Webinar Series: High-Performing Schools with Effective School Libraries

IFLA School Library Manifesto (2021) & Best Practices of School Librarians in Croatia

Dr. Zvjezdana Dukić

Independent researcher, Zagreb, Croatia

School librarianship in Croatia

- School libraries in Croatia are learning spaces offering many services to all members of the school community

- School librarians are qualified professionals who manage library collections and services and actively support teaching and learning in their schools

- In collaboration with teachers, school librarians guide library users on using library collections and services and run various literacy classes (e.g., information literacy, media literacy, digital literacy)

- School librarians promote students' reading by organizing various reading activities

- Croatian school librarians actively engage with modern technologies in library instruction and their professional development

Reading activities

Library practices of school librarians in Croatia are rich with various reading activities inside and outside the library, often in collaboration with teachers

- Reading lists, book displays, watching movies based on novels

- Invited talks with writers, poets, illustrators, and other experts

- Reading club, library club (boor repair)

- Reading events and projects on the city, state, or international level (e.g., *Reading network, Book night, Party with letters*, Reading together – reading aloud, *Our little library, Let's create eCreatively, eTwinning*)

Examples of various reading projects can be found on the following website*:

https://sites.google.com/view/skolskek-u-godinicitanja/home

*Google translate may be helpful to other language speakers

Library instruction

School librarians in Croatia provide various instructional sessions:

- Library orientation for new students and teachers

- Information, media, and digital literacy lessons and workshops for students to
  - learn how to use various sources of information (books, periodicals, reference resources, Internet) for learning purposes
  - acquire skills to analyze and evaluate messages on various media and to use media to communicate their messages
  - get familiar with various digital tools to perform various learning activities

Library instruction is often performed in collaboration with teachers

Find out more about Croatian school librarians teaching and reading activities in Tam et al. (2017).

School library evaluation

- Evaluation of school library programs and services is crucial for continuous improvement of library practice

- School libraries are responsible for regular monitoring and evaluation of library operations and services by gathering various kinds of evidence, analyzing gathered data, and sharing the results with the school and local community members and stakeholders (IFLA, 2021)

- Evaluation is a substantial component of the evidence-based library and information practice (EBLIP) approach to librarianship (IFLA, 2015)

- EBLIP is defined as a systematic process of evaluating library practice by generating evidence from various sources and using this evidence to improve library practice and to demonstrate the impact of the library on teaching and learning (Brettle, 2017)

Types of evidence

School librarians gather evidence of their library practice from various sources.

- Library statistics – collections, services, budget & staff
- Observation – e.g., users' behavior in the library
- School library users' feedback – users' comments, systematic collections of data from library users
- Evidence from professional interaction with colleagues – informal contacts, meetings, conferences
- Evidence from research and non-research literature

More about the evidence-based practice of school librarians from Croatia you can find in the paper by Tam, Rebrović-Habek & Dukić (2019).

Examples from Croatian school librarary practice

In this presentation, three examples from Croatian school librarians' practice will be demonstrated

These examples are selected because they include the evaluation of library practice based on evidence gathered from participants' feedback

1. Media literacy lesson: *Comics as a medium*
2. Interschool literary project: *I write a story, I read a story*
3. Professional collaboration of school librarians in the virtual community ŽSV *Teams*

1. Media literacy: ***Comics as a medium***

Library lesson *Comics as a medium* was based on the comic book *Durica-small loves* (I. Bednjanec)

The lesson was prepared and performed by school librarian R. Rebrović-Habek in collaboration with the class teacher

Teaching process

1. Introducing the story and its characters through a discussion with students

2. Teaching about comics combined with discussions and activities for students

3. Group work on creating a photo comic using the *Comic Life* application

4. Testing students' acquired knowledge using the *Plickers* smartphone application

Feedback from students

1. Introducing the story

2. Teaching about comics

3. Work on a photo comic

4. Testing knowledge

- After each session students were given a simple graphic quiz about their attitudes to the performed activity
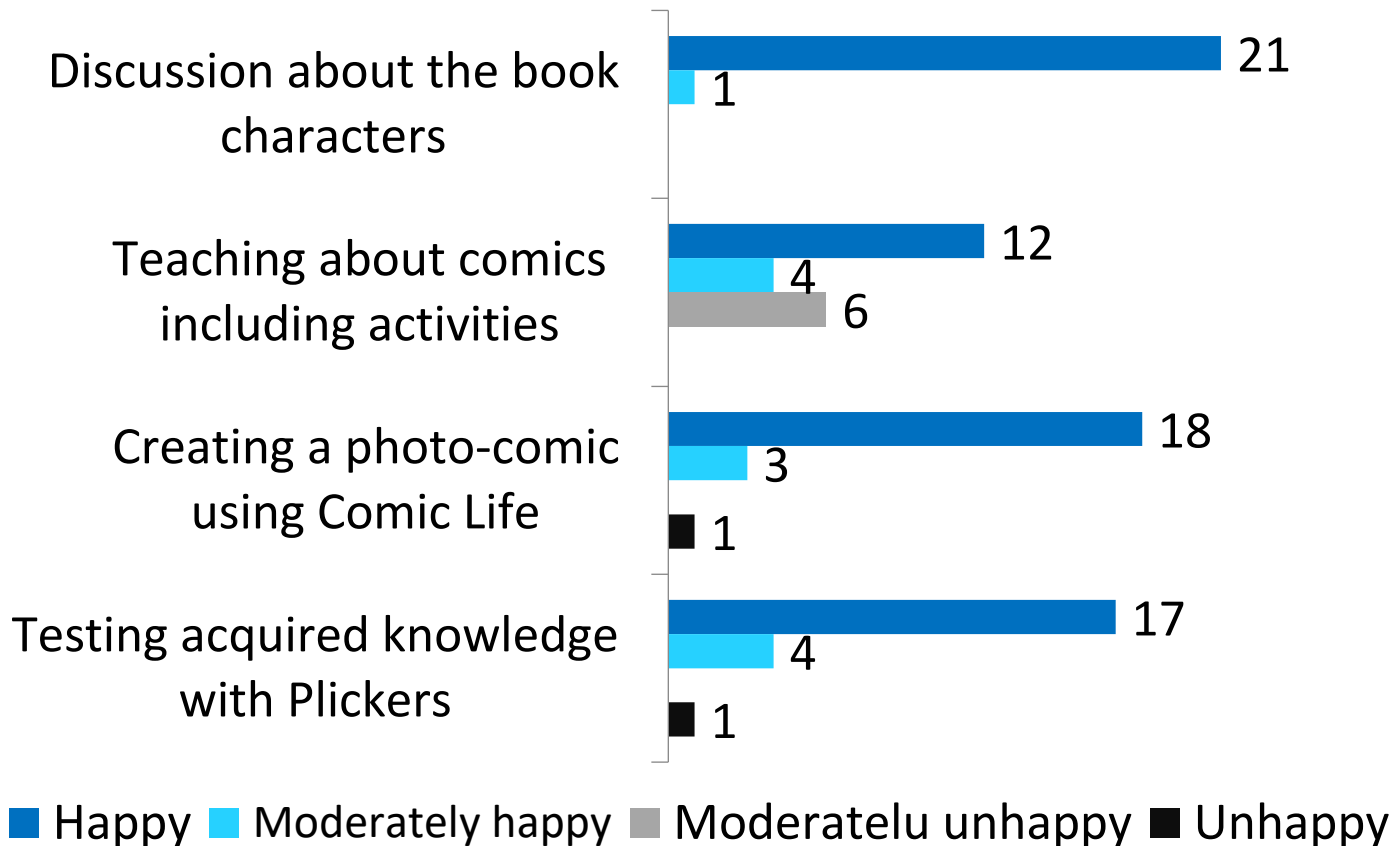

LIBRARY QUIZ

How do you feel about today's library activity?

- At the end of the lesson, a focus group was conducted with 7 students from the class about their thoughts on this lesson

Feedback from students

Students' reaction to 4 lesson components

Discussion about the book characters
- 21 (Happy)
- 1 (Moderately happy)

Teaching about comics including activities
- 12 (Happy)
- 4 (Moderately happy)
- 6 (Moderately unhappy)

Creating a photo-comic using Comic Life
- 18 (Happy)
- 3 (Moderately happy)
- 1 (Unhappy)

Testing acquired knowledge with Plickers
- 17 (Happy)
- 4 (Moderately happy)
- 1 (Unhappy)

Legend: ■ Happy ■ Moderately happy ■ Moderatelu unhappy ■ Unhappy

Takeaways for school librarian

Feedback from the quiz
- Most of students felt well during all lesson components
- Students enjoyed more lesson components requiring their active engagement
- Students enjoy activities involving new technologies

Feedback from the focus group
- Students especially liked the knowledge quiz with *Plickers* and the work on a photo comic with *Comic Life*

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2. Literary project: *I write a story, I read a story*

- In this project school librarians from 7 primary schools in Zagreb (Croatia) implemented an online collaborative tool *Book Creator* to encourage students' writing and reading

- Another goal of this project is to encourage collaboration among school librarians and to promote school libraries in the school community.

- The project is developed by school librarian Katarina Jukić

Book Creator major features

- Contents can always be added or corrected

- It provides many options for graphic editing

- Users can insert images, text, videos, and music, or record their voice

- Completed digital book can be published online, printed or saved as a PDF

The project implementation

The project implementation process includes 4 stages

- 5th - 8th grade students are encouraged to write stories for 1st - 4th grade students

- Each month, one school sends one story to other participating schools

- 1st - 4th grade students read and interpret the story and participate in various activities related to the story

- Students' work is published along with the story, in the joint digital book created in *Book Creator*

The project was implemented during one school year in monthly cycles

Project activities with students

In the course of the project, school librarians encouraged students to

- discuss story topics

- illustrate stories, perform various artworks

- dramatize the story

- expand story parts and write a different story ending

- write messages to the author (praise the story, suggest changes in the story ending, ask questions)

Examples of students' work
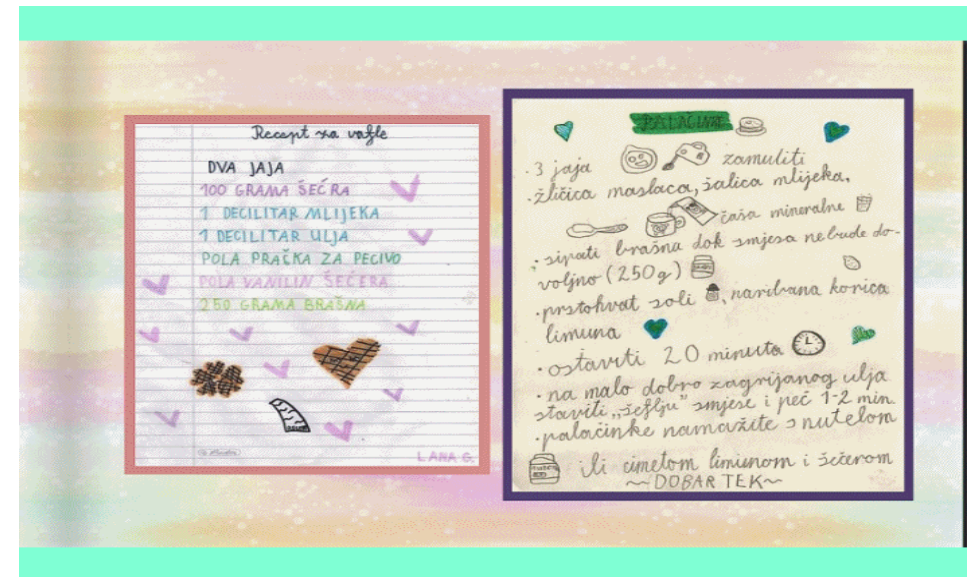
Feedback from school librarians

- After one year of running the project, a short survey was conducted with seven school librarians involved in the project

- A survey included questions about the suitability of *Book Creator* for school library projects and about the use of new technologies in school library programs

- In addition, school librarians were asked to describe students' reactions to the project

Survey questions	Weighted average*
Book Creator is suitable for school librarians' collaboration on joint projects	4.5
Book Creator is easy to use and can be learned quickly	4.63
It is important to implement modern technologies in school library programs	3.63
School librarians need more training on applying new technologies in education	3.88

*A 5 point Likert scale is applied: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Feedback from school librarians

Comments by school librarians about students' reactions to the project

Reactions of students who read and discussed the stories
- Students enjoyed the project
- They liked that the stories were written by older students
- They were active in writing comments to the author of the story
- Students were pleased that their comments were published

Reactions of students story writers
- Students were pleased that their stories were read to students in other schools
- They were delighted with the feedback

Additional benefit from the project
- Students connected with their librarian and showed interest in other library projects

Based on the survey findings it can be concluded that the project was succesful and can serve as a model for school librarians' future work.

3. **ŽSV** virtual community for school librarians' professional work and collaboration

- The **ŽSV** virtual community on *Teams (Microsoft Teams)* was launched by the local school library association (*Županijsko Stručno Vijeće, Zagreb 1*) in March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and a temporary school closure

- School librarians associated with the ŽSV virtual community extensively used this platform to connect and collaborate

- School librarians found the **ŽSV Teams** virtual community very useful for their professional work and collaboration

- They continued to use it regularly when school life was back to normal, and **ŽSV** group members could meet face-to-face again

# *Teams* virtual platform features

Teams is a communication platform developed by *Microsoft*, as part of the *Microsoft 365* group of products

- The platform supports features like chat with threads, video conferencing, file storage, and integration with other *Office 365* apps

- Users can create separate channels focused on specific topics

- Teams analytics provides data on usage patterns of group members

Activities on ŽSV channel *School librarians*

Channels

- General
- Educational games
- School librarians
- Cultural organizations
- Library instruction
- Online digital tools
- Collaboration with teachers
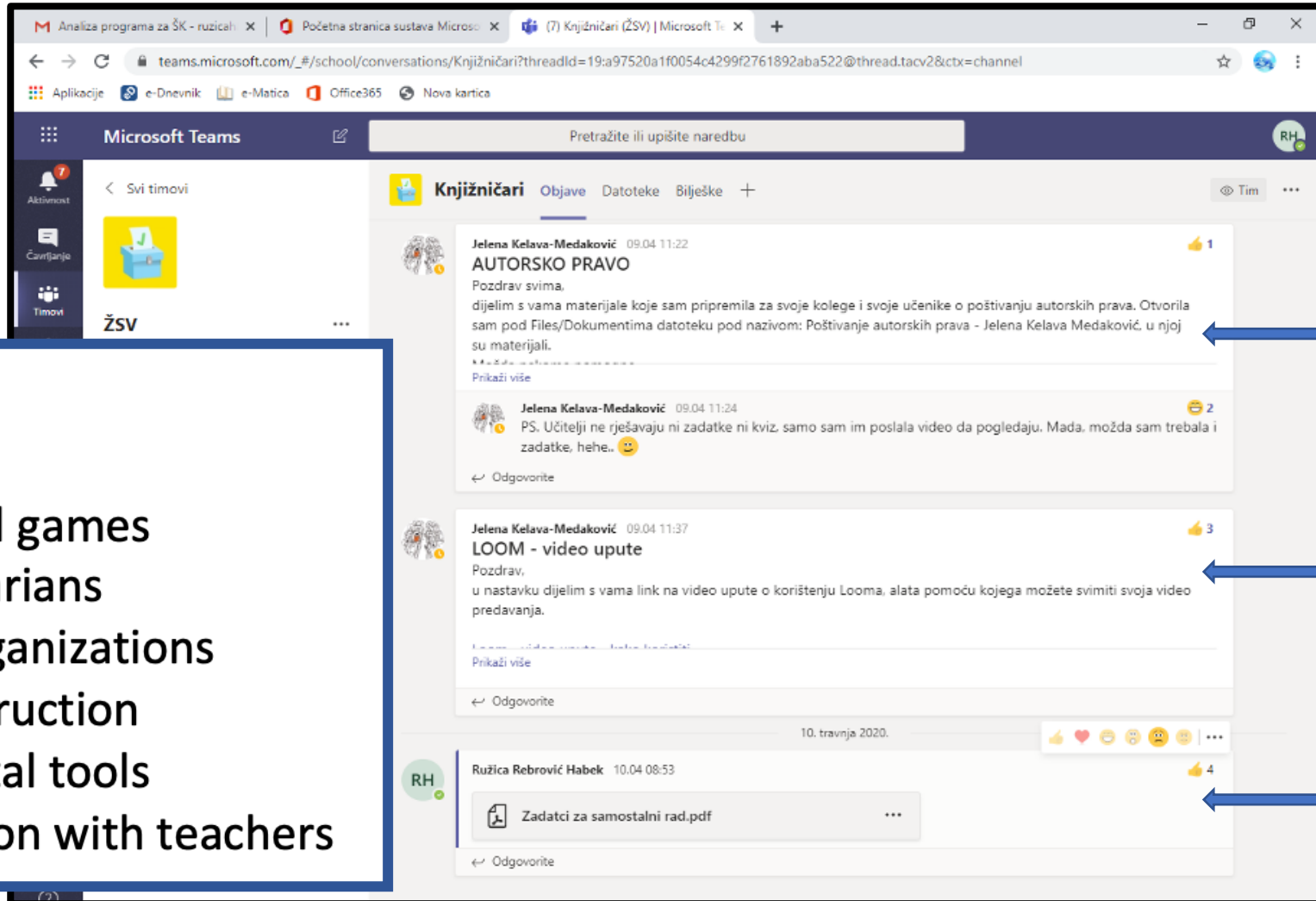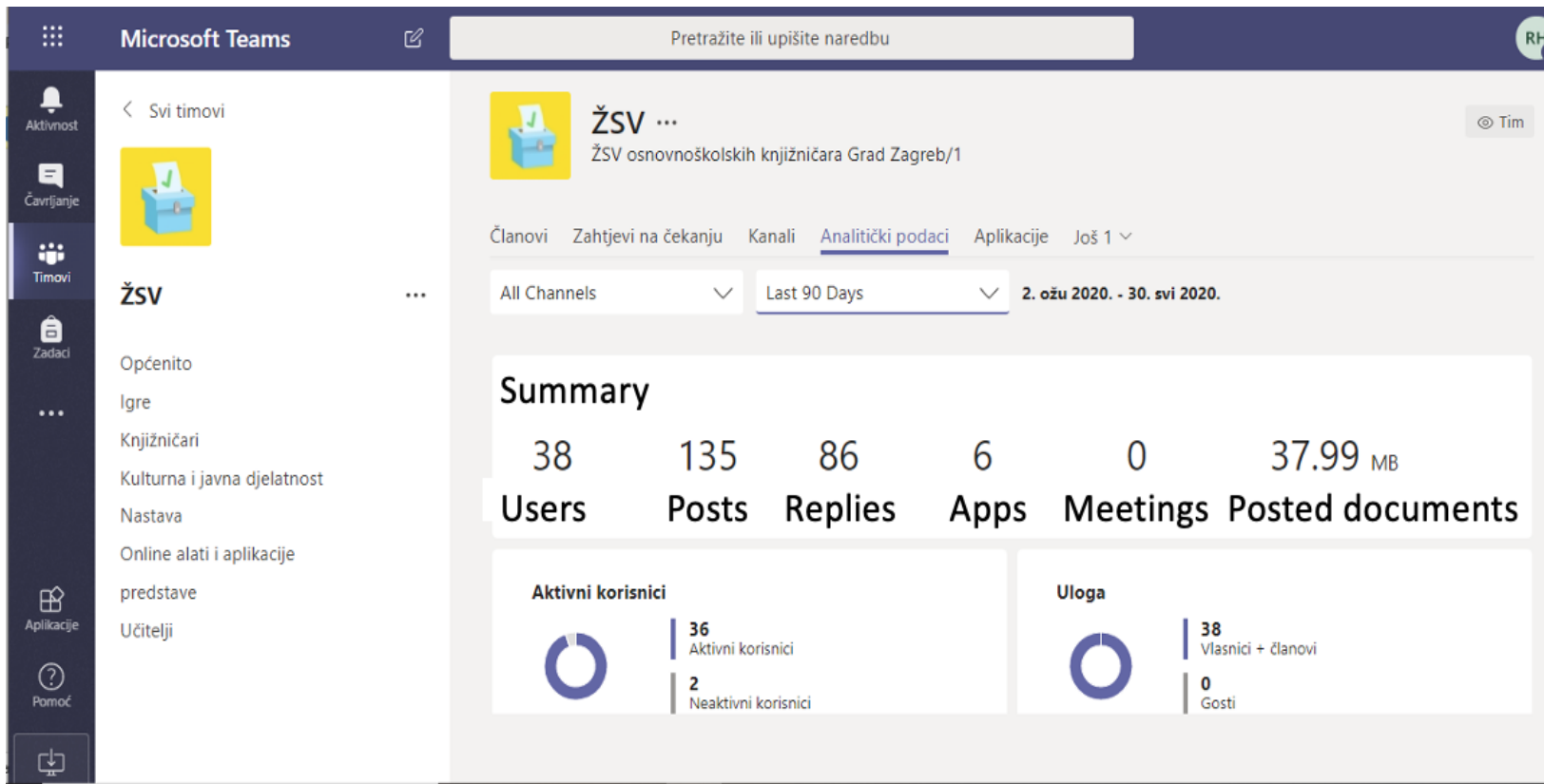
Posts

Teching materials about copyright

Video on using *Loom*

Sharing teaching materials

ŽSV Teams platform analytics

Observed time: **March 2, 2020 - May 30, 2020**

- **38** school librarians joined the **ŽSV Teams**

- **36** active members placed **135** posts and **86** replies

- **6** applications were used

- Posted documents occupied **37.99 MB** on *SharePoint*

ŽSV Teams members' feedback survey

After one year of using ŽSV Teams, a short survey was sent to group members asking them to assess the usefulness of this virtual group.

Assement of the *Teams* platform

	Weighted average*
Teams platform is easy to use	3.91
Teams platform is suitable for professional collaboration	3.94

*1 to 5 points Likert scale (1=stronglu desagree, 5=strongly agree)

Assement of the ŽSV

	Weighted average*
The virtual group is well organized	4,16
Channels are well chosen and interesting	3,78
Discussions by colleagues are stimulating and useful	3,97
Shared resources are of high quality and useful	4,03

*1 to 5 points Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Usefulness of ŽSV channels

	Weighted average*
General	2.75
Educational games	2.53
Professional resources	2.72
Cultural organizations	2.75
Library instruction	2.38
Online digital tools	2.75
Collaboration with teachers	2.38

*1 to 3 points Likert scale
(1=disagree, 2=neutral, 3=agree)

ŽSV Teams project achievements

Based on the findings from *Teams* analytics and school librarians' feedback, it can be concluded that

- ŽSV Teams virtual community is a very successful project that is well accepted by primary school librarians in Zagreb

- Virtual and face-to-face professional collaboration complement each other and bring in a new quality to school librarians' professional work

- *Teams* virtual platform is suitable for primary school librarians' professional collaboration and can be recommended to others

Conclusions and recommendations

- Collecting evidence from school librarians' professional practice is important for enhancing library practice and for library strategic planning

- The process of collection and analysis of specific types of evidence may be a complex task requiring from school librarians to have appropriate knowledge and skills to perform it (e.g., knowledge of research methods and data analysis)

- It can be recommended to LIS educators to include in their curriculum methods and techniques for applying EBLIP in school library practice

- School library associations may organize professional development programs to further enhance school librarians' knowledge and skills in applying EBLIP in their libraries

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Thank you for watching my presentation!

Questions?