Checking Your Work:
Creating a Diverse, Patron-Driven Collection
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Overview

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Diversity Audits

- What is a diversity audit?
  - A diversity audit is an evaluation of a collection of materials to see how well it represents different characteristics and attributes of specific populations
  - TL:DR Looking at each title in the collection and evaluating it for diversity

- Diversity audits are not new, but have found new enthusiasm in the library community recently
Our Plan

- Inspired by a popular article by Jenni Frencham, we designed and implemented our own diversity audit.
- We focused on the Young Adult collection because of its size and the diversity of its audience.
- We selected six criteria to evaluate.
- We chose the criteria by comparing against what is considered the conventional narrative:
  - White
  - Cis hetero
  - Christian
  - Wealthy
  - Mentally and physically healthy
Criteria for Our Audit

To be considered a diverse title, each item had to meet one of these qualifications measured against the predetermined narrative.

- Economic Welfare
- LGTBQIA+
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Race and Ethnicity
- Religion
Differing Philosophies

- Our diversity audit covers two departments.
  - Materials
  - Programming

- Purchasing for a collection has barriers to diversity, including budget and publishing trends. An audit allows librarians to be more intentional with their purchases.
  - Quantitative, data driven

- Programming looks at ways to better serve the people of a community. With an ever-changing demographic, librarians need an inclusive, current collection that speaks to all populations.
  - Qualitative, patron driven
According to the 2010 census, Cedar Rapids has a population of 126,326. This continues to grow and is estimated to be around 132,000 now.

There are roughly 30,000 people who are 18 and under living in Cedar Rapids.

Cedar Rapids is steadily climbing in racial diversity.

11.4% are below the poverty level.
A community is more than numbers and statistics. It’s living and growing, in constant flux.

A diversity audit is essential to creating a diverse, welcoming collection to help us be a better resource for our changing community.

Every community deserves a collection that is reflective of the world, not just their place in it.

This is the philosophy we looked to as we moved forward with the diversity audit at our library.
If the point of a diversity audit is to make sure that your collection is reflective of your patrons, then we believe that it is important to conduct your audit from the patron perspective.

Instead of pulling a report out of our catalog, we did a physical search of our collection and surveyed the covers, summaries, and copyright page for diverse content and characters.
All items surveyed by hand were tallied to get a total number.

A separate form was filled out for diverse items with which diverse criteria they met and how; for example – Religion; Buddhist.

All information was then entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

2 staff devoted 10 hours to the physical labor of this project and ultimately surveyed 20% of the collection.

- 1027 items were surveyed; 164 were diverse.
2018 Diversity Audit: Data

- Total Matching Any Criteria: 15.87%
- Total Not Matching Any Criteria: 84.13%
We broke information down within criteria to create a more accurate picture of our collection and how it specifically represents our community.

For example, 2.73% of items in the 2018 collection were apart of the LGBTQIA+ criteria. Within that category, they break down into these specific groups:
Lessons Learned

- Most important lesson we learned was that our collection needed some work and it was/is important to accept that.

- While we still think it is important to do the physical labor of auditing the collection and looking at it from the patron perspective, hand writing our results and retyping them into Excel is tedious and can be improved.
2019 Diversity Audit: Methodology

- Not wanting to disrupt prior purchasing practices in the middle of the fiscal year, purchasing was changed to intentionally seek out more diverse titles
  - We consider this to have been “Purchasing with Awareness”

- When the new fiscal year began, every other order was/is entirely diverse titles with the goal of spending the same dollar amount throughout the year
  - Now “Purchasing with Intent”
The 2019 diversity audit was scheduled nearly a year in advance so that we could have additional seasonal staff dedicated to the project

- Every item on the shelf was surveyed
- 2639 items were surveyed (54% of overall Main YA collection); 690 were diverse

A Google Form was created for staff to fill out as they assessed each item instead of having to write it down

- This meant that all of the data could be exported directly to Excel
Diverse Items?

Title

Diversity on the cover?

Diversity in the summary?

Diversity in the BISAC?
If yes to any of the diverse criteria, Google Form would prompt the next section to be filled out that recorded in what way did this item fit the criteria.

If no, or if no to “diverse in other ways?” question, Form returns staff to the beginning for the next item.
2019 Diversity Audit: Data

Total Diverse: 25.50%
Total Not Diverse: 74.50%
Economic Welfare: 1.09% Growth
LGBTQIA+: 1.14% Growth
Mental Health: 0.99% Growth

- Suicide: 12.77%
- Depression: 8.51%
- Amnesia: 6.38%
- Mental Health (Unspecified): 17.02%
- Addiction: 10.64%
- Anxiety: 6.38%
- OCD: 6.38%
- Schizophrenia: 4.26%
- Manic-Depression: 2.13%
- Learning disability: 2.13%
- Kleptomania: 2.13%
- Autism: 2.13%
- Self-destructive behavior: 2.13%
- Anorexia: 4.26%
- Self-mutilation: 10.64%
- 2018
Physical Health: 2.24% Growth

- Albino: 8.33%
- ALS: 8.33%
- Deaf: 8.33%
- Obesity: 16.67%
- Paralysis: 8.33%
- Physical Health (Unspecified): 33.33%
- Terminally ill: 8.33%
- Teen pregnancy: 8.33%
- 2018

- Paralysis: 8.33%
Race/Ethnicity: 1.31% Growth

2018

- Black: 34.72%
- Mexican-American: 6.94%
- Russian: 4.17%
- Asian (Unspecified): 6.94%
- Australian-Palestinian: 1.39%
- Chilean: 1.39%
- Indian: 1.39%
- Hispanic: 1.39%
- Egyptian: 1.39%
- Korean-American: 2.78%
- Japanese: 4.17%
- Middle Eastern (Unspecified): 6.94%
- Caucasian: 6.94%
- Caucasian (Unspecified): 6.94%
- Hawaiian: 1.39%
- Hasidic/Haitian: 1.39%
- Indigenous Peoples (North America): 8.33%
- Indigenous Peoples (South America): 1.39%
- Iraqi: 1.39%
- Irish-American: 1.39%
- Italian: 1.39%
- Jewish: 1.39%
- Korean-American: 2.78%
- Lebanese: 1.39%
- Lithuanian: 1.39%
- Salvadorian: 1.39%
- Scottish: 1.39%
- Syrian: 1.39%
- Thai: 1.39%
- Ukrainian: 1.39%
- Vietnamese: 1.39%
- Yemeni: 1.39%
- Yugoslavian: 1.39%
- Other: 1.39%
Afghan: 0.47%
Arabic: 0.95%
Asian (Unspecified): 5.69%
Bahamian: 0.47%
Black: 36.49%
Black Creole: 0.47%
Cambodian: 0.47%
Cambodian American: 0.47%
Chinese: 3.32%
Cuban: 0.95%
Dominican: 0.47%
Dominican American: 0.47%
Filipino: 0.47%
Filipino American: 0.47%
Haitian American: 0.47%
Haitian Creole: 0.47%
Hispanic Americans: 0.47%
Hmong: 0.47%
Hmong American: 0.47%
Indigenous Peoples: 10.43%
Indian: 3.79%
Indian American: 0.47%
Indian American (Unspecified): 3.32%
Irish: 0.47%
Iranian American: 0.47%
Iraqi: 0.47%
Italian: 0.47%
Japanese: 4.27%
Japanese American: 0.47%
Latinx: 3.79%
Latinx American: 0.95%
Latino: 3.79%
Latino American: 0.95%
Latino/a: 3.79%
Latinos: 3.79%
Latinos American: 0.95%
Leo: 0.47%
Libyan: 0.47%
Lithuanian: 0.47%
Lithuanian American: 0.47%
Malaysian: 0.47%
Mexican: 2.37%
Mexican American: 0.95%
Middle Eastern (Unspecified): 4.74%
Middle Eastern American: 0.47%
Middle Eastern Americans: 0.47%
Native American: 1.42%
Native American (Unspecified): 0.47%
Native American Heritage: 0.47%
Native American Heritage Month: 0.47%
Native American Identity: 0.47%
Native American (Unspecified) Identity: 0.47%
Native American (Unspecified) Heritage: 0.47%
Native American Heritage Month (Unspecified): 0.47%
Native American Identity (Unspecified): 0.47%
Nepalese: 0.47%
POC (Unspecified): 3.32%
Puerto Rican: 0.95%
Roman: 0.47%
Romanies/Gypsy: 0.47%
Saudi Arabian: 0.47%
Syrian: 0.47%
Syrian American: 0.47%
Syrian American (Unspecified): 0.47%
Syrian Creole: 0.47%
Trinidadian: 0.47%
Vietnamese: 0.47%
Vietnamese American: 0.47%
Vietnamese American (Unspecified): 0.47%
Vietnamese Creole: 0.47%
2019
Religion: 0.04% Growth

2018:
- Buddhism: 4.55%
- Christian: 50.00%
- Judaism: 22.73%
- Muslim: 22.73%

2019:
- Christianity: 33.33%
- Islam: 22.22%
- Judaism: 29.63%
- Hindu: 3.70%
- Religion (Unspecified): 3.70%
- Amish: 3.70%
- Buddhism: 1.85%
- Catholicism, Atheist, Judaism, Paganism: 1.85%
Multiple Diversities Within a Title

- Economic/LGBTQIA+
- Economic/Mental Health
- Economic/Physical Health
- Economic/Race/Ethnicity
- LGBTQIA+/Mental Health
- LGBTQIA+/Physical Health
- LGBTQIA+/Race/Ethnicity
- Mental Health/Physical Health
- Mental Health/Race/Ethnicity
- Mental Health/Religion
- Physical Health/Physical Health
- Physical Health/Race/Ethnicity
- Physical Health/Religion
- Race/Ethnicity/Race/Ethnicity
- Race/Ethnicity/Religion
Lessons Learned

- Google Forms was a useful tool for this project
  - This idea came out of the Equity in Action online course from the SLJ
  - Required some adjustments throughout the audit to make the form truly fit our needs
- When doing a physical audit, more staff members and time is necessary
- Make sure you are using common language throughout the process
  - Matching census data for more direct comparison
Flaws

- Conducting a physical audit meant that we were only assessing the items that were on the shelf in that moment

- Publisher provided information may not cover diverse topics present
  - For example:
    - “The Lady’s Guide to Petticoats and Piracy” by Mackenzi Lee features as asexual protagonist
    - Not mentioned in summary or BISAC information
Next Steps

- Our goal for the first year was simply to improve our practices and diversify the collection.

- As we prepare for year two and three of this project, our goals are:
  - Audit our west side branch, Ladd Library
  - Create an in depth community analysis utilizing the 2020 census data
  - Reach an overall collection diversity of 50% for both library locations
Audits in Action

Striving to improve as librarians and community members is sometimes difficult. Here are ways to continue learning and growing.

- Take part in Equity in Action: Taking Your Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives to the Next Level online course with the School Library Journal
- Participate in webinars presented by Booklist, School Library Journal, and your State Library
- Research what other libraries have done for their diversity audits
- Participate in literary movements through social media
Questions
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