

Infusing Diversity, Cultural Competence, and Social Justice into an LIS Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This poster reports on research being conducted by faculty in the Valdosta State University (VSU) Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program on identification and implementation of best practices for infusing concepts of diversity, cultural competence, and social justice into the VSU MLIS curriculum. It is essential that as emerging professionals, students in our MLIS program see themselves reflected in the curriculum and master theoretical and practical knowledge to be able to develop inclusive library collections, services, and programs that reflect diverse patrons' lived experiences and provide opportunities for all patrons to understand the experiences of people whose identities differ from theirs. This infusion of diversity, cultural competence, and social justice concepts plays a key role in the VSU MLIS curriculum and we strive to ensure it occurs in both core courses (required for all students) and elective courses.

Research in progress for three courses is highlighted: an elective course on multicultural children's literature, a core course that fulfills the program's collection development requirement, and an elective course on services to diverse populations that is being developed. These represent three approaches to infusing concepts of diversity, cultural competence, and social justice into the curriculum: continual improvement of electives that focus on the concepts; revision of core courses to explicitly address the concepts; and development of new courses that expand our focus on the concepts. Research methods include reviews of the literature, expert interviews, content analyses of syllabi, and surveys of LIS programs.