

Janice Winkler 0:01

Hi everyone and welcome to our presentation for the OLA super conference 2022: "Gathering research – why all librarians should care about systematic reviews". My name is Janice Winkler and I am your moderator for today. We have four panelists today, Mê-Linh Lê is from the University of Manitoba. Christine Neilson is also from the University of Manitoba. Zahra Premji is from the University of Victoria, and Janice Hermer, is from Arizona State University. So today, what we'll do is I'll begin with a few definitions to get everybody on the same page. And then we'll move into a brief presentation of research project summaries. So for each presenter, they'll spend about five minutes on their, on their research projects, and then we'll move into a panel discussion. So if you're watching this live, you can pose your questions in the chat throughout the presentation, and we will be there to answer them. We have this infographic here, and I'm just going to go through briefly through all the steps to give you a sense of kind of what a systematic review looks like. So you begin by determining a clear concise research question. And then we move into planning. So that's where we write a protocol. And then from there, searching for studies is the next step. And this is where librarian skills really shine. And, and then of the many search results, the team sifts and select studies. And next, they extract data from the studies and assess the quality of the studies. The data is then combined in a process called meta analysis. And then like any other research study, discussions, and conclusions kind of come out of that, and then the systematic review is disseminated. So that's kind of the process. Now I just want to also bring your attention to another term that you might hear a lot of today. And that's knowledge synthesis, or sometimes it's called KS. And so Knowledge Synthesis is sort of any research project in which the authors seek to synthesize existing research to answer a research question. So systematic reviews are one kind of KS product, other types of products might be things like scoping, reviews, realist reviews, there's many different types of KS products. So from here, we'll move into the research presentations. And first up, we have Christine Neilson, who will be presenting about a librarian survey.

Christine Neilson 2:36

Okay, thank you very much, Janice. Hi, everybody. Um, so yeah, Janice W, Mê-Linh and I conducted an online survey of science, humanities and social sciences librarians working at ARL libraries and CARL libraries. And that survey ran from the end of 2020, to the beginning of 2021. Now, we decided to do this project, because we were hearing anecdotally that librarians outside of health were being called on to provide support for SRS, and we thought it would be worthwhile to dig into the matter and see what we could find out. Now, as far as our own experience with SRS go, all three of us have contributed to knowledge synthesis projects conducted by folks within the health disciplines. And Janice W has also assisted researchers from outside of health with SRS. On a kind of related note, both Mê-Linh and I have delivered in

invited introductory sessions about knowledge synthesis, including SRS, to librarian colleagues that serve the non health disciplines. So we wanted to do two things with our project. First, as as you might imagine, we wanted to benchmark ARL and Carl librarian support for SRS outside of health. And secondly, we wanted to get a sense of these librarians comfort and competence with different aspects of the systematic review processes, as well as their perceptions of library administrators level of support for participation in systematic reviews. Now, the idea here being that what we learned could help inform training efforts for these folks in the future. So we're currently writing up the project and its results for publication. But we have a few quick takeaways for you.

So, for our survey, 42 out of 108 US based ARL institutions and 20 out of 31 CARL institutions are represented by our pool of respondents. The majority of respondents had been asked to participate in a SR in the past five years and about half indicated that the frequency of SR requests has increased in that time. Now, consultation was the most commonly reported type of support activity that they participated in, followed by activities like search development and search execution, which like Janice said, that's our time to shine. Now as far as training and support for these libraries goes, just over 80% of respondents took part in Learning activities related to SRS. And they participated in a variety of both formal and informal learning activities. But it turned out that independent learning through reading literature, reviewing material that's online, that turned out to be the most popular first choice for learning about SRS for our respondents. Most reported receiving some kind of support from their institution for taking on SR work, which was primarily funding for fees and travel related to training, and also time away from regular duties to participate in that training, which is interesting given that was not their first choice of learning activity. A small number reported that their existing workload and responsibilities will be adjusted to accommodate taking on SR work. But for the most part, this was not the case. And when we asked who these librarians would go to if they had questions related to supporting SRS, the majority of respondents indicated that they would approach library colleagues either from inside or outside their institution. But sadly, a small number said that there was nobody they could turn to for help. The degree of interest in supporting views did vary. But most respondents indicated that they were interested in providing SR support, regardless of whether an adjustment to their other workload to accommodate that work is a possibility. And finally, some participants noted that there are challenges around providing SR support, particularly around the sustainability of providing support in the long run, a lack of deep understanding about SRS among library patrons, and some challenges around the differences in the availability of standards and guidance on SR methods, depending on what the discipline or disciplinary area is. So that's kind of our project in the nutshell. And with that, I will turn it over to Janice.

Janice Hermer 6:49

Hi, there. I'm Janice Hermer with Arizona State University. So I'm starting off with research I'm doing with two colleagues here in Arizona, on who is publishing systematic reviews outside the health sciences. My co investigators, Maribeth Slebodnik and Kevin Pardon and I had a discussion at a conference once about, you know, the prevalence of systematic reviews outside Health Sciences, and how did we know who they were and what kind of support they were getting. So we decided eventually to look at the characteristics of non health science, systematic reviews, and to determine what disciplines specifically outside health sciences are publishing the most often. We did our research in Scopus, because at different institutions, we had access to different different databases. So EBSCO, or ProQuest, wouldn't really work as well for us. So we worked together using Scopus as our tool. And in our research, we found that once we once we took out the health sciences, we found that the number one field was social sciences. Now one of the weaknesses of Scopus was the way that they described the items inside. And so when we were breaking down by discipline, we had a harder time in some cases; Social Sciences was at the same level as business, but business is a social science. So it's not perfect, but social sciences is the largest group, and that included areas like education, political science, and social work. The second largest individual group was environment science. Business was third, computer science was fourth. And engineering was the fifth largest group that were conducting systematic reviews. And we went back, I don't think we put a year limit on how far back we went in systematic reviews. So the growth we did notice in a growth chart that the numbers are increasing year by year as well. One of our questions were what guidelines or standards were people using when they were writing their protocols. And the number one was Prisma, which most health sciences librarians are very familiar with. But that's a Health Sciences guideline and standard for sharing the information you find in your systematic review. The next most common was Tranfield, the third was Kitchenham, and that was encouraging because Tranfeild publishes in business and management, and Kitchenham was actually specifically software engineering, originally. Petticrew produced standards for social sciences in general. And Cochrane as a health sciences again, what we did find, though, that often, people were using standards or guidelines that actually were not applicable necessarily to their field and simply using them for lack of any other resource they had, or using them because they found that that was, what they what they were familiar with, or what would perhaps they were guided to. If, for example, they asked the Health Sciences Librarian for standards they might have mentioned Prisma and that's what they used.

Finally, we did find that librarian involvement was pretty abysmal. In non Health Sciences systematic reviews was only 4% of the sample we looked through that actually had any kind of mention of a librarian.

And most of those were actually systematic reviews on library practice. That being said, it's not necessarily all that much better in health sciences. A recent publication by I believe Salinger, but I could be wrong, it's in our list of publications, indicated that in dental science, she found that only 9% of systematic reviews actually had librarian involvement. So that's an area of growth. I think, for all of us, especially with all the research that shows the library involvement, improves systematic reviews. And our research, this and more findings will actually be available. We're through peer review and in our final revision before our article is published in ISTL: Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship. So hopefully that will be available fairly soon. Thank you very much. And I'm going to pass this on to Zahra.

Zahra Premji 10:59

Thank you, Janice. And I'm going to talk about systematic reviews in business specifically. So in my previous role, I was both a medical librarian and a business librarian, and librarian support or involvement in systematic review in health is established. But in business, I found that not to be the case. And so that led to my interest in looking at what librarian involvement in business systematic reviews was like. So it started off with an exploratory study, which I presented as a poster at OLA in 2020. And what I wanted to do was to examine the prevalence of librarian involvement by analyzing 100 recently published business systematic reviews. I searched for these systematic reviews using web of science. And I excluded those that had a health, psychology or tourism focus. Of the 100 studies, I extracted the number of authors on the publication a number of databases searched, and whether the publication mentioned the librarian at all. And what I found was that 97% of reviews did not mention a librarian in any way. 2% of reviews mentioned consulting a librarian in the Methods section, and one of the 100 reviews or 1% of reviews included a mention in the Methods section and also acknowledged the librarian for conducting the search. So the results that I found were similar to what Janice presented in terms of the level of involvement of librarians in systematic reviews in business. Of the 100, I took a random set of 20 and did further analysis on some of the aspects of searching and reporting. I looked at whether they reported keywords, whether they reported search fields, whether they included a flow diagram for their study selection, and whether they cited a reporting guideline, and I didn't assess the quality of the keywords. So I only looked at did they mention the keywords, and 19 of 20 did report keywords. More than 50% also reported the search fields, only two out of the 20 had a full complete flow diagram. And another seven had a partial flow diagram or some level of description, and only three of the 20 cited Prisma standard. So the recording could really be improved in business systematic reviews. But I was shocked at the level of or the lack of involvement of business librarians in systematic reviews and this led to the next research project which I'm presenting. This was done in collaboration with Ryan Splenda and Sarah

Young at Carnegie Mellon University. And we wanted to find out from business librarians, whether they were involved in systematic review support, what their familiarity was with the method, what kind of steps they are involved in what their prior training was, and what did they perceive as their barriers, benefits and challenges. We sent this out as a Qualtrics survey in April 2020. And the survey had 24 questions in total, and we received 71 eligible and complete responses. So our article has been accepted and is currently in press and should be in College and Research Libraries in March. And just to give you a teaser of some of the results 21 of the 71 respondents said they were currently involved in supporting systematic reviews or knowledge synthesis in business, which is much larger than what we saw acknowledged in existing publications. In terms of the steps that they're involved in some librarians were involved in the entire process, but majority are involved in choosing the information sources, designing the search and the question formulation piece. In terms of the roles they played in supporting so here we're talking about consultant or consulting versus co authoring. Three of the 21 respondents said they were a co author, which is wonderful, and only three of the respondents said that they consulted and were sometimes acknowledged. And so getting credit for the consultation that you provide is still a challenge in business systematic reviews and an area of advocacy for librarians. The more shocking result I thought was in training, we asked whether that they had taken prior training, what kind of training and what prompted their training, and only 19 of the 71 respondents said yes to the fact that they had taken training for systematic reviews or knowledge synthesis, and 52 said, no, they had no training. In terms of what prompted training, the most frequent response was interest in developing this as a potential service. So business librarians are interested in potentially expanding their role in supporting systematic reviews and knowledge. And with that, I'll pass it back to Janice.

Janice Winkler 15:50

All right. Before we move on to the discussion section, I just wanted to highlight some resources that we've gathered. You heard a few mentioned so far today about kind of different standards that are being used in different disciplines. We've gathered a number of different resources that are being used in systematic reviews outside of the health sciences, and with a little bit of kind of description of each. And so we encourage you to check that out. So the first question I was going to pose today is, what is the biggest challenge you encountered, or found with SRS, outside of the health sciences,

Zahra Premji 16:26

I'll take I'll start with that one. So what I've noticed is that different disciplines have differing expectations and standards around SRS. And I think this is the biggest challenge. So what is acceptable as a systematic review in one discipline is going to be different than what is accepted as a systematic review in another discipline. And I

noticed this very, obviously in business. And what this means is that this can result in a lot of pushback from researchers if you try to push a higher standard than they're used to, or that is acceptable for publication, because they might not be ready for that level of involvement. And then furthermore, in some of these disciplines, the role of the librarian is much less visible, because there is less emphasis placed on the searching part of knowledge synthesis or systematic review. And so supporting disciplines outside of Health Sciences, I found requires, on average, more education, to the researcher, a greater amount of advocacy and convincing that they need to follow these standards. What I often do is to go in with exemplars from journals that they're familiar with, and that would respect and sometimes these examples are hard to find, but they do exist. And that always really helps with it, I also will try to find a standard from a professional body that's also aware of and that can sometimes really help. And one other challenge that I think of right away is the terminology for searching. So controlled vocabularies aren't as well developed in some of these other disciplines as compared to health.

Me-Linh Le 18:00

So I can, I am a Health Sciences Librarian, but have, I have assisted on systematic reviews in education and psychology. So I do have a little bit of experience outside of health. And I would echo a little bit of what Zahra is saying is that the biggest side, or pardon me, the biggest challenge on the side of the researcher is again, just that time needed to train and educate, there's just less baseline knowledge, I would say, on the purpose of systematic reviews and how they're actually done and whether a researcher or a grad student has ever actually read one before. So it's just time. And on the librarian side, what I have seen as a challenge for me is getting familiar with non health databases. So since systematic reviews are so common in health, our databases are really set up in a way to have the features that are required for kind of advanced and complex searching and then the reporting standards that we have to meet to to publish. So I think for non health librarians, even though you have that familiarity with the databases, in your discipline, you have that subject specialty is really diving deep into the database in a different way to really see if those features that you need to do that level of searching are there and how you can actually make it work for you. I I would imagine that that would be a bit of a challenge. And again, just take time.

Christine Neilson 19:30

Well, also like like Mê-Linh I'm a health librarian. So really all the SRS and whatnot I've worked on have related to health, but I just I would like to just put it like a plus one for the the local expertise, right? If you are liaison in a particular area, you have expertise, and that's very valuable. So I wouldn't I wouldn't sell that short. As far as challenges, I think, based on the responses we got from our survey, something that is a common concern, regardless of discipline is capacity, right, revolving around workload, because systematic

reviews are a lot of work for the team as a whole, as well as the librarians involved. And I know just with the folks I've talked to there are there are serious, serious concerns about how much could be taken on and existing existing responsibilities and how to how to manage that. So I think that's that's a discussion that's going on in health right now. And maybe, before things get wildly out of control in other disciplines, if you're, if you're thinking of taking this on, you might want to think about that right from the start.

Janice Winkler 20:54

Thank you. So the next question relates to some of the common misconceptions that you might have encountered about systematic reviews? And is this something that you might have found to be different outside of the health sciences versus inside Health Sciences? And we'll start with Christine for this one.

Christine Neilson 21:17

Thanks, Janice. So I think there are a lot of misconceptions, I'm just going to talk about two really. So for me, what something that comes to mind is that there's kind of this perception that SRS are it right, like that's all that's all that that's all that you need to do. But really, like, I think, was Janice, in the introduction you mentioned, there's, there's a whole range of different methodologies that relate to knowledge synthesis, whether it's like scoping reviews, or realist reviews or concept analysis. And they're all They're all valid and useful. And they might be more appropriate in certain situations than others. So, as an aside, Janice mentioned that there's that that nifty handout, there is there is an article that's listed there, from 2019, by Sutton and colleagues, and you might want to check that out, it talks about the families of reviews, that's quite, quite useful. Secondly, and this is this is totally with the health lens. I think there's a certain assumption that, you know, systematic reviews are the best. And, you know, high quality by default, because of that, that evidence based practice pyramid, if you're not familiar with the pyramid, it's a pyramid. And at the bottom is like, oh, you know, experts expert opinion, and then that kind of goes through up to the top with different types of research studies. And, you know, surprise, surprise, systematic reviews are at the top. So I think, when people see that they go, Oh, that's the best one, well, I'm going to do that. Right. And there's not necessarily a real understanding of what systematic reviews are. And so as a result, I think a lot of poor quality, systematic reviews end up getting published. There have been guidelines that are been developed to try and kind of bolster that quality. Maybe they help a little bit, but you know, there are there are good examples out there of where guidelines have been used incorrectly or not in the way that's been intended. So I think I think that's a that's a big misconception. It's like, yep, automatically systematic reviews, those are the best.

Janice Hermer 23:44

I'd like to jump in here and say, I'm also a Health Sciences Librarian, but I have helped with systematic reviews outside of Health Sciences, both in and outside Health Sciences, I think the biggest misconception I run into is that systematic reviews are just somehow beefed up literature reviews, right? That they should do things exactly the way they did in the first year of college, just somehow more systematically, whatever that means. No idea that there's guidelines, no idea that there's pretty stringent processes structure to this, that if you deviate from it technically is no longer a systematic review. And that people just slap that label on a essentially ordinary literature review they did. And sometimes they get published and sometimes they get slapped in the face that gets thrown back at them. Either is actually a problem for the researcher. Right. So yeah, I I'm very concerned by the fact that a lot of people including a lot of librarians simply don't know what systematic reviews actually are, and the processes that go into them. And that is leading, I think, what both Christine and Mê-Linh said about the quality is, you know, not always going to be there.

Me-Linh Le 24:58

Yeah, and I'll just chime in. I very much agree with what Christine and Janice, were saying this like one size fits all mentality, or that they kind of are very simple to do. I think one thing that I have found time, I even just happened today, is I spend a lot of time telling students, that you can be systematic in your searching, without doing a systematic review. And that that is totally valid, especially when it comes to say a thesis, that a systematic review is a whole research project, it doesn't need to be one part of your, you know, master's level thesis, where you have one or two months to complete it. And so that it isn't the answer to everything. But it can be a helpful tool and really understanding, really understanding it before you kind of embark on it. You don't just kind of start doing one that day without really understanding all the steps that go into it. So I think it's just again, a big education, opportunity for librarians, with students and with advisors or with researchers.

Christine Neilson 26:03

I think you raise a good point there, Mê-Linh . I'm sure other institutions have same problem with the grad students coming in saying, Yeah, I've got like, a month to work on my research project. And I'm going to do systematic review. Can you help me out? Yeah, that's definitely a role for education, for sure. And it is a team activity. I think there is another problem is that people kind of go, oh, well, I can just, I can just do it myself, or me and my, my friend can do this, when you need specialized expertise, like statisticians and methodologists and librarians and a whole a whole crew to make it happen.

Janice Winkler 26:46

Okay. So our next question relates to these guidelines and protocols



that keep coming up. Are there standards, guidelines, protocols that can help in these interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, systematic review projects? And we'll start with Janice Hermer.

Janice Hermer 27:08

Yes, there are some out there. I mentioned a couple when I was talking earlier about my research. Kitchenham was software engineering. Petticrew was social sciences. There's new stuff coming out all the time. And we have quite a bit in our bibliography. But the thing is, is a lot of disciplines don't. And so what they're doing is these are happening on the fly. They're adapting, they're using health sciences, we found that a number of fields besides software engineering are using Kitchenham's guidelines, simply because there's a lack or they don't aren't familiar with any other options available to them. But there are things coming out all the time. There's ones for, you know, engineering education, there are guidelines that what a lot of authors have been doing is they've been cobbling together their own process, though, out of 2, 3,4, or more resources. Maybe they're using PRISMA for one part, maybe they're using an exemplar article as their process for another part of what they're doing. And it isn't one size fits all right, I mean, other disciplines have other needs. And so grabbing PRISMA guidelines or grabbing, you know, the Cochrane handbook, or the JBI, Joanna Briggs Institute, which is another well known nursing, particularly protocol guideline, and trying to jimmy, a decision science process into that may not work well. And so it's understandable that these new guidelines are being created. One of the big problems, I think, is is that people can't figure out what guidelines or protocols are out there. And so they are just using whatever they happen to stumble across, or they're led to, which is why I think it's so prevalent that health sciences guidelines are being used in non Health Sciences fields. Ours are really well codified, and they're really well publicized. And if they're going to Health Sciences librarians for guidance, those we're going to obviously point people to direction to things that we're familiar with.

Me-Linh Le 29:08

Yeah, and I mean, what I found when I have been asked to kind of talk about this kind of thing is like, as Janice noted, there, some are out there some disciplines better than other, I would say probably Environmental Sciences is one of the ones that I saw that has, you know, the most rigor and isn't a single kind of article that has that everybody is then following off of. So what I always recommend to people like when I'm talking to other librarians about that is to look as widely as you can. So don't just have a single article, like even if your discipline doesn't have published standards, don't just look at one article to guide you, but really look at look at the methods for as many as you can to really get kind of the widest picture kind of view. And I would say to I'm interested in what Zahra has to say,

if she has something to chime in afterwards, but I think that there is a real gap right now and that librarians are so well suited to fill this. So if you are a librarian who is in a non health discipline, you're you're helping out already on systematic reviews, or you want to be is, is this something that you could help do? What what resources could you pull together? What can you through talking with colleagues, what could you put out there? So I think there's, there's a lot of room here for librarians to contribute. And librarians have contributed a lot to the standards within health, and it's never in isolation. They are huge team efforts that take years and are always being refined, not static. So I think, yeah, a good opportunity.

Christine Neilson 30:52

I would just like to throw out the idea that terminology is different in different disciplines. So there might even be research methods texts out there where like they have a chapter, like the book isn't about systematic reviews, but there's like a chapter that would be very relevant and useful. So some exploration, there might be might be a good idea as well.

Zahra Premji 31:15

Yeah, I'll chime in. And when I started supporting systematic reviews in business, and the question I got told as well, there are no business guidelines to the same level that there are in health sciences, the question I posed back to the researcher was, does it matter if you use the guideline from another discipline, like it does it really matter. Systematic Review is a research method. And there are so many commonalities among parts of the method across disciplines. I mean, if you look at the Campbell Collaboration guidelines, they were based off of the Cochrane guidelines. So the social science evidence synthesis organization, can base their guidelines off of a health sciences evidence synthesis organization guide, what does that tell you about the common aspects of the methodology? And so when I started supporting business, a lot of a lot of researchers would say, Well, I'm following Transfield, which is not a guideline, it is a methodology paper, but it's not a guideline that really tells you how to conduct. And so I said, in the absence of a business specific conducting guideline, why not look at the next best alternative. And maybe that's the social sciences evidence synthesis conducting guidelines, such as the one from the Campbell Collaboration. And so my guidance has always been, it is better to use a guideline from an adjacent discipline, then not use a guideline at all, or just follow the methodology of someone else who successfully published a systematic review, successful publishing of the systematic review is not an endorsement of the methodology used in that systematic review. So that's my two cents on them, because many are poorly done. So use a guideline.

Janice Winkler 32:55

Thank you. So Christine you highlighted earlier that systematic

reviews are really kind of a team sport, it's not something you do by yourself or that one person can do. It's a really collaborative process. And so, you know, building on that, what in your experience, leads to successful collaborations with systematic reviews, sorry, whether in or outside of Health Sciences. And Mê-Linh I'll have you start.

Me-Linh Le 33:26

Sure. So I found and I well, I suspect that if you are a librarian in a non health field, you're thinking about this, you're already really set up for potentially kind of great collaboration, because you're likely a liaison in some way, whether that's your actual title anymore or not. And liaisons know about relationship building, that is their bread and butter. And so really, I have found the most successful collaborations that I have had, are all about ones where I have a strong relationship with that team, or with that researcher already. And so, you know, over time, we kind of build up a mutual understanding and mutual kind of respect for what different people bring to that team. And it's not just well, I'm going to ask a librarian for help, and then pretend that I've never heard from them before when I publish this final thing, right? It is, they have contributed something, they have expertise. And I'm going to acknowledge that appropriately. And those are, you know, kind of the best projects that I have worked on. And that doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen necessarily with your first one. So successful collaboration, it really takes time and effort. So don't get discouraged. You know, if your first one doesn't go well, or, you know, it doesn't end up getting published, which happens to all of us. It really comes through time and building up relationships with faculty. And that I find it really rewarding ultimately.

Christine Neilson 34:57

Well, I say all that. I think, for the projects I've worked on, and this is, it sounds pretty, pretty basic. But since there are a lot of pieces and a lot of steps and a lot of people involved in systematic review, the best ones have had a really good project lead with good project management skills, organization skills, communication skills, these I mean, this is good for all projects, but it the best systematic reviews I've been involved with have had these.

Janice Hermer 35:34

I'm going to throw in here for the non Health Sciences. When I'm a health sciences librarian, when I do non Health Sciences ones. I always pair up with a subject liaison from that field. And if they were not already in the group, I pull them in if I wasn't already in the group, they usually pull me in. Because it's really an acknowledgement of everyone's expertise and their own skill sets. You don't want a group with all the same skill sets. And the most effective collaborations are people, as Christine said, that have strengths in areas that aren't necessarily just research.

Zahra Premji 36:12

Yeah, I mean, I want to bring it back to what Mê-Linh said at the beginning, as well. And really, what I found in my experience is that having someone else on the team who respects and values your expertise as a librarian is really important for a successful collaboration. Because if other members of the team maybe are less familiar with what you're what you're advocating for, push back, if you have a champion who understands your role, and what you bring to the team there to kind of back you up, that's all is very, very helpful. And so then, from that comes this idea of nearly having a team charter. One of the common complaints I've seen in more informal discussions with librarians is doing the work and not getting credit for it. And so when you are going to be involved in as in a knowledge synthesis project, it's really good to have the discussion on roles and responsibilities and credit. And so if you have the team charter that really sets up who's doing what, and also what credit they are gonna receive for it, so I find that thing really valuable.

Janice Winkler 37:15

Okay, so here's our final question that will help us kind of bring everything that we talked about today, together. So why do you think that all librarians serving all disciplines or working in different areas should care about systematic reviews? And do you have a single piece of advice that you would offer to a librarian getting started in systematic reviews for the first time,

Me-Linh Le 37:38

I can go first, um, I think people, or all librarians should be aware of systematic reviews, because they are an important methodology and interest in them is growing. And I think that they are a real opportunity where librarians can show their value and the service that they provide. On a personal note, I'll just say it's extremely satisfying to do that kind of work, because you can see the impact in a way that you can't see in a lot of other library work that you are having. So on the health side, seeing how a systematic review that I've contributed to can change, say, policy or patient care, that's just very rewarding.

And in terms of a single piece of advice, I would say, if you're new to it, or even if you're not, what helps me the most is having a community of practice or having a team, not pardon, not a team, a network of peers, who that I can turn to, whether that's my colleague next door, or a more formalized group, I learned so much from other people who do this kind of work. And I would really advise you to Yeah, to hook into existing networks or start your own. If they're not if they don't exist for your discipline yet.

Christine Neilson 38:55

Ok, well I'll go. Yeah, so I think, I think the why you should care,

we've kind of, you know, touched on a bit. So I just want to say, you know, be prepared, right? So someday, somebody is gonna come and say, hey, I want to do systematic review help me out teach me or something. And so I think it's, it's in everybody's best interest to at least at least have a general sense of what it is and what's involved, even if even if you're not involved, like, in a major way, at the moment, because you just never know, tomorrow might be the day. So as far as advice goes, there is a lot out there in terms of like online videos, and webinars and things like that. But something I found, really, it was, I guess, useful, but also kind of eye opening, just in terms of understanding was participating in Cochrane Crowd for one, one project. And so the Cochrane Collaboration has the Citizen Science portal setup, right? So it doesn't matter if you're a health professional or, or a librarian or what, you have like little video tutorials and whatnot, you can take and then you participate in level one screening, which is title and abstract screening. And I thought that was really, really valuable, just to get some experience, not just saying, oh, there's level one screening and this is what happens. Actually, you know, tried it out. And it was like next to no commitment. So that was that was pretty great. So if something like that doesn't appeal like you Like, I don't want to do any health related stuff, you might consider, you know, chatting with folks in your in your area, like in your liaison area, there might be some opportunities to act as like a research volunteer for screening or data extraction for a project, something like that, which would be instructive, but also help build those relationships, too. I think that that Me-Linh was talking about and Zahra. So that's my advice.

Janice Hermer 41:24

I have to say that I agree with everything you've both said. But for me, systematic reviews are really an excellent way to objectively critique the knowledge available on an individual topic. And and as has been pointed out, that doesn't mean Health Sciences topic. That's any topic. That's a marketing plan. That's a education plan. That's policy decisions. It's a great way to drill down to what do we know about this? And how confident are we in this knowledge, which is really the original purpose of a systematic review. And so they really, we should be touting them as a great way of forwarding knowledge in all of our fields. For me, the piece of advice I'd give is there's a lot of training out there available. It's not all health sciences, most of it is Health Sciences. But I believe Cornell, and University of Minnesota, for example, both have training available for non Health Sciences, systematic review. And so you aren't just stuck doing health sciences stuff. But I would say, dip your toe in, come to a presentation like this or to other presentations at conferences, learn a little bit about it, read an article, trying to understand what it is, like, as Christine said, Someday, somebody is going to show up on your doorstep and say, what's all this about systematic reviews? And should I be doing one? And you either need to have an answer, or you need to know who to go to to get an answer. That's what

our job is. So I would suggest getting the training. Whatever level does come from for you to start with. And always whenever possible, on your first project, try and partner up with somebody who's more experienced. And that can provide a little bit of guidance, maybe let you lead but give you some support in the background. Because these are tricky to do, it's really easy to mess up in them. And there's a pretty high cost in messing up in them. And so you do want to make sure that, that you're if the people you're guiding and helping that you're doing the very best you can. So there's resources out there to help you with that, though.

Zahra Premji 43:24

Yeah, and I'll just chime in to kind of summarize, you know, like Christine said, Someday someone's gonna knock on your door. And you never know when that is. So at some point, someone will eventually come to ask you for some support or ask a question. And so part of that is being ready, but also recognizing that in many cases, when someone knocks on your door, because they need to do a systematic review, oftentimes, they don't know that much about the methodology. And they know even less about how to search appropriately for knowledge synthesis, and use the librarian or the search expert. So it really helps if you understand what the search expectations are, so that you can guide them appropriately or refer them appropriately or even just inform them appropriately as to the expectations even if you don't support them. But having passing that knowledge on that education on about what is expected for a systematic review. And searching for a systematic review, I think is really important. Because I think that that's going to help the field as a whole. So it's really a service to the profession, but also a service to the field to improve help improve the quality of the Knowledge Synthesis products that are being produced, and being well aware and educated yourself, will allow that education to continue on with the researchers as well. That's all I have.

Janice Winkler 44:50

Thank you so much, Zahra, and everybody for your contributions today. So this little kind of final reminder to please go and take a look at our handout, which does kind of gather together some really, really great resources. So there might be something that's useful for you there so I would suggest checking it out. And aside from that, thank you so much for your attention today.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>