

Decolonizing Academic Libraries: Critical Information Literacy and Truth and Reconciliation Donna Langille (McGill University) (Recipient of the CAPAL Bursary for Student Conference Attendance)

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) formed a Truth and Reconciliation Committee in 2016 and delivered their Report and Recommendations in 2017. One of their goals was to identify how libraries, archives and cultural heritage institutions can implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action. This presentation hopes to expand on the CFLA's recommendations by identifying and exploring how critical information literacy instruction can support reconciliation in academic libraries.

The last ten years has seen a surge in research focusing on critical information literacy in library and information studies. Critical information literacy looks beyond developing students' library literacy skills, such as the ability to find relevant sources and use the library catalog, and aims to encourage students' agency in the process of seeking, retrieving and evaluating information. Critical information literacy also encourages the examination of the social and political power structures within the context of information.

This presentation looks at the history of libraries as colonial institutions and draws on the scholarship in critical information literacy, critical pedagogy theory, as well as literature on settler colonial reconciliation from Indigenous perspectives. This presentation proposes that critical information literacy, that intentionally applies an anti-colonial lens, and which acknowledges and addresses the disparities of social power between settlers and Indigenous communities, can support reconciliation by encouraging students to question concepts of authority and the privileging of the written word in higher education, as well as to acknowledge and respect Indigenous knowledge systems.

The goal of this presentation is to evaluate the ways in which academic librarians can adopt critical pedagogical praxis as a way to resist and challenge colonial power within the university. In this presentation, I hope to build upon the work done by the CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee and to advocate, from an allied perspective, for the importance of academic librarians' participation in Reconciliation.