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Diversity Symposium on Cultural Intelligence: Are you Culturally Competent?

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Review of the Diversity Symposium on Cultural Intelligence: Are You Culturally Competent?

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Have you ever wondered if you are culturally competent and how important it is in the workplace? Have you ever considered if librarians and your stakeholders are culturally competent and how it impacts you? The 2012 AALL Diversity Symposium this past July addressed just that – with insights from presenter and AALL Diversity Committee member, Michele Lucero.

The room was packed with law and corporate librarians from every type of institution. Librarians attended to learn how to increase their knowledge and understanding of cultural intelligence and its importance in the workplace. As a cultural intelligence certified facilitator, I have studied this topic deeply within my dissertation research and feel very strongly about sharing it with our organization members. A majority of research indicates the importance of emotional intelligence. It has only been within the last nine years that cultural intelligence has officially been defined. There is sparse research in the legal professional focusing on this topic. Librarians, clients, business partners and resources are becoming more global. It is critical that librarians recognize the challenges of working with culturally diverse natures.

The Symposium began with an open question to the audience to consider in framing the concept of cultural intelligence, What's the difference between individuals and businesses that succeed in a multicultural, globalized economy and those that fail? The answer; cultural intelligence. As globalization lunges forward and our world becomes more competitive, there is a need to understand cultural intelligence. Indicators show that these facts along with the workforce becoming more diverse will only continue to increase. Consider your current clients, students, faculty, clerks and attorneys.

According to Ang and Van Dyne, cultural intelligence is the “capability to function effectively across various cultural contexts (domestic, international, ethnic, organizational, generational, etc.).” This is a new way of approaching the topic of cultural sensitivity that has been around for years. It was developed to provide a theoretical framework tying several models together. Everyone has a cultural intelligence quotient (CQ) and it is a capability anyone can develop. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) provides a valid and reliable measure of a person's ability to function effectively in culturally diverse situations. There are several defining points, which separate cultural intelligence from other approaches. Cultural intelligence integrates psychological and sociological issues, can be integrated with other forms of intelligence, applies to any type of cultural context