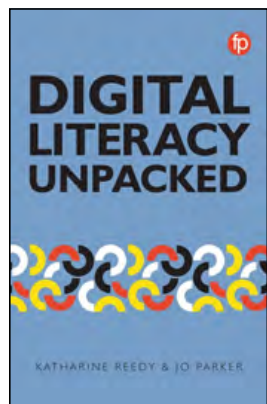


Book Reviews



Digital Literacy Unpacked. Katharine Reedy and Jo Parker, eds. London: Facet Publishing, 2018. 240p. \$87.99 (ISBN: 978-1-78330-197-3).



Although information literacy is not new as a focus for learning theory and instructional design in higher education, it has seen renewed interest in recent years with the adoption of the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. Accordingly, a number of books and articles have lately been published proposing innovative approaches to the teaching of information literacy, as well as books exploring the value and meaning of information literacy both inside and outside the academy in the twenty-first century. Along with the fresh inquiry into information literacy has come excavation of "other" literacies that, depending on context, exist alongside or within information literacy, such as visual literacy, media literacy, and digital literacy. These works have helped to shed significant light on the work being done in information literacy and beyond. *Digital Literacy Unpacked*, edited by Katharine Reedy and Jo Parker, is such a work; it presents a multifaceted view of digital literacy today that enhances our understanding of the value and potential of digital literacy in higher education and in the culture at large.

One of the central tenets of the book is that digital literacy is more than just technical competency or a specific set of concrete skills; it is therefore deserving of both theoretical contextualization and research focused on successful pedagogical practices. Many of the individual articles address the challenge of defining digital literacy, but Jane Secker's chapter on the terminology of digital literacy is particularly useful. Secker gives a history of how the term has been used and shows how the act of defining digital literacy in specific institutional contexts can help identify learning outcomes and assist in the design of collaborative instructional programs.

The contributors to *Digital Literacy Unpacked* are a diverse group of scholars and experts on technology and education, primarily based in the United Kingdom, from various international locations. Some of the authors are affiliated with libraries, but many represent fields as varied as linguistics, business, instructional design, and more. Reedy and Parker both work for Open University, a UK-based distance learning and research university as learning designer and library manager, respectively, and bring their expertise in the integration of technology and education to the framing of this work. Throughout the book, authors use spellings and, more important, terminology that is specific to the United Kingdom, but in the majority of cases the context helps clarify any terms that have different meanings or uses in the United States or elsewhere. Many of the chapters refer to services and support provided by Jisc, a not-for-profit organization working with education and research institutions in the United Kingdom, but the broader concepts are still applicable to US-based institutions as well as other international contexts.

Articles in the book are presented as chapters and divided topically into four broad sections covering approaches to digital literacy, learning practices, staff development, and applications to citizenship and the workplace. Nevertheless, overarching themes cross these sections, and

there are elements of all four topics in each section. The chapters also represent a variety of academic approaches, including literature review, research study, and case study, but virtually all the chapters advocate for the value of digital literacy as an area of focus. The need for the thoughtful development of digital literacy education is evident throughout the various chapters and sections.

The majority of the authors present ideas that cannot be fully explored in a one-shot instruction session, and many of the authors refer to workshop series, courses, and other scenarios where instructors and designers work with learners for multiple sessions. Recent work on information literacy instruction echoes this need for multiple encounters with students, and perhaps this is one of the elements at the core of the theme of advocacy that runs throughout the work. Resources are ever scarce in higher education, and yet the need for digital literacy is only growing. Like information literacy, digital literacy is more an approach and a critical understanding than a specific skill or set of skills, and it evolves as technology itself evolves. For this reason, it cannot be simply checked off a list but requires sustained pedagogical attention.

Another consistent theme throughout the articles is the role of creativity and innovation in digital literacy instruction. Many of the authors demonstrate that digital literacy is often best cultivated through the use of digital tools; it may therefore require rethinking how instruction is presented. The nature of technology as a topic of study means that some of the tools and resources mentioned are already becoming outdated, and some trending games and applications are conspicuously absent, but this is hardly unexpected in books about technology. The models and concepts presented hold value even if the tool used—like Google Plus in one case—is itself on its way out.

A few charts, images, and text boxes are sprinkled throughout the text and for the most part provide useful illumination of concepts discussed, although an unfortunate printing error in the copy this reviewer had appears to have cut off the text of the examples presented in text boxes in one of the chapters in the paperback edition. Each article includes references, and an index is provided at the end of the book that allows readers to track concepts and themes across chapters. The introduction and conclusion provided by the editors do a particularly good job of highlighting the common themes across all the articles and of emphasizing the ways the research and practices presented in the book might be used by librarians and educators developing digital literacy instruction programs.

A fair amount of attention is given to professional development and staff competencies throughout the text. The need to provide professional development to staff around digital literacy is evident, and the arguments provided in the articles may help librarians and educators advocate for such opportunities. In addition, Inskip's article on developing digital literacy in library staff provides a list of competencies and practices that may be useful in the development of assessment programs and even accreditation narratives. Part of the value of a book such as this is that it makes visible some of the work that librarians and educators at multiple levels are already doing in digital literacy, and it demonstrates how essential this work really is to the larger goals of various institutions. In addition to providing guidance for the verbal articulation of what we as librarians and educators are doing, *Digital Literacy Unpacked* may also inspire those working in information literacy and digital literacy to seek out new opportunities for collaboration, to innovate and take risks in instruction, and to rethink learning outcomes when designing instruction programs. Compact and yet rich in perspectives in both

the theory and practice of digital literacy, *Digital Literacy Unpacked* offers much of value to educators, librarians, and instructional designers. —Melissa Anderson, *Southern Oregon University*

Margaret Zelman Law. *Cultivating Engaged Staff: Better Management for Better Libraries*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2017. 128p. Paper, \$55.00 (ISBN: 978-1-4408-5222-0). LC: 2017004832.



A library's most valuable resource is its staff. It is the library staff who ensure excellent customer service and research assistance to our communities, who purchase, preserve, and make accessible print and electronic resources of all kinds, and who keep the doors open early in the morning and late into the night. The work and care of library staff (including librarians and library assistants alike) keep libraries running, and they deserve the best possible support from their managers and supervisors. Patrons get the best service from staff that gets what they need from their work environment. Margaret Zelman Law's insightful and detailed volume can help you learn more about both individual and team needs and how to better meet them. Having worked in both public and academic libraries, as well as library consortia, the author is now a consultant to libraries worldwide on organizational development and other management challenges, as well as an instructor at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. With advanced degrees in both information studies and business administration, Law brings together her experiences and the research in both fields to demonstrate how management practices impact organizational climate and provides concrete examples for how practices can be changed to improve staff engagement in any kind of library.

At only 128 pages, this is not a long book; however, it is a very important one for anyone who supervises staff. I encourage everyone who picks up this book to read through the introduction. Entitled "Employees and Their Relationship with Work," this section alone offers a number of valuable insights, not only into what staff members are looking for in terms of meaningful work that engages them, but it may also help you better understand your own motivations and connections with the work you do every day. Understanding these underlying motivations can help you set better intentions and goals for yourself as well for any staff you supervise. The introduction lays out the groundwork for the rest of the book by examining what engagement really means. The author presents eight ways that people relate to their work and describes each in some detail: psychological contract, professional identity, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, burnout, and boredom (xiv). She links not only to what library literature exists on the topics, but to the broader business management literature as well, arguing that, while libraries may not be concerned with profit, they are concerned with good stewardship of resources, including and especially human resources. The introduction concludes with a brief outline for each of the seven chapters to help you determine which may be most relevant to your situation.

The chapters move from theoretical to practical, with the first five chapters focusing on the workplace. The first chapter discusses more in depth the concepts presented in the introduction, and the second chapter focuses on fairness and the different kinds of organizational justice, including procedural, distributive, interactional, and information justice. The second-to-last chapter examines how professional organizations, library and information programs, faculty