

Decolonizing Community-based Teaching and Learning in LIS: A Path to Equity Literacy

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ABSTRACT

Library and information science (LIS) education has long relied on traditional needs assessment models that often reinforce and perpetuate institutional biases inherent in the process. This poster demonstrates how contemporary LIS pedagogy can be changed to reframe this practice as a critical, reflective process that challenges systemic inequities and amplifies marginalized voices. Within the context of a graduate-level course offered at an ALA-accredited Master of Library Science program serving the needs of rural, economically disadvantaged, and otherwise at-risk communities, the author details efforts to conceptualize community information needs analysis as an act of resistance that engages students in structural critique and participatory action to recognize and eradicate systemic inequities in library service design. The poster provides specific examples of assignments and pedagogical tools that have been implemented across five sections of the course to help students identify and challenge exclusionary library practices and their impacts on marginalized groups. The effectiveness of each strategy will be discussed, such as auditing library policies, particularly regarding access restrictions and neutrality rhetoric, developing asset-based community-led assessment models, and analysis of language justice barriers at a local library serving immigrant communities. The poster concludes with a discussion of how LIS education must evolve with a greater focus on fostering student agency in learning and future professional practice. These necessary changes are discussed through the equity literacy lens to highlight the impact of anti-oppressive frameworks on information access and moving beyond urban-centric models of both education and service in the field.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Community engagement; Information needs; Social justice; Pedagogy.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Community-based teaching and learning; Equity literacy; LIS education.

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