

Anita Brooks Kirkland

Building a Culturally Relevant and Responsive School Library Learning Commons

Our truth is in the stories we tell. Nowhere is this better understood than in libraries. But what is our school library story as it relates to equity and cultural inclusion, and how relevant is that story to the needs of our students today? What is the role of the school library learning commons in keeping, sharing and creating the new story of Canada as a diverse, multicultural society and as a country that honours its relationship with its Indigenous peoples? What is the role of the school library learning commons in serving our multi-cultural society and in developing a welcoming and inclusive school culture?

These questions are at the core of resources for Culturally Relevant and Responsive School Library Learning Commons from Canadian School Libraries (CSL). The project grew from the theme of CSL's fifth Treasure Mountain Canada Research Symposium and Think Tank (TMC5), held in Winnipeg, Man. in October 2017 in partnership with the Manitoba School Library Association. The outcome of the symposium was to provide relevant, strategic and practical support for schools.

The Culturally Relevant and Responsive SLLC resource contains three sections:

Standards of Practice Competencies and practices for cultural relevance and responsiveness are linked to Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada, providing a framework for self-assessment and a plan for moving forward.

Context & Resources Here we position the project within Canada's multicultural society and the greater ethics of librarianship, and demonstrate alignment with educational goals. You will also find an extremely useful annotated resource list to further your own explorations.

Planning Tools The planning tools put it all together, with practical assessment and planning organizers, a wonderful poster which is free to download and print, and links to additional practical resources.



There is a strong link to the Ontario School Library Association in the creation of these resources. One of the project leads was OSLA President Jenn Brown. The wonderful poster, *Time to Make Room*, which we believe should be displayed in every school across the country, was inspired by the article of the same name from *The Teaching Librarian* by Jenn Brown and OSLA Council member Melanie Mulcaster (Vol. 25 No. 2, January 2018).

CSL is very pleased to announce that the next TMC Symposium (TMC6) will take place in Toronto, presented in partnership with OSLA and The Association of Library Consultants and Coordinators of Ontario (TALCO), as part of the OLA Super Conference 2020. The theme and sub-themes continue the valuable work of TMC5.

TMC6 Theme: Participatory Learning in the Library Learning Commons

TMC6 Sub-Themes:

- Collaborative Environments
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive SLLC
- Accessibility for All
- Creativity and Innovation
- School Culture

We invite you to use the resources from CSL to frame your school library program's cultural growth, and also to think about telling your story at TMC6!

CSL Resources: canadianschoollibraries.ca/relevant-responsive

Learn more about TMC6: tmc.canadianschoollibraries.ca |