

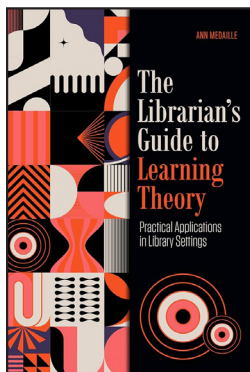
professional application of the transformative learning theory. Authors in this section discuss their experiences with imposter syndrome, storytelling, analyzing changes in post-instruction reflection, advocating for student needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, building professional skills, and using curriculum mapping to develop a full strategy to enhance student learning. Collaborating with other teaching faculty, they have implemented the ideas of transformative learning theory into their professional identity by adjusting their own beliefs and values. Part 3, “Collaborative Experiences for Instructional Identity Development,” examines group learning and professional development. Topics include experiences with trauma-informed approaches and radial empathy, developing a professional learning community, and transformative role playing. The writers detail how they worked with librarians, as well as colleagues outside the library, to implement the tenets of transformative learning theory and to help create an overarching instruction identity for other academic departments.

Many of the chapters in this first volume focus on topics that are timely and of interest to the library community, such as impacts of the COVID-19 and the experiences of Black, indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC). Modifying instructional identities against the backdrop of collective traumatic events, such as the pandemic and the death of George Floyd, is something that academic librarians might keep in mind, especially because an increasing number of today’s college students were potentially affected by these events. Each chapter in Volume 1 concludes with a section titled, “Critical Reflections for Instructional Identities,” where the author(s) apply what they have learned to librarianship and instruction. The text includes critical questions—along with their answers—to make this a useful guide for academic librarians adapting their own pedagogical practices to reflect shifts in learning. *Instructional Identities and Information Literacy: Transforming Ourselves*, Volume 1 would be at home on the shelf of any academic instruction librarian, especially those who are looking to create or reflect on their own instructional identities, and in the library collection of any university with a library and information science program. — *Stephanie Cicero, Roberts Wesleyan University*

Reference

Mezirow, J. (1997), Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 1997: 5–12. <https://doi-org.gate.lib.buffalo.edu/10.1002/ace.7401>

The Librarian's Guide to Learning Theory: Practical Applications in Library Settings, Anne Medaille. ALA Editions, 2023. Softcover, 192p. \$54.99. 9780838939581



Ann Medaille is director of research and instructional services at the University of Nevada, Reno Libraries. Her most recent publication, “The Librarian’s Guide to Learning Theory: Practical Applications in Library Settings” (2024) reviews theories related to learning in its widest definition; not just the learning that takes place in the classroom, but in a variety of settings. This book examines various learning theories taken from a predominantly Western, Global North canon and shows how they can be supported by library settings, both virtual and online. The book also links theory to librarians’ classroom teaching practices, though that is not its main scope. Although the parts related to space design could be useful for all libraries, the book is clearly aimed at academic librarians or

library space managers within education.

The book is clear in its intent to summarize and encapsulate the application of the theories themselves and is well-structured to support this. Each chapter is themed around a topic such as “Dialogue,” or “Constructing Knowledge,” and includes useful parenthetical cross-references to indicate where the book explores theories across these topics. The chapters are consistent in format, and it is textbook-like in its inclusion of reflective questions for the reader, as well as case studies.

Through the clarity of her writing, the author gives the reader the vocabulary needed to successfully articulate—and reflect on—learning moments librarians may have experienced themselves in their work with students, and to link these with relevant, contributing theories. This may lead the reader to reflect on their own actions or contributions to learning practices, and to further inform their future praxis.

For a slim volume, the book covers a lot of ground, albeit with very little depth. Each chapter includes bulleted lists of suggested actions librarians can take to help people learn in their spaces. The book’s main weakness is that these actions often depend on the “ideal” scenario where librarians have as much power, money, space, time, and autonomy as needed to implement them. The tips (“librarians should/librarians could”) are extremely broad and range from space-based changes, to ideas for programmes the libraries could run, to maker-space use within libraries, and continuing on to changing the culture of use within the library’s stakeholders. But these are just tips, not strategies—additional, detailed case studies exploring how to do this work in would make this book more useful for library-space managers. For tips that might be difficult thinking: Also, the recommended reading lists of can-dos were repetitive, which was frustrating at times.

This book is also very shallow in its exploration—or critique—of the often extremely complicated and nuanced theories it is summarizing. The writing comes across as deliberately non-partisan, aiming to explore how learning (in the Western Global North context) has been theorised in a non-judgemental way. However, the book lacks criticism—or even acknowledgement—of the sometimes racist, neoliberal agendas behind globalised education systems, which certainly includes libraries. There are also notable absences within the book’s references to scholars exploring learning in culturally responsive, or restorative ways, as well as to supporting learning for neurodiverse or disabled populations. Because of this, the book seems curiously out of touch with much of the current discourse within librarianship surrounding learning and pedagogy; however, this is not the book’s stated purpose, and as a textbook guiding librarians new to established populist learning theories it does its job well.

This is not a practical guide to implementing learning theory in an information literacy or academic skills classroom (although there are sections for librarians working in this area). Rather this book is, as the title suggests, most useful for evaluating library settings, and how they are set up to encourage learning. I certainly learned a lot from some parts of the book: the chapter on “Observation” was the stand-out for me in explaining Badura’s theory of triadic reciprocity in a way I could fully understand for the first time. In addition, the book includes helpful illustrations, which further assist understanding of the included theories. *The Librarian’s Guide to Learning Theory* would be most useful for librarians, or library space managers, looking for inspiration on how to make their spaces more suitable for learning. Librarians new to teaching may also find value in how the learning theories—often mentioned in librarianship literature with an assumption of prior knowledge—fit in with their own work. — Jess Haigh, Leeds Beckett University