Amigos Fellowship and Opportunity Award Final Report

Project Title: Diversity in Library Youth Collections

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This project began with two questions: How diverse are youth collections in school, public, and academic libraries? Are we providing the children, young adults, and future teachers we serve with books that reflect diverse families and life experiences? Our project goals were to measure diversity in library youth collections, analyze how collection diversity is related to community diversity, establish baseline data for longitudinal research on how collection diversity reflects social and demographic trends, and raise awareness of the issue of diversity in youth collections.

We proposed a time-consuming but relatively simple method of measuring diversity by matching OCLC holdings for libraries to U.S. Census data for the communities they serve. During the course of this project, we discovered a number of issues we had not anticipated and how to modify our proposed methodology. Although we did not fully meet the objectives in our proposal, we made substantial progress toward the project goals and are continuing to work toward the goals of analyzing how collection diversity is related to community diversity.

Accomplishments, with notes on complicating issues, are listed for each project objective.

Objective 1: Measure extent of youth collection diversity by examining OCLC holdings of titles which won 2006-2010 Coretta Scott King and John Steptoe awards; Belpre, Rivera, and Americas awards; Asian/Pacific American Awards; Native American Youth Services Literature Award; Schneider Family and Dolly Grey awards (disabilities); or, were named to the 2008-2010 Rainbow List (GLBT books for youth).

- Developed youth title checklists representing eight areas of diversity experience
  - The checklists we originally identified vary considerably in number of titles. Some are for the one best book of the year in a category, while others recognize a dozen or more culturally authentic books published each year. Relying solely on best book of the year lists limited our ability to assess different levels of collecting, so we added additional titles from *Multicultural Reviews* and from *Disabilities and Disorders in Literature for Youth: A Selective Annotated Bibliography for K-12.*
  - Our checklists included almost 1400 titles in eight categories: African American (964), American Indian (72), Asian/Pacific Islander American (278), Hispanic/Latino American (209), emotional disabilities (117), mental disabilities (115), physical disabilities (102), and LGBTQ (116).
- Collected OCLC holdings data for almost 1400 checklist titles.
  - We identified 20,524 unique holdings symbols; however, since nearly 10% held only one checklist title, we decided to add criteria to identify U.S. academic, public, and school libraries that "actively collect youth literature."
  - We defined "actively collect youth literature" as a library that held at least 20% of the Caldecott, Newbery, or Printz award winners from the previous decade. We collected OCLC holdings data for those 30 titles, then applied the 20% rule to reduce the list of holdings symbols. We looked up library name, city, state, zipcode, library type (academic, public, school, and several others) for 11,394 OCLC symbols. This list will be posted in the institutional repository.

- Identified 5,004 United States academic, public, and school libraries that actively collect youth literature. This list will be posted in the institutional repository.
- Developed a Conspectus level scale based on OCLC holdings for youth literature reflecting diverse racial/ethnic diversity experiences, youth literature reflecting disability experiences, and youth literature reflecting LGBTQ experiences. Assigned each checklist title to a Conspectus level. This list will be posted in the institutional repository.

Objective 2: Analyze holdings to determine whether collection diversity correlates with library type, community size or ethnicity, or other factors reported in the 2010 United States Census.

- Matched OCLC symbols of public libraries to US Census data for the county in which the library is located.
  - This data needs considerable refinement to be useful as public library service areas do not necessarily correspond to county boundaries; therefore, we have not used it in analysis yet.
  - We decided to use the Public Library Survey data on population served for our first paper, as it corresponds to the library's geographic area; however, this data set does not include population by race/ethnicity.
- Matched OCLC symbols of public libraries to FSCS ID in the Public Library Survey conducted by Institute of Museum and Library Services. The FSCS ID is included in the library list being posted to the institutional repository.
  - The Public Library Survey is conducted annually and includes data on collection size, collection expenditures, total population served, geographic area served, and other factors used to compare public libraries.
  - One element, legal basis, can be used to identify libraries that serve multiple jurisdictions such as two counties and state-defined library districts. In order to do further demographic analysis on public library collecting patterns, we will need to identify the geographic boundaries of these libraries and match them to multiple Census geographies.
- Matched OCLC symbols of schools to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as a source of demographic data. The NCES symbols are included on library lists to be posted in institutional repository.
  - Although the 2000 Census data was searchable by school district, the 2010 Census data was not searchable by school district during the grant period. Since the NCES collects demographic data for public schools and school districts annually, we matched the school library OCLC symbols to NCES identifiers so we could use that demographic data.
  - We matched 4,834 OCLC symbols to NCES identifiers for schools and 335 to NCES identifiers for school districts. Only 843 of these libraries met our criteria for "actively collect youth literature." We deliberately set the criteria low, to avoid eliminating school libraries that collect for just a few grade levels, but since less than 20% met our criteria, we suspect many of the school libraries do not consistently update OCLC holdings.
  - We concluded that OCLC holdings data is not a good way to analyze collections in United States school libraries. The actively collecting schools are concentrated in a few states, so we may be able to use the data to analyze collecting patterns in those states.
- Matched OCLC symbols of academic libraries to multiple sources of demographic and accreditation data. This data is included on library lists to be posted in institutional repository.
  - US Census data for the state is being used to analyze whether academic libraries are providing future teachers, librarians, social workers, etc., with a youth collection reflecting diverse experiences similar to the state's population.

- o National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education and American Library Association accreditation status are being used to focus analysis on the youth collections of nationally accredited programs for future teachers and future librarians.
- o Carnegie Classifications are being used to compare the youth collections of different types of institutions.

Objective 3: Submit at least three papers to peer-reviewed journals, one to a library science journal and two to journals in other disciplines, during the two year project period.

- Presented at the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, September 21, 2012, in a session titled Reaching Youth Through Diverse Collections and Teen/Community-Driven Programming. During the first half of the session, we presented on our research project and discussed preliminary findings; our co-presenters discussed programming to reach diverse populations in public libraries. Feedback from attendees helped shape our first paper submission. The presentation slides are available at http://soar.wichita.edu/handle/10057/5328.
- The first paper "Diverse Population, Diverse Collection? Youth Collections in the United States" was submitted to *Technical Services Quarterly* on June 24, 2013. This paper provides an overview of youth collection diversity in academic, public, and school libraries, but focuses on public libraries; it addresses racial/ethnic diversity, disabilities, and GLBT experiences. The journal editor has indicated that the paper is likely to be accepted, but we have not yet received an official acceptance.
- The second paper, tentatively titled "Controversy and Diversity: LGBTQ Titles in Academic Library Youth Collections," is in preparation. The data analysis and literature review are complete; we have begun writing the paper and anticipate submitting it in Fall 2013. This paper will focus on youth titles reflecting the GLBT experience in academic libraries that support NCATE-accredited teacher education programs.
- The third paper will focus on school libraries, with National Center for Education Statistics data used for school demographics. As we have reason to believe that many of the school libraries are not consistently updating holdings in OCLC, we plan to select a sample of those that met our definition for active collecting, then check holdings directly in their online catalogs.
- We expect to continue using data collected for this project for many years. The library list with OCLC symbols matched to NCES ID, Carnegie Classification IDs, and FSCS ID will allow us to match holdings data to other data sources for many more papers.

Objective 4: Post all data from the project in an institutional repository where it will be freely available to librarians and researchers by the end of the project period.

- We are working with the Institutional Repository Librarian to post data in the same folder as our JCLC presentation, http://soar.wichita.edu/handle/10057/5328. The following spreadsheets should be posted in September 2013: OCLC holding symbols matched to NCES school and school district data, OCLC symbols matched to academic library Carnegie data, checklist titles, OCLC symbols for each title.
- Additional data will be added to the institutional repository as it is formatted.