



James Telles
Equity Reflection
Fall 2018 – Spring 2022

What have you done to improve your understanding of anti-racism, equity, equity-mindedness, and/or equity as it relates to your field and the LRCCD?

- **Workshops**
 - *Symposium on Research to Practice: Addressing Inequities in Higher Education* (Spring 2019)
 - Attended FLC Equity Center Soft Launch (Spring 2019)
 - Reviewed PowerPoint – Continuing Education Development Committee of LLAMA & the ALA Office for Diversity sponsored, “Racial and LGBTQ Microaggressions: An Introduction for Library Leaders” (Spring 2020)
 - Zoom Meeting – FLC VPSS Sonia Ortiz-Mercado facilitated, “Anti-Racism and Ally Community Dialogue Debrief and Planning for Next Steps” (Summer 2020)
 - Gender Identity & Pronoun Workshop (Fall 2020)
 - Webinar – Community College League of California Library Consortium hosted, [“Equity & Inclusion in CCC Library Systems & Resources”](#) (Spring 2021)
 - Webinar – “Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Surveillance through Digital Library Tools” (Spring 2021)
 - Webinar – Drs. Frank Harris III and J. Luke Wood facilitated, “Race-lighting.” (Spring 2021)
 - Soar to Success - Supporting Students and Closing Equity Gaps through Early Academic Identification and Intervention Summer Retreat (Summer 2021)
 - Film & Webinar – TherActivist’s They/Them/Theirs (Spring 2022)
- **Professional Materials**
 - Article from *Inside Higher Ed*, “Faculty members of color see 'illusion of inclusion.'” (Read Spring 2021)



- Article from *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, "That Which Cannot Be Named: The Absence of Race in the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education" (Read in Fall 2021)

- **Outside of Academia**

My best friend brought it all home to me, big time, just after George Floyd was murdered. He and I have been friends since junior high and have never parted ways during our lifetime. Before academic James Telles existed, he and I were roadies for years for a local band and shared many adventures together. We are really more like brothers than friends, so I thought I knew all of his happiness and his pain. I didn't!

His father was an African American and his mother White. He has lived in all White world all of our lives, our childhood, in our young and now not so young adulthood. He never knew his Dad and for a time had a White stepdad. His Mom and Stepdad were wonderful to him and all of his friends, but for him something was missing. In tears he confided in me the struggles of being a Black man in White America. In being the only Black man in a huge group of friends who grew up together. I would never have realized that there was always a loneliness to his existence because of the lack of Black peers had he not opened up me. This brings me to tears in writing this because I love him so much. But I feel unworthy to be driven to tears because as a member of the always dominant race, do I deserve the love he's always shared with me or the catharsis of crying now about this?

I have a mixed bag of beliefs, but the majority of them are leftwing. My best friend and many of our other closest friends were politicized as junior high school kids joining the punk movement. We were anti-nuclear, anti-homophobic, anti-sexist, and certainly anti-racist and continued to think we were into adulthood. BUT, but are we really. In having that conversation with him and in reading about anti-racism, not as a belief, but as a practice, I recognize that I have not been an anti-racist. I have physically fought racists in my lifetime, yet done nothing to see, let alone attempt to breakdown the racist structures that are everywhere around us. I do honestly believe that the ship has finally sailed and there are not enough overt racists or those who are as blind as I have been to



hold back the tide of change and justice. All I need to stay on task is to think about my best friend. He opened my eyes and he made it real.

How have you used and/or how will you use these understandings to improve your practice and/or help close opportunity gaps?

I am still a novice when it comes to equity-minded practices and am really enjoying starting to build up my skill set. Because the library world is finally struggling with its past as part of the white supremacist “infrastructure,” we are now seeing more and more on that problematic past and solutions for moving forward in our professional publications, workshops and conferences. I am currently reading the book *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory* which takes on the issue and my profession in “head-on” fashion and I know we need to hear it, take it on board, and change.

Though my professional development in the areas of equity-mindedness and anti-racist practices are certainly impacting me, the two most recent changes to my practice that come to mind were both driven by learning from offerings that were provided by my Classified Professional colleagues.

The first was changing how to deal with student sound level on the library floor. A former member of our Equity Center team, who has since moved on to a new role at another LRCCD college, explained how the classic shushing that librarians have relied on in the past to control sound level, is a microaggression. This was eye opening to me and got me reading and attending webinars on microaggressions. My practice has changed. As now when any students are walking through or sitting in the central floor area and being a bit loud, I do not react in the “traditional” manner. I don’t do anything. If a student does complain about noise level or give me “the look” when they expect the librarian to get louder patrons to quiet down a bit (this does happen), I now quietly let the complaining and “the look” students know that the central part of the library floor is not a quiet or silent study area. I let them know that we do have such areas and share their locations.

The second change to practice is around pronouns. I attended a couple game changing FLC-based workshops and immediately added my pronouns to various places. I also am much more cognizant and careful about use of pronouns when communicating with or about others. I am



not going to lie, it is tough to always get it right, as we've had the dominant ways of putting people into the boxes that society has taught us to smashed into our brains. I have had to "get into it" with backwards members of my own family. I have had to let them know that just like they know who they are, those who don't fit into traditionalist boxes also know who they are and deserve the respect of the use of the correct pronouns.

These were easy changes to practice that will make more of our patrons comfortable working with me as a librarian. They may be more likely to see me as an ally. I look forward to continuing down this path of knowledge-gain and am excited about the potential changes/improvements I can make to my practice and, with my library colleagues, changes/improvements to policies, services and resources.

What additional trainings and resources, whether offered by LRCCD or others, would be helpful in continuing your development of anti-racist practices?

I feel like our local PDC and the greater Los Rios PD groups are providing great opportunities, I just need to free up the time to take advantage of them.

The academic librarian community, institutions, and organizations are providing excellent library and librarian-specific programming in equity-minded and anti-racist practices.