Building a Culture of Collaboration and Shared Responsibility for Educational Equity Work through an Inclusive Teaching Community of Practice

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Abstract

For libraries to be equitable spaces as educational institutions and places of employment, it is necessary that educational equity be a shared, collaborative goal. Unfortunately, equity and inclusion work in libraries has historically been an individual pursuit that falls disproportionately on the shoulders of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) library workers. Communities of practice employ social learning principles to facilitate praxis and offer opportunities to develop shared goals, language, and responsibility. This article explores how librarians at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas developed and implemented an inclusive teaching community of practice with members of their instruction department in order to foster a culture of discussing inequity in higher education, to develop and implement inclusive teaching practices, and to cultivate a shared responsibility to be equitable instructors and colleagues. The article highlights the importance of library workers from majority groups, especially white library workers, to engage meaningfully in educational equity work to lessen the burdens faced by those with marginalized identities, particularly BIPOC library workers, and to ultimately foster educational equity for all by creating inclusive workspaces, libraries, and learning experiences.

Keywords: inclusive teaching, educational equity, community of practice, professional development, information literacy instruction

Introduction

The work to make academic libraries equitable spaces as educational institutions and places of employment is often led by individuals who are passionate about the work and attempt to drive change. For example, library instructors interested in developing equitable and inclusive teaching practices in their information literacy instruction have primarily done so individually by engaging in professional development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and

online courses. This approach to equity work generates initial excitement for learning new concepts and motivation for implementing them;[1] however, it can be a struggle to sustain pedagogical innovation without continued support and encouragement.

Ongoing support is not only important for individuals' motivation and persistence, but also for collective action. For educational equity work to progress, it must move past individual pursuits and instead be a shared goal that is "enacted as a pervasive institution- and system-wide principle."[2] In particular, those who belong to majority groups and have more institutional power must share the burden of change by supporting the work of those experiencing marginalization in our communities. This is especially true for white library workers because without being a shared institutional goal, equity and inclusion work falls disproportionately on the shoulders of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) library workers.[3] However, it is also important that white library workers are mindful about the ways they participate in this work and ensure they do not appropriate the labor of BIPOC colleagues, as discussed in this collaborative statement by BIPOC library, archives, and information workers and educators.[4] One mechanism for developing a culture of shared responsibility and understanding is a community of practice.

Communities of practice offer a regular space for sharing, discussing, and reflecting on a topic or theme in order to foster a shared culture among members. They are formed by "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."[5] In these communities, members approach knowledge sharing and development intentionally and systematically. For these reasons, communities of practice are an excellent tool for supporting library workers in fostering a culture of educational equity not only at the individual but also the department, program, and institutional level.

This article explores how we, librarians at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, developed and implemented an inclusive teaching community of practice (ITC)[6] with members of our instruction department to foster a collaborative culture of educational equity and inclusive teaching practices. We highlight the importance of library workers from majority groups, especially white library workers, to engage meaningfully in educational equity work to lessen the burdens faced by those with marginalized identities, particularly BIPOC library workers. We begin with an in-depth exploration of the literature in several key areas including the importance of equity work in higher education, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work in libraries, and communities of practice both broadly and within librarianship. We then share information about our own inclusive teaching community of practice including our institutional context, an evolution of our equity work, and how we designed our community of practice. Next, we discuss activities our community of practice participated in, provide considerations for those who want to build a similar community, and share our plans for moving forward.

Literature Review

The Importance of Equity Work in Higher Education

Once touted as the "great equalizer," research in the last few decades has shone a light on inequities in higher education through gaps in admission, retention, and graduation for those from historically marginalized groups.[7] There is a disconnect in higher education between what Nicola Rollock calls "the diversity promise"[8]—shared via empty institutional equity statements and policy documents—and the data and research that show the realities of inequitable cir-

cumstances for students and staff alike. Moreover, "despite worthy aims and a commitment to equitable education for all students," professional development for professors on race "largely fails at sustaining *ongoing* work to combat structural racism."[9]

While educational equity has always been and will continue to be paramount, the importance of equity work has been laid bare in the past few years as the United States and the world more broadly have reckoned with the COVID-19 pandemic and increased coverage of the United States' law enforcement's long history of violence against Black communities. The pandemic has also made transparent major economic and racial disparities in the United States. For instance, low-income students are less likely to have adequate access to the necessary technology for remote learning.[10] Issues regarding inequity in education like racism, sexism, classism, heteronormativity, ableism, and more occur both overtly and covertly on college campuses and in learning environments. Students face hate speech, threats, and violence,[11] and do not see themselves and their communities authentically reflected in academia.[12] Concurrently, the increased visibility of the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 has meant more people are discussing inequity than ever had before. Unfortunately, in many workplaces this has led white individuals to rely on their BIPOC colleagues to address this work. This "invisible tax" asks BIPOC to shoulder a significant amount of responsibility—from serving on diversity committees to writing diversity policies and statements to leading diversity trainings—and it is exhausting for them.[13]

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Work in Libraries

There is a prevailing challenge of whiteness within higher education, and libraries are no exception. Whiteness is not only about race but is also a broad concept "refer[ring] not only to the socio-cultural differential of power and privilege that results from categories of race and ethnicity; it also stands as a marker for the privilege and power that acts to reinforce itself through hegemonic cultural practice that excludes all who are different."[14] While library workers of many marginalized groups face barriers, the challenges faced by BIPOC library workers are particularly ubiquitous and harmful.

BIPOC library workers face microaggressions, bullying and abuse; experience low morale because of equity promises left unfulfilled; and bear the burden of replicating whiteness.[15] As a result, they experience high levels of stress and trauma in library workplaces. BIPOC library workers are also often asked to do more labor related to EDI work than their white counterparts. Additionally, EDI work has often been seen as less important than other areas of research or service in promotion and tenure processes.[16]

The burden of EDI work must shift to white librarians. In a study of racial and ethnic minority academic librarians it was found that, "White women [are seen] as saboteurs or upholders of status quo behaviors surrounding Whiteness, racism, and minority marginalization in [library and information science]."[17] Moreover, white colleagues are seen to be not as deeply dedicated to EDI values and mainly focus on shallow, ineffective, or insufficient efforts for assessing EDI.[18] In addition, as Sofia Leung and Jorge López-McKnight have argued, "current ideologies and formations of "progress" in librarianship are viewed through a White Supremacy lens and do not move us forward in an effective or urgent way. Progress in the profession is generally defined by a liberal marker of attainment that has no real, concrete impact in the lives of those most marginalized."[19]

The focus of the predominantly white profession on shallow initiatives and low levels of commit-

ment to change does not enact meaningful progress. White librarians must answer the many calls from BIPOC colleagues for their white counterparts to "step up, to perform small acts that demonstrate understanding and moment-by-moment allyship and educate themselves about whiteness via readings, workshops, and lectures as a part of their professional development and civic responsibility."[20] As Leung and López-McKnight stated in their article, attempts at diversifying the profession and acknowledging diversity mean nothing without concrete structural change, and superficial work only strengthens white supremacy in our institutional systems. Leung and López-McKnight have provided further clarity on this issue:

If progress in librarianship does not center the specific, different, and nuanced "material and embodied conditions" of BIPOC in the profession nor those supported by the profession, then we do not consider it progress; we chalk it up as just another projection of the White Supremacy project. If we are going to think and converse about real movement toward change, that means switching from progress narratives to liberatory imaginaries, which then opens up room to ask different, deeper questions about teaching and learning and the architecture of libraries that are designed to uphold White Supremacy.[21]

To truly move forward, white colleagues must recognize that concrete, structural, and transformative change must occur. Communities of practice offer one method for learning from others' experiences and sharing expertise in a way that can move equity efforts from individual to programmatic.

Communities of Practice

According to Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder, "communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis."[22] Communities of practice exist both formally and informally, named and unnamed. Communities of practice may be called learning communities, learning networks, communities of interest, or something of the like. They evolved from practice-based communities such as guilds and apprenticeship unions.[23] As Wenger noted, "although the term may be new, the experience is not."[24] At any given moment, every individual is participating in a variety of communities. From family units and work teams to high school groups and social news sites, such as Reddit, communities of practice make up a huge part of how people learn.

Etienne Wenger, a social learning theorist, and Jean Lave, a social anthropologist, first introduced the concept of communities of practice in their 1991 book *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*.[25] Wenger built on the concept in his 1998 book *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*.[26] In this book, Wenger employed a social theory of learning to reframe learning from an individual process to one that places "learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" and assumed that it is a social phenomenon.[27] Wenger furthered this idea, along with McDermott and Snyder in *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*, by noting that "though our experience of knowing is individual, knowledge is not."[28] The authors also provided significant developments in the literature including design principles, structural elements, and ongoing strategies for measuring and managing communities of practice.

While evidence of communities of practice have long been prevalent in the business sector (Chrysler, World Bank, Shell Oil, McKinsey & Company),[29] literature exploring these communities in education and librarianship has only recently begun to grow. Alice E. MacGillivray ex-

plored the paradox of why communities of practice are not thriving in higher education, "the sector in which we care most about learning."[30] MacGillivray identified several inhibitors, from pressure to publish to disciplinary barriers, that work against the formation of communities of practice. However, MacGillivray also has seen a desire for faculty to connect more and in new ways. For instance, MacGillivray highlighted faculty conversations on Twitter around education-related hashtags as a way of informally coming together to share resources, experiences, reflect, and ultimately, improve student learning experiences.

Sheila Corrall has explored the importance of reflective practice and the need for more formal support and guidance, especially for instruction librarians, within the context of critical pedagogy.[31] Corrall drew from Andrew Whitworth's "The Reflective Information Literacy Educator '' on the importance of praxis, which Whitworth described as a "dynamic between theory and practice, and subject to continuous reflection."[32] Whitworth acknowledged the complexity of reflection and noted that "transformation cannot be undertaken by a practitioner acting alone," highlighting communities of practice as a way for individuals to navigate through an informational environment by employing social learning.[33]

Communities of Practice in Libraries

Within the literature around communities of practice in libraries, there are differences in how the concept has been applied. Several libraries or groups of librarians have formed communities of practice to learn, reflect, and grow a culture around a certain topic following the standard community of practice model. For instance, Robin E. Miller has suggested that communities of practice can help support the general, disciplinary, and interdisciplinary knowledge of reference librarians.[34] Additionally, Maoria Kirker has shared how scholarship roundtables and

workshops aimed at unpacking the *ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* has led to a community of practice within her library department.[35]

At the 2020 Critical Librarianship & Pedagogy Symposium (CLAPS), Lindsey Shively et al., shared how they, a group of white library workers, "convened a virtual community of practice to engage critically, vulnerably, and personally with racism and whiteness in [their] work."[36] Like work around inclusive teaching and educational equity, they emphasized the importance of not appropriating the labor of BIPOC librarians. For them, a virtual community of practice open to librarians across institutions has offered a space to connect with other white librarians doing similar work, to learn from each other, and hold each other accountable. They discussed how it was important not only to use the community to learn and reflect on how to be anti-racist but to make impactful changes in their daily responsibilities, thus having an external impact beyond the group itself. They ended with a call for participants to form or join similar communities. They also acknowledged that this work is never truly done.

An emotional intelligence community of practice formed by liaison librarians at the University of Houston provides another example.[37] There are many parallels between the development of emotional intelligence and a culture of educational equity. Primarily, for both emotional intelligence and educational equity, understanding is not enough and "deep change requires the retooling of ingrained habits of thought, feeling, and behavior."[38] Beyond this, both also require continued support and benefit from being a common goal shared among colleagues. For topics of this nature, the informal and social nature of communities of practice make them an ideal method of professional development. The flexibility of communities of practice was also helpful for the University of Houston librarians as they realized "weaving in

equity, diversity, and inclusion skills quickly became valuable to the entire community."[39]

Several other library workers have leaned heavily on the flexibility of communities of practice and have applied the concept in less traditional ways. For instance, instead of being informal learning spaces, several communities have appeared to operate more like traditional task forces or committees with a formal charge. Such is the case in Joy Rodriguez, Chandrika Kanungo, and Ana Macias, where a community of practice was formed to fulfill a national library plan to organize and standardize operational services.[40] Similarly, Harriett E. Green drew upon communities of practice as a way of contextualizing research collaborations and training initiatives,[41] while others have interpreted groups of learners as belonging to communities of practice.[42]

Communities of practice take various forms throughout the literature. They may be small, departmental units, cross institutional groups, or centered around a cohort of learners. No matter what shape they take, they offer a flexible, economical, and supportive form of professional development for librarians and library workers and a way to ultimately improve the teaching and learning experience of students and staff alike. Moreover, communities of practice are not self-contained but rather "develop in larger contexts—historical, social, cultural, institutional,"[43] and as such, must take into consideration the current state of inequities surrounding students and staff. Considering the need for a shared and supportive approach to educational equity work and the larger contexts in which we work, we identified a community of practice as an ideal way to learn, reflect, and support our library colleagues.

UNLV's Inclusive Teaching Community of Practice

Background on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) is a public, doctoral-granting research institution with over 30,000 students. For many years, UNLV has been recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse universities for undergraduates in the United States.[44] Approximately 61% of students identify as a racial or ethnic minority and UNLV is designated as a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI), Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and Asian-American and Native-American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.[45] The institution is proud of its ethnically diverse student body and is actively working to create a campus culture and academic curriculum that ensures all students succeed.

The UNLV Libraries strive to connect diverse communities, and it is part of the mission for the Libraries to be an inclusive place for learning and working. The Educational Initiatives Department is responsible for creating educational and co-curricular programs in the library and for integrating information literacy learning outcomes into the general undergraduate curriculum. The department consists of six tenure-track library faculty, one full-time professional staff member, two part-time professional staff members, and students employed as undergraduate peer research coaches.

Prior to forming the community of practice, there was already a broader shift to formally institutionalize the Libraries' commitment to educational equity. In fall 2019, the UNLV Libraries launched its new 2019-2021 Strategic Plan which emphasizes the mission to be "a welcoming and inclusive place for learning" and shares the value that "everyone deserves a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment."[46] These sentiments are further articulated in strategic and core themes. For example, the Libraries

adds that it will invest in developing the cultural awareness of its employees.

Additionally, the UNLV Libraries Inclusion and Equity Committee (IEC) developed the Diverse Recruitment project that resulted in multiple published reports detailing various aspects of diverse recruitment and retention. Most notably, the IEC published a cumulative report detailing a series of recommendations for the Libraries' Leadership Team (LLT) and the Libraries to consider implementing in order to increase representation and retention of historically underrepresented groups at all levels of staff.[47] As a result of advocacy on the part of the IEC, beginning in 2020 all faculty and staff across the Libraries were required to develop an annual professional development goal related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We incorporated this practice into our department, where everyone has been encouraged to set an inclusive teaching goal. Individual goals can vary with examples including keeping a journal to reflect on inclusion and equity in one's teaching, integrating new inclusive practices into one's teaching, or participating in educational equity-focused professional development.

Evolution of Equity Work

Several colleagues within the Educational Initiatives Department had previously researched and published on a variety of inclusive teaching pedagogical approaches and practices for student learning and engagement,[48] but we had not had intentional, regular discussions about our efforts collectively as a department. In summer 2019, two librarians from the department attended a campus-led institute on educational equity that encouraged participants to incorporate liberatory pedagogical frameworks and inclusive teaching practices into their classrooms. After the institute, the librarians offered a library-wide workshop to discuss how some of the semester-long practices highlighted at the institute could be incorporated into library instruction.

Based on the success of the library workshop and a desire to learn more from our colleagues, we considered ways we could continue to evolve this work. This led us to developing a community of practice with members of our department.

Designing Our Community of Practice

The collective goals for our community of practice were to: (1) foster a culture for discussing inequity in higher education and inclusive teaching practices among library instructors, (2) build a reflective practice as library instructors, and (3) develop and implement inclusive teaching practices appropriate for library instruction. We hoped that by cultivating that culture of discussion and understanding around equity and inclusion in the classroom we would develop a shared responsibility to be equitable instructors and colleagues, and that this work would no longer happen only on an individual basis. Three librarians served as coordinators and active community members, alongside six other department members who participated as community members (librarians, staff, and a student employed in a fellowship). It was not a department requirement to participate in the community of practice.

One of the major benefits of communities of practice is that they are highly flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the community. How a community develops has been described in seven design principles identified by Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder. These seven principles make it "possible to be more flexible and improvisational":

1. Design for evolution;
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives;
3. Invite different levels of participation;
4. Develop both public and private community spaces;
5. Focus on value;
6. Combine familiarity and excitement; and

7. Create rhythm for the community.[49]

The three coordinators initially met to plan out the logistics of the Inclusive Teaching Community (ITC), keeping in mind that it would naturally evolve as the department became more involved and as the community itself grew. As part of the planning process, the coordinators (and authors of this article) discussed our positionality and how it impacted our work and the power dynamics that it would bring to the community since the three of us are white women. We recognized the importance of ensuring that we framed ourselves as supports and guides for our colleagues in our collective learning and not as experts in things we had not personally experienced. We discussed how we would handle challenging moments that might come up in learning, as it was important to us that if BIPOC department members attended, it would not be a space where they would be retraumatized by white learning.[50]

We decided to keep the initial community membership to members within our department (principle one). This would allow us to establish a solid community foundation and reflect on our own expertise as the primary teaching department within the library as a group before inviting in outside perspectives (principle two). We also encouraged community members to engage in different ways and at varing depths that suited their comfort level (principle three). This was important to us as we did not want BIPOC participants to feel obligated to participate in conversations about educational equity in predominantly white spaces. Although we guided the formation of the ITC, we hoped that individuals would eventually share the responsibility of leading the meetings in the future. As a community, we co-developed a series of community guidelines to help reinforce these values. We also welcomed discussions of inclusive teaching outside of the community of practice. Our meetings, what Wenger et al. consider public spaces,

are further enriched by the strength of our individual relationships (private spaces) (principle four).[51]

While we came together around the shared value of practicing inclusive teaching to foster educational equity, we know that our shared values as a community will continue to emerge as we engage, apply what we were learning in practice, and reflect. It is important that we not only continue to reflect on our individual practices but also those of our community (principle 5). Since our community consists of members of our teaching department, there is a familiarity with all group members. We have made it clear, however, that this is not work assigned by the department head and it is not mandatory to participate. We wanted to offer a novel, informal space "separate from the everyday work pressures of people's jobs."[52] Through this design, we have offered both familiarity and excitement (principle six). At this point in our community's infancy, we are still developing our own rhythm (principle seven). This is partially due to the fact that we had just formed the community prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which upset our daily rhythms, including those of our community. We have found ways to adapt and are continuing to find our beat as a community. And as Wenger et al. have noted, "the beat is likely to change as the community evolves."[53]

Our Community of Practice Activities

Jigsaw Learning

We have used a jigsaw reading activity to frame our discussions and contextualize our practice during most of our ITC meetings. For each jigsaw activity, we select three readings with at least one set within librarianship and one within education more broadly. Each community member then signs up for a reading so that we usually have two or three members per reading. We meet once a month for an hour and the theme of our readings changes each meeting. Often our

next topic is inspired by something we discussed in an earlier meeting. For instance, after reading about deficit thinking,[54] we read about funds of knowledge[55] as an inclusive pedagogy to combat deficit thinking. We use four questions to guide our reading of the articles and to facilitate discussion during our meeting. As an example, these questions framed our discussion of deficit thinking:

1. How do you understand deficit thinking based on your reading?
2. How have you seen deficit thinking manifest in higher education settings?
3. What perspective does this article bring to inclusive teaching?
4. How does this article challenge or change your personal conception of inclusive teaching?

The first two questions are adapted to the theme of the meeting and the second two remain the same across readings. The community coordinators take turns leading the meetings. Where the discussions lead depends entirely on the topic and the broader context of our work at that moment. We started with topics that were familiar to some of us and began to explore new topics as we learned more, and new areas of interest arose. For example, we sent out a survey to ask participants what topics they wanted to learn more about. From that survey, we centered our next meetings around trauma-informed teaching[56] and neurodivergent-supportive teaching.[57]

We have also found ways to diversify how we are doing the jigsaw activity. For instance, we used one meeting to discuss presentations we had attended at the 2020 Critical Librarianship & Pedagogy Symposium. We also joined up with the UNLV Office of Online Education Community of Practice to hold a joint meeting on inclusive online pedagogy. This was a great way to discuss our shared passions and enhance our dialogue around educational equity by bringing in outside perspectives. We hope to

continue these sorts of collaborations in the future. We also held a praxis session at the end of the 2021 spring semester where we shared strategies for how we might implement the theories and pedagogies we learned about into our teaching. This meeting was particularly helpful, and we intend to incorporate additional praxis work into our future jigsaw activities.

Self-Reflection

When we first introduced our community of practice to our department at the beginning of spring 2020, we shared a handout on "Strategies to Practice Reflectively."[58] We had hoped to use the questions posed in the document to keep teaching reflection journals over the course of the semester which we could then reflect on within the ITC. Unfortunately, with our abrupt and unexpected transition to working from home and the need to provide entirely virtual instruction, we decided to postpone more formal reflection activities. Almost a year later, we felt ready to begin this reflective work.

In addition to reflecting on our practice within the classroom and within the structures of society that shape it, we wanted to incorporate more self-reflection as it relates to our own selves similar to the tripartite model used by Shannon K. McManimon and Zachary A. Casey in their educational foundations-based professional development curriculum of antiracist conscientization.[59] In our ITC, we addressed this using positionality or reflexivity statements. In a positionality statement, you reflect on your own cultural, political, and social context. Aspects of positionality that may be addressed include personal characteristics that define your social position, the settings where you grew up and relevant family information, and the frame offered by your discipline or institution. In addition, this works ask you to reflect on how your personal characteristics and experiences act as sources of power and privilege, or, alternatively, marginalization and disadvantage. These statements are

not meant to be shared unless the writer feels comfortable doing so. We used a meeting before the spring 2021 semester to discuss the process of creating a statement, what we learned, and how that knowledge might impact how we approach inclusivity in our teaching. We believe that practicing reflection is an ongoing process and will continue to incorporate reflection as a core value of our community.

Considerations and Moving Forward

At the end of spring 2021, the ITC met to reflect on the community thus far and how we imagine it might grow moving forward. Upon reflection, members felt that meeting monthly worked well, and that we might want to consider ways to incorporate asynchronous activities. We also received feedback that utilizing the jigsaw approach was a balanced way to learn from different perspectives, as each participant was only required to read one article for each meeting. This led to engaged discussions and participants were able to emphasize which key points were most important to them personally. As coordinators, we felt that it was beneficial to have members of the community from various positions within the library. Having academic faculty, student workers, classified staff, and temporary staff has contributed to the richness of the discussion. Additionally, discussing equity in the classroom has led to and informed conversations about the workplace and the ways we can build more equitable systems.

As we discussed the future of the community of practice, the group shared that they felt it would be beneficial to have meetings focused on praxis more regularly throughout the year in addition to readings and reflection assignments and to tie the sessions to recent topics. We also discussed that in the future we would offer the role of moderator to community members who are interested in volunteering. We discussed the possibility of expanding the community outside the department, and members expressed that they

felt safe having discussions within our small group and that there was some concern around how that dynamic could change if we became a larger group. Some ideas to address these concerns include returning to our community guidelines, reminding ourselves that it is a living document and one which may need to be revisited every meeting if we have participants coming and going. Another idea would be to divide the ITC into multiple, miniature communities of practice, like the model discussed by Alexander J. Carroll and Melissa N. Mallon.[60] In this case, the meetings would all share an overarching theme, inclusive teaching and educational equity, and we would focus in on different areas such as combating deficit thinking or online pedagogy.

While we did incorporate regular reflection, we plan to incorporate broader assessments of our community to measure sustained impact and expand efforts to meet our goals to foster a culture of awareness of inequity in higher education as well as a shared responsibility to be equitable instructors and colleagues through inclusive teaching. For example, we would like to implement peer observations for feedback on inclusive teaching practices and collect qualitative and quantitative feedback from students who participate in classes that have incorporated equitable teaching practices. We are also interested in collecting data on how the community of practice is contributing to the Libraries' culture of educational equity as a shared responsibility overall.

We acknowledge that our efforts to use a community of practice model within the UNLV Libraries Educational Initiatives department may not be an ideal model for others. We felt the structure of a department-wide format made the most sense, especially since we wanted to expand our professional development activities related to inclusive teaching into a more collaborative approach. At other institutions, it may not be possible to situate a community of practice

similarly, particularly if there are concerns that members will not engage constructively, as this may cause harm if the group is not ready or open for the nature of the theme. If this is a concern, alternatives such as working across departments or establishing a library-wide group may be worth considering.

As we continue to meet as a community of practice, we hope to foster a departmental culture of inclusive teaching with trust, responsibility, and commitment, qualities that Twyla T. Miranda found emerged from her transformational professional development cohort which shares many characteristics of a community of practice.[61] Wenger has explored group culture through identity and stated that "there is a profound connection between identity and practice."[62] Identity is a "very complex interweaving of participative experience," while practice results from a negotiation of individual identity with a context.[63] Thus, by coming together as an ITC with a shared passion of inclusive teaching, we are building our identities through social interactions and shared experiences. Similarly, we will build a shared, collaborative culture around what brought us together in the first place.

Another opportunity for our community of practice moving forward is to expand our membership or partner with other groups on campus, in the profession, or within education that are similarly fostering educational equity through their work. For example, within the Libraries, we may open the membership to anyone who wants to join. In addition, our University Libraries IEC does an incredible amount of work in the many areas that support educational equity and foster inclusion throughout the Libraries. For example, the IEC would be a great group to collaborate on an assessment project to see the sustained impact of our community. Moreover, groups across campus, such as our Faculty Center, have committed to expanding their anti-racist efforts to foster a more equitable

educational experience for BIPOC students in response to the current Black Lives Matter movement. These efforts create opportunities to expand our community locally as well.

Conclusion

Our ITC is not yet liberatory or radical—it is one step of many concurrent and future steps alongside our BIPOC colleagues, who, rightfully so, don't want to assimilate into existing racist structures but want institutional and structural change. We also acknowledge that we are not alone. As demonstrated during Shively et al.'s 2020 CLAPS presentation, there is a desire and a need for these types of communities across libraries, especially for supporting each other in educational equity work and holding white colleagues accountable.[64] Our community of practice is young. While we have not yet documented sustained impact, participants have consistently discussed how they value the space to learn and reflect together. We know it will evolve as we ourselves grow, experience new things, and experiment with our teaching practice. There will be many opportunities for our department to continue this work and expand our network of passionate, equity-minded community of practice members.

Inclusive teaching is a powerful tool for library workers to foster equity within higher education. Communities of practice offer colleagues an opportunity to continually share, discuss, and reflect, build a supportive and trustful network of peers, and ultimately dismantle oppressive practices in higher education through inclusive teaching. Our learning is never done. Thankfully, through our inclusive teaching community of practice, we have been able to support each other and hold each other accountable as we engage in and reflect on educational equity work that expands beyond teaching. In closing, we call on all of our colleagues, especially white library workers, to also create, discover, and engage in similar communities, whether locally

within your department, at your institution more broadly, or with colleagues across the profession. While the focus of your community will depend on your context, members, and interests, we hope that it offers you a safe, informal, and supportive place to engage critically and collaboratively, ultimately supporting a more equitable culture of teaching and working in libraries for all students, library instructors, disciplinary instructors, and staff.

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