Introducing New International Students to Issues of Privilege in the Libraries

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Abstract: Our university recently added a Power, Privilege, and Diversity (PPD) requirement into the curriculum. In trying to better prepare their students for success, the Summer Academic English Institute, a program for incoming international students, structured many of their readings and writings around concepts of PPD. Librarians generally meet with these Institute students for an orientation session.

To align with this curriculum, we applied critical pedagogy to the ACRL Framework concept that “information has value.” In this poster session, you will learn about our interactive session to facilitate the students’ exploration of how the libraries’ spaces, collections, and services interact with power and privilege on and off our campus. We encouraged first year international students to think critically about their forthcoming education and the way social and cultural constructs could affect their praxis, and/or the praxis of their peers.

The Context:

DePauw University
- Residential, undergraduate, liberal arts
- Located in a rural part of Indiana
- 2,200 students
- 13% of incoming students are international

Power, Privilege, and Diversity
- Recently-added graduation requirement for all students
- Courses that have “as a major component the analysis of the interplay of power and privilege in human interactions”

Immersion Institute
- 2 weeks, held just before “regular” international student orientation
- Focuses on academic writing, speaking, and reading in English
- Over half the incoming international students participate
- 35 students in our pilot year; 49 the second year
- New focus on PPD concepts

Theoretical Framework:
- ACRL’s Framework
  Threshold Concept: Information Has Value
- Freire’s Critical Pedagogy
- Critical Information Literacy

Activity: Price is Right game
Match library resources with everyday items
Discussion on costs, access to information, ability to read/understand, & why we cite

Changes:
- Language
- Defining privilege
- Eliminating jargon
- Conceptions of authority
- Reassuring about other library education
- More orientations coming
- Providing basic library facts

Assessment: