

Book Review: Metaliteracy in Practice, edited by Trudi E. Jacobson and Thomas P. Mackey, Chicago, IL: Neal-Schuman, 224 pp., ISBN: 978-0-8389-1379-6, \$70.00.

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Abstract:

Metaliteracy is a reframing of information literacy that “emphasizes the metacognitive dimension of learning and the active roles we play as producers of original and repurposed information” (p. xvi). Editors Trudi Jacobson (Head of the Information Literacy Department, University Libraries, University at Albany SUNY) and Thomas Mackey (Vice-Provost for Academic Programs, SUNY Empire State College) coined the term in a 2011 article and further explored it in their 2014 book *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners*. Metaliteracy has recently gained recognition in the field of information literacy, primarily through its influence on the Association of College and Research Libraries *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. A foreword by Allison Head (from Project Information Literacy) and a preface by the editors situate this book at the intersection of metaliteracy, the *Framework*, and teaching practice, briefly explaining the theoretical terrain in which the practical applications described in the case studies exist.

Keywords: metaliteracy | information literacy | book review | case studies

Article:

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metaliteracy, the *Framework*, and teaching practice, briefly explaining the theoretical terrain in which the practical applications described in the case studies exist.

Seven of the nine chapters are case studies of (as the title promises) metaliteracy in practice. Each case study includes the same basic elements: an introduction, a brief literature review, information about the context (institutional and/or disciplinary), an in-depth description of the course in which metaliteracy is applied, and a conclusion. This consistency in formatting, supported by the use of clear sub-headings within each chapter, facilitates reading and makes the cases easy to scan back through to locate specific details. Many chapters are also supported by useful figures and tables that present key information in an easily digestible format.

Jacobson and Mackey have done an excellent job of including case studies from different academic disciplines, featuring courses in rhetoric, information literacy, nursing, education, and literature; several chapters are co-authored by librarians and disciplinary faculty, highlighting the collaborative potential of metaliteracy. All of the contributors provide a great deal of detail about their specific instructional scenarios, including course goals, course descriptions, assignment descriptions, and assessment techniques. Librarians and teaching faculty looking to design or redesign courses with metaliteracy goals in mind will find plenty of inspiration here. Unfortunately, librarians working in instruction programs that rely on one-shot information literacy sessions are likely to be less satisfied. All seven of the case studies focus on semester-long, credit-bearing courses, and the authors of at least one chapter (Stewart and Broussard, “Promoting Empowerment Through Metaliteracy”) argue that metaliteracy cannot be effectively integrated into a one-shot model. While an approach that prioritizes embeddedness and collaboration might be the ideal path for integrating metaliteracy into higher education curricula, that path is far in the distance for many instruction librarians.

While the seven case studies are consistently well-written and feature innovative assignments and teaching strategies, the two remaining chapters are noteworthy for their different approaches. Amanda Scull intentionally connects collections with instruction and metaliteracy in “Where Collections and Metaliteracy Meet,” exploring the relationship between “library-curated content” (specifically institutional repositories and LibGuides) and metaliteracy goals. Scull explores these platforms as potential spaces to engage students in metaliteracy as content consumers, curators, and creators. In the final chapter, Paul Prinsloo (Research Professor, University of South Africa) explores intersections of literacy (including metaliteracy), agency, and praxis. Prinsloo's writing is more philosophical than the preceding chapters, but his exploration is in keeping with the spirit of metaliteracy, which encourages self-reflection.

Metaliteracy in Practice is a welcome addition to Jacobson and Mackey's body of work on metaliteracy. Faculty in many disciplines are likely to find the case studies useful, but academic instruction librarians who have the opportunities to teach or co-teach semester-long courses will get the most out of this collection. Instruction librarians with limited opportunities beyond one-shot research workshops will not find anything directly applicable here, but may find the case studies useful in engaging with faculty around ideas related to metaliteracy.