Mackey, Thomas P. & Jacobson, Trudi E. (2014). *Metaliteracy: Reinventing information literacy to empower learners***. Chicago: American Library Association. 248 pp. ISBN 978-1-55570-989-1. Softcover, $67.00.**

Penny Hecker, Southeastern Louisiana University

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) published the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* in 2000. It is being revised to the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,* the draft of which is currently found at http://acrl.ala.org/ilstandards/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Framework-for-IL-for-HE-draft-3.pdf. Integral to this re-envisioning of information literacy is the concept of metaliteracy, which is covered extensively by Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson in their recently published *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners*. The book references and greatly expands upon earlier articles by Mackey and Jacobson: the 2011 *College & Research Libraries* article, "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy," and their 2013 *Communications in Information Literacy* article, "Proposing a Metaliteracy Model to Redefine Information Literacy." It also complements the upcoming *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,* of which Trudi Jacobson co-chairs the Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force through 2015.

Mackey and Jacobson define and describe metaliteracy variously in Chapter One, "Developing a Metaliteracy Framework to Promote Metacognitive Learning." They note, "The term metaliteracy has been applied previously in several different contexts and academic disciplines related to the study of literacy." Metaliterate individuals know their literacy strengths, while recognizing areas for improvement, and then adapt their own learning. The authors further clarify that "The ability to critically self-assess different competencies and to recognize one's need for integrated literacies in today's information environment is a metaliteracy." It calls upon

learners to be active and self-reflective while critically engaging in the collaborative spaces of today's social media age.

The chapter comprehensively explores the metaliteracy framework and how it expands upon defined, existing literacies. The authors explain how the prefix *meta* works in their theoretical expansion of information literacy: "While literacy is focused on reading and writing, and information literacy has strongly emphasized search and retrieval, metaliteracy is about what happens beyond these abilities to promote the collaborative production and sharing of the information." They illustrate this with a scenario where a student uses their library's website to access articles about public art. The library document is then compared to Open Educational Resources (OERs) of the same subject and the learner discusses this with an online community. This exploration provides insights from a variety of sources and formats; the student will have to evaluate critically from both the formal and informal sources explored. The process may lead to the production of an individual or group project in text, audio, video, or a combination of media, which will then be shared within a social learning environment such as a blog or wiki.

Chapter Two, "Metaliteracy in the Open Age of Social Media," delves into the idea that we are now in the post-information age, a time of user-centered content producers that is global in reach. Is it the end of information? It is understandable to be concerned about the *post* in post-information. Mackey and Jacobson are careful to point out that *post* here describes "an end to the concept of information as we knew it, as something simply accessed and retrieved in a one-way modality in print to networked ways of knowing through social media." What role can metaliteracy play in the global village of social media? The authors provide answers, while noting other crucial questions of metaliteracy:

Overall, metaliteracy prepares learners to navigate social spaces as individuals while

learning community building and how to interact in meaningful ways. This approach moves beyond skills development only to maximize the creative and democratic potential of social and visual networking sites for the dynamic production of new knowledge. In addition, consistent with the foundation of elements of information literacy, metaliteracy includes an emphasis on ways to define the relevance and credibility of information in social media settings. For instance, how do we advance the critical evaluation of information created by multiple participants? What are the specific competencies for the assessment of information when everyone is a contributor in a decentered network? ...these questions require an expanded conception of information literacy as a metaliteracy to build on the information literacy foundation and to develop linkages with related literacy types.

Chapter Three, "Developing the Metaliterate Learner by Integrating Competencies and Expanding Learning Objectives," ably discusses how we have long been in an environment of multiple literacies. The authors provide a useful table that lists the similar characteristics of identified literacies and how they are related. They discuss the existing discrete literacies of media, digital, cyber, visual, mobile, critical information, and health, which segues then to a review of combined literacies, such as transliteracy, new media literacy, information and communication technologies (ICT) literacy, and information fluency. Transliteracy, for example, refers to individuals literate in multiple information modalities "from print and orality to traditional mass media (television, radio, and film) and social networking."

The categorization and summary of related, discrete, and combined literacies leads the reader to Mackey and Jacobson's proposal of seven learning objectives, which appeared in their aforementioned 2011 and 2013 articles:

1. Understand Format Type and Delivery Mode
2. Evaluate User Feedback as Active Researcher
3. Create a Context for User-generated Information
4. Evaluate Dynamic Content Critically
5. Produce Original Content in Multiple Media Formats
6. Understand Personal Privacy, Information Ethics and Intellectual Property Issues
7. Share Information in Participatory Environments

In 2012 the authors received an Innovative Instruction Technology Grant supported by SUNY to rethink information competencies via the creation of a Transliteracy Learning Collaborative. They discovered that their team work was leaning more toward metaliteracy rather than transliteracy, and thus they now propose four domains to organize metaliteracy learning objectives: behavioral, cognitive, affective, and metacognitive. For more information about the four defined metaliteracy goals/objectives, visit their blog at http://metaliteracy.org/learning-objectives/.

Chapter Four is titled, "Global Trends in Emerging Literacies." The authors begin the chapter with the section, "International Trends in Open Education," providing a brief overview of leading voices in Open Education and Open Educational Resources (OERs). They also discuss international literacy initiatives from international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The authors feel that OERs are connected to the scope of their work and note that "…goals of open learning align well with the overall vision of UNESCO itself as an international organization that promotes peace and literacy for all…this vision is the empowerment of individuals through open access to information and the tools for communication." They end the chapter examining recently updated information literacy documents from the United Kingdom and Hong Kong that have incorporated some of the re-envisioned information literacy standards now being addressed by the ACRL Information

Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force.

Chapter Five, "Survey of the Field: From Theoretical Frameworks to Praxis," provides detailed analysis of Mackey and Jacobson's international exploration of metaliteracy. To gather data for *Metaliteracy,* the authors advertised a survey, "Information Literacy as Metaliteracy," on various listservs in 2012. The survey results indicate that "strides have been made in providing effective technology infrastructure and support at many institutions while some respondents are still struggling with ineffective resources." Although the authors feel encouraged by respondents using multiple technologies in their information literacy presentations and sharing information—key elements of metaliteracy—they also note "to reinvent information literacy as a metaliteracy, we will need to continuously increase the use of technology, with a focus on producing and sharing information in collaborative contexts." Mackey and Jacobson suggest ongoing communication in the traditional arenas of readings, conferences, and workshops combined with institutional support to further the professional development of both faculty and librarians.

The last two chapters of *Metaliteracy* illustrate real-world practice of metaliteracy using case studies, one from Jacobson's institution at the university of Albany, SUNY, and one from SUNY Empire State College where Mackey is dean of the Center of Distance Learning. Chapter Six, "The Evolution of a Dedicated Information Literacy Course toward Metaliteracy," traces the progress of a credit information literacy course, UNL 205x: Information Literacy, over several years of iterations, owing to the rapid changes and influences of web technologies. Jacobson's work in this regard culminated in transforming a garden-variety information literacy course, from the turn of the 21st century, toward an expanded information literacy course where core metaliteracy learning objectives are applied.

Another course recently created is UNL489: Advanced Topics in Information Literacy, at

the University of Albany. Composed of students who have already taken a lower-level information literacy course, the instructor is not constrained teaching the basics of academic research and allows the investigation of social media tools in a structured environment of team-based learning, one where student teams are given latitude in both topic and format as long as both are connected to social media. This course is greatly intriguing from a New Media Literacy perspective. Discussed in Chapter 3, New Media Literacy is a "participatory culture" evolving from digital literacies, ICT technology, and social skills acquired by collaboration and networking. See http://www.newmedialiteracies.org/ for more information on the concept.

"Exploring Digital Storytelling from a Metaliteracy Perspective" is the seventh and final chapter of *Metaliteracy.* It is a case study tracking the development of the course Digital Storytelling at Empire State College. This unique course demonstrates that creativity and artistic expression can be supported with learning objectives; the instructor serves as a facilitator encouraging both independence and community to create new knowledge. The course ties technology to collaborative, creative elements like writing and designing while also adding the components of self-reflection and critical thinking. The authors think that Digital Storytelling is ideal because "it demonstrates that in an open social media environment face-to-face computers labs or expensive technologies are not required to teach students how to produce meaningful projects."

By far, this reviewer considers *Metaliteracy: Reinventing Information Literacy to Empower Learners* as an influential addition to any academic library's information literacy collection. It can suggest to institutions how to update their approaches to teaching the competencies of information research, critical thinking, and knowledge sharing within the framework of the ever-evolving social media environment.