Book Review

Klipfel, K. & Cook, D. 2017. *Learner-centered pedagogy: Principles and practice*. London: Facet. pp197. 9781783302543. £59.95. Pbk.

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This book is of relevance to early-career librarians as well as more experienced LIS practitioners with teaching and learning responsibilities.

Teaching comprises a significant part of many liaison librarian roles in the UK and although this title has a US bias, it has much that can be applied to the higher education academic library context in the UK. The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework by the UK Department for Education and the awards of gold, bronze and silver have prompted universities to review the importance of information literacy in their curriculums. The subject-level consultations taking place in universities have placed information literacy centre stage and provide librarians with an opportunity to establish themselves as experts within their institutions and to demonstrate their strong collaboration skills as they work with academic skills advisors and technology enhanced learning colleagues.

In light of developments around the Teaching Excellence Framework it has become imperative for librarians to develop their pedagogical knowledge. The authors state that without 'expertise in the theory and psychology of how students learn, it is difficult to ensure that our practices are ultimately aimed at student learning'.

The book is clearly laid out and provides an introduction to the increased importance of pedagogical expertise for library professionals. It explains the methodological principles employed and over six chapters highlights psychological and educational theories of learning, gives practical examples and encourages the practitioner librarian to focus a little more on the process rather than the results which seem to be the basis for so much information literacy teaching.

Chapter one offers an overview of pedagogical knowledge and the current information landscape, the methodological principles employed in the book are highlighted and the approach taken is justified. It draws on Doyle's 2011 definition of learner-centred pedagogy as any set of practices that involve getting 'students to do most of the learning work'.

Chapter three provides six cognitive principles for organising information literacy instruction sessions.

An overview of the importance of empathy and science of learning is provided and it also demonstrates how to incorporate this theory into information literacy instruction sessions.

This approach provides a very useful approach/checklist for planning sessions:

1. Limit learning outcomes
2. Focus on a problem to solve
3. Build a narrative
4. Activate background knowledge
5. Focus on deep structure
6. Active learning is practice of deep structure

The chapter ends with cognitive strategies cheat sheet as well as a 'learner-centred lesson plan template'.

Chapters four and five highlight the work of two educational psychology theorists selected as particularly useful for understanding student learning: Carl Rogers and Carol Dweck. Chapter four provides the LIS practitioner with an understanding of the importance of establishing a relationship or rapport as an impetus for learning.

Chapter five outlines Dweck's work on cultivating a growth mindset and explores how attitudes toward learning affect the ability to learn, the need to connect motivation and mindset and to situate the learner at the centre of this process. It then applies this theory to a particular information literacy example and highlights the importance of the growth mindset, as it is highly transferable to different contexts. The summary at the end of this chapter provides the LIS practitioner with several thoughtful questions for reflection:

- In working with a learner, did I focus my feedback more on process instead of the end result?
- Did I explicitly remind learners that they are capable of improvement and that their skills are not fixed?
- Did I try to praise the work, persistence and process of learners instead of their inherent qualities?

Chapter six looks at the role technology can play in the planning and delivery of information literacy sessions. This chapter examines tools such Prezi, clickers, research/course guides, flipped classroom techniques and chat software, before taking a case study approach and reviewing each of the tools or technologies listed above.

It urges practitioners to question their use of technology and apply a range of criteria prior to incorporating these tools. The questions practitioners are asked to consider before employing these tools and techniques revolve around evaluating the suitability of the tools and not losing sight of whether they enhance the learner experience. The practitioner is asked to consider whether the use of technology contributes to significant learning and provides opportunities for active learning.

A particular strength of the book is that it manages to balance theory with practice. I have found it particularly informative as I prepare my application for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy and would recommend it to colleagues who are new to academic liaison roles in higher education. It provides a helpful list of references at the end of each chapter and also a reference list at the end to point to further reading.

This book encourages the information literacy practitioner to develop a greater understanding of the principles and practice of educational pedagogy. In addition to this, the key message I have taken away from this book is the importance of considering the process of learning over the results in information literacy sessions.

In conclusion, this is a useful addition to the books available to both new and more experienced library professionals to help them understand the practice and techniques of teaching and to develop teaching strategies that take into consideration theories of learning. It emphasises the importance of understanding the motivations of students as well as engaging with topics of interest to them, and incorporating them into both embedded in the curriculum and stand-alone information literacy sessions. It makes a really valuable contribution to the literature in enabling LIS practitioners to develop their understanding of educational psychology and applying it in their practice, through useful checklists, case studies and examples such as Joan Didion's work on the value of storytelling. I will be referring to my copy regularly!