Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

The Best Article of 2023 in Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

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Editorial

The Best Article of 2023 in *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*

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The Editorial Advisors of *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP)* have selected "Teens' Vision of an Ideal Library Space: Insights from a Small Rural Public Library in the United States" as the best article published by the journal in 2023. This article was authored by Xiaofeng Li, YooJin Ha, and Simon Aristeguieta of the Department of Library and Information Science at Pennsylvania Western University, and it was published in the December 2023 issue (volume 18, issue 4).

This article represents the first year that *EBLIP* has recognized an outstanding contribution to the promotion of evidence based practice in the profession. To make the selection, the journal's Associate Editors nominated works published over the course of the year that were especially note-worthy, and a shortlist of three articles was compiled. The journal's Editorial Advisors, an international group of the journal's former editors and editors-in-chief, then read all three articles and selected their top choice.

In this article the authors studied the important but often overlooked setting of rural public libraries. They collected data from 28 13- and 14-year-olds in the form of drawings, written responses to questions, and interviews to learn about rural teenagers' preferences regarding public library design and services. In particular, the authors' use of drawings demonstrates the power of this under-utilized qualitative research method for eliciting rich data for exploration.

From an analysis of the data, the authors discovered four main themes. (1) The teens were interested in engaging library activities that were fun, social, and represented their interests in study, entertainment, and gaming. (2) The teens expressed preferences for particular library amenities like food services, comfortable furniture, TVs, and areas for games and crafts. (3) The teens wanted book collections that better represented their interests. (4) Finally, the teens wanted more modern and colorful library spatial designs.

The authors' findings have a number of implications for youth services librarians in public libraries, as well as other library and information practitioners who work regularly with teens. This research revealed that teens hold some negative perceptions of library spaces and services, and the authors recommend forming teen advisory councils and using low-cost assessment methods to better understand the interests and preferences of their teen populations. In addition, while the study took place in the United States, it has relevance for information professionals who work in rural areas from around the world and who must consider factors such as transportation in the provision of information services.

In their selection of this work as the best article of the year, *EBLIP's* Editorial Advisors noted that the study was creative, fresh, and visually appealing. They observed that it has wide application across a variety of library settings and users, and they hoped that it would inspire the use of more attention to the needs and interests of rural library users.

References

Li, X., Ha, Y., & Aristeguieta, S. (2023). Teens' vision of an ideal library space: Insights from a small rural public library in the United States. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, 18*(4), 52–67. https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30410