Unpacking White Language Supremacy in the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy

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https://www.indigenouseidalliance.org/

Privilege.
Who is the idealized Information Literate Individual?
Whiteness

• 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).
Whiteness is an active thing.
Librarians define Knowledge (but we don’t think critically about that)
“WLS assists white supremacy by using language to control reality and resources by defining and evaluating people, places, things, reading, writing, rhetoric, pedagogies, and processes in multiple ways that damage our students and our democracy.”

RICHARDSON, E., ET. AL (2021)
Whose Information Literacy coins are we valuing in our classrooms?
# Habits of White Language Supremacy (HOWL) Characteristics (Inoue, 2021, 22-28)

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<td>Clarity, Order, and Control</td>
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April Baker-Bell: Antiracist Black Language Education and Pedagogy
Words Wound
Faith Yacubian, Whiteness and Critical Discourse Analysis
On the absence of Race in the ACRL Framework
1 Minute Reflection Break

How does White Language Supremacy function in your life?
Developing Information Literate Abilities
HOWL: Unseen, Naturalized Orientation to the World
HOWL: Hyperindividualism
The white experience of an individual becoming information literate is assumed to be universal, and any other kind of process is deemed as lessor.
Scholarship as Conversation
“Power and language are deeply entangled. Groups already in power can suppress the language of subordinate groups seeking justice.”

Tripoldi, 134
So in order to become fluent, to gain power in terms of entering a conversation this frame asks folks to discard their blackness, discard their otherness, in other words to become white.
A supposedly neutral language, an unexamined language is a hallmark of HOWLing.
Information has Value
HOWL (s):

• Stance of Neutrality, Objectivity, Apoliticality
  • Clarity, Order, and Control
  • Rational, Controlled Self
“Literacy may be the key to liberation, but not all literacies liberate. Who controls literacy and its standards? Where do these things come from?”

Inuoe (2021), 92
Neutral
Who has these affordances in the classroom economy?
Authority is Constructed and Contextual
The Framework assumes that what is reachable for the Authority is reachable for all.
Becoming Information Literate is conceived of as a colorblind process.
Thank You

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