

Researching and Educating for Leadership



**Educators of School Librarians Section
Research Symposium
Louisville, Kentucky
November 2019**

Judi Moreillon, M.L.S., Ph.D.
Adjunct Associate Professor
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Author, Literacies and Libraries Consultant





Discussion Strategies: How?



**Reflecting on Recent Research
and Its Potential Impact on Practice**

**Reflecting on Past Research
and Its Impact on Practice**

**Reflecting on the Implications of
Research on School Librarian Education**

**Disseminating Research in Order to
Influence Practice and Listening to the
Response from the Field**



Connect:

Current Research: Two Seminal Studies

Everhart, Nancy, and Melissa P. Johnston. 2016. "A Proposed Theory of School Librarian Leadership: A Meta-ethnographic Approach." *School Library Research* 19.

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol19/SLR_ProposedTheory_V19.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2018).

Johnston, Melissa P., and Lucy Santos Green. 2018. "Still Polishing the Diamond: School Library Research Over the Last Decade." *School Library Research* 21.

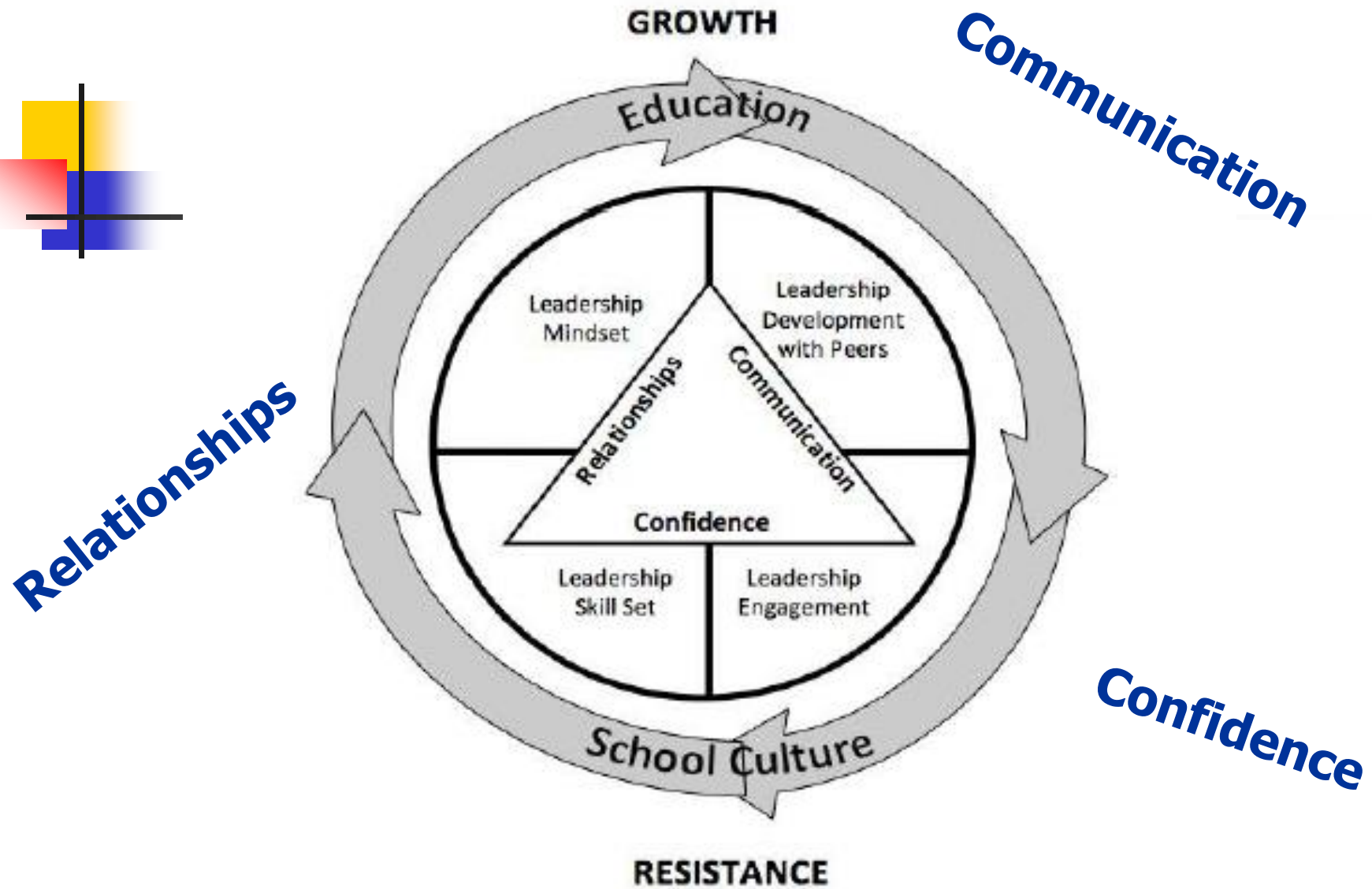
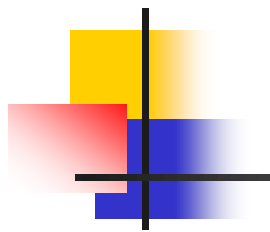
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol21/SLR_StillPolishing_V21.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2018).



Six Studies on School Librarian Leadership

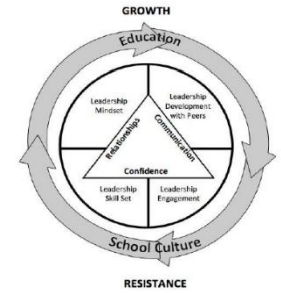
(Everhart and Johnston 2016) Chronological Order

- Everhart, Nancy, and Eliza T. Dresang. 2007. "Integrating Research Results and National Board Certification Standards into a Leadership Curriculum for School Library Media Specialists." *Journal for Education in Library and Information Science* 48 (4): 272–83.
- Smith, Daniella. 2009. "Self Perceptions of Leadership Potential: A Study of Teacher-leaders Educated to Be School Library Media Specialists Who Lead." PhD. diss. Florida State University, Tallahassee.
- Everhart, Nancy, Marcia A. Mardis, and Melissa P. Johnston. 2011. "National Board Certified School Librarians' Leadership in Technology Integration: Results of a National Survey." *School Library Media Research* 14.
- Johnston, Melissa P. 2012. "School Librarians as Technology Integration Leaders: Enablers and Barriers to Leadership Enactment." *School Library Research* 15.
- Mardis, Marcia A., and Nancy Everhart. 2014. Stakeholders as Researchers: A Multiple Case Study of Using Cooperative Inquiry to Develop and Document the Formative Leadership Experiences of New School Library Professionals." *Library and Information Science Research* 36 (1): 3–15.
- Kang, Ji Hei. 2015. "The Leadership Role of School Librarians in the Adoption of Digital Textbooks: Evaluating School Librarians' Stages of Concern in Florida and South Korea." PhD diss. Florida State University, College of Communication and Information, Tallahassee.



Everhart, Nancy, and Melissa P. Johnston. 2016. "A Proposed Theory of School Librarian Leadership: A Meta-ethnographic Approach." *School Library Research* 19.

Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory of Leadership

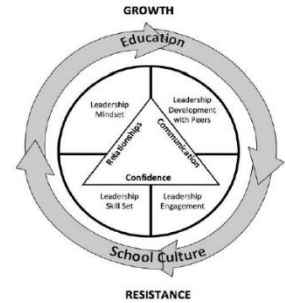


“**Proposition 1:** Education can provide a leadership skill set to bolster **confidence** for the growth of school librarian leadership.

School library preparation programs can provide **instruction on the knowledge, skills, and abilities school librarians need to develop leadership...**

School librarians also cite **professional development training and informal modes of education** as factors that can contribute to leadership growth” (Everhart and Johnston 2016, 22).

Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory of Leadership

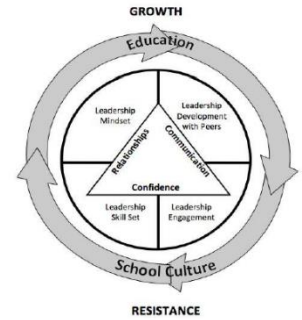


“**Proposition 2:** School librarian leadership growth is influenced by **school culture**.”

Although school culture was most often associated with resistance, Johnston (2012) identified the existence of:

- **a district-wide school library coordinator,**
- **a supportive principal who provided opportunities for leadership,**
- **formal professional development,**
- **and a flexible schedule as school culture factors that enabled school librarians in their leadership efforts”** (Everhart and Johnston 2016, 23).

Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory of Leadership

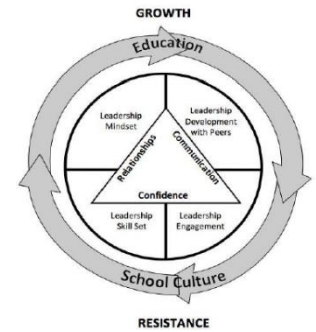


“Proposition 3: Peers contribute to school librarian leadership growth.

Professors’ input and peer support was also important for first-year school librarians (Mardis and Everhart 2014)...

- **Mentors,**
- **district-wide school librarian groups,**
- **professional organizations,**
- **and online personal learning networks** were all ways that school librarians in these studies describe a supportive relationship with respected colleagues.”
(Everhart and Johnston 2016, 23).

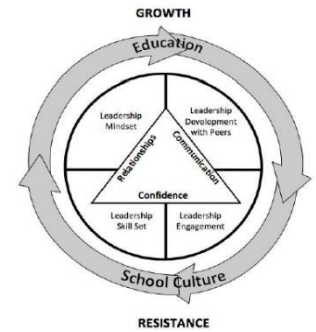
Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory Leadership



“**Proposition 4:** School librarian leadership **growth** requires a specific **mind-set**.”

But the desire to lead and commitment to professional growth and to making a difference must be present first (Johnston 2012). These findings are supported by leadership trait theory, which asserts that core personal characteristics such as **cognitive abilities, personality, values, social appraisal, problem-solving skills, and expertise** (Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader 2004) exist in leaders...” (cited in Everhart and Johnston 2016, 24).

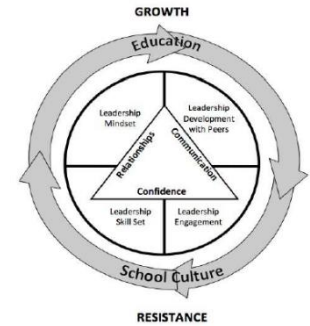
Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory Leadership



“**Proposition 4:** School librarian leadership **growth** requires a specific **mind-set**.”

“... **Rather than be at the forefront** of an impending state or national education initiative, some school librarians **would rather avoid these initiatives** and, as a result, lose key leadership opportunities (Kang 2015)” (cited in Everhart and Johnston 2016, 24).

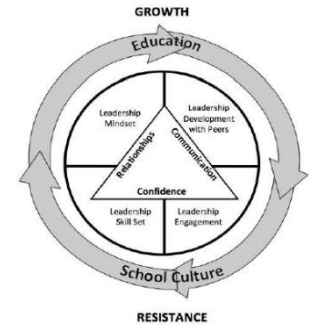
Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory Leadership



“Proposition 5: School librarian leadership engagement follows traditional leadership patterns and is **resistant** to forms of leadership that **require taking risks**.

The majority of school librarians Smith studied were unwilling to go beyond any type of traditional leadership activities **outside their own school walls**. Leadership in the community and in professional associations was not prevalent” (Everhart and Johnston 2016, 24).

Everhart and Johnston: A Proposed Theory Leadership



“Proposition 5: School librarian leadership engagement follows traditional leadership patterns and is **resistant** to forms of leadership that **require taking risks**.

Some of the **more far-reaching and impactful behaviors possible for school librarians, such as**

- **setting learning objectives for collaborative lessons**
- **and presenting at conferences, were unrealized**

(Everhart, Mardis, and Johnston 2011)” (cited in Everhart and Johnston 2016, 24).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



The four questions defined by Neuman represent the four corners of her diamond:

1. What are the contributions of library media programs to **student achievement**?
2. What are the **roles of the library media specialist** in today's schools? (Johnston and Green 2018, 2).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



3. How do students use **electronic information resources** for learning?
4. What has been the **impact** of the "Information Literacy Skills for Student Learning" [in *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* (AASL and AECT 1998)] on library media programs? (2003, 504)" (Johnston and Green 2018, 2).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade

- ...several studies indicated preparation programs for school librarians needed to provide future school librarians with **learning experiences that required**
- **collaboration,**
 - **emphasizing candidate preparation for the instructional roles** (for example, Church 2008; Everhart and Dresang 2007; Latham, Gross, and Witte 2013; Mardis 2013; Meyers 2007; Meyers, Nathan, and Saxton 2007; Montiel-Overall and Hernandez 2012; Moreillon 2008; Moreillon, Cahill, and McKee 2012; Moreillon, Kimmel, and Gavigan 2014; Shannon 2004)” (Johnston and Green 2018, 11).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“*Empowering Learners* (AASL 2009) proposed a greater variety of paths for leadership, such as

- **instructional leader,**
- **leader in technology integration, and**
- **leader of learning through development and provision of professional development for other educators”** (Johnston and Green 2018, 12).



Johnston and Green Research Over the Last Decade



“... while instructional partnerships could lead to being an instructional leader, Judi Moreillon explained that future school librarians must be educated on how to **first develop instructional partnerships before parlaying these into leadership opportunities** (2013)” (Johnston and Green 2018, 12).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“Until recently, graduate-level programs in library and information science **invested little time or training** in helping future school librarians **learn to be leaders...**

Results of these studies indicated that practicing school librarians **did not believe that their coursework and internship prepared them for leadership roles**” (Johnston and Green 2018, 13).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“Mardis (2013) and Moreillon (2013) further encouraged preparation programs for school librarians to have a **plan in place** for helping graduates **transfer leadership skills and knowledge acquired during preparation into actual practice**” (Johnston and Green 2018, 13).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“Due to the **more-explicit connection between student learning and the roles of instructional partner and teacher**, these two roles were the subject of the majority of the research reviewed for Neuman’s Question 2, with **emphasis placed on the collaborative relationships** necessary for enacting these roles” (Johnston and Green 2018, 23).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“...although the roles of the school librarian have been investigated from **various perspectives** (including those of the principal, the teacher, and the student), teachers and administrators still demonstrate a **lack of understanding** of the school librarian’s five roles, signifying a need for **better dissemination** of the results of this school library research strand to the broader field of education” (Johnston and Green 2018, 23).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“Based on the comparison figures presented in table 2, the **AASL CLASS II** proposals aligned with favored research questions of the past ten years, with the majority of proposals submitted focusing on the **roles of the school librarian** (40 percent)” (Johnston and Green 2018, 27).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“While the **proposals for examining the contributions of school library programs to student achievement** seemed to be an **increase** (from 11 percent to 20 percent), it is still **not an area of major focus for the CLASS researchers**”
(Johnston and Green 2018, 27).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“While the **proposals for examining the contributions of school library programs to student achievement** seemed to be an **increase** (from 11 percent to 20 percent), it is still **not an area of major focus for the CLASS researchers**”
(Johnston and Green 2018, 27).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“The most surprising finding from this admittedly brief and limited comparison is that, despite the increase in **digital technologies** for teaching and learning, scholars still indicated **very little inclination to conduct research** in this area” (Johnston and Green 2018, 27).



Johnston and Green

Research Over the Last Decade



“Finally, with the new AASL standards released in the fall of 2017, it is expected that research investigating the **impact of the 2017 standards** on school library programs will increase” (Johnston and Green 2018, 27).

Recent Research: Educating Preservice School Librarians for the Instructional Partner Role



“This case study indicates that, in the case of the programs at these nine institutions, the **collaborative lesson plan assignment** may hold a key to a guaranteed learning experience for all preservice school librarians” (Moreillon, Kimmel, and Gavigan 2014, 27).

Educating Preservice School Librarians for the Instructional Partner Role



“However, the study also shows that at these (nine) institutions there is very **little overlap in the readings and textbooks** with which preservice candidates engage during their graduate coursework” (Moreillon, Kimmel, and Gavigan 2014, 27).

Recent Research: State Library Conferences as Professional Development Venues...



“While library-conference sessions do not present the sum total of formal professional development available to school librarians, conference sessions indicate the **exemplars we showcase and the opportunities we provide to improve our profession**. They may also be important indicators of the **values we hold**” (Moreillon, Cahill and McKee 2012, 18).

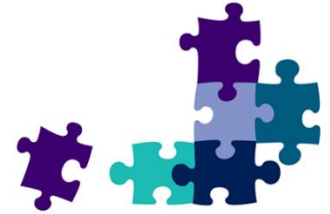
Current Research: A Study of How We Study...



“If school library research is to investigate the impact of school libraries and school librarians on student learning, the **research must involve student participants**... Currently, however, Pre-K–12 students serve as participants in **less than a third** of the research ” (Morris and Cahill 2017, 17).



A Study of How We Study...



“Working **collaboratively with school librarian practitioners** would facilitate researchers’ access to Pre-K–12 settings and participants, and keep researchers attuned to the **real and perceived issues** affecting school library stakeholders as the educational landscape continues to evolve” (Morris and Cahill 2017, 18).



Putting It All Together



**Reflecting on Current Research
and Its Potential Impact on Practice**

**Reflecting on Recent Research
and Its Impact on Practice**

**Reflecting on the Implications of
Research on School Librarian Education**

**Disseminating Research in Order to
Influence Practice and Listening to the
Response from the Field**



Closing Thought



“Research informing practice
and practice informing research
is a fundamental cycle
in any sustainable profession”
(Todd 2007, 64).

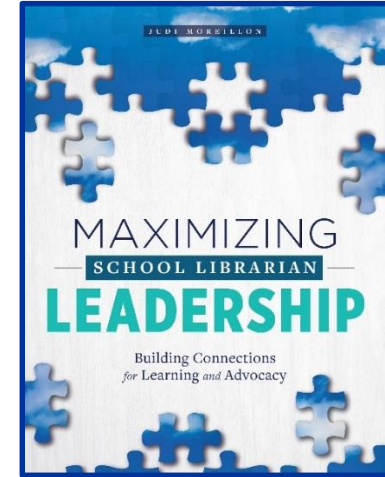
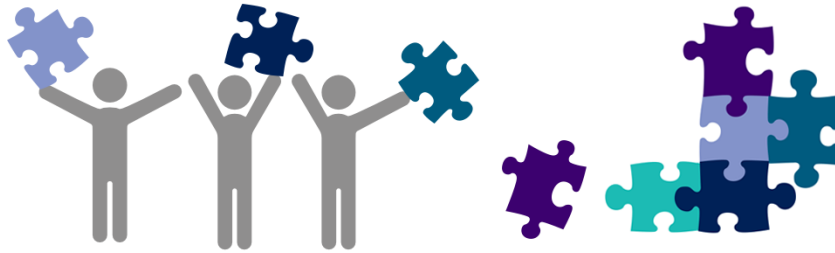
Thurston, Baratunde. 2008. "I Am A Community Organizer." *Flickr.com*.
<<https://www.flickr.com/photos/baratunde/2837373493/>>.



References



- American Association of School Librarians. 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.
- Everhart, Nancy, and Melissa P. Johnston. 2016. "A Proposed Theory of School Librarian Leadership." *School Library Research* 19.
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol19/SLR_ProposedTheory_V19.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2019).
- Johnston, Melissa P., and Lucy Santos Green. 2018. "Still Polishing the Diamond: School Library Research Over the Last Decade." *School Library Research* 21.
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol21/SLR_StillPolishing_V21.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2019).
- Moreillon, Judi, Maria Cahill, and Rebecca McKee. 2012. "State Library Conferences as Professional Development Venues: Unbalanced Support for the AASL-defined Roles of the School Librarian." *School Library Research* 15.
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol15/SLR_Conferences_as_PD_Venues_V15.pdf> (accessed October 31, 2019).
- Moreillon, Judi, Sue Kimmel, and Karen Gavigan. 2014. "Educating Preservice School Librarians for the Instructional Partner Role: An Exploration into University Curricula." *School Library Research* 17.
<http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol17/SLR_EducatingPreservice_V17.pdf> (accessed October 31, 2019).
- Morris, Rebecca, and Maria Cahill. 2017. "A Study of How We Study: Methodologies of School Library Research 2007 through July 2015." *School Library Research* 20. <<http://www.ala.org/aasl/slr/volume20/morris-cahill>> (accessed October 31, 2019).
- Todd, Ross J. 2007. "Evidence-based Practice in School Libraries: From Advocacy to Action." In *School Reform and the School Library Media Specialist* edited by Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Violet H. Harada, pp. 57-78. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.



Judi Moreillon, M.L.S., Ph.D.

Adjunct Associate Professor

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Literacies and Libraries Consultant

Author: *Maximizing School Librarian Leadership: Building Connections for Learning and Advocacy* (ALA 2018)

jmore@illinois.edu

[@CactusWoman](#)

school librarian leadership.com

J. Moreillon, 2019. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution–Noncommercial Share Alike 4.0 International License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

