Spectrum Fellows: Catalysts for Change in the LIS Professoriate

SIG Sponsor(s):

Equity and Social Justice SIG (Dr. Mónica Colón-Aguirre, University of South Carolina, USA)
Equity and Social Justice SIG (Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, University of South Carolina, USA)

Presenters:

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ABSTRACT

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an intellectual framework intended to explain the day-to-day situations that affect the lives of members of minoritized groups. Its main goal is to help bring about revised social and systemic structures, which in turn can ameliorate the detrimental effects of racism and racist systems for historically marginalized and excluded groups. As a framework, CRT stands on a set of principles which serve as a foundation. Although the wording and structure of these principles varies among scholars, some of the ideas presented are stated throughout. For example, some of the main principles for CRT is that racism is ordinary and not aberrational, that race is a social construct which is not objective, inherent, or fixed on any genetic or biological reality, making it a purely social phenomenon, and that CRT due to differences in their historical experiences with oppression, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Latinx individuals are better equipped to communicate their experiences than their white counterparts (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

The volatile and increasingly resistant environment serves only to highlight the importance of centering CRT, especially for a field such as Library and Information Science (LIS), but particularly for LIS pedagogy. The LIS field has lagged behind on many aspects related to bringing about racial equality, despite a generalized idea that the field is a pioneer of social equality and egalitarianism (Cooke and Colón-Aguirre, 2021; Ettarh, 208; Honma, 2005). As LIS educators, we must focus not only on preparing our students for the work they will perform but also to present the challenges faced by their chosen career.

Buy in from the field at all levels is required in order to bring LISCrit to the future generations of information professionals, and one of the ways to do that is to clearly and consistently demonstrate how CRT undergirds and informs the profession and its teachings. The tenets are CRT are baked

into LIS, one only need to look closely and critically through a lens of intellectual and cultural competence and humility.

In this presentation the panelists will discuss their efforts to infuse CRT into graduate LIS curricula (LISCrit). The discussion will focus on three main initiatives geared at bringing about more discussions and enabling the field's multiple facets to benefit from the contexts and discussions which CRT facilitates. The panel will take place in three parts, including:

- Colón-Aguirre and Cooke (2022) will discuss their article that introduces the LISCrit framework and its main propositions,
- Colón-Aguirre and Cooke will share their scholarly efforts to produce an edited collection (Advances in Librarianship) and special journal issue (Library Quarterly), which have been designed to enable LIS educators to better include this content in their LIS classrooms,
- Harris will present and demonstrate a digital CRT in LIS toolkit developed through an American Library Association Carnegie Whitney Grant.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Education; Education programs/schools; Pedagogy; Critical librarianship

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Critical Race Theory; LIS Education; social issues in LIS; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).