

Diverse Voices and Resource Management

Marianne Hebert, SUNY Potsdam (hebertm@potdam.edu)

Maggie McGee, SUNY Library Services (margaret.mcgee@suny.edu)

Session Outline

- Strategies for finding voices of historically marginalized people
- Implicit bias in library systems
- SLS/SMSP initiatives for DEI in the NZ
- What next? Open discussion

LibGuide: Diverse Voices – Research Strategies

- July 2021: DARC (Diversity Attribute Review Committee) request to do a presentation on diversity and diverse voices for faculty diversifying their classes:
“session on using our library to find content on diversity and/or finding content authored by people from marginalized communities”
- Summer 2020 we curated an e-book collection [Diversity and Social Issues](#)
 - One focus was on author voices and personal narratives of people from historically marginalized communities
- Result was the Libguide: [Diverse Voices – Research Strategies](#)

Considerations

- Language Matters
 - [Conscious Style Guide](#)
 - [People First Respectful Language Modernization Act of 2006](#)
 - [The Language of Disability](#) by the ACE Disability Network
 - [Evolving Language of Diversity](#) fact sheet by Kathy Castania
 - [Purdue OWL Using Appropriate Language](#)
 - [APA Style Bias Free Language](#)

Add your favorite resource(s) in the chat!

Searching for Historically Marginalized Voices

- Author headings do not include information such as ethnicity, race or gender
- LCSH assigned to works may not indicate the voice of the author
- Subject headings for autobiographies and memoirs (Biography) and primary sources (Personal narratives, Correspondence, etc.) work well
- Authors who discuss racism and other social justice issues from their lived experiences, may not get the LCSH term “Biography” assigned to their work
- Other metadata may hint at the voice of the author, but might not make searching easy or consistent
- Metadata does not make it easy to distinguish White centered voices from under-represented voices

Example 1 : Biracial author

Make Change: How to Fight Injustice, Dismantle Systemic Oppression / Shaun King

650_0 Black lives matter movement – United States

650_0 Criminal justice, Administration of – United States

650_0 Police brutality – United States

650_7 BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Social Activists (bisacsh)

520 “As a leader of the Black Lives Matter movement, Shaun King has become one of the most recognizable and powerful voices on the front lines of civil rights in our time.”

Example 2: Black British woman author

Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race / Reni Eddo-Lodge.

650_0 Racism – Great Britain

650_0 Race discrimination – Great Britain.

650_0 Social classes – Great Britain – Race relations

650_0 Race relations – History.

650_0 Racism – Great Britain – Blogs.

520 “The result is a searing, illuminating, absolutely necessary examination of what it is to be a person of colour in Britain today.”

Example 3: White author

Race and racisms : a critical approach / Tanya Maria Golash-Boza

650_0 Race.

650_0 Racism |z United States.

650_0 Equality |z United States.

651_0 United States |x Race relations.

651_0 United States |x Emigration and immigration.

505 0_ “Racial ideologies -- The origin of the idea of race -- Race, immigration, and citizenship from the 1840s to the 1920s -- Racial ideologies from the 1920s to the present -- Sociological theories of racism -- Racism in the media : the spread of ideology -- Skin-tone stratification and colorism -- White privilege and the changing U.S. racial hierarchy...”

Example 4: Native American authors

"All the real Indians died off" : and 20 other myths about Native Americans / Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker.

650_0 Indians of North America – Historiography.

520 "In this enlightening book, scholars and activists Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker tackle a wide range of myths about Native American culture and history that have misinformed generations."

The metadata does not reflect that the authors present a Native American perspective.

Example 5: Santee Dakota author

- **The soul of the Indian / Charles A Eastman**


- 650_0 Indians of North America -- Religion.

- 650_0 Indian mythology -- North America.

- 650_0 Indian philosophy -- North America.


- 520 An effort by a Native American to explain the content and attraction of Indian spirituality, concluding that Christianity and civilization are ultimately incompatible concepts.

[Home](#) | <https://library.potsdam.edu/DiverseVoicesResearchStrategies> | [Show Record ID](#) | [Getting Started](#)



Potsdam
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Campus Tools



College Libraries


Find Sources Help Services About Us

[Chat with a Librarian](#)

[Appointment with a Librarian](#)

College Libraries: libraries@potsdam.edu

Text Us (M-F, 10-4): 315-277-3730

 **Crumb Library** 8am – 11pm

Crane Library 1pm – 10pm

- [Decolonizing the Library](#)
- [General Strategies for Finding Diverse Voices](#)
- [Race, Ethnicity and Social Justice](#)
- [Gender and Sexual Orientation](#)
- [Immigration and Xenophobia](#)
- [Health Care, Disability and Stigma](#)
- [Religion and Discrimination](#)
- [Poverty and Economic Disparities](#)

Diverse Voices Research Strategies - Decolonizing the Library

Events in 2020 revealed the systemic racial and social disparities that affect our most vulnerable populations, from the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement to the risks essential workers face every day during the pandemic. We recognize that it is important to offer works represented by historically marginalized voices, such as people of the global majority, people with disabilities, people identifying as LBGTQIA+, etc. We also recognize that publishing, academia and libraries have traditionally centered White voices. This research guide aims to highlight some of the difficulties in locating works by diverse and historically underrepresented people, and present strategies to help student, faculty and staff find works by historically marginalized voices.

Searching for works by diverse and historically underrepresented people can be challenging, in part due to standard practices in library organization of materials outlined below. It is not necessary to understand all the complexities of metadata management, but if you are curious about implicit bias in library systems read below.

Use the subject tabs for concrete strategies for finding works by historically marginalized voices.

Comments and suggestions welcome: Marianne Hebert hebertm@potsdam.edu.

Metadata, Implicit Bias and Structural Inadequacies

There is implicit bias in the knowledge organization systems used by libraries. Classification systems and subject headings reflect the

Organization of Diverse Voices LibGuide

- Tabs are listed according to strength of our collections to support those research topics
- Links to Library of Congress Linked Data Services for scope notes and broader and narrower terms
- Links to Primo searches for live examples
- Made sure the Primo results were sufficient and reliable sources
- Our collections are lacking for some topics, e.g. “Poor – Diaries”

Strategies to identify diverse voices

- No magic bullet, try lots of approaches
 - LCSH for classes of people and Biography
 - Subject headings for primary sources
 - Keyword searches and browsing
 - Anthologies
 - Book recommender sites
 - Book awards
 - Internet searches
 - Journals that amplify under-represented voices

Additional strategies not included in LibGuide

- Amazon recommender services
 - People who viewed this also viewed
 - People who bought this also bought
 - Frequently Bought together
 - Explore similar topics
 - Add titles to an Amazon shopping list, and wait for the emails

Other strategies

- Browser search for [topic] and “libguide.” Many results are for academic libraries reading lists
 - “Economic Disparity and libguide”
 - “Diverse voices and libguide”
- Book reviews: What makes the book reviewer the authority and what books did they write?
 - [Concepcion: An Immigrant Family’s Fortunes by Albert Samaha](#) NYT book review by Roberto Lovato author of “[Unforgetting: A Memoir of Family, Migration, Gangs, and Revolution in the Americas.](#)”

Implicit Bias in Libraries

- Academic research reflects the worldview of scholars which has historically been White, male, Christian, and privileged.
- Academic library collections (books, journals, etc.) tend to reflect that historic worldview
- Voices of historically marginalized people are less well represented, because historically they haven't been included in the academy
- Library organizational systems perpetuate that worldview

Subject Headings for Classes of People and Ethnic Groups

- Categorizing authors into diverse classes of people can be useful for researchers, but it is also problematical.
- Not easy to determine an author's ethnic, racial or gender identity
- Some authors prefer not to be classed apart from authors in general.
- Assigning diversity attributes to authors assumes that people of the global majority and historically marginalized voices are not the norm, reinforcing their otherness, and re-affirming bias in our systems.

Problematic LCSH

- [Rich people](#) compared with [Poor](#)
- [Prostitutes](#) compared with [Male prostitutes](#)
- [Illegitimate children](#) vs Children of unmarried parents
- [Juvenile delinquents](#) vs Youth in custody
- [Primitive Societies](#) vs Non-industrialized societies
- [Invalids](#) vs People with disabilities
- [Oriental literature](#) vs Asian literature

What LC subject headings do you think are problematic? Add them to the chat!

Does anyone have any experience working with SACO efforts to change LCSH?

Problematic Library of Congress Classification

- **Non-Western [languages](#)** are lumped together along with “artificial languages”
 - PC Romance Languages
 - PE English Languages
 - PL Languages and literatures of Eastern Asia, Africa, Oceania
 - PM Hyperborean, Indian, and artificial languages
- History of The Americas. America and United States--United States--Elements in the population--**African Americans** ([E184.5-185.98](#))
(Perpetuates “otherness” and physically separates works from White history)
- Geography. Anthropology. Recreation--Anthropology--Ethnology. Social and cultural anthropology--Collected ethnographies--Ethnographies of special categories of peoples--**Threatened societies** ([GN380](#))
 - “Class here ethnographies that discuss collectively the **nonliterate** peoples of the world whose particular way of life is being shattered by **Western** encroachments”
(Perpetuates colonial perspective that indigenous cultures are “others.” Non-literate as a criteria for “primitive societies.” Is there a separate classification for encroachments happening in East Asia and other non-Western areas?)

What Classification areas do you think are problematic? Add them to the chat!

How do we fix this?

- Acknowledge the bias in our library catalog, and explore solutions to fix the problematic subject headings and classifications
- Lots of research and work being done to address bias in catalogs
- Alternative linked data vocabularies are being curated
- Language changes faster than controlled vocabularies and organizational structures so we will always be catching up

SLS/SMSP DEI Initiatives for the Network Zone

- Change the Subject Project
 - August 2020: Implemented in the Network Zone (NZ) and Institution Zones (IZ)
 - SUNY Library Services (SLS) Change the Subject Project LibGuide: <https://slcnyc.libguides.com/c.php?g=986218&p=7623203>
- Statement on the Language of Description
 - SUNY Metadata Standards and Policies (SMSP) Committee is in the process of drafting a statement
 - Cataloging Lab's List of Statements on Bias in Library and Archives Descriptions: <https://cataloginglab.org/list-of-statements-on-bias-in-library-and-archives-description/>
- Homosaurus – International LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary
 - Homosaurus subject headings can be added to existing MARC records with a \$2 homoit designator
 - Investigating implementing local authority records in Alma
 - Homosaurus: <https://homosaurus.org/>
- Investigating the ability to perform DEI audits on physical titles in the NZ and IZ

Comments or Questions?