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Editorial

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A matter of perspective

I wrote a short blog post a month or so ago after attending the Association of Learning Developers in Higher Education (ALDinHE) conference and LILAC in quick succession. The post was entitled 'Information literacy and learning development: two sides of the same coin' (Secker 2014), and it had probably one of the largest number of retweets I've ever had when I shared it on Twitter. It had struck me how two professional conferences were having highly similar discussions and yet the overlap between attendees was still fairly minimal. I am sure there must still be plenty of librarians at LILAC unaware of what a learning developer is and possibly not working with staff in this role even within their own institution. Similarly I was struck how some learning developers that I spoke to at ALDinHE had perhaps a more traditional view of the role of the librarian and were unaware that many librarians did more than help students to find books.

Last October at the European Conference of Information Literacy, Ralph Catts discussed 'Media and information literacy' – the phrase UNESCO had adopted – and spoke about how when you asked media literacy professionals and information literacy (IL) professionals which was the broader term, they would each chose their own. Similarly, I've encountered the same phenomenon when asking people to discuss digital literacy; it's striking how many people recognise 'digital' as the all-encompassing term. Yet to me, information literacy must surely cover information in all its forms – digital, print and oral.

Shortly after ALDinHE, Emma Coonan (who I had presented with at the conference) also wrote a blog post about how we spend much too much time discussing 'container' terms (Coonan 2014). Emma recalled a conversation she had with Florence Dujardin during a Society of Research in Higher Education (SRHE) event last year. Florence likened these terminology debates to matryoshka dolls, with people always trying to claim their doll as the largest one. Emma has reflected on this further:

'So here's a thought: maybe we're at the point now that *it doesn't actually matter* which doll is the biggest, the outward, most visible one.'

She urged us to recognise that 'although we're coming from different specialties and start points, we're all converging on the same goal: to provide opportunities for our students to construct and sensemake the academic landscape for themselves.'

It really is a matter of perspective, but I think we must never lose sight of our ultimate goal when we help people find, manage, evaluate and use information. We are helping learners succeed and helping citizens to exercise their democratic rights and achieve their goals in life. I have often wondered why some of those who work for universities can be slow to recognise that the overriding reason we are there is education – whether our focus is on support, research, teaching or administration. I always try to keep the bigger picture in my mind while focusing on the specific task in hand. It's a matter of perspective and hence why this issue's articles look at IL from a variety of viewpoints. June's issue has three articles and a paper presented at LILAC. I'm also delighted to have several short project reports, two reports from students sponsored to attend LILAC 2014 and four book reviews.

Our first article is by Nikolas Leichner, Johannes Peter, Anne-Kathrin Mayer, and Günter Krampen, who are based at Leibniz Institute for Psychology Information in Trier, Germany. The article reports on the assessment of IL in undergraduate students using scholarly information search tasks. The team developed a taxonomy for three search tasks with increasing levels of complexity and found this a valid way of assessing IL. Meanwhile Alison Hicks explores 'Bilingual workplaces: integrating cultural approaches to information literacy into foreign language educational practices'. The paper investigated workplace information environments of bilingual professionals (speaking English and Spanish) in the United States, in order to design more relevant IL instruction. The paper will have a broad appeal as it focuses on workplace IL within higher education, as well as contributing more broadly to studies on cultural approaches to IL. Our third paper is from Lisa

Anderson and Stephen Bull, based at the University of Birmingham. They describe their ongoing work to develop an outreach programme for students in further education to address issues of transition into higher education. Increasingly universities are engaging in programmes to support school age and further education level students, but ensuring the offering is sustainable is key. Our only article in this issue from LILAC is written by Sarah Clark, who explores the 'Lived information-seeking experiences of mature students'. Using a 'narrative inquiry design' and Kuhlthau's information search process model Clark explores a range of factors that impact on the student's search process. This qualitative study will be of interest to those supporting mature students and is based on doctoral research at a university in Oklahoma.

I'm delighted to include three project reports in this issue, again reflecting the diversity of IL initiatives. Firstly, Geoff Walton reports on the first stages of a European-funded project to encourage school age students around Europe to develop a love of reading through a digital literacy project. Next up, Elizabeth Tilley from the English Faculty Library at the University of Cambridge describes her team's efforts to embed IL, specifically, information management skills, into first year student courses working with the faculty. Our final short report is from Lauryl Lefebvre and Martha Yancey who are based at a research led US university. They describe their use of the embedded librarian model in a graduate level online course.

The CILIP Information Literacy Group sponsored two students on library and information studies courses to attend the LILAC conference in April 2014, and we have reports from them both in this issue of JIL. Firstly Amanda Brennan, who is a student at Robert Gordon University, has written an excellent summary of the conference including her thoughts on the keynotes and some of the parallel sessions that she attended. Meanwhile, Penny Andrews, a student at the University of Sheffield, took time out of the hectic three days to interview three librarians from sectors that are traditionally under-represented at LILAC (further education, health and public libraries) who had won places to attend the conference. Her thoughtful questions highlight how IL transcends the sectors. I had the pleasure of meeting both Amanda and Penny at the conference dinner and would like to congratulate them both on their articles.

We have four book reviews in this issue of JIL, so thanks as ever to Ian Hunter for his efforts to find reviewers for these new books in the field. They also reflect the diversity of writings about IL.

Thanks as ever to the JIL Editorial Board for all their hard work and support in the past six months and to Lisa Hutchins, the newest member of our copyediting team who joined us earlier this year. Enjoy this issue and do continue to celebrate the increasing diversification of IL in its 40th year.

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