

Getting To The Heart of Your Library:

Assessing Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion in Your Library Collection

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Meet the speakers:

Rebecca Bartlett | Access Services Manager, La Grange Public Library

Betsy Bird | Collection Development and Materials Manager, Evanston Public Library

María Emerson | Student Success Librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Lauryn Lehman | Research & Instruction Librarian, Tredway Library, Augustana College

Tim Longo | Executive Director, Grayslake Area Public Library District

Augustana College

Key and Guiding Goals

Our Audit Goals:

- Better understand whose voices are in the collection;
- Determine if we had “explored possibilities for more inclusive additions to the collection” as per the library’s Strategic plans;
- Ensure students have resources to present diverse viewpoints and thoughts in their research involving our print collections
- Increase student’s sense of belonging in the library;

Our Approach:

- To do this work responsibly and respectfully
- Actively work to curb our own assumptions and rely on information that can be verified
- Focused on using information directly from the authors themselves.

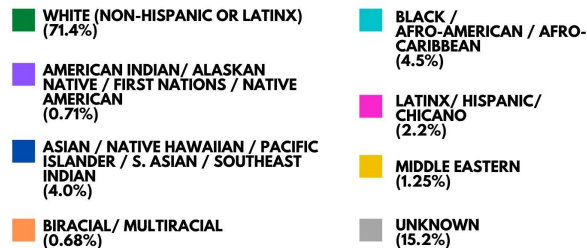
What and How We Audited

Audited 6,465 books from our permanent collection:

- Single-author books
- Published since year 2000
- Part of our circulating collection

- **Specifically, we assessed the authors':**
 - Gender Pronouns
 - Sexuality + Relationships
 - Race + Ethnicity

- **Our Methodology:**
 - Self-identification when possible
 - Secondary sources where authors could reasonably edit if info was incorrect



Potential Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Organizing humans into categories is messy.

- It is uncomfortable at times.
- Flexibility is key and you must be able to adapt throughout the process.
- Need to act intentionally and avoid becoming complacent.

2. Information will sometimes be incomplete.

- Relying on author self-identification means that often you will find a lack of information to satisfy all of your data points.
- Keep in mind that incomplete information still says something.

3. You can't stop the process once the audit is complete.

- Policies and practices need to be updated and regularly evaluated.
- Follow-up assessments will help measure the impact of the changes you've made.
- Open and ongoing communication with patrons is essential to improving collection practices.

For More Information:

Article: Available in *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*

Emerson, María Evelia and Lehman, Lauryn Grace. (2022) "Who Are We Missing? Conducting a Diversity Audit in a Liberal Arts College Library." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2022.102517>

Toolkit: Available in Augustana Digital Commons

Emerson, María Evelia and Lehman, Lauryn Grace. (2021) "Filling in the Gaps: A Diversity Audit Toolkit from Tredway Library" Digital Commons: Library and Information Science: Faculty Scholarship & Creative Works. <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/libscifaculty/14>

Article Preprint: Available in Augustana Digital Commons

<https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/libscifaculty/15/>

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**Evanston
Public
Library**

Beyond Auditing Collections

The Challenges

- Evanston serves a population area of 78,110. Racial demographics include 64% White, 16% Black or African-American, 11% Latinx, & 9% Asian. Collection Size: 478,000 items in collection.
- How can you get continual community feedback?
- What is your yardstick? What are you measuring against?

Audits don't exist in a vacuum. What are you doing beyond an audit?

The Solutions

- Communication. With staff and the public.
- Re-examine what makes you comfortable.
- Implement a Whole Collection Approach.

WHOLE COLLECTION APPROACH

WEEDING

01

02

DISPLAYS

REPRESENTATIVE READS

03

04

TRACK PURCHASES

Four Pillars of the Whole Collection Approach

Adjusting Our Lens When Weeding:

- Reexamine what we were taught/current library practice
- Use the tools that are available to you, but recognize their biases
- Ensure students have resources to present diverse viewpoints and thoughts in their research involving our print collections
- Establish different standards based on historical inequities

The Critical Role of Displays:

- Highlight the historically marginalized
- Re-examine your displays
- Track display contents

Four Pillars of the Whole Collection Approach

Providing the Best Possible Representative Reads:

- Start by looking at your community demographics, but census data only tells us so much
- Set up a committee within your library of community members with the express purpose of figuring out areas of interest
- Use the collection analysis to find holes in your collection

Tracking Purchases:

- Know what you are getting then you have something to improve upon
- Purchase in a wide variety of formats then you can evaluate the circulation
- Start small and build from there

Lessons and Challenges

Intended Outcomes

- To begin by matching the census data.
- Once collectionHQ's DEI Analysis tool was underway, to show continual improvement month-to-month
- To always keep changing and adapting. Investigate new ways of critiquing the collection. Example: CCS has the Diversity Audit Tool

Obstacles

- Take into account the scope of a project but don't let it overwhelm you
- Establish rules for community committees early to avoid confusion
- Find ways to keep yourself committed

Vendor Resources for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- [Baker & Taylor](#)
 - Kirkus Collections
 - Collection HQ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Analysis
- [Ingram](#)
 - iCurate

State and Regional Resources for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- ILA [DEI Initiatives](#)
- RAILS [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)
- LACONI TSS - [Past Programs](#)
- CCS [Diversity Audit Tool](#) (available to CCS member libraries)
- SWAN [DEI in Metadata](#)
- Chicago Public Libraries [Strategic Plan 2020-2024](#)

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Questions?