

PARTNERSHIP

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Baer, A. (2016). **Information Literacy and Writing Studies in Conversation: Reenvisioning Library-Writing Program Connections.** Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press. ISBN 978-1-63400-021-5.

Baer, a librarian at the University of West Georgia with a PhD in comparative literature, builds a compelling case for shared programming between librarians and writing instructors. The book appears to owe its inspiration to “Writing Information Literacy,” rhetorician Rolf Norgaard’s two-part editorial published in *Reference and User Services Quarterly* in 2003-04, which Baer highlights in both the introduction and the conclusion. Yet little appears to have changed in the interval since Norgaard’s manifesto, which also called for a partnership. For the most part, librarians and compositionists have dwelt (and dwell) in separate silos, despite the evident interconnectedness of information seeking, information use, and writing.

Librarians would benefit from being more integrated into the scholarly conversation about writing. Baer insightfully discusses how student writers struggle with understanding “disembodied” texts. The writer’s “voice” may not emerge if the research materials are not re-contextualized with a critical lens. The result can be plagiaristic forms of paraphrase, not to mention cut-and-paste, as the student becomes less and less invested in developing their own ideas. This in turn raises questions about whether the research essay is the best forum for stimulating meaningful writing.

Librarians have their own distinctive contributions to make. Student researchers face serious challenges in comprehending citations, understanding the organization of catalogues and databases, and employing more sophisticated search techniques than keyword searching. Were librarians more “embedded” in the curriculum, they could also ruminate on issues such as critical information literacy, the construction of authority, and net neutrality, which profoundly influence research and writing. These themes are problematic to discuss when library instruction is viewed only as an adjunct.

Baer points out the striking degree of complementarity between the [Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing](#) of the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) and the [Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The WPA framework delineates scholarly habits of mind (e.g., persistence) as well as experiences with reading, writing,

and critical analysis. ACRL's posits six conceptual frames (e.g., research as inquiry), and explores their implications.

The book presents four case studies of collaborations—at the University of Colorado-Boulder, the University of Scranton, Hunter College, and the University of Vermont respectively—where Baer interviewed the participants. The WPA and ACRL frameworks were an impetus for the first two, the third has made its [Research Toolkit](#) available open-access, while the fourth is a [writing-across-the-curriculum program](#) that includes information literacy. The personal and professional elements that contribute to these successful collaborations are elucidated.

Baer delves into the conflicted terrain of the academy and argues that a partnership between librarians and compositionists makes not only intellectual but also strategic sense. They are natural allies by virtue of their marginal academic status. Compositionists tend to be viewed as having only a remedial function for students at risk, while librarians are consigned to one-off presentations of search mechanics. The programmatic integration of writing studies and information literacy could be an enormous benefit for students. The insights and skillsets gained have the potential for wide application.

The book is well written with extensive notes, a 13-page bibliography, and an index. The layout and presentation are clear and readable, and the body of the text is impeccably edited. However, there are numerous proofreading errors in the notes and especially in the bibliography.

This important publication is highly recommended for librarians and educators interested in information literacy and writing.

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