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## Editorial

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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> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

## Positive disruptions

Every conference organiser discovers in time that the single most significant factor in an event's success is the quality of the lunch – especially the coffee. This is less cynical than it may sound. Every professional event carries the opportunity for almost limitless personal challenge: each one has the potential to either reaffirm our belief in what we do, or disrupt, dislocate, or entirely derail it.

Professional meetings take us away from our familiar environments and into spaces that stimulate inquiry just by virtue of being different from the ones we know. They challenge our established patterns of thinking by bringing us into contact with lines of thought built on diverse literature and founded on viewpoints and values different from our own. They force us to re-evaluate the evidence basis for our thinking and compel us into the unstable, curiosity-driven world of the researcher, who in seeking answers faces more questions at every turn.

At any rate, this is what events and conferences *should* do. An event that acts as a filter bubble, feeding us only reassuring reinforcement of the rightness of our views, our practices, and the assumptions on which they are grounded, is no professional development at all but a safety blanket smothering our integrity. Opportunities for reflection, on the other hand, are inherently discomfiting; and that discomfiture deserves to be balanced out with good coffee - and good company from a community of practice.

At events with plenty of networking opportunities there's a critical mass of energy that sustains us through the challenges that stretch our thinking, and allows us to reflect on and absorb what we're learning through discussing it with our peers (mirroring the constructivist learning strategies that we use with our students). Articulating what we've learned and hearing others' views on it allow us to engage with our learning and evaluate its implications - the 'what' and the 'so what' of the ideas presented to us. Attendees at i3, LILAC and LOEX - the three multi-day international conferences summarised ably and engagingly in this issue - all emphasised the importance of sharing their discoveries with fellow delegates both face-to-face and via online media.

Further, this conversation gives us a safe and stimulating environment in which to contemplate what we might do with that learning in our own context, or indeed what it might do with us: the 'what next' of reflective practice (Williams, Woolliams and Spiro 2012). Amy O'Donohoe's reflections on LILAC are an example of this 'ripple forward' effect, as she explores what she will bring back to her workplace after hearing Char Booth's invitation to move from routine activity to reflective action. The bursary winners interviewed by our other LILAC reporter, Anna Theis, also came away inspired to bring change back into their practice and their working environment.

Events and conferences are also an indicator of a profession's mindset, its status and the conditions in which it functions. LILAC saw a number of presenters call for an evidence-based approach in day-to-day library and information science (LIS) practice as well as in LIS research. Indeed, the importance of an evidence basis for our work was the main theme of the two-day summit in Qatar described by Priya Thomas, who was especially struck by Helen Partridge's assertion that as library practitioners we are therefore also researchers. Similarly, claims such as those advanced at the one-day Measuring Value conference attended by Michelle O'Connell depend upon robust evidence. If we are to influence others in our belief that information literacy (IL) teaching and support genuinely make a difference to student progression, research students' development, and employability, we must be prepared to counter 'anecdotal' with evidence. Analytics, university-approved key competencies, and learning gains measurement were all explored at this event as means to demonstrate the impact of IL empirically and persuasively.

In contrast, Jacqueline Geekie's report on two digital inclusion TeachMeets sadly highlights the stark disconnect between libraries' values and potential role in society, and the government's attitudes towards both libraries themselves and the poorest members of that society. The digital services offered by public libraries are hugely valued by patrons, yet framed as supplementary

'value-adds' rather than core services. Even as both IT resources and qualified staff are leached away from the sector, jobseekers and those in receipt of Universal Credit are required to communicate electronically and Jobcentre staff refer claimants to public libraries to use non-existent computers. In such a Kafkaesque environment it is understandable, though deeply saddening, to see no resistance at these events to the idea of libraries partnering with Barclays' Digital Eagles as a solution to supporting the digital needs of library users. Yet how can this be seen by policymakers as a viable, evidence-based alternative to a service based on qualified (and paid) staff, non-profitmaking values, and professional ethics?

The relationship between society and libraries was also highlighted at both LOEX and i3. Katelyn Angell notes that LOEX included a strand of sessions on critical IL, which works to articulate and challenge systems of oppression. At 2015's i3 conference issues around the ubiquity and control of information, and the place of IL in a democratic society, were discussed. Geoff Walton and Dorothy Williams end their report with a series of research questions inviting us once again to take our thinking on beyond the event itself, and to put our reflections into practice in our professional environments.

There's much in this issue of JIL to help with putting reflection into (evidence-based) practice. Our articles describe research that ranges from the micro to the macro, spanning the impact of small but powerful changes in course materials to a national survey on IL. Patricia Sandercock describes a study designed to evaluate academic staff perceptions of IL, which reveals some fascinating discrepancies, while Alison Hicks focuses on students' responses to a redesigned research assignment handout that drew on academic literacies thinking to promote critical engagement. Stacey Greenwell's study explores whether the I-LEARN model of IL teaching can lead to a deeper understanding of IL concepts. This study is one of the brave few to publish negative results – a resource just as vital to our understanding as studies that bear out a research hypothesis – and contributes valuable empirical data derived from the use of control and experimental groups.

Erin Alcock and Kathryn Rose analysed a number of course syllabi to assess the extent to which the library and IL concepts were embedded in course content. Their comparison of syllabi enabled them to reassess IL provision for departments and to approach their offering in a more informed way. This is a thought-provoking and eminently reproducible method for evaluating IL teaching. Finally, Shaheen Majid reports on a large-scale survey exploring secondary school pupils' IL and 'cyber wellness' levels in Singapore, a country which has achieved an understanding of and commitment to IL at national level.

In our book reviews section, Niamh Tumelty introduces us to a useful visual resource on information and information management for undergraduate students, while Jess Haigh explores an edited work that puts Mackey and Jacobson's work on metaliteracy into practice, showing how existing courses can be adapted to incorporate concepts from both metaliteracy and the 2015 ACRL Framework.

Finally, I'd like to welcome Michelle O'Connell to the JIL team as our new Managing Editor. Michelle is an academic liaison librarian at Edge Hill University, and wrote the report in this issue on the 'Measuring Value' conference. We're thrilled to have Michelle on board. However, this means we're also saying goodbye to Cathie Jackson, who is moving on to new opportunities. Cathie has been Managing Editor for the last seven years, but her involvement with JIL goes back even further – she was one of the first authors for the journal, with a practice report in our first ever issue, and also acted as editor for Volume 2. Thank you, Cathie, from all of us at JIL. Your contribution has been amazing and is a huge part of what has made JIL all it is today. We wish you the very best in your own 'what next'!

## References

Williams, K., Woolliams, M. & Spiro, J. 2012. *Reflective writing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.