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Book review

Ishiyama, J., Miller, W.J. and Simon, E. (eds). 2015. *Handbook on teaching and learning in political science and international relations*. Cheltenham: Elgar. pp 496. ISBN 978-1-782-54847-8. £150.00. Hbk.

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It is a welcome sight to see chapters on information literacy (IL) in a subject-specific handbook for teaching and learning. Although, as the title indicates, this book focuses on the teaching of Political Science and International Relations, there are several chapters relevant to the LIS educator and practitioner.

Of most relevance are Chapters 11 and 3: 'Promoting information literacy and information research' and 'Teaching Politics to Practitioners'. 'Promoting information literacy and information research' (Stephen Thornton, pp.121-131) is designed to provide educators in Political Science and International Relations with an introduction to the concept of IL and makes recommendations as to what can be done to support students' information skills. This chapter is clear and understandable for educators outside of Library and Information Studies (LIS). Parts of the contextual background may therefore be useful to subject librarians seeking to introduce teaching staff to the concept of IL, and the suggested reflective exercises and workshop structures may be used by Political Sciences subject librarians or be adapted by other subject librarians.

Although some of the metaphors used (for example, 'information obesity' and 'digital natives') are somewhat troublesome, the message of the chapter overall is that engagement with IL, in cooperation with subject librarians, is a worthwhile and beneficial endeavour for teaching staff, because students *do* struggle and *do* need support. Readers of this journal surely would not refute this, but it is a message still to reach many academic departments. The background, recommendations and practical examples will hopefully be a useful starting point for strengthening relationships between academic departments and their librarians. The justification of the benefits of collaboration between academic departments and library services to engage in IL instruction may also serve as a useful advocacy tool.

Chapter 3: 'Teaching Politics to Practitioners' (John Craig. pp.28-34), although not consciously related to IL, is an engaging short chapter on teaching aspects of political science to practitioners in public services. The chapter considers what kinds of practitioner are likely to engage in the study of politics, and then explores how curriculum design and pedagogic strategy can support these learners.

Public sector managers may engage in the study of politics for career aspirations and contextual reasons such as changing relationships between the state, market and society. Using local councillors as an example, Craig details the ways New Public Management now requires public officials to serve as, among other things, budget holders, trouble-shooters, and advocates for their communities. These roles may be familiar to public library managers as well as leadership teams in other sectors. Craig also identifies the likelihood that practitioners engaging in political education will be older and therefore have developed partial understandings of the topics covered already, necessitating the unpicking and reflection of the understanding that already exists. The career progression of the LIS professions is likely to mirror that of what Craig terms (in a non-pejorative way) "career bureaucrats" whose engagement with politics is more likely to become more necessary at later stages in their careers. It may be useful for LIS educators and those engaging in

self-directed learning to consider the final two sections of the chapter: what to teach and how to teach it, especially the latter.

In terms of 'how' to teach the political theory, philosophy and skills which public service workers may benefit from, context is key, and the needs of the learners must be identified and taken into account. Practical limitations of time, space and resources are also acknowledged. Stressing the importance of the social good that can be produced as a result of bridging the academic-practitioner divide, Craig recommends drawing upon the experiences of the learners, unpacking and exploring their partial understanding and encouraging critical reflection to engage with "theoretical and societal issues in examining their own experiences and actions" (p.31). Craig's exploration of how critical reflection in relation to political and societal issues can be encouraged is likely to be of relevance to LIS educators, particularly his recommendations around overcoming the "potential alienation" that may be experienced by practitioners when engaging with theoretical texts.

Three further chapters, 'Teaching controversial topics', 'Teaching gender politics' and 'Teaching about diversity issues' are also relevant to LIS educators and perhaps to academic librarians seeking to introduce aspects of social and political theory into their IL instruction. The chapters offer practical recommendations as well as theoretical insights into the importance of engaging students in issues of social justice as they relate to their academic and/or vocational fields. Applying some of the techniques and activities suggested in these chapters geared towards increasing awareness of 'real-world' politics would be of benefit to students of other academic disciplines, not only political scientists.