

BOOK REVIEWS

BREIVIK, PATRICIA S., AND GEE, E. GORDON. **Information Literacy: Revolution in the Library.** New York: Macmillan, 1989. (The American Council on Education/Macmillan Series on Higher Education.) 250 p. \$24.95. ISBN: 0-02-911440-3.

The full intent of this title is not evident until one reads several chapters and gets a picture of the challenging vision both authors have for academic libraries. Their aim, as stated on the dust cover, is to "take a close, critical look at the potential of academic libraries as key campus resources in the Information Age." As Gee writes in the preface, this is a book of "advocacy for the quality learning, research, and service that can occur on campuses where more imaginative use is made of academic libraries." The authors' intent is to challenge academic administrators to create new partnerships with librarians, and this is, indeed, a major theme. The book might have been more descriptively titled *Information Literacy: Crucial Roles for Academic Libraries*. It attempts, and succeeds, to go beyond reports calling for reform in higher education. The authors use these as a base, with sufficient citations, to establish where higher education is and what the major concerns are. The authors make the point that strategies for educational reform give little, if any, attention to the potential role of the academic library. They use these reports to set the stage for discussion of possible solutions involving the academic library. The book, beyond the first twenty-nine pages, is about these solutions. This is an applied and descriptive approach to information literacy, as opposed to an historical treatment.

The authors' working definition of information literacy is one proposed by two faculty members at the University of Colorado at Denver:

Information literacy is the ability to effectively access and evaluate information for a given need. It includes an integrated set of skills (research strategy and evaluation) and knowledge of tools and resources.

In the first two chapters, Gee and Breivik put information literacy in context with other concepts about information. The authors view information literacy as a natural expansion of problem-solving skills because an adequate and accurate information base is needed before a problem can be solved. Computer literacy is proven to have too narrow a focus because it concentrates on technology rather than the broader issues of information retrieval and management. Computer literacy is, in the authors' view, a subset of information literacy. In this way, they clarify the difference between "information literacy" and "information technology."

Following are some of the key points made by the authors:

- A critical partnership needs to be established between the university president and the library director. The partnership between the two authors, which inspired the book, began in 1985. Gee is the president of the University of Colorado, and Breivik is the director of the Auraria Library, University of Colorado at Denver.

- Partnerships between librarians and classroom faculty should be built parallel to those between the library director and president; this fosters integration of information-literacy education across the curriculum and promotes research productivity. The authors strongly encourage the inclusion of librarians on research teams, as well as support for their work as independent researchers. Some of the benefits claimed are increased research productivity and reduced duplication of effort.

- Emphasis should be placed on

access versus acquisition, with a matching change in the values and standards used to measure libraries.

- Myths (e.g., that automation or resource sharing save money) are debunked and replaced with more realistic reasons for such activities and pragmatic guidelines for planning.

- Institutional commitment is stressed. Commitment is translated as leadership from the president, library director, and academic vice-presidents—combined with a serious program of faculty development to promote the concepts presented in the book.

- A strong case is made for a library education background for the information officer on campuses where computer, media, and library centers are being merged. The book provides a good description of what is expected of this person and a brief job description.

In addition to these points, three separate chapters are devoted to how libraries can contribute to reforming instruction, to increasing research productivity, and to assisting university administrators in effectiveness. Librarians' roles in planning, fund-raising, applying for grants and contracts, and recruiting and retaining students are part of these chapters.

Another chapter is devoted to developing relations with the local business community for the purpose of meeting information needs while cultivating funding and political support. Chapters seven through ten describe major changes occurring in libraries: those affecting the internal operations (including collection development, information technology, information management, relations with campus computer centers, and buildings and furnishings); the importance of technological change in increasing campus access to information; personnel is-

sues (including hiring and evaluating library directors, making changes in personnel and organizational structures in libraries, and granting faculty status for librarians); and financial innovations.

Information Literacy focuses on undergraduate education. It also makes repeated mention of the public library as a source of life-long learning resources and activities after students leave school. The authors propose that student preparation for using academic libraries should also prepare them for using public libraries. In the chapter on services to the community, specific links to public libraries are promoted, and illustrative examples are included. Cooperative programs with school libraries and high schools are discussed under student recruitment and retention.

The eleven chapters in the book are followed by three appendices: the prologue and major recommendations of the Carnegie Foundation's report on colleges, accreditation standards for academic support of off-campus programs, and an evaluation form for University of Colorado library directors. These are followed by 358 references, organized by chapter, which cite primarily the literatures of librarianship and education. Included are scattered references from architecture, history, and computer science as well. Most of these references are current—many from 1987 and 1988. Quotes from several recent symposia and conferences are also included, and some current unpublished efforts are cited. Following the notes is an eleven-item annotated bibliography that includes such items as *Academic Libraries: The Changing Knowledge Centers of Colleges and Universities* [1] and *Alliance for Excellence* [2]. A useful eight-page index completes the book.

The writing is straightforward and thus, easy to read. One of the major features and a plus are the

many examples of successful programs. Most are from public academic libraries, particularly those in Colorado, but there are also those from community colleges, private institutions, state library systems, and others. Examples are from all parts of the country. Enough information is given about each example in the narrative to help the reader appreciate its value. Some examples from medical librarianship include citations to the Matheson report [3], the IAIMS grant programs, and the clinical medical librarianship literature.

Both authors appear well qualified to write this book. Breivik was appointed to the American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy in 1987, which produced its *Final Report* in January 1989 [4]. She and Gee jointly arranged a national symposium, "Libraries and the Search for Academic Excellence," in March 1987 at Columbia University to promote an active educational role for libraries. Breivik also edited a book by the same title with Robert Wedgeworth, published by Scarecrow Press in 1988, which includes papers from the symposium [5]. She has several other publications to her credit on the topics of library instruction and the information society.

A minor complaint is that the title and the chapter headings could be more descriptive, or the table of contents could have included brief annotations of the chapters. In light of the audience, a *Harvard Business Review* style on this point would have been appropriate. Fine editing has been done; the only proofreading inaccuracy encountered was in chapter four where the reference numbers are out of sequence with the text because several numbers were missed. The references are included in the list for that chapter, and one can guess where they should have appeared.

In comparing this to the ALA *Fi-*

nal Report [6], the latter is more polished and serves as a brief introduction to the topic; its language is more general and examples are few. There is some overlap in phraseology and references. The *Final Report's* brevity may make it useful as a type of executive summary, but the pragmatic approach and greater depth of *Information Literacy: Revolution in the Library* will have more impact on administrators.

For the academic library reader, there is not much new in the book, providing one has followed the information literacy and information management education literature. However, the examples of programs mentioned may be new and may inspire ideas. The book also allows the reader to step back and get a broader picture of the impact and use of technology as it relates to information literacy. This book is really written for academic administrators and would be a book to buy and place on your chief administrators' desks. Do not let it go at that, however; take them out to lunch afterward—ask them about their reactions and discuss ways to build a stronger partnership.

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2. U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT, CENTER FOR LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT. Alliance for excellence: librarians respond to "A nation at risk": recommendations and strategies from libraries and the learning society. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984.
3. MATHESON NW, COOPER JAD. Academic information in the academic

health sciences center: roles for the library in information management. *J Med Educ* 1982 Oct;57,pt.2:1-93.

4. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION LITERACY. Final report. Chicago: The Association, 1989.

5. BREIVIK PS, WEDGEWORTH R, EDS. Libraries and the search for academic excellence. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1988.

6. AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, op. cit.

PAO, MIRANDA LEE. **Concepts of Information Retrieval**. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1989. 285 p. \$28.50. ISBN: 0-87287-405-2.

In the preface to *Concepts of Information Retrieval*, Miranda Lee Pao states that "there is a definable domain for our discipline that is not covered by . . . information professionals in other disciplines. . . there is a body of concepts, principles and ideas that are uniquely our own." It is this domain that Ms. Pao has laid out in her book. Intended primarily as a text, it is based upon a course developed originally by Tefko Saracevic at Case Western Reserve University and subsequently taught by Ms. Pao. The book is a carefully referenced and well-written addition to the basic library of information science materials.

Although the text could easily be used as the frame around which to build a course on information retrieval, selected sections could also be used to enrich a practice-based seminar or workshop on retrieval techniques. It complements and is on a par with Stephen Harter's more specialized *Online Information Retrieval: Concepts, Principles and Techniques* [1]. Part one covers basic phenomena—the literature, its users, and the concept of relevance. Part two, the bulk of the book, covers information retrieval systems. The design, selection, information representation, file or-

ganization, question analysis, and dissemination are presented clearly, with ample use of figures and tables to illustrate points.

Included are, for example, figures depicting the elements of indexing and a model of the process of question asking and question answering. Separate tables show samples of a linear file and an inverted file. A brief treatment of the evaluation and measurement of information systems and services follows in part three. A cursory treatment of artificial intelligence and expert systems concludes the work.

All the basics are here and all the big names—Saul Herner, Lois Lunin, Hans Peter Luhn, and Robert S. Taylor among others. The references at the end of each chapter and the final bibliography comprise a well-chosen list of documents in information retrieval. The care that went into the writing of this text is evident in every chapter. Congratulations to Ms. Pao!

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Reference

1. HARTER SP. *Online information retrieval: concepts, principles, and techniques*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1986.

GRIFFITH, H. WINTER. **Instructions for Patients: Medical Tests and Diagnostic Procedures**. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1989. \$39.50. ISBN: 0-8121-1257-1.

Each year some 10 billion tests and procedures are ordered at a cost to patients and third-party payers of between \$100 and \$150 billion. Increasingly, patients are questioning the need and the reliability of many of these procedures. This compilation of over 400 tests and diagnostic procedures is aimed at

helping physicians answer patients' questions. Listed alphabetically by test name, each test is arranged on a reproducible one-page chart, which is perforated for easy removal. Exactly the same format is used for each test. Each entry includes basic information on whether the test is performed on blood, urine, skin, or directly on the body; the length of time the test takes; its purpose; where it is performed and by whom; the risks and benefits; the pain and discomfort associated with the test; the equipment used; immediate post-test care and what, if any, restrictions on activity may be required after the test; the time it takes for results to become available; test values and normal values; possible meanings of abnormal values; and drugs or other factors that may affect test results. Eleven appendices present lists of what abnormal test results may indicate, disorders and drugs that may affect results, and tests by type.

This publication is almost identical to Dr. Griffith's *Complete Guide to Medical Tests* [1], which includes more introductory matter, estimated cost for each test, different appendices, a list of home self-tests, and a glossary of medical terms. Unlike the *Complete Guide, Instructions for Patients* does not list any cost estimate for each test, nor whether a test is available as a home self-test.

Neither book defines what "good" means with regard to the reliability of a test. Thus, there is no way of knowing whether "good" means a particular test is reliable 98% of the time or 52%. Cathey and Edward R. Pinckney, M.D., in the *Patient's Guide to Medical Tests* [2], provide just such information, indicating accuracy and significance as a percentage. They also provide more data on possible risks associated with each procedure and the level of pain and discomfort that a test may cause.

Unfortunately none of the books