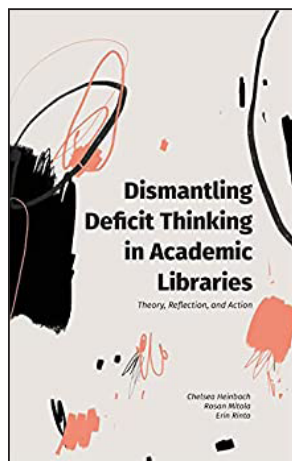


libraries remains to be seen. Readers responsible for guiding the direction of a library will have the chance to try them out for themselves.—Justin Fuhr, *University of Manitoba*

**Chelsea Heinbach, Rosan Mitola, and Erin Rinto.** *Dismantling Deficit Thinking in Academic Libraries: Theory, Reflection, and Action*. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2021. 160p. Paper, \$28.00 (ISBN 978-1634000956).



*Dismantling Deficit Thinking in Academic Libraries* is designed to—in a brief 160 pages—give the reader an introduction to how pedagogical literature that critiques or challenges deficit thinking and its racist consequences can be applied to teaching in academic libraries. More practical than exhaustive, the book is broken into three main sections. Each section includes “reflections from the field” (short quotations from library workers who are applying these concepts to their work) and reflection questions for the reader. The first of these sections reviews the literature on the detriments of deficit thinking in higher education and academic libraries; the second details five pedagogical approaches that the authors identify as addressing issues of deficit thinking; and the third outlines strategies that academic librarians can use in their own teaching to dismantle deficit thinking.

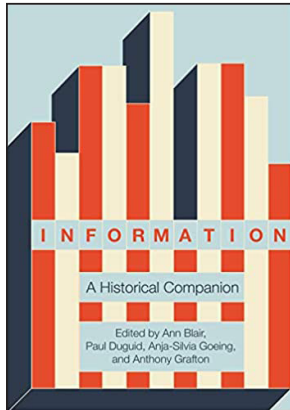
The authors make a particularly useful move in section 2, outlining the characteristics common to several or all of the strengths-based pedagogical approaches they selected for review. By “putting these strengths-based pedagogies in conversation with one another” (54), the authors provide the reader a sense of why these common practices are shared between pedagogies that can otherwise seem disparate in approach or goal. The authors accomplish this conversation practically by creating a chart outlining five principles shared between constructivism, funds of knowledge, open pedagogy, critical pedagogy, asset-based pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy. For each principle, the authors provide an accompanying mindset and set of practices that will assist the practitioner to employ the principle in their own work. A good example is seen in the description of the criteria, “Center Social Interaction and Community Knowledge.” The authors begin with constructivism’s claim that students learn well when they must resolve the conflicting ideas inherent in a diverse learning environment (82). They complement constructivism’s approach to social interaction with open pedagogy’s use of sharing within and outside of the classroom as a motivating factor for student learning (83). This is generous intellectual work by the authors and makes it easy to understand how and when each principle might work in one’s own teaching.

Because the focus of the book is specifically on dismantling deficit thinking in academic libraries, it does not go into depth on any of five pedagogical approaches that it discusses. For this reason, the richness of these theories—their potent social and cultural histories, and even some of their foundational authors—are not fully explored. For readers who are new to educational theories that challenge racism, this will be an approachable introduction. Readers who are more deeply versed in these theories may find themselves wanting to dig back into the foundational texts that are referenced within this work for more detail.

The conclusion of the text is a call to action that describes the authors’ own approaches to pursuing this work as well as suggestions and imperatives for how the reader can proceed with their own personal and professional work to dismantle deficit thinking. The authors offer

considerable further reading in addition to their works cited in each chapter; after finishing the book, it was my inclination to return to some of the source texts for the pedagogies that were tantalizingly introduced here. — *Althea Lazzaro, Seattle Central College*

**Information: A Historical Companion.** Ann Blair, Paul Duguid, Anja-Silvia Goeing, and Anthony Grafton, eds. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. 904p. Hardcover, \$65.00 (ISBN 978-0-6911-7954-4).



At nearly 900 pages, *Information* offers a wide-ranging treatment of its subject. Thirteen opening chapters, followed by more than 100 topic entries, trace the “emergence across history of new information practices, technologies, and institutions” focusing particularly on “moments of confrontation and transition.”

Several themes run through the opening section. The centrality of geography to information is established in the opening chapter as Anthony Grafton revisits the Silk Road, a pre-modern information highway, multilingual in its cultural sweep. In Grafton’s concise words, “Information made the Silk Road.” Along the route, “cultural practices and styles moved as far—and as erratically—as words, transmitted by the artisans who made them, by the products that embodied them, and, above all, by missionaries and other migrants.” Such erratic transmission of information may be found in any of the book’s chapters, and most of the topical entries that follow them.

Yet people have always felt the need to organize and control information. Such impulses lead to bureaucracy, another of the book’s themes. The often clunky but always imposing machinery of archival control lurks beneath nearly all of modern information. The volume’s commentary on official recordkeeping includes everything from ancient Rome’s *acta diurnal* (chapter 1) to the rise of the European information state (chapter 6) to “managerial capitalism” (chapter 8).

The first section of *Information* fittingly ends with a chapter entitled “Search,” which foregoes the chronological scheme of the prior 12 chapters to conclude theoretically with issues of discoverability. What good is all the voluminous information now freely available to much of the world if one cannot locate it? This coda, authored by Daniel Rosenberg, reminds us that information is still not free despite the promise of the latest “information age.” Proprietary platforms such as Google quickly seized the best search engine models, ensuring that, despite its initial promise, our access to information now depends upon a few corporatized networks.

Human anecdotes punctuate the otherwise technological narratives, making each chapter a highly readable treatment of its topic. The chronological progression lends an overall arc to the first section that is impressive for any edited work running 13 chapters and covering millennia in the process. Chapters are enriched with thematic elements that layer the temporal with accompanying issues of the time. “Documents, Empire, and Capitalism in the Nineteenth Century” is a typical example of such interpretation of a period in information development. Such combinations help the various authors advance political points of view that subtly echo much of today’s accepted thinking; there are few controversial claims in these opening essays. In fact, the reader could be excused for concluding that even in today’s world the encroachment of information into our everyday lives has few consequential implications. This sterility is to be expected of such a broad project, and few of the work’s likely readers may anticipate