

Encouraging Cultural Competence Among LIS Professionals via the Critical Incident Technique and Reflective Journaling

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ABSTRACT

In a political climate in which intellectual freedom, particularly regarding Critical Race Theory (CRT) and other diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts are under attack, courses with DEI content are especially relevant. Examining Library and Information Studies (LIS) curriculum within the United States, scholars have repeatedly found DEI content, despite being foundational to the LIS profession, is insufficient in preparing future LIS professionals. Scholars, throughout decades of research within LIS education, have explored various lines of inquiry, including multicultural LIS education (Carter, 1978), recruitment challenges that contribute to a lack of diversity (Childers and Adams, 1972), trainings, and professional development opportunities to better serve diverse populations (Simsova, 1980), and LIS curricula at institutions across the United States (Cohen, 1980). More recent scholarship has provided innovative efforts and approaches regarding recruitment, curriculum, and pedagogy, while also presenting the necessity to expand conceptions of diversity within LIS education (Adkins, Virden, & Yier, 2015; Jaeger et al., 2015; Roy, 2015). Despite extant literature and professional attention to DEI issues, the LIS education, and the profession at large, remains largely White (Bajjaly & Drulia, 2021) and can improve (Chancellor, 2019; DuMont, 1986; Jaeger et al., 2011; Mestre, 2010; Ndumu & Chancellor, 2021). The focus on these issues within LIS education is significant for the training of future LIS professionals as, once employed, opportunities for additional training are limited given the one-shot nature of many professional development opportunities.

This presentation describes one attempt to effectively incorporate DEI content, specifically cultural competence, into a 4-week continuing education course in which participants can incorporate material into their professional activities via the critical incident technique and reflective journaling. After discussing existing scholarship regarding LIS education to establish the need for concerted efforts to implement useful and actionable approaches to DEI concepts, the

presentation describes a continuing education course in which the critical incident technique and reflective journaling are offered as tools to effectively translate coursework into professional practice. A common, although not universal, approach to DEI and cultural competence training within LIS is one-off workshops, with many professional development opportunities limited by nature of their delivery. The present course's emphasis on continual reflection via journaling and the critical incident technique addresses the limitations of many professional development opportunities.

The presentation discusses a variety of topics pertinent to LIS curriculum. Instructional modality offers both opportunities and challenges, both of which this presentation addresses. As an online course, striking a balance between asynchronous content with synchronous meetings presents possibilities to check understanding and promote student engagement. As a continuing education course – a form of professional development – necessitates an understanding of educators that students' schedules are full and, as working professionals, they have demands on their time that affect engagement. includes suggestions for professionals and educators to keep up to date with emerging research (e.g., the move from cultural competence to cultural humility within recent scholarship), incorporating course content into required LIS curriculum, and outlines avenues for future research.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Curriculum; Pedagogy; Continuing education; Online learning; Social justice.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Cultural Competence; LIS Education; Continuing Education; Professional Development.

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