

ALA Annual Conference (virtual)

ACRL programs at the ALA Annual Conference

ALA's Annual Conference & Exhibition-Virtual was held June 23–29, 2021. More than 9,400 librarians, library support staff, exhibitors, writers, educators, publishers, and special guests attended the virtual conference. *Ed. note:* Thanks to the ACRL members who summarized programs to make this report possible.

Professional connections during the pandemic

This program, sponsored by the Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies Interest Group, had three presentations. In the first presentation, “Professional Connections During the Pandemic: Stay Connected, Informed, and Engaged Through Professional Associations,” Binh Le (The Pennsylvania State University) discussed the importance of the professional area studies associations in keeping the area studies librarians connected, informed, and engaged during the pandemic. In particular, Le discussed how these organizations have successfully exploited digital communication tools such as email, listservs, Zoom, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others, to continue to conduct their professional activities virtually (e.g., committee meetings, webinars, workshops, conferences, exhibits) and keep everyone informed, connected, and engaged.

In the second presentation, “Professional Connections During the Pandemic: A New Model of Library Services,” Deepa Banerjee (University of Washington) talked about a major shift in library services and programs during the pandemic with increased reliance on digital technology and

an emergent new model of library services that would cater to new faculty and student needs, foster compassion, collaboration, innovation, and creativity. This new model would provide equitable access to collections and encourage local, national, and international partnerships and shared infrastructure.

In the third presentation, “Musings on Building Professional Networks—Sharing Connecting, and Learning,” Triveni Kuchi (Rutgers University) talked about how she got interested in keeping in touch with her international contacts via social media during COVID-19. In exploring this personal process of change due to the pandemic, she uses a conceptual viewpoint informed by learning, experiential, and social network theories to understand why we connect. Kuchi also discussed research that explained the attitude and culture of minorities and people of color towards networking. She suggested that we get started by focusing on three key elements—curiosity, authenticity, and follow-through/follow-up—to build strong professional networks.

Key points

1. Heavy reliance on digital technology, including social media, to maintain professional networks and connections.
2. A major shift in library services during the pandemic that would foster compassion, understanding, collaboration, creativity, and innovation.
3. More opportunity for national and international partnership and shared infrastructure.—*Deepa Banerjee, University of Washington, dbaner@uw.edu*

Partnering to amplify underrepresented and unheard voices using digital scholarship

The Digital Scholarship Section, in collaboration with the ALA Social Responsibility Round Table, presented a panel featuring librarians who collaborate with researchers and local community organizations to develop digital scholarship projects spotlighting valuable contributions of marginalized voices. Moderated by Cal Murgu (Brock University), the session began with Portia Hopkins' (Rice University) discussion of "Project Pleasantville," a community-centered collection that highlights the stories of African American home ownership, grassroots activism, and preservation emerging from the Pleasantville community, a

post-World War II middle-class African American neighborhood in Houston. Hopkins works with three generations of Pleasantville community members to empower them with digital history tools and methodologies to tell their own stories.

Alex Gil (Columbia University) presented the "Frontline Nurses Project," a digital archive of oral histories that document the role of those frontline nurses and midwives who successfully led their communities through the Ebola crisis in West Africa. According to Gil, while these professionals have accrued the wisdom necessary to rise to health crisis challenges, they often are not consulted in the decision-making process during pandemic outbreaks. "Project Frontline" is a sustainable and replicable platform for communities to create and compare oral histories and a solution to existing local and global digital divides.

Both projects have multiple components, including oral histories, interactive timelines, and

historical essays. Presenters discussed the critical role librarians play in creating infrastructures and in facilitating digital social and educational encounters during today's critical times. Gil stated: "Besides publishers and journalists, librarians stand a good chance of being important players in the 21st century when it comes to mediated approaches [to activism]." Hopkins concluded the session with this optimistic assertion: "We have all of the tools. It's just a matter of empowering librarians,

empowering the communities, to think about how those tools can be employed to change their situation."—*Nashieli Marcano, Furman University, nashieli.marcano@furman.edu*

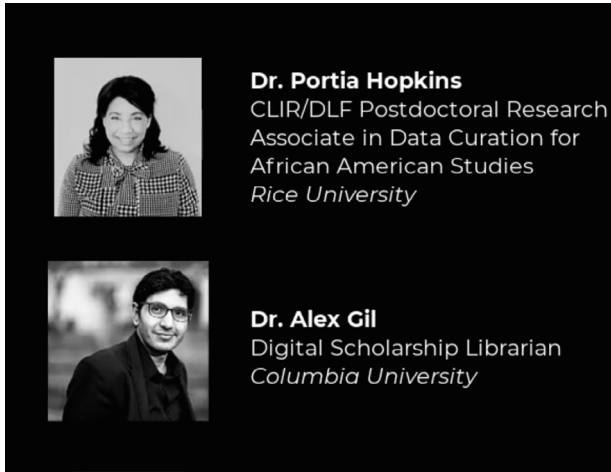
Online library instruction assessment

In the panel program "Online Library Instruc-

tion Assessment: Passing Fad or Curriculum Staple?" cosponsored by ACRL's Distance and Online Learning Section and College Libraries Section, three invited speakers presented on their experience assessing online library instruction and using assessment data for program advocacy.

John Burke (Miami University Regionals in Ohio) presented on a survey he distributed to more than 3,000 students over six semesters to assess his institution's LMS Embedded Librarian program. His 12-question survey revealed that half of students had never received college-level library instruction and that students struggled the most with searching for information. After their librarian experience, most students reported using the library's website and databases to find sources. Burke used these and other data points to market online instruction to faculty.

Cecelia L. Parks (University of Virginia) summarized her library's multipronged assessment



Panelists from the Digital Scholarship Section's presentation.

efforts for instruction, including improvements to existing data collection, pre- and post-session surveys using open-ended questions, and a project to evaluate asynchronous online learning objects. Parks shared her major lessons learned, including the importance of “facilitating, rather than dictating” assessment, taking advantage of assessment tools in online instruction platforms, and using data to improve and advocate for online instruction.

Jenna Stebbins (Naugatuck Valley Community College in Connecticut) rounded out the panel by sharing her experience converting an existing hybrid first-year experience curriculum to a completely virtual program. In the virtual environment, Stebbins established learning

outcomes and employed a pre-session exercise, discussion questions, and a six-question post-quiz for program assessment, noting that these virtual assessment methods will easily translate back to a hybrid model.

The panel concluded with a moderated discussion of advice for program attendees interested in assessing their own online instruction programs or using assessment to advocate for continued online programming.—*Ashley Hoffman, Kennesaw State University, ahoffm18@kennesaw.edu*

Diverse children’s literature in K-12 schools

The on-demand panel presentation, “Diverse Children’s Literature in K-12 Schools: Making Mirrors, Windows, and Glass Doors Visible,” sponsored by ACRL’s Education and Behavioral Sciences Section (EBSS) and the Educators of

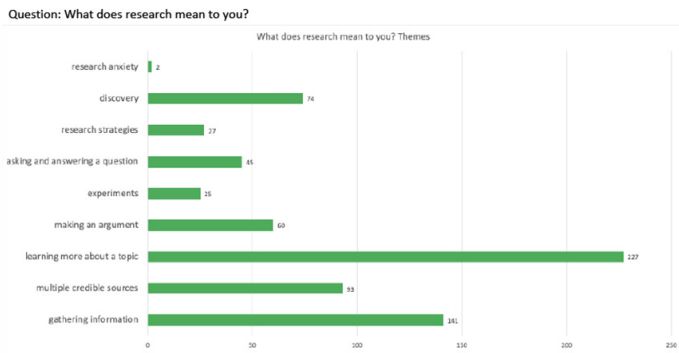
School Librarians Section of the American Association of School Librarians, was viewed more than 600 times during the 2021 ALA Annual Conference. Panelists included Elizabeth Burns, assistant professor of library and information studies; Karla Bradley, K-5 school librarian; Brittany Kester, education librarian; and Kimiko Pettis, a 6th-8th grade English language arts teacher. The session was moderated by past EBSS chair Ericka Raber.

Panelists presented their perspective on the question, “What are the pieces that go into getting diverse children’s literature into the hands of our

students and teachers?” Burns discussed teaching future school librarians to use selection principles to locate and evaluate diverse children’s books as well as the im-

portance of getting to know one’s unique user community. Bradley said she didn’t see herself in many of the books that were read to her as a child and consequently didn’t develop a love for reading until later in life—something she seeks to rectify daily for her students as a school librarian. Kester described showing pre-service teachers the strategies and tools they can use to locate diverse literature and how to collaborate with school and public librarians. Pettis explained how the Project LIT community on social media helped her locate diverse, engaging books that completely revived her classroom library.

Panelists also discussed making diverse books more discoverable with metadata audits, the value of community partnerships, the need for reaching beyond one’s personal biases, and the importance of visibility and sharing success stories with stakeholders.



PRE- AND POST-INSTRUCTION SESSION SURVEYS WITH OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
 Chart from analysis of Fall 2020 survey responses

Visual aid from Cecelia L. Parks’s presentation on online library instruction assessment.

“All patrons should be able to see themselves, others, and the world in our collections,” said Burns.

The recording of the presentation can be found at <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00011484/00001>.—*April Hines, University of Florida, aprhine@ufl.edu*

How we are marching

The ACRL Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee presented on the divergent and intersecting work across ACRL advancing EDI efforts, “How We are Marching: EDI Efforts Across ACRL.” Maisha Carey, EDI Committee vice-chair, moderated a discussion with seven ACRL organization leaders describing the challenges and highlights of EDI work.

The Mary Beth Lock, EDI Committee chair, described events held by the committee, the review of ACRL standards for inclusive language, and the implementation of the ACRL Board of Directors’ initiative providing 50 free memberships to ALA and ACRL for BIPOC library workers.

Amanda Folk, Value of Academic Libraries Committee chair, described the new ACRL Insider spotlight series concept that is making the equity and social justice (SJ) work of librarians visible and giving concrete examples of infusing practice with EDISJ principles and values.

Pamella Lach, Digital Scholarship Section (DSS) EDI Committee chair, discussed efforts to embed EDI frameworks into DSS, such as the development of community agreements, support for bystander training and anti-oppressive training, and the launch of an EDI Toolkit for digital scholarship (<https://dsseditoolkit.hcommons.org/>).

Bill Mickey, editorial director at Choice, described product-focused EDI initiatives, including the addition of a racial justice tag to the online reviews database and a new content channel, *Toward Inclusive Excellence*, on Choice360.org.

Aubrey Iglesias, Dr. E.J. Josey Spectrum Scholar Mentor Committee chair, shared their work to match 33 ALA Spectrum Scholars with mentors, the selection of scholarship recipients for the ACRL 2021 Conference, the creation of documentation supporting mentee and mentor pairs, and the expansion of the mentor pool to meet mentees’ needs.

Brian Flota, Literatures in English Section chair, shared the efforts of the section to develop an

anti-racist action plan, including the evaluation of documentation, leadership recruitment activities, and meeting practices for inclusive language, approaches, and perspectives; the inclusion of more EDI content in newsletters, blogs, and presentations; and increased outreach efforts focused on anti-racist practices.

Bonnie Fong, the Science and Technology Section’s (STS) EDI Task Force and Implementation Team co-chair, shared information about the development and implementation of a prioritized list of recommendations for actionable steps STS can take (<https://acrl.libguides.com/sts/edi/initiatives>).—*Mary Beth Lock, Wake Forest University, lockmb@wfu.edu*

Change as noun and verb

The presentation “Change as Noun and Verb: A Transformational Approach to Change Efforts that Don’t Suck” was led by Dani Brecher Cook (University of California-San Diego Library), Cinthya Ippoliti (Auraria Library), and Brianna Marshall (Northern Kentucky University Steely Library). Cook, Ippoliti, and Marshall are coauthors of the *Fostering Change* guide, which was published as an open resource with support from the ACRL New Roles and Changing Landscapes committee in October 2020. The guide is available to download at <http://bit.ly/ACRLFosteringChange>.

The presenters began by exploring empathy-based change processes, change and power dynamics, and understanding negative reactions to change. They shared suggestions for pulling together a successful change team, including prioritizing diverse team composition and members with varied experiences and expertise, establishing shared values and collaborative practices, and ensuring that the people affected by the change are represented. The presenters then segued to discussing strategies to plan for change, gauging the readiness of an organization for change, working with internal and external stakeholders, project management, and communicating about the change. To close the presentation, Cook, Ippoliti, and Marshall unpacked how change frameworks can serve as useful tools in a change process, and invited attendees to stay tuned for the opportunity to join a *Fostering Change* cohort taking place in

Experiential integration

“Experiential Integration: Partnering to Publish a Student Journal and an Open Textbook” was presented by Andy Spackman, Ellen Amantangelo, Marianna Richardson, Danielle Mattsson, Lilli Vehikite, and Ryan Pinkney from Brigham Young University (BYU) as a video-on-demand session.

The BYU Library is integrating information literacy and experiential learning through the Marriott School of Business’s M COM 320 course. Students attend library sessions and learn how to use library resources as part of the course. In addition to being a librarian, Andy Spackman is also an adjunct professor for M COM 320 and an author of the course’s open textbook (mcom320.net), helping to truly integrate library services with the curriculum. As Spackman says, “This experiential learning trend offers opportunities for the library to, in even more meaningful ways, introduce information literacy to students.”

Another key way the BYU Library is integrating library services and experiential learning is through hosting Marriott Student Review (<https://scholarsarchives.byu.edu/marriottstudentreview>) on ScholarsArchive, the university’s institutional repository. The journal’s repository page serves as an archive for journal issues and allows for access to download statistics and greater discoverability of articles through web searches.

The Marriott Student Review (MSR) began as part of BYU’s inspiring learning initiative to provide greater experiential learning opportunities for students. MSR also includes podcasts and blog articles that are stored in ScholarsArchive. Students have opportunities to work on several different MSR teams, providing for more personalized experiential learning and greater academic focus—editing, design, web, marketing, translation, and podcast. Although MSR is business-focused, it accepts articles from students at any university and from many different majors. The presentation includes testimonials from students who discuss their opportunities for experiential learning while working on the journal.—*Ellen Amantangelo, Brigham Young University, ellen_amantangelo@byu.edu*

Generating professional best practices to combat dis- and misinformation, resist burnout, and empower our communities

An overwhelming sense of isolation, frustration, and burnout during the pandemic led Kacy Lovelace, Sabrina Thomas, and Lindsey Harper to see if other librarians experienced similar emotions while fighting the infodemic. To find out, the authors created a survey to investigate librarians’ perceptions and their experiences of fighting misinformation and disinformation related to the virus. In the session, “Generating Professional Best Practices to Combat Dis- and Misinformation, Resist Burnout, and Empower Our Communities” the authors discussed their findings and possible routes to best practices in the future.

Sabrina Thomas (Marshall University) discussed the presenters personal experiences with COVID-19 mis- and disinformation. She also discussed the key terms infodemic and burnout.

Kacy Lovelace (Marshall University) and Lindsey Harper (Marshall University) discussed the creation of their survey and the four central themes that they investigated: social media usage to access news about COVID-19, engagement on social media with misinformation about COVID-19, perceived personal responsibility to refute information online, and burnout feelings associated with refuting COVID-related misinformation.

Lovelace and Harper then shared the presenters’ collected best practices for engaging social media. They found that survey respondents felt a sense of responsibility to refute COVID-19 misinformation online but were “careful about what specific posts that they would engage with.” Respondents were more likely to engage if a friend’s post begins with a “Hey, have you guys heard statement.” The presenters found that not engaging is often the best way to avoid feelings of burnout.

The presenters compiled the following best practices:

- consume news outlets independently from social media,
- avoiding reading the comments on news articles,
- share easy-to-understand information free of jargon,
- talk to others privately about misinformation they’ve posted,

- emphasize fact-checking over emotions, and disconnect from social media when feeling overwhelmed—*Sabrina Thomas, sabrina.thomas@marshall.edu, Kacy Lovelace, kacy.lovelace@marshall.edu, and Lindsey Harper, harper166@marshall.edu, all of Marshall University*

Library impact on student success

Adele Dobry, Holly Yu, Carlos Rodriguez, and Letty Terrones from California State University-Los Angeles (CSU-LA) shared the preliminary findings of a correlational study funded by the 2019-20 ALA Diversity Research Grant that assessed whether the use of library online resources, participation in information studies and material borrowing contributed to a better GPA and retention rate among first-generation, Pell-eligible, and underserved students at CSU-LA.

The presentation began with a brief overview of the history and development of academic library assessment and the increased focus on the impact of library use on student success. The CSU-LA correlational study mapped three metrics (circulation, electronic resource use, and participation in information literacy sessions) with campus student demographic and academic performance data for analysis. The analytical results were used to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in cumulative GPA and semester retention rates among the targeted student population (who used at least one of the above library services), compared to those students who did not use any of the services. Preliminary findings showed there was a positive relationship between library resource use and GPA. Students with higher GPAs had a higher use of library resources. The preliminary findings also showed a positive relationship between library resource use and student retention.

The importance of developing and strengthening strategic campus collaborations and participating in campus-wide student success initiatives was also discussed. Examples included the library's active participation in the planning and development of the Center for Academic Success, which will provide comprehensive and fully integrated peer-to-peer academic success

services and the library's inclusion in Navigate LA, the campus's online coordinated care network that provides holistic student academic support services. The presenters concluded by sharing examples of the library's participation in campus student programs and events that support student success and well-being.

The presentation recording is available at https://youtu.be/z_uC-k9gSOc.—*Carlos Rodriguez, carlos.rodriguez@calstatela.edu, Adele Dobry, adobry@calstatela.edu, Holly Yu, hyu3@calstatela.edu, Lettycia Terrones, lettycia.terrones@calstatela.edu, all of California State University-Los Angeles*

Inclusive online instruction

In the on-demand presentation “Online Instruction for All: Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Online Instruction,” panelists discussed methods for making online instruction more accessible for, and inclusive of, all learners. Moderated by Amanda Roth (University of California-San Diego), panelists discussed Universal Design for Learning (UDL), inclusive teaching practices, and combatting deficit mindset in online instruction.

UDL guidelines, according to Kimberly Shotick (Northern Illinois University), go beyond ADA accessibility standards to reach all learners. Shotick and Dominique Turnbow (University of California-San Diego) offered examples of the guidelines in practice—such as offering content in a variety of formats with tools for the learner to express their knowledge and monitor their progress—such as quizzes and reflection exercises. Shotick mentioned that online tools, such as Kaltura, may assist in the creation of designing media that reflects UDL guidelines.

Twanna Hodge (University of Florida) introduced implicit bias by recommending librarians identify their own hidden biases using tools, such as Harvard's Implicit Association Tests. Hodge described the act of inclusion as learning about the communities you teach and adjusting your content and approach to better meet their needs and include their experiences. Hodge explained “Equity does not equal equality.” To be equitable, according to Hodge, we must be aware of and respond to the various barriers our learners face.

Finally, Sam Harlow (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) described the deficit mindset and how to combat it using critical information literacy in online learning. Harlow described methods, such as being explicit about information privilege, learning about your students through formative assessment, and adjusting your session to best incorporate their experiences. Harlow gave the example of offering multiple points of entry to content and following UDL guidelines. The panelists' handout is available at <https://tinyurl.com/ala21inclusivehandout>. —*Kimberly Shotick, Northern Illinois University, kshotick@niu.edu*

Take up the challenge

Nearly 1,000 people attended “Take Up the Challenge: An Actionable and Accountable Racial Justice Program,” in which Jen Bonnet (librarian), Anila Karunakar (diversity officer), and Madelyn Woods (graduate student) discussed their collaboratively designed Racial Justice Challenge program at the University of Maine. The speakers noted that this weeklong, asynchronous program was accessible to anyone with an Internet connection and an email address, and was inspired by the racial reckoning of 2020.

In an attempt to facilitate a commitment to meaningful change regarding racist policies and practices, the Racial Justice Challenge included daily tasks that encouraged listening, learning, sharing ideas, and taking action. Woods shared that Day 1 of the challenge, “Beginning the Conversation,” focused on helping participants identify how they fit into racial justice work. Inspired by Layla Saad's book *Me and White Supremacy*, participants were asked to reflect on ways their worldview might be white-centered. Bonnet noted that Day 2 built on the introspection of Day 1 to consider what Ibram X. Kendi describes as how to be antiracist (versus “not racist”), and invited participants to identify ways they are or could be antiracist. According to Karunakar, Day 3 emphasized that there isn't one, single narrative that tells the full story of a person or their lived experience, and that participants were encouraged to contribute their own ideas of how to move beyond a single story. Bonnet took us through Day 4, which examined race in the media, and asked participants to reflect on the ways in which news stories, film, and television can

shape public perception. Woods stated that Day 5 was simple, but not easy, and was dedicated to designing a Personal Antiracism Action Plan by taking the week's learning and turning it into an enduring commitment.

The program remains accessible at <https://libguides.library.umaine.edu/racial-justice>.—*Jen Bonnet, jenbonnet@maine.edu, Anila Karunakar, anila.karunakar@maine.edu, and Madelyn Woods, madelyn.woods@maine.edu all of the University of Maine*

The power went out

More than 250 attendees watched Julia Kress' on-demand program, “The Power Went Out - Who You Gonna Call? Being Prepared for Library Emergencies and Communicating Quickly,” that discussed how to be prepared for emergencies. Since climate change is causing extreme weather, now is the time to make sure your institution has an up-to-date plan.

The emergency management cycle consists of four areas: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Most library plans, though, only address recovery and mitigation. The focus is on saving the collection. However, planning will also save the collection. It is important to be proactive, not reactive, so that damages, costs, and delays can be mitigated.

For emergency planning, libraries should consider the following areas: 1) the collections, which includes access to electronic collections; 2) having a technology disaster plan, which includes prevention and restoration measures; and 3) the building, which should include known problem areas. First, evaluate your library's risks, including location risks. Next evaluate how ready your library is for a disaster. Review ways to reduce your disaster risk by making sure that any renovations include disaster risks and climate trends. Develop a communication plan, including having a communication command chain listing three-to-five alternative people to make decisions in case the library director is unavailable.

A handout provided specifics about the communication plan, internal library communications, and external communications via social media regarding emergencies.

There are two places to be prepared—home and work. If library staff is busy dealing with issues at

home they will not be available to help at work. Encourage staff to have a personal emergency plan.

The presentation ended with a call to action to get a small group of people in your library together that are actively interested in climate change or emergency preparedness and to list the top three emergencies that might occur at your library. The group can then plan for these emergencies.

For more information go to library.rice.edu/climate-resilience-hub.—*Julia Kress, Fondren Library, Rice University, email: jekress@rice.edu*

Diversity in scholarly publishing

The Publications Coordinating Committee sponsored the program “Diversity in Scholarly Publishing: Creating a More Inclusive Future,” a panel discussion on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in academic publishing.

Charlotte Roh (University of San Francisco) reviewed incremental changes in the demographics of scholarly publishing. She noted that although there is greater BIPOC, LGBTQ, and disabled representation, they are mostly in low-wage, entry-level, or temporary positions. Roh noted recent missteps in LIS publications, such as Black authors rescinding an article from the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* due to racist practices. She concluded that libraries shape what is considered authoritative, and the profession must work to dismantle existing structures that cause harm.

Harrison Inefuku (Iowa State University) continued the conversation by acknowledging systemic racism and white supremacy in publishing that excludes marginalized voices. Scholars from dominant groups can use their privilege to support authors of color, but when they write about EDI they should ask questions about their positionality, appropriateness, and authenticity in these pursuits. He suggested strategies for making publishing spaces safer for scholars of color by creating systems that support authors. He concluded that the profession must interrogate our practices to combat racism and prioritize EDI scholarship.

Cassidy Sugimoto (Indiana University-Bloomington), spoke on gender, race, and ethnicity demographics with a focus on emerging scholars in the sciences. She noted disparities in the distribution of labor as women are less likely to receive research assistantship and more likely to serve

supporting roles. She provided examples of how knowledge is skewed by who is studied and noted that authors are more likely to publish studies on topics that reflect their lived experiences. She concluded with opportunities for librarians to support researchers from marginalized groups.—*Tessa Withorn, California State University-Dominguez Hills, email: twithorn@csudh.edu*

Conducting and supporting research synthesis

“Conducting and Supporting Research Synthesis: Librarian Roles, Competencies, and Collaborations,” moderated by Amanda Click (U.S. Naval Academy), featured six academic librarians with experience supporting and conducting research synthesis projects. The session was sponsored by the ACRL Systematic Reviews and Related Methods Interest Group and more than 300 attendees viewed the presentation.

Whitney Townsend (University of Michigan) kicked off the panel discussion with an overview of competency standards for academic librarians supporting research synthesis. The competencies include systematic review foundations, process management and communication, research methodology, comprehensive searching, data management, and reporting.

Zahra Premji (University of Calgary) reiterated the importance of systematic review training for academic librarians. She suggested that librarians attend formal courses or workshops, attend webinars, seek out disciplinary communities, and request mentorship from colleagues. Additionally, establishing values and policies is an important component of establishing a research synthesis program.

Marcus Spann (Louisiana State University) suggested that librarians interested in developing research synthesis services should clearly define all roles in the research synthesis process, create shared case files, establish boundaries, and clearly communicate with supervisors.

Amy Reigelman (University of Minnesota) shifted the panel conversation from supporting research synthesis to conducting research synthesis. She briefed attendees on the preliminary results from her team’s systematic review on citation rates of open access and subscription resources, which

showed a positive correlation between citation count and open access.

Claire Wiley (Belmont University) and Meggan Houlihan (Colorado State University) discussed their experiences applying research synthesis methods, including systematic and scoping reviews, to LIS and suggested that teamwork, access, research design, and organization were key to successful projects. They offered research synthesis methods as a low-cost and high-quality contribution to the LIS field.

Additional information regarding recommended resources, suggested readings, and learning opportunities can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/alaacr12021>.—*Meggan Houlihan, Colorado State University, email: meggan.houlihan@colostate.edu*, and *Claire Wiley, Belmont University, email: claire.wiley@belmont.edu*

A conversation about libraries, neutrality, and free speech

Emily Knox (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Renate Chancellor (Catholic University of America), Stacy Collins (Simmons University), and Adriene Lim (University of Maryland) spoke about their experiences as faculty, practicing librarians, and administrators with academic library neutrality in the context of free speech. A series of questions were posed to the panelists focusing on roles of libraries as neutral spaces, how libraries can support marginalized students, and how libraries can balance tensions between professional ethics and university administrative goals and policies. The session was moderated by Alyssa Denneler (Indiana University-Bloomington).

All of the panelists highlighted the idea that libraries, as a whole, are not neutral spaces. Due to the systems on which they are built, libraries were never neutral and inherently support the predominate voice. Additionally, being exposed to new information, ideas, and viewpoints can make some feel “unsafe” and often makes us vulnerable. Libraries are not equipped to provide safety from differing opinions, nor should they be. The panelists noted that the libraries’ role is not to do no harm, as it is not possible given that each patron brings a unique set of viewpoints, identities, and experiences. Rather than striving

for neutrality, libraries should aim to ensure their collections, services, and programming reflect the communities they are serving. At the same time, they should proactively examine the embedded systems, structures, and policies that are implicit in supporting one-sided viewpoints. Changing these to be more inclusive creates a support structure for marginalized students. Policies, in particular, should be reviewed collaboratively on a regular basis. It is often policies that can ensure diversity and equity in collections, services, and programming. These policies can also protect the library against individuals, such as donors, with specific agendas (political, social, etc.).

The program was cosponsored by the University Libraries Section; Anthropology and Sociology Section; and the Politics, Policy and International Relations Section. Watch the full panel discussion at <https://www.acrl.ala.org/UlS/confronting-the-myth-of-neutrality-academic-libraries-advocacy-and-free-speech-video-replay/>.—*Jennifer Sharkey, Illinois State University, email: jsharke@ilstu.edu*

A critical conversation about assessment of student learning in academic libraries

ACRL’s Student Learning & Information Literacy Committee and Value of Academic Libraries Committee cosponsored the panel discussion “A Critical Conversation About Assessment of Student Learning in Academic Libraries.” The panelists were Veronica Arellano-Douglas (University of Houston Libraries), Nicole Branch (Santa Clara University), and Kyle Jones (Indiana University-Indianapolis). The program was moderated by the current SLILC and VAL chairs and cochairs: Alex Hodges and Meg Meiman, and Amanda Folk and Rebecca Croxton, respectively.

Moderators posed a variety of questions to the three panelists, ranging from the question of practically incorporating a critical perspective into assessment efforts to examining how the assessment of learning might reinforce stereotypes or harm marginalized student populations. Panelists spoke of ways that predictive data from learning analytics can reinforce stereotypes, and how learning outcomes can reveal power structures inherent to assessment processes.

A theme that ran through the discussion was

framing assessment from a student perspective or an asset-based approach and the shifts required to center students and their strengths and assets rather than perceived deficits. The role that assessment can potentially play in current diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts was also discussed, and it was noted that the current atmosphere is ripe for change in higher education for critical assessment, in large part due to a focus on DEI and antiracist approaches.

The panel closed with a discussion of the term value and the movement for libraries to prove or demonstrate value in a neoliberal return-on-investment paradigm. The panelists proposed that value be re-centered on students and could potentially be thought of as what teachers and learners value together in the classroom and measured through thoughtful, critical assessment.

A resource list for further reading can be found on the ACRL Student Learning and Information Literacy's guide, under Readings and Publications.— *Sara D. Miller, Michigan State University, smiller@lib.msu.edu*

Transforming our libraries for everyone

The Women and Gender Studies Section presented the panel “Transforming our Libraries for Everyone: Trials, Tribulations, and Successes,” which highlighted efforts to make libraries more equitable and inclusive. Kate Boylan (Wheaton College) described an effort to facilitate institutional reckoning by revising their archive's public website about Wheaton College's history. The website was updated to reflect the realities of Wheaton's history, including land-grabbing, slavery, and segregation, as well as student activist work. jaime ding (Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo)



Clockwise from top left: Karla Strand, Kate Boylan, jaime ding, and Porsche Schlapper.

shared the LibGuides Open Review Discussion project. Project participants used a rubric and toolkit to guide discussions about LibGuides and apply criticality to the resources represented, addressing questions such as, “How many scholars of Color are cited on our LibGuides?” This project resulted in multicampus discussions to embed these ideas of criticality and critical race theory into the everyday work of the library (<https://guides.lib.calpoly.edu/OpenLibGuideReview>).

Porsche Schlapper (Marquette University) used the local subject heading field in the library's catalog to make subject headings more inclusive and representative. For example, she added the local subject heading “Undocumented Residents” and moved the nonpreferred term illegal aliens to the MARC 658 field, which was unused by her library's catalog. Karla Strand (University of Wisconsin-Madison) created a “Confronting Whiteness in Libraries” study group for library staff.

The group did not go quite as planned, but helped the organizers learn the importance of having structure and clear goals for such groups. A valuable outcome from this effort was the creation of a “Disrupting Whiteness in Libraries and Librarianship” bibliography (<https://www.library.wisc.edu/gwslibrarian/bibliographies/disrupting-whiteness-in-libraries>).

Panelists discussed the challenges of changing oppressive systems and agreed that diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism work is continuous and never completed.— *Tara Baillargeon, Marquette University, email: tara.baillargeon@marquette.edu* ✍️