Examining the Hidden Ideologies within Cultural Competence Discourses among Library and Information Science (LIS) Students: Implications for School Library Pedagogy

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In order to provide culturally responsive instruction to all students, school library professionals need to recognize the various discourses around cultural competence that exist in the field of library and information science (LIS) and understand the broader meanings that are attached to these discourses. This study presents an evaluation of the underlying ideologies that are embedded in the textual responses of a group of LIS students reporting on their perceived levels of cultural competence preparation. The results reveal that there are dominant and competing discourses around cultural competence in the LIS field, which are important to make visible. The paper concludes with a discussion of how this kind of discourse analysis might inform pedagogies in the school library in ways that uniquely benefit historically marginalized students.

Introduction

The notion that all students deserve quality educational experiences is a popular discourse that reflects a broader ideology about the value and importance of education to one's life success. Yet, hidden within this discourse is a common understanding that many public school students in America do not have access to a quality education because of their circumstances of birth. These students are the metaphorical 'outliers' in mainstream U.S. schools because their cultural and linguistic backgrounds often position them on the periphery of dominant white, middle class, English-speaking cultural norms and practices. A related discourse that has emerged regarding issues of equity and diversity in schools is the notion of cultural competence. Within the field of multicultural education, cultural competence centers on helping teachers teach towards prejudice reduction; understanding ethnic group culture; and ethnic identity development (Bennett, 2001). Yet, although cultural competence has entered into mainstream discourse communities, it remains a broad concept that gets conflated with a range of associated topics. This confusion about the meaning of cultural competence may render it ineffective as a

tool for engaging in culturally responive teaching that might benefit all students, particularly those from historically underrepresented cultural backgrounds .

Background, Purpose, and Significance of Study

Evidence suggests that some pre-service librarians are underexposed to cultural competence concepts during their pre-service preparation coursework and do not feel prepared to become culturally competent LIS professionals (Hill & Kumasi, 2011; Kumasi & Hill, 2011). Acquiring knowledge of cultural competence concepts can help librarians who work in a variety of settings to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to work in increasingly diverse library communities. Moreover, this knowledge can be particularly useful for school library professionals, who have the means to shape curricular learning outcomes in ways that address the goals and objectives of multicultural education. Yet, it is not enough to merely be aware of this discourse. It is equally important for LIS professionals to be self-reflective and to develop a sense of "cultural critical consciousness" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003) about the ideological origins of their practices and beliefs.

One way to better understand a complex topic such as cultural competence is to examine the implicit discourses that are at play while individuals talk about this concept. To that end, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the implicit discourses that are located in the textual responses of a group of LIS students, who were reporting on their perceived levels of cultural competence preparation.

Conceptualizing Discourse

While the term discourse has several meanings, it is used in this study to describe the conversations and the meanings behind them that a group of people or a discourse community expresses on a particular topic. Within this definition there is an assumption that discourses often reflect broader ideologies and ideological stances about certain social subject matters that are usually normative (Bloome et al, 2004). Ideological stances refer to the theoretical positions that individuals or institutions take on major social issues worthy of debate, which often reflect philosophic viewpoints.

Another premise that helped to guide this analysis is the idea that there are dominant discourses that appear most prevalently within a given society. From a critical theory perspective, these dominant discourses often reflect the ideologies of those who have the most power in society (Gee, 1996). Few people challenge this dominant discourse, which makes it difficult for new ideas to enter the mainstream. It is important to note that dominant discourse is variable, meaning that discourses on different topics may not always come from the same individual or groups.

The evidence used to validate the hidden ideologies within discourses may derive from conceptual or empirical forms of "data." Typically, conceptual data is drawn from secondary sources rather than firsthand accounts. Some examples of conceptual data include the ideas expressed in scholarly journal articles and/or the messages communicated via popular culture media such as television, radio and print ads. Fairclough (2003) suggests that there is validity in tracing discourses through these types of conceptually constructed forms of "data" that are located in popular culture. He states:

Culture industries such as television are (as the term suggests) entities on an economic level as well as others, but they are specialized for 'signifying systems' in Williams' terminology – and the representations, values and identities constructed in and projected and circulated through them are uncontroversially of increasing social significance. (p.19)

In turn, these 'signifying systems' get taken up in our everyday conversations and worldviews. The current study relies on this fluid understanding of discourse to support the claims being made about the hidden ideologies embedded within the textual responses of a group of LIS students discussing cultural competence concepts.

Review of Related Literature

This section presents research related to the major conceptual areas associated with current study, including: cultural competence, LIS discourses, and critical perspectives in LIS.

Tracing 'Cultural Competence' in Scholarly Discourses

Cultural competence was first conceptualized and applied within social work and health care (especially nursing) as a way to move institutions and systems toward providing effective and culturally responsive patient care (Seright, 2007). However, other fields of study have contributed to cultural competence discourse both as it is individually oriented and institutionally focused. A number of education scholars (e.g., Dee, 2012; Hernandez & Kose, 2012; Milner, 2011) focus on the process of preparing individuals to serve K-12th grade students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds. International business scholars Tropenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) addressed methods that allow organizations to establish and maintain global effectiveness.

One of the earliest articulations of the term cultural competence came from a team of social work researchers led by Cross, whose intent was to present "a philosophical framework and practical ideas for improving service delivery to children of color who are severely emotionally disturbed" (Cross, et al, 1989, p. 1). The Cross research team codified the relationship between cultural competence and organizational systems when they defined cultural competence as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross, et al, 1989, pg. 13). Having origins in the organizational systems discourse community caused other discourse communities outside this context to refer to cultural competence primarily as a goal for institutions rather than individuals to attain.

However, Montiel Overall (2009) provided a comprehensive treatment of cultural competence as it is positioned in the library and information science scholarly discourse, which contains both individual and institutional elements. She describes cultural competence as:

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 the lives of both those being served by the library profession and those engaged in service (p. 190).

This definition of cultural competence recognizes the need for self-awareness, interaction, and education. While this work has helped illustrate how cultural competence concepts might be integrated into LIS education and practice, it stops short of offering a critical examination of the ideological roots of cultural competence scholarly discourse itself. The next section provides a brief overview of some of the scholarship within the LIS field that has sought to interrogate the discourses upon which the LIS profession itself has been constructed.

Discourse and LIS scholarship

The concept of discourse has gained footing as a viable conceptual and analytical tool within LIS research. According to Budd (2006) discourse analysis, like other methodologies, "offers a way of seeing things, of envisioning what is happening and what has happened (p.80)." Most LIS researchers have taken a macro-level approach to discourse analysis, which typically involves studying the ontology, or the formation of libraries as institutions and tracing the social forces that have shaped the implicit ideologies upon which libraries have been constructed (see e.g. Day, 2001). While macro-level approaches have dominated the literature, there are more micro-level phenomena that lend themselves to discourse analysis in the LIS field as well. For example, the classic reference exchange in the library is a scenario whereby a micro-level approach to discourse analysis might be applied. Micro-level approaches to discourse analysis focus on the transactional (sentence level) elements of discourse. By contrast, macro-level approach involves studying language as a discursive practice (beyond the sentence level). The latter approach seeks to understand the situated contexts in which words are articulated and the circuitous route in which meaning is made (Budd, 2006).

Critical Perspectives on LIS Discourses

Some scholars have critically examined the discourses upon which the LIS profession has been constructed. Such analyses are viewed as helpful in exposing the conceptual blind spots and false ideologies that exist within the profession as a means of infusing more transformative and inclusive paradigms into its theoretical base of knowledge. The two main theoretical areas where scholars have focused much of the critique include examinations of race and class. The next section will briefly explore a few of the seminal writings in these two areas.

Critical discourse on race in LIS. With regard to how issues of race have been constructed in LIS discourse, Honma (2005) articulated a sound critique in his article, "Trippin' Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies." In the article, Honma posits that, "the issue of race has been evaded in the field of Library and Information Studies (LIS) in the United States through an unquestioned system of white normativity and liberal multiculturalism (p.1)." The central thesis of Honma's article is that there are inherent contradictions in the purported mission of libraries as a democratizing institution and the complicit role libraries have played in the discriminatory process of racial formation in the US.

One of the popular critiques of how race is dealt within LIS is the tendency to rely on empty, celebratory rhetoric that employs race neutral terms such as diversity and

multiculturalism, which lack the ability to address structural racism (Peterson, 1996). Most critical race scholars would argue that although the racialized legacy of the American library's past continues to be transmitted in contemporary library and information science discourses and practices, there is potential for positive transformation if these discourses are exposed and critiqued. This kind of tempered critique is levied by Pawley, whose class-based analysis of the emergence of LIS as a professional discourse community is the focus of the next section.

Critical discourse on class in LIS. Although race and class are widely considered to be interlocking systems of oppression, there is benefit to using a singular theoretical lens to examine certain issues that might not be otherwise easily explained. For example, class-based analyses generally focus on the economic structures within society and how these systems often put capitalist owners in conflict with workers, or the laboring class. As mentioned previously, Pawley offers a cogent class based critique of the LIS profession in her article entitled, »Hegemony's handmaid? The library and information science curriculum from a class perspective.« In the article, Pawley (1998) traces how middle class values and practices have been codified within the LIS profession through the concepts of managerialism and pluralism. Pawley discusses the ways in which these two paradigms have become synonymous with middle class values in part as a response to corporate interests.

Another of Pawley's (2006) articles identifies four dominant paradigms that are said to guide LIS teaching and practice. These paradigms are linked to middle-class and white-male epistemologies. The four paradigms that Pawley argues dominate LIS teaching and research include: science/technology, business/management, mission/service and society/culture. Pawley situates multicultural courses within the domains of mission/service and society/culture, explaining that:

> Although they have their origins in the relatively distant past, the society/culture and mission/services models are also home to research and teaching in newer areas, including multiculturalism. For instance, the research heading "Services to User Populations" includes a topic called "Serving Multicultural Populations," while courses in literature and services for children and young adults frequently contain units on multicultural materials (p. 160).

Pawley distinguishes the business/management model that depicts library and information users as "consumers or customers" from the mission/service model which casts them as "clients or patrons." From this standpoint, the mission/service model enables librarians to see themselves service providers whose job it is to assess and help meet patron "needs." Librarians are said to draw inspiration in service roles from their "mission" and "faith" in the libraries educative role as a public good.

Overall, this literature review reveals the complexities surrounding disourse as an area of scholalry inquiry and the nuances of using discourse as a methodological approach. Despite its complexity, discourse can serve as a powerful analytic framework for unpacking dense theoretical concepts such as cultural competence. For this reason, the research design of the current study is heavily informed by conceptual understandings of discourse.

Research Design

The process of analytic induction was the primary method used in this study, which was framed by the following research question: What are the various ideologies embedded in a group of library and information students discourses on cultural competence? According to Thomas (2003), the primary purpose of analytic induction is to "allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies (p.2)." This method is often used by researchers to arrive at general conclusions through the examination of a set of specific facts (Spurgin & Wildemuth, 2009). Since the inductive approach reflects frequently reported patterns used in qualitative data analysis, the researchers used this method to identify the major themes, or discourses around cultural competence, that were embedded in the open-ended textual responses of the LIS student respondents surveyed in this study.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected via an electronic survey questionnaire that was emailed to students during the Fall 2011 semester. The survey instrument itself contained five sections. However, this paper focuses exclusively on the qualitative data collected in the fifth and final section wherein respondents were instructed to include comments about the survey questionnaire and/or the survey topic. The first section of the questionnaire requested basic demographic information about the students, while the second through fourth sections prompted students to rank themselves and their LIS coursework in terms of cultural competence preparation using a Likert scale. The results derived from the quantitative data have been reported elsewhere (see Kumasi & Hill, 2011).

Study Participants

The survey respondents were all library and information science students at two ALA accredited institutions. Students were eligible to complete the survey if they had completed at least 15 credit hours in their respective programs. The original survey yielded a total of 151 student respondents out of a possible 672 eligible students enrolled at both institutions (Kumasi & Hill, 2011). As mentioned previously, this study reports only on those responses obtained from the final optional open-ended question. There were a combined total of 29 qualitative open-ended responses submitted. Within this sub-sample, all respondents except one were female. Three students self-identified as African American, 24 as White, and one as Mexican/German. One student preferred not to reveal her race/ethnicity.

Data Analysis

Using the constant comparative method (Boyatzis, 1998), the researchers identified several broad themes in the raw data. Subsequently, the researchers identified similar words and phrases that appeared most frequently in the data. The initial broad themes served as the basis for subsequent rounds of data analysis that involved cross-checking and refining the thematic categories based on the researchers' consensus. The researchers continued to refine the thematic categories by looking for confirming and disconfirming evidence. Phrases and words from a

single student's response may have been grouped into one or more broad categories based on the inductive coding process.

Issues of Validity

Validity in qualitative research involves determining the degree to which researchers' claims about knowledge correspond to the reality (or research participants' construction of reality) being studied (Cho & Trent, 2006). Furthermore, the evidence that researchers use to support the claims being made in any qualitative approach, including a discourse analysis, are always subject to possible revision by new evidence (Cho & Trent, 2006). As a result of this amorphous nature of discourse, providing evidence to validate the claims being made about the broader ideologies embedded within a given discourse can be extremely difficult. This analysis is therefore admittedly limited to the subjective knowledge of the researchers about the concepts that are being introduced. However, an attempt has been validate the claims that are being made through a process of cross-checking and looking for negative cases to provide both confirming and disconfirming evidence.

Limitations

One limitation that might be perceived in this study is the lack of follow-up interviews with the student respondents to help validate the claims being made about the ideological stances embedded in their discourse around cultural competence. However, this limitation is offset by the overall goal of the study, which was to identify the implicit or hidden discourses that were embedded in the students' remarks. By allowing students to write anything related to the survey topic, this study does not impose preconceptions on the data collection instrument as is typically done in deductive analysis procedures such as experimental and hypothesis testing.

Findings and Discussion

This study provides an evaluation of the implicit discourses around cultural competence that were embedded in the open-ended textual responses of a group of LIS students. The inductive analysis yielded several broad themes, which upon further analysis, revealed that a number of competing discourses were being articulated. For each of the broad themes that were identified, Table 1 features a brief analysis of the dominant and competing discourses that were embedded within the textual themes identified within the students' responses.

Table 1. Dominant and Competing Ideologies within Cultural Competence Discourses

Textual Theme	Dominant Discourse	Competing Discourse
Cultural competence terminology	An ideology of 'political correctness' and benign pluralism translates into the use of 'neutral' terms when discussing cultural competence concepts.	A critical theoretical orientation calls for naming specific modes of domination and axes of privilege when discussing cultural competence concepts.
The role of libraries/librarians in cultural competence	A service-oriented business/management paradigm informs how librarians talk about working with diverse library users.	A community engagement-oriented, socio-cultural paradigm informs how librarians talk about working with diverse library users.
Prior experience in relation to building cultural competence	A dominant white cultural perspective translates into prior experience meaning working in non-white or non-English-speaking cultural contexts.	A non-dominant, pragmatic perspective recognizes any library experience as valuable in a competitive, predominately white job market.

Cultural Competence Terminology

Recent LIS literature suggests that a number of words and terms have been used as substitutes for the term cultural competence (e.g. Helton, 2010 and Mestre, 2010). It is common for terms such as multiculturalism, diversity, cultural awareness, and cultural sensitivity to be used interchangeably with cultural competence. However, cultural competence has a specific definition that is similar to but not synonymous with the above-mentioned terms.

Thirteen research participants submitted written responses that included words and terms that seemed to be used synonymously with cultural competence. Some respondents referred to "multicultural issues" or "multiculturalism." For example one student stated, *Having been an urban educator, I had a great deal of experience and prior knowledge related to **multicultural issues**. Another student stated, *I would like to see more required courses include information about **multiculturalism**. I would also like to see more **multiculturalism** classes become required courses in the program.*

Similarly, several participants included the word "diversity" in their open-ended responses. For instance, one student commented, *Most of my experience in regard to **diversity** has come from my undergrad studies or my work at* [workplace name removed to protect anonymity]. *So far, my classes in the MLIS program have not addressed such topics.* Another student noted that, *The general and/or archival tracks do not seem to emphasize **cultural diversity** so much in the program.* Moreover, at least one respondent introduced used a related term, which was phrased as "cross-cultural programs." She stated, *I think being in information specialty reduces exposure to these topics. I also think online students have less access to **cross-cultural** programs and experiences.*

These presumed variations of the term cultural competence might not be noteworthy if not for the fact that the researchers included a specific explanation of the term as it pertained to the survey questionnaire. Additionally, the term culture was used consistently throughout the questionnaire. One plausible reason students may have used these terms as substitutes for

cultural competence is that an ideological stance of 'political correctness' was operating beneath the surface of their responses.

The notion of political correctness being described here is not meant pejoratively, but rather is used to describe the ways in which people make conscious and subconscious language choices when discussing politically and racially-charged issues in public spheres based their understanding how these terms have been taken up in the broader social and political context throughout history (Fairclough, 2003). In this sense, the respondents may have elected to use the terms that they have come to understand as aligned with a certain a political ideology. Or, perhaps they elected to use the terms they believed had the least chance of offending an audience that is presumably situated on either side of the political spectrum. For example, a student may consciously avoid using the term diversity, given that it has been widely critiqued as being too generic to address any substantive issues (Peterson, 1996). Yet, they may still subconsciously insert the word diversity into a discussion about cultural issues because of its prevalence and perceived palatability in contemporary popular discourses.

By contrast, some students seemed to consciously reject the dominant discourse of political correctness and instead chose to name specific types of privilege and oppression whenever possible. For example, two students directly acknowledged whiteness and white privilege in their responses. One of the students stated, *Since beginning at SLIS, my awareness of cultural differences and the need for specific library services for individuals of non-dominant cultures (the dominant culture being **white, Christian, heteronormative**, etc.) has increased greatly, thanks to the effort of my professors to include these topics in their curriculum.* Another student used similarly direct language when opining that, *If the SLIS is serious about developing librarians to serve cultures from various backgrounds, the best solution would be to have a librarian or other person in a community that's **not Anglo-American** conduct a lesson on the libraries of that person's culture.* A final student response, which further illustrates this practice of naming states, *In the [city name] area, the **black/white dynamic** is the most prevalent, but there are many other cultures that would require specialized learning in how to best interact.* Within this last response, there seems to be an acknowledgement that cultural issues extend beyond routine realm of "white vs. black", and yet there is also a recognition that most cultural discussions in the U.S. continue to be framed within a black/white binary (Perea, 1997).

The Role of Libraries/Librarians in Cultural Competence

A number of student respondents used some variation of the word "serve" to describe the role of librarians in cultural competence. In particular, eight of the 29 respondents gave remarks that contained the words: *serve, service, services*, and/or *serving*. The frequent use of these words might suggest that the dominant discourse related to the role of libraries/librarians in cultural competence is undergirded by a business/management or a mission/service paradigm (Pawley, 2006).

One problem with the dominant service-oriented ideology of the role of libraries in cultural competence is that it positions librarians at a formal distance from library users. In doing so, the library user is depicted as a somewhat powerless consumer of the goods or services that an all-knowing librarian has procured for their benefit. For example, one student stated that *it is extremely important to learn and have knowledge about **services provided** to various*

multicultural groups with different cultural backgrounds. Although this response extols the merits of cultural competence preparation, it leaves the impression that there is some distilled collection of "services" related to multicultural groups that librarians can "purchase," or avail themselves of if only they become aware of this content. Similarly, one student stated that, *I'd also bet that most librarians (and those in library school) are already fairly cognizant of the need to* **serve & accommodate** *individuals from various cultures.* This comment supports the notion that "service" is a mentality so thoroughly engrained in the collective consciousness of the LIS profession that according to this student, most librarians should be "fairly cognizant" of how it works in their everyday practices. Furthermore, the use of the word "accommodate" connotes a business-like sensibility that seems more akin to a policy mandate than an authentic sense of engagement with library users.

By contrast, there were textual responses that seemed to reflect a competing discourse, which was rooted in socio-cultural view of the role of libraries in cultural competence. Some of the textual clues that signaled a socio-cultural ideological stance were the use of words such as: *interact, interactive, experience,* and *community-driven.* Whereas the business/management and mission/service paradigms have roots in the positivist epistemological paradigm, a socio-cultural perspective draws from the interpretivist tradition, which recognizes that it is impossible to fully understand someone unless you understand his/her culture. Culture in this sense refers to the patterns of behavior, beliefs, and values that are shared by a group of people. One student articulated a socio-cultural view when she stated, *I specifically chose to take classes that would allow me to* **interact** *with and learn about people from other cultures. (Urban Libraries, Special Issues, Multicultural Services). In the classes, I particularly enjoyed and found valuable experiences that forced me* **out into the community**, *working with others.* This statement reflects a recognition that cultural competence is not merely about knowledge acquisition or service provision, but calls for having authentic interactions with people and engaging with the cultural contexts of their daily lives.

The socio-cultural view of the role of libraries in cultural competence brought forth some valid concerns about the conflict between online education and the development of cultural competence. For example, one student commented that *the experiences expressed in these questions are best developed with more hands on experience, that which comes from internships and work and career experiences. It is also more difficult to gain* **interactive** *experiences from a primarily distance program.* It should be noted that online education is a prevalent mode of course delivery in many LIS schools, including the two institutions where this study was conducted. Yet, there were student responses that clearly recognized the conundrum of trying to foster the kind of firsthand interaction that cultural competence is predicated upon in an online educational environment.

Prior Experience in Relation to Building Cultural Competence
Having prior experience in a purportedly "diverse" environment was one of the most prominent themes that the students expressed in their open-ended responses relative to cultural competence. Students who reported having prior experience also reported that their LIS education did not enhance their level of cultural competence. The types of prior experience that the students cited most included: living or working in an environment that was characterized as

being diverse; and having educational experiences that somehow contribute to an increased awareness of multicultural issues.

All of the students who referenced having prior experience were self-identified as white. The racial identity of these student respondents is relevant to this finding as it may help illuminate the ways in which the term diversity was being constructed within their remarks. In turn, this may also reveal how the concept of cultural competence was being understood. For example, one respondent cited *having prior experience working at* **minirity** [sic] *companies in non-library environments*. This reference to minority companies presupposes a contrast between predominantly white companies and companies where the majority of employees are non-white. Other students also made comments that reflect a dominant white perspective of diversity. For instance, one white respondent noted that, *By working at a library in a* **diverse population***, I entered the program working with a diverse population and pool of co-workers.* Another white respondent made an implicit connection between working in an urban area and having a multicultural base of prior knowledge and experience with the following statement: *Having been an* **urban educator***, I had a great deal of experience and prior knowledge related to multicultural issues. My experience in LIS has not added greatly to my* **prior knowledge** *- with the exception of reading Elfreda Chatman.* Here the use of the term "urban" connotes some kind of cultural diversity, which one might presume refers to a non-white and/or non-English speaking community.

By comparison, there was a competing discourse relative to the theme of prior experience that reflects a non-dominant, pragmatic ideological stance concerning cultural competence. For example, one of the African American respondents stated, *I wish that library/repository tours were more a part of regular class time (field trips). This happened in only 2 of my classes. Student professional orgs would offer this, but I couldn't get off from my full-time job. I will take a multi-cultural class next semester, so my answers will be different then, I hope.* There are a few contextual clues in this response, which suggest a pragmatic view of prior experience that is not predicated on working in a so-called "diverse" environment. For example, when this student establishes the value of the library/repository tours without mentioning what type of tour it was, there seems to be a preference for gaining any library experience, whether it is explicitly culturally-based or not. When coupled with her remark about not being able to get off from her full-time job, the statement begins to reveal a non-dominant, pragmatic understanding of what kind of library experience might be beneficial to a non-white preservice librarian. The response suggests an understanding that the library workforce is predominantly white and thus gaining any kind of library experience would prepare one for future employment prospects from this situated racialized perspective.

Conclusion & Implications

Ultimately, understanding the hidden ideologies upon which cultural competence discourses are built is important to the work of any self-reflective, critically conscious LIS professional. Although this work is tenuous and messy at best, it can have positive real world implications for students. This is especially true if teachers (including school librarians) become aware of the origins of the ideologies that inform their philosophies of teaching and particularly those ideals that they hold that might alienate or place students, who are already educational outliers, further on the periphery mainstream educational discourses.

While this kind of self-reflection may seem esoteric, school librarians can translate this kind of deep analysis into a signature pedagogy that builds on the inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning that have become a trademark in school libraries (see e.g., Callison & Preddy, 2006). Initially, the school librarian might engage teachers and administrators in professional development activities aimed at helping them to examine the hidden ideologies informing their philosophies of teaching. The hook for getting busy teachers to buy into this kind of professional development might be to prepare a brief handout during the school-wide faculty meetings that features series of statements that reflect different positions and beliefs about what it means to be a culturally competent educator. Once teachers rank these statements in the order of their perceived validity, the school librarian can then help them begin to understand how certain beliefs they hold might be problematic for certain students. As a result of this self-reflexive inquiry teachers may recognize its value and, in turn, incorporate the same kind of activities in their classes and/or in collaboration with the school librarian.

This kind of pedagogical approach could evolve into a school-wide inquiry initiative that is spearheaded by the school librarian. The project might be called "tracing our ideas" and students (with the guidance of their teachers) could be encouraged to trace the ideological lineage of the different positions they hold on debate-worthy topics. These topics may originate from the school curriculum or from popular culture. The school library can also serve as the resource lab for helping students identify debate-worthy topics found in popular reference series such as Introducing Issues with Opposing Viewpoints (2009).

For the critically oriented school library professional, this work can serve as a conceptual mirror upon which everyday ideas and conversations related to cultural competence might be held up to scrutiny. Too often, we rely on empty platitudes when discussing our roles as culturally competent professionals. Yet, if we can begin to trace the origins of these ideas, we can move beyond mere awareness towards critical cultural competence.

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