

Navigating the Opinions of the Colonizers on What it Means to Be You: A Pedagogical Framework for Responding to Identity Conflicts

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ABSTRACT

Information represents the building blocks for identity construction, yet it is also full of contradictions and conflict. This is particularly true in the workplace, where workers must navigate conflicting information about their own standpoint on who they are, would ideally be, or should be (ideal standpoint); and the standpoint of management, customers, and colleagues (ought standpoint). Success in the profession requires a suite of tools and strategies for navigating these identity conflicts. This is particularly true for students with non-normative identities, for whom conflicts are increasingly likely and damaging.

Building on the work of Freeburg & Klein (2025), this poster presents a framework for supporting student development of these tools and strategies that considers identity construction as a form of conflict management. Conflict management strategies have existed for some time and are backed by empirical research. These strategies differ to the extent that they prioritize a person's own goals (ideal standpoint) or the goals of someone else (ought standpoint). Dominating prioritizes a person's ideal standpoint; obliging prioritizes the ought standpoints of others; integrating attempts to merge ideal and ought standards; compromising attempts to find a middle ground; and abandoning attempts to sidestep the conflict altogether.

The legacy of colonization is an attempt to subsume ideal identity standpoints into the ought standpoints of the colonizers. By adapting existing strategies to manage conflicts between information about who a student believes themselves to be and who others want them to be, students will be in a better position to successfully navigate identity issues and craft spaces for themselves in the profession.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Pedagogy; Information use; Critical librarianship

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Information practices; Identity work; Conflict

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