Anti-Oppression Workshop Series at the University Library

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I.   Introduction

In this report, I will give an overview of the Anti-Oppression Workshop Series that I designed, implemented, and facilitated in the spring of 2016 at the University Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a part of my Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) project. In order to contextualize the series, I will also discuss the motivation behind the project as well as discuss the rationale for the series name. Finally, I will discuss lessons learned and conclude with offering a few next steps for librarians interested in engaging in anti-oppressive practices within their respective institutions.

The primary motivation and purpose behind the series was to engage white librarians and staff in discussions about race and racism within the field of library and information science. As many scholars in the field have noted, the racial makeup of the field is overwhelmingly white (Honma 2005; Branche 2012; Bourg 2014; McElroy and Diaz 2015; Hathcock 2015). Furthermore, if the racial demographics of the profession actually reflected the United States population, there would need to be a *decrease* of 29,632 white librarians and a substantial *increase* in the number of African American, Latinx[1], Asian/Pacific Islander, two or more races, and Native American (including Alaska Native) librarians (Bourg 2014, under the first three graphs).

Despite efforts to diversify the profession through diversity initiatives and residencies, the racial demographics of the LIS field have not shifted (Walker 2016;

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[1] Latinx is the non-gender specific term that encompasses all genders, including non-binary. In a push to be more inclusive and to move beyond the Latino/Latina binary, I am choosing to use it here. See: http://www.latinorebels.com/2015/12/05/the-case-for-latinx-why-intersectionality-is-not-a-choice/.

McElroy and Diaz 2015). For example, McElroy and Diaz note that "In 1990, several years after the first diversity residency programs began, academic librarianship was 86.1 % white. In 2010, academic librarianship remained 86.1% white" (2015, 642). Reasons for why the field has not diversified vary. One such suggestion is that diversity efforts are used as smoke screens to uphold white supremacy. In "The Black Body at the Reference Desk" Tracie D. Hall writes:

> That library and information science and practice in this country are deeply infused, indeed "colored" (pun intended), by racism, given the larger social context in which libraries operate and (un)intentionally propagate, is hardly surprising. What is unsettling, however, to the point of frustration is the unwillingness of the profession to deeply engage in an open discussion of race, racism, and the accompanying acts of personal discrimination and structural exclusion that often result without seeking to sublimate that critical conversation to one that ends in cosmetic attempts at diversity. To be sure, diversity—in its quest to achieve equitable representation and participation—is a fundamental goal; but it is a concept that has been increasingly co-opted by systems that use it as a smoke screen for disingenuous efforts that serve to reify racism. (2012, 198)

Hall illuminates that not only is the profession unwilling to deeply engage in discussions about race and racism, oftentimes diversity efforts serve to reify racism. To reify racism through diversity efforts simply means to enact racism through diversity efforts.

Other scholars and writers both within and outside of the LIS field have also articulated the ways in which the concept of diversity and multiculturalism have been used to uphold white supremacy (Walker 2016; Kẏra 2014; Thobani 2010; Honma 2005). Upholding white supremacy through diversity efforts include an unwillingness to deeply engage in discussions about race and racism as Hall noted above, but also involves "the reframing of affirmative action as an initiative to promote diversity," which does not seek to redress past discrimination (Hall, 2012; Kẏra, 2014). Kẏra continues, "Affirmative action was created in recognition of a centuries-long legacy of racism and historically discriminatory hiring/admissions practices. It is remedial in nature, and

requires the recognition of past and ongoing wrongs that need to be righted" (2014, under "Love" graphic).

However, while affirmative action legislation was passed to correct previous wrongdoings for African Americans who experienced legal discrimination, with the passage of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) legislation protected classes were expanded to include white women, the disabled, Vietnam Veterans, people over 40, and people with physical and intellectual disabilities (Peterson 1999, 20). Peterson writes "This legitimate expansion of group protection of civil rights, but with limited critical discourse to untie the complexities of the discussion, muddles the equity focus. Emphasis was placed on difference and softened on oppression, facilitating the maintenance of the status quo" (1999, 20). The concept of diversity was conceived out of the expansion of protected classes, which placed an emphasis on difference without focusing on redress for past discrimination and redistribution of power (Peterson 1999).

Scholar Dr. Sunera Thobani extends the conversation of diversity as a means to uphold white supremacy through the concept of multiculturalism. Thobani asserts that the rise of the use of multiculturalism has been used to silence anti-racist politics. She says:

> Multiculturalism *is* the dominant discourse now through which all of us have to, are forced to, articulate our politics...Because it has just silenced anti-racist discourse and anti-racist politics in this country, which has been defined as an *extreme* kind of politics. And meanwhile, the deeply-embedded racial inequalities in Canadian society continue to be reproduced. (2010)

Thobani also notes that multiculturalism is used for people of color to be constructed as *cultural* communities, which are then described in colonist, static ways (Thobani 2010). Obviously people of color are not monolithic groups: they occupy various identities. To

describe people of color as cultural communities is one way in which the concept of multiculturalism upholds white supremacy.

The significance of the history of the conception of diversity and the ways in which multicultural language uphold white supremacy for the library and information science profession helps us to understand why diversity and multicultural language are the de facto terms we use to articulate the lack of racial representation within the profession. Given that the racial demographic of the field is overwhelmingly white, it is unsurprising then that diversity efforts may actually reinforce racism and uphold white supremacy.

In "White Librarianship In Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS" April Hathcock asserts, "Our diversity programs do not work because they are themselves coded to promote whiteness as the norm in the profession and unduly burden those individuals they are most intended to help" (2015, under "Failures of Diversity Initiatives in LIS"). This is one example in which diversity efforts actually reify racism. Shaundra Walker writes that "In addition to the persistent lack of minorities in the profession, among those African American and other librarians of color who ultimately gain employment in academic libraries, reports of discriminatory practices abound" (2016, 146). One such discriminatory practice Walker points out is tenure-track librarians of color are more likely than white librarians to be asked to serve in diversity-related positions, which add to what she calls "a hidden workload" (2016, 147). Not only is expecting librarians of color to take on a hidden workload discriminatory, it implies that diversity work is the work of librarians of color and not white librarians.

Cheryl E. Branche further stipulates "Diversity and multiculturalism suggest inclusiveness of diverse and many cultures; the obverse racism and race consciousness are rarely used, acknowledged or studied. The need for diversity cannot be investigated effectively without addressing the origins of the diversity deficit" (2012, 204). It in the interest of investigating the origins of the diversity deficit that the Anti-Oppression Workshop Series was conceived.

The Anti-Oppression Workshop Series was thusly named rather than the Diversity Workshop Series in order to address the systems of oppression—white supremacist capitalist patriarchy[2] as well as homophobia and transphobia—that lead to the marginalization of people of color, LGBTQI, poor and working class people, and women. By focusing on the systems of oppression that affect marginalized groups, my hope was to move the conversation away from diversity and multicultural language in order to examine more deeply how these systems of oppression are intertwined in our profession and to brainstorm strategies for "redressing discrimination and redistribution of power" for historically marginalized people (Peterson 1999).

Furthermore, the "Anti-Oppressive frameworks seeks to not only recognize the oppression that exists, but also seeks to mitigate its effects. Part of this is personal responsibility: this means not only confronting individual examples of bigotry, or confronting societal examples, it is also confronting ourselves and our own roles of power and oppression in our communities and society" (The Anti-Oppression Network

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[2] The phrase "White supremacist capitalist patriarchy" is a phrase coined by the scholar bell hooks to address interlocking systems of domination. See: *Ain't I a Woman* by bell hooks. I added the terms homophobia and transphobia to acknowledge structural oppression and discrimination directed at LGBTQI people.

2011, under "What is Anti-Oppression"). While diversity focuses on the celebration of difference, anti-oppression practices require not only recognition of systems of oppression but action, including personal responsibility. By focusing on diversity, white people are able to not see themselves as a part of the problem and are too easily able to shift the burden of responsibility to people of color. The purpose of the series was to take a step towards changing that within the context of the University Library.

II.   Process and Challenges

The process from conception, implementation and the facilitation of the Anti-Oppression Workshop Series involved several steps. While I was able to access librarians and staff employed at any of the thirty-one libraries on campus through a practicum with Lori Mestre, Head of the Undergraduate Library, there were several levels of clearance I had not anticipated. It should also be noted that per the approval of the Library Diversity Committee, students, staff, and faculty from the School of Information Sciences were invited to participate as well. However, the majority of the attendees were employees of the University Library.

The first step in the process after meeting Lori Mestre and formalizing the terms of the practicum, was to meet with the Library Diversity Committee since they are charged with overseeing diversity-related trainings. This was my first round of having to propose and advocate for the workshops. I got questions about my qualifications and other logistical questions, but the Library Diversity Committee was supportive and willing to sponsor the series.

Initially there were going to be three workshops total, but after meeting with the Library Diversity Committee we decided to offer each of the workshops twice, once at the Main Library and once at Grainger Engineering Library in order to accommodate different employee schedules. The workshops at the Main Library would be offered at 10am while the workshops offered at Grainger were held at 2pm. By offering a morning and an afternoon option (as well as two different location options), we hoped to make the workshops as accessible to as many employees as possible. We decided the workshops would each be an hour long because there were concerns if they were any

longer, it might be difficult for employees to take the time out of their work schedule. The advertisement for the series did stipulate "This is an approved event for non-exempt civil service employees. These employees may attend, without having to charge a benefit, operations permitting and with prior supervisory approval" in order to communicate to employees that they could attend the training as a part of their work.

However, as is common with social justice and diversity-related training, none of the workshops were mandatory. In addition, due to the nature of the content and the fact that there was one facilitator there was a maximum of twenty-five participants per workshop. Since the workshops were not mandatory, participants were not required to attend all three in order to participate. Therefore, a participant could come to the first workshop, not come to the second, and still come to the third. While it was most beneficial to attend all three, the workshops had to be designed in such a way that an attendee could come to any workshop and still be able to participate with ease.

After the Library Diversity Committee agreed to sponsor the series, I then met with the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council serves as an advisory board for the University Librarian, John Wilkin. There was a lot more pressure to deliver at this meeting as there were people in higher positions of power present, including Dean Wilkin and associate librarians. After proposing the workshops, I got a lot of questions and some pushback. People were less concerned with the content and figuring out methods to ensure their staff was integrating the new knowledge into their workplace practices and more preoccupied with figuring out how to quantify attendance so that they could add it into their reports and check off a box that their employees had participated in diversity training. In addition, council members suggested offering

certificates of completion. However, unless participants attended the entire series, there was little justification for a certificate.

In a comment posted to "White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS" scholar and librarian Shaundra Walker notes, "Too often the LIS field has turned to quantitative data alone to assess its progress in diversifying the profession. More experiential reflections from marginalized individuals and groups would certainly help to refine and explain the quantitative findings" (Hathcock 2015, under "Comments: Shaundra Walker). Though the workshops were predominantly white, they were an attempt to actually allow space for there to be experiential reflections from employees and LIS students, staff, and faculty from marginalized groups rather than just depend on quantitative data.

The other challenge was pushback I received on the series title. I was told that the word "anti-oppression" would scare people. I explained what anti-oppression meant and explained as politely as possible that I was not offering diversity training, but rather anti-oppression training and therefore, the title needed to reflect the content that was being offered in the series. As noted in the introduction, diversity and multicultural language is the norm but it does not address systems of oppression that prevent diversity from being possible. This pushback on the title and the desire for me to use diversity language is a reflection of diversity language not getting to the root of the problem coupled with white people's desire to stay within their comfort zone by not actually engaging deeply with race, racism, and white supremacy.

III.   Design and Delivery

The first step to actually determining the content and structure of the workshops was creating the series and workshop descriptions after the series was approved. The series description is as follows:

> The goal of the Anti-Oppression Workshop Series is to expand the conversation of diversity and inclusion to include discussions of power and privilege. In addition, the Series aims to help participants develop concrete strategies and practices they can use in their workplace and community in order to help create a more equitable and just society. A companion blackboard collaborate site will also be available. Caragher 2016, under "Projects")

In the description I made a point of emphasizing discussions of power and privilege in order to steer it away from diversity and multicultural language and to accurately describe the purpose of the series. While developing concrete strategies for participants to integrate into their jobs was a key part of the series, there was also an emphasis on learning about and discussing concepts.

As Paul Gorski, Associate Professor of Integrative Studies at George Mason University, points out "a workshop that focuses ONLY on 'practical strategies' without also doing the work necessary to help people understand the injustices we ostensibly want to dismantle" is unhelpful. He continues, "Why? Because racist people with practical strategies are no threat to racism" (2016). Unless librarians and staff understand the systems that cause injustice, how can they come up with just solutions to alleviating the injustices in their institutions? The three workshops in the series sought to: a) differentiate between diversity and anti-oppression work b) understand that oppression is interlocking through intersectionality theory and c) address practical solutions for how we can create an environment that is not hostile to librarians and staff of color.

Each of three workshops included active learning, such as reflection, writing, and discussions in pairs or small groups, with the option to then share with the entire group. As Robin DiAngelo points out:

> White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. (DiAngelo 2011, 54)

So although sharing was voluntary, it was encouraged. Both the small group discussions and sharing with the entire group were encouraged to help white people in particular strengthen their ability to engage in conversations about race, racism, white supremacy and their place in it without displaying aggression, fear or guilt. In addition, it challenged them to do so in front of their peers of color and to actually have conversations with the librarians and staff of color, despite the perceived risk of getting it wrong.

I used presentations and videos as the primary method to communicate content. I also made a point of citing material from a variety of sources, including academic and non-academic sources.

Once I had the title and description of the series written, I used it to help determine the three workshops and how they would be ordered. Since I knew diversity training and language was commonly used, I needed to clarify what differentiated anti-
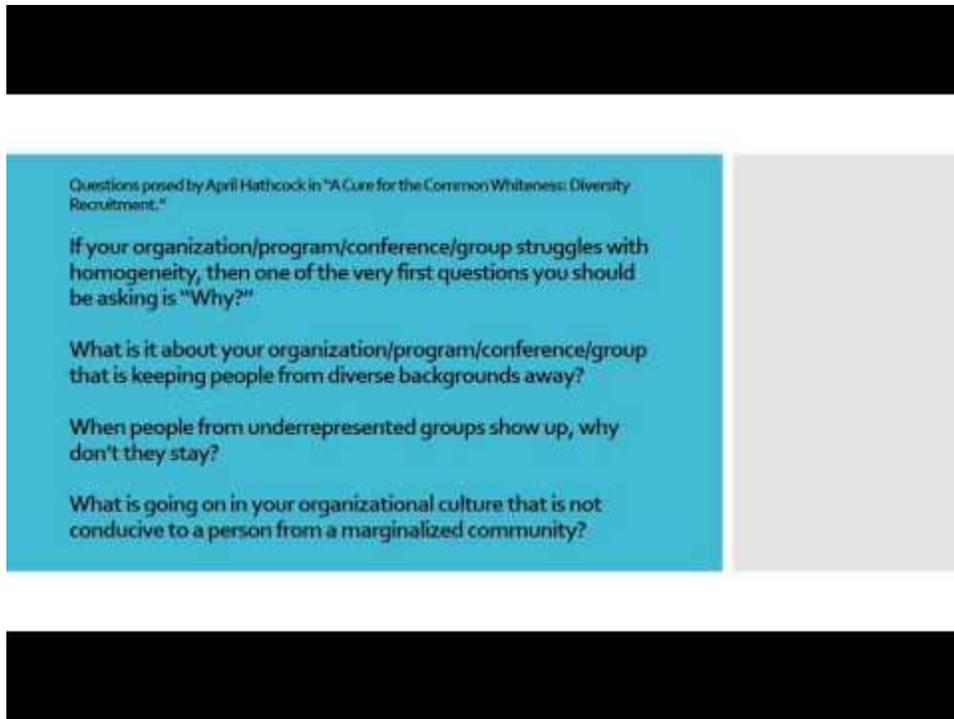
oppression training from diversity training, which is why the first workshop was dedicated to addressing the differences. Workshop #1 was titled "Setting the Stage: What is anti-oppression training?" The workshop description is as follows:

> The purpose of this workshop is to define and discuss the anti-oppressive/anti-racist framework the series is operating from. To that end, we will discuss the difference between diversity training and anti-oppression training, and in particular how it relates to both higher education and librarianship (Caragher 2016, under "Projects").

As mentioned above, I knew most participants were familiar with diversity training and language, but most likely were unfamiliar with anti-oppression and anti-racist frameworks. However, I also felt it was necessary for participants to understand why I purposefully chose the word anti-oppression rather than diversity. Additionally, I wanted to familiarize themselves with the critiques of diversity language and initiatives.

Therefore, I not only included definitions of diversity, oppression, anti-oppression, and anti-racism, I also included critiques of diversity language and initiatives. I prefaced the diversity critiques with the graphs Chris Bourg created that demonstrate the fact that despite efforts to diversify the profession, racial demographics have not changed.

The workshop presentation is as follows:

Questions posed by April Hathcock in "A Cure for the Common Whiteness: Diversity Recruitment."

If your organization/program/conference/group struggles with homogeneity, then one of the very first questions you should be asking is "Why?"

What is it about your organization/program/conference/group that is keeping people from diverse backgrounds away?

When people from underrepresented groups show up, why don't they stay?

What is going on in your organizational culture that is not conducive to a person from a marginalized community?

In the middle of the workshop I then decided have participants answer questions April Hathcock posted in her blog post "A Cure for the Common Whiteness: Diversity Recruitment" in small groups:

> "If your organization/program/conference/group struggles with homogeneity, then one of the very first questions you should be asking is 'Why?' What is it about your organization/program/conference/group that is keeping people from diverse backgrounds away? When people from underrepresented groups show up, why don't they stay? What is going on in your organizational culture that is not conducive to a person from a marginalized community?" (2016).

I chose to have an activity because I wanted to give participants time to digest and discuss what I had just presented to them. I also wanted to give participants a chance to discuss before moving on to discussing anti-oppression.

In the ClimateQual Summary Report at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, one of the areas of improvement was in response to the "Climate for Demographic Diversity" section: "Race (40th) refers to the extent to which the library

supports racial diversity. Sample question: 'The race of a team/work unit member does NOT affect how they are valued on this team/work unit'. This scales indicates that Library employees believe that the University Library could do a better job in supporting racial diversity" (2015, 8). Therefore, I selected April Hathcock's questions as the basis for our discussion since they directly address an area identified in need of improvement in the ClimateQual results.

It should also be noted that the racial demographics of the workshop reflected the makeup of the profession: primarily white. When asked why the University Library was more or less homogenous, several white participants responded with reasons why people of color choose not to enter into the profession, or barriers to access, citing low pay and not choosing to enter into the profession as reasons. The question was not about recruitment but about retention and environment of the institution. However, the few librarians and staff of color that were in the workshop brought up the fact that when librarians and staff of color bring up issues around race in the workplace, librarians or staff of color have experienced being pushed or cut out.

The second half of workshop one was sequenced similarly to the first half, only this time I focused on defining oppression and anti-oppression. I decided it was important to discuss oppression before discussing anti-oppression so that participants were familiar with the types of oppression that exist. Finally, we watched a video on moving from 'not racist' to anti-racist in order to understand the distinction. The workshop ended with a group activity, which was answering a single question: What would moving from 'not racist' to anti-racist look like in practice in your organization? I purposely had us close

with this question because it set us up for the second workshop and got people thinking about concrete ways they could create equitable change in their work environments.

After the initial run of the first workshop, I received feedback from my practicum supervisor that people felt the workshop focused too much on diversity and not enough on clarifying what anti-oppression work looks like, so I edited it to accommodate this feedback for the Thursday session.

Workshop #2: Intersectionality: the key to anti-racist action description is as follows:

> This workshop will focus on intersectionality as a starting point for exploring the ways in which our identities intersect with systems of power and oppression and therefore, impact the ways in which we perceive and interact with one another. Using our experiences as frame of reference, together we will begin to discuss practices for naming and calling out systems of oppression in our community and workplace (Caragher 2016, under "Projects").

The presentation can be viewed [here](#)[3]. At the heart of the second workshop was intersectionality theory, a term and theory developed by legal scholar Kimberlé W. Crenshaw. While researching Black women, Crenshaw realized she could not simply talk about the oppression the women faced as only women or only as Black people, their oppression had to be understood as *Black women* who faced compounded oppression as both Black people and as women (1989, 140).

The main purpose of focusing the second workshop on intersectionality was to help participants understand that oppression is interlocking; in other words, the more marginalized identities a person has, the more oppression they face. In the introduction I mentioned that the field is overwhelmingly white, but it is not just white: the bulk of the field is made up of white women. Even though white women experience sexism and

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[3] The second workshop, despite also being uploaded in YouTube, will not load in Microsoft Word. Just in case you have trouble accessing the hyperlink, here is the link: https://youtu.be/SSipDXzkBW8.

misogyny within and outside of the field, not only do they not experience racism, historically white women in the library have upheld white supremacy (Schlesselman-Tarango 2016,668).

I also drew from the article "Making a New Table: Intersectional Librarianship" by Fobazi Ettarh:

> When librarians discuss the lack of underrepresented populations in librarianship, the solutions suggested most often are recruitment and awareness. But these discussions focus on one matrix of identity, like race or class, and ignore the fact that people embody multiple, layered identities. By treating these matrices of identity and marginalization as separate entities, librarians fail to fully understand how oppressions work in varying contexts. We need to go beyond the traditional diversity rhetoric and speak instead of intersectional librarianship. (2014, under "In Brief")

In order to go beyond race or sex, together the participants came up with dominant and marginalized identity categories as a group. I wrote their answers on a whiteboard, so they could refer to them later. I then had participants reflect on their own interlocking identities. Finally, we discussed the ways in which people in positions of power—for example, middle class white women—determine the norms of the profession and determine solutions to the lack of diversity through that lens.

For example, as a white woman, I may notice the issue that even though the bulk of the field is made up of women, men still hold the majority of leadership positions and make more money. My solution could be to find ways to get more women in leadership positions. However, if I do not approach the solution with an intersectional perspective, I could end up with white women in positions of power. How is that a just solution if women of color are not in leadership positions? Therefore, the workshop also ended with group work. Participants were asked to think about the question Fobazi Ettarh brought up: How can librarians make their respective libraries safe for these

populations if people in the field don't feel safe? (2014, under "Whose Table?"). In other words, if marginalized librarians and staff in the field of librarianship do not feel safe in the field and at work, how can we make the libraries safe for marginalized patrons?

Interestingly enough, the workshop on intersectionality also had the strongest reactions. When prompted with the question "How can we incorporate intersectionality into our work" a white woman librarian responded with the acknowledgement that although women are the majority in the field, men are still in leadership positions. As discussed above, while that is true, the participant was approaching the issue from a single axis perspective (i.e. sexism) without taking into account the multiple accesses of identity (race, sex, sexual orientation, class).

In addition, a few participants even approached my practicum supervisor following the workshop with various complaints, ranging from disdain that I used a feminist theory to being upset that they were being challenged. This helped me know that I was digging deep.

Workshop number two was also the workshop where we really dug into uncovering the systems of oppression. While I did ask participants to think about how we can approach the lack of diversity in the field with an intersectional lens, the bulk of the workshop was really about understanding how systems of oppression are interlocking and there was less emphasis on "doing." I think many of the responses were a reaction to actually having to do the work of expanding and challenging previously held beliefs instead of relying on not changing their attitudes and coming up with half solutions as Gorski mentioned above.

It was also in this workshop that the power dynamics within the workshop became evident. There was a white male participant who became disgruntled and used his power to dominate and shut down a conversation without adding anything to it. My response was to change the subject, but since then I have learned when participants are saying things that are either not informed knowledge or are a response to feeling like their privileges are being threatened, it is best to respond with "What do you mean?" Once they have to explain themselves, any issues with what they are trying to say usually become apparent.

Workshop #3: Anti-racist librarianship: strategies for moving from awareness to action was described as:

> What is anti-racist librarianship and how do we move from awareness to action? This final workshop seeks to get us to think more deeply about strategies to shift the conversation from diversity and inclusion to engaging more deeply with anti-oppressive practices that lend themselves to creating structural change (Caragher 2016, under "Projects").

The Anti-Racist Librarianship workshop is where we worked to put all of the pieces of the previous two workshops together. After spending workshop number two on understanding intersectionality and the interlocking systems of oppression, workshop number three is where we came up with practical solutions we can integrate into our work and institution.

For this reason, while I did do some presenting, particularly on differentiating between individual prejudice versus structural racism as well as defining active antiracism, the bulk of the workshop was focused on activities. I modified the think-pair-share collaborative learning styles so that it was a think-pair-group-share. The collaborative learning style and workshop was centered on the single question: How do we create a space where people of color can speak up without fear of being retaliated

against or silenced? I also expanded the question into two sets of questions: one for white people and the other for people of color. The purpose was to center the needs and desires of people of color. Prior I brought up perfectionism, which is an aspect of white supremacy organization culture, in order for us to examine the ways in which this prevents us from actually doing the work and contributes to upholding white supremacy within the library (Jones and Okun 2001, under "Perfectionism"). I also made sure participants worked in pairs and groups with people they had previously not worked with.

The presentation is as follows:
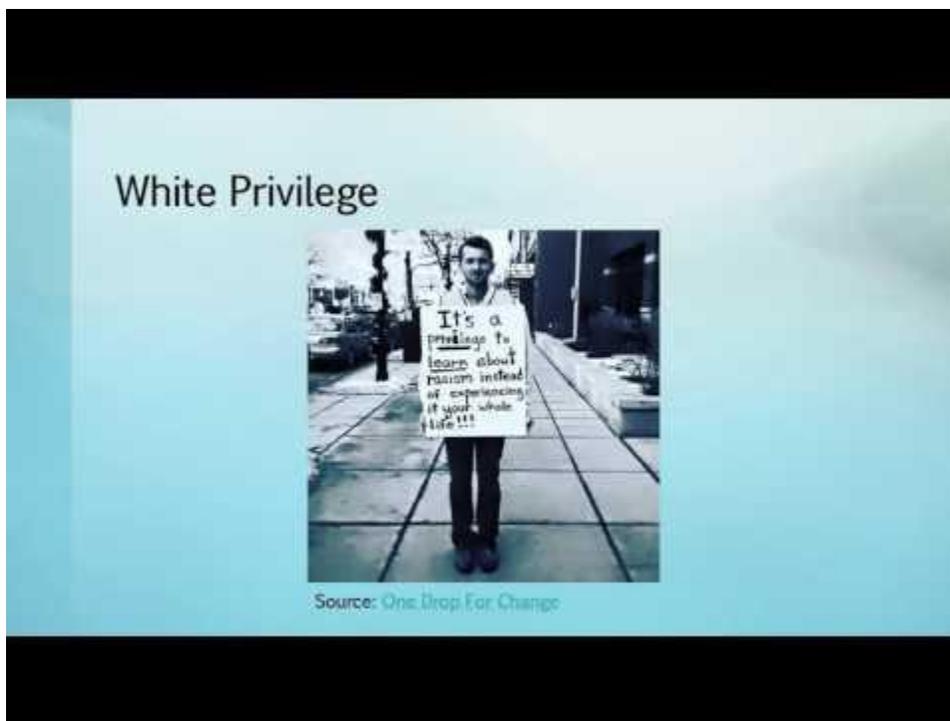
It is worth noting that participants were highly engaged, asked a variety of questions, and even identified policies that disproportionately affected patrons of color in the library. By the end of the session, members of the Library Diversity Committee were

encouraging participants to send me their recommendations so they could share them with the rest of the committee and follow through with figuring out how to change them. This is precisely what the series was for: identifying policies and structural issues that are in need of change and working to follow through with change.

IV.   Lessons Learned

One of the biggest lessons I learned was to contend with my own perfectionism, which is the aspect of white supremacy culture I reference earlier. There is so much fear of making a mistake and/or having a mistake be equated with being a mistake, especially (and ironically) in academia, that it is easy for white people or other people who have dominant identities to not take action. Having to propose and advocate for the series in front of many different constituencies as well as putting myself out there in front of colleagues, peers, and other people in positions of power was daunting.

However, I know when I make a mistake or hurt a person of color (or any other marginalized person from a marginalized group), I have the ability to apologize and learn from my mistakes. As April Hathcock wrote in "You're Gonna Screw Up", "Race work is not easy. The history of racial oppression is ugly and the present is not much better. But the work we all do is vital to the future of our society, and despite whatever mistakes you make, your contribution as an ally is absolutely crucial" (Hathcock 2016, under "Truth #6: You will experience extraordinary joy and fulfillment"). I also know that by not doing anything, by giving into perfectionism, white people are being complicit in upholding white supremacy. As a person dedicated to institutional and structural change, it is important for me to remember that my fear of saying the wrong thing or not doing it right cannot be greater than my desire for liberation and equity.

Designing, implementing, and facilitating the series definitely helped me to work through both perfectionism and helped me to build up my ability to have uncomfortable conversations in a public setting. While I had often had conversations with friends and

even classmates, it was a much different situation to not only be having these conversations with many unfamiliar faces but to be facilitating them.

The other major lessons I learned is precisely what Hathcock said: race work is hard. Working with people in positions of power and people who have varying agendas is complicated, especially given the fact that I was a student, which automatically meant I had the least amount of power in the room. Some people do the work for appearances and the accolades, and it is not always easy to know that ahead of time. Some people are afraid to challenge their supervisors and often times these are the very people who have the most privilege and very little to lose. Navigating between different parties' politics and agendas while holding onto my integrity was not easy. In fact, it was harder than facilitating the workshops themselves.

V.   Next Steps

Now that I have designed, implemented, facilitated, and evaluated the Anti-Oppression Workshop Series, I want to offer a few next steps for libraries who are interested in taking the next step towards integrating anti-oppression work into their institutions.

One of my key recommendations for anti-oppression workshops is to have cross-racial facilitation teams. In the article "Showing What We Tell: Facilitating Anti-Racist Education in Cross-Racial Teams" co-authors Robin DiAngelo and Darlene Flynn write, "One norm and tradition of racism that antiracist practice seeks to interrupt is unilateral white leadership" (2010, 1). By having a cross-racial facilitation team, the workshops will serve as a mean to ensure they are not being led by an entirely white team.

Another component of anti-racism is accountability to people of color. Working in a cross-racial facilitation team can contribute to that accountability. In "Word to the Wise: Unpacking the Privilege of Tim Wise" Ewuarex Osayande writes in regards to anti-racism, "And if that definition comes from a white person, how is that anti-racist?" (2013). Accountability and cross-racial facilitation team can ensure that white people are working to be accountable to the people of color they are working with and that they are deepening their commitment to anti-racist work and practices. By not having unilateral white leadership, it also means that white people do not get to be the deciders of everything, including what is or is not racist.

I also recommend increasing the length of the workshops, the amount of employees reached, and the frequency of the workshops. As observed by a participant, a single hour

is simply not enough. As a facilitator, I can definitively say that an hour was not enough. While it was an excellent start, a half-day or even a full-day would be better for many reasons, including having the time to go more deeply into concepts so that participants can better familiarize themselves with the work. This will also increase the likelihood that participants will integrate the new knowledge into their work practices. Increasing the number of employees reached is essential for institutional change. Putting pressure on the administration to take a more active and dedicated role in anti-oppression work is also essential. While I proposed the series to the administration and it was decided that the series would serve as a preliminary model, none of the administration actually attended the series.

Finally, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of continuing with face-to-face workshops. While a Blackboard space may serve as a space to help employees access articles, reading articles is not enough. Employees must engage in face-to-face conversations in order to move beyond their comfort zone, learn concepts and have conversations they can actually integrate into their work practices in the hopes of effecting structural change.

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