Getting To The Heart of Your Library:
Assessing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Your Library Collection
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
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*


**Toolkit:** Available in Augustana Digital Commons


**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?