The Power of Words:

Analyzing Social Justice Language in Information Literacy Standards Lists Heather Charlotte Owen, MLIS Student, Syracuse University

62%

Summary

Social Justice Standards within Information Literacy Standards Lists

Information literacy standards help shape instructional design and indicate the importance of information literacy to stakeholders. It is imperative, therefore, that these standards embody social justice, acknowledge how privilege and societal biases silence the voices of marginalized individuals, and encourage the inclusion of these elements within instruction. This poster evaluates numerous standards and frames for socially just elements, and examines the language used to articulate these points to determine if they are explicitly socially just. With this knowledge in mind, participants will be able to utilize standards to their full affect, and ideate their own policies



Methodology

* Collated and sorted 12 different ACRL information literacy standards lists.

- * Counted the number of standards which had social justice elements to them.
- * Decided to count standards that could be read as being socially just, but are ambigious.
- * Used R Studio to create a bar chart illustrating the percentage of social justice standards within the different lists.
- * Used Voyant Tools to create Word Clouds of the social justice standards to determine what language was commonly used.

Key Findings

* The Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Women's and Gender Studies by far had the most socially just standards (62%).

Social Justice Standards within the Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education: Women's and Gender Studies



60

- *Many standards had no social justice standards which were clearly intended to be read as socially just. Many were ambigious and could be read without interpreting it as being socially just.
- * The Women's & GS standards used words such as "marginalized", "power", "structures", "privilege", "voices", "critical", "and "patriarchal", which were not used in the other standards.

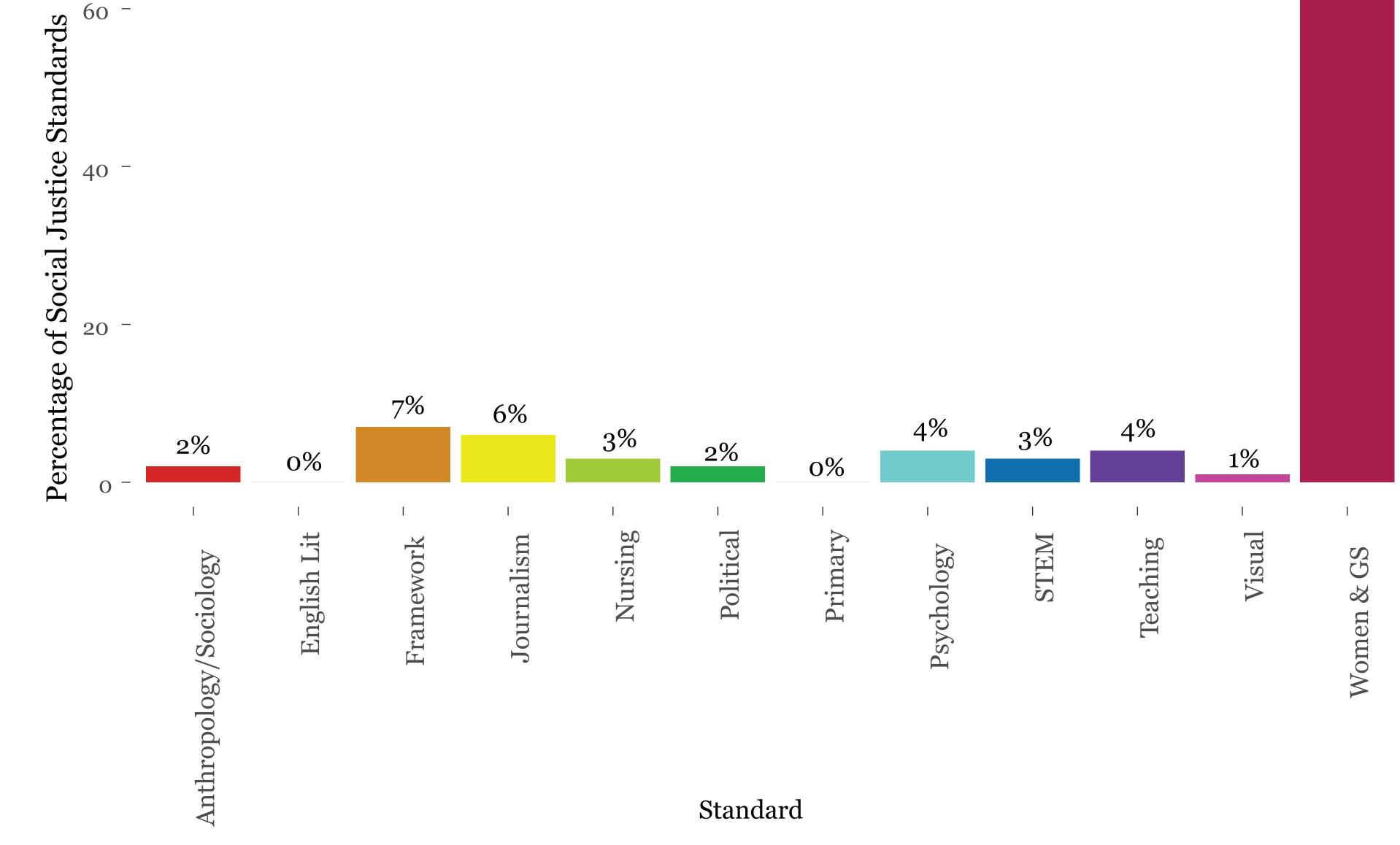
Number of Social Justice Standards within **ACRL Information Literacy Standards Lists**

Limitations

- * This study only looked at the ACRL Information Literacy standards.
- * This study examined the standards for social justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity, but did not examine it for accessibility.

Future Considerations

* The standard with the most socially just standards was the only companion list to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The other subject lists should be updated so they complement the framework and have socially just elements.



- * When librarians create policies, curriculums, and lesson plans at their own libraries they should be clear to use language that is explicitly socially just and refrain from using ambiguous language.
- * Although information literacy standards and frameworks are important, librarians should not be afraid to go beyond them and introduce social justice into the classroom. By doing so, they may inspire change with other librarians.

