

Library Staff

The culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community in recruitment of library boards, administrators, staff and volunteers.

Culturally responsive staff:

- ◆ Integrate traditional ways of knowing into library collections, programming and services.
- ◆ Is aware of local knowledge and cultural practices and incorporates it into their work.
- ◆ Is knowledgeable in areas of local history and cultural tradition.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for patrons to learn in a setting where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant.
- ◆ Utilize the expertise of Elders and culturally knowledgeable leaders in multiple ways.
- ◆ Recognize that the library as information resource should include oral wisdom and traditions of those in the community as well as books on the shelf.
- ◆ Participate in local and regional events and activities in appropriate and support-



Group Choral Reading, Annual Heritage Language Conference, Monument Valley High School, San Juan School District, Monument Valley, Utah.

How can I use this self-assessment?

As a library leader, you can use these guidelines to:

- ◆ Review mission and vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies to assure the integration of culturally appropriate practice.
- ◆ Examine the library environment and atmosphere provided for all library users.
- ◆ Review staff performance as it relates to practicing culturally specific behavior.
- ◆ Strengthen the commitment to facilitating and fostering the involvement of members of the indigenous community.
- ◆ Adapt strategies and procedures to include culturally sensitive library practices.
- ◆ Guide preparation, training, and orientation of library staff to help them address the culturally specific needs of their indigenous patrons.
- ◆ Serve as a benchmark against which to evaluate library programs, services, and collections.



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Self-Assessment for Library Leaders

Do I Have a Culturally Responsive Library?



21st Century
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Libraries

Library Environment

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Is open and inviting to all members of the community.
- ◆ Utilizes local expertise to provide culturally appropriate displays of arts, crafts, and other forms of decoration and space design.
- ◆ Makes use of facilities throughout the community to extend the library's mission beyond the walls of the library.
- ◆ Sponsors ongoing activities and events that observe cultural traditions and provide opportunities to display and exchange knowledge of these traditions.
- ◆ Involves local cultural representatives in deliberations and decision making for policies and programs.



Students in the library during lunch hour. Monument Valley High School & Community Library, San Juan School District, Monument Valley, Utah.

Collections

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Provides assistance and leadership in teaching users how to evaluate material about cultural groups represented in its collections and programs.
- ◆ Purchases and maintains collections that are sensitive to and accurately reflect Native cultures.
- ◆ Seeks sources of materials that may be outside the mainstream publishing and reviewing journals.
- ◆ Seeks local community input and suggestions for purchase.
- ◆ Incorporates unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities into its collection.
- ◆ Encourages the development and preservation of materials that document and transmit local cultural knowledge.
- ◆ Makes appropriate use of diverse formats and technologies to gather and make available traditional cultural knowledge.
- ◆ Develops policies for appropriate handling of culturally sensitive materials.
- ◆ Reviews its collections regularly to insure that existing materials are relevant and appropriate.
- ◆ Collects materials in the languages used in its community when they are available.

Services & Programs

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Holds regular formal and informal events to foster and to celebrate local culture.
- ◆ Involves members from local cultural groups in the planning and presentation of library programs.
- ◆ Bases its programming and services on the expressed needs of the community.
- ◆ Recognizes and communicates the cultural heritage of the local area through its programming.
- ◆ Reaches out and adapts its delivery of services to meet local needs.



School can get stressful . . . sometimes students need a place to unwind and relax! San Juan High School.

This self-assessment is based on the publication *Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Alaska Public Libraries* developed by the Alaska Library Association and sponsored by the Alaska State Library. Used here with permission from the Alaska State Library.