

JLSC

ISSN 2162-3309 | JLSC is published by the Pacific University Libraries | <http://jisc-pub.org>

Volume 6, General Issue (2018)

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Whitney Curtis

Curtis, W. (2018). Metaliteracy in Practice [Book Review]. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 6(General Issue), eP2275. <https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2275>



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BOOK REVIEW

Metaliteracy in Practice

by Whitney Curtis

2016 | ALA Neal-Shulman | 256 pages, softcover | ISBN-13: 978-0838913796 | U.S. \$70.00

Metaliteracy in Practice is a collaboration of information professionals and teachers that takes readers through the practical application of using the metaliteracy framework laid out in the 2014 book *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners*. The contributors to *Metaliteracy in Practice* outline their practical use of Mackey and Jacobsen's metaliteracy framework and multiple paths to engage in metacognitive thinking and active engagement in online, hands-on learning environments.

The foreword and opening chapter position information literacy in relation to today's students and their future professional lives. They also include an overview of the metaliteracy literature, whose relevance to various learning environments is illuminated by subsequent chapters. The final chapter considers metaliteracy as it relates to literacy education in general, concluding that metaliteracy cannot be contained within a single framework.

Despite chapter contributors' different approaches to teaching using metaliteracy, there are several common themes throughout the book. One unifying thread is students' use of particular digital platforms and tools to create and evaluate information. However, all of the authors agree that the goal is less to master the platforms and tools than to increase the knowledge and abilities transferable by the work, regardless of the platform or tools used. In chapter 1, authors Donna Witek and Teresa Grettano examine their social media literacy course and how students use a variety of social media platforms. In chapter 4, Amanda Scull illustrates another example of her students' use of an assortment of library-provided platforms, such as digital repositories and LibGuides, to learn about library collections and information creation. Digital repositories offer unique opportunities to teach students the research process from knowledge acquisition through scholarly dissemination in an



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online, open access environment. Using institutional repositories in information literacy instruction rather than tried-and-true subscription databases encourages collaboration, contribution to the scholarly process, and engagement with dynamic content. Additionally, using these types of resources decreases a library's dependence on expensive subscription databases and creates instruction relevant to 21st-century learners. Finally, students who don't pursue graduate studies are unlikely to have access to subscription databases. There is no guarantee they could apply the information skills they learned in closed database environments in an open source environment. Promotion of research activities using sources like digital repositories helps create a foundation for lifelong learning.

Chapter 4 further illustrates how the history students at Keene State College transcribe Civil War-era letters that are added to the institutional repository, combining both primary source literacy and digital literacy. The records they create include their names, which allows them to include these documents in a future portfolio or research. At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, students use the institutional repository to conduct research and then build on the existing collections by contributing their own work at the end of the course. The course also includes a poster presentation, which allows the students to learn the process from beginning to end: identifying relevant sources in the repository, understanding authors' rights and copyright, presenting, and disseminating research.

Finally, an institutional repository can be used to show students how to develop research ideas and conduct a literature review. The author provides an excellent example of how one-shot instruction sessions on how to use the repository's interface are an effective way to introduce students to open access and the scholarship cycle.

In chapter 6, Michele Santamaria and Kathryn Moncrief use their students' contributions to the digital, open access project Map of Early Modern London (MoEML; <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca>) to highlight their course's focus on metacognition and research-based learning. The components of the students' coursework and the nature of the MoEML educational partnership aligned with metaliteracy characteristics in their dynamically digital nature and their semester-long emphasis on student collaboration. The course also offered students an open access alternative to subscription-based databases.

Another prevailing theme throughout the book is metaliteracy's relevance to professional contexts. For example, in chapter 3 Barbara D'Angelo and Barry Maid highlight their research and writing course, in which nursing students created and shared information using digital media and e-portfolios. In chapter 5, Sandra Cimbricz and Logan Rath detail their use of metaliteracy principles in a graduate course in education. In this course, the

graduate students reviewed their own literacy practices to develop instructional materials and curricula for grades 5–12.

While the entire book addressed the social and political aspects of information, as well as information practices vital to metacognitive thinking and knowledge creation, they were specially highlighted in certain chapters. For example, in chapter 2 Lauren Wallis and Andrew Battista outline their information literacy course, which stressed the role of students as information creators and the contextual nature of authority. Students contributed to a class blog, edited Wikipedia, wrote BuzzFeed articles, and researched topics in order to create something other than a traditional written essay, which the authors referred to as a Bizzaro Research “Paper.” These alternative research methods promoted collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, and challenged traditional reliance on “text-based information, produced by and for academic communities” (p. 27). In chapter 7, Kristine Stewart and David Broussard discuss their reconfiguration of their library information literacy course using both metaliteracy and the ACRL Framework to cultivate self-directed learning and student empowerment. Irene McGarrity writes in chapter 8 about how she and Jennifer Ditkoff encouraged ownership and agency in the learning process by inviting their students to cocreate central modules of their course. Throughout the course, the students direct the content and create the assignments, and are heavily involved in social networks outside the classroom. This chapter elucidates both the advantages and the disadvantages of having students create course content.

Metaliteracy in Practice is a valuable tool in the library and information science arsenal. Throughout the book, authors discuss the shift from information literacy to metaliteracy and how it runs parallel to the evolution of learner-centered, collaborative, and participatory models of education. This paradigm shift has caused or should cause librarians to make changes in their overall information literacy programs and in their own lesson plans and classroom activities. It is an excellent resource for librarians to use to revisit how they work with students and collaborate with professors to incorporate metaliteracy into their curriculum.

BIOGRAPHY

Whitney A. Curtis is the Associate Director/Head of Public Services at Barry University Dwayne O. Andreas School of Law in Orlando, FL. Prior to entering librarianship, she was a practicing attorney in New Jersey for a number of years. Her research interests include assessment, technology/innovation in education, and online learning.