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Engaging identity and positionality in designing library subject guides: The landscape of Sovereign Tribal Nations and LGBTQ+ peoples

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Kim: SHARE JAMBOARD SCREEN 1:

<https://tinyurl.com/5cbjwdwu>

MiALA session

https://whova.com/portal/webapp/miala_202205/Agenda/2234717

5/18/22 9:00-9:50 a.m.

"Engaging identity and positionality in designing library subject guides: The landscape of Sovereign Tribal Nations and LGBTQ+ peoples"

Kim L. Ranger

Hello! This morning I'll show some examples of universal design for inclusive and equitable access for distinct populations and describe my process.

Our learning objectives are to:

- Appreciate the usefulness of identity self-inventories
- Characterize positive design principles for indigenizing and queering subject guides
- Analyze your own asynchronous instructional materials (e.g., subject guides) in order to redesign them

We're all learners, so respectful questions are welcome as we learn new language and design ideas.

The Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples are collectively known as Anishinaabeg.

KIM: STOP SHARING SCREEN

I learned in a Land Acknowledgement workshop by GVSU prof Dr. Andrea Riley-Mukavetz that before creating a land acknowledgement, it's important to give back to the Indigenous communities with which one liaises, and to give thanks. This constitutes reciprocity. Therefore, I acknowledge the indigenous peoples who have shared their

knowledge with me: my childhood neighbors, my stepmother and one of my brothers-in-law, college professors, current colleagues, and local Anishinaabeg. This workshop is part of giving back by paying it forward. All inaccuracies and misunderstandings are my own.

I'd like to offer my land acknowledgement:

I grew up, live, and work in the territories of the Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. I affirm the sovereignty of tribal nations in the Americas and around the world, their experiences and histories, and their continuing traditions. I am a settler of western European ancestry, responsible for building better relationships with indigenous peoples, the environment, and the spirit that sustains us. I acknowledge that I approach this topic through an academic and pedagogical perspective and that there are people with deep lived experiences among us. Thank you.

Scholarly bias:

We often teach about information biases or viewpoints. But, while prepping for a Foundations of Communication Research library instruction session, I read sections of the course textbook by Davis & Lachlan. It made the point that scholarly/academic work is often created by white males, and their viewpoints are revealed in terminology, the names they use to describe the population they are studying, and with the details they reveal about their own background. On page 328, Davis & Lachlan state that, "Rather than seeking the objectivity and detachment **quantitative** researchers value, **qualitative** researchers acknowledge their own subjectivity and include that either formally or informally in their analysis and consideration of the research."

Then I read an entry in the *Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* that said, "Positionality refers to aspects of the researcher's sociocultural identity that are salient in the field and to how the researcher positions him- or herself in relation to participants and within their cultural context. ... To develop an understanding of researcher positionality, qualitative researchers begin by **accounting for their identity, beliefs, values, and affiliations**. This is sometimes referred to as a **self-identity inventory or audit**. In this process, the researcher acknowledges **demographic markers** such as sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class; physical characteristics and appearance; and social and cultural affiliations such as religion and profession."

Kim, share screen: <https://libguides.gvsu.edu/com275/authority>

There's an example of a self-inventory in the Practice box. Doing these audits helps us uncover various facts about who we are – reveals insights, which we can then follow up on by reading, having conversations, attending workshops, etc.

Private reflection:

Take a moment to think about your own identity, and whether your characteristics are

- hidden or visible,
- public or private?

KIM: STOP SHARING SCREEN

What are some characteristics of best practices for instructional design for Indigenous learners?

- Important aspects of teaching from an indigenous point of view are:
 - relationship,
 - interconnection,
 - acknowledging that lived experience and wisdom are as important as scholarly knowledge,
 - making the context clear,
 - and emphasizing practical outcomes of learning.
- Teachers and learners should try to form a collaborative, empathetic rapport that fosters finding deep meaning and creating a transformation in self-understanding.
- When I began editing a library subject guide on Native Americans several years ago, I read resources by and listened to Michigan Anishinaabeg teachers. I attended meetings and tried to apply my learning to the guide, while also making it clear that I am not Indigenous myself.

Kim, share screen: <https://libguides.gvsu.edu/natamericans/>

Welcome Box:

- This guide's purposes are to help you learn more about peoples of the Americas while using information and provide resources for doing research. For those who are "white" please see the Education tab, box on **Resources for settlers**.
- Kim Ranger (Euro-American) is of western European ancestry.

Sovereign Tribal Nations News Sites:

- We can advocate for primary sources from first-hand experiences – challenging academic notions of authority; like art that pushes back against the “establishment.”

Michigan:

- Tribes and Bands
 - I used their own language and spelling
- Michigan People of the Three Fires' Works in the GVSU Libraries
 - Do the research to figure out the author's affiliations, e.g., Manoomin: the story of wild rice in Michigan by Barbara J. Barton (contributions by Anishinaabeg) – Barton is “white” but much of the material is from people of Michigan Tribal Nations.
 - We can provide sources that can help learners shift their perspectives.

Articles/Databases:

- **Search Tips:** While we prefer terms like "Tribal Nations" or "Sovereign Nations," we acknowledge that the following terms are commonly used in sources of information. Try combinations like the following search with your other topic keywords:
- ("native americans" or indian or indigenous or "first nations" or aborigin*) NOT (india OR indiana* OR australia*)
- American Indian Experience: Features more than 150 volumes of scholarship and reference content, most from settler viewpoints.

Citing:

- We can challenge the notions of authority and citations

LGBTQ+: <https://libguides.gvsu.edu/lgbt/>

I realized I could do something similar for the LGBT subject guide, but in that case, I acknowledged that I was part of the community:

Kim Ranger identifies as lesbian and gender nonconforming or non-binary (androgynous) and prefers "she, her, hers" but is fine with "per, per, pers" pronouns (from Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*).

Articles:

- make the database descriptions specific to the population's needs and the language they use, instead of using a standard description from the resource itself.
- **Search Tips** - also make specific

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Discussion Prompts:

- What kinds of things do you see that are different from your own guides?
- Thinking about your own guides, what kinds of changes might you make in the future?
 - Learn the history of words
 - Be gentle with everyone: we are all learning

Summing up:

Collaboration is paramount: I sought input to forge an inclusive vision of asynchronous learning objects by reaching out to Native American faculty/staff and working with LGBTQ+ students. If you can get their time, the groups for whom the guide is designed can give you feedback, correct your language. Do research and read primary sources!

Final thoughts and questions;

Do you feel capable of analyzing your own asynchronous instructional materials in order to redesign them?

You may contact me via email too - it's in the chat!

My materials link is in chat:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vm516x0Q7iH6VgHU3DIpd8B3bY9qjDO9zTi7M0w897Y/edit?usp=sharing>

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