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By Tatiana Bryant, MPA, MLIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Overview: BIPOC Representation in Open Access Publishing

Knowledge of open access stakes and initiatives is critical for understanding and promoting the fundamental role of faculty and librarians in the scholarly information cycle as academia aims to become diverse, equitable, and inclusive and make scholarship more accessible. Despite the open movement being decades old, there is still a gap in research on Black, Indigenous, and faculty of color (BIPOC) in the context of open access. This gap exists because LIS students and professionals may not be empowered or knowledgeable enough to produce research in this area. Understanding the motivations for and barriers against Open Access (OA) publishing (and the relationships between them) among BIPOC faculty helps LIS practitioners and Open advocates design incentives to increase participation and decrease lack of knowledge and stigma around OA.

In 2020, Principle Investigator, Tatiana Bryant and her research team designed an original qualitative study (Perceptions of Open Access Publishing among Black, Indigenous, and people of color Faculty, forthcoming *College & Research Libraries*) that uncovers ways in which pre-tenure and tenured BIPOC perceive attitudes towards the legitimacy of open access publishing, especially as it relates to their own tenure and promotion processes. This study illuminates how their perceptions motivate or diminish their own interest in and adoption of open access as well as their level of advocacy for open access in their field, campus, and department, et al. To advance this research, select study instruments (focus group question set, sample excerpts from de-identified dataset, and an abbreviated codebook template) have been published in the *Scholarly Communication Notebook* for reuse and adaptation as part of a lesson plan (featuring a pre/post class survey, a reading list, a structured assignment, and class discussion questions) designed to teach LIS students and professionals to consider how qualitative research methods can support their praxis as well as how to use the study instruments.

This Scholarly Communication Notebook contribution allows those interested to learn how to replicate our research methods, articulate their positionality as researchers and practitioners, consider hosting their own focus group(s) with BIPOC faculty, and practice analyzing the associated qualitative data. This resource aims to fill multiple gaps by increasing the facility with robust qualitative research methods among LIS students and workers as well as advancing the conversation around equity within the open movement. It can be used in LIS classrooms or by

LIS workers in academic libraries. Questions about this contribution can be directed to Tatiana.Bryant@uci.edu.

About the Author

Tatiana Bryant is the Research Librarian for digital humanities, History, and African American Studies at UC Irvine. She holds an MPA from New York University and a MLIS from Pratt Institute. Tatiana was a 2017 [OpenCon](#) Berlin fellow, a 2020 OER Research Fellow with the [Open Education Group](#), and a 2021 Pedagogy Lab Fellow at [The Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies](#). She's on Twitter at @bibliotecariaT.

(Pre-class assignment)

[Instructor creates a student survey using Google forms or a similar survey tool]
STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS
On a scale of 1-5 (1 being none and 5 being a lot)
1. What is your knowledge of qualitative research methods?
2. What is your comfort level with qualitative research?
3. How familiar are you with open access publishing?
4. *How familiar are you with hiring and retention issues in higher education of Black, Indigenous, and people of color faculty?*
5. Expand on any of your answers here (free text)

(Pre-class Reading List)

[Instructor assigns reading list to class]
READING LIST

Flaherty, C. (2020, October 21). Scholars talk about being Black on campus in 2020. Inside Higher Ed.
https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/10/21/scholars-talk-about-being-black-campus-2020
Fullington, L. A., West, B., & Albarillo, F. (2020). Reflections on practitioner research: A practical guide for information professionals.
Gross, J., & Ryan, J. C. (2015). Landscapes of Research: Perceptions of Open Access (OA) Publishing in the Arts and Humanities. Publications, 3(2), 65–88.
https://doi.org/10.3390/publications3020065
Kaba, A., & Said, R. (2015). Open access awareness, use, and perception: a case study of AAU faculty members. New Library World, 116(1/2), 94–103.
https://doi.org/10.1108/NLW-05-2014-0053
Kim, J. (2011). Motivations of Faculty Self-archiving in Institutional Repositories. The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 37(3), 246–254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2011.02.017
Shuva, N. Z., & Taisir, R. (2016). Faculty members' perceptions and use of open access journals: Bangladesh perspective. IFLA Journal, 42(1), 36–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035216628879
Skjott Linneberg, M. and Korsgaard, S. (2019), "Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice", Qualitative Research Journal, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 259-270.
https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-12-2018-0012

(In-class work)

[Instructor reviews learning outcomes with class]
LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. To understand how LIS students and professionals can increase their facility with qualitative research methods to better understand and support their user populations (i.e. faculty) and promote Open Access initiatives.
2. To understand how can LIS students and professionals can better align with initiatives around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that are current conversations in academia

    (especially hiring and retention of BIPOC faculty throughout tenure and promotion processes)

3. To understand how LIS students and academic librarians can connect DEI conversations with the OA movement, which embeds equity as a value by positing that publicly funded research and scholarship should be freely accessible to all.
4. To understand our positionality as researchers and practitioners and how that impacts data collection strategies and outcomes

[Optional: Instructor delivers an abbreviated lecture/presentation and class discussion of major definitions and points from the assigned pre-class reading list, including: qualitative research methods; focus groups; codes; intercoder agreement; open access publishing; hiring and retention of BIPOC faculty in higher education, et al.]

[Instructor introduces structured assignment directions for manuel coding exercise]
ASSIGNMENT DIRECTIONS
1. Review focus group question set
2. Discuss questions 4 and 8 which have response excerpts for manual coding
3. Break students into small teams (min. 2 and max. 5)
4. Assign 1 question per team (de-identified sample data from study focus groups)
5. Teams code the same response excerpts individually using the abbreviated codebook template, and then compares codes with other team members to come to intercoder agreement
6. The remaining responses can be coded individually or collectively as a team and compared
7. The entire class shares out what codes their teams came up with and what was learned from the coding exercise

Required Materials:
    A. Focus Group question set (Appendix A)
    B. Sample dataset excerpts (Appendix B)
    C. Abbreviated codebook template (Appendix C)

[Instructor leads class discussion using sample questions below and/or additional questions based on pre-class Reading List as needed]
CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. How can LIS students and academic librarians better align with initiatives around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that are current conversations in academia, specifically how to hire and retain faculty of color throughout tenure and promotion processes?
2. How can LIS students and academic librarians connect DEI conversations with the open access movement, which embeds equity as a value and posits that publicly funded research and scholarship should be freely accessible to all?

3. How can LIS students and professionals increase their experience/facility with using qualitative research methods to better understand and support their user populations (i.e. faculty) and promote Open Access initiatives?

[Optional: Instructor introduces a qualitative data analysis software alternative to manual coding, like free and open source Taguette to students: https://www.taguette.org]

(Post-class assignment)

[Instructor recreates student survey using Google forms or a similar survey tool and compares results]

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being none and 5 being a lot)
1. What is your knowledge of qualitative research methods?
2. What is your comfort level with qualitative research?
3. How familiar are you with open access publishing?
4. How familiar are you with hiring and retention issues in higher education of Black, Indigenous, and people of color faculty?
5. Expand on any of your answers here (free text)

APPENDIX A

Focus Group question set

[Research team defines open access publishing for focus group participants]

1. Were you previously aware of open access?
2. Is open access publishing encouraged in your discipline?
3. Has your employer adopted an open access publishing requirement?
4. **Is there a culture of support around open access at your institution?**
5. Have you published in an open access publication?
6. If you haven't published open access previously, do you plan to in the future?
7. How do you think publishing open access would impact your tenure or career trajectory?
8. **What is your perception of the quality of open access journals and scholarship?**
9. What, if any, biases have you noticed in scholarly publishing?
10. Is there anything you'd like to add that we haven't asked about?

Sample dataset excerpts

[Instructor assigns a question from this sample dataset (which includes de-identified answers for two focus group questions (see Appendix A) from four participants) to each team to manually code.]

Question 4: Is there a culture of support around open access at your institution?

    Participant 1 Excerpt:

"Yes there is a culture of support around Open Access and my institution by which I mean in comparison to maybe some of the other participants. You know if I mentioned Open Access to people they don't, you know, necessarily assume that it means that it's bad I think people here are inclined to sort of be like, "Oh yeah that sounds great." So I would say there's sort of a culture of like superficial support and recognition but then in terms of the more practical things that you need like infrastructure or you know a really firm certainty that if you're on a tenure track in any given discipline that your CV is not going to be reviewed differently if you do have more Open Access options on there then say your peers. I think without those things then the culture of support for Open Access feels more sort of like maybe we have interest in superficial recognition of some of the benefits but not serious cultural support that you might have if we had a more realistic and grounded approach to what it takes to actually support Open Access."

    Participant 2 Excerpt:

"and I think my situation is similar. I think at the institutional level there's an acknowledgment especially as a public institution that we have this obligation to share knowledge with the community, etc. And so there's at least, like a slogan type support for it but at the department level I don't think it's truly respected or encouraged."

    Participant 3 Excerpt:

"I agree as well with the comments in saying that you know there are slogans, there is, you know, information out there. There's awareness of it in sharing this as an institution and even so as a department, but yet the things that are required to actually do it, infrastructure support, that part is not necessarily there."

Question 8: What is your perception of the quality of open access journals and scholarship?

    Participant 1 Excerpt:

"I would say that I feel like my perception is that the quality is good. I would say that's a perception that's developed and is partly informed by my research on OER and so I would say

maybe two or three years ago I was sort of agnostic. Like I knew that there were questions around the quality of Open Access journals and open educational resources. ...and so I was unclear and then when I came into this role this is one of the things that I prioritized, was researching the quality of Open Access and open educational resources. And the majority of the research I found says that the quality especially, you know, contemporary, is up to the rigor that we see in traditional publishing. So that's my perspective."

Participant 4 Excerpt:

"I have a really positive perception of Open Access journals. And frankly in my subfield I think that some of the work being published in Open Access journals, the quality of that work is much higher in terms of methodology, the way that it's written, but also in terms of the robustness of ideas being presented through Open Access journals in my subfield is kind of constrained itself a little bit to certain perspectives. And Open Access has really allowed young and up and coming scholars to develop these really wonderfully robust ideas and we wouldn't normally have an opportunity to engage with that thought or those different critical paradigms unless we had access to open journals. The other sort of part of this is that in my subfield I think there's a lot of, and I'm trying to be as asset-based as possible in this conversation, but I think for this you know I have to just be a little bit more honest about it. I think 1) there's a lot of gamification going on in the journal industry and I think 2) there's a lot of back door or there's a lot of behind the scenes agreements that are made where certain specific tenured scholars will get in with mid-level work before young scholars with really super high level work, and so the pipeline of knowledge has and is really constrained. Having these Open Access journals spring up or a new journal spring up really does give younger scholars without social capital the ability to really get this strong work out there and sort of push the envelope and push the boundaries of research which is what we're supposed to be doing."

Participant 2 Excerpt:

"I have a lot of respect for Open Access journals and I think that they play an important part in the whole, you know, knowledge enterprise that we're supposed to be engaging in. But I once was like a way down the line co-author on a paper in a medical journal, and that's very much not my area of expertise, and yet I often receive invitations to publish about this topic and I know I'm not an expert on this topic. I think others would realize that but for some reason, and I don't know if these are Open Access journals or some other type of predatory journal, but I'm always getting these invitations to publish which seems which makes me suspicious knowing that I'm not an expert on this topic so it makes me wonder how they recruit authors and so that makes me a little nervous about some of the credibility. But maybe that I assume that that's definitely not all Open Access journals and that maybe it's just this one subfield or I'm not sure what's going on with that, but I definitely have a lot of respect for Open Access journals and I would encourage my colleagues and students to submit but just to use some critical thinking in deciding which ones to submit to."

APPENDIX C

Abbreviated codebook template
[Each individual and team can add general or granular codes as time permits.]

Column 1: Code (What code(s) would you apply to this excerpt?)
Column 2: Definition (How would you define the code for others?)
Column 3: Purpose (What is the purpose of the code?)
Column 4: Example (Which excerpt(s) does this code apply to?)

Code	Definition	Purpose	Example
Code 1 (lorem)			Excerpt 4.X
Code 2 (ipsum)			Excerpt 8.X
Code 3 (dolor)			Excerpt 4.X; Excerpt 8.X