

From Information Literacy to College Success: Ensuring Equitable Educational Experiences for First- Generation Students, A Practitioner's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

First-generation students, an integral part of the increasingly diverse college population today, often find themselves marginalized from access to information resources and educational opportunities. As centers of the university intellectual life, academic libraries have untapped potential to help first-generation students overcome their lesser preparedness for college that results from the unique economic, cultural, and family backgrounds these students possess.

This poster contributes to this ongoing discourse by elucidating the prominent role academic libraries can play in first-generation student learning and engagement. The author details the process of planning and developing a brand-new credit-bearing library research course to illustrate how tailored information literacy initiatives addressing the learning needs of first-generation students can be a viable solution to the problem of disempowerment in higher education. The poster highlights a practitioner perspective on major aspects of the course implementation, including needs analysis, content creation, assessment techniques to evaluate both student learning and teaching effectiveness in this semester-long course, along with challenges encountered along the way.

The project calls for enhancing the extent of existing library support for first-generation students. It outlines strategies librarians may employ to help overcome the stress of the college experience, provide more equitable educational opportunities, and increase retention and completion rates of underrepresented student populations. Above all, this project advocates for re-conceptualizing LIS education with greater emphasis on the issues of diversity and social justice. Such a shift in curricular focus is imperative for better scaffolding contemporary professional practice that seeks to create a positive academic experience for students from any background.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Academic libraries; Information literacy; Curriculum.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

First-generation college students; student success; information literacy course design.