Finding "Diversity Levers" in the Core Library and Information Science Curriculum: A Social Justice Imperative

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Abstract

In this exploratory study, the researchers examined the core library and information science (LIS) curriculum, looking for diversity levers, or conceptual access points, where transformative academic knowledge related to diversity and social justice could be meaningfully integrated. Multicultural curriculum reform, conceptualized as a social justice approach, was the guiding framework for the research design and analysis. The researchers began by establishing what constitutes the core curriculum and essential knowledge taught across thirty-six ALA-accredited master's of library and information science degree programs. These data were then used to construct a survey that went to one hundred LIS faculty at ALA institutions who provided pedagogical knowledge, ideas, and resources for infusing diversity and social justice into the core curriculum. The findings suggest that there are certain core LIS courses that have explicit diversity levers, or areas where there are natural connections to diversity and social justice content, while others have emergent or implicit diversity levers. The differences among these types of diversity levers are explained, and some of the pedagogical resources that were shared by the survey respondents are included. The Information Technology core course shows the most promise for integrating diversity and social justice pedagogies.

Introduction

Social justice is based upon the idea of making equitable changes in society that can help to disrupt cycles of oppression (Clayton & Williams, 2004). One of the primary ways in which educators in the United States

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have worked to achieve the goals of social justice is through multicultural curriculum reform (see, e.g., Banks, 2010; Bennett, 2001). A driving force behind multicultural curriculum reform is the recognition that the mainstream curriculum taught in the educational institutions in the United States tends to reflect Eurocentric biases that work to reproduce existing social hierarchies (Gay, 2000). More specifically, in the library and information science (LIS) educational context, Pawley (2006) asserts that the traditional LIS curriculum taught in master's programs in North America transmits a knowledge inheritance that "perpetuates white privilege and presents barriers to racial diversification in LIS" (p. 153). These kinds of curriculum imbalances can have a negative effect on all students, but particularly on students of color whose histories and unique foundations of knowledge have historically been subjugated in mainstream classrooms (Carter, 2007). When teachers work to offset these exclusionary aspects of the curriculum in their teaching, they are, in essence, teaching toward social justice. In doing so, teachers function as "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1984) who recognize their power to produce and legitimate various political, economic, and social interests through the pedagogies they endorse and utilize in their classrooms. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of such a critical pedagogy because they can begin to see themselves as integral to the knowledge construction process and to understand that learning in school is a value-laden process that must be constantly interrogated by multiple stakeholders (i.e., teachers, students, administrators) from a broad range of cultural perspectives.

This article reports on a study that examined how multicultural curriculum reform concepts and pedagogies might be implemented in core courses taught in LIS programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). Although LIS scholars have examined the state of diversity-related courses offered at ALA institutions (Subramaniam & Jaeger, 2011) and have looked at instructors' perceptions and practices for integrating diversity across the LIS curriculum (Mehra, Olson, & Ahmad, 2011), there is a dearth of empirical research that provides a practical roadmap for helping LIS faculty to integrate diversity and multicultural education activities into the core curriculum. The current study seeks to help fill this research gap by reporting the results of a survey in which a group of LIS faculty shared teaching strategies and resources geared toward integrating diversity- and social justice–related concepts into the common core classes offered at ALA-accredited institutions.

The Conceptual Relationships between Social Justice and Multicultural Education

In keeping with the theme of this issue of *Library Trends*, this section compares and contrasts the conceptual linkages between multicultural education and social justice as described in two seminal writings from these

respective areas. Each of these works offers foundational ideas, language, and terminology for demonstrating these interrelationships. In this discussion, Mehra, Rioux, & Albright's (2009) five typologies of social justice (as summarized from historical and philosophical developments) will be juxtaposed against Banks's (2010) conceptualization of multicultural education as a field of study. Using Mehra et al.'s work as a point of reference, Bonnici, Maata, Wells, Brodsky, & Meadows (2012) list the five major social justice typologies: justice as fairness, utilitarianism, justice as desert, egalitarianism/equity, and distributive justice. Banks's work was chosen for comparison because he is considered a pioneer scholar in multicultural education who helped to lay the theoretical foundations for research and practice in the field. Moreover, the conceptual framework for the current study was built upon Banks's five dimensions of multicultural curriculum reform: contention integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure (see Banks, 1995). Mehra et al.'s (2009) encyclopedia entry was chosen because it provides the first comprehensive treatment of the topic of social justice within the context of LIS, the disciplinary domain of the current study.

The most obvious commonality between multicultural education and the broader notion of social justice is that they both are concerned with changing social reality in ways that make life more equitable for people who have been marginalized or oppressed. Sleeter (1994) writes that "in its inception, multicultural education was clearly connected with a broad social and political racial struggle that was rooted in a structuralist understanding of oppression" (p. 33). The following definition of multicultural education provides a clear basis to begin the comparison with social justice ideals. Banks & Banks (1995) describe multicultural education as "a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic and women's studies" (p. xii). The key words within this description that coincide with the basic thrust of social justice ideals and language are "to increase . . . equity." Inherent in this phrase is a change-oriented goal that seeks to balance existing power asymmetries that benefit only a select few. This same transformative focal point is present in each of the five social justice typologies described in Mehra et al.'s work and further distilled by Bonnici et al. (2012).

As figure 1 illustrates, the conceptual relationships between multicultural education and social justice can be explained by situating the five typologies of social justice distilled by Bonnici et al. (2012) within one of three broad conceptual containers. These three containers represent the essential characteristics of multicultural education described by Banks (2010) as an *idea*, a *process*, and a *movement*. Meanwhile, the five typologies

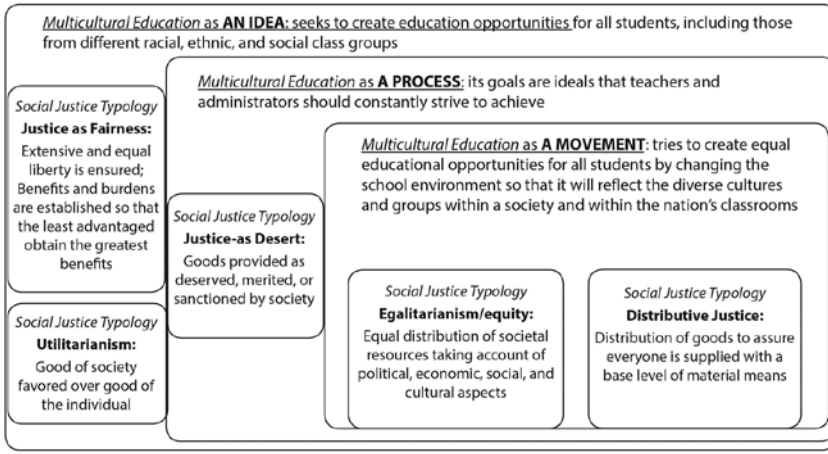

Figure 1. Conceptual relationships between multicultural education and social justice.

of social justice will be contextualized within North's (2006) three spheres of social justice discourse in education: macro/micro, sameness/difference, and redistribution/recognition. The following discussion elaborates on how these typologies and conceptualizations correlate to one another.

As an idea, multicultural education seeks to create education opportunities for all students across different racial, ethnic, and social class groups (Banks, 2010). When one examines the five social justice typologies, there are two areas that seem to signify a larger idea that can be espoused: *justice as fairness* and *utilitarianism*. Such a categorization is supported by North's (2006) analysis of the meaning behind social justice terminology in education. The author cites two paradigmatic discourse themes in social justice: redistribution and recognition. The recognition tradition of social justice discourse emerges from Hegelian philosophy and emphasizes an "ideal reciprocal relation between subjects in which each sees the other as equal and also separate from it" (p. 513). The *justice as fairness* typology of social justice could, therefore, be linked with the recognition paradigm insofar as fairness connotes a basic belief stance that all people should enjoy similar levels of freedoms, whether they be material (income, housing, education) or social (rights and respect) (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In the context of schools, a justice as fairness approach to multicultural education would acknowledge the unique "funds of knowledge" and contributions of historically marginalized groups as an idea worth supporting in the teaching and learning process (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Similarly, the idea of social justice as *utilitarianism*, whereby the good of

society is favored over the good of the individual, could be seen as compatible with the recognition paradigm of social justice insofar as cultural diversity is a societal goal that affirms equal recognition for all historically marginalized cultural groups. Such recognition is about appreciating and respecting differences, rather than merely tolerating them. Fraser & Honneth (2003) explain further that "social movements of recognition labor for cultural or symbolic transformation by recognizing and positively valorizing cultural diversity or transforming wholesale societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that could change everyone's social identity" (North, 2006, p. 514).

One might argue that the *egalitarianism/equity* social justice typology should be considered *as an idea* based on the simple notion that equity is a fundamental idea worth striving for (Rawls, 2001). However, the present authors chose instead to situate the *egalitarianism/equity* social justice typology within the *as a movement* conceptual container, because the description that accompanies it focuses on the equal distribution of societal resources taking account of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. The word "distribution" connotes some form of action being taken to ameliorate unequal material conditions, which is why this typology better fits in the conceptual container that connotes action rather than the more strictly ideological category. North (2006) points out that the redistribution sphere of social justice involves "some kind of economic restructuring, whether it be a redistribution of income or the democratization of procedures by which investment decisions are made that alters the relation of particular classes to the market or the means of production" (p. 512). One way in which multicultural education scholars take up the idea of equity through a redistribution approach to social justice is through multicultural curriculum reform (Banks, 1995). In this realm, educators attempt to balance the asymmetrical Eurocentric bias that has been concretized through textbooks and teaching practices by looking for opportunities to insert the contributions and ways of knowing of people of color into the learning process.

However, critics might argue for a more broad interpretation of the *egalitarianism/equity* social justice typology that would recognize that schools are societal resources insofar as they act as sorting mechanisms, providing different students with access to different kinds of experiences, opportunities, and knowledge that then shape their future opportunities (Lewis, 2004). Far from functioning as great equalizers, schools too often perpetuate existing inequalities. *As a process,* therefore, the goals of multicultural education are ideals that teachers and administrators should constantly strive to achieve (Banks, 2010). Unlike the previous conceptual container that focused more on ideas, this process-oriented area foregrounds the objectives and strategies that are needed in order to meet broader goals. Specifically, Rawls (2001) describes five distributive primary social goods:

> Basic liberties, such as freedom of thought, that enable the development and application of the capacity to pursue and revise a conception of the goods; freedom of movement and free choice of occupation wherein diverse employment opportunities are available; powers and choices of offices of responsibility that enable the development of various self-governing and social capacities of the self; income and wealth as all-purpose means to achieve a wide range of ends; and a social basis of self-respect, emerging from society's basic institutions and making possible a vital sense of self-worth and, thus, the ability to realize [one's] highest order interests and advance [one's] ends with self-confidence. (p. 522)

For example, in the realm of education, a school administrator or faculty member might establish a set of best practices that reflect the principles of multicultural education in areas such as hiring and promoting racially diverse teachers and administrators; infusing an ethnic studies program into the curriculum; incorporating a climate of respect for diversity and inclusion in the school environment; and addressing the disproportionate numbers of African American students in Special Education. Such actions would exemplify the way in which social justice can be applied in the educational context through a systematic process. Similarly, the *justice as desert* typology was placed in the process-based conceptual area because of the focus on goods provided as deserved, merited, or sanctioned by society. In order to provide goods based on merit, one has to develop some sort of process for procuring said goods on behalf of the intended beneficiaries (North, 2006).

Finally, *as a movement,* multicultural education tries to create equal educational opportunities for all students by changing the school environment so that it will reflect the diverse cultures and groups within a society and within the nation's classrooms (Banks, 2010). The notion of change is central to understanding the essence of this category and how it correlates with the social justice typologies being presented. Unlike the previous conceptual categories, the *movement* area focuses on actionable change that can be measured. For example, Sleeter (1994) takes up the notion of change and movement with multicultural education when she argues that any education that claims to be multicultural is also social reconstructionist. North (2006) further contends that multicultural education "should both teach students how to examine critically and in sustained ways the relationships among and consequences of White supremacy, patriarchy, and advanced capitalism and help them translate these critiques into collective, transformative political action" (p. 515).

The two remaining social justice typologies that align with the idea of multicultural education as a movement are *egalitarianism/equity* and *distributive justice.* One of the key phrases in the egalitarianism/equity typology that triggers an association with this broader conceptual category is the notion of "equal distribution" of societal resources, taking account of

political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. In particular, the term "distribution" connotes a tangible process whose outcomes can be measured. An educational example of this social justice typology would be a multicultural curriculum reform effort whereby concrete changes are made to the subject matter and how it is taught in ways that can be measured through various student-learning assessments.

Teaching toward Diversity and Social Justice

Many colleges and universities in the United States have developed diversity-related strategic plans. These plans recognize the benefits that student diversity brings to the overall campus milieu (see, e.g., Retention Advisory Committee, 2013). However, these initiatives tend to focus on representational diversity or student body counts rather than on leveraging the powerful benefits of diversity to create better groups, schools, firms, and societies (Page, 2008). In short, having a diverse student body does not, in itself, guarantee that a more substantive type of diversity will permeate the campus. A more powerful manifestation of diversity would be to see college students moving past their comfortable worldviews, perspectives, and ethnic silos to explore ideas and curriculum content through different cultural lenses and cross-cultural exchanges (Tienda, 2013).

Lehman (2004), however, posits that our human tendency is to sort ourselves into islands of comfortable consensus. If this is true, then recruiting a more culturally diverse student body is only half of the solution to becoming a more inclusive LIS profession. Despite well-meaning diversity recruitment initiatives, students (from both dominant and nondominant backgrounds) tend to self-segregate into homogeneous groups. Therefore, students need more opportunities in the classroom to challenge mainstream perspectives and to interact with students and faculty who have differing ideological viewpoints, backgrounds, and experiences from their own (Tienda, 2013). Diversity initiatives will remain tangential and ineffective unless the core curriculum is imbued with multicultural content, perspectives, and frameworks for teaching and learning.

It is difficult to dismiss representational approaches to diversity in LIS education that seek to offset the unequal cultural balances that exist in the library workforce. According to a recent American Library Association diversity report (ALA, 2010), 8 percent of the library workforce represents more than 40 percent of the population. Interestingly, the iSchool at the University of Maryland (UMD) has seen an increase in students from historically marginalized backgrounds, which some faculty have said is NOT attributed to any strategic diversity recruitment effort (Jaeger, Subramaniam, Jones, & Bertot, 2011). Rather, the increase has been linked directly to the development of a degree specialization in information and diverse populations within their graduate degree program (see http://ischool.umd.edu/programs/hils.shtml). Therefore, one could conclude that stu-

dents from nondominant backgrounds prefer to attend institutions where they see themselves and their lived experiences embodied in the curriculum.

Review of Related Literature

Scholars who have examined the current state of diversity course offerings have found that the few courses that do focus on these elements tend to be electives that directly cover multicultural and diversity issues in LIS (e.g., multicultural information services, information services for diverse populations) (Subramaniam & Jaeger, 2011). Yet these same scholars point out that in order to make a significant impact, inclusive elements should be made an aspect of "all courses in an MLIS program, not just evident in one or two courses that are electives, especially as electives may not be regularly offered" (p. 3). They go on to state that "the lack of explicit focus on diversity in the repertoire of courses that are required to obtain an MLIS degree—such as courses in organization of information, research methods, and information access—has sizable implications" (p. 3).

Previous scholars have examined the intersections of diversity, multiculturalism, and LIS education from a number of investigative standpoints, which will be explored in greater depth in the following sections of this literature review. One common theme across this body of literature is a recognition of the importance of integrating diversity and multicultural issues into the LIS curriculum so that graduates are prepared to respond to the information needs of increasingly nonwhite, non-English-speaking user populations (Jaeger, Bertot, & Franklin, 2010). This literature review provides an overview of a few related directions taken by scholars in this topical area, while highlighting the research gaps that the current study seeks to fill.

One of the most prominent approaches to studying diversity in LIS education has been to empirically survey the landscape of diversity-related courses offered at ALA-institutions. Al-Qallaf & Mika (2013) found that out of the fifty-eight LIS programs at ALA-accredited graduate institutions in North America, forty-seven (81 percent) offer one or more courses that deal explicitly with diverse and multicultural communities. This number is a significant increase from previous years, when only twenty-two programs offered forty-two such courses. Despite this increase, Subramaniam & Jaeger (2011) noted that the majority of diversity-related courses are electives. The status of most diversity courses as electives explains why the student respondents in Mestre's (2010) study felt that they had never had a chance to take a course related to diversity during library school. Further, these respondents expressed that they were inadequately prepared in library school or during on-the-job training for the role they were undertaking.

Another prevalent direction scholars have taken in the research litera-

ture is to conceptualize the traditional domains of knowledge within the LIS curriculum through the lens of diversity-related theoretical frameworks such as critical race theory (CRT) and Marxist theory, along with more generalized concepts such as social justice and cultural competence. In particular, Honma (2005) used CRT to interrogate the epistemological foundations of LIS. His work sheds light on the ways in which mainstream discourses in LIS reinforce a liberal and benign celebratory approach to multiculturalism that fails to evoke substantive analysis of systemic inequities. In a similar critique, Pawley (2006) used Marxist theory to identify four dominant paradigms of knowledge that get codified in LIS research and in the curriculum: science/technology, business/management, mission/service, and society/culture. Pawley argued that these paradigms support the interests and practices of the middle class and help to maintain its hegemonic control. Pyati (2006) drew upon the critical social theory of Herbert Marcuse to dissect how discourses of information are being used to "perpetuate modernist notions of information and capitalist logics of consumption" (p. 83). Finally, Mehra et al. (2009) published their encyclopedia entry that presents an overview of the intersections between social justice ideals, vocabularies, and concepts with library and information practice and research. While these authors acknowledge that notions of fairness, open inquiry, service, and humanism are inherent in LIS, they also provide a careful critique of the ways in which these ideas have and have not been upheld throughout history, particularly for disadvantaged populations.

Different, yet veritable, strands of research are studies that explore student and faculty perceptions about and strategies for integrating diversity in the LIS curriculum. For example, Kumasi & Hill (2011) sought to gauge how well LIS students believed their coursework was preparing them to become culturally competent LIS professionals. While some students reported having minimal knowledge increases, the majority indicated that their coursework and interactions did not help them learn more or was less than they were already exposed to regarding cultural competence. With regard to faculty perceptions, Mehra, Olson, & Ahmad (2011) surveyed instructors teaching in both online and face-to-face courses to glean their attitudes and practices about how diversity could best be represented and taught. Of particular import to the current study are the data gathered on the specific "hows" of integrating diversity into the LIS curriculum. The authors reported that the top two effective ways to integrate diversity in an online or face-to-face course were through readings (87 percent) and discussion topics/questions (79 percent) (p. 44).

The extant research on diversity-related teaching resources and strategies has been primarily related to a specific LIS program, such as that of the University of Maryland (Jaeger, Bertot, & Subramaniam, 2013; Oxley, 2013). However, the current study expands upon this line of research by

looking more broadly across all ALA institutions and locating diversity levers, or conceptual access points within the six core courses where issues of diversity might be addressed. Although the study conducted by Mehra et al. (2011) aligns closely with the goals of the current study, it stops short of providing specific pedagogical resources for integrating diversity into the core courses. To that end, this study helps to fill a known research-to-practice gap that has heretofore stagnated well-meaning curriculum diversity initiatives in LIS.

Strategic Guiding Questions

This exploratory study is guided by the following strategic questions that helped systematically collect relevant datasets and document the process in order to develop a rigorous and applicable methodological approach:

- SGQ1: What are the commonly required courses taught at ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs, which constitute the core curricula?
- SGQ2: How do ALA's core competencies of librarianship correlate to what is taught in the common core curricula of ALA-accredited MLIS programs?
- SGQ3: According to LIS faculty, what are the diversity levers, or the conceptual hooks, pedagogical resources, and strategies that open up opportunities for teaching about diversity and social justice issues in the core curriculum?

By systematizing data collection shaped by the above questions, the researchers were able to logically apply a step-by-step mechanism that allowed for development of replicable research methods. Also, parsing the questions in this way helped to develop a holistic picture of the LIS curriculum and its essential characteristics, a necessary precursor to locating opportunities for infusing multicultural education strategies across the ALA institutions under investigation.

Methodological Phases

Given the lack of prior empirical research on implementing multicultural curriculum reform in LIS classrooms, the researchers took an exploratory approach to the current study. In accordance with the exploratory tradition, the data collection and analysis occurred in several recursive phases, which are described as follows.

Phase 1: Determining the Sample

It was necessary to begin by establishing baseline data about what constitutes the core LIS curriculum across ALA-accredited institutions. To obtain these data, the researchers consulted the 2012 statistical report of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). This report provides annual statistical data about various aspects of ALA-accredited institutions including such areas as faculty salaries, student de-

mographics, and required course offerings, to name a few. The primary source of data from the report came from Table III-41, "Name and Number of Required Courses in Different Master's Programs." At the time of this study, the 2012 ALISE Statistical Report was the most current source available. It should be noted that ALISE report data are derived from self-reporting member institutions. As a result, not all ALA-accredited programs are represented in the sample because several schools (particularly iSchools) are not institutional members of ALISE.

It is also important to note that the researchers focused solely on institutions that offer the master of library and information science (MLIS) degree. This decision was made primarily because the most recent line of research in this area uses iSchools as its dataset (see Mehra et al., 2011), leaving room for a comprehensive examination of the core curriculum within LIS programs. Practicum or field experience courses were eliminated from the initial round of data collection since typically in such courses hands-on experience, rather than a discrete body of academic knowledge, drives the learning (Roy, Jensen, Hershey, & Meyers, 2009). In all, the sample included thirty-six institutions that offer an ALA-accredited MLIS degree.

Phase 2: Determining the Names of the Commonly Required LIS Courses

Having established the average number of required courses in the sample, the researchers began the next phase, determining what names are most commonly used to describe similar required courses. This process involved creating a spreadsheet in which each required course for every institution was categorized into a broader curricular area. The researchers eliminated core courses that were geared toward a particular type of library (e.g., school library management) and considered only the general core courses that all students take regardless of their area of specialization. Also eliminated were the required practicum core courses, which are highly individualized and focused on special projects and workplace competencies. To establish intercoder reliability, the researchers coded the sample separately and then cross-checked their classifications using the course descriptions from the program websites to aid their verification process. Next, a tag cloud was generated from http://tagcloud.com for each course, providing frequency counts and visualization of the words occurring most often in the course titles. Although the word "information" was the one most commonly used in a course title, it was not included in the final list because it serves as an umbrella term that broadly anchors the subject matter for each of the core courses.

Phase 3: Identifying Essential Curricular Knowledge

Once the names used to identify the commonly required courses were determined, the next phase involved analyzing the course descriptions for each course in the sample in order to arrive at the essential curricu-

lar knowledge being taught. A thematic analysis guided this stage, which consisted of grouping together key words that had similar meanings and collapsing categories and adding new ones as themes emerged (Boyatzis, 1998). In order to contextualize how these course themes aligned with the broader base of knowledge in LIS, the researchers consulted "ALA's Core Competences of Librarianship" (American Library Association [ALA], 2009). This document sets out to define "the basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master's program in library and information studies" (p. 1). The researchers then created a matrix to thematically align the major concepts taught in the core courses with one of ALA's eight core competences for librarianship. Doing so created a curricular portrait of the essential knowledge being taught in the LIS core courses juxtaposed with the core competences for librarianship.

Phase 4: Surveying LIS Faculty to Identify Diversity Levers in the Core Curriculum
During the fourth and final phase of the study, the researchers developed a questionnaire using the Qualtrics software program, which is licensed to employees at the researchers' university. The survey went out via an email link to one hundred LIS faculty with backgrounds and interests in diversity-related issues in LIS. The authors constructed the list of relevant faculty from their personal network of colleagues and associates who have attended conferences and written papers related to diversity in LIS education.

Part 1 of the questionnaire asked demographic questions about the participants such as their position title/rank, number of years teaching in an ALA-accredited program, gender, race, etc. Part 2 pertained to the LIS curriculum, asking the participants to reflect on their teaching practices regarding where and how they introduced diversity and social justice into the core course they had taught in the past five years. The matrices that were developed in the previous phase were transposed onto the survey that went out to LIS faculty. Providing this matrix diagram gave the survey respondents an opportunity to see where curricular themes for each core course aligned with one of the ALA Core Competences for Librarianship. It also served as a data analysis tool by allowing the researchers to add a layer to the existing matrix diagram based on diversity levers identified by the survey respondents that correspond to the curriculum areas.

Through skip logic, which enables survey respondents to be automatically redirected to a future question or page in the survey based on the answer choice they select, the respondents were permitted to answer only those questions pertaining to a core course that they had previously taught. This approach was designed to allow the survey to be completed as quickly as possible, or in approximately fifteen minutes. Each item in the curriculum section of the questionnaire followed the same pattern. First, the name of the core course appeared along with a matrix diagram for the

corresponding course. Next, a side-by-side matrix question item appeared, which allowed textual feedback on any of the following items (with their definitions) for each content area within a given core course:

- *Diversity levers*: Pedagogical access points or topical areas in the course that open up avenues for discussing and learning about the intersections of diversity and social justice within the existing curriculum context.
- *Essential questions*: Provocative and generative questions that help students strengthen and deepen their understanding. By tackling such questions, learners are engaged in uncovering the depth and richness of a topic that might otherwise be obscured by simply covering it.
- *Suggested readings*: Citations to articles, books, or other resources that lend themselves to understanding an aspect of the content area.
- *Classroom activities*: Descriptions of learner-centered ways to engage students in applying concepts and articulating new knowledge (partial is fine) to articles, books, or other resources that lend themselves to understanding an aspect of the content.

Limitations of the Methodological Approach

Knowledge in the LIS discipline is quite diffused and localized into specialized areas (e.g., cataloging, online searching, reference, etc.) and library types (e.g., academic libraries, archives, museums, public libraries, etc.). Therefore, it is difficult for anyone, including the researchers in this study, to have global knowledge of the discipline sufficient to fully represent the breadth, depth, and scope of opportunities for integrating diversity into each core LIS course. Moreover, there are inherent omissions and blind spots that must be considered when undertaking efforts to develop any sort of canon of knowledge or best practices for teaching diversity issues. However, the faculty who were surveyed in this study represent a diverse range of curriculum knowledge in LIS that helped to offset this innate limitation. Furthermore, teaching is a highly autonomous endeavor, notwithstanding recent efforts to standardize teaching and learning in both K–12 and higher education environments. While this study provides a framework and instructional resources for embedding diversity and social justice learning, there is a high probability that faculty will continue to teach what they know and in the way in which they are most comfortable.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, the findings are not generalizable and serve mainly as baseline data about where LIS faculty see opportunities for opening up diversity levers in the core curriculum. Moreover, the sample size of survey respondents was not a random choice, but purposive and based in large part on the researchers' professional associations. With such a small sample size of diversity-minded faculty, the respondents may be overrepresented in certain facets of diversity while underrepresented in others, leaving conceptual holes in certain curriculum areas.

Finally, due to the qualitative nature of the data collected in the curriculum portion of the survey, the findings do not lend themselves to replicability. If another group of LIS faculty were asked to locate diversity levers and share pedagogical resources, they might derive a completely different list from what was found in this study. For the reasons cited above, future research on multicultural education in LIS may have the most powerful impact if it is framed within the action research tradition. This would allow LIS faculty to study, in real classroom situations, how students are able to integrate diversity and social justice constructs into the mainstream curriculum already being taught. Understanding the classroom dynamics, tensions, and other pertinent aspects of student learning could help to set a foundation for what teaching for social justice might look like in the core curriculum.

Findings and Discussion

The following results provide an overview of both the statistical data that were gathered about the LIS curriculum and the survey data that were collected from LIS faculty regarding opportunities and strategies for integrating diversity and social justice topics into the core curriculum. A substantive discussion is woven into the presentation of the fourth strategic guiding question, which reports on the survey responses of faculty relative to implementing diversity levers into the LIS curriculum. The findings for the remaining strategic guiding questions are discussed as quantitative analyses of the data collected from the 2012 ALISE statistical report.

Demographic Overview of Survey Respondents

Of the one hundred LIS instructors who were sent the invitation to participate in the survey, fifty-six began the survey and twenty-seven completed it, yielding 48 percent usable results. Forty-five (45 percent) respondents completed the demographic section. Of those, sixteen (36 percent) identified themselves as associate professors, ten (22 percent) as assistant professors, and seven (16 percent) as full professors among the top three respondent groups. In terms of teaching experience, the majority of the respondents (29 percent) have taught fifteen or more years with an average of four years of experience in the entire sample. Thirteen (30 percent) self-identified as male, and thirty-one (70 percent) self-identified as female. The racial category that the majority of the respondents chose was White alone, not Hispanic (59 percent), while the remainder chose either Black (23 percent), Asian alone (14 percent), Hispanic or Latino (2 percent), or other (2 percent).

The respondents were asked to identify which core courses they felt most comfortable providing recommendations for concerning potential diversity levers. Each respondent could comment on more than one core course, since it is quite possible for individuals to have taught more than

that in the course of their tenure. The responses—from highest to lowest percent of comfortability—were as follows:

- Introduction to the Profession/Foundations of LIS (45 percent, 19 respondents)
- Management, Leadership (38 percent, 16 respondents)
- Reference/User Services (40 percent, 17 respondents)
- Research Methods (31 percent, 13 respondents)
- Information Technology (21 percent; 9 respondents)
- Organization of Knowledge/Cataloging, (5 percent, 12 respondents)

SGQ1: What are the commonly required courses taught at ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs, which constitute the core curricula?

An analysis of the data presented in the 2012 ALISE Statistical Report indicates that the number of required courses in the sample of thirty-six ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs averages at seven (see figure 2). Having seven required courses in a standard thirty-six-hour MLIS degree amounts to roughly half of the courses in the degree program being required, provided that most classes are worth three credits. Additionally, the names of the courses that are most commonly required in the study sample are listed below and illustrated in figure 3.

- Introduction to the Profession/Foundations (17 percent, 32 institutions)
- Organization of Knowledge/Cataloging (17 percent, 32 institutions)
- Reference/User Services and Resources (16 percent, 30 institutions)

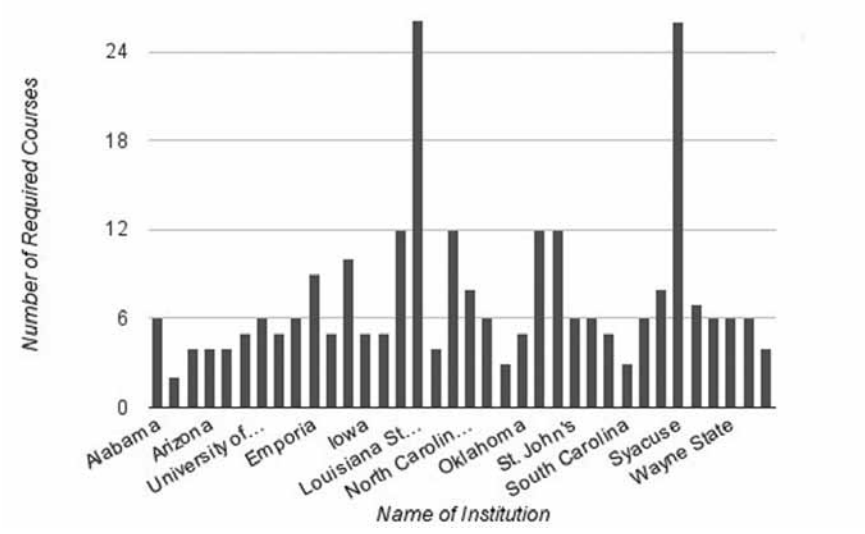

Figure 2. Average number of required courses at ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs by institution (2012).

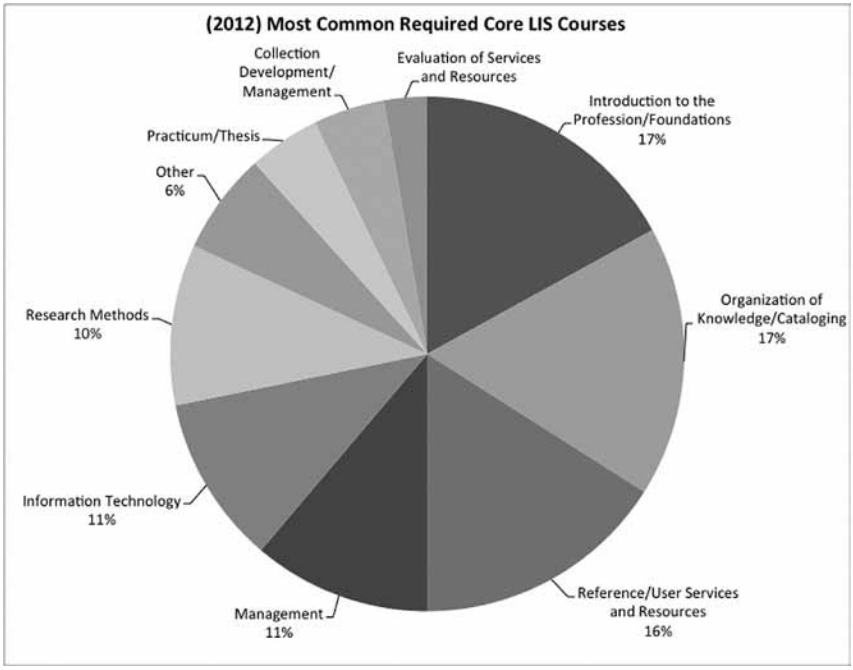

Figure 3. Names and percentages of the most commonly required courses in ALA-accredited MLIS degree programs.

- Management (11.2 percent; 21 institutions)
- Information Technology (10.6 percent; 20 institutions)
- Research Methods (10.1 percent, 19 institutions)
- Other category (6.4 percent, 12 institutions)
- Courses below 5 percent included Practicum/Thesis; Collection Development/Management; and Evaluation of Services and Resources

The names of the required courses listed in figure 3, in and of themselves, do not provide a complete picture of the essential knowledge taught in the core curriculum. A more complete understanding of what constitutes the essential knowledge was gleaned by contrasting the information extracted from the course profiles in the sample to the core competences of librarianship adopted by the ALA Council and Executive Board in 2009. The results of this phase of the analysis are described below in SGQ2.

SGQ2: How do ALA's core competences of librarianship correlate to what is taught in the common core curricula of ALA-accredited MLIS programs?
In comparing the names of the required courses within the study sample to the eight core competences of librarianship adopted in 2009 by the ALA Council and Executive Board, there were significant thematic overlaps in

the basic content areas. Out of the following eight core competences for librarianship listed in the aforementioned ALA document, only two *do not* have a commonly required course that directly aligns with them.

1. Foundations of the Profession
2. Information Resources
3. Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information
4. Technological Knowledge and Skills
5. Reference and User Services
6. Research
7. Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning
8. Administration and Management (ALA, 2009; numbered list in original)

There are numerous curricular alignments between what students are expected to know and to be able to do at the professional level and what is being taught in their core LIS coursework. The only two areas in which there is no direct curricular alignment within the sample are Information Resources and Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning. This finding suggests that there has been strategic alignment between the core curricula offered at MLIS degree programs in the U.S. and the core competencies expected of LIS students once they graduate and enter the profession. Due to space limitations, however, this article does not report on each area of curricular alignment since that is tangential to the primary focus of the investigation. Instead, several circular diagrams were included as part of the survey design to allow the faculty respondents an opportunity to visually map where diversity levers might be integrated into the course they teach as they answered the questionnaire. Figure 4 features just one of the circular diagrams that were presented on the survey for each of the six core courses. The introduction/foundations course is highlighted as a representative sample.

SGQ3: According to LIS faculty, what are the diversity levers, or the conceptual hooks, pedagogical resources, and strategies that open up opportunities for teaching about diversity and social justice issues in the core curriculum?

The survey responses suggest that the extent to which diversity and social justice concepts can be meaningfully integrated into a core course depends on the nature of the knowledge taught in the subject area itself. For example, there are some areas in the LIS curriculum where diversity concepts are obviously aligned with the traditional subject matter. In contrast, there are curriculum areas where the link between diversity and the course content is more obscure. Therefore, the findings will be described within the following continuum of categories: Explicit, Emergent, and Implicit Diversity Levers.

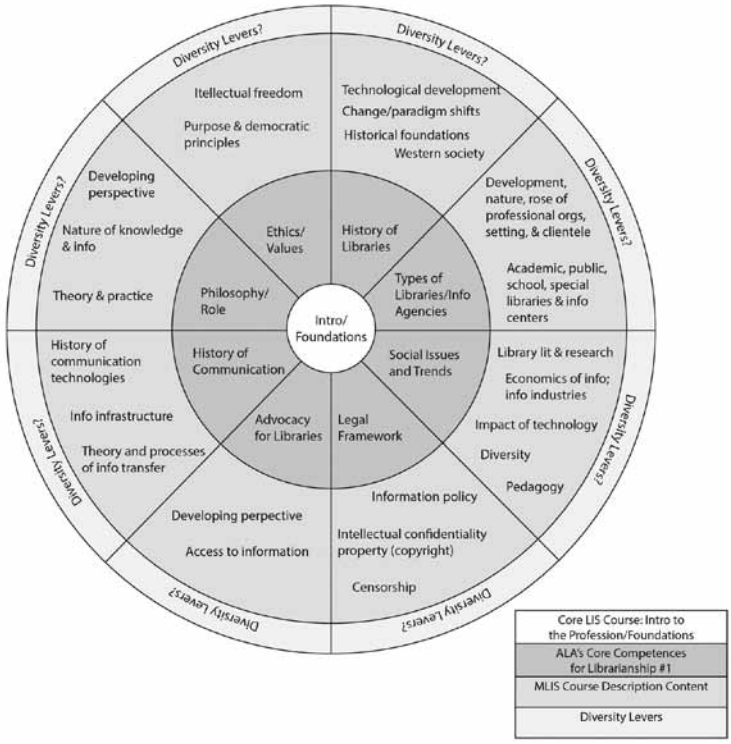

Figure 4. One circular diagram that was presented on the survey for each of the six core courses.

Explicit Diversity Levers

Areas in which the respondents provided more textual feedback on a single item of the questionnaire than other items could be considered Explicit Diversity Levers. Explicit Diversity Levers are an indication that diversity and social justice concepts could be woven into the curriculum with relative ease. In these instances, both the volume and the caliber of the textual feedback were more substantial than in other areas of the curriculum. In terms of volume, the respondents provided a wealth of textual feedback in the form of concepts, suggested readings, and classroom activities. Below are two examples of the Explicit Diversity Levers the respondents identified. Unlike the two other categories of diversity levers—Emergent and Implicit—that will be discussed later, the content within the Explicit Diversity Levers category cuts across several core courses because of the broad and overarching nature of the concepts themselves.

Ethics and Values. It is not surprising that this was the content area in which respondents provided the highest volume of feedback. This content area is typically covered in the Introduction to the Profession/Founda-

tions course but can be taught in virtually any course. When one thinks about the meaning of ethics and values, there are immediate connections that can be made with the broader values that have long characterized the LIS profession, such as service, intellectual freedom, and equity of access. Furthermore, the notion of ethics/values itself connotes personal belief systems, which vary among diverse cultural groups by definition. Therefore, the respondents made what seems like a natural connection between teaching about ethics and values and diversity.

Two classic texts that were mentioned in the survey were ALA's "Code of Ethics" (1939) and "Freedom to Read Statement" (1953). However, there were a number of pedagogical resources shared in this content area that demonstrated a level of criticality among the respondents. The following is a selected list of the essential questions, suggested readings, and classroom activities that provide practical strategies for opening up diversity levers when teaching about ethics and values in the Intro to the Profession core course.

- *Diversity Lever—Critical Whiteness Studies*
  - Essential question: *How is power manifested in LIS?*
  - Readings: Honma, T. (2005); Hand, S. (2011); McIntosh, P. (1989)
  - Classroom activities: Brainstorming dominant narratives and then counternarratives; Privilege walk exercise
- *Diversity Lever—Social Justice; Human Dignity*
  - Essential question: *Is access a right?*
  - Classroom activity: Discussion
- *Diversity Lever—Service; Access*
  - Essential question: *How do the values we espouse as a profession conflict with institutional policy (e.g., Internet filtering for minors, access to facilities by members of homeless populations)?*
  - Readings: Curry, A. (2005); Shilton, K. (2013)
  - Classroom activities: Batya Friedman's Envisioning Cards (http://www.envisioningcards.com/) and Mary Flanagan's Grow-A-Game cards (http://www.tiltfactor.org/growagame/). Each is a facilitated brainstorming exercise. The Envisioning Cards guide participants working on a project together in brainstorming around values, stakeholders, and dimensions such as pervasiveness and time. The Grow-A-Game cards ask participants to redesign familiar games (such as Scrabble or Pong) to reflect certain values.
- *Diversity Lever—Ethics in Cataloging Practices*
  - Essential question: *How do we appropriately respond to materials we may find personally offensive?*
  - Readings: Beghtol, C. (2008); Ferris, A. M. (2008)
  - Classroom activity: Have students think about and discuss how they might handle what they regard as "hot button" issues.

Advocacy/Outreach. This is another area where diversity naturally aligns with the essential knowledge represented in the core curriculum. This content is typically covered in the Reference/User Services course, but it is also commonly addressed in the introductory classes or in classes pertaining to special library types. In the latter, students are encouraged to develop ideas for library programs that might reach patrons from underrepresented backgrounds.

Although there was a wealth of textual data provided by the respondents for this content area, only a few responses included a specific suggested reading. The readings that were mentioned for this content area were more general in nature (e.g., Reference and User Services Association [RUSA] guidelines). This trend may indicate that although advocacy and outreach have deep ideological roots in the LIS profession, they are more practice-based concepts that are not as easy to codify in a scholarly publication. Yet, as shown below, the respondents provided a number of diversity levers and practical teaching strategies for integrating diversity and social justice teaching around advocacy and outreach concepts in the LIS classroom.

- *Diversity Lever—Library User/Nonuser Trends*
  - Essential questions: *Who doesn't use the library? Are there ethnic, racial, or other trends? What sorts of services does the library have that might benefit them?*
  - Activities: Anthropological comparison: visual surveys of people in libraries versus people in mall, park, etc.
- *Diversity Lever—Service for Diverse Populations*
  - Activities: Using scenario- and persona-building techniques from the design sciences, sketch a situation where one might find the "information poor." Suggest ways to reach out to this community.
- *Diversity Lever—Equity of Access for All Users*
  - Essential questions: *What "counts" as information? Where are library users, and are librarians there, too (e.g., mobile spaces)? How does technology shape access?*
  - Reading: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (2012)
  - Classroom activities: Have students look at library sites that are noncompliant according to the WCS standards. Translate the library website into a language other than English that is highly represented in the community.
- *Diversity Lever—Stakeholders/Language*
  - Essential questions: *What are the needs of the community where I serve? How do I find out those needs? How do I move beyond the walls of the library?*
  - Reading: Robertson, D. (2005)
  - Classroom activities: Develop a survey of user preferences focused on one area. Relate this to a particular program or to a grant for which the library might be applying.

- *Diversity Lever—Community Profiling*
  - Essential questions: *Who is your community? Who are the other players who feel they might have a stake in saying what your community should receive? Have you spoken with all members?*
  - Classroom activities: Community analysis; individual interviews with someone from a "different" category (e.g., blue collar worker, different race) to ask about how they use information.

Access/Service. The respondents also mentioned these two hallmark concepts, which have been closely tied to the mission of the LIS profession, as potential diversity levers across several core courses. Highlighted below are examples of pedagogical resources that the respondents provided for teaching about access and service in the following core courses, respectively: Introduction to the Profession; Reference and User Services.

- *Diversity Lever—Minors' Access to Information*
  - Essential question: *How do public and school libraries work to allow and curtail minors' access to information?*
  - Suggested Readings: Johnson, M. (2010); Battles, M. (2003)
- *Diversity Lever—Libraries as Community-Centered Organisms*
  - Suggested Reading: Holt, G., & Holt, L. (2010)

Emergent Diversity Levers

Emergent Diversity Levers are curriculum areas that have seen a recent influx of scholarly publications around a diversity- or social justice–related concept previously understudied or absent from the literature. Other indicators of the Emergent Diversity Levers category include how mature the subject matter is within the broader disciplinary realm of library and information science; the age of the publication date; and the rate of speed in which the subject matter evolves and generates subbranches of study. Unlike the previous section, the items that fall within the Emergent Diversity Levers category are discussed within the context of a specific core course rather than as concepts that can be taught across multiple courses.

Information Technology. An outstanding finding from the study was the breadth and scope of diversity levers identified by the respondents for the Information Technology core course. On the surface, technology courses could be seen as neutral spaces where diversity and social justice are tangential, if not irrelevant, to the subject matter. However, the respondents in this survey disprove that notion quite convincingly. Many of the suggested readings that they provided had publication dates within the last five to eight years, which is one reason the Information Technology course was categorized as an area where there are Emergent Diversity Levers. As highlighted in the examples below, the Information Technology core course is fertile ground for teaching toward diversity and social justice.

- *Diversity Lever—Digital Inclusion and Broadband Adoption*
  - Essential question: *How does a community's access or lack of access to high-speed broadband impact upon its ability to utilize information and build knowledge?*
  - Readings: Digital Inclusion Survey (2013); Federal Communications Commission (2010); Larose, Gregg, Strover, Straubhaar, & Carpenter (2007); Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (2010).
- *Diversity Lever—Universal Design for Learning (UDL); Assistive Technology Tools*
  - Essential question: *When does technology help and when is it an obstacle?*
  - Readings: Jaeger, Bertot, Thompson, Katz, & DeCoster (2012); World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (2012).
- *Diversity Lever—Digital Divide*
  - Essential question: *What might librarians and information organizations do to mitigate various digital divides?*
  - Reading: Jaeger et al. (2012).
- *Diversity Lever: Social Construction of Technology*
  - Essential questions: *In what ways are values, biases, race(ism) and other hegemonic forces embedded in the architectural design of everyday technologies such as the Internet? How do we learn what cannot be taught?*
  - Readings: Brock, A. (2009); Noble, S. (2012); Flanagan, Howe, & Nissenbaum (2008).

Implicit Diversity Levers

Implicit Diversity Levers are areas of LIS education in which there appear to be limited connections between diversity and social justice issues and the subject matter taught in the LIS course. Moreover, the courses that fall under this category require a highly specialized knowledge, but the connections to diversity and social justice concepts are not readily apparent in the curriculum or in the research literature. To that end, some of the common themes found in the survey responses that led a core course to be labeled as an Implicit Diversity Lever included, for example, fewer textual responses on the survey than other classes; use of technical language to describe the content; and suggested readings with publication dates over twenty years old.

Cataloging/Organization of Knowledge. The common perception among librarians and library educators is that cataloging is a unique subset of LIS that requires a highly specialized skill set and knowledge base. As a result of the technical nature of this subject area, some have found difficulty making the connections between diversity and social justice issues and teaching or performing cataloging. This perception was validated by one of the survey respondents, who emailed one of the researchers prior to completing the questionnaire. In the email, the faculty respondent wrote:

> I will fill out the questionnaire, but I suspect that LIS 6210 offers fewer opportunities for integrating diversity and social justice concepts, perspectives, and practices than most core courses. Subject headings are the main area where questions about diversity and social justice arise. There used to be serious issues with LC subject headings, which Sanford Berman exposed in his 1971 book *Prejudices and Antipathies*. Most of these issues have since been addressed. I mention this in 6210 but I don't discuss it in as much detail as I did in the past. I've attached what I used to say on the topic. (K. Kumasi, personal communication, 2014)

Although this email does not provide details as to why cataloging offers "fewer opportunities" for integrating diversity, the implication is that the subject is highly technical and therefore does not lend itself to discussion about humanistic-oriented topics such as diversity and social justice. Yet, as the survey responses below illustrate, the very act of cataloging and classifying knowledge created by humans is innately connected to diversity and social justice issues.

- *Diversity Lever—Classification of Particular Individuals and Groups*
  - Essential question: *How do we appropriately deal with inequalities in how certain individuals or groups are classified?*
  - Readings: Berman, S. (1993); Olson, H. A. (2002).
  - Classroom activities: Examination of historical terminology used to classify various individuals and/or groups based on race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

Research Methods. There was a dearth of survey data for the Research Methods course, which could suggest that this subject area has only Implicit Diversity Levers. The few responses that were recorded provide evidence to suggest that the nature of the content taught in this core course is highly technical and situated within quite disparate paradigms of knowledge. For example, research methods that are situated in the qualitative tradition are primarily concerned with determining how people make meaning. Diversity is inherent in this kind of naturalist inquiry because people embody a multitude of cultural traits. In contrast, research methods situated in the quantitative tradition decenter the role of the researcher and focus on evidence claims that can be made from empirical data (e.g., numbers and percentages) and generalized widely.

The responses highlighted below support the idea that diversity and social justice issues can be integrated into research methods courses from both a topical and a methodological standpoint. In the former case, faculty can help students to craft research topics that work to address and dismantle existing social inequities. In the latter instance, faculty can help students design studies that draw from critical methodological frameworks (e.g., CRT) in which the design of the research itself supports emancipatory goals (Kumasi, 2011). Below are examples from the survey respon-

dents of areas in the Research Methods course where diversity and social justice pedagogies could be integrated.

- *Diversity Lever—Equity and Diversity in Research Design*
  - Essential questions: *What research methodologies get privileged and/or marginalized in LIS research, and why? How might human diversity affect the generalizability and transferability of quantitative/experimental and qualitative research results? How does the researcher's social positionality affect the design, analysis, and ethical conduct of research?*
  - Readings: Wolf, D. L. (1996); Chartier, R. (2004); Skloot, R. (2011)
  - Classroom activities: Discussion of IRBs, and whether they effectively encourage equity in research.
- *Diversity Lever—Diversity as Context for Inquiry*
  - Essential question: *How should we take diversity into account when studying user behaviors?*
  - Reading: Chatman, E. (1998)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Multicultural education, as a form of social action, has led to more equitable transformation in schools (Sleeter, 1994). Although transformation requires that all variables of the school be changed (e.g., policies, teachers' attitudes, instructional materials, assessment methods, etc.), this study focused on what happens in the realm of curriculum and instruction. To that end, a remaining question is: What might LIS educators do with the results of this study to more deliberately effect change in their classrooms? This concluding section offers three broad recommendations for transferring the findings of this study into real LIS educational contexts.

Examine the Nature and Dynamics of Dominance in LIS and in Society

Any successful multicultural curriculum reform in LIS will have to begin with faculty, administrators, and students learning about how privilege and power operate in the discipline and in society at large. Due to the fact that the majority of faculty in LIS education are white, there is tremendous opportunity for those who self-identify as white to lead the effort in multicultural curriculum reform. However, such an effort would entail examining how whiteness has functioned for generations in the LIS discipline and developing strategies for unlearning the assumptions of rightness and ignorance that have led to whites being in a position of social hegemony. There are a number of transformative texts written by white educators that demonstrate how whites can help lead multicultural education efforts (see, e.g., Howard, 2006. In the field of education, there is a critical mass of scholars who self-identify as white who also engage in this tenuous aspect of multicultural education, which involves interrogating whiteness. LIS could use a similar contingency of white scholars who lead

in this scholarly area, although there are certainly a dedicated few already. The work of multicultural curriculum reform should not be left solely to faculty of color or to those who occupy social identities that are marginalized. Comprehensive change will require a systemic effort among all LIS faculty.

Explore Curriculum Content through the Lens of Marginalized Identity Groups
According to Banks (2010), a central feature of multicultural curriculum reform is interrogating the knowledge construction process. Through this process, faculty help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within their content area influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed. One strategy for embarking on this task would be to decenter whiteness and look at subject matter through the lens of the cultural "other." This involves expanding the focal point of learning beyond the normative white frame of reference and entering inquiry through a nondominant social position. For example, LIS faculty might guide students in an exercise that asks them to consider whose perspectives or experiences are overlooked or marginalized in a particular topic or issue being examined. To get students to think about their own positionality, faculty could show them a picture of the entire class at the beginning of the semester and ask them to identify the first thing they notice in the picture. The most common response would likely be for students to locate themselves in the picture. This exercise is a nice scaffold for building students' understanding that we all tend to see the world through our narrow personal lenses. That same exercise could be used throughout the class to have students place themselves in the position of someone outside their comfortable social location. Doing so might help students to see how individuals from outside their social location might view a particular topic or presentation of the subject matter. Upon completing this exercise, faculty can then move to bridging the gaps in students' understanding within future classes where they begin infusing readings and activities that seamlessly engage multicultural perspectives.

Advocate for Inclusion and Multicultural Curriculum Reform in LIS
Every person has the power to shape outcomes regardless of whether or not he or she is in a position of power or influence. This means that LIS administrators, faculty, and students alike could all be powerful advocates for diversity, inclusion, and multicultural curriculum reform in the discipline. As the results suggest, when faculty are prompted to think about the intersections of diversity and their course content, the results can yield new ideas and strategies in even the most unlikely-seeming curriculum areas, such as Information Technology. However, this work cannot be left for faculty alone to undertake. Deans, directors, and other leaders in LIS

education should be a part of these advocacy efforts. Deans could lead the charge by folding diversity learning outcomes into their existing curriculum development and program outcomes committee.

Finally, in order for this line of research to be more useful, it needs to become more visible and more comprehensive. In terms of visibility, we need more published articles that highlight case examples of what teaching toward diversity and social justice looks like across different areas of the LIS core curriculum. This kind of research falls within the parameters of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) movement in post-secondary education, whereby faculty conduct inquiries into student learning by making their pedagogical decisions and student outcomes the focus of their research publications (McKinney, 2004). The Association for Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE) has a similar focus as the primary professional association that deals with education issues in LIS. One of the strategic directions within ALISE is "Teaching Effectiveness for 21st Century Learners" (2014). In particular, item 4.3 states, "Showcase pedagogy and innovations in education in LIS and cognate disciplines in ALISE communications." Future research in this area could be strengthened if LIS faculty made deliberate attempts to document their diversity-related teaching practices and resources and to show evidence of their effect on student learning.

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