Using Diversity Codes for a Retrospective Assessment of an Academic Library Collection

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Purpose

Evaluate current monograph collection through a diversity lens in order to ascertain what percentage reflects something other than the experiences of white, heteronormative, non-disabled males.

Scope

Broad → Shallow
OR
Focused → Deep

Scale down → random sample, defined date or classification range, subset of titles, etc.

Themes:
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Immigration
- Gender
- Sexual Identity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Ability
- General/Multidisciplinary (i.e. diversity, multiculturalism, intersectionality, social justice)

Not included in this assessment:
- Age
- #ownvoices
- Political Diversity
- Religious Diversity
- Veteran Status

Methodology

Assign diversity codes to list of FY20 (*n* = 806) and FY21 (*n* = 794) acquisitions to demonstrate intentionality (or not) of collecting diverse materials.

Use title, TOC, summary, and/or subject headings to determine whether the book/title reflects a measure of diversity

Considerations & Limitations

- No single method is "right" or comprehensive
- Interdisciplinary nature of diversity topics and LC classification scheme
- Subject content and interpretation can be subjective – human fallibility in assigning codes
- Inconsistency of code assignments among multiple selectors/evaluators
- Start with a well-defined scope as it might be difficult to anticipate all possible codes/categories needed
- Cumbersome approach for larger collections
- A number alone cannot account for diverse content within a diversity category
  - i.e. not all "Jewish" books should be about the Holocaust
  - i.e. there are multiple subcategories under the "LGBTQ+" umbrella

Code	Code Description	FY20 # Titles	FY20 % Titles	FY21 # Titles	FY21 % Titles
AA	African/African-American	53	6.3%	80	10.1%
AR	Arab/Arab-American/Middle Eastern/Muslim	4	.5%	11	1.4%
AS	Asian/Asian-American/ Pacific Islander	11	1.4%	13	1.6%
DS	Disability/Neurodiversity/ Physically Challenged	14	1.7%	17	2.1%
GN	General/Multidisciplinary	44	5.5%	67	9.6%
HS	Hispanic/Latinx	19	2.4%	21	2.6%
IM	Immigrants/Immigration/ Refugees	20	2.5%	17	2.1%
JW	Jewish	8	1%	5	.6%
LG	LGBTQ+/Sexuality	24	3%	24	3%
NA	Native American/ Indigenous Peoples	15	1.9%	20	2.5%
PO	Poverty/Homelessness/ Socioeconomic Status	18	2.2%	12	1.5%
RE	Race/Ethnicity	29	3.6%	43	5.4%
WG	Women/Gender	60	7.4%	73	9.2%
OVERALL (at least 1 diverse element)		256	31.8%	325	41%