Lynette Torres · Fiona Salisbury ·
Barbara Yazbeck ·
Sharon Karasmanis · Janice Pinder ·
Caroline Ondracek *Editors*

Connecting the Library to the Curriculum

Transformative Approaches that Enhance Skills for Learning

Springer

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Foreword

What an impressive achievement this book is! Not only does it stand out in the literature on teaching information literacy competencies to college and university students, but it also advances the field of information literacy significantly. Higher education institutions worldwide would do well to adopt either of the models described within.

Many college-level instructors decry the lack of knowledge their students have about the information world in which they exist and must survive and thrive. Those faculty assume that students should have a sophisticated ability to work with information that they developed during earlier formal education. They express frustration with the students' lack of motivation to research sources of information beyond that one ubiquitous search engine. They report that students generally don't know or even care about the implications of superficial searching. Instructors generally feel that there is not enough time to include this training in their courses.

Integrating information literacy competencies systematically throughout curricula has long been recognised as the ideal way to address these issues. However, there is a historic tension between the entrenched structure of higher education systems and this need to prepare students with strong information-related competencies. These tensions have proven quite difficult to resolve. While the needed information competencies have been identified, there are few successful examples reported that use models based on well-established education theory to integrate them holistically throughout curricula.

Lynette Torres and Fiona Salisbury are highly experienced and knowledgeable practitioners who have successfully engaged in this conundrum. As Research and Learning Skills Lead at Monash University Library, Torres understands what needs to transpire at the organisational, team and individual level for reconceptualising and adopting new practices for the in-curricular development of students' research skills. Salisbury is Executive Director Library and University Librarian at La Trobe University, giving her administrative and institution-wide perspectives on curriculum integration, as well as the implementation of changes needed within libraries and among librarians to enable curriculum integration.

Monash University uses the Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching (MELT) developed by John Willison, an expert in education studies, and La Trobe University

uses its own Library Learning and Teaching Partnership Framework (LLTP Framework). Through discussion of the theoretical underpinnings, practice-based examples from diverse disciplines and thought-provoking implications for librarians' practice, they show how the models can be applied effectively in a variety of fields of study, cultural settings and educational levels. The models are sufficiently flexible so that they can adapt to disciplinary differences and changes in a curriculum, as well as to information needs as they evolve in education and society.

Torres and Salisbury, and their teams, show that an ongoing, sustained and persistent effort can result in the successful integration of information literacy. They have ensured that what their universities have done is both scalable and sustainable, although it is clear that curriculum integration is an extensive and ongoing process. It does not occur quickly or without effort and the willingness to examine and change one's teaching practice. The process is iterative and involves regular modifications that are responsive to student preferences and the effectiveness of learning strategies.

A fundamental premise of the authors is the critical importance of ongoing collaboration between academic faculty and librarians and other staff as *partners*, not merely as *supporters* of faculty work. All of the partners must know the techniques for successfully collaborating and have the propensity to do so. This requires a considerable shift within an institution in how the role of libraries and librarians is perceived. It may also require a shift in how librarians perceive their own roles. These two models provide a common language for all partners to discuss student-centred learning goals.

Interestingly, Torres and Salisbury conducted a qualitative analysis of the contributed chapters to identify common themes. They discuss the essential, but sensitive, issue of transforming libraries and library practice—necessary for achieving what their libraries have so admirably done. These models have not only transformed the libraries, but have removed boundaries in the institution so that the education of students occupies a new 'third space': a neutral space in which all those with a vested interest in student learning can collaborate freely and equally.

The knowledge that librarians will gain from this book can be the basis for comfortable discussion of barriers to student learning. Librarians will be able to confidently engage in productive partnerships with academic faculty and others who are directly involved in teaching in their institutions.

This book is a significant and valuable contribution to our understanding of how to integrate important information literacy and research skills in college and university curricula. That elusive goal of consistently reaching large numbers of students across disciplines seems much more realistic and achievable with the work that Torres and Salisbury and their colleagues have done.

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