

# Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 4 Issue 2

December 2010

## Book Review

Perry, N. 2010. Book Review of Burkhardt, J.M. and MacDonald, M.C. with Rathemacher, A.J. *Teaching information literacy: 50 standards-based exercises for college students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: ALA Editions. *Journal of information literacy*, 4(2), pp. 97-98

<http://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL/article/view/BR-V4-I2-2010-2>

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

**Burkhardt, J.M. and MacDonald, M.C. with Rathemacher, A.J. 2010. *Teaching information literacy: 50 standards-based exercises for college students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: ALA Editions. 152 pp. ISBN 978-0-8389-1053-5. \$50. Pbk.**

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This is a practical book aimed at those involved in teaching information literacy or research skills in a higher education environment. It provides 50 exercises for use with students and is based on the authors' own experience of delivering information literacy training at the University of Rhode Island. Each exercise is designed to address specific aspects of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and can be used either in standalone workshops or as part of a longer programme. Reviewed here in its second edition, the book has been updated to reflect changes in technology and to be more student-centred in its approach.

The book is split into 11 chapters with each chapter containing one or more exercises that can be used to support student learning. Chapters 1 to 5 deal with general issues around information and its use including identifying different types of information, evaluating the quality of sources, formulating research questions, constructing searches and dealing with intellectual property rights and plagiarism. Chapters 6 to 9 go on to examine the effective use of specific resources such as library catalogues, journals and the Web. The final two chapters provide ideas for creating assessments and contain a detailed description and example submission for the "Paper Trail Project" assessment used with students at the University of Rhode Island. There is comprehensive coverage of the various elements that make up information literacy, reflecting the authors' stated belief that information literacy training should provide a "skill for life" rather than focussing narrowly on academic work.

A consistent format is used to present the exercises with each one having stated goals, followed by guidance on how to conduct the exercise with students and finally an indication of which of the ACRL standards it addresses; there are also instructions or worksheets to be given to students. Alongside the exercises each chapter provides an overview of the area of information literacy in question. Overall the book is very informative, though I did find it a little irksome that the text varied in style; while the majority of the text is clearly aimed at the instructor, some sections are written in a slightly simplistic style, as if intended for students rather than educators.

There were three exercises that I felt were particularly well-constructed: Exercise 15, in which students have to identify search terms for a topic; Exercise 33, which uses a "taxonomy of periodicals" to help students recognise the differences between scholarly and other types of journals; and Exercise 44, which requires students to evaluate websites using an extensive list of criteria. These stood out for me as they provide effective ways of addressing some of the key issues that students (certainly those with whom I work) seem to have; namely, identifying keywords for their searches, understanding the different types of resources they are using, and recognising the need to assess the quality of those sources.

Throughout the book a very clear understanding of the student perspective is evident. The exercises are designed to engage students and to help them appreciate the relevance of information literacy to both their academic and personal lives. For example, Exercise 22 deals with the issue of academic integrity by asking students to reflect on a real-life high profile case of

plagiarism. There is also an acknowledgement of the genuine anxiety that students can suffer when seeking information or using libraries and Chapters 2 and 3 contain exercises specifically intended to help build confidence.

Although the book is aimed at a US audience I did not find that to be too problematic. The majority of the exercises could be used with non-US students with minimal changes, although inevitably others would require more significant adaptation, for example, the exercises in Chapter 9 which refer to US organisations and government statistics. Similarly the use of the ACRL standards (which are included as an appendix to the book) was still useful although as a UK reader I am more familiar with the SCONUL “Seven Pillars of Information literacy”.

As the authors intended, all the exercises could be used for one-off training sessions. However, more could have been done to make using the book in this way easier for readers. Although there is a list of exercises at the front of the book, the names of those exercises do not give a clear indication as to the subject matter, or the particular ACRL standards they address. A more detailed list, perhaps in a tabular format, would have been a welcome addition.

Overall this is a very usable book that has been written with the student in mind. It is perhaps a little overpriced and would be of limited usefulness to practitioners working outside a university setting but I would certainly recommend it to anyone involved in teaching information literacy to students in higher education.