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**Book Review**

## **Review of *Information Literacy and Social Media: Empowered Student Engagement with the ACRL Framework***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Review of Santamaria, M. & Pfannenstiel, N. (2024). *Information literacy and social media: Empowered student engagement with the ACRL Framework*. Association of College and Research Libraries.

### **KEYWORDS**

Librarians, social media, information literacy, academic libraries

### **SUGGESTED CITATION**

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While exploring a dense rainforest, you would not attempt to hack through an overgrown path with a gardening trowel—you would wield a machete instead. In the introduction of *Information literacy and social media: Empowered student engagement with the ACRL Framework*, authors Santamaría and Pfannenstiel argue that libraries oftentimes teach information literacy within the confines of “carefully curated gardens of peer-reviewed articles” (p. ix) when in fact the social media environment in which students will spend the most time, especially post-graduation, is more comparable to a wild and messy rainforest. As such, they assert, “If we want our information literacy efforts to matter in the long-term, to impact lifelong learning, we need to teach our learners to engage with the messiness, and that messiness truly lives in the social media environment” (p. ix). With this analogy in mind, we step forward onto the path to explore the book’s chapters and the authors’ recommendations.

*Information literacy and social media: Empowered student engagement with the ACRL Framework* is written by Michele Santamaría and Nicole Pfannenstiel. A holder of three master’s degrees, Michele Santamaría has a background in anthropology, poetry, and librarianship, which influences her interdisciplinary approach to her role as the Learning Design Librarian at Millersville University. She uses student behaviors and attitudes toward information literacy to influence her pedagogy. Nicole Pfannenstiel, PhD is a member of the faculty in Millersville University’s English & World Languages department. She focuses on rhetoric, writing, and human learning and experience through and with technologies such as social media, video games, and other digital tools. Both authors bring with them publishing experience and use their varied expertise to study how students can learn from and approach information when using technology. Michele’s past experience teaching composition led to better and more engaging collaborations with Nicole’s classes. Nicole’s openness to partnering with a librarian allowed for a creative and fun exploration of information literacy exploration. In the introduction to the book, the authors note, “This work truly showcases our shared goals of supporting student learning, and the interconnectedness of information literacy to all teaching and learning in higher education” (p. xiii). And it does just that.

*Information literacy and social media: Empowered student engagement with the ACRL Framework* is a succinct and focused book, containing a wealth of information within its pages. The introduction establishes the book's goals by contextualizing its methods for teachers and students alike. In this section, they introduce the analogy of the curated garden and the rainforest, arguing that there is a greater, life-long impact when information literacy is taught within the messy social media environment, compared to the curated library databases and research guides. Social media is more representative of the types of information landscapes students will encounter after they graduate: messy, raw, and ever-changing. The authors acknowledge that while students have some understanding of social media, they need to learn the dispositions and skills to help them engage responsibly and critically in this setting. These skills will serve them well beyond the university setting.

Chapter 1 explores big-picture ways to teach information literacy using social media. Social media access allows users to encounter their acquaintances' content served on the same platform as political and worldwide media. This platform also offers them the opportunity to engage in dialogue, not just observe passively. "From an information literacy standpoint, we are concerned that our students be aware of the implications of curation, and particularly that they impact and are impacted by this curated information" (p. 3). Chapter 1 also includes a literature review, and the authors find there is a gap in the research which they address in this book. They argue that engaging with social media can help students become meta-literate learners, building self-awareness of how they consume and produce information across different platforms. They aim to establish how teachers and librarians can use social media to teach deeper information literacy skills that extend beyond just social media itself but can be applied to other areas of their lives and to future iterations of social media and online landscapes.

In Chapter 2, the authors suggest how the ACRL's "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education" concepts can connect to each specific platform. They connect Facebook and TikTok with the frame "Authority is Constructed and Contextual;" X with "Scholarship as Conversation" and "Research as Inquiry;" Instagram and Pinterest with "Searching as Strategic Exploration" and "Information Creation as Process;" and they explore how social media as a whole aligns with "Information has Value." It is also important to acknowledge that social media is always evolving, and these ideas and lessons can be—should be—adapted and revised as appropriate. The authors note that the Framework itself has the flexibility to continue to be relevant as the information landscape changes. They end the chapter with a series of self-reflection questions and highlight the importance of instructors (teachers and librarians alike) reflecting on their approaches to creating lesson plans and activities.

Chapter 3 gets practical, offering a lesson plan template and eight cross-disciplinary lesson plans that focus on design, assessment, and keeping students engaged. These lessons emphasize students as creators, highlighting process and reflection and encouraging learners to develop habits they can apply not only in academic settings but also in real-life experiences. "Each lesson draws on the breadth of prior knowledge students bring with them to our learning spaces to build and rebuild their information literacy practices" (p. 86). Again, the chapter concludes with self-reflection questions for the instructor to consider as they consider and implement the lesson plans.

Finally, Chapter 4 looks ahead to the future of social media and the students' futures, as well. The authors remind us of the danger of restricting students to the highly curated garden of peer-reviewed information in academic settings when they will be thrust into the wild rainforest of information once they leave the university setting. They emphasize that the information literacy lessons that can be taught in the messy social media platform settings support lifelong critical thinking skills and demeanors. "We must engage students in the spaces where they are

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already at for this is their ‘point of need,’ and this is also, given what we know about algorithms and misinformation where our civic needs are greatest” (p. 97). By using the Framework as a guide, librarians and faculty can teach students to engage with the various ever-changing platforms. On the other hand, these platforms provide very practical, real experience engaging the Framework concepts which can often feel very abstract.

In conclusion, *Information literacy and social media: Empowered student engagement with the ACRL Framework* provides librarians and faculty with a great background for producing successful information literacy lessons situated in social media. Chapter 3’s lesson plans and reflection questions are the book’s greatest strength. The lesson plan template and eight lesson plans are invaluable, and the reflection questions help instructors implement these lessons more thoughtfully and effectively. While the lesson plans provided are very practical and helpful, the book would have been strengthened by the addition of a few very specific use-case examples of these lesson plans in action. Overall, this book is a great guide for faculty, librarians, and instructors in academic settings. It provides engaging and relatable lessons that enhance information literacy, meeting students where they currently are while equipping them with the skills to navigate future challenges.