

Conceptions of Professional Expertise: Implications for Educating Future Librarians

Amy Vanscoy^a, Deborah Hicks^b, Heidi Julien^a

^aUniversity at Buffalo, USA

^bSan Jose State University, USA

vanscoy@buffalo.edu, deborah.hicks@sjsu.edu, heidijul@buffalo.edu

ABSTRACT

Librarianship has struggled with professional identity and power relations, both within the profession, such as between librarians who serve customers face-to-face and those who create and maintain library systems (Harris, 1992), and outside the profession (e.g., on academic campuses, where librarians have maintained a subservient relationship with disciplinary faculty) (Julien & Pecoskie, 2009). Librarianship remains a feminized profession, which generates value from stereotypically female attributes, such as caring and service, rather than from recognized professional and intellectual expertise. VanScoy (2013) found that librarians who identify as women downplay their professional expertise when discussing public service activities. However, subsequent research did not find a similar tendency among librarians of color (VanScoy & Bright, 2017) suggesting that intersectional identities may be at play. These findings merit further study. While a feminist lens has been used to examine librarianship (e.g., Harris, 1992; Lew & Yousefi, 2017), feminism and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) have not been applied to empirical work to a significant extent. We will present preliminary results of an ongoing study exploring librarians' experience of professional expertise, examined through an intersectional lens. The project includes interviews with 30 librarians representing multiple identities including gender, race, type of role (public-facing and non-public-facing roles), and managerial level. The study intends to amplify marginalized voices, to better understand personal conceptions of professional expertise. This has implications for education future librarians, as they are coached to develop a sense of expertise to support their career ambitions. Implications for educating librarians are the focus of the poster.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Education programs/schools; Curriculum; Pedagogy.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Professional expertise; Intersectionality; Professional issues.