JEDI Inspirations for Undergraduate Research: Leveraging Library Connections to Diversify Student Research & Researchers

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Focus & Agenda

This presentation opens a discussion for college and university libraries on how they can inspire a more diversified portfolio of undergraduate student research and researchers through a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) principles, especially by leveraging strategic collaborations with library and other academic partners.

Agenda
Defining Contexts
Principles of Student Engagement
Collaborations
Discussion
“We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.”

—Sonya Renee Taylor, activist, artist, author, speaker
Defining Contexts

JEDI Perspective

Critical Research Perspectives

Critical Outreach & Engagement
Working from a JEDI Perspective

First Principles
  Justice
  Equity (+ Accessibility)
  Diversity
  Inclusion

Open, Questioning Stance

Open Invitations

Positionality and Structures
Anti-racist teaching is not a strategy, practice, or curriculum. **IT IS A MINDSET**

**This is why theory matters.** Theory offers a social systems analysis that names the roots of oppression so that they may be addressed at the very foundation.

Critical theories and pedagogies **explicitly critique** and challenge the oppressive power structures embedded within white-supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy.

Examples of critical theories include: critical race theory, feminism, marxism, engaged pedagogy, critical pedagogy, ethnic studies, critical whiteness studies, and pedagogy of the oppressed.

Credit: @decentertheteacher, Instagram
Critical Outreach & Engagements

What from your collections/resources might be engaging for students to research?

Who are the students that you typically support for research? Who doesn’t typically get invited to do this work?

How can you leverage your full employee base to support student research interests?
Considering Student Engagement

How do we encourage a more diverse range of students to engage in research, on a more diverse range of topics?

How do we encourage JEDI thinking, whereby students are considering and connected to social justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion?

What are possible goals for students beyond retention and workforce preparation—what about cultivating better and more curious thinkers and social actors?
Student Engagement

Consider where students are—classes, extracurriculars, internet and social media, workplaces and internships.

Consider invitations to spark curiosity—discerning rather than judgmental.

Consider popular culture inspiration on par with “grand challenges”—how are they linked?
Consider student populations that may not consider themselves researcher material, or that on paper might not be seen as such.

Who’s at your front-facing spaces? Collaboration with librarians/library workers important (remember staff with whom students may find it easier to connect)
Student Engagement Examples

Mentoring through the UM Library Research and Adobe Research Scholars program

Nhadya Lawes, “A Different Image, Another Sound: Resistant Rhetoric and Black Identity” (second-year student project)
Presenting at the UM Center for the Humanities’ Inquiring Minds Symposium for undergraduate research:

“There are Black People in the Future: Finding and Making Space for Diverse Research Projects”

• Background—where current research ideas came from and how are they evolving
• Mindset—questioning, opening, connecting
• Process—ideas for doing the work
Student Engagement Examples

Developing workshops for the UML Learning Commons, focused on student research presentation formats: “Paper-to-Poster Workshop for Presenting in the Humanities”
Student Engagement Examples

Are Jews White?
An Examination of American-Jewish Identity

Jacqueline Yastrow
American Studies Honors Thesis
University of Miami

Directing Independent Study course projects through the American Studies Program

Topics included Jewish-American/ethnic identity, social media and social justice through Black Lives Matter campaigns, and U.S. identity through objects/U.S. car culture
Campus Collaborations

University of Miami Libraries
UML Learning Commons
Center for the Humanities, College of Arts & Sciences
American Studies Program, College of Arts & Sciences
Office of Learning Innovation and Faculty Engagement
Office of Institutional Culture
Collaborative Opportunities

Culture Building Initiatives
Common Read programs, campus-wide JEDI communities

Faculty Learning Communities
Critical Pedagogies, Primary Sources Work

First Year Student Engagement Initiatives
Orientation sessions/courses, Writing courses

Independent Study Courses
Interdisciplinary studies, esp. Ethnic Studies programs
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<th>Suggested Practices for Collaboration</th>
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<td>Operating with principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion will always yield the greatest benefits in terms of collaboration with partners, both library and college/university wide.</td>
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<td>When we collaborate, we build relationships, we support scholarship and creativity, we advance the mission and goals of the institution. Academic libraries serve as a commons in the same way as public libraries in local communities.</td>
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<td>Get out of the building—make sure library employees are connecting with others.</td>
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<td>Give yourself time—collaborative relationships need these</td>
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Suggested Readings

These selections may help your thinking about librarian support for undergraduate research from a JEDI perspective…


Questions for Discussion

What are your strategies for connecting with students?

What are your strategies for collaborating within and outside your libraries?

How will you account for gaps in your collections and/or resources when students want to work on on minoritized topics?

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