
**Publishing Outlets for LIS Faculty Outside of Librarianship:
Current Journals Extending the Reach of Our Scholarly Conversation**

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Abstract

Through an analysis from the past twenty years of the top journals in non-library fields which are related to the educational work of school library media professionals, this study reports on major education publications' coverage of work with and in libraries. The study also offers recommendations of ways to fill gaps in knowledge sharing among librarians and traditional educators, through the identification of opportunities which exist in publications of mutual interest.

Keywords: literature searching, library databases, publications, journals, scholarship

Introduction

This paper aims to determine possible publication outlets for librarians who wish to have their work recognized outside of the profession of librarianship. Publishing by practitioners and researchers is especially important for educators in the school library media field, due to the potential to enhance librarians' collaborations with -- and respect among -- subject area specialists at both the K12 and university levels, to produce significant learning outcomes. Library science faculty often have eager collaborators in the education disciplines, thereby creating useful opportunities for cross-references between the two disciplines.

Library and information science professionals, through their professional standards and practice in the field, clearly state the importance of advocacy for the school library media program, and libraries in general. Similarly, a collaboration between school library media personnel and subject teachers of any grade during compulsory education is considered the gold standard of influence by the International Association of School Librarians, by the American Association of School Librarians, and their other worldwide counterparts. With a shared goal of information literacy, reading proficiency, and critical thinking efforts, collaborations between traditional classroom teachers and librarians positively impact student learning at all levels.

As a result, most educators can conclude that communicating with other like-minded professionals and scholars, in both formal and informal ways, helps librarians to promote cross-pollination of ideas among their non-librarian peers. Similarly, when the communication is about a particular library or information standards, goals, and philosophies which may align with subject area aims of the same nature, this dialogue helps to feed interactions among educators of different disciplines. In many cases, getting to know colleagues in related disciplines helps to encourage mutual understanding of shared work environments and

constituents. Ideally, the exchange of ideas between librarians and educators helps to advocate for the importance of information literacy for students of all ages.

Studies of journal impact, accessibility, and interest are readily available and an ongoing area of LIS research. Nisonger and Davis (2005), and Togia and Tsigillis (2006) evaluated library science journal rankings for LIS and education journals, respectively. Waters and Wilder (2016) investigated disciplinary content within LIS journals,

Information science may have had much success in engaging in the literature with computer science, business, nursing, and medicine. Librarianship could have similar success in infiltrating publications in formal schooling and education and other helping professions in the social sciences, for both contents (for example informatics, learning interventions, information-seeking behavior) and methodology (for example case studies, focus groups, improvement of quasi-experimental learning designs). In tandem, library scholarship could have a greater impact on the literature of education, especially due to similar shared values and infrastructure which create conditions for immediate understanding between these two cognate areas. If information professionals believe that collaboration is key to expert function in the field of librarianship, then it must also be paramount to knowledge production in our formal outlets of scholarship, both in our field (library-centric) and in the fields of our collaborators (non-library fields).

Formal communication in the form of written scholarship represents the highest level of communication in these efforts. This paper considers specifically the scholarship of libraries and information studies, which most often appears in its original form in journals read by scholars and graduate students, and which is occasionally abstracted or summarized in publications targeted to practitioner readers or the general public. This study will determine the levels of communication about libraries in the most common journal outlets of our most significant subject area partner, the field of education, as indexed in English in the Scopus database.

Method

Journals to investigate were chosen by their inclusion on subject-specific lists produced via the *Web of Science (Web of Knowledge)* online article database between August 2009 and August 2019. The current report is limited to the results of journal investigations in the field of education and the number of articles resulting from a search limited to publication dates from 2000 to 2009, and 2010 to 2019, respectively. The initial list of 109 educational research journals was taken from the Web of Science's Journal Citation Reports (JCR) category for 'Educational Research,' which was procured at the start of the investigation. Results were expected to appear most commonly in the ISI/Clarivate 'core collection,' which also appears as the default container in which *Web of Science* searches are performed (in other words, the general corpus was searched, as opposed to a specialized set of themed resources identified by the vendor).

For each title in the journal list, the researcher searched the main, general database using the advanced search options, entering *librar** as a truncated term (to capture the simple words *library*, *librarian*, etc.) in the 'topic' field. The journal-title was also entered into the 'publication name' field, and these were automatically connected by the database's default

AND Boolean operator. Naturally, since both new and older articles are added to the database periodically, these counts reflect a snapshot of the searches performed at the time, so items searched in the database at present may not be a perfect match retrieved from past searches. Early access dates are used by this database's indexing as primary publication dates as well. Nevertheless, the numbers present interesting patterns over twenty years.

The numbers of articles mentioning the library/libraries/librarian word stem were counted and recorded, and initially, the context noted where keywords were determined to either about libraries in the sense described and traditionally understood by those familiar with the role of libraries in the teaching and learning sense. However, content analysis beyond recording the tally was quickly abandoned. Definitional decisions about the nature of articles about libraries, or a particular article's use of the term *library*, were checked on a case-by-case basis for each instance of the word via skimming the PDF of the articles returned in the results lists. However, more often than not, the term was used in the computer science sense (in other words, a synonym for corpus or collection), rather than as related to the buildings, programs, and services of a functioning academic, school, or public library.

For example, many articles about building a digital library of subject-specific objects or sources were not considered as being 'about libraries' for this study, since they were specifically about the construction of a computer tool, software, or architecture that was in all but one case distinct from the description of its uses in the educational or applied sense. Unfortunately, most articles appearing in these educational research journals with the term *librar** were not using the term as the educators in the same way as those in the LIS field. Therefore, this analytical step was abandoned for all publications, and utilized only for the publications which most frequently cited instances of the term.

Results

Published literature which simply mentions the topic of either library or librarian (or their variants) is not plentiful among the most important educational research journals. Even fewer of these titles mention substantive uses of the term related to the services, collections, or spaces of libraries as we in LIS usually consider them. Surprisingly, 30 journals do not have articles that mention the topic of the library at all over the past twenty years of published articles, and another 21 of these titles do not have any articles which have the term *librar** as a topic. By these counts, one-third to one-half of the educational research publications in the large library research database *Web of Science* does not mention libraries. A full tally of article counts appears in the Appendix below.

Of course, librarians' first instincts will be to question the category of 'topic' in the database drop-down menu, especially since it is unclear if all journals feed this category to the database vendor automatically, or if cataloging of content is done by a qualified human. These and other limitations naturally affect the interpretation of these results. However, this method can be easily replicated with different journals, in different databases, and with search terms in different database fields to create composite and triangulate results and rankings. Nevertheless, the journals with the most frequent instances of an article with a library topic appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Most frequent instances of JCR-identified ‘Educational Research’ journals with counts of their articles using the term ‘*librar’ as a topic**

Journal Title (abbreviated)	Number of Articles from 2000-2009	Number of Articles from 2010-2019
J ADOLSC ADLT LIT	5	27
READ TEACH	3	18
BRIT J EDUC TECHN	9	9
INT J SCI EDUC	1	9
PHI DELTA KAPPAN	3	8
TEACH COLL REC	4	7
COMPUT EDUC	2	5
EDUC TECHNOL SOC	4	4
STUD HIGH EDUC	1	4
J GEOGR HIGH EDUC	0	4
J LEGAL EDUC	4	3
EDUC REV	3	3
J EDUC COMPUT RES	2	3
J TEACH EDUC	1	3
TEACH SOCIOL	1	3
J ECON EDUC	0	3
QUEST	0	3
INTERACT LRN ENV	5	2
READ RES QUART	5	2
EDUC LEADERSHIP	3	2
HEALTH EDUC RES	3	2
AUST J EDUC	2	2
J COMPUT AST LEAR	2	2
TEACH PSYCHOL	2	2

Interestingly, many journals have published more articles that mention the library as a topic in the most recent decade than in the previous decade (and this is how the publications in Table 1 were ordered). Initially, as mentioned earlier, the appearance of the term *librar** as a topic may not have yielded substantive results any more than a straight keyword query, yet it is an interesting option to review since the term may not appear in an article title or abstract either, depending on the content described.

The researcher browsed the PDFs of the first 50 articles in the earliest period items in Table 1 above, using the Adobe PDF ‘find’ feature to locate uses of the term *librar** in the textual content of the articles. Only 13 of the 50 could be described as library-related studies, such as research into undergraduate library use or attitudes, or studies of library-related content, such

as information seeking by a particular user group or database knowledge and use by patrons. Substantive library content was therefore contained in only 26% of these first 50 articles, which was deemed too small a percentage to warrant continuing examination of the full text of individual articles. Another 29 articles (or 27%) from the whole list in the Appendix, from the same time frame, contained merely a tangentially meaningful use of the term library, such as indicating the location of a study's subjects when queried or use of the term as part of a contextual statement about the campus or a side reference to libraries as a source of help available generally to the subjects studied.

Unfortunately, most of the articles containing the search term *librar** in the topic field did not use the content or context in any substantive way, and may not have pointed to articles about libraries of the type of interest in this study. Often, they were casual mentions in an introduction or conclusion. Of the original 50 articles as above which contained the search term, 14 more of these (another 13%) used the term in a non-meaningful way concerning libraries, such as in a bibliographic citation or the workplace of an author. It is unclear why these types of articles were returned when searching the library term in the 'topic' field, and this may have contributed to wasted time during the analysis phase.

Discussion

Technical limitations of library databases which aggregate journals from multiple vendors are mildly problematic in this method, since they may not be properly indexing all of the terms of a first-level bibliographic entry, nor utilizing available full-text fields from different database vendors. Unfortunately, many vendors no longer use professional catalogers but rely on automated algorithms of non-librarians to determine the topics and subjects for article query fields. Future studies in other electronic sources containing the same types of articles would assist in verifying the accuracy of results from one type of search. To later mitigate this limitation, a cross-vendor analysis of search results to verify the accuracy of the journal article counts could be conducted to determine the reliability of the method and exact counts of the instances.

Needless to say, if the *librar** search stem has not appeared in great quantities yet, the subsequent counts may not significantly differ even with these adjustments. It appears that librarianship content has not appeared in educational research journals in any meaningful way in the past twenty years, save a few exceptions as noted at the top of Table 1. Yet these results also clarify which journals have been publishing articles related to libraries, information literacy, research learning, and other topics – specifically which of them have been interested in librarianship content in recent years, and more than ever.

Concerning the articles discovered through this process, studies by university professors are similarly useful to investigators of K12 information phenomena, and potentially vice-versa. The substantive journal articles which did appear show librarians collaborating with subject matter classroom teachers at all levels, and discuss student learning as a result. Sometimes, these articles appear in disciplinary journals about law, or nursing, or even psychology. Educators (both LIS and non-LIS) may very consider the conclusions from one of the studies above, in which interviews of university lecturers in the UK, in a variety of subject areas, indicated changes that electronic information brought to their work in the classroom:

“The electronic academic library perspective did not suggest the need for radical change to teaching and learning practices. Reading lists were extended to incorporate new electronic information resources so that students mainly accessed specific resources identified for them. Lecturers did not expect students to be using resources of a different nature to those held by the academic library, nor to be using materials with which the lecturers themselves were unfamiliar” (McDowell, 2002).

In this sense, LIS faculty are reminded that all educators and many students are using library resources, even if not explicitly. Teachers may have read journal articles of these types during their teacher preparation phase, and students may have been given materials from publications to read by their professors, who located the items in a library. Direct or indirect library use – of the intellectual resources, and not only the physical spaces – are surely a place of common ground for all in education. Thus, advocacy and communication opportunities are plentiful when our librarianship norms become part of educational research publications as starting points for educators everywhere.

Librarians of many types could discuss the substantive article contents further through formal study and publication and could replicate this study or others like it, among instructors, researchers, or even their students. Much in the way that McDowell (2002) found that the teachers expected the librarians to impart many of the ICT skills students would need for their courses, LIS educators can impart their particular brand of ICT skills to the teachers via their literature. These types of findings and the perceptions surrounding them are easy prompts for discussion and collaborative study. Mentions of library resources and instructional practices such as these are beneficial to an understanding of our field of librarianship by other types of educators and scholars.

Knowledge gained from library content within educational research is thus not unrelated to, but instead clearly useful to K12 scholars and practitioners and the librarians who serve them. For example, the findings that “Students who had more prior experience with the Internet had significantly higher positive perceptions toward using the digital library” (Koohang, 2004), or that “Males [undergraduate students] had significantly higher positive perceptions toward using the digital library” (Koohang, 2004), may certainly influence our colleagues in the importance of adding our perspective to their literature. Quoting these studies to editors and editorial boards of the target publications will also help to ensure that all know our goals for student achievement are essentially the same.

Similarly, improving understanding of these aspects of library use may inform our own discipline’s practice of information literacy at various instructional levels. Replication of studies that produced meaningful outcomes is certainly an important task that would contribute to our body of literature, could increase the stability of our claims about effective library instruction, and could create immediate connections with the journals where this work first appeared. Knowing where to publish may have been identified here in the present study, but many other journals are also hospitable to including library content as it relates to student learning and identification of strategies that increase critical thinking.

And in another example of intentional cross-pollination of library content within educational publications, the study uncovered an article by Joyce Valenza (2005) on digital libraries for *Educational Leadership*. This is the type of article that can populate the education scholarship

with discussions of libraries and their places in other professions and subject areas. Perhaps using the right “buzz words” early and often is one way to capture the attention of those in the education discipline. In the same journal in 2004, though, a piece entitled “Save the Libraries” gives off the wrong message! Our LIS strategy here must be well-planned and clearly articulated to all. Our national and multinational professional organizations can help with messaging and alignment of our missions with our colleagues in Colleges of Education who prepare new teachers or study accomplished ones.

Conclusion

While the need for field-specific publication is likely necessary for promotion and tenure, senior professors and veteran teachers may help to cross these disciplines more easily. Perceptions of some academics about interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary work may create barriers (perhaps unintentional) to publication in top journals of other fields. However, cross-disciplinary publishing need not be the only publishing a faculty performs during a given year, within a promotion cycle, or throughout a career. If each of us as library professionals periodically submitted good work to a top content area journal, in addition to writing solely for our library peers, our problem of scholarly visibility would diminish exponentially with relatively little burden on each scholar.

Recommendations

This study aimed to help library scholars and practitioners identify non-library publication outlets that might help to raise the profile of the library and information science in near-peer fields. By adding the voice of libraries to the dominant discourse among subject fields which are often partners to ours, librarian scholars may help to improve advocacy efforts, mutual understanding, and communicative patterns among educators with similar goals. The method in this study is easily replicable and transferrable to other topics, databases, and search fields. Colleagues are encouraged to improve upon these attempts to find out which journals are most hospitable to library content now and in the future.

Replication of this method with only the top-tier and high-impact journal titles may also be a useful alternative, and perhaps a first-level or first-generation citation analysis may be a future study protocol. Citation chaining starting with some of the identified articles searched once more in a different database like Scopus, has revealed interesting aspects of article impact which may be useful to librarians. For example, in the *Brit J Educ Technol*, one study about the use of ICT by primary and secondary school teachers in Scotland (Williams, et. al., 2000), was cited 23 times over the first decade, and 90 times over the past 20 years, according to *Web of Science*. In the Scopus library database, it was cited 106 times in total. And in Google Scholar, this article was cited 377 times. Limits on our access to indexing tools, and vendors’ acquisition of meta-data and content holdings, influence all of these types of searches. Yet this does not make our investigations less valuable even if they cannot be comprehensive.

As a check on these citation connections for the additional meaningful impact of libraries in education journals, the researcher performed a first and then second generation citation search of another highly cited article. This process would help to verify if connections from education articles produced from the original *librar** search were indeed helping to connect the two fields

within their literature. Using SSCI's citation map, the researcher found 55 articles in two generations of citations based on the previously mentioned article by McDowell (2002) about university lecturer's perceptions of ICT.

Specifically, 21 of these resulting articles (almost half) were about meaningful content and study of library work. However, not all of these citation links were from the original education journal list in this study; computer publications and library journals appear as well, thus reinforcing a circle of self-impact. It appears that library content is *two* citation generations away from even *one* of the mentions in an education journal, and even then not in sufficient quantities to infiltrate library content in other subjects' journals in any volume. More work can be done in this area to not only determine which journal outlets would be most hospitable to LIS content but also which publications among those would have the highest likelihood for future citation impact.

In conclusion, several actions may assist us in sharing research information about libraries and their patrons among scholarly conversations in the fields which we serve. School librarians, public librarians, and university librarians can provide subject-area faculty with ideas for studies that involve libraries, including some interesting articles that might spark their interest in topic or methodology. Library professionals can offer assistance to faculty and other researchers in conducting these studies. If for some reason a librarian felt uncomfortable or inferior in designing or doing the empirical research, they could easily assist with the literature review, statement of the problem, and discussions of impact. This is how librarians became co-authors of many important review articles and seminal works in other fields.

Partnerships will only cement our value and worth in the minds of those scholars and of those who read the resulting publication. When partnerships are slow-moving or not yet attainable, librarians can seek to have their work – research studies, position papers, reviews of the literature, etc. – published in near-peer journals in many related content areas. Since many librarians were once subject-area classroom teachers of younger students, they can connect with educators of many types of students. Since many public librarians hold bachelor's degrees in a variety of subject areas besides their M.L.S., they can encourage interdisciplinary perspectives among their patrons. And since many university librarians work with faculty researchers and master lecturers in a variety of subject areas, ready-made partnerships around shared experiences can be pursued. Our LIS connections to cognate fields should already contain enough shared experience to start the conversations.

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APPENDIX: Original list of 109 JCR-identified ‘Educational Research’ journals and counts of their articles using the term ‘*librar**’ as a topic

Journal Title (abbreviated)	Number of Articles from 2000-2009	Number of Articles from 2010-2019
ACAD PSYCHIATR	1	2
ACADEME	1	0
ADULT EDUC Q	2	0
ADV HLTH SCI EDUC	0	2
AIDS EDUC PREV	1	0
ALBERT J EDUC RES	1	0
AM EDUC RES J	1	1
AM J EDUC	0	0
ANTHROPOL EDUC Q	0	0
APPL LINGUIST	1	0
APPL MEAS EDUC	0	0
AUST EDUC RES	1	0
AUST J EDUC	2	2
BRIT EDUC RES J	0	0
BRIT J EDUC STUD	1	0

BRIT J EDUC TECHN	9	9
BRIT J SOCIOL EDUC	0	0
CAN MOD LANG REV	0	1
CHINESE EDUC SOC	0	0
COMMUN EDUC	0	1
COMP EDUC	0	0
COMP EDUC REV	0	0
COMPUT EDUC	2	5
CURRICULUM INQ	0	1
EARLY CHILD RES Q	1	1
ECON EDUC REV	1	0
EDUC ADMIN Q	0	0
EDUC EVAL POLI AN	0	0
EDUC GERONTOL	3	1
EDUC LEADERSHIP	3	2
EDUC POLICY	0	0
EDUC RES (UK)	1	1
EDUC REV	3	3
EDUC STUD	1	1
EDUC TECHNOL SOC	4	4
EDUC URBAN SOC	1	1
ELEM SCHOOL J	1	2
ETR&D	0	0
FOREIGN LANG ANN	0	1
GENDER EDUC	0	0
HARVARD EDU REV	1	0
HEALTH EDUC RES	3	2
HIGH EDUC	1	2
HIST EDUC QUART	1	1
INNOV EDU TCH INT	0	0
INSTR SCI	1	1
INT J ART DES EDUC	2	1
INT J EDUC DEV	1	2
INT J SCI EDUC	1	9
INTERACT LRN ENV	5	2
J ADOLSC ADLT LIT	5	27
J AM COLL HEALTH	2	1
J COLL STD DEV	0	0
J COMPUT AST LEAR	2	2
J CURRIC STUD	1	0
J ECON EDUC	0	3

J EDUC BEHAV STAT	0	2
J EDUC COMPUT RES	2	3
J EDUC POLICY	0	2
J EDUC RES	1	1
J EXP EDUC	0	1
J GEOGR HIGH EDUC	0	4
J HIGH EDUC	0	1
J LEARN SCI	1	1
J LEGAL EDUC	4	3
J LIT RES	3	0
J MORAL EDUC	0	0
J PHILOS EDUC	1	0
J RES MATH EDUC	0	0
J RES READ	1	0
J RES SCI TEACH	0	1
J SCHOOL HEALTH	1	1
J SOC WORK EDUC	0	0
J TEACH EDUC	1	3
J TEACH PHYS EDUC	0	0
LANG LEARN	0	0
LANG LEARN TECHN	0	0
LEARN INSTR	0	0
MINERVA	1	0
NEW ZEAL J EDU ST	0	0
OXFORD REV EDUC	0	0
PERSPECT EDUC	0	0
PHI DELTA KAPPAN	3	8
QUEST	0	3
READ RES INSTRUCT	1	0
READ RES QUART	5	2
READ TEACH	3	18
READ WRIT	0	0
RES HIGH EDUC	1	0
RES SCI EDUC	2	0
RES TEACH ENGL	0	0
REV EDUC RES	2	0
REV HIGH EDUC	1	0
REV RES EDUC	0	0
RUSS EDUC SOC	0	0
SCH EFF SCH IMPRV	1	0
SCI EDUC	2	1

SCI STUD READ	0	0
SECOND LANG RES	0	1
SOCIOL EDUC	0	0
STUD HIGH EDUC	1	4
TEACH COLL REC	4	7
TEACH PSYCHOL	2	2
TEACH SOCIOL	1	3
TEACH TEACH EDUC	3	1
TESOL QUART	0	0
THEOR PRACT	0	2
URBAN EDUC	0	2
YOUNG CHILDREN	2	0

Author’s Brief Biography

Michelle Kowalsky is a librarian and professor at Rowan University who assists undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty in learning the art and science of research. She has been a teacher and librarian for over 20 years, also at the K-12 level, and is a National Board Certified Teacher of Library Media. She has worked in college libraries, school libraries, corporate libraries, and public libraries throughout her career, and has been contributing to the profession as an Education and LIS professor. Her interests focus on the intersections between libraries and technologies, and also between learning and technologies.



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