

CritConvo series: Diversity

OLA Board Meeting
OSU Valley Library
December 5, 2014

As a library profession, we pride ourselves on the core beliefs revolving around access, intellectual freedom, and diversity. We work to make our resources and services available and meaningful to all. Even with a foundation of equal access, though, we would be complacent not to continuously reexamine and improve our practices.

Emily Drabinski is the Coordinator for Instruction at the Long Island University Brooklyn. She is also a library leader in writing and presenting about topics of institutional oppression.

She will invite the board to turn a critical lens on ourselves. Do libraries and librarians reproduce structures that give some people power instead of others? If so, how do we do this? Is it through our resources, services, vendors, and/or our education? What are some examples of how we resist those structures of oppression?

Keep in mind that these conversations can be difficult at times because they force us to turn a critical lens on ourselves and our profession, one that already strives to overcome structures of oppression. Despite our efforts, we all bring biases to our daily lives. What are some ways that we can “check” those biases when they occur? How can we push ourselves and our profession to continuously evolve in this area?

The board will use a framework for our discussion, the Cultural Proficiency Continuum. A powerpoint describing the continuum has been posted under board meeting documents. Please review the powerpoint and try to think in advance of some good examples – the good, the bad, and the ugly – from your professional experience that fall into the continuum. Note that the focus is on the structure or institution, not necessarily the individual.

Bring an open and inquisitive mind!