

# Culturally Responsive Public Services



**the EXCHANGE**

an ALCTS/LITA/LLAMA Collaboration



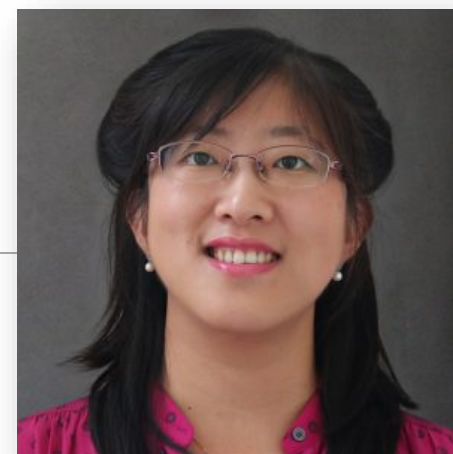
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# Today's Journey



# Theoretical Grounding

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# Definitions

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## **Culturally Responsive**

Able to understand & consider the different cultural backgrounds of the people you teach, offer services to, etc. (1)

## **Public Services**

Any public-facing service within the library.

**1. Cambridge Dictionary online at**

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/culturally-responsive>

# Culturally Responsive Teaching

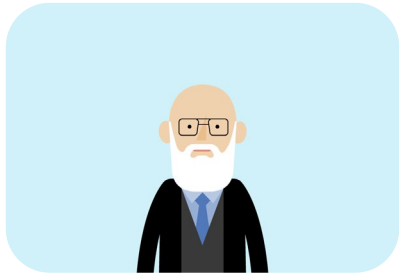
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- **Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)** is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.
- **Major Theorists/Practitioners:** Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings
- **Cornerstones**
  - Academic success
  - Cultural competence
  - Critical consciousness



# Adjacent Theories/Pedagogies

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Critical  
Pedagogy



Multiculturalism



Intersectional  
Feminist Theory

RECOGNITION NETWORKS:  
THE **WHAT** OF LEARNING



Universal  
Design Learning

# Where's the Bridge?



# Culturally Responsive Public Services

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1. Reject “cultural blindness” as a Eurocentric approach. (CRT)
2. Recognize the importance of relationship building. (CRT)
3. Self-reflection and self-education (CRT) + community engagement (Cooke)
4. Move beyond cultural “highlighting.”



# Practical Applications

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# Who Needs This?

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ALL

Y'ALL!

# Self-Education: Goals

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## **Areas Recommended for Library Public Services**

1. Cultural awareness and sensitivity
2. Cultural knowledge—history, values, belief systems of various groups
3. Linguistic competence

(Cuesta, 2003, pp. 112-113)

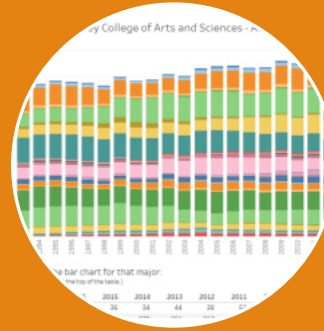
# Self-Education: Actions



Read  
widely



Attend  
continuing  
education



Find your  
Factbook



Participate  
& Listen



# Self-Reflection

“...the process of building and maintaining cultural competence is a multistep endeavor. Library professionals must engage in critical self-reflection and *then* become involved in the process of getting to know their communities...”

(Cooke, 2017, p. 12)



# Self-Reflection: Model

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**What is your cultural background?**

**Can you think of ways that your cultural background affects your approach to providing library services?**

# Self-Reflection: Exercise

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**What is your cultural background?**

**Can you think of ways that your cultural background affects your approach to providing library services?**

An abstract, swirling pattern in shades of blue and white, resembling water ripples or a galaxy, occupies the left side of the slide.

# Self-Reflection: Extensions

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1. [Circles of My Multicultural Self](#) (EdChange)
2. Dr. Nicole Cooke's adaptation:  
“What diverse population(s) do you identify with? What services would you like to see at your library to meet your needs?”

# Self Reflection: 4 Questions

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1. Did my identity contribute to the outcome of this interaction?
2. Was there an opportunity to build a relationship with the patron?
3. Where were there hurdles in communication or service provision? Could those have been the result of cultural differences between me and the patron?
4. Was I uncomfortable or tense during the patron interaction? Why?



Self-Reflection:  
Consider a Transaction

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# Self Reflection: Your Turn

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1. Did my identity contribute to the outcome of this interaction?
2. Was there an opportunity to build a relationship with the patron?
3. Where were there hurdles in communication or service provision? Could those have been the result of cultural differences between me and the patron?
4. Was I uncomfortable or tense during the patron interaction? Why?

# Suggestions for Your Practice

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1. **Locate** educational opportunities
2. **Complete** Circles of My Multicultural Self, Background Questions, or Cooke's suggested reflections
3. **Commit** to a schedule for self-reflective practice
4. **Identify** a shift/time
5. **Record** your answers to the 4 Questions

# Closing Thoughts

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1. Self-work is essential for building culturally responsive public services.
2. Self-reflection & education are iterative processes.
3. Reminder: consider the digital space.
4. Keep the conversation going! Share these materials with your colleagues. Join or form a community of practice.

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Paolo Freire: <https://mathsnoproblem.com/blog/teaching-practice/paulo-freire-pioneer-of-critical-pedagogy/>

Multiculturalism:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommons.wikimedia.org%2Fwiki%2FFile%3AMulticulturalism.jpg&psig=AOvVaw1ODIfGfJ4oD9luzJkZkiJ&ust=1588030852685000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCPCxsJ6ih-kCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD>

Intersectional Feminist Theory:

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Factbook: <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/publications/factbook/jpg/viz/Majors.jpg>

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Circles: <https://www.needpix.com/photo/edit/48550/wave-motion-waves-circles-water-wave-circle-rings-arrangement-nature-wallpaper>

Hopkins Library Staff: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Service\\_Desk\\_at\\_Hopkins\\_Library,\\_Dow\\_House.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Service_Desk_at_Hopkins_Library,_Dow_House.jpg)

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# Questions?

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