

# Conceptions of Librarians' Expertise: Bridging the Gap Between Discourses and Practices

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## ABSTRACT

In the sociology of professions, expertise, or a specialized area of knowledge, is considered a core attribute (Abbott, 1988). Typically, when the expertise of a particular profession is examined, it is examined as it relates to the interests and actions of a profession (Brady, 2018). This means that the way professional expertise shapes and is shaped by axes of oppression and privilege, such as gender, race, and class, is overlooked. For librarianship, this is a particularly important lens through which to understand professional expertise given the predominance of cisgendered, able-bodied, white, middle-class women who make up the demographics of the field. Understanding the "feminized forms of expertise, as it is intersected by multiple, embodied forms of privilege and oppression" (Brady, 2018, p. 136), will provide LIS instructors and researchers with new insights into how we can bridge the gap when recruiting for librarians of color. In LIS, professional expertise has largely been examined at the discursive level (Hicks & Llyod, 2022; Hicks & VanScoy, 2019), although aspects of expertise have been examined in practitioners' understandings of their professional roles and relationships (e.g., Julien and Genuis, 2009; VanScoy, 2013). This poster will present findings from an ongoing study exploring librarians' experience of professional expertise, examined through an intersectional lens. Interviews with 30 librarians representing multiple identities including gender, race, type of role (public-facing and non-public-facing roles), and managerial level are being conducted to examine how professional expertise shapes and is shaped by intersecting identities.

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## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Education of Information Professionals; Curriculum; Pedagogy; Education programs/schools.

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

Professional expertise; Intersectionality; Professional issues.

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