

REVIEWS

Latinos in Libraries, Museums, and Archives: Cultural Competence in Action! An Asset-Based Approach

By Patricia Montiel-Overall, Annabelle Villaescusa Nuñez, and Verónica Reyes-Escudero. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015. xvii, 291 pp. Softcover and EPUB. Softcover \$55.00, EPUB \$52.00. Softcover ISBN 978-1-4422-5850-1; EPUB ISBN 978-1-4422-5851-8.

This book is a must-read for library and information science (LIS) professionals because it presents a practical approach to an issue of great significance today: underrepresentation of and discrimination against Latinos in the United States and the power of libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs) to improve their situation. The two major contributions of this book are, first, the layout of a solid conceptual framework—an asset-based approach to cultural competence—and, second, the listing of numerous resources to understand, acquire, and practice cultural competence at U.S. LAM institutions.

Latinos in Libraries begins with a description and historical background of the different Latino groups that live in the United States. The authors, Patricia Montiel-Overall, Annabelle Villaescusa Nuñez, and Verónica Reyes-Escudero, work at the University of Arizona. Montiel-Overall is associate professor at the School of Information, Villaescusa Nuñez is the research and learning librarian at the College of Public Health, and Reyes-Escudero is the Borderlands Curator for Special Collections. In their book, the authors contest the monolithic view of Latinos as one group with the same cultural background. They then explain that the founding rock for cultural competence is to part from the assumption that the increasing inequity that Latinos face is a result of their own deficiencies. Instead, the authors propose that political, economic, and social systems in the United States derive from policies that prevent the advancement of such communities. Such policies attack bilingualism and multiculturalism because they part from the mainstream idea that “cultural differences are detrimental to the United States” (p. 237). To counteract such assumptions, the authors propose the theoretical concept of “cultural competence,” which they define as the ability to recognize that culture is an intrinsic part of each human being (p. 23). This ability derives from the recognition and appreciation of cultural differences and, above all, from the awareness that the current environment in the United States sets obstacles for the advancement of Latino people. In the first chapter of this book, the authors describe and analyze the concept of cultural competence.

They also provide specific examples of how its lack impacts policies such as the banning of ethnic-studies books from schools in Arizona.

The authors go from the abstract to the concrete by describing the implementation of cultural competence through an asset-based approach. First, they define the deficit model that has structured the majority of the programs developed to support Latino communities. Such a paradigm assumes that acculturation is necessary for Latino people to advance in U.S. society. This results in deficit-model policies and strategies being based on the needs of Latinos and not taking Latino culture into consideration. On the other hand, the asset-based approach emphasizes not Latinos' needs but their assets. Such an approach focuses on the communities' cultural strengths. The asset-based approach gives agency to Latino communities; through it, LIS professionals partner with Latino communities to design programs and services.

After setting up the theoretical framework in chapter 1, in chapters 2 through 7, Montiel-Overall, Villaescusa Nuñez, and Reyes-Escudero analyze the process of implementing an asset-based approach to cultural competence in different types of institutions: school libraries, public libraries, academic libraries, health information services, special collections and archives, and museums. In addition to describing the specific ways in which each type of institution can adopt cultural-competent strategies, these chapters highlight general trends. Chapters 2 and 4 ("School Libraries" and "Academic Libraries") stress the positive impact that Latino librarians can have on the education of Latino students, for the former understand the challenges the latter face. Thus, the authors issue a call to increase the number of Latino LIS professionals. At the same time, given that Latino librarians are so scarce, they recognize the indispensability of non-Latino librarians becoming culturally competent to serve and support the advancement of their Latino patrons. Along with these two chapters, chapter 3 ("Public Libraries") stresses that one of the main Latino assets is a strong family connection. Hence, the authors propose to use this asset as a strategy by involving parents in their children's education.

In chapter 5 ("Health Information Services"), the authors discuss differences between the American and Latino health cultures and propose to use such differences as assets. For instance, the reliance on traditional knowledge, such as herbal medicine, or *curanderismo* (healing art), must be seen as a useful resource and not as an obstacle or an inferior practice. Another cultural-competent practice in this field is *respeto*, or the respect and deference used to treat older people. Health science librarians will serve as effective health information brokers if they incorporate such assets into their practice. In this chapter, the authors also take into consideration Latinos' close family connections by proposing programs in which younger Latinos provide outreach to their older counterparts.

In the following chapter ("Special Collections and Archives"), Montiel-Overall, Villaescusa Nuñez, and Reyes-Escudero focus on the underrepresentation of Latinos in special collections at academic libraries. In previous chapters, the authors present statistical information to illustrate the growth of the Latino population in the United States. They contrast the Latino presence in the United States with the lack of documentation on the history of such immigrants, for instance, Mexican immigrants in the Southwest, or Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Dominicans, and others in the North and Southeast. The authors identify some of the reasons for underrepresentation. One is that U.S. special collections and archives have privileged collecting on Latin America while ignoring collecting about Latinos in the United States. Aside from a lack of interest in acquiring such materials, another obstacle for special collections is Latinos' distrust of these institutions, especially in places and times where U.S. immigration policies and legislation are harsh towards Latinos. In this chapter, the authors issue a call to diversify collections, and they state that to overcome existing challenges, special collections librarians, archivists, and institutions have to become culturally competent. One of the greatest contributions of this chapter is the authors' introduction of the need for cultural competence around digital curation, and they present, even if briefly, the main issues regarding the digitization of Latino collections. Chapter 7 ("Museums") discusses in detail the success that museums of Latin American and Latino cultural heritage have had in the United States, for they have become cultural centers that provide not only access to Latino art, culture, and history but also to social services and meeting places.

In addition to a strong conceptual framework, this book constitutes a great collection of resources. It includes statistics on Latinos in the United States, in libraries, and in lower and higher education, as well as best practices, tables of cultural beliefs, websites of LAM institutions that effectively target Latinos or that have strong Latino holdings, lists of books that might help raise cultural competence, lists of digitized collections, and standards such as the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries*.¹ It also describes specific examples on how to implement cultural competence through an asset-based approach. In fact, the quantity of information in the book can be overwhelming. Perhaps the book's greatest weakness is that, although the text explains in detail all of the actions that Latino librarians, archivists, and museum professionals can take, it does not acknowledge the great burden that they already carry; it also does not acknowledge that, in fact, Latino LIS professionals might not have the cultural competence or the linguistic skills to work with other Latinos. The book would be much stronger if it emphasized the importance of archivists, librarians, and

museum professionals from all backgrounds acquiring cultural competence instead of singling out Latino LIS professionals for such responsibility.

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- ¹ Association of College and Research Libraries, *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries*, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/diversity>.

Pedagogies of the Image: Photo-archives, Cultural Histories, and Postfoundational Inquiry

By Hannah M. Tavares. Dordrecht, Neth.: Springer, 2016. x, 105 pp. Softcover and EPUB. Softcover \$54.99, EPUB \$39.99. Softcover ISBN 978-94-017-7617-2; EPUB ISBN 978-94-017-7619-6.

Hannah M. Tavares, an associate professor in the University of Hawaii's Department of Educational Foundations, has published a variety of articles on the topics of gender, ethnicity, identity, and educational theory. Her *Pedagogies of the Image: Photo-archives, Cultural Histories, and Postfoundational Inquiry* is a natural successor to these works, even if "photo-archives" is a new addition. Throughout the book, *archives* is used neither in the practitioner's sense nor exactly in the Derridean conceptual sense, but instead as a broad umbrella term for "historical documents," regardless of their context.¹ As part of the *SpringerBriefs in Education* series, which are formatted as hybrids of books and journals and are intended to be shorter (and more rapidly published) than traditional monographs, this text is structured more like an edited volume than a monograph; each chapter has its own abstract, and each chapter (with the exception of the first and last, which function as introduction and conclusion) could stand alone as an academic essay. As an aggregate, the work feels, in many ways, only loosely tied together by its premise—to analyze three photographs as evidence and sites of identity and voice, and to explore the possibility that the analysis of photographs can provide insight into narratives that have been underexplored in history. Tavares writes that the book will support multiple readings, but for archivists, the most engaging reading is likely to be as a case study in the critical interpretation of images and their contexts.

Chapter 1, "Why Photo-Archives," functions as both introduction and manifesto. Citing thinkers like Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida,