



Multidimensional Cultural Safety in Information Literacy

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Outline



- **Context:** University of Winnipeg; Outreach and Engagement
- **Literature Review:** Barriers to equitable library services
- **Theory:** Information Literacy and the neoliberal subject
- **Theory:** Cultural Competence and its Limitations
- **Other models:**
 - Multi-Dimensional Cultural Competence
 - Cultural Safety
- **Synthesis:** Multidimensional Cultural Safety in Information Literacy

Outreach and Partnerships at the University of Winnipeg





UW Demographics

(November 1, 2017)

- Total students: 9,449
- Undergrad Students: 9,175
- Graduate Students: 274
- Total international students: 713 (7.4%)
- Students enrolled in the English Language Program (many are new Canadians): 212
- 13% of students self-identify as Indigenous (approx. 1,230 students)
- Approximately 600 students registered with the Accessibility Resource Centre (6%)

Aboriginal Student Services Centre



Indigenous Summer Scholars Program



International Student Services Centre



Accessibility Services and Resource Centre



Access Education Programs



Urban and Inner City Studies





THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

NewsCentre

PEOPLE

ATHLETICS

INDIGENOUS

ALUMNI

COMMUNITY

School Pride: LGBTQ2S Voices + Collections at UWinnipeg

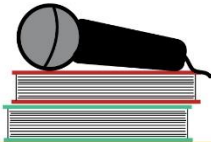
Posted on: 05/11/16 | Author: Communications | Categories: All Posts, Feature Story



UWinnipeg's Pride Banner, © UWinnipeg



LOUD



IN



THE



LIBRARY

A SPOKEN WORD EVENT

Thursday, Nov. 29 | 6 - 8 PM

The University of Winnipeg Library

Hosted by Students of Colour Collective


Free | All voices welcome



Literature Review: Barriers to equitable library services


(Summarized in Caidi & Allard 2005, 317)

- ▶ institutional barriers (e.g., opening hours, availability of library services, staff attitudes, rules and regulations, and sense of ownership),
- ▶ personal/social barriers (e.g., basic literacy skills, low income, and low self-esteem),
- ▶ environmental barriers (e.g., physical access, remote areas, decay, and isolation), and
- ▶ perceptions barriers (sense of isolation, educational disadvantage, relevance of libraries to one's needs, lack of knowledge about existing facilities and services).



Indigenous students can experience...

- ▶ distrust in the education system, an intergenerational legacy of the residential schools (Wotherspoon & Schissel 1998);
- ▶ “cognitive imperialism” in the education system (Battiste, 2000);
- ▶ structural factors exacerbating socio-economic barriers in home communities (Wothersoon & Schissel 1998);
- ▶ feelings of social discrimination, isolation, and loneliness on campus; perceived lack of respect for Aboriginal culture (CMEC 2002); and
- ▶ a “culture of whiteness” in curricula & library holdings (Gradysmith 2012)



International students can experience...

(Sin and Kim 2018)

Higher levels of information barriers owing to:

- cultural differences
- uncertainty about how to evaluate the quality/credibility of information
- language differences
- uncertainty about what information sources are available
- searching for information is too time consuming
- Uncertainty about which sources to start with
- uncertainty about what search terms to use
- too much information found

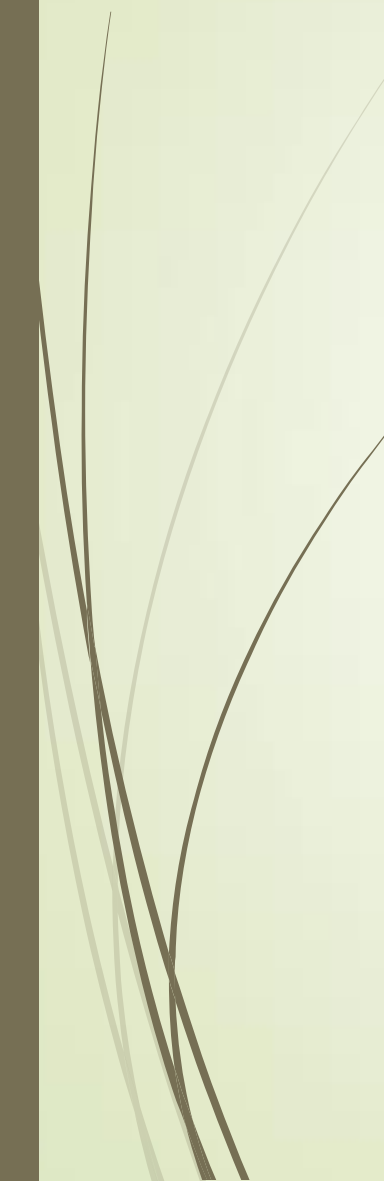


Students with disabilities can experience...

- Physical impairments
 - Visual/ Print impairments
 - Hearing impairment
 - Invisible disabilities
 - mental health/anxiety
- 



My Search for Praxis

- * Status relations (Fincher & Iveson)
 - * Intersectionality (Falcon)
 - * Social learning
 - * Reflexivity (Hankivsky)
 - * Activist stance
- 

Critical Reflection: Developmental Spiral

(Horwitz 2009)

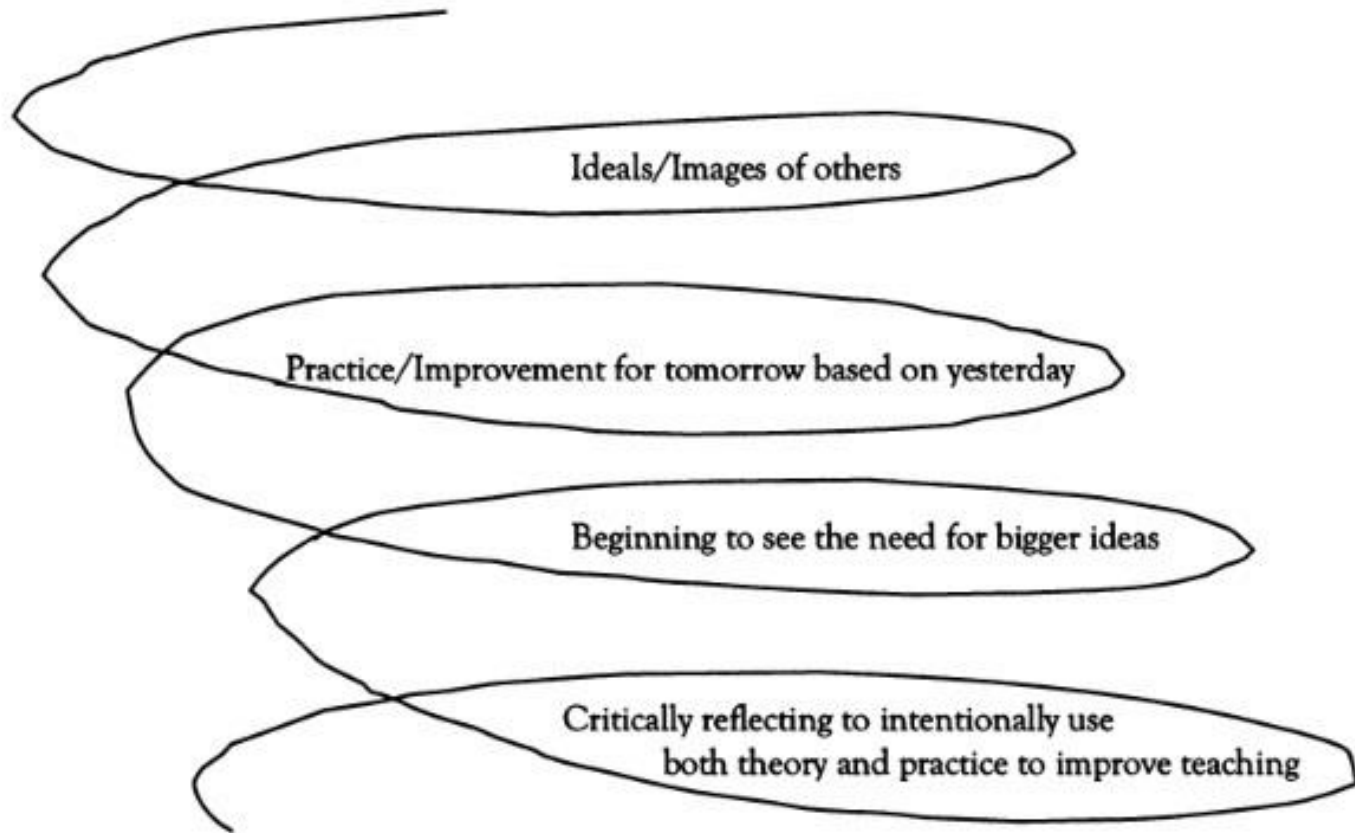


Figure 19.1 *Developmental Spiral of Critical Reflection*



Information Literacy and the neoliberal subject



The Neoliberal Subject


(adapted from Verdouw 2016)

- Practices are presented as freely chosen, responsibility is taken regardless of constraint
- Their main goal is independence, self-reliance,
- They perceive the self as a project, and themselves as a rational economic actors
- problems are construed as ones with solutions
- Emphasizes self-responsibility, agency and initiative.
- Confident in self-identification with the future
- Have a clear, linear view of the future.



Neoliberalism in Information Literacy Discourse

(summarized by Beilin 2018)

- general requirement under neoliberalism for everything and everyone to justify itself based on criteria such as cost, efficiency
 - Information literacy should serve the need of industry and government for skilled and competitive individuals.
 - mandate for university education to produce job-ready graduates who will keep North American industry “competitive” in the world.
- 




Neoliberalism in Information Literacy Discourse

- ▶ student primarily seen as an economic actor born free, and ostensibly free of all constraints, who gains new skills in order to succeed in a neoliberal world (Seale 2010)
- ▶ Students “exist[] outside of social, political, and economic contexts” (Seale 2013, 52),
- ▶ 2015 ACRL Framework assumes an atomized information seeker, a “learner emptied of history” with “no sense that context and history bear upon learning” (Seale 2016, 85).



Theory: The Limits of “Diversity” and Cultural Competence



Cultural Competence in LIS


(Overall 2009)

- ▶ the ability to recognize the significance of culture in one's own life and in the lives of others; and
- ▶ to come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics through interaction with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic groups; and
- ▶ to fully integrate the culture of diverse groups into services, work, and institutions in order to enhance [patrons'] lives (189-190).



ACRL Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries (2012)

A congruent set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable a person or group to work effectively in cross-cultural situations; the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.





Limits of Cultural Competence

(Honma; Hudson)

- Focuses on the practitioner
- Skill/knowledge/disposition based
- Emphasizes “culture” and intercultural communication
- Assumes cultural neutrality; “culture” as an ontology
- Ignores historiography of *racisms* (Wolfe 2016)
- No explicit recognition of status relations
- No explicit attention to power, injustice, racism, colonialism, classism, ablism, sexism, and heterosexism.
- Views anti-racism as “personal work”



*Tension between institutional
reform and structural critique*



Seeking models drawn from other
disciplines:
Clinical Psychology and Indigenous
Nursing



Multidimensional Facets of Cultural Competence

(Sue 2001)

Three axes:

diversity factors of individuals (predominately race and culture, but he also allows that they can include aspects of embodiment [gender, ability, sexuality]);

components of competence, consisting of knowledge, skills, and awareness of one's beliefs and attitudes;

foci of the professional's attention, at the individual, institutional, organizational, and societal levels

Multidimensional Facets of Cultural Competence

(Sue 2001)

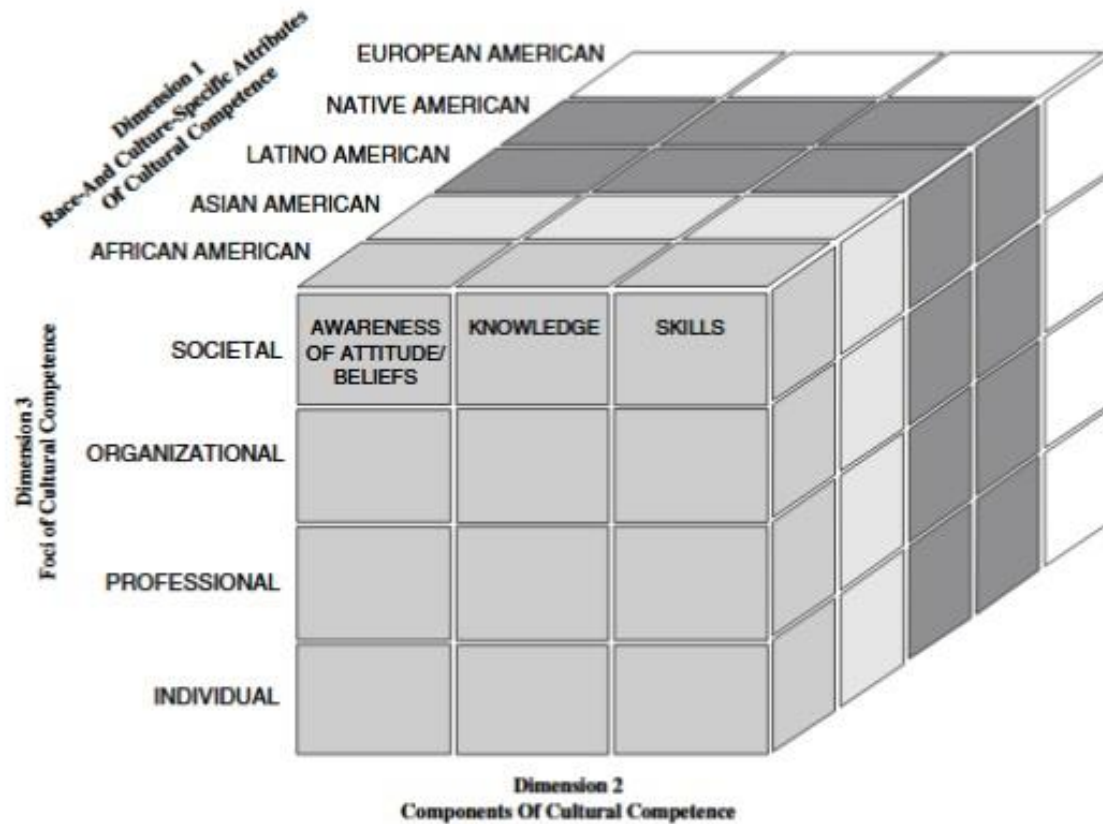




Figure 1. A multidimensional model for developing cultural competence.



Cultural Safety in Indigenous Nursing

(Hart-Wasekeesikaw & ANAC 2009)

- Acute awareness of the historical effects of inequality, discrimination, and racism in the life of the client, and their political position in society as a result of those forces
- Individual's locations at the intersections of power, specifically in terms of colonialism, race, ethnicity, embodiment, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status.
- role of the life-chances that can result from differentials in power and as a result of discrimination
- a “moral discourse” about the rightness of service delivery (Smye and Browne (2002)
- outcome determined by the recipient




Discussion: Similarities, Differences, and Absences



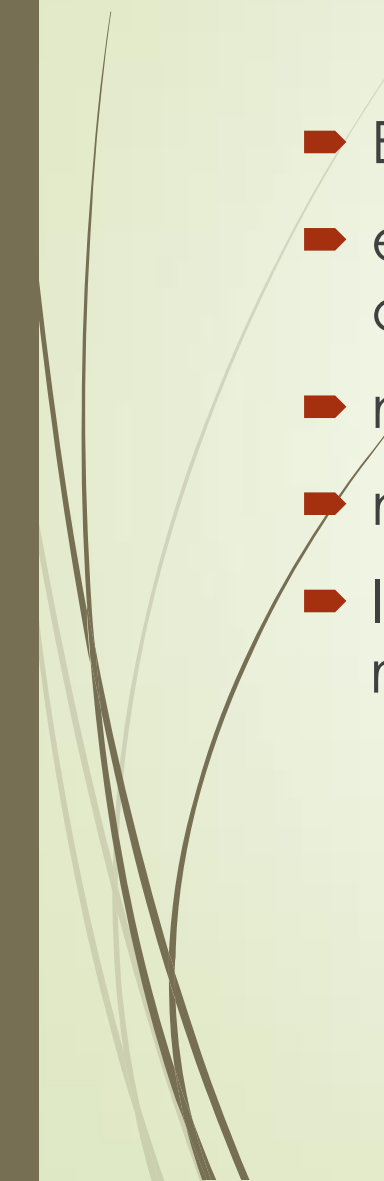
Strengths of MDCC and CS

Both:

- ▶ address power relations between practitioners and clients as well as structures of power in society,
- ▶ recognize and seek to address impacts of racism;
- ▶ locate social disparities, inequities, and discrimination in historical forces and the exercise of power by the dominant European-descended white majority culture;




Limitations of Sue's MDCC

- ▶ Emphasizes therapist-client relationship
 - ▶ emphasizes five major racial and cultural categories but...
 - ▶ neglects colonialism
 - ▶ neglects intersectionality
 - ▶ little attention to Indigenous peoples and the recognition of their worldviews.
- 




Limitations of Cultural Safety

- ▶ Neglects means for multilevel critique of the place of the institutions in structures of power, racism, and colonialism.
 - ▶ Focus is on the Indigenous experience
- 




Synthesis: Multi Dimensional Cultural Safety




Multi-Dimensional Cultural Safety

1.) An institutional culture in which staff are aware ***of their own cultural, racial, and socioeconomic locations, attitudes, and biases***, and are able to skillfully engage in transactions with library users representing the ***full range of the human experience*** (including race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and sexuality) and ***whose knowledge and agency are acknowledged and respected***.



Multi-Dimensional Cultural Safety

2.) Programs and services are created and delivered with a recognition of—and a view to correcting—the historical and contemporary influence and **impacts of colonialism, unequal power relations**, ableism and normative monocultural Eurocentrism at the **individual, institutional, organizational and societal levels.**



Multi-Dimensional Cultural Safety (MDCS)

Principles:

- Understanding the limits of “culture” in terms of people accessing and safely moving through libraries and in encounters with staff;
- Exposing the social, political and historical contexts of information, including colonialism and power;
- Enabling library practitioners to consider sources and effects of racism, discrimination and prejudice;
- Need to recognize and challenging unequal power relations.
- Acknowledging that cultural safety is determined by library users;



MDCS Strategies in Information Literacy

- Tailoring sessions for needs/locations of each micro-community
- partnering with existing student services; inviting students into the library
- judicious use of jargon
- avoiding canned presentations
- dialogic pedagogy
- Reflexivity
- Prefacing / seeking permission to explore potentially traumatizing topics



MDCS Strategies in Information Literacy

- Critical pedagogy focusing on the hegemonic potential of Eurocentric, colonial, sexist, heteronormative ableist language in knowledge organization systems
- demonstrating ways to overcome these limitations
- demonstrating alternative sources of information and scholarship (e.g., *Alternative Press Index; iPortal*)
- Paired with reference outreach
- follow-up & consultation with stakeholders



Summary



- ▶ Students can face challenges in the library environment based on structural barriers relating to intersecting identity categories
- ▶ Libraries participate in structural forces; most KOS premised on hegemonic normativity
- ▶ In addition to effective cross-cultural communication, the instructor needs to account for their own positionality in these structures



Summary



- ▶ Multi-dimensional, culturally safe library instruction accounts for structural forces in the lives of students and situates the library among those forces
- ▶ Partnerships, relationships with existing services, bridging programs
- ▶ Involves collaborative, dialogic instruction
- ▶ Links with other forms of outreach



Thank you! Miigwetch!

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