



BOOK REVIEW

Mapping Information Landscapes: New Methods for Exploring the Development and Teaching of Information Literacy

Andrew Whitworth

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This book builds on Whitworth's previous works on Information Literacy (IL), and moves on to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the practice of mapping as a method for developing IL. Whilst a prior interest in and general understanding of IL is beneficial for a reading of the text, it is nonetheless accessible, clearly structured and easily readable for those who are newer to the topic.

The introduction and first chapter contextualise the work and give an overview of the development of IL practices in recent years, both within and outwith HEIs. As in his previous works, including *Radical information literacy: reclaiming the political heart of the IL movement* (2014), Whitworth is interested in power dynamics at the heart of IL practices. This comes through in the way in which he situates the book, arguing for a distribution of authority across information practices. His discussion of the re-evaluation of the role of the physical HE library in students' information landscapes is a particularly pertinent one at the present time, as Covid-19 continues to cause shifts in how students engage with both libraries and information sources in general. Thus, reading the text through a Covid-19 lens adds even more topical relevance to an already pertinent and useful area of discussion. However, Whitworth is also keen to explore IL outwith HEIs and, indeed, the range of examples in the book include those from the world of work as well as study, which adds depth to his discussion.

Whitworth argues for the indivisibility of the concept of the geographical or physical landscape and the informational one, and justifies his argument effectively through detailed discussion of both a range of maps and, central to his argument, the practice of mapping itself. A strength of the book is the rich range of examples he uses to support and elucidate his points: his discussion of the Mappa Mundi, as well as maps beyond the graphical, such as discursive 'rutters' from the field of navigation, and his own psychogeographical field notes from walking excursions, enable the reader to broaden their understanding of maps and mapping to good effect. The language, explanations and supporting sources (including appendices) are clear and useful, so that readers new to this area can engage easily with the key principles explored, such as the role of maps and mapping in stewarding and developing

knowledge, but also the power dynamics at play both within and through maps, and the importance of context to both their creation and their reading. This lays the groundwork well for Whitworth's discussion of maps and mapping in developing IL.

In the fifth and sixth chapters of the book, Whitworth goes on to demonstrate ways in which these principles of mapping can be 'applied to informational space' though, again, he is mindful of the importance of context. The maps explored and discussed, both graphical and discursive, are presented as examples, not exemplars. Indeed, this is characteristic of the approach taken throughout the book: Whitworth offers examples of how IL can be developed through mapping practices, but avoids didactic instruction as to how to implement this pedagogically. Whilst some readers might have looked for more direct instruction, this is, in my view, a strength of the book and in keeping with the writer's views on IL: readers are given information about maps and mapping practices, and are signposted towards suggested tools for exploring the information further, but are able to do so within their own context. Again, the discussion is strengthened by the breadth of examples Whitworth utilises to explain and explore his ideas: we are presented examples such as young mothers who create maps related to healthcare provisions and sources; 12-13 year olds who use diaries as a cognitive tool to build IL and discursive writing skills; Tesco staff who generate collaborative discussion regarding sustainable practices; and examples of how practice architectures such as Ketso boards and online discussion boards can be used to shape mapping practices and develop IL. Readers are allowed to consider implications for their own context, and key principles emerge such as the importance of facilitation of mapping processes, and the role of guidance and scaffolding through dialogue.

Overall, the topic of this book is a highly interesting one on many levels. It will be relevant to a wide range of readers, from those working in Higher Education to those considering how to develop their own Information Literacy, or work with colleagues or peers to do so collaboratively.