

CIS 668: Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy
**School of Library and Information Studies, College of Communication and Information
Sciences, University of Alabama**

Memo of Relevance: Article Critique and Review

Name of reviewer: Melissa Carrasco

Article's bibliographic information:

Mehra, B., Sikes, E. S., and Singh, V. (2019). Scenarios of Health Engagement Experiences and Health Justice in Rural Libraries. *International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* (Special Issue: Health Justice Part I. Edited by Beth St. Jean, Gagan Jindal, Yuting Liao, and Paul T. Jaeger), 3(3), 56-87.

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/article/view/32963/25305>

Keywords: Action research, case methodology, economic development, LIS education, rural public libraries, small businesses, Tennessee

Purpose of the article:

The purpose of this article is to document scenarios or narratives of health engagement experiences in rural libraries based on qualitative analysis of feedback collected from 15 rural librarians in the Southern and Central Appalachian region using semi structured interviews. To counter-point past unfair and marginalizing representations in its constructive asset recognition of the SCA rural librarians and provide positive examples of health related experiences. To also spotlight the invisible of SCA librarians' individual/ community empowerment as change seeking agents making an impact on the lives of their rural residents.

Theoretical frameworks:

Qualitative analysis of feedback collected from 15 rural librarians during semi-structured interviews. Research forms part of a larger planning grant entitled "Assessment of Rural Library Professionals' Role in Community Engagement in the Southern and Central Appalachian Region: Mobilization from Change Agents to Community Anchors"

Paradigms/approaches/methods/methodological frameworks:

Researchers created a semi-structured guide consisting of a series of open-ended questions to prompt participants to identify ways their rural library had collaborated, partnered, or engaged with external community stakeholders in the domain of health and others during the past five years.

Sample Interview Questions

- ▶ Describe up to three initiatives related to issues of health through which your library assisted or engaged with external community stakeholders during the past five years

- ▶ What were the key challenges in these initiatives?

- ▶ What were the key outcomes of these initiatives?

Strengths (significance) of the article:

The strength of this article is the way that they were able to achieve when it comes to information gathering from other libraries. They were able to gain lots of feedback and learn about programs that maybe no one knew existed when it comes to health in libraries. This information could be very useful for other libraries to have and to inspire them to start programs of their own.

Weaknesses (limitations) of the article:

A weakness of this article is that it only provided a glimpse of the programs that libraries are involved in. Fifteen libraries is great, however, it is not a huge number. We do not get a huge picture of what libraries are doing.

Important references in relation to student's areas of interest:

Grossman, S., Cannuscio, C.C., Feuerstein-Simon, R. *et al.* Public Librarian Perceptions of Assisting Immigrant Patrons: Results from a Multi-State Survey. *J Community Health* 48, 659–669 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-023-01204-w>

Linnan, L. A., Wildemuth, B. M., Gollop, C., Hull, P., Silbajoris, C., & Monnig, R. (2004). Public librarians as a resource for promoting health: results from the Health for everyone in libraries Project (HELP) librarian survey. *Health Promotion Practice*, 5(2), 182–190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839903258018>.

Ideas and relationship of article to student's areas of interest:

This article showed me what other libraries are doing as far as programming and really inspired me to think outside the box. My area of interest this semester is library offerings for immigrant populations. I can see myself using a similar research approach in my library to see what others are doing with this population in their communities.

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Article's bibliographic information:

Perryman, C. L., and Jeng, L. H. (2020). Changing Models of Library Education to Benefit Rural Communities. *Public Library Quarterly* 39(2), 102-114. Mehra, B., Sikes, E. S., and Singh, V. (2019)

Keywords:

Community informatics, library education, public libraries, rural libraries

Purpose of the article:

The purpose of this article was to examine the “Transforming Libraries into Community Anchors in Rural Texas” program (TLCART). They also explored how librarians can get out into their communities and work with community leaders and residents to facilitate needed and wanted change. They discussed previous successful programs at other institutions and how they affect change in their communities.

Theoretical frameworks:

The TLCART program is a 24 month program. Students enroll in two courses per semester, completely online and asynchronous. Six out of twelve courses are new and focus entirely on community informatics. Examples of classes are: Grant writing and Management, Community Based Project and Design. Courses culminate in a capstone project through an organization or community based interdisciplinary/ interprofessional project. The program also includes a Final Exam Portfolio and Mentorship.

Paradigms/approaches/methods/methodological frameworks:

The program chose to focus on individuals living or working in rural communities, prioritizing Hispanic individuals. Applicants were reviewed in terms of their ethnicity and race, residency in or access to a small or rural area, aptitude and interest in community informatics, technological proficiency, and demonstrated community engagement. Recruitment efforts targeted communities in the border regions, encompassed by TLA Districts 4, 6, and 10, or West Central Texas, South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley which have the most substantial Hispanic population. Applicants would apply to the TWU Graduate School, SLIS and to the TLCART program and must complete an in depth survey and admissions essay as well as open ended responses in their applications.

Strengths (significance) of the article:

The strengths of this article are the ways in which the program inspires librarians and library workers to go out into their communities and build relationships with community members and organizations. This program also helps support education, health and literacy achievements within their communities.

Weaknesses (limitations) of the article:

Although the program is great it is very niche. They're really aren't a lot of people that can take advantage of a program like this. A program like the one described in this article would only benefit a small number of people.

Important references in relation to student's areas of interest:

van der Linden, K., Bartlett, J., & Beheshti, J. (2014). New Immigrants' Perceptions and Awareness of Public Library Services / L'opinion des nouveaux immigrants et leur sensibilisation aux services des bibliothèques publiques. *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 38(2), 65-79. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ils.2014.0008>.

Rene, Jean Edwin, "Exploring the Information Experience of the Immigrant Toward Public Libraries in New York City" (2022). Theses and Dissertations. 2934. <https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/2934>

Ideas and relationship of article to student's areas of interest:

My area of interest this semester is library offerings for the immigrant population. I really related to this article because I am in a similar program and can relate well to the students and what they are trying to do in this program. I hope that I can be just as successful in my community as they were.