LIBRARY INSTRUCTION ROUND TABLE

NEWS

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CONTENTS

1 from the president
2 from the editor
3 from the conference planning committee
4 LIRT Awards

FROM THE PRESIDENT

LIRT News is back!

Hello everyone, I'm Renee Kiner and I'm your 2025/26 LIRT President. I've been volunteering my time with LIRT since 2020 in a variety of roles. I got involved with LIRT because my position included instruction, and like most other librarians, I felt the need to continuously improve upon my pedagogy. LIRT has given me a place to learn from innovative librarians doing amazing work.

As I write this on a gloomy Monday afternoon, I'm excited that spring is just around the corner. I'm looking forward to some blue skies, warm weather and ALA Annual in Chicago! I invite you to attend the President's Program on June 27 to learn about Building Communities of Practice and to attend the LIRT Awards Program on June 28 to celebrate your fellow librarians and their innovative programs.

The LIRT Steering Committee has been working hard to maintain the website, provide helpful instruction materials, select outstanding articles and award winners, and restart our newsletter. It's been a hectic year, but we've completed tasks as a team. LIRT will be in great hands when Holley Cornetto takes over as LIRT President in June 2026.

It wouldn't be a Letter from the President without a call to join a LIRT committee! If you're interested in working with a fabulous group of individuals, please consider volunteering on a LIRT committee.

I'm ending my update by extending my thanks to all of you for being patient while LIRT News took a brief hiatus. I'm happy to say we are back and I'm looking forward to a fresh restart to our newsletter. Keep an eye on ALA Connect for future calls for articles. We'd love to hear about your instruction successes, challenges, and ideas!

Renee

FROM THE EDITOR

Hello LIRT News!

I'm thrilled to be your newsletter editor. For several years I have admired LIRT's dedication to inspired library instruction. In my short time working behind the scenes with the LIRT Steering Committee I have admired everyone's focus and commitment to revitalizing our committees, newsletter, and website.

I am also happy to represent those of us in LIRT who work in K-12 education. As a middle school librarian, I am always examining my instruction materials and methods to better engage my students. I look forward to communicating with and learning from you as we strive to better our professional knowledge.

As the weather begins to shift and we collectively shake off winter's frost, I hope we take time to enjoy the (slightly) warmer weather, brighter days, and feel the low hum of energy that spring provides.

Amy

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Contributions to be considered for the June 2026 issue must be sent to the editor by May 1, 2026.

LIRT @ ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date: Saturday, June 27th
Time: 4 - 5 p.m.
Location: TBD

Librarians are increasingly called upon to provide high-quality instruction across diverse subjects and formats. Cultivating a supportive community can be a critical step in helping library instructors become more effective teachers by exploring new approaches and deepening pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, it can foster a culture of care that increases stability for librarians, providing emotional support and shared resources that help mitigate burnout. These communities of practice may take many forms and encompass wide-ranging initiatives including reading clubs, structured peer observation programs that facilitate feedback and professional growth, and collaboration on specific instructional topics. In this session, a panel of librarians will share how their engagement in communities of practice has helped create robust support networks for instruction that can meet the needs of all learners.

Join us to gain practical ideas and inspiration for building your own supportive teaching community that can reenergize your teaching practice, nurture well-being, and reduce burnout.

Alicia G. Vaandering
Conference Planning Committee

LIRT AWARDS

INNOVATION IN INSTRUCTION AWARD

Elizabeth Roberts (left) and Heather Newman (right).

The Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) is pleased to announce that the 2025-2026 Innovation in Instruction Award will be presented to the Bellevue School District Libraries at Lake Hills Elementary School, Bellevue Digital Discovery, and Cherry Crest Elementary School. This year's award recognizes them for their series of information literacy instruction activities for grades 2, 3, and 4. The activity series is a worthy model for generating student interest and engagement and building core information literacy skills at a young age.

Over several years, Heather Newman, teacher librarian at Lake Hills Elementary School and Bellevue Digital Discovery, and Elizabeth Roberts, teacher librarian at Cherry Crest Elementary School, collaborated to solve their dilemma: how do we design learning activities for students to work independently or in small groups to develop specific library and information literacy skills; have the activities be meaningfully assessed; and each activity can be completed in 20 minutes? They now have a series of hands-on activities. The activities are low-cost and adaptable in many environments beyond grades 2-4, and they are sharing their activities, including learning objectives and methods of assessment, online and via social media. You can follow Heather Newman on Instagram, Tiktok, or LinkedIn, and you can follow Elizabeth Roberts on Instagram or LinkedIn.

"We are deeply honored to receive the 2026 LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award. Our focus as school librarians is to design engaging, student-centered library instruction that builds independence and information literacy through hands-on, accessible learning experiences," said Elizabeth Roberts. "We thank the LIRT Awards Committee for this meaningful recognition and remain committed to supporting students and educators through creative, inclusive library instruction."

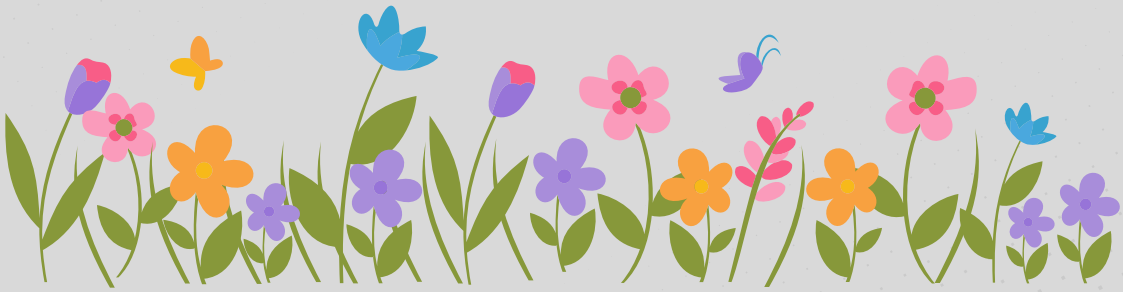
LIBRARIAN RECOGNITION AWARD

The Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) is pleased to announce that Dr. Robbie Barber has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 LIRT Librarian Recognition Award. A teacher-librarian at Tucker High School, Dr. Barber exemplifies excellence in instruction and information literacy through her scholarship, innovative programming, and sustained professional leadership at the local, state, and national levels. Her published work in Knowledge Quest and Georgia Library Quarterly, along with peer-reviewed book chapters, addresses critical topics such as soft censorship, media literacy, artificial intelligence, and participatory research. In addition to traditional publications, her widely read blog, Tickling Tech, extends her impact by sharing practical, research-informed strategies with educators across the country.

Dr. Barber has created dynamic, replicable programs that model engaging and accessible information literacy instruction. Initiatives such as TigerCon, weekly "Tickling Tech Tuesday" professional development sessions, passive media literacy installations, and her low-cost, highly adaptable Information Literacy Night demonstrate her commitment to scalable programming that bridges school and community contexts. Her collaborative work with Dr. Leah Panther at Mercer University further reflects her ability to connect scholarship and practice, including co-authored research, teacher preparation partnerships, and the student-centered TigerTalk podcast. These efforts foreground critical thinking, ethical use of technology, and community engagement while remaining practical for replication across diverse library settings.

A recognized leader in the profession, Dr. Barber serves on state and national committees, including the AASL ABC-CLIO Leadership Award review committee, and is Treasurer of the Friends of the Tucker-Reid Cofer Public Library. She is an active member of the Georgia Library Media Association and the Georgia Library Association and was recently honored as a 2025 GALILEO K–12 Ambassador of the Year. Through her scholarship, mentorship, and servant leadership, Dr. Barber advances information literacy as an intellectually rigorous, community-centered practice. LIRT proudly recognizes her sustained and meaningful contributions to the field.

Upon learning that she had received this award, she said "I am excited, and a little bit humble, to win the LIRT Librarian Recognition award. Teaching requires collaboration both in the creation of the lesson and the actual delivery. Finding ways to connect, share, and learn from others is my goal. I am incredibly grateful for my colleagues in DeKalb County, the state of Georgia, and across the U.S. who make these collaborations work. The Georgia Library Media Association has been instrumental in my growth as a school librarian."

The Library Instruction Round Table was started in 1977 with the intent to bring together librarians who provide library instruction across all types of libraries–academic, public, school, and special. 2026 marks the 13th year the Librarian Recognition Award has been awarded. Jane Hammons will be presented with a $1,500 cash prize, $1000 stipend to attend an awards ceremony in her honor, and a plaque commemorating the award. She will be honored during a ceremony at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 28 at 5:30 p.m.

Visit LIRT's webpage to find out more about LIRT, its mission, and the awards.
The LIRT Librarian Recognition Awards Subcommittee includes Monica Latham (Colorado State University) – Chair, Bridet Farrell (University of Denver), Dr. Melissa Ann England (Northern Kentucky University), Melissa Herzberg (University of Alabama), & Tammi Stolte (Strafford Middle School Library)