

Chapter 6

Implementing Sustainability in Library Instruction: The Journey to Creating a Crowdsourced Mission Statement Informed by Positionalities and Core Values

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ABSTRACT

This chapter shares the process and rationale behind a library workshop with the Reference and Research Services Department and Archives and Special Collections Department at the New Mexico State University Library. The workshop was part of a grassroots social justice initiative aimed at forming a more equitable and sustainable library instruction program. The concepts of equity, economy, and environment taken from the 4th U.N. Sustainable Development Goal and the extant literature in the fields of library instruction and educational leadership were utilized to plan and implement this workshop and research. Holmes's definition of positionality was used as the theoretical framework. This chapter unpacks the learning and reflection from an initial meeting with library staff to craft individual positionality statements that will be used to co-create a crowdsourced mission statement informed by positionality and core values.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-5964-5.ch006

INTRODUCTION

In April of 2022, the Instruction Coordinator at the library at New Mexico State University (NMSU), in conjunction with a librarian coworker in the Reference and Research Services Department, and a faculty member from the College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation's Educational Leadership and Administration program created a workshop to facilitate a grass roots initiative to create a shared mission statement based on sustainability, equity, and liberating educational practices and leadership. These mission statements would become the focus of the library instruction webpage; communicating more clearly who the departments are and how they engage with library education to the campus community. Reference and Research Services and Archives and Special Collections were chosen for this project because they are the two departments in the NMSU Library that actively participate in instruction to the campus community.

The NMSU Library was recovering from pandemic-related trauma and lack of synergy due to successive leadership turnover practices and this was seen as an opportunity for these departments to sit together in a room and process their individual and shared identity and core values to align thoughts and ideal pedagogies in the ever-changing environment. By crafting a shared mission statement based on positionality statements and core values, the NMSU library instruction program and archives can enact important, sustainable educational change utilizing the best skills and identities of the experts already working in the building. Grass roots collaborative initiatives such as this with two departments working together honor the knowledge and expertise that live within campus communities. These further the dialogue and vision about how the library connects and partners with other departments campus-wide and setting progressive, sustainable standards for cooperation and instruction practices.

Each participant created their own statement using their positionality and core values, allowing them to reflect upon how their positionality informs their own teaching philosophy, and the final statement for the department as a whole was crowd-sourced from these individual statements, as a collaborative endeavor meant to represent every member of the department. Using best practices in developing researcher positionality from educational leadership literature, the workshop was designed to allow for creativity as well as flexing professional skills. Through this workshop, new verbiage was generated to shift the environment of the department and align it under a more sustainable, transparent, and supportive vision of library instruction. By taking ownership of the co-created mission statement, librarians can increase the value and sustainability of the department's position overall.

Background

The interdisciplinary nature of this workshop allowed the facilitators to pull from literature of sustainability and researcher positionality in educational leadership through the lens of higher education and librarianship as a framework for this initial work (Holmes, 2020; Loya, 2021; Rigby et. al., 2015). As this work continues in the next academic year, more disciplines will be invited to share their expertise in more workshops, making this endeavor truly interdisciplinary, inclusive of university community expertise, and a model for collaboration for academic libraries. To create a collaborative and interdisciplinary workshop, we needed to define the parameters we were using to create the experience. In this initial workshop, there were two main concepts begging for definition: sustainability and positionality.

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