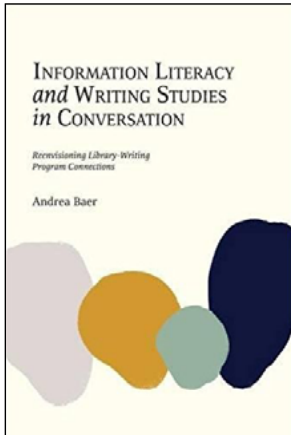


# Book Reviews



**Andrea Baer.** *Information Literacy and Writing Studies in Conversation: Reenvisioning Library-Writing Program Connections.* Sacramento, Calif.: Library Juice Press, 2016. 202p. Paper, \$28.00 (ISBN 978-1-63400-021-5). LC 2016031944.



Information literacy and composition are two areas of intensifying instructional focus in higher education today, especially since the adoption of the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) in 2011 and the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* by the ACRL in 2015. *Information Literacy and Writing Studies in Conversation* presents a thoughtful and concise discussion of the history and institutional structures that have shaped how both composition and information literacy are taught at the university level with particular focus on the opportunities for collaboration presented by the similarly theorized frameworks. Currently Instructional Services Librarian at the University of West Georgia, Andrea Baer's perspective on these two disciplines is also informed by her doctoral studies in comparative

literature and her experience teaching English and composition. Baer's numerous publications and presentations on the pedagogy of information literacy, the intersection of composition and information literacy, and the instructional implications of the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* make her voice an important one in the growing body of work on the potential for partnerships between librarians and writing program faculty. With its succinct analysis of both opportunities and obstacles to collaboration, and its plentiful references suggesting areas for further exploration, the book is particularly useful for instruction librarians and writing program faculty currently looking for ways to enrich current instructional offerings and expand beyond traditional one-shot library sessions.

Much of Baer's slim volume presents a discussion of the literature on student learning, pedagogy, and institutional structures that one could claim has strongly influenced the development of the *Frameworks* of both the WPA and the ACRL. Aside from the introduction and brief conclusion, the book is divided into four chapters examining studies of students as writers and researchers, on the WPA and ACRL *Frameworks*, on current collaborations between librarians and writing program instructors, and on the interpersonal and institutional contexts that shape collaborations. Drawing on decades of pedagogical theory and studies, Baer argues convincingly that the acquisition of mechanical skills that has been the focus of instruction in both information literacy and composition programs does students a disservice and also exacerbates power dynamics in academia that can render true collaboration between librarians and faculty difficult.

Given Baer's already notable history teaching and writing about the ACRL *Framework*, it is hardly surprising that it would play an important role in her book. The third chapter is devoted to a discussion of the ways that the WPA and ACRL *Frameworks*

align, and both documents come up frequently in earlier chapters as well. Since the ACRL *Framework* is still a contentious topic among instruction librarians, this discussion is both timely and useful. Baer focuses on the interconnections between the two frameworks and demonstrates how the language of the documents themselves opens up both theoretical and practical possibilities for cooperation. The book's focus on the historico-structural contexts of the *Frameworks*, and of information literacy and writing instruction more generally, could benefit newer librarians and instructors by explaining concisely how we have gotten to where we are in the teaching of these subjects. Library school students, particularly those interested in instructional design, could also derive value from Baer's analysis of the *Frameworks* and of current practices of and expectations for information literacy instruction. Of particular interest are Baer's discussions of the literature on skills transfer, learning dispositions, and knowledge construction, since these are areas of much current scholarly focus.

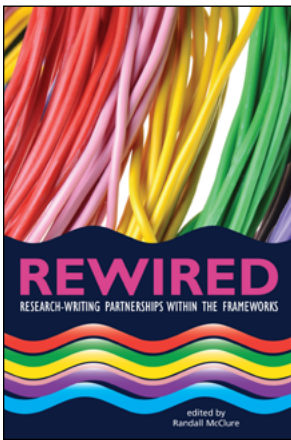
The fourth chapter of the book, "Composition-Library Collaborations: Notes from the Fields," is based on Baer's interviews with librarians and writing program faculty who have developed successful partnerships at their institutions. This chapter does provide concrete examples of different ways that collaboration between libraries and writing programs can work, but it is nevertheless somewhat light on practical suggestions. Instead, Baer focuses more on the evolution of these librarian-compositionist partnerships and on an analysis of the institutional contexts in which they came to fruition. The fact that much of the book deals with theory rather than practice does not detract from its usefulness, however. On the contrary, Baer's thoughtful investigation of the assumptions and perspectives that have shaped writing and information literacy instruction highlights the work still necessary if we want to transform instructional programs. The conceptual approach Baer uses to examine information literacy and writing studies also adds complexity and nuance to areas of instruction that are often seen as mechanical and procedural. In addition, the sections discussing actual collaborative programs show the variety of approaches possible, emphasizing the fact that no one specific set of institutional circumstances is required. Instead, the common factors in most successful partnerships are, unsurprisingly, a desire for collaboration on the part of librarians and compositionists and institutional support for that collaboration.

Baer's penultimate chapter tackles the more sensitive topic of the marginalization of both writing and information literacy instruction in higher education. With a growing interest in the deficits many adults have in various areas of literacy—digital literacy, data literacy, and media literacy, to name only a few currently discussed—we can hope that this marginalization is in the process of changing. As many universities adopt information literacy initiatives, work such as Baer's drawing attention to the ways that institutional cultures and structures create impediments to cross-disciplinary and cross-campus collaboration becomes important, giving weight to arguments for better institutional support of new teaching practices. Baer's references to older works make it clear that both librarians and compositionists have been aware of these obstacles and have been interested in overcoming them for quite a while. Nevertheless, she seems to suggest that, with the increased interest in various literacies and the adoption of the WPA and ACRL *Frameworks*, the circumstances may finally be right for changing some of the "paradigmatic assumptions" and power dynamics that have dogged partnerships over the years (155).

One of the most important features of Baer's book is not really that it brings information literacy and writing studies into conversation with each other, but rather that it demonstrates that, by their very nature, these disciplines are already dialogic and inextricable. In her conclusion, Baer encourages discussions and collaborations

that have the potential to truly transform the way information literacy and writing are taught in universities by recognizing their dialogic character. She also suggests multiple approaches to building partnerships that take advantage of the intertwined nature of these disciplines. Finally, the bibliography provides a comprehensive list for further reading and could inform the design of professional development courses on collaborative teaching. Well-organized, compact, and informative, *Information Literacy and Writing Studies in Conversation* offers much of value to teaching librarians, writing instructors, and instructional designers.—Melissa Anderson, Southern Oregon University

***Rewired: Research-Writing Partnerships within the Frameworks***. Randall McClure, ed., for the Association of College and Research Libraries. Chicago: American Library Association, 2016. 303p. Softcover, \$68.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-8904-3).



Attending the “*Creating Knowledge VIII*” 2016 conference (Reykjavik, Iceland) I was delighted to find conference sessions addressing the integration of writing and research for students. One session was titled “We have to talk about collaboration”: a presentation on a partnership between the University Library and the Writing Centre at Umea University, Sweden.

*Rewired: Research-Writing Partnerships within the Frameworks*, edited by Randall McClure, extends this conversation to development of, partnerships with, and assessment of information literacy and writing as collaborative and integral foundations of academic research.

The edited volume offers three key sections that document the value of reducing if not eliminating the current separation of writing and research within our higher education institutions. With thirty educators providing stories, practices, insights, perspectives, and arguments, the volume’s content is a solid introduction to and reinforcement of the editor’s commitment to a “reunion” of writing and information literacy. *Rewired* is a book defining and advocating “research-writing” as a critical partnership.

Contributors were asked to frame individual chapter content using two relevant documents: the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* (2011) and ACRL’s *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (adopted 2016). The contributors have successfully merged two discipline-based documents to offer a broader understanding of and perspective on the relationship between researching and writing.

The book’s authors ask for feedback and engage in analysis and reflection to explore the topic of research-writing. It is a book with which a librarian/instructor can explore how information literacy/writing/research is being presented and taught and, most important, how its academic positioning impacts students as developing researchers. The chapters give the reader an opportunity to look at root causes and interdependencies that must be addressed to face the strategic challenge of instructional separateness of research and writing.

Section I gives the reader four chapters that present research and writing perspectives as engaging conversation. An analysis of the fields of librarianship and writing instruction by Refaei and Wahman reveal and confirm the shared common ground of theory and practice. This thread of educational commonality is highlighted throughout the edited book. Acknowledging commonalities and differences, Refaei