

School Library SIG: Evolving Practice and Elevating Libraries

Rene Burress^a, Xiaofeng Li^b, Maria Cahill^c, Jennifer Moore^d, Christie Kodama^e, Melissa P. Johnston^f, Lucy Santos Green^g, Kim Reichenbach Krutka^h, Katherine Kleinⁱ, Kelly M. Pryde^j

^aUniversity of Central Missouri, USA

^bPennsylvania Western University, USA

^cUniversity of Kentucky, USA

^dUniversity of South Carolina, USA

^eIndependent Consultant, USA

^fUniversity of West Georgia, USA

^gUniversity of Iowa, USA

^hOld Dominion University, USA

ⁱUniversity of South Carolina, USA

^jUniversity of Central Missouri, USA

burress@ucmo.edu, xli@pennwest.edu, maria.cahill@uky.edu, JM328@mailbox.sc.edu, ckodama152@gmail.com, mjohnsto@westga.edu, lucilia-green@uiowa.edu, kimkrutka@gmail.com, Katie72925@gmail.com, kpryde@ucmo.edu

ABSTRACT

This panel explores how school librarians are transforming their roles through evolving practices while elevating libraries' essential position in educational ecosystems. Burress and Li as co-conveners of the School Library SIG will facilitate the presentations and lead Q and A. Spanning evidence-based practice, information literacy in charter schools, diverse representation in collections, culturally responsive online learning, and professional development, these studies illuminate librarians' journey toward decolonizing pedagogies. School librarians prioritize student identity, challenge traditional power structures, center marginalized voices, and build professional agency through reflective practice. Together, these works demonstrate school librarianship's shift toward practices that honor diverse knowledge systems while asserting school libraries' indispensable role as catalysts for educational transformation and student learning.

Cahill, Moore, and Kodama will present “Not a problem, a challenge, something to work with”: School Librarians’ Difficulties Collecting, Analyzing, and Sharing Evidence of Practice which

discusses the idea that school librarians should be collecting, analyzing, and sharing evidence of practice both to inform decision making and to increase the visibility and value of school library programs. Prior studies suggest that school librarians struggle with these practices. To pinpoint school librarians' difficulties with evidence, our research team engaged in focus groups and individual interviews with secondary school librarians and educational administrators at the school, district, and state levels. Analyses of those interviews reveal four areas of challenge in this realm of evidence-based practice: resources, knowledge and skills, dispositions, and alignment with stakeholder values.

Pryde will present, "Preparing School Librarians: Reflection on Practical Experiences within Professional Learning Networks for Preservice Librarians". This presentation will discuss school librarian field experience. Preservice librarians require support and training to develop their own professional learning networks and engage in reflective practice for growth and improvement. By designing practicum and student teaching coursework and expectations that require regular reflective practice and engagement with a PLN, students learn about the benefits of these practices and also develop habits that continue in their careers. Preparing school library students to successfully manage their own professional growth and continued learning upholds the ideals of the AASL School Library Standards (2018) and ensures school librarians will have the necessary tools to successfully manage the multiple roles of school librarians.

Greene and Johnson will present, "Online Ready Year One: Culturally Competent and Impactful K-12 Online Learning". The present study is the second phase of a national grant funded research project that aims to thoroughly capture and assess the institutional structures, pedagogical practices, and learner needs found in the first cycle of iterative design, development, and testing of a professional development learning product targeting that knowledge gap. Findings address the ways school librarians define and actualize their role in culturally responsive K-12 virtual learning, and how these change through professional development.

Krutka will present "Looking into Mirrors and Windows: School Librarians' Perspectives on Diverse Representation in Book Collections". This study, based on a survey of 142 school librarians, centered Rudine Sims Bishop's concept of books as windows and mirrors and furthered a greater understanding of school librarians' practices. Findings revealed four themes: librarians prioritize students, recognize the power of books, curate messages thoughtfully, and strive for continuous improvement. Librarians' voices are essential for developing equitable library practices that affirm all student identities and experiences. School librarians are expected to develop collections reflecting diversity, yet the practices related to and significance concerning multicultural literature is understudied. Challenges related to this topic include bans and policies jeopardizing student access to literature.

Klein will present, “Information Literacy in Charter School Cultures” a study of information literacy in US charter schools. In our current media and technology saturated culture, K-12 students learn a lot about navigating, evaluating, and using information at school. However, how charters with their unique cultures and approaches do this important work with their students is not understood. This study looked at how educators prepare students to be wise information consumers and creators in classrooms, schools, and across the charter sector. Institutional ethnography, an apt methodology and theory to study this aspect of charter schools, was used to learn how work around information literacy is organize.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

School libraries; Students; Online learning; Education; Information literacy.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Practicums; Evidence-based practice; Online learning.

Copyright 2025 by the authors. Published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2025.2026>