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Citation Details

Tobiason, Anders, "On "Developing Information Literate Abilities": Uncovering Whiteness at the Center of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy" (2021). *Library Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 331.

https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/ulib_fac/331

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ON “DEVELOPING INFORMATION LITERATE ABILITIES”: UNCOVERING WHITENESS AT THE CENTER OF THE ACRL FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

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JAMILA LYISCOTT: 3 WAYS TO SPEAK ENGLISH
[HTTPS://WWW.TED.COM/TALKS/JAMILA_LYISCOTT_3_WAYS_TO_SPEAK_ENGLISH?LANGUAGE=EN#T- 127735](https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english?language=en#t-127735)

I'm a tri-lingual orator
Sometimes I'm consistent with my language now Then switch it up so I don't
bore later Sometimes I fight back two tongues
While I use the other one in the classroom
And when I mistakenly mix them up
I feel crazy like ... I'm cooking in the bathroom
I know that I had to borrow your language because mines was stolen
But you can't expect me to speak your history wholly while mines is broken
These words are spoken
By someone who is simply fed up with the Eurocentric ideals of this season And
the reason I speak a composite version of your language
Is because mines was raped away along with my history
I speak broken English so the profusing gashes can remind us
That our current state is not a mystery

WHITE INSTITUTIONAL PRESENCE



“WIP focuses on the White normative messages and practices that are exchanged within the academic milieu. When these messages and practices remain subtle, nebulous, and unnamed, they potentially harm the well-being, self-esteem, and academic success of those who do not share the norms of White culture.” (Gusa, 471)



ANTIRACIST BLACK LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

“Provides Black students with critical literacies and competencies to name, investigate, and dismantle white linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism. conscientizes Black students the historical, cultural, political, and racial underpinnings of Black Language.” (Baker-Bell, 34)



WHITENESS AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.

“The concepts of mastery and authority in the academy reverberate a colonial episteme of domination by assuming that encounters with the world should convert to “information” that humans consume, more like devour—master. Consuming information is not enough though. We must dissect it, slowly swallow parts of it and stretch our stomachs to eat all of it—analogueous to educational competency criteria.” (Yacubian, 109).

“Objectivity, the concept of concerted mastery, and autonomy are leading canons of Whiteness, reinforced by ideas of individuality and privatization, or proprietorship.” (74)

“The double-standard ... that requires racially and ethnically marginalized persons to assimilate into White culture in order to be heard, but does not require White culture to acclimate to these same persons’ cultures, vindicates White culture of the harm it causes by making “being listen to” conditional. It also absolves White culture of its role in causing racially and ethnically marginalized persons to perceive themselves as inferior without looking to the double-standard as the source of the perception.” (74)



WHITENESS: A DEFINITION

- A socially and politically constructed behavior.
- Whiteness has a long history in European imperialism and epistemologies. It does not simply refer to skin color but an ideology based on beliefs, values, behaviors, habits and attitudes, which result in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin color. Whiteness represents a position of power where the power holder defines social categories and reality—the master narrator. (Adapted from STAND Framing and Learning Anti-Racism. [Understanding Whiteness, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center](#))

(Portland Community College, What is Whiteness).

CODE SWITCHING

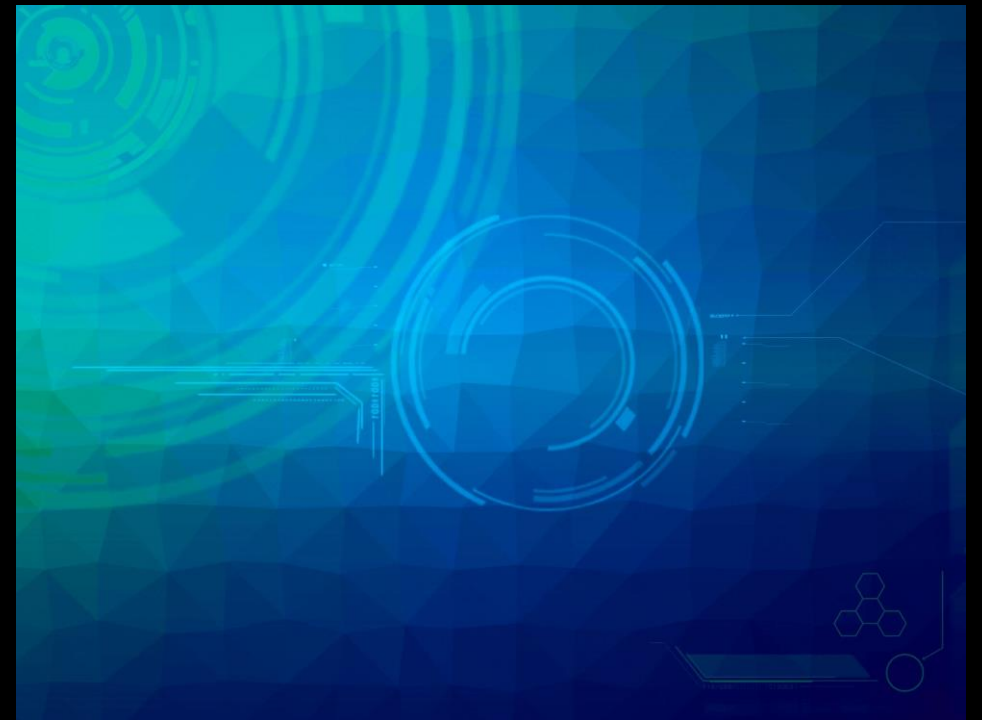
“I would add to this point that teaching students how to function within an academic discourse can be perilously close to teaching students how to conform, how to get along, how to succeed.” (Beilin)

“the practice of code switching is power-laden.” (Benjamin, 180)



ON THE ABSENCE OF RACE

“We cannot fully examine the information environment without understanding how it is impacted by the structural oppression of people of color, especially at the intersection of other identities. Since the framework names some of these other identities, it is peculiar that it does not include race.”
(Rapchak, 173)



INFORMATION LITERACY AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION.

“I believe that relative to its overall place within the library, information literacy is of outsize importance as a potential tool of oppression. Information literacy does not merely target the contents of the mind but consciously tries to change individuals’ cognitive processes.” (Beatty)

“Any instruction that emphasizes the importance of White Mainstream English over all other linguistic forms is especially dangerous for Black students, and other linguistically marginalized students of color, as it communicates to them that being Black and speaking in Black Language are insufficient.” (Baker-Bell, 25)



WHO IS THE ARCHETYPE OF THE INFORMATION LITERATE INDIVIDUAL?

“Western values, principled in *human capital* and economic proliferation (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1963; Weber, 1976), seed education in a plot that is fertilized by power, which when directed towards domination, breeds oppression. This is most prominently evidenced in U.S. education, in which an unspoken archetype of “student,” against which all other students are measured, exists and from which outliers are made discernable and discardable.” (Yacubian, 33)



SCHOLARSHIP AS CONVERSATION

- “Recognize that systems privilege authorities and that not having a fluency in the language and process of a discipline disempowers their ability to participate and engage.” (ACRL Framework)
- “They are being asked to switch their language, their cultural ways of being and knowing, their community, and their blackness in favor of a white middle class identity.” (Baker-Bell)

- “understand how and why some individuals or groups of individuals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information;” (ACRL Framework)
- “decide where and how their information is published;” (ACRL Framework)
- “understand how the commodification of their personal information and online interactions affects the information they receive and the information they produce or disseminate online; (ACRL Framework)
- “make informed choices regarding their online actions in full awareness of issues related to privacy and the commodification of personal information.” (ACRL Framework)

INFORMATION
HAS VALUE



AUTHORITY IS CONSTRUCTED AND CONTEXTUAL

“Experts understand the need to determine the validity of the information created by different authorities and to acknowledge biases that privilege some sources of authority over others, especially in terms of others’ worldviews, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural orientations.” (ACRL Framework)



PROBLEMS WITH AUTHORITY

WHAT IF WE WERE TO CONCEIVE OF
OUR RELATIONSHIP TO INFORMATION
AS COMPLEMENTARY, NOT AS
NOVICE AND EXPERT, NOT AS
AUTHORITY, NOT AS GAINED OR IN
NEED OF GAINING? MIGHT WE THEN
IMAGINE AUTHORITY AS SOMETHING
EACH OF US ALREADY HAS?



THANK YOU

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