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Article

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Jacobsen, Trudie, E. and Mackey, Thomas P. *Metaliteracy in practice*. London: Facet. 2015. 224 pages. ISBN 9781783300938

This book is a follow up to a previous text by the editors, which provided a theoretical framework, and serves as a more practical approach. This framework is applied throughout the case studies in this text. It is an edited publication that draws together case studies from across American universities and colleges which apply many of these theoretical principles.

The Foreword observes that, although graduates can synthesise and evaluate sources, they are not entering the workforce with the critical thinking skills required It calls for faculty and librarians to enable students to question information, rather than become 'strategic learners among the digital generation'. The Preface goes on to claim that Metaliteracy (ML) is a reinvention of information literacy (IL).

Chapter 1 reports on the integration and application of social media in an assignment. It emphasises the importance of focusing less on the tools, but more on the 'conceptual learning goals' of the task, looking at different iterations of the course and why it was revised. The authors stress the importance of being critically aware of what tutors and students are doing with information to prevent social media tools themselves from influencing an outcome.

A key goal of the course is reflection-oriented to recognise learners' own online behaviour. Changing the syllabus from task-focused criteria to specific learning outcomes (e.g. identity) aims to provide a more holistic, outward-facing experience for the learners. This chapter finishes by setting the scene for subsequent chapters by providing an extensive list of references.

Chapter 2 establishes a recurring ML theme through the book, that of students as active creators of material rather than learning passively**.** The notions of questioning, critiquing, conceptualising and feminist pedagogy are discussed, plus a nod to credit-bearing information literacy classes.

The authors argue that ML aims to empower students to take control of their learning. The tutors enabled the students to decide, to some extent, what was to be covered in class and lead discussions. ML learning goals focus on knowledge gained through activities and emotional responses which are based on critical self-reflection. This idea is scaled up to consider how information is produced at a wider national level, taking into account (and challenging) corporate and government power, and personal privacy.

Many academics (in the USA at least) only accept sources which have been filtered through an academic approval system, such as peer review. This restricts students' scope of research severely and provides an interesting perspective. This course will undoubtedly help the students in their wider studies, but it is a shame that this method has not been embedded in any curricula. The chapter ends by promoting the position of librarians and their 'bigger picture' of the different approaches of faculties and their attitudes to research.

Chapter 3 discusses courses with the aim of achieving a meta approach to IL and writing communication. The authors explore the effect of ML on IL. They acknowledge the Council of Program Writing Administrators' framework who promote 'habits of mind ', such as curiosity

and creativity rather than the typical skills associated with learning outcomes. This idea would certainly be useful when setting up or reviewing a course, and this example aligns to these to some extent.

The themes of communication and collaboration, both entirely applicable to ML, run through this chapter. Linked to these are the notions of evidence-based and reflective practices which draw on a range of IL and critical thinking perspectives. Shared responsibility and accountability between students and tutors is noted as a key achievement and move towards a model of 'fusing literacies' alongside the discipline-related skill of reflection.

The fourth chapter asserts that most teaching undertaken by librarians is focused on databases and subscription content. The author argues that the types of information US students choose to use for their assignments now come from a much broader range of sources and therefore require an alternative teaching approach. From a UK perspective I'm not sure this is the case as librarians have worked closely with faculty here for many years to tailor tuition. The increase in Open Access publishing and institutional repositories (IR) is discussed as a positive counteraction to expensive databases. Teaching the evaluation of sources is recommended, which is also practised widely in UK academic libraries.

Submitting students' own resources to an IR, where they can feel part of an institution's community, is discussed, complementing the development of key skills. An alternative approach is suggested for students– the idea of writing LibGuides, which document the findings of the students' own research. Training in the use of LibGuides enables librarians to branch out from traditional instruction and get involved in the local curation of research. The author emphasises the importance of collaboration, a key ML trait. However, there are several tools which enable this, such as VLEs, it just requires librarians gaining access to modules in order to see this as a mainstream activity.

The complications and opportunities related to assessment in this area demonstrate a shift in the traditional marking approach, but student reflection is once again suggested as part of a wider professional portfolio. The chapter ends on a call for librarians to be embedded in courses and to play an active role in online teaching.

Chapter 5 documents a Masters course aimed at newly qualified teachers called Critical Multiliteracies, aiming to equip the children they teach with appropriate ML skills. The course's somewhat ambitious goals of learner empowerment, and individual and social transformation focus on the impact of the teachers' actions. This notion contributed to the overall course design and in turn enabled the course tutors to consider their own teaching approaches. The tutors discuss the opportunity to experience researcher reflexivity, giving them insights into their own approaches - a valuable asset in HE, but also useful for their teacher students if this skill was taught.

The course was informed continually by student feedback. It would be interesting to know how, and to what extent, this was achieved, but it is not developed here. This chapter touches on debates which have existed for a number of years – what constitutes a text and assumptions concerning students' digital abilities.

Chapter 6 introduces a drama and writing class where, traditionally, solo research has featured heavily. However, an important goal for the authors was to make research collaborative. This study was part of a wider OER project, and this digital initiative included a range of social media elements which the students utilised and contributed to.

Raffaela Negretti's works on ML are acknowledged elsewhere in the book, but this chapter explores the 'hows' and the 'whys' of student strategies during academic writing, plus activities for students to enhance their own regulation of learning. The chapter ends with reflections from the tutors on how to improve for future cohorts and tips for anyone replicating this approach.

In contrast to previous examples, the seventh chapter looks at students' application of ML outside the classroom. Quantitative methods of assessment, standards and frameworks are critiqued in terms of their limitations, which establishes the need for a new approach. Various limitations and the recommendation of Mackey and Jacobsen's framework alongside the application to 'one-shot' instructional library IL sessions bring this chapter to a close.

Chapter 8 emphasises the socially active role of the learner over the passive – a social constructivist model. The literature background provides quite a heavy theory-led section. Reinforcing previous contributors, this chapter discusses 'one-shot' library teaching sessions. However, the author asserts that that librarians should not own information teaching, it should be embedded and supported across institutions. This validates the notion that IL cannot be taught in an hour and should be given time and separate opportunities to develop.

The goal of the course was to analyse 'the online worlds where (students) interact daily'. Students were given a rubric and expected to create their own assignments to meet criteria. Here the skill of reflection features heavily, demonstrating student anxieties about a lack of structure and direction. Recommendations are provided to address mixed student feedback.

The final chapter offers a sobering, more philosophical argument to the (over) use of frameworks and literacies. A range of themes are offered amongst a discussion of society as a whole and identity, drawing heavily on the works of Bourdieu and Freire. Overall the author seeks to keep the debate alive surrounding what the best approach is for our learners, making sure we don't rely on existing literacies and frameworks to keep an open mind on when to adopt them.

The text as a whole offers many examples on courses which have incorporated ML to varying degrees of success. There is a lot of overlap; all accounts appear to promote reflection, collaboration and peer learning, but primarily the student as producer rather than consumer of information. These are the key strategies to encourage ML it seems.

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