

CJILS Book Review: *Knowledge Management: Historical and Cross-Disciplinary Themes*.

Reviewer: Nicole Eva

Wallace, Danny P., ed. *Knowledge Management: Historical and Cross-Disciplinary Themes*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-59158-502-2. \$60.00

For scholars seriously interested in the study of knowledge management, this book will be a must-read.

Knowledge Management: Historical and Cross-Disciplinary Themes is an extremely thorough, well-researched guide to the entire field of knowledge management, going beyond past the popular concept of a management fad from the 1990s to much earlier days in a variety of disciplines. Wallace cites philosophers, psychologists, educators and economists as well as management gurus and information scientists to show that the field of knowledge management has deep roots, situating the field in its historical context and proving that it's not just a recent craze.

A glance at the table of contents may at first lead one to believe that this book is a collection of essays by various thinkers in the field, ranging from Charles Dewey to Peter Drucker and beyond. However, Wallace does not reproduce these earlier works but instead analyzes these 'key papers' as a way to trace the evolution of the concept of knowledge management through time and academe. Wallace acknowledges both the struggle to define knowledge management over the years as well as critics of the movement, but manages to bring together the various threads of the topic and tie them together into a cohesive whole.

Each chapter is based on one of nine major themes Wallace has drawn out of the knowledge management literature, and in each one highlights key concepts & texts by seminal thinkers to help situate, define, and follow the route knowledge management has taken through history and various disciplines. His methodology in selecting these key papers is explained, and each chapter is thoroughly researched and footnoted. Wallace introduces, defines and explores the theme (ie Chapter 1, "The Nature of Knowledge"), before drawing out and interpreting the ideas from his chosen 'key papers'.

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This book would be useful for a student in the field of knowledge management; it is scholarly, dense, and thorough. While there is no particular Canadian content, there is nothing particularly American about it either, except perhaps the authors chosen; knowledge management is a fairly universal topic, and anyone studying the topic would do well to read this book. Containing both table of contents and detailed index, the book could be sampled sparingly but is probably best read at least a complete chapter at a time. Wallace himself has a long and varied career in the field of Library & Information Studies and is well-published, and has obviously done his homework on this topic. A unique contribution to the field, this book is recommended for any school of Library & Information Studies library, and for any serious scholar on the subject.

-- Nicole Eva, University of Lethbridge Library