

Kick back and relax!

Creating a Radical Sense of Belonging in Our Libraries





HELLO!

My name is Ione Damasco.

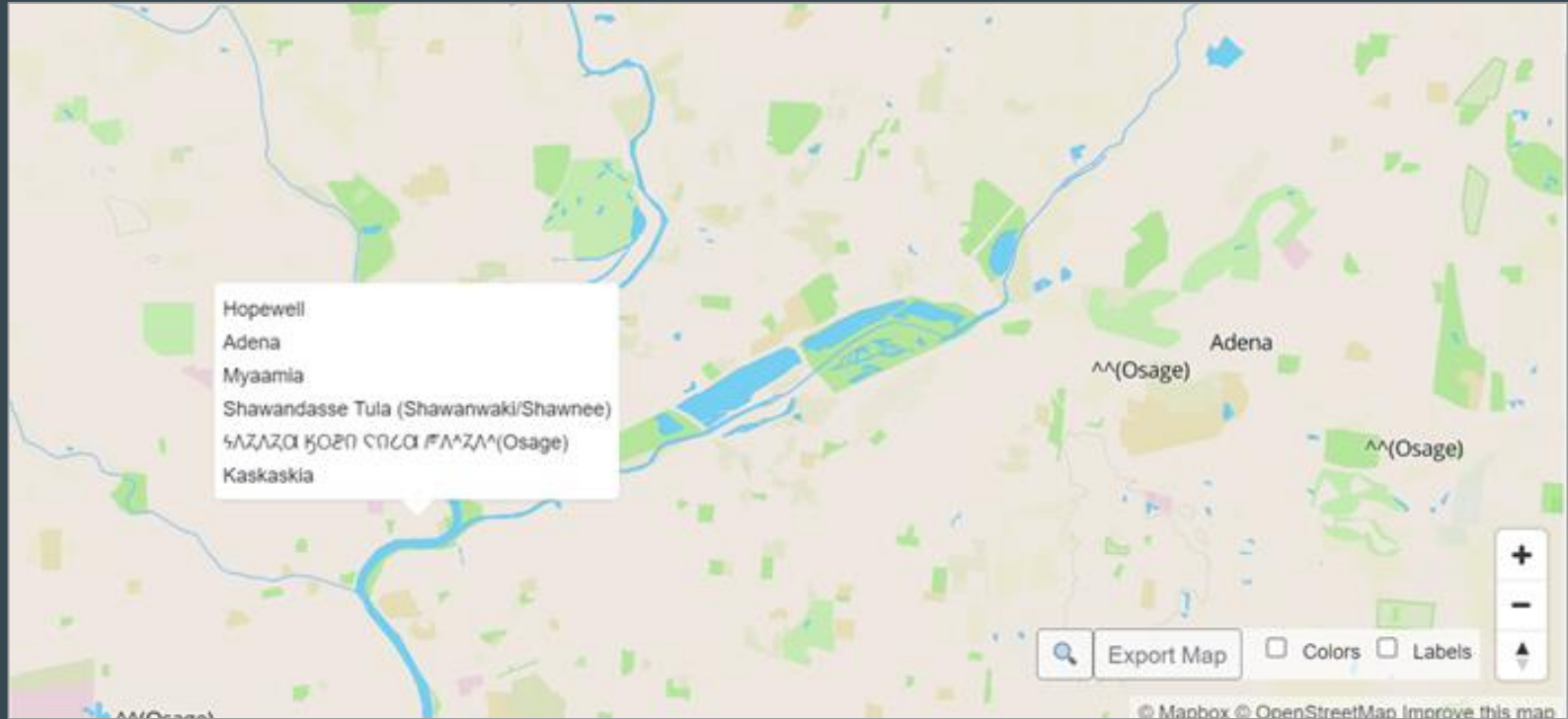
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Land Acknowledgement





**Imagine your
favorite space**

How does it
make you feel?

Imagine a space you dislike



How do you feel in that space?

Narrative #1: Neutrality



Critical Race Theory 101

- The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination
- **The challenge to dominant ideology**
- The commitment to social justice
- **The centrality of experiential knowledge**
- The transdisciplinary perspective



We define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society).

The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform.

Counternarrative #1

- Libraries, archives, and museums are institutions grounded and founded in the same social, political, and historical contexts as all other institutions in our culture, and are therefore not neutral.
- Librarians and other information professionals, like all other people, hold implicit and explicit biases shaped by culture and lived experiences.
- To proclaim neutrality means we uphold an oppressive status quo.

What is white supremacy culture?

According to Okun, white supremacy culture:

- “... [refers to] the ways in which these ruling class elite or the power elite in the colonies of what was to become the United States used the pseudo-scientific concept of race to create whiteness and a hierarchy of racialized value”
- “... affects us all, harms us all, and is toxic to us all, it does not affect, harm, and violate us in the same way. White supremacy targets and violates BIPOC people and communities with the intent to destroy them directly; white supremacy targets and violates white people with a persistent invitation to collude that will inevitably destroy their humanity.”
- intersects with, supports, reinforces, and reproduces capitalism, class oppression, gender oppression, heterosexism, ableism, etc. and these in turn intersect to support white supremacy culture

Narrative #2: Diversifying our collections



Counternarrative #2

- The presence of marginalized perspectives on our shelves does not guarantee their use nor their integration into the curricular or research activities of our campuses.
- **How** we provide access to our collections is just as important as what is in our collections.

Subject(ive) Headings

From a 2016 email (Janis L. Young, Policy and Standards Division, Library of Congress):

“In response to requests from constituents who consider the phrase **illegal aliens** to be pejorative and disappearing from common use, the Policy and Standards Division of the Library of Congress, which maintains Library of Congress Subject Headings, has proposed that the headings **Aliens** and **Illegal aliens** both be replaced.

If approved, the heading **Aliens** will be replaced by **Noncitizens**, which is currently a Used For (UF) reference to Aliens. **Illegal aliens** will be replaced by two headings: **Noncitizens** and **Unauthorized immigration**.”

Language has power

LCSH:

- Children of illegal aliens
 - Alternate subject could be: **Children of undocumented immigrants**
- Aliens
 - Alternate subject could be: **Noncitizens**

CHANGE CAN HAPPEN!

- ~~Japanese Americans—Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945~~
- **Japanese Americans—Forced removal and internment, 1942-1945**

Environments matter



Other environmental considerations



Narrative #3: Diversifying our workforce



Counternarrative #3

- Adding more persons of color to an institution does not inherently guarantee the cultural transformation of that institution.
- Black, Indigenous and people of color often find themselves in environments that are not inclusive (and sometimes actively hostile or harmful), and they are expected to adapt to “fit” into the culture of the organization.

Privilege of Authenticity

- Display a full range of emotions
- Share interests, opinions, personal life and health details and histories, family details, hobbies, etc.
- Present one's self physically (hair, clothing, skin, makeup, accessories, etc.) in almost any way – and in (almost) any workplace setting – with considerably less concern about shaming, push-back, punishment/mistreatment, unsolicited interference, or undue interrogation

Deauthentication

- Cognitive process that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) traverse to prepare for or navigate predominantly white workplace environments
- Results in decisions that hide or reduce aspects of the influence of their ethnic, racial, or cultural identity, and the presentation of their natural personality, language, physical and mental self-images/representations, interests, relationships, values, traditions, etc.
- Defensive actions taken to avoid macro- or microaggressions, shaming, incivility, punishment or retaliation, etc.
- Results in barriers to sharing their whole selves with their colleagues and/or clients.

Organizational culture & exclusion

- Sense of urgency
- Either/or thinking
- Worship of the written word
- Overworking is an unstated norm
- Fear of conflict

Building a culture of inclusion

- Set realistic timeframes that factor in sustainability and equity
- Give everyone the space to address important issues as they come up in the moment
- Push for more than two alternatives when either/or language comes up
- Resist oversimplification of complex issues
- Make sure anything written can be clearly understood, and that everyone has access to the same information and time to process it
- Ensure everyone has the ability to question or challenge policies that can then be revised to ensure equity
- Support one another's mental, physical, and emotional well-being
- Support time boundaries that are considerate of needs outside of work
- Account for emotional labor when BIPOC employees are assigned “diversity work”
- Make clear distinctions between being impolite and bringing up difficult issues

Developing inclusive interpersonal skills

- Become a generous listener
 - Turn off your internal voice--don't just wait for silences to add your opinions without an affirmation of what the other person has shared
 - Be genuinely curious--this means you genuinely care about the other person's experiences, even if they are different from your own
 - Listen with focus and an intent to understand
 - Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something
 - Be willing to center the other person's stories during your conversation, especially if they are sharing stories from a historically marginalized point of view



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