

# Leading, Educating, and Inspiring LIS Professionals to Embrace Accessibility for a Resilient Future

## SIG Sponsor(s):

Disabilities in LIS (Keren Dali, University of Denver, USA)  
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## Presenters:

Denice Adkins (University of Missouri, USA), Bobbie Bushman (Emporia State University, USA), Maria Cahill (University of Kentucky, USA), Clayton A. Copeland (University of South Carolina, USA), Timothy J. Dickey (Kent State University, San José State University, Columbus Metropolitan Library, USA), Lesley S. J. Farmer (California State University Long Beach, USA), Heather Hill (Western University, Canada), Kevin J. Mallery (Western Carolina University, USA), Kim M. Thompson (University of South Carolina, USA), Melissa Wong (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

## ABSTRACT

The COVID pandemic has put the issues of disability and accessibility in the spotlight. Social interactions, employment, studies, and day-to-day activities for some people with disabilities have become more challenging; yet, others have found opportunity and even relief in working from home, avoiding the grueling commute and inaccessible physical environments. The situation has thus highlighted disparities within the disabled community: those with comfortable living conditions, information literacy skills, and stable internet access fared better than individuals lacking these conditions. People with disabilities in all LIS constituent groups have been affected: students, librarians, library users, faculty, and academic staff. This has shown the need for building resilience and improving accessibility. This session will bring together over a dozen educators from American and Canadian LIS programs and include five presentations accompanied by hands-on interactive activities. After a brief introduction (5 min), each group of presenters will introduce their topics (30-35 min) and then engage the audience in a series of prepared activities (40 min) using two virtual breakout rooms. In Breakout Room 1 (“LIS Education: Course Preparation, Collaboration, & Design”), Cahill, Adkins, and Bushman will review the ways in which LIS courses in youth services address programs for young children with disabilities and later facilitate the collaborative analysis of syllabi from LIS youth services courses. They will encourage participants to collectively come up with solutions, changes, and improvements and show their alignments with ALA Core Competences and COA Standards for Accreditation. Hill and Wong will focus on everyday choices made by LIS educators in their course design that can improve accessibility in learning, including policies, learning materials, and considerations of diversity in establishing “norms.” Participants will leave with a checklist of practices for accessibility audit in their courses. Farmer will take up the

topic of collaboration with disability support service providers (DSSP). Building off the lived experiences of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), participants will learn several strategies for successful collaboration with DSSP. In Breakout Room 2 (“LIS Preparation for Practice: Equitable Hiring & Service Provision”), Copeland, Mallery, and Thompson will focus on the training of LIS professionals that helps them embrace accessibility by using scenarios for inclusive hiring practices. They will offer a lesson plan for preparing future LIS managers and leaders for the equitable handling of job interviews, inclusive job advertising, and onboarding after hiring. Participants will learn to design training scenarios related to teaching students about inclusive communication practices. Focusing on the potential of libraries to provide “non-pharmacological interventions” that improve the lives of people living with dementia and their care partners, Dickey will help participants explore the ways to prepare LIS students for supporting these user groups. Participants will brainstorm practical suggestions for fostering accessibility when people with dementia are concerned and discover resources for leadership and advocacy. Then, participants will reconvene for the general discussion (10-15 min). The SIG session will end with the general discussion of how the aforementioned aspects are affected during world health emergencies and what it means for the future of accessibility.

### **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

education; pedagogy; social justice; students; teaching faculty

### **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

course design; dementia; disabilities; training; workplace equity