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Book Review: Information Literacy: Research and Collaboration Across the Disciplines

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**Review of Susan H. McLeod & Rich Rice (Series Eds.),
*Perspectives on Writing. Information Literacy: Research and
Collaboration across Disciplines,*
Edited by Barbara J. D'Angelo, Sandra Jamieson, Barry Maid,
& Janice R. Walker**

Reviewed by Carrie Forbes, University of Denver

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Recently, some librarians who teach have embraced *situated learning* and the idea that effective learning takes place within the situated context of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Even given research concerning the value of situated learning contexts, however, many disciplinary faculty and teaching librarians continue to view their distinct domains as encompassing bodies of knowledge to be taught, rather than as cultures within which inquiry, discovery, and debate shape knowledge in an iterative and recursive fashion (Farrell & Badke, 2015). In an effort to bridge disciplinary divides and encourage “shared responsibility and accountability” for students’ information literacy (IL) learning outcomes, editors D’Angelo, Jamieson, Maid, and Walker (2017) have compiled this worthwhile collection of essays, which presents research into IL within and across disciplines, as well as case studies of collaborations between librarians and disciplinary faculty (p. 3). The contributing authors also examine the nature of IL through the lens of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015) and attempt to predict the future course of the teaching of information literacy in academic contexts.

The monograph is divided into four parts (Situating Information Literacy, Researching Information Literacy, Incorporating and Evaluating Information Literacy in Specific Courses, and Collaborating to Advance Programmatic Information Literacy), which organize 20 chapters. Part I features essays on the history of IL and notable advances that have been made when academic disciplines have found connections with IL pedagogy, research, and assessment. A series of well-written pieces consider robust collaborations between theory and teaching in the field of writing and rhetoric and the theory and teaching of information literacy; the nature of IL in workplaces; and how the digital environment has effected changes in librarians’ teaching and assessment of IL. Maid and D’Angelo’s chapter

“Threshold Concepts: Integrating and Applying Information Literacy and Writing Instruction” is especially notable and succinctly explores *threshold concepts* and *metaliteracy*. Both are now often referenced by librarians who teach, but are frequently misunderstood. Chapters in Part II of the book focus on current research into how students and other information consumers search for evidence and construct knowledge. Here, multiple authors consider the *Framework*, with a focus on the frame *scholarship as a conversation*.

Based on the book’s title, I anticipated a focus on case studies of cross-disciplinary, information literacy collaborations. It is not until Part III, however, that the included essays address the complexities and nuances of incorporating IL assignments and teaching in courses from education to economics. Additional chapters in this section provide academic librarians with practical information that can be applied to any disciplinary area and examine infographics, the use of Zotero in research instruction, and how the concepts of quantitative reasoning may be applied to IL teaching. To round out the book, the five chapters in Part IV describe librarians’ extensive efforts to build collaborations with disciplinary faculty and departments, in order to move away from *one-shot* information literacy instruction sessions and toward comprehensive, programmatic efforts that embed information literacy research and pedagogy throughout curricula.

Information Literacy: Research and Collaboration across Disciplines is a recommended read for new instruction and reference librarians, as well as for faculty who are interested in approaches to integrating information literacy within academic disciplines. The predominant focus of this collection is on the history of information literacy teaching and research, from *one-shots* through to writing and research across curricula, and from the original ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (2000) through to the *Framework*. The majority of the cross-disciplinary research and praxis that is described in the book is situated at the intersections of research and writing processes. The fields of English composition and writing and rhetoric have a well-established history of collaboration with librarians in relation to information literacy; commonly-required, first-year undergraduate courses in these disciplines are well suited to programmatic IL efforts. Instruction librarians also owe much to theory from writing, which they have drawn on in advancing and improving their teaching practices. While many seasoned librarians may be familiar with the ideas that are presented in the initial sections of this book, they will still find substantial value in the included theoretical discussions concerning disciplinary

practices in IL and the case studies of sustainable models for programmatic IL integration. This collection also provides an excellent and thorough overview of IL concepts, research, and teaching practices that will interest librarians who are new to this subject area. Experienced subject/liaison librarians may be better served by other texts that have a stronger focus on disciplinary-specific IL practices within the sciences, social sciences, or humanities.

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Part of the Perspectives on Writing series, available at
<https://wac.colostate.edu/books/infolit/collection.pdf>.

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