Bringing Critical Disability Studies to Library & Information Studies Pedagogy and Practice: A Dissertation Proposal

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ABSTRACT

Few LIS courses apply a critical lens to the understanding of disability and its impact upon library practice. Library staff can have conscious and/or dysconscious ableist understandings of disability that shape their interactions with disabled patrons and staff. Dysconscious ableism is a distorted or impaired understanding of disability that arises from an incomplete analysis of social reality and implicitly accepts and reproduces dominant ableist norms and privileges. Broadly viewed and investigated, much of the field of librarianship is dependent upon pre-social models of disability, that are both uncritical and neutral. While greatly valuing the social model and acknowledging its limitations I have sought a more critical, flexible, and applicable model that can better inform LIS instruction and library practice. At my institution I designed and instruct an LIS course specifically focused on understanding disability and serving the information needs of diversely disabled patrons, while pursuing my doctorate in cultural foundations of education. This WIP poster accompanies the next task in my doctoral program of developing a dissertation proposal addressing the questions: 1) How does dysconscious ableism operate in public librarianship? 2) What are disabled library patron and staff experiences of ableism in public library physical and virtual spaces? 3) What might be done to disrupt dysconscious ableism and to move public library staff toward a more liberatory, anti-ableist praxis of librarianship?

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Critical librarianship; Public library; Curriculum; Pedagogy; Research methods

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Critical disability studies; Library practice; Dissertation proposal