

Commitment to Multicultural Library and Information Science Education: Part 2 - A Model for Success

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Welburn's (1994) persuasive case for including cultural diversity in the educational preparation of library and information science (LIS) professionals is based on the rationale that the foremost function of LIS educators is their involvement "in programs of study that are designed to prepare graduate students as professionals mediating between information and people" (p. 328). Although the words "cultural diversity" were not used, over 20 years ago Shera (1972) also regarded the environment of the clientele as the librarian's *raison d'etre*, which translates to the need for information professionals in the United States to be prepared to serve a multicultural, multiracial, and multilingual user population.

For the cultural context with which the librarian finds himself associated he must become familiar with its specialized terminology, its social structure, its patterns of thought, the ways in which it operates, and its peculiar problems. There are certain library procedures and methods appropriate to specific cultural groups, special classification schemes, special systems for the analysis of varying types of graphic records for special purposes, and there are particular bibliographic or reference services for identified clienteles (p. 217).

Welburn's (1994) argument is based on cultural diversity being "a dynamic engagement between cultures, their beliefs, and ways of knowing" (p. 328) that is a direct consequence of diverse peoples constituting a society. This argument makes a stronger case than the sole use of demographic projections for the turn of the century.

In Part 1 of this report, a review of the current status on multicultural library and information science (MLIS) education,¹ it was concluded that LIS schools and the profession still have much work to do to strengthen our commitment to multicultural library and information science. The literature provides many examples of programs, activities, recommendations that have or can succeed in incorporating multicultural components in the LIS educational experience. They include² federal funding for library training programs for minorities, recruitment, mentoring, and internship; cooperative efforts with LIS professionals in recruitment, mentoring, and internship; multicultural training in the workplace; LIS education targeted to specific ethnic groups; models for MLIS curricula; and activities of professional organizations, such as scholarships, research funding, recruitment and mentoring, conferences, conference sessions, policies and guidelines for services to ethnic groups, publications, and the 1992 ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA) standards. All of these components attribute to a successful MLIS education program; but, unfortunately, it is rare to find such a comprehensive approach in any LIS educational program. Our experience with a piecemeal approach to instituting MLIS education programs has hindered our progress; therefore, it is essential to take a holistic approach to MLIS education for it to be effective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to advance multicultural education programs in library and information science, help is offered in the literature. Works on MLIS education include descriptions of courses and curriculum, recommendations of approaches to MLIS education, and research describing the role and status of MLIS education in LIS schools — all prompting action and directing change. Although there are as many perspectives and emphases as there are authors, common threads run through the approaches.

Recommendations for an effective and successful MLIS education program vary from emphasis on a single element of an education program, to various components to a comprehensive approach. Financial assistance for ethnic students was considered essential to the success of a MLIS education program by some proponents of education for multicultural librarianship (Brown 1989, Knight Randall 1988, Totten 1977, Trujillo and Cuesta 1989). Their recommendation was made from observing the decline of ethnic enrollment associated with the reduction of federal support for training of ethnic librarians. Findings from the LISSADA Survey (De la Peña McCook and Moen 1992) confirmed the importance of financial matters for ethnic minorities considering undertaking a LIS education. The second most important reason for selecting a program for blacks was financial assistance and for Asian Americans was cost. Fellowships were considered a major source of support for American Indians, Hispanics, and blacks.

Higgins (1977, 1979) and Totten (1977) found that a successful program should include ethnic students in the regular program of the library school. Library schools which had not established a separate program for ethnic minorities were more successful than those which had (Totten 1977). In addition, Totten (1977) indicated that commitment from administrators, students, and faculty was essential to a successful program. Hines (1973) also recognized the importance of administrative support along with the need for ALA accreditation requirements to incorporate cultural diversity. The new draft accreditation standards recognize and address the diversity in society and that it needs to be reflected in all aspects of the educational experience of LIS students. Therefore, ethnic representation in LIS school faculty is also vital (American Library Association 1991, Dean Toni Carbo Bearman in Wynar 1991, Totten 1992, Trejo 1977). Totten (1992) offered some guidance on minority faculty recruitment by reviewing some of the problems inherent in existing recruitment programs and offering some ways to improve them.

Others emphasized recruitment (McGarry 1987, Robbins Carter 1978) or equal access to education for ethnic students (Bowen, Hiley and Walley 1986, Clough and Quarmby 1978) as a step toward multicultural graduate LIS education. In addition to recruitment, Metoyer-Duran (1990) regarded curriculum and placement as areas of attention in a MLIS education, and the Library Education Task Force, EMIERT (1989) deemed curriculum and continuing education as essential.

Although some information professionals have chosen language proficiency as one solution to services to ethnic groups, few have addressed it as an educational goal (Freiband 1992, Simsova 1980). Simsova (1980) considered knowledge of foreign languages to be essential but "versatility is more useful than complete mastery of one language" (p. 251).

In the matter of MLIS course content, there is much agreement. Some underscore that course content should emphasize intercultural communication (Hines 1973, Robbins Carter 1978). Sever (1990) favors focus on the users instead of technical matters and on the teaching of concepts of social science and communication. Many agree that a MLIS course should impart (1) skills to communicate with a diverse clientele, conduct a community analysis and needs assessment, and develop relevant and effective library and information services, (2) knowledge about the history, culture, socioeconomic status, available resources, and information seeking behavior of diverse groups, and (3) sound attitudes toward cultural diversity in society, in the workplace and in the delivery of library and information services (Bowen, Hiley, and Walley 1986, Cohen 1980, Freiband 1992, Lockett 1988, Simsova 1980, Trejo 1977, Welburn 1994).

Articles which describe course(s) focus on specialized courses for serving culturally diverse groups or specific ethnic groups. Cobb (1973) deemed UCLA's Graduate School of Library Service to be "in the forefront of organizing teaching, and updating courses to prepare librarians who are interested in working among blacks" (p. 43). In spring of 1970 UCLA began offering "Afro-American Bibliography" and "Library Service to the disadvantaged" (later changed to "Library Service to Special Populations"), and in 1973, it added "American Indian Bibliography." Trejo (1977) described the "Library Services for Ethnic Minorities" course at the University of Arizona which focused on the culture and value systems of three ethnic groups. A modified library school program concerned with ethnicity would follow this course with advanced courses on serving

specific ethnic groups. The course "Library and Information Services to Ethnic Communities" was offered at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the summer of 1987 (Lockett 1988). Lockett did not use the traditional approach which emphasizes the teaching of information resources on ethnic groups. "The course was based on the assumption that an understanding of the cultural heritage and the socioeconomic, political, and educational conditions of ethnic groups is a prerequisite to the development and implementation of effective library and information services in the urban community. A sociological perspective was combined with an emphasis on the problems associated with planning, funding, and promoting services to ethnic communities" (pp. 141-2). Two new courses in multicultural librarianship were introduced in LIS schools in January 1990 (Courses... 1990): one at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, and the other at Queens College. Welburn (1994) was particular in noting the intent of a separate course in cultural diversity. "First, such a course would have to be considered to be an intermediate or transitional step toward rethinking the curriculum at large. Second, a separate course should (at least in my view) revolve around the trifold concept of linkages between the multicultural contexts of information, its users, and information providers. Third, distinctions should be drawn between diversity as a workplace issue and diversity as a service issue" (p. 329). This author is also mindful of the last concern and in her offering of the "Information **S**ervices in Culturally Diverse Communities" course. at UCLA the emphasis is on service, leaving management issues to be dealt with in management courses.

In an article describing their model library school ethnic curriculum, Cohen and Sherrill (1982) described each of the courses which would constitute their three-level integrated approach. This article is noted for offering a method for modifying core courses to reflect a multicultural Freiband (1992) offers a tool for LIS faculty to use in evaluating and developing courses and suggests that it can form a basis for further discussion of the issues leading to the development of an official ALISE position on multicultural library education. Instead of a prescriptive list of courses and descriptions of their content, she details skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed by LIS graduates. Each element should be found in all courses and therefore should be reflected in the curriculum as a whole. Peterson's (1994) recommendations for incorporating cultural diversity issues into LIS curriculum are also general in nature with examples to be used in specific courses. They include discussion of projected demographic data; use of guest lecturers; broadening of lectures; assigning reference questions with multicultural topics; delivering separate lectures on information sources and services for women, ethnic, and areas studies; and encouraging behavioral and cognitive (knowledge base) changes.

As recent as 1992 at the ALISE annual conference (Belay 1992) and over twenty-one years (Monroe 1971), the key question in any discussion of a MLIS curriculum has been whether cultural diversity should be infused throughout the curriculum or addressed in specialized courses (i.e., the integrated vs. the separate approach). Twenty-one years ago, the question was raised with regard to serving the information needs of the disadvantaged. "Three major arguments were advanced for the integration into established courses: All students need contact with the problem and its various solutions, specialized courses may tend to develop too rigid a style of thinking about a group which contains great variation in readiness to use all types of library services, and service to the disadvantaged must be kept in a perspective of service to all other publics" (Monroe 1971, 454). The argument for the separate approach was the need to delve deeper into an area that a course with a broader topic could not allow.

The answer to the integrated/separate question becomes clear following Belay's (1992) argument. The division "implies a distinction between standard course topics and multicultural course topics. Developing new courses as the only strategy to accommodate cultural diversity would mean that existing courses do not require multicultural perspectives. In designing strategies to operationalize multicultural curricula, an important point to consider is that multiculturalism does not introduce new topics but rather new approaches to teaching old topics" (Belay 1992, 302). However, Belay (1992) incorrectly assumes that "some skills courses (e.g., courses dealing with indexing and abstracting, cataloging) are hardly influenced by cultural variables" (p. 302). Some examples of essential multicultural perspectives in skills courses are: cultural biases and insensitivity in the development of indexing terminology (Berman 1992) and classification systems (e.g., the Western bias in DDC 20 in such areas as literature, language,

religion, geography), treatment of the form of headings for persons with non-English names, construction of bilingual or multilingual thesauri, and development of English or vernacular language catalogs of multilingual collections. Most authors of publications on MLIS education support the integrated approach and the development of specialized courses as needed (Belay 1992, Clough and Quarmby 1978, Cohen 1980, Cohen and Sherrill 1982, Higgins 1977, Hines 1973, Library Education Task Force, EMIERT 1989, Trejo 1977).

Other responses to the integrated/separate curriculum question offered choice. Monroe (1971) acknowledged a range of responses that spanned a continuum: "(1) book materials for the disadvantaged; (2) understanding the dynamics of life in specific groups of the disadvantaged; (3) interdisciplinary education, with social work, sociology, public administration, learning theory, communications theory, and others making their contribution in the content of library science courses or through courses carried by the student in other academic departments; and (4) research-oriented theory combined with field practice in library social action programs" (Monroe 1971, 454). Simsova (1980) also chose not to prescribe one approach but offered four alternatives to address cultural diversity: a specialized, elective course; a course in the core curriculum; an optional, specialist paper; or a subject integrated into all courses in the core curriculum.

A position which concurs with the integration approach is that a multicultural position should be advocated for all types of libraries and information institutions (Bowen, Hiley and Walley 1986, Clough and Quarmby 1978). Although public libraries have been chiefly dealing with multicultural information services, it is not the only setting where the user community is culturally diverse. It is also important to note that the wording of course or program titles may appear to limit or exclude participation. For example, a title which states "service TO/FOR ethnic minorities" implies that other members of a culturally diverse society could not benefit from multicultural services, and a title which states "MLIS education FOR ethnic librarians" suggests that non-ethnic librarians could not benefit from learning about multicultural library and information services nor be suitable to provide such services.

A MODEL MLIS EDUCATION PROGRAM

All the approaches that have been described offer partial solutions in the design of a successful MLIS education program. A more comprehensive approach is needed which takes into account all the elements noted thus far. In other words, a holistic approach is essential in the education of information professionals to serve in a culturally diverse society.

An effective MLIS education program begins with institutional leadership (Schmitz, Paul and Greenberg 1992) that recognizes cultural diversity as central to the MLIS educational experience and desirable in holding (not conflicting with) the quality of an MLIS education program. The outcome from this acknowledgment would include: (1) an institutional commitment stated in the mission statement of the school (or department) and possibly the university as a whole, and (2) strategic planning, with coordination and accountability built in, to implement relevant programs and provide appropriate resources. A focus on cultural diversity as central to the higher education experience means that diversity efforts go beyond the insignificant attempt of documenting the number of minority applicants to meet legal guidelines of affirmative action. Similar deficient approaches of earlier efforts placed the emphasis of change on the underrepresented groups (Smith 1990). For example, it was assumed that minorities would assimilate into the majority culture, underrepresented groups would be responsible for forcing change, and minority population centers would influence a response from local institutions. Change has and can come about through the efforts of individuals but they tend to be local and sporadic.

With institutional leadership in place, Barr and Strong (1988) note two approaches to develop multicultural programs: through economic development or structural change. Multicultural programs that focus on economic development would ensure that they "benefit the university economically by helping it retain its staff, students, and faculty" (p. 87). A focus on structural change would entail "changing the structure of the institution to make it more

inclusionary. ... The program's content would include both behavioral and structural issues, and participants would develop action strategies for achieving measurable goals" (p. 87). Adopting one approach over the other in this case would leave a gap and, therefore, would not reflect a holistic strategy — both approaches are needed.

Richardson and Skinner's (1991) Model of Institutional Adaptation to Student Diversity is more in line with this author's concept of a holistic approach. It begins with action to increase diversity followed by methods to increase achievement. In this model student diversity has three dimensions in addition to race or ethnicity:

1. *preparation*, the development of expectations about higher education and participation in experiences that approximate college-going;
2. *opportunity orientation*, the beliefs students develop about valued adult roles and the part played by education in structuring access to those roles; and
3. *mode of college-going*, which distinguishes between students who follow traditional full-time patterns of college attendance and those who enter college with adult roles and responsibilities. (p. 15)

The Richardson and Skinner model includes three stages: reactive, strategic, and adaptive. In the first, or reactive, stage, interventions to increase participation rates are emphasized, such as recruiting, financial aid, and admissions and scheduling. Many programs implement this stage because it increases the participation of minority students but it can only present a superficial level of success if academic achievement does not follow. The strategic stage emphasizes institutional change and calls for more comprehensive and better-coordinated interventions, such as outreach, transition programs, mentoring and advising, and provision of a comfortable social and residential environment. Culturally diverse staff can be recruited to assist in implementing Stage 2 activities. The leadership for both Stage 1 and 2 strategies is largely in the hands of student affairs administrators. The adaptive stage requires faculty involvement through activities which encourage participation and graduation of minority students, such as assessment, learning assistance, and curricular renewal. These changes in educational practices, curriculum content, and pedagogical practices reflect differences in student needs rather than requiring students assimilate into traditional practices that are not effective. These interventions which link diversity and achievement strategies are needed to realize institutional goals of access and quality.

A holistic approach leading to a successful and comprehensive MLIS education program would have instated institutional leadership, mission statement, and strategic planning recognizing cultural diversity and would implement interventions in the following areas:

1. *Human Resources* — Recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of diverse staff, faculty, and administrators. These individuals reflect the diversity of the population, serve as role models, have the diverse skills and expertise to design and implement a comprehensive educational program, and provide the supportive services needed by students.
2. *Financial Resources* — Cultural diversity efforts need to be a priority in budget allocation if any progress in the commitment to MLIS education is to be made.
3. *Material resources* — These include information resources to teach and inform students, staff, and faculty about issues related to multiculturalism and other material resources to support necessary interventions.
4. *Diversification of students* — Recruitment, admissions, financial aid, pipeline programs, and advising and counseling of diverse students. These interventions focus on increasing the participation of underrepresented groups.
5. *Achievement and degree attainment of students*— Curricular renewal, academic support programs (e.g., mentoring and advising, learning assistance, student buddy programs), educational practices (e.g., scheduling), and pedagogical practices. These practices emphasize the provision of an academic relevant experience for all involved to foster inclusion and retention.
6. *Environmental support* — Extra-curricular and social programs to increase the social integration of all students to reduce alienation and promote inclusion.

7. *Research agenda* — Embracing cultural diversity issues to advance knowledge regarding information services and education in a multicultural society.
8. *Continuing Education* — Programs and activities to update practitioners on effective methods of serving multicultural populations.
8. *Continuing Education*—Programs and activities to update practitioner on effective methods of serving multicultural populations.

This author's holistic framework does not have stages because all components are deemed necessary for a successful and effective MLIS education program. It is critical to note that a multicultural education program needs to assist and accommodate all students, especially minority ones, to reduce alienation (Smith 1990) because "minority students often leave college because of loneliness and isolation, not low academic achievement" (Hawkins 1989). Although these authors were mainly referring to the undergraduate student experience, this concern should also be heeded at the graduate level. Therefore, the holistic approach advocates both social and academic integration to increase retention. In Tinto's model of retention (Smith 1989), "social integration relates to involvement with peers, campus activities, and so on, while academic integration relates to academic performance, involvement with the curriculum, and contact with faculty and staff" (p. 33).

In line with the holistic framework to a MLIS educational program, a holistic approach also needs to be taken in order to be successful in curriculum design and pedagogical practices. This concern was echoed by Smith (1990; 77) who stated that "educating in a multicultural context involves not only what we teach but also how we teach and the climate in which our classrooms function." Similarly, Schmitz, Paul and Greenberg (1992; 75) considered the "critical ingredient is a supportive learning environment fostered by a teacher who appropriately recognizes and values different cultural styles and perspectives and effectively engages students in the learning process." This notion of a holistic approach blending curricular and pedagogical issues is advanced by Pai (1992) in the form of "library praxis." The notion of praxis was developed by Paolo Freire which is the process of "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Omatsu 1990; 77). Praxis is achieved through the use of a "problem posing" style of education which calls for both teacher and student to assume the dual roles of teacher and student, enabling reciprocal learning, parallel growth, and mutual respect.

Pai compared praxis with Banks' (1988) notion of "cross cultural competency." It directs that "the multiethnic curriculum should help students to develop the ability to make reflective decisions on issues related to ethnicity and to take personal and public action to help solve the racial and ethnic problems in our national and world societies" (Banks 1988, 51). Parallel to these approaches is Green's (1982) notion of "ethnic competence" which is an approach to deal with culturally diverse clientele in human services. It is an effective means of cross cultural communication emphasizing awareness of the role of culture in human behavior. Pai underscored that praxis goes beyond teaching of cultural awareness or communication by being action-oriented. "The skills to remove the barriers and to provide service to a diverse population must also be included" (Pai 1992, 10). Therefore, library praxis, unlike other approaches, requires information professionals to not only fulfill their information service mandate but also their social responsibility mandate. Also, contrary to other approaches, which address one or some of the elements of a MLIS education, Pai's approach, like this author's holistic framework, goes beyond curricular issues. "The education of librarians in a racially and ethnically diverse society must address each of the components of the educational experience of students in library school" (Pai 1992, 12). These areas include the curriculum; student, staff, and faculty diversity; recruitment, admissions, and development programs; and research.

CONCLUSION

The future then implies much work for LIS schools and the profession. Literature exists to guide the development of courses and to revamp the curriculum (e.g., Cohen and Sherrill 1982, Courses... 1990, Freiband 1992, Lockett 1988) and the recruitment of minority faculty (Totten 1992) and, more importantly, a holistic framework has just been presented to guide the renewal of LIS education programs. It is hoped that the

existence of multicultural components in LIS education programs will be closely scrutinized by the ALA Committee on Accreditation and the ALISE Ethnic, Multicultural and Humanistic Concerns Special Interest Group. However, fair warning exists for all working toward full implementation of MLIS educational programs. Buckland (1986) in his treatise of education for librarianship in the next century projected change to take place in three areas: library values, library technology, and library science. He predicted rapid change in technology and hoped for changes in the other areas, but foresaw little change in the Western liberal tradition of library services. The same view that technology will overshadow other LIS concerns is echoed by other educators (Jackson in Wynar 1991, Robbins Carter 1978, Sever 1990, Turock in Josey 1991). Nevertheless, supporters of MLIS education will not be discouraged. For example, ALISE Alert (October 1992) announced that Queens College Graduate School of Library and Information Studies continues its activities in support of MLIS education, proposing a series of four workshops/ seminars focusing on multiculturalism and diversity in the workplace. Lastly, education and professional practice cannot be constructive if LIS educators and professionals continue to use and rely on past practice, old knowledge, or untested practice. The field, in order to remain vital in its goal to educate professionals to serve in a culturally diverse society, needs to conduct research on multicultural issues, to revisit old practices, and to institute holistic MLIS education programs in order to successfully and effectively prepare information professionals to mediate between people and information.

NOTES

1 Chu, Clara M. "Commitment to Multicultural Library and Information Science Education: Part 1 - Current Status." *EMIE Bulletin* 12.1(1995): 1, 6-7.

2 For fuller coverage of these programs, activities, and recommendations, please see the literature review section of Chu, Clara M. "Education for Multicultural Librarianship." *Multiculturalism in Libraries*.

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