

Serving Everyone or Serving No One? Examining the Faux-Equity of the One-Shot

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While the one-shot model of instruction is the most common model of library instruction, a review of the literature highlights that academic librarians have struggled to identify how and if it is possible to meet curricular needs. This theoretical literature review takes a critical look at the one-shot and argues that this model fails to be the equitable model we think it is. This literature review examines the one-shot by examining its role in combating or upholding information privilege, whether it can be used when supporting learners with disabilities, and what alternatives exist for instruction practices going forward.

Introduction

In March of 2020, universities, and their academic libraries, across the globe were forced to pivot from in-person to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic libraries were tasked with identifying how to exclusively offer their services and resources virtually: instruction, research assistance, and access to collections.¹ This process of reimagining and tailoring library services to this current crisis has caused many practitioners and researchers to ask themselves what will need to change when this situation is more stabilized.² Even in the fall of 2021, when we were writing this article, libraries were offering their users varying degrees of access to their physical spaces, services, and resources.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is in itself its own crisis, academic libraries have been in crisis over their instructional practices for much longer. Throughout the last decade, especially as academic libraries have migrated from using the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Standards for Information Literacy* to the *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*, librarians have noted a disconnect between the skills they are tasked with cultivating in their students and the modality of instruction available to them. Commonly, instruction librarians use the one-shot model of instruction, even though it is recognized that this model of instruction does not allow for deep retention of information literacy concepts³ and "has no memory of where information literacy has been or where it is going."⁴ One of the major arguments for the one-shot is that more students get exposure to library services, resources, and information literacy skills; but, with the knowledge that the one-shot is less likely to impart deep critical thinking skills and generally assumes that students are equal learners, is it possible that

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the one-shot actually does more harm than good? Likewise, if we superficially categorize our students by the skills they should have by a specific point in their academic journeys, how are we missing the mark in creating an equitable environment for all learners—not just the ones who fit our generic profiles? Finally, is this mutually agreed-upon, yet contested, model of instruction working against our core values as a profession—such as providing the “highest level of service to all library users through... equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests?”⁵

To analyze these questions, this paper aims to review a selection of the literature and discuss the role of the one-shot by examining three things: 1) whether the one-shot really serves our needs or if it is a force that furthers inequity to our students and us as a profession; 2) its role in upholding or dismantling information privilege; and 3) the impacts of how we provide instructional support to learners with disabilities. Though this paper seeks to analyze and understand the complexity of equity, or lack thereof, in the one-shot, it is uncertain at this time what solutions should be employed to address this issue. That being said, we look forward to interrogating the literature so that we can begin to find ways to progress toward forms of more equitable library instruction in higher education.

Positionality Statements

The ability to understand our role in upholding or cultivating authority can occur through the process of social positioning, “where partiality, not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims.”⁶ Born out of the philosophy of standpoint theory, social positioning takes into account how one’s intersectional identities inform knowledge creation and acquisition.⁷ As such, it was important for us, as the authors of this article, to reflect on our positionality in relation to these topics discussed in this article.

Zoe Bastone (she/her/hers): I am a cis-gendered white woman who is also neurodivergent. Throughout my roles as a student in higher education, I was largely unaware of the services and resources available to me. This certainly impacts my work as an academic librarian who provides information literacy instruction and has responsibilities in outreach and engagement. My position in the context of this paper and in my professional work is to highlight the disparities of the student experience and access to information.

Kristina Clement (she/her/hers): I am a cis-gendered, able-bodied, neurotypical white woman. While I have experienced some marginalization in higher education because I am a woman, I also have experienced significant privilege in librarianship, as I represent the majority demographics of the field—white and female. My privilege and status as a majority member of my field places me in a position where I benefit from the systems of oppression that have long existed in higher education. My position in the context of this paper and in the greater context of my profession as an academic librarian is to challenge the status quo and work to build better systems and praxis that create space and place for the equitable education of students and the equitable treatment of librarians (both by others and by ourselves).

Faux-Equity in the One-Shot and Librarianship

As we began to examine the role of the one-shot, we were struck by the disconnect between the intended goal of creating more equitable, impactful learning environments and the lack of movement toward meaningful change. This is certainly the case in LIS literature surrounding the one-shot, where researchers and practitioners generally agree that the one-shot is one

of the least effective methods of teaching information literacy concepts.⁸ Still, we continue to adopt and adapt different forms of the one-shot in an attempt to preserve the existing infrastructure using whichever technique is currently the most popular, which have included modeling around threshold concepts,⁹ boosting engagement opportunities,¹⁰ or gamifying the session.¹¹ Additionally, there are other factors that are likely at play, including faculty expectations of the library and its information literacy instruction, time constraints, and the overall institutional resistance to change that is keenly felt by the library and requires a significant amount of effort and labor on behalf of librarians that has led to the continual use of the one-shot. Finding the right term to describe the disconnect that we were feeling was difficult. In the beginning of her editorial, from which this paper was inspired, Nicole Pagowsky aptly describes the one-shot as a “faux-innocuous activity,”¹² which struck a chord for us and was close to but not quite the exact feeling about the one-shot and equity that we were trying to name. After reviewing the literature, we started referring to this dynamic as “faux-equity,” which we feel strikes at the heart of the problems with the one-shot instruction session and equitable instruction practices.

In reviewing major LIS databases, we sought to find terms analogous to the concept of “faux-equity.” We searched the terms “faux equity,” “fake equity,” “false equity,” and the term “performative equity” in the major LIS databases and Academic Search Premier. Unsurprisingly, none of these terms generated any literature results. Outside of LIS or multidisciplinary databases, the closest term we found was “fakequity” (a combination of the words fake and equity). The term “fakequity” was found on Erin Okuno’s and the consulting firm Equity Matters’ *Fakequity* blog. Okuno coined the term “fakequity” and defines it as all talk and no action where you expect different results but the systems stay the same.¹³ This definition resonated with us, as we noticed that this definition embodies much of the sentiment of what we consider to be faux-equity and the topics discussed in this paper.

One example of faux-equity in LIS scholarship comes from Devina Dandar and Sajni Lacey’s 2021 article in which they use critical discourse analysis and critical pedagogy to analyze the language used in first-year library instruction sessions.¹⁴ As Dandar and Lacey point out, the language we use in our instruction is inherently academic and therefore exclusionary, so thinking about the language we use can make our instructional practice more equitable overall and can help us understand why the language we use makes us, as instructors, better conduits of information literacy and critical thinking.¹⁵ Additionally, Amanda Folk, in her 2019 article, uses the theory of cultural capital to present the idea that information literacy as threshold concepts is a form of academic cultural capital that may disproportionately affect students whom higher education marginalizes.¹⁶

That being said, to provide a definition of faux-equity for the purposes of this paper, it helps to look at the separate parts of the term. Faux-equity is not actually being fair or just in the way that people are treated, despite appearing to be so. In terms of faux-equity in information literacy instruction and the one-shot instruction session, it can be helpful to examine the differences between equality and equity and how they exist in the library classroom.

- **Equality** is giving each student the same resources, the same time to learn about the resources, and the same activities to reinforce the presented knowledge—essentially, a one-shot instruction session.
- **Equity** is giving each student the opportunity to find the resources that they each need to grow and thrive in their coursework, the flexibility and autonomy to take the time they

need to learn about the resources, and multiple ways to complete activities to reinforce their knowledge.

The one-shot instruction session, by nature, makes it incredibly difficult to achieve equity for all students because its inherent design provides equal support for students, rather than equitable support. It is impractical to believe that students will all learn and absorb information in the same way via the one-shot.

Some authors, like Zoe Blecher-Cohen, have recognized the inherent difficulties of the one-shot when combating issues such as library anxiety in first-year students. Blecher-Cohen frames the struggle to be accessible to students as a call for flexibility that challenges where the library begins and ends.¹⁷ This is also embodied in Leah Morin's 2021 article, which focuses on developing an ethic of care that expands outside the one-shot. Morin's approach includes providing availability outside work hours; sharing their personal cell phone number and encouraging students to text them for assistance; and maintaining that the librarian exists solely to help students with their research.¹⁸ This may indeed give some students what they need to succeed, and it may feel like an equitable practice; but, in reality, it makes us "beholden to cycles of ineffectiveness that create burnout."¹⁹ Ultimately, practices like these highlight how we misplace our finite energy in resources toward the ideals embodied in vocational awe.

Coined by Fobazi Ettarh, vocational awe is defined as "the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique."²⁰ Ettah notes that one of the complexities of vocational awe is that librarians see themselves as saviors who "[expect] that the fulfillment of job duties requires sacrifice."²¹ This overarching mindset sets an unrealistic standard for practicing librarians, as libraries are staffed differently and require different levels of instructional support. In addition, this mindset has the potential to cause significant damage—such as burnout—to the librarian who practices it. This is particularly true for library staff members with disabilities or chronic illnesses that would impact their ability to perform at such a level.²² It is important to remember that even equitable practices have to come with boundaries. The profession of librarianship may be founded in service to others, but we cannot forget about service, kindness, and equitability to ourselves. If we discount or ignore our needs as professionals and as humans, we run a dangerous risk of not giving ourselves the space to reflect and grow our instructional practices, meaning we will never escape our faux-equitable practice.

Concepts Surrounding Faux-Equity

In reviewing the literature, we began to question what existing scholarship would contextualize and describe faux-equity, particularly as it exists in the disciplines of education and LIS. This quickly introduced us to scholarship regarding knowledge creation, particularly the philosophy of epistemology. Formally, epistemology analyzes the nature of knowledge and how it is constructed.²³ Conversations surrounding epistemology are far-reaching in their interdisciplinary applications; but, in recent years, epistemology has been reviewed through a social justice lens. Feminist scholars throughout the 1960s and 1970s argued that prejudice and bias inform understanding of the female experience and that a careful consideration of the vast array of scholarship—often produced by men—had in constructing knowledge about the female experience.²⁴

In the latter half of the twentieth century and into the early aughts of the present millennium, epistemology evolved as scholars began to question the roles of authority in their

disciplines and how that authority marginalizes and suppresses valuable voices that should be included in further discussions. For example, philosopher Miranda Fricker defined these actions as epistemic injustices that fall within two categories: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice impacts the ability to see one's credibility; hermeneutical injustice is systematic in nature and denies access or the ability to create knowledge.²⁵ These injustices are often done without our awareness, especially when we do not take into account our roles in upholding or working against constructed authority.

The philosophy of epistemology and the concepts of epistemic injustices have only recently begun entering the conversation in LIS literature as scholars critically examine how the profession's actions are continuing a lineage of suppressing users' access to information and creating knowledge. Patin et al. highlight a gap in the literature regarding how libraries and other information institutions commit epistemic injustices, despite its being against the professions' core values. They note that ongoing epistemic injustices contribute to epistemicide, which happens "when several epistemic injustices occur which collectively reflect a structured and systemic oppression of particular ways of knowing."²⁶ A year later Patin et al. returned to the concept of epistemic injustices by reviewing the different epistemic injustices most prone to librarianship. Of these injustices, they conceptualize the term curricular injustices, which "is used to suppress and eliminate the creation of rival, alternative knowledges. This exertion of power denies an education that allows for diverse epistemologies, disciplines, theories, concepts, and experiences."²⁷

These discussions surrounding epistemology, epistemic injustices, and epistemicide greatly influence how we consider the one-shot's role in upholding faux-equity. Dangerously, it should be considered that the one-shot is in itself a form of curricular injustice, where librarians and students equally struggle to engage meaningfully in the knowledge transfer and creation process. While the goal is to promote ongoing inquiry into research and lifelong learning, librarians instead become complicit in what Paulo Freire described in his banking model of education. In this model, the instructor treats their learners as objects upon which the instructor can deposit knowledge.²⁸ The problem with this approach is that it fails to account or acknowledge the lived experiences of the learner. This frequently is the case in the one-shot, where librarians often do not know the students they will be teaching ahead of time, but expect that all students will receive, interpret, and integrate the session's information in the same way. These circumstances are not only faux-equitable, but have the potential to engage in epistemicide.

The One-Shot: Upholding or Dismantling Information Privilege

To understand how faux-equity impacts academic libraries, it is important to first understand librarians' complex relationship with information privilege, which was introduced in the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy*, under the frame "Information Has Value." As part of the key dispositions affiliated with "Information Has Value," learners "are inclined to examine their information privilege."²⁹ It should be noted, however, that ACRL does not provide a definition of information privilege. Criticism of the *Framework* highlights a disparity between the key skills and concepts that instruction librarians provide and the lack of resources to implement them. Hseih, Dawson, and Yang, in a 2021 survey of academic librarians, noted that 12 percent of their total participants (n = 84) felt that the *Framework* was hard to comprehend, citing the language and theoretical approach to these concepts as barriers

to implementation.³⁰ The lack of clarity surrounding the language included in the *Framework* certainly applies to the concept of information privilege.

In the absence of a pronounced definition, scholars have been left to their own devices to define information privilege. Char Booth was one of the first to explore the concept of information privilege in their blog *Info-mational*. Booth asserts that “information privilege situates information literacy in a sociocultural context of justice and access.”³¹ Hare and Evanson build on Booth’s work by contextualizing it within higher education and academic libraries by pointing out that instructors and students have a responsibility to leverage their elevated access to information to combat the existing information inequities.³² This raises the important question of whether our primary mode of instruction, the one-shot, serves in our goal of understanding and overcoming information privilege. Furthermore, as long as the profession continues to use the one-shot as its primary mode of instruction, are we furthering faux-equity by not fully comprehending the importance of information privilege in our profession?

There are a few examples in the literature that examine the use of the one-shot to equalize information privilege among students. One such example is the case study from McCartin, Evers, and Markowski that assesses the one-shot’s impact on their students’ ability to complete an assignment.³³ McCartin et al. used their assessment to determine what gaps in knowledge students had post-session, such as identifying the reputability of sources and combating misinformation. This assessment led to librarians being able to advocate for curriculum changes that invited librarians into the course earlier. Librarians regularly express the need to be further integrated into courses to better teach information literacy skills and to scaffold information literacy across the curriculum.³⁴ Likewise, centering student feedback can foster reflection on how to reform their instruction to better serve the needs of their students, including considering delivering information literacy instruction through a lens of information privilege.

Another approach some take is to focus their one-shot sessions around developing information literacy skills in the context of disciplinary threshold concepts. This can also be dangerous, as designing instruction around threshold concepts relies on normative student profiles (for example, able-bodied, neurotypical students with similar educational backgrounds, and so on). Egan, Witt, and Chartier discuss in their 2017 article how they balanced their one-shot sessions across four years of disciplinary curriculum. They note that many institutions focus their library instruction programs around first-year students, which often leads to students feeling overwhelmed by the content of the session. Furthermore, the authors argue that students have no real method at that time to apply these freshly developed information literacy skills on an assignment.³⁵ While it is beneficial to apply these threshold concepts across the curriculum, articles such as these fail to address how students who do not fit within the given structure, such as transfer students or students with disabilities, find their way in this instruction program.³⁶ Likewise, even pivoting one-shot sessions to workshops, while providing more nuanced conversations surrounding information literacy, have the potential to lose students along the way, as noted by Van Houlson in 2007.³⁷ These examples highlight a real need for librarians to consider the timing of their instruction, lest we miss key demographics of students.

Furthermore, if we recognize that our attempts to provide balanced, scaffolded instruction may leave out students, we are furthering faux-equity because we fail to level the difference in our learners’ information privilege. Instead, academic librarians rationalize the continued use of the one-shot by turning attention to the instructors and students they serve. For example, with students, their perseverance and mindsets are called into question when they do not

meet the specific outcomes or goals that are established for them. “[This] creates an environment, however, where students are defined in terms of deficits and their lack of perseverance in striving toward goals determined by an educational system that is structurally unjust.”³⁸ Beilin echoes this sentiment in his piece surrounding the adoption of the *Framework*, noting that “much of the rhetoric of information literacy, including that of the Framework, represents the world of information (the Framework refers to it as the “information ecosystem”) as something that must be mastered by individual students making their own ways through an educational institution out into the world.”³⁹ Heinbach, Paloma Fielder, Mitola, and Pattni also explore the concept of deficit thinking in their 2019 article in which they look specifically at the experiences of transfer students and the assumptions surrounding what they lack when they enter the four-year university.⁴⁰ In general, deficit thinking “...manifests in practice by believing that students who in any way do not conform to a ‘traditional’ or privileged financial situation, home life, or route to education are not likely to succeed.”⁴¹

Turning our attention to disciplinary instructors, there is evidence in the literature that librarians are not solely responsible for the failures of the one-shot. For example, Melissa Bowles-Terry and Carrie Donovan note in their examination of the one-shot that librarians are often faced with two distinct models of curating collaboration with departmental instructions: grassroots relationship building and systematic approaches. Both of these methods have flaws, as the grassroots method relies solely on the librarians’ ability to build relationships; more systematic approaches, such as faculty workshops, require incentives that will appeal to instructors.⁴² Either way, the librarian is at the mercy of their departmental faculty to recognize the value of their information literacy instruction.⁴³ From the instructor angle, English professor Margaret Torrell reflects that many instructors often “won’t let librarians into our classes. And if [they] do, [they] want the one-shot lesson, maybe because that’s all [they] have time for, or perhaps because some of us don’t believe a librarian can offer much beyond the standard search techniques we trust that our students mastered in their first year at college”⁴⁴ The result, Torrell argues, is that instructors are complicit in upholding information privilege because students leave the course unable to contextualize academic and popular sources within the larger information landscape.⁴⁵ It is clear from the literature that university faculty agree that information literacy instruction from the library is important, but it rarely translates into meaningful library collaborations.⁴⁶

The power imbalance often found between librarians and departmental instructors, where librarians are little more than guest lecturers in a class, can spell dangerous results for the students both parties serve. When we are not treated as equal partners in the curricular experience, librarians are at an inherent disadvantage because they are more likely to be unaware of the challenges students face in the classroom. Likewise, students are left to their own devices to develop their own information literacy skills. The very logistics of the one-shot model creates an inequity of information by assuming that students have enough time and resources provided in the session to obtain the information literacy skills that their instructors expect. Likewise, if we are supposed to treat scholarship as a conversation, then how can the one-shot model be both the start and end of the conversation? Can our preferred method of instruction be considered effective if we are unaware of who we are excluding because of our lack of awareness of the faux-equity in the one-shot model? In fact, the *Framework* does not truly allow for a proper examination of information privilege because it does not adequately support social justice in the praxis of critical librarianship.⁴⁷

Instructional Support for Students with Disabilities

The one-shot raises many concerns regarding supporting students equitably, which also comes with the inference that all students arrive into the classroom with the same access needs. A recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics revealed that 19 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary schools have disclosed disabilities;⁴⁸ yet there is evidence to suggest that many undergraduate and graduate students have not disclosed a disability due to lack of awareness—perhaps even from a lack of a diagnosis—or fear of receiving pushback from instructors.⁴⁹ This knowledge complicates the already questionable one-shot when considering that librarians often enter classrooms without knowing who may or may not need accommodations based on disability or other learning needs.

The reality of the situation is that librarians rarely ask instructors whether they have students with disclosed disabilities. Graves and German noted in their study of ARL-affiliated libraries that only 5 percent of the libraries studied exclusively provided an accommodation statement as part of their instruction program website.⁵⁰ Most of the library websites that Graves and German reviewed did have disability information to varying degrees, though most of the information was related to spaces, services, and technology, with instruction being noticeably left out. In fact, of the 49 library instruction forms reviewed, only 10 had some sort of accessibility and/or accommodation statement or a field to describe accommodation needs.⁵¹ This study did not look into how often faculty reported their students needing accommodations during library instruction, but we, the authors of this article, whose libraries both ask about accommodation needs on their instruction forms,⁵² can speak from lived experience and say anecdotally that faculty rarely report that they have students with accommodation needs. Our experience is not surprising. Lombardi, Murray, and Gerdes conducted a survey in 2011 that sought to investigate the associations between faculty participation in diversity training and their adoption of universal design practices for their courses and found that, while faculty who had completed the training agreed that inclusive practices were a good idea, few actually implemented it.⁵³ Studies such as these illustrate quite clearly that faculty are creating significant barriers for students with disabilities and yet are still insisting that their classrooms are equitable places. In fact, the same could be said for instruction librarians who neglect to inquire about student accommodations ahead of library instruction sessions.

As a discipline, the field of education has struggled with supporting students with disabilities in their identities as learners and contributing scholars. In the literature, those with intellectual and learning disabilities are underrepresented as the subjects of educational research—though they are widely discussed. One explanation for this phenomenon can be found by examining how researchers account for epistemological diversity. Coined by Siegel in 2006, the concept of epistemological diversity refers to beliefs and belief systems, research methodologies, modes of inquiry, and research questions that inform how one can access, interpret, and create knowledge.⁵⁴ Epistemological diversity becomes especially complicated when applied to individuals with intellectual disability, as they are often treated as incapable and unable to participate in educational research. This is, in part, because of the existing structure built on the belief that able-bodied and able-minded individuals are the only ones capable of knowledge production.⁵⁵ As such, these voices are not represented in the literature, making it difficult for us to understand completely how we can best empower them as consumers and creators of knowledge stemming from their lived experiences both inside and outside academia. The fact that education as a discipline is uncertain how to interact with

learners with disabilities impacts the librarian's role as an educator, despite many librarians feeling that they missed instruction training in their MSIS/MLS courses.⁵⁶

To be in alignment with our core values and roles in furthering knowledge creation and sharing, librarians and other educators need to give epistemic agency to all learners—not just those who fit the description of who is traditionally seen as having power and contextual authority. In genuine attempts to support students with disabilities, along with their other intersecting identities that impact their educational experience, many librarians have begun to implement the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Created by CAST, formerly known as the Center for Applied Special Technology, UDL offers a framework that ensures multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression in the classroom.⁵⁷ When employed, UDL allows the learner to take charge of how they engage with instructional materials, moderate their workload, and demonstrate their knowledge. There is a general consensus in LIS literature that using UDL in the library classroom is a good idea, but there are significant barriers toward implementation given that most instruction librarians attempt to retrofit their instruction to include UDL principles instead of starting over from scratch to make UDL a foundation of their instruction programs and individual pedagogy.⁵⁸ UDL is one of the most successful ways to create an equitable classroom environment, and there are significant examples of effective implementation in the library classroom. One of the most in-depth examples comes from Chodock and Dolinger of Landmark College, a higher-education institution specifically for students with learning disorders. Their study outlines how they have used the UDL framework to create an approach to library instruction that they describe as Universal Design for Information Literacy, which helps set up students with neurological disorders and learning disorders for success in the library classroom and beyond.⁵⁹ Designing and providing instruction that is intentionally equitable and inclusive to students with diverse learning styles speaks to the core tenets of librarianship, and it is our responsibility as instruction librarians to provide these equitable experiences for students.

To dismantle the faux-equity of the one-shot as it relates to serving students with disabilities, the library profession as a whole must reframe the ways in which we approach library instruction and make a concerted effort to center disability in our pedagogical practice instead of continually retrofitting. Whitver explores the dangers of retrofitting the learning experience and the challenges that are faced when trying to apply UDL principles in the one-shot model:

If librarians truly want to center disability within the library instruction classroom, they must move beyond the legal dictates of accommodation and retrofitting, and instead design their classrooms as flexible laboratories of engagement and learning. This environment, moreover, must not focus on the typical body. To move beyond retrofitting, librarians need to create environments that imagine a new system entirely.⁶⁰

Retrofitting our instructional practices to tenuously center disability in our pedagogy only really serves to perpetuate the injustices of the accommodation process and further excludes all students from adequately participating in the learning process. By controlling the barriers to accessible learning in the library classroom through the unyielding application of the one-shot instruction session, whether it be intentional or not, we run the significant

risk of committing participatory injustice against students with disabilities by deciding who belongs and who does not.⁶¹

The Path Forward

This is only a start to the conversations that need to happen surrounding faux-equity. This paper is not intended to solve the problems inherent to the one-shot instruction session, but rather to shed light on the faux-equity that we have created for ourselves within the one-shot. That said, there are recent examples in LIS scholarship that highlight attempts to understand and rectify the faux-equitable practices inherent in our profession. For example, in grappling with vocational awe, librarians are attempting to overcome it by adopting critical and feminist pedagogies of librarianship.⁶²

In light of the emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only have academic libraries shown very clearly that our claims of equity fall to the wayside at the first sign of stress, but an ethic of care has become a more prominent conversation for librarians as we try to balance supporting our faculty, staff, students, selves, and coworkers.⁶³ Providing an ethic of care in the classroom is a noble effort that often uses feminist pedagogy to dismantle the power structures that exist between the teacher and the student and instead create a learner-centered environment where differences and individuals are respected.⁶⁴ Caring for our students past their ability to acquire, digest, and use information is vital to developing strong relationships. It would seem a natural action to implement an ethic of care in the library classroom; however, these examples present their efforts as equitable for the students, but range in their ability to account for the sustainability and replicability of their practices.

When it comes to serving students with disabilities, it is our responsibility to use our power and position to advocate for better forms of instruction that are equitable and inclusive to all. This includes putting an end to deficit thinking about students and their abilities in the classroom. In his 2020 article, Eamon Tewell points out that deficit models of instruction support and perpetuate forms of oppression and that students who are lacking in various ways become responsible for their perceived deficits, whereas students who are perceived as “normal” are not responsible for their own success because they can rely on the systems that were built for them.⁶⁵ Because of this, our information literacy instruction, which is ultimately informed by the larger educational system, tends to reflect the deficits that are present in the values of the programs, departments, and universities for whom we work.

It is not enough to try to teach students about their own information privilege (or lack of it). We must take it upon ourselves to examine our own information privilege, along with the position we hold as library instructors and life-long learners, so that we can start genuine conversations about how to create a more inclusive, equitable practice for our profession. One possible way to examine our own information privilege is through the growing case for information social justice and recognizing information as a human right. In her 2017 article, Laura Saunders discusses our need to analyze the potential and actual applications of social justice in the *ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*. Saunders examines the case for information social justice and information as a human right with a focus on the need for reflective practice; she argues that, ultimately, if information is a human right, then information literacy must be one too.⁶⁶

Another essential way to examine our information privilege is to recognize and acknowledge our own biases as a path toward cultural humility. Twanna Hodge suggests learning

cultural humility to come to terms with and earnestly examine our own biases to truly advance our profession.⁶⁷ We have to be willing to put in the work to self-reflect, identify our values, be vulnerable, figure out how we perceive the world, and learn how that affects our interactions with each other and those we serve. As Hodge puts it, “understanding who we are as individuals will help us become better professionals.”⁶⁸

Heather Hackman also puts forth five components for social justice education in her 2005 article that translate especially well to information literacy instruction: “In particular, helping students use information to critique systems of power and inequality in society, to help them ask who benefits from said systems, and to encourage them to consider what aspects of our social structures keep those inequalities alive are all important and necessary ways for students to become more engaged in social justice education.”⁶⁹ Social justice education may be key to fully understanding the connection between information privilege and faux-equity, but only if we are also dedicated to understanding our information privilege.

In this vein, we recognize that the concept of faux-equity deserves further exploration and consideration. Critical librarianship, critical pedagogy, and information literacy as social justice may be parts of the path forward, but we believe that this topic deserves further consideration and interrogation by academic librarians who want to bring equitable practices to their library instruction. Likewise, understanding the role of faux-equity in other areas of librarianship and LIS scholarship will further contextualize how we can all grow as information professionals.

Notes

1. Farne et al., “COVID-19 Protocols in Academic Libraries in Canada and the United States.”
2. Sewell, “Creating a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Library Orientation”; Carroll and Mallon, “Using Digital Environments to Design Inclusive and Sustainable Communities of Practice in Academic Libraries.”
3. Jacobson, Gibson, and University at Albany, SUNY, “First Thoughts on Implementing the Framework for Information Literacy.”
4. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
5. American Library Association, “Core Values of Librarianship.”
6. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges.”
7. Ibid.
8. Latham, Gross, and Julien, “Implementing the ACRL Framework.”
9. Christensen, “Designing One-Shot Sessions Around Threshold Concepts.”
10. Walker and Pearce, “Student Engagement in One-Shot Library Instruction.”
11. Smale, “Learning Through Quests and Contests.”
12. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
13. “Welcome to the Fakeequity™ Blog.”
14. Dandar and Lacey, “Critical Discourse Analysis as a Reflection Tool for Information Literacy Instruction.”
15. Ibid.
16. Folk, “Reframing Information Literacy as Academic Cultural Capital.”
17. Blecher-Cohen, “The Student Connection.”
18. Morin, “The First-Year Library Instruction One-Shot.”
19. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
20. Ettarh, “Vocational Awe and Librarianship.”
21. Ibid.
22. Schomberg, “Disability at Work.”
23. Lechte, “Epistemology.”
24. “Feminist Epistemology | The A-Z of Social Research—Credo Reference.” There are additional theories that intersect with epistemology, such as decolonial and postcolonial theories. Both of these are worth examining through the lens of faux-equity and though not the focus of this paper, would be excellent topics for future research.

25. Fricker, "Introduction."
26. Patin et al., "Toward Epistemic Justice," 2.
27. Patin et al., "Interrupting Epistemicide," 1310.
28. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
29. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."
30. Hsieh, Dawson, and Yang, "The ACRL Framework Successes and Challenges since 2016."
31. Booth, "On Information Privilege," para. 1.
32. Hare and Evanson, "Information Privilege Outreach for Undergraduate Students."
33. McCartin, Evers, and Markowski, "Student Perceptions of Information Literacy Skills and Curriculum before and after Completing a Research Assignment."
34. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow"; Egan, Witt, and Chartier, "Going Beyond the One-Shot"; Van Houlson MA, "Getting Results from One-Shot Instruction"; Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot."
35. Egan, Witt, and Chartier, "Going Beyond the One-Shot."
36. Christensen, "Designing One-Shot Sessions Around Threshold Concepts."
37. Van Houlson MA, "Getting Results from One-Shot Instruction."
38. Tewell, "The Problem with Grit," 138.
39. Beilin, "Beyond the Threshold," sec. A Critical Information Literacy Perspective on Threshold Concept Theory, para 4.
40. Heinbach et al., "Dismantling Deficit Thinking."
41. Ibid., sec. Deficit Thinking and Strengths-Based Approaches.
42. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot."
43. Pagowsky and DeFrain, "Ice Ice Baby."
44. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow," 119.
45. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow."
46. Moran, "Disconnect"; Stebbing et al., "What Academics Really Think about Information Literacy."
47. Gregory and Higgins, "Reorienting an Information Literacy Program toward Social Justice."
48. "Digest of Education Statistics, 2019."
49. Scott, "NCCSD Research Brief-Access and Participation in Higher Education: Perspectives of College Students with Disabilities."
50. Graves and German, "Evidence of Our Values."
51. Ibid.
52. It should be noted that one of the authors works for a branch library at her university and that there is inconsistent messaging across the Libraries' instruction pages regarding accommodations in the classroom. Her branch does ask for accessibility and accommodation information on its instruction form. It should also be noted that the other author is recounting her time at her previous job (during which this article was researched and written) and the instruction form at that institution, not her current institution.
53. Lombardi, Murray, and Gerdes, "College Faculty and Inclusive Instruction."
54. Siegel, "Epistemological Diversity and Education Research."
55. Taylor, "Knowledge Citizens?"
56. Goodsett and Koziura, "Are Library Science Programs Preparing New Librarians?"
57. "About Universal Design for Learning."
58. Chodock and Dolinger, "Applying Universal Design to Information Literacy."
59. Ibid., 24.
60. Whitver, "Accessible Library Instruction in Practice," 384.
61. Patin et al., "Interrupting Epistemicide," 1311.
62. Duffy, Rose-Wiles, and Loesch, "Contemplating Library Instruction."
63. Chenevy, "An Emergent Pedagogy of Presence and Care: Addressing Affect in Information Literacy Instruction"; Douglas and Gadsby, "Gendered Labor and Library Instruction Coordinators: The Undervaluing of Feminized Work"; Sloniowski, "Affective Labor, Resistance, and the Academic Librarian."
64. Morin, "The First-Year Library Instruction One-Shot."
65. Tewell, "The Problem with Grit."
66. Saunders, "Connecting Information Literacy and Social Justice."
67. Hodge, "Integrating Cultural Humility into Public Services Librarianship."
68. Ibid., 269.
69. Hackman, "Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education," 106.

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