

Speaking to Diversity through Information Literacy

Jennifer Joe

ALAO Annual Conference 2020



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TOLEDO

Who Am I?

Undergraduate Engagement Librarian

Liaison to Anthropology, Sociology, Gender and
Women's Studies

Information Literacy/First Year Experience Instructor



Diversity is differences – in pedagogy, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race or ethnicity.

Equity is equalizing the playing field.

Inclusion is providing the opportunity for full participation to every person by understanding their unique needs.

Basis in the Credit Bearing Class

My Student Population

- Exploratory Major; did not get into major of choice
- Often URM students; first-generation, Pell Grant Recipients
- Mixed experience with information literacy
- Struggling with belonging

Seamless Element vs. Standalone Concept

- “Diversity Day” is common but often ineffective
- Have access to diversity oriented speakers
- Decided to focus on embedding diversity in the course

ACRL Framework

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation

Intentional Additions

- Rearranged class into skills first, then theory & disposition
- Discussion about their past research experience
- Encouraging debate, discussion, and defense of sources
- Accessibility

Changes Made to One-Shot Classes

Encouraging Diverse Voices

- Emphasizing the importance of different perspectives
- Discussing the importance of diversity in research
- Encouraging and supporting persistence in college
- Highlighting alternative resources

Highlighting Access Issues Post-College

- Discussing information inequity
- Emphasizing being able to discern reliability regardless of medium

Design Meaningfully and Intentionally

- Identify sources of diverse voices in the discipline
- Use examples to discuss the impact of diversity
- “Warm Up” for particularly contentious topics
- Ask whose voice might be missing from the discussion

Framing Administrative Conversations

- Information literacy and library resources can inherently support a more diverse community.
- Consistent messaging is important.
- Actively supporting diversity goals adds value to the library.
- It doesn't cost anything to make these changes.

Conclusions

- Frame the conversation with administration first for maximum support
- Begin with small changes
- Engage in conversation with instructors of record
- Refer back to examples presented here

Jennifer Joe

Friday, October 30, 2020

