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Book Review

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Basili, C. eds. 2008. *Information literacy at the crossroad of education and information policies in Europe*. Rome: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche. 301 pp. ISBN: 9788880800965. €20. Hbk.

Reviewed by Gwyneth Price, Collection Development Services Librarian, Institute of Education, London

Unfortunately my rudimentary knowledge of Italian was inadequate to translate the introductory chapters of this book, but I was able to glean that the intention of the call for papers was to improve understanding of the strategic and policy dimensions of information literacy (IL) in Higher Education and discuss themes affecting IL inclusion into university curricula. The bulk of the book is in excellent English written by contributors from a wide selection of European contexts, and does live up to my expectations of a carefully considered academic approach to IL.

Carla Basili's first chapter on 'Information and Education Policies in Europe: key factors influencing information literacy academic policies in Europe' sets the tone. It is certainly true to say that IL has been "intensively discussed in the literature as a skill from the library perspective rather than as a policy issue" and that academics have been largely absent from the IL discourse. Basili's overview of current dimensions of IL leads to the view that the Library and Information Science (LIS) Community "cannot cope with this problem as the main agent but only as a facilitator." Her view that the LIS community should therefore facilitate change through policy initiatives which might catapult the academic community into rapid activity is not without its attractions, but her own analysis demonstrates just how little reference is made to IL in EU Information and Education policies.

In the second chapter of the book Basili returns to the theme of policy modification and change by presenting a series of propositions or theses analysing IL from three different perspectives: as a discipline of study, as an educational policy goal, and as a competency. Her explanations of the 'Bologna' process and harmonisation of the HE curriculum in Europe, with its emphasis on learning outcomes, was of particular interest to me but the whole chapter raises issues for discussion and it seems likely that librarians, as well as academics, will continue to disagree on a primary perspective for IL, but must continue to explore and develop multiple perspectives on this most vital issue.

Contributors to the rest of the book take a variety of stances and define IL in their own ways. For example, Sirje Virkus (Estonia) prefers to refer to "information-related competencies... defined as the skills, knowledge, attitudes, experience, attributes, and behaviour that an individual needs to find, evaluate and use information effectively." I was particularly interested in the French perspective on IL, expertly presented by Lisa Reggiani, and its fundamental difference to "documentary education", a concept apparently rarely discussed outside France.

The final chapter of the book, by Susie Andretta, emphasises the view that IL is much more than a set of skills and competencies and Andretta's research, published elsewhere, demonstrates the mismatch between policy and practice in HE institutions in the UK. Most of this chapter is given over to the practicalities of developing IL in post-graduate students with a strong emphasis on starting with the student. Andretta's excellent models should provide an ideal starting point for librarians to discuss with academic teaching staff how IL might be integrated into their teaching programmes.

This volume has provided me with much food for thought and I will be keeping it on my personal shelves and buying an additional copy for our library.