancellor, Clara Chu, Howard Rodriguez-Mori, and Loriene Roy provide ideas and real world examples that can be readily implemented in the classroom, in research, and at the institutional level. While the United States provides the context for these discussions, many of these methods and ideas are readily adaptable to countries across the globe.

## Background and Introduction— Shari Lee

**A**long acknowledged, but growing, concern among library directors and library science educators in the United States is that today's librarians need unique skills, knowledge, and abilities in order to provide the cutting edge library services the country's growing number of distinctly urban environments require (Wayne State University, 2008). This has spawned the term “urban librarians” to describe those who need to possess the cultural awareness to work effectively in

diverse communities. Unfortunately these librarians are a rarity. In fact, this very issue was raised by librarians, library directors, and Library and Information Science (LIS) program directors who attended the Deans and Director's meeting at the 2011 New York Library Association Conference in Saratoga Springs. Attendees unanimously agreed that many newly qualified librarians are ill-prepared to work in diverse neighborhoods. The consensus was that these librarians lacked the cultural experiences necessary to support the 21st century information needs of our increasingly culturally diverse user populations.

Similarly, the findings reported in the *Educating Urban Librarians Summit* state that an urban librarian should possess specific cultural competencies, one of which is determined to be “an understanding and appreciation of various cultures, a respect for diversity and a willingness to deliver library and information services to each and every patron” (Wayne State University, 2008, p. 5).

In considering this vision for diversity and cultural fluency in the profession as well as LIS research and education, Clara M. Chu urged the Association to consider taking an official stance on diversity. Following Lorna Peterson’s successful President’s Program on diversity at the 2011 ALISE annual conference, an ALISE Diversity Taskforce was appointed to pursue the development of an ALISE Statement on Diversity. The five-member Taskforce, led by Chu, examined how to define diversity, determined what should be included in a diversity statement, and looked at the impact such a statement would be expected to have on ALISE and its membership in the US. This led to the adoption of a definition of diversity that was crafted to describe what diversity is, rather than how it might be achieved. At the 2013 ALISE conference, the membership voted unanimously to adopt the *ALISE Diversity Statement*. In the document, diversity is defined as “the difference among us” (Lee and Chancellor, 2011, as cited in the ALISE Diversity Statement, 2012).

Given that LIS researchers, faculty, and administrators often lack the know-how required to advance a diversity agenda, the Taskforce also presented an “ignite” session intended to move the statement from mere words to one that provided actionable models and ideas. The two-part session held at the 2013 ALISE conference in Seattle, Washington took the following approach: (a) introducing the ALISE Diversity Statement and next steps, and (b) presenting a panel on diversity that provided actionable examples that could be readily implemented in the classroom, in research,

and/or at the institutional level. The ignite session, which I moderated, was tremendously successful: attracting over 100 attendees, several of whom described it as the “best” session they had ever attended at an ALISE conference. The information presented below constitutes a set of actionable diversity resources upon which ALISE will continue to expand.

In this collaborative piece, four members of the ignite diversity panel share their ideas, experiences, and methods for advancing diversity in the classroom and beyond. Drawing on her innovative teaching strategies, Renate Chancellor provides step-by-step instructions on incorporating assignments and activities that not only expand the cultural fluency of LIS students on an individual basis, but which also open the door to candid class discussions on difficult issues. Clara Chu argues that “a critical approach to library and information research requires engaging multicultural knowledge, attitudes and skills because most communities are multicultural.” However, in pointing out that cultural awareness does not always lead to the appropriate action, she provides ten strategies aimed at reducing research bias. While making a case for the inclusion of cultural communication competencies in LIS curricula, Howard Rodriguez-Mori notes that the United States will become progressively diverse. He argues that the cultural factors that affect how people from diverse groups communicate, perceive, and deduce meaning can have a significant impact on interpersonal interactions. Therefore, LIS educators need to consider how to incorporate cultural communication competencies into the curriculum. Finally, Lorie Roy champions the integration of civic engagement in LIS education as a means of advancing diversity. She points out that through this academic approach educators and students work together, which not only enriches the students’ learning experience, but also signals a move from the lone-researcher model to one that is grounded in collaboration.

These scholars address a critical area of need in LIS research and education, which, by default, is reflected in the profession. Through the incorporation of their strategies and ideas into LIS research and education, LIS professionals will gain ground zero perspectives of *the difference among us*, as well as an understanding of how to effectively serve the increasingly diverse user populations across the United States. These strategies not only encourage thoughtful and reflective expression, but they also lay the groundwork upon which researchers and educators can continue to expand in an effort to effectively incorporate diversity into current LIS pedagogy and research.

### **Exemplars for Incorporating Diversity in an Introductory Library & Information Science Course— Renate Chancellor**

In an era of controversial jury verdicts, voter suppression, and talk of comprehensive immigration reform in the United States (US), a foundations course in Library and Information Science (LIS) is ideal for incorporating diversity into the curriculum. A typical introductory course is usually taught as a seminar that covers traditional themes such as the history and nature of information and the role of libraries and the profession in contemporary society. Emphasis is also placed on technological innovation, values, principles, legal, and ethical responsibilities of the profession, which provide grounding for each student's ongoing professional development and leadership (Rubin, 2010). Evoking discourse on the current immigration dilemma and how it affects users of information centers, or exploring what impact, if any, have the recent jury decisions and incidents of voter suppression had on information professionals and race relations in the US is important. These are all current societal issues that can be discussed in the classroom within the contexts of diversity and LIS.

Although many LIS scholars have written about diversity (De la Peña McCook, 2000; Fish, 1992; DuMont, Butlar & Cayon, 1994; Gollop, 1999; Neely, 1988; Peterson, 1996; Honma, 2005), few publications provide examples of how to incorporate diversity in the classroom. Moreover, while there have been elective courses, such as *Ethics, Diversity and Change in the Information Professions* at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles], rarely do we see issues related to diversity in core courses. The following are three examples that have been used in the LIS foundations course at the Catholic University of America, Department of Library and Information Science Program. Each has been used over the last five years and has been successful in fostering enlightening and provocative discussions on diversity. It is important to note that a holistic approach is applied when incorporating diversity in the foundations course. Rather than focus on diversity for one or two weeks, it is important to address the issue throughout the course. This can be done through lectures, class exercises, and assignments.

#### ***The Diversity Awareness Quiz*** **(<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/quizzes.html>)**

A classroom exercise that has been very useful is the Diversity Awareness Quiz created by Paul Gorski (2013). Although quizzes are not new the classroom environment, this one has proven to be effective in generating good discussion on diverse populations. Since questions on the quiz do not specifically address information professions, it is important that the instructor provides context for students. For example, one question asks, "What is the percentage of US schools that have no teachers or staff of color?" When the answer is revealed to be 40%, students are asked, "What does this mean for information professionals?" This always stirs an interesting discussion.

The quiz is also intended to allow students to understand, and possibly confront, personal biases they might have about certain groups. It is always astonishing to see how students respond to the answers to some of these questions. Often there is an evolution of thinking on views of certain groups at the conclusion of this session. Students are appreciative of the opportunity to discuss this sensitive subject in a comfortable, non-threatening, environment. The following are three examples of questions (with answers in bold) that have been used:

1. According to the 2006 report from the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], African Americans comprise more than 37% of people arrested for drugs use, 59% of those convicted of use, and 74% of those sentenced to prison for drug use. African Americans comprise this percentage of drug users:
  - a) **15%**
  - b) 30%
  - c) 45%
  - d) 60%
  
2. What percentage of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender high school students report that their teachers “never” or “rarely” respond to homophobic remarks made by students, according to national study by the GLSEN [Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network]?
  - a) 15.1%
  - b) 37.8%
  - c) 63.2%
  - d) **84.5%**
  
3. Based on a 2007 report from the Economic Policy Institute, the *annual* earnings of the average full-time US worker is roughly equal to:
  - a) The hourly earnings of the average CEO [Chief Executive Officer] in the US

b) **The daily earnings of the average CEO in the US**

c) The weekly earnings of the average CEO in the US

d) The monthly earnings of the average CEO in the US

### *The Luminary Analysis*

Popular among students, the library luminary analysis assignment has provided a great forum for engagement with a significant luminary figure in LIS. Students are required to write an in-depth analysis and to present their findings in class using PowerPoint, Prezi, Youtube, etc. Lasting no longer than 15 minutes, presentations must demonstrate the students’ understanding of the luminary’s professional contributions. Assessment is based on the depth of knowledge, analysis, clarity of writing, and overall presentation. A list of recommended luminaries is provided for the students. Included on the list, for example, are: E.J. Josey, S.R. Ranganathan, Augusta Baker, Regina Andrews, Pura Belpre, Sandy Berman, Eric Moon, and Judy Krug. Student presentations have often segued to discussions about the history of discrimination towards certain groups in LIS. Therefore, a collective learning experience occurs—for the student who researches the luminary and prepares the presentation, and for the class that learns about the luminary from the presenter and through the discussions that follow.

### *The Research Paper*

The core assessment for the course is a research paper in which students analyze an issue confronting the information profession. Students are strongly encouraged to research a topic related to one that has been covered in class, such as: policy, technological innovation, ethical issues, or diversity. The final product should present an exploration of the topic that is well-researched, analyzed, and supported

by documentation. In the past, students have examined the demographic disparity between library professionals and library users; the research strategies and methods used in public libraries to determine how users with disabilities are accommodated; and the recruitment and retention of librarians of color.

A foundations course in LIS education is designed to provide an introduction to critical issues facing the profession. Global challenges such as laws to protect citizens, economic disparity, and criminal justice are covered, along with more traditional topics such as intellectual freedom, surveillance and security, and professional principles. Equally important are challenges of information equity, access, power and diversity—diversity is more than nationality, gender, race, physical ability, or age. It is also language, religion, sexual orientation, and educational background. It simply is . . . the difference among us. All of these current trends are important in that they provide a grounding of the profession. Therefore, emerging information professionals must be aware and be able to grapple with these controversial issues, and what they mean for users nationally and globally if they are going to be successful in the 21st century and beyond.

### **Perspective and Bias in Information and Research— Clara M. Chu**

Information both reflects and shapes society, as society both reflects and shapes information. It is this interdependent worldview that has allowed legal scholars, who use critical race theory as a research lens, to uncover the intersections between the law and racism. Invoking the work of critical race theorist Mari Matsuda (1996, p. 52), and positioning it within library and information studies (LIS), LIS researchers are called to uncover and understand the ways in which information supports racism and other forms of oppression, and the degree to which racism/oppression con-

tributes to the development of information practices. Likewise, by substituting “research” for “information” they can be mindful of the potential biases while conducting multicultural research.

Moreover, racism is a placeholder for other “isms” that signal social hierarchies, and oppression of the “Other,” their culture and history. It should be noted that racism doesn’t need to be associated with overt acts of violence, such as burning of books or destroying of tangible cultural heritage, but includes silent acts of disallowing of cultural practices, speaking in non-dominant languages, and not collecting or recording minority histories, rendering them invisible.

A critical approach to library and information research requires engaging multicultural knowledge, attitudes and skills because most communities are multicultural. First, one needs to recognize (consciousness) the social construction of knowledge and information practices. That is, research needs to be conducted with attention to information as a social process. Second, by questioning (critical reflection) our assumptions and attitudes about the world (social, professional, institutional) around us, we are critically examining behavior and practices to shine a light on any injustices. Third, by acting (change) to remove systemic barriers and to give voice to those silenced, we can begin to change both research and information practices for the better.

In order to reduce sexism in research and adopt a feminist methodology, Margrit Eichler (1988) wrote *Nonsexist Research Methods*, which identified seven sexist problems in research and provided strategies to address them. Eichler (1988) noted that the basic problem that perpetuates biases related to gender/sex in research is androcentricity, and Chu (2014) noted that the basic problem related to cultural/racial bias in research is ethnocentrism. Androcentricity is the social condition that favors men, and ethnocentrism is the social condition which privileges mainstream

culture and the predominant race. Eichler later expanded her work with Mary Anne Burke, to develop the BIAS FREE Framework (2006), a three-dimensional matrix that identifies and eliminates biases created by social hierarchies such as sexism, racism, ableism, ageism, etc. found in research, legislation, programs and other practices.

### ***Seven Cultural Biases in Research***

Informed by Eichler (1988), Chu (2014) proposed seven cultural biases in order to identify and eliminate cultural and racial biases when conducting research. These ethnocentric problems, except the concept of “privilege,” parallel Eichler’s seven sexist problems.

1. *Ethnocentrism*—This is the act of judging another culture using the norms of one’s own culture, consciously or unconsciously, and considering it more important or significant than others. In the research process, -ethnocentrism occurs when researchers, who belong to the majority culture/race, overlook or devalue other cultures and their communities. Thus, research is conducted in accordance with the parameters of the majority culture. In the United States (US) and much of the Western world, the White race and their respective cultures are considered at the center, and minorities are marginalized or oppressed, and are viewed as passive objects rather than active subjects, acted upon rather than being actors.
2. *Over-generalization, over-specificity*—Over-generalization occurs when one cultural/racial group has been studied (sample) and is generalized to all cultures/races. An example would be research on e-book use in libraries in the Southern States of the US (where historically there are large numbers of African Americans), which used language that generalized the findings to the region, but did not specify that

mainly White library users were studied. Conversely, over-specificity occurs in a study when it is impossible to determine if the findings or other aspects of the research are applicable to one or all races/cultures/ethnicities. Many of the problems associated with biased or oppressive language fit in this category (e.g., racist language, cultural omission, ethnic exclusion, etc.). For example, in a study that uses the term Hispanic, does it also include people from Spain, and when the term White is used, do people of Middle Eastern and North African descent consider themselves in this category, which is how they are currently classified in the US Census?

3. *Culture/race insensitivity*—Insensitivity takes place in research when culture/race is ignored as a social variable. If the aim of a study is to be able to access the community and obtain authentic responses, the cultural practices of the community under study need to be adopted, as in those communities that have norms about who may interact with an older person or someone of a specific gender, and how they engage in these circumstances. Other examples include instances when race or culture is not considered in a study, i.e., not used as an analytic variable, or when race and culture is considered as the only analytic variable rather than a multivariate category. When studying ethnic or racial groups, the use of additional variables such as length of time in country, knowledge of heritage language, ethnic media use, etc. would reveal aspects of the group’s experience or circumstances that are associated with observations related to race or culture.
4. *Double Standards*—A study uses double standards when it treats or measures identical behavior, traits, or situations differently. For example, in the US, when discussing film, the label Foreign Films rather than Internation-

al Films is often used, which results in the categorization of non-US films as “Other.” In the music field, the category World Music has been used to group the various types of music outside the US. In contrast many more labels exist to recognize the variety of music in the US such as jazz, blues, country, and pop.

5. *Culture/race appropriateness*—Appropriateness is present when human characteristics are assigned only to one or another culture/race, and they are very important in the race/culture/ethnicity. Some cultures have certain values, traditions or practices, but it doesn’t mean that everyone in the cultural group applies them or cannot adjust depending on the cultural milieu. Culture is pervasive but not immutable (e.g., nature vs. nurture). For example, in Latin American culture, there is an orientation toward the present, so there is flexibility toward the notion of time. Thus, in social circumstances, there is a reference to “Latino time,” which for some means arriving late, but it means that one will arrive to the social event at the time that is appropriate to the individual rather than necessarily at the start of the event. In professional circumstances, however, punctuality is standard practice.
6. *Privilege*—In research, privilege occurs when researchers are a part of the dominant culture/race, hold specific assumptions to be normative, and don’t have to think about or adapt their research practices because the system is made for members of the dominant group. Moreover, in contrast to ethnocentrism, which emphasizes how other cultures/races are judged, privilege is the set of advantages or immunities that researchers who belong to the dominant culture/race have. In the US, for example, Western theories and research methodologies are taught, and assumed to be applicable for any research context by researchers,

objectivity is valued, English is the language of communication, and familiarity with consumer research and other forms of surveys is the norm.

7. *Culture/race dichotomism*—Dichotomism occurs when races/cultures/ethnicities are treated as discrete categories, attributing human characteristics to a race/culture/ethnicity, and ignoring intra-group differences. This leads to an exaggeration of differences rather than an acknowledgement of both differences and similarities. An example of this is when a minority group is associated with a feature or stereotype and it is attributed to all in the group, such as being good dancers or math geniuses.

### ***Ten Strategies to Reduce Research Bias***

Although researchers may be aware of and learn the research biases noted above, awareness or understanding doesn’t necessarily lead to counter-action. Thus, the following strategies offer essential and doable actions to reduce research bias:

1. *Consider culture/race as a research factor.* All research should consider culture/race as influencing the researcher or study, and as appropriate, adopt it as a social variable for study. Furthermore, researchers need to consider a multivariate approach to understanding culture and/or race.
2. *Understand how to conduct research within the applicable sociocultural context.* When conducting research of a community outside one’s own, there is a need to learn and adopt culturally appropriate and relevant methodology and methods. By applying cultural relativism, the researcher can understand another culture in its own terms and using its own norms and rules.
3. *Question objectivity and subjectivity.* In the name of objectivity, research is overlooked as a social act in order for it to be deemed robust. However,

by acknowledging subjectivity in research, it allows for a clearer interpretation of the findings. Thus, research is in fact more robust when there is transparency, which can be achieved by reporting any issues in a “limitations” statement often found in research publications, or by adding a separate positionality or transparency statement.

4. *Recognize one's positionality.* Researchers should know their limits, weaknesses, and attitudes regarding the research topic, methodologies, and methods in order to identify whether and what assistance and knowledge they need, and to maintain transparency through stating the study's limitations or the researchers' positions.
5. *Engage in reflexivity.* By reflecting on the entire research process and context, the researcher is systematically attending to their effect on the study, and how these actions, attitudes, values, and beliefs impact knowledge construction. Researchers can use journaling to reflect, which allows them to make the research process itself a focus of inquiry. Overt biases may be apparent in the regular course of research, but this reflexive exercise is critical in identifying unintended discrimination, such as micro-aggressions. A micro-aggression is an action or expression that, while made without conscious choice, has the same effect as conscious, intended discrimination. For example, when one asks a person of color “where are you from?” it signals to that individual their foreigner status.
6. *Attend to Intentionality.* Research is not just for research or knowledge's sake. It is critical to know the reason for conducting a study and its potential impact. In learning about the education performance of a community, for example, is it only to understand the community, or will the research result in stigmatizing or helping its members? Funding for research on multicultural or minority issues is often targeted or a one-time effort, leading to one-time research that is not sustained, and/or to drive-by research, where researchers are only interested in the research as an object and not a subject, without a sustained commitment to the community under study.
7. *Use the appropriate language.* Be cognizant about language use, in terms of using language that does not offend, language at the appropriate level of understanding, and the language that the subject prefers, which may not be the language spoken by the researcher(s).
8. *Understand authenticity vs. authority.* When considering the intellectual capital of researchers and subjects, the notions of authority and authenticity need to be clear and considered. Chu (2000) describes authority (established reputation) as held by those who have subject mastery or expertise, gained through academic training, extensive experience, or established or proven through prior work. Authority is also reflected in the way that factual evidence is presented or documented in a work by footnotes or references. Authenticity (being true to culture), on the other hand, refers to knowledge that is realistic and true to the cultures presented, to the situation, and to life based on the actual experience or perspective of the culture itself or created by members of the particular cultures. It presents the internal perspective rather than external perspective of a culture/race.
9. *Diversify the research community.* By having researchers from different communities and experiences, diversity creates the conditions for not only diversity of research topics pursued but also of methods and methodologies applied. A more diverse research community also creates an inclusive and robust peer-review process that

welcomes diverse topics, methods and methodologies.

10. *Practice a scholarship of dialogue.* A research subject (i.e., participant) shouldn't just become an object. Questions and research conditions should allow them to provide authentic responses, and to the extent possible, allow them to be at the table to present their perspectives on their research experiences and the topic. A scholarship of dialogue (Chu, 2005) calls for research participants to have a voice and be credited for the research by involving them at conferences and other forms of dissemination.

In summary, because meaning and learning are contextual, it is important to recognize biases (positive or negative) in the process of any multicultural research or academic endeavor. As Matsuda notes “. . . where we stand shapes what we see, what we believe, and what privileges and subordinations we experience” (1996, p. xi). Through the conscious act of recognizing one's prejudice, research has a chance of becoming less biased and providing answers that approximate reality. Through the conscious act of stating one's positionality, even research that is biased would be less so, because both the researcher and the consumer/reader are informed/aware of what is influencing the research.

### **Cultural Communication Competencies to Bridge Barriers in Communication Interactions— Howard Rodriguez-Mori**

It does not take long to realize how much society in the United States has changed in just 20 years. Technology innovations that are common in our daily lives and workplaces did not, for the most part, exist back then. In a global society, the demographical composition of many countries has also changed. One example of this is the United States, whose population is, and will progressively become, more and

more diverse (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009; Passel & Cohn, 2008; Pew Research Center, 2013; Vincent & Velkoff, 2010). As modern society strives to keep up with technological advances and innovations, it is of equal importance, and perhaps, imperative, that LIS programs also consider the inclusion of cultural communication competencies into their curricula.

No other function of library service requires more attention to advance diverse interpersonal communication competencies than those that depend on direct contact with people, whether face-to-face, by phone, or online. Library professionals providing information (reference), outreach, and other customer-related services will invariably engage in communication interactions with the public, and unless they are trained in intercultural communication competencies, they may, inadvertently create barriers and hinder the outcome of their service.

Let's take a closer look. Communication is the process of creating or sharing meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Verderber & Verderber, 2005), but there are also cultural factors that affect how people from diverse groups communicate, perceive, and deduce meaning from communication interactions.

When people interact with others (communicate), the intention is to transmit a message, and, in doing so, the sender tends to assume that the message is received and translated by the intended target person or group according to the initial intention or purpose of the sender. Yet, as the reader may note from the Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (Case, 2012), the message is usually affected by factors that may or not be in control of the sender. Cultural factors can, and often are some of those affecting factors.

Communication is much more than just words. Communication is a multimodal process that uses the verbal medium (voice), voice intonation, facial expressions, and body language (Kress, 2010;

Okun, 2002). At the receiving end, people will receive or capture the content of the message, but also the facial expressions, body language, and the intonation of the voice, and create a combined interpretation. For some, understanding the verbal message is more than sufficient and will pay little attention to other communication factors. Yet, some people tend also to notice if the message carries more than a verbal message and will recognize, and interpret other messages. Examples of this include, among others, perceptions and hints of sarcasm, happiness, sadness, and anger. There are people in some cultures that are more prone to perceive these hints and interpret them according to their cultural lens. Unfortunately for our profession, many public service librarians are not yet aware of this multimodal aspect of communication and its potential to effects on customer service.

How much or how little people capture from the multimodality of communication depends on their cultural background. According to Edward T. Hall (1976), cultural groups vary in how much, or little, they use elements of the context of communication to draw their understanding, or perceived meaning of the messages they receive. As such, some cultures will draw meaning exclusively from the literal meaning of words (low context). On the other hand, high context cultures will draw meaning from a combination of elements, including the verbal message plus their interpretation of non-verbal (conscious or unconscious) messages.

Further, diverse groups will infer meaning from perceptions of preferential treatment to others, or deferential treatment received when there are no obvious reasons for such treatment. Observed examples of preferential/deferential treatment include, but are not limited to:

- Customer service/front desk staff who try their very best to make and establish contact with mainstream population customers, yet avoiding making con-

tact, or provide the minimum service possible to others that look (or are assumed to be) different.

- A marked change in attitude when interacting with people who are, (or are assumed to be) from diverse and minority groups. Observed change in attitude may include friendly, “service with a smile” to mainstream customers that without reason changes to a frown and a stark attitude when servicing perceived minority customers. Selective use courtesies and small talk (and lack thereof) are also noticed.
- Preferential or full service treatment to mainstream customers, while limiting options to others. This includes offering alternatives or options for services to some customers, while failing to offer similar alternatives to people perceived as minorities.

Perceived differences in service, unfortunately, tend to be interpreted as the organization’s culture rather than the employee’s attitude, and this has lasting negative consequences. When people from high-context cultures perceive disdain or a lack of desire to provide good and equitable service, they tend to look for alternatives elsewhere to satisfy their information needs, and some may choose not to return to the library for some time, or forever.

In communication interactions, diverse groups use and interpret context in different ways. As a result, there are best practice variants that work in some cultures but not in all. Examples of how people from different cultural backgrounds and nationalities react to differences in service abound in the professional business, communication, sociology, and marketing literature. For example, people from some cultures will be put off or highly upset if they are not addressed with their expected level of professional demeanor. Others, however, will not mind at all if they are treated casually (Harris & Moran, 2007). Some groups prefer to “get straight to business” without much consideration

to other factors, yet others will take their time to study how they are treated in order to determine whether the individual or institution can be trusted with their business. For them, until trust can be established, they will avoid engaging in their intended business or information interaction (Hall, 1990; Korzenny & Korzenny, 2012; Schaefer, 2006). Other groups have different nonverbal communication preferences. For example, some groups have strong opinions and interpretations about eye contact while interacting. Some people expect to make direct eye contact. Yet others will find it offensive, or will just hesitate and act confused (Harris & Moran, 2007). These behaviors and preferences are just a few examples of culturally based factors that may affect the outcome of communication interactions.

The question for LIS educators to consider is: how do we incorporate cultural communication competencies to our curriculum? Let us not forget that excellent customer service is not only expected of current LIS students (future library professionals), but it is also the backbone of LIS ethical service. As we teach our students:

We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous [verbal and nonverbal] responses to all requests. (American Library Association, 2007)

In order to provide the highest level of service, LIS students must become competent and pay active attention to all communication elements. The verbal message is not an exclusive factor anymore. The traditional, one-size-fits-all service model is already obsolete. If LIS students enter the work force being ignorant and incompetent in multicultural communication, their interactions with customers will be affected. Those affected more adversely will take notice, and will likely share their experiences with family, friends, and

those in their social networks. As a result, the lack of multicultural communication competence could have a multiplying effect and lasting consequences for libraries. If our students are to become the front face of libraries in this increasingly multicultural and diverse global society, they should be made aware of, and trained on, cultural communication competencies.

### **Do it Yourself/Do it With Others: Blending Teaching, Research, Service—Loriene Roy**

I am an Anishinabe woman, enrolled or affiliated with the White Earth Reservation, and a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. My own perspectives on advancing diversity within LIS education reflect my cultural identity, my strong belief in the potential contributions of service learning, and my treasured connections with other indigenous peoples around the world. I express these connections through direct service, publications, teaching, and collaborations.

When alone, I continually return to two books by others for inspiration and support: Greg Cajete's *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* and Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. *Look to the Mountain* affirms the indigenous worldview as a process of seeking a fulfilled life, one that is a process of being, asking, seeking, making, having, sharing, and celebrating. *Decolonizing Methodologies* reminds me that the processes of working as an indigenous scholar involves employing strategies that diverge from the quantitative and even qualitative methods that are more commonly discussed in graduate research methods courses. This involves recognizing and valuing the processes such as claiming, testifying, storytelling, remembering, returning, naming, and protecting. My own cultural background is based on a clan system. This tells me that successful efforts evolve from ensuring that human efforts

are balanced in terms of leadership, learning, sustenance, medicine, and defense.

LIS faculty can support and advance their own involvement in the philosophy of diversity through service learning or civic engagement. This is an academic approach that enables LIS educators to blend their teaching, research, and service while including students. Over the past fifteen years, my students and I have contributed to work that extends beyond individuals' life spans and across borders. In this way, we have expanded the image of the solo-researcher, who is doing-it-by-him/herself to a do-it-with-others model that more honestly reflects and respects true collaborations. My students and I have created our diversity community of schools, museums, information workers of color, tribal colleges, and professional organizations within the United States as well as with colleagues in Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand. These connections were aided by various tools, especially the use of technologies that have allowed us to communicate across time zones and create and contribute to demonstration projects.

While I am not a specialist in school librarianship, I had a small role in the late 1990s in a large grant project called Four Directions that assisted tribal school educators within the United States in using technology to develop culturally based curriculum. These connections, including visits to a number of schools, and the support of American Library Association Past-President Sarah E. Long, led to our launching a national reading club for Native children through their tribal school libraries. Operated largely by my graduate students, over ten years we delivered over 100,000 new books and developed reading promotion events involving some sixty schools, including a school serving Maori children on the North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand, enrolling children from kindergarten through high school. These events included sponsoring writing and art contests, a regional battle of the books, literacy open houses, scary story open mic

events, and a book drop that involved the delivery a free new book to 10,000 Native teens during National Library Week. The Four Directions grant also involved museum staff and provided opportunities for a number of my students to work on digital initiatives at the National Museum of the American Indian including the creation of online exhibits.

Over time, students developed end products to serve indigenous peoples. They did this in formal classes, through independent work, or through volunteering. They developed websites for a Native filmmaker, instruction videos for tribal colleges in the United States, Canada, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, evaluated the collection at a tribal public library, and co-authored/co-edited books and other publications. They traveled with me to conferences and meetings in Arizona, Montana, Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. These conferences included the International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums; the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education; the International Indigenous Librarians Forum; and the annual conference of LI-ANZA, the Library and Information Association of New Zealand/Te Rau Herenga o Aotearoa. Other students traveled to tribal lands in Arizona and Washington to helping catalog collections or organize map collections. Whenever I received an invitation to join a project, this opened the door to include students who would be my witnesses and collaborators. This brought students in contact with key staff at WebJunction, the Fetzer Institute, and a publishing team for ABC Clio/Greenwood and to the ALA, especially during the time I served as President-Elect and President.

In time, the student group enlarged as I served as an adjunct professor in the School of Information Resources & Library Science at the University of Arizona and in the Library and Information Science Program at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I was able to recruit American

Indian and Native students in our iSchool with support from one of the first Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grants from the US Institute of Museum and Library Services. Those graduates are now connecting with other Native new professionals, creating the next generation of Native information workers developing innovative services and interdisciplinary scholarship.

We learned much about program management through these experiences. Work with indigenous peoples has its own ethical and social concerns. I offer these recommendations to other LIS faculty members interesting in finding their path to advancing diversity:

1. Begin with friendship. Meet Native people on their ground. Start by attending both local events and professional meetings where Native people gather and their issues are discussed. While indigenous librarianship is discussed at meetings and programs of the American Indian Library Association (AILA) and at the annual Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries & Museums (ATALM) conference, consider attending and participating in other meetings of such groups as the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WiPC:E), and LIANZA conferences.
2. Create your global community. Native peoples view their families and connections beyond traditional governmental boundaries.
3. Be attentive to protocol or the Native ways of communicating. Ask for guidance.
4. Reflect on your role in collaborative efforts. Consider your motivation for participation. You need not always lead an initiative; sometimes listening is the best action. Read about the concept of shared authority.
5. Be inclusive, especially with regards

to communicating the efforts and their outcomes.

6. Be patient. Remember to provide service without expectation; lessons and gifts will return your efforts.
7. And take time to acknowledge the lessons you learn: celebrate, honor, and dream.

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