

Thinking critically about information

The ACRL March 2017 Conference broke records for attendance – in the neighborhood of 3,500 librarians. It was noteworthy in the many sessions (as well as informal discussions in the exhibit halls, hotel lobbies and harbor-view restaurants) reaffirming the role and relevance of librarians and libraries in assuring a well-informed electorate. Whether under the broad rubric of information literacy, or more directly confronting the disinformation of the recent and current political environment, academic librarians are finding that their expertise in critical thinking about information is an effective bulwark in the fight against the careless, intentional, manipulative or scurrilous promulgation of “fake news.”

This issue opens with a piece by Oliver Batchelor, one of *Reference Services Review* (RSR)’s reviewers, who unpacks the “fake news” meme and provides an excellent starting point for academic librarians seeking information on current library programs and approaches. Then, pieces written by presenters at Library Instruction West (LIW) follow: Roberts, Reynolds and Hauck on improving student motivation for information literacy; Whitver on information literacy for practicum students; and Worsham and Glassman on implementing digital research notebooks for more reflective learning.

Several other information literacy-related articles propose approaches to teaching and assessing: Berg discusses the design and implementation of a general assessment tool; Lee, Hoffman, Beatty and Feng describe an embedded librarian approach to information literacy. Krutkowski’s paper looks at a program at a London school that involves a varied and integrated “strengths-based” rather than remedial approach to information literacy instruction.

The bulk of this issue and the following one explore issues, themes and practical approaches to services for transfer students. Guest editor Tamara E. Ivins (whose editorial introduces this two-part theme) sought authors to write on the theme of academic library support for transfer students and students in transition. The “call” for contributions mentioned several topics of particular interest, including special informational literacy challenges providing instruction to transfer students; solutions to transfer student information literacy needs; studies related to special population groups that transfer students are often drawn from; and studies on First Year Students’ issues shared by transfer students, such as culture shock. Response to the “call” exceeded expectations, affirming our colleagues’ interest in this topic and, we suspect, ensuring our readers’ interest too! Indeed, “call” response was such that this special issue will span two issues – Vol 45 Iss 2 and Vol 45 Iss 3. Academic library support for transfer students and students in transition is trending hot. We invite our readers to start with Tammy’s editorial introduction, and then begin to enjoy the deeper dive into this topic.

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