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THE NEW INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN

A Workbook for Trainers and Learners

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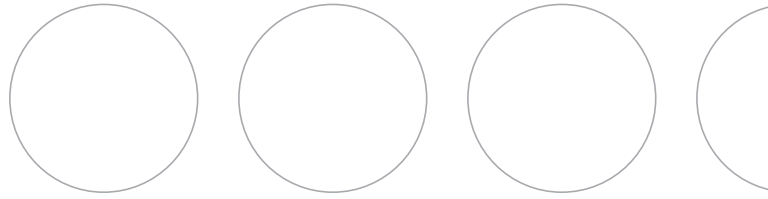
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Worksheets in part 4 are available for download at
www.alaeditions.org/webextras.

Preface

WELCOME TO OUR BOOK

Hello! Pull up a chair, and grab something to drink or eat. We want you to be comfortable as we start our journey together.

WHO ARE YOU?

This book is intended for any library professional with instruction duties. This could include:

- Recent graduates from library and information sciences programs in their first professional position
- Librarians who have been in the profession for a while but have recently taken on instruction duties
- Librarians with instruction experience but who have moved to a new library and are looking for a "game plan" for settling into their new setting
- People who are, formally or informally, tasked with training someone else in instruction

Although this book is primarily geared towards librarians in academic settings, anyone involved in teaching users about some aspect of the library or information seeking should find it applicable.

WHO ARE WE?

We are librarians who love instruction and want others to experience that passion.

Candice entered the library program at the University of Texas at Austin in 1995 with a concentration in reference and happily took an "information specialist"
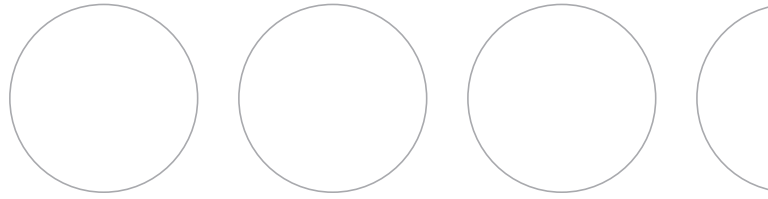
position after graduation at the University of Southern California's Norris Medical Library in 1997. She had been told that teaching database workshops would be part of the job, and dreaded it. Public speaking had never been her strong point. But over the first year on the job, she discovered a previously unknown love of teaching—helped, no doubt, by a supervisor who firmly believed in mentoring her new librarians in instruction. Candice spent her first full semester at the University of Southern California just observing other librarians teach and was not expected to lead a class herself until she announced she was ready. She was startled to discover that many of her colleagues at other libraries had not had such a supportive start to instruction, and when she became instruction coordinator at Radford University in Virginia in 2004, she immediately implemented a training program for all new instruction librarians.

After working as a staff member at a public library, a university library, and a health sciences library, Rebecca graduated with her MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2007. While she always viewed one-on-one reference interactions as a type of teaching, it wasn't until her first post-MLS librarian position at Louisiana State University in 2008 that she actually stood in front of a class and was expected to teach. Rebecca never took an education or information literacy class at any point during her library program, so she was surprised when she was expected to teach not only one-shot classes but also credit-bearing information literacy classes. She dove into the literature headfirst and discovered that a lot of excellent information on learning theories, teaching techniques, and information literacy already existed. When she was appointed information literacy coordinator at Virginia Tech in 2011, she decided to enroll in a second master's program in instructional design and technology. Through this program she was introduced to many additional learning theories, instructional design models, and teaching strategies that have helped her reframe how she thinks about teaching in libraries. She believes strongly in communities of practice as an effective way for individuals to grow in their professional roles, and believes that this book can help bring supervisors, mentors, colleagues, and new instruction librarians together into supportive communities of practice.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

This book is intended to be a practical handbook for new instruction librarians and those who are training or managing them. While the library literature about information literacy is rich, we both noted that there was no single go-to source for orienting new colleagues. Candice created a reading list for her new instruction librarian hires, but she had to develop a more comprehensive training program to fill in the gaps. She copresented with one new librarian, Katelyn Tucker Burton,

about this program at numerous regional conferences and audience response was overwhelming. Rebecca established a community of practice for all teaching librarians at Virginia Tech that revolved around shared readings related to teaching and learning. Through this program, she realized that all librarians who teach—not just new instruction librarians—need support as they continue to grow as teachers and learners. Many instruction librarians had felt lost at the start of their careers, while those who had been charged with orienting new hires also expressed frustration with the process. This book is intended to ease the transition into library instruction and support all those involved, including supervisors, colleagues, and trainees.

Introduction

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK ADD TO THE CONVERSATION?

Our book enters a long-standing and rich scholarly conversation. Since the 1970s (Palmer 1971; Galloway 1976), there have been calls for librarians to be trained to teach, either on the job or in graduate school (Petrowski and Wilson 1991; Mandernack 1990; Kilcullen 1998; Hook, Bracke, Greenfield, and Mills 2003; Hensley 2010). In the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of books were published that aimed to help librarians in this area: Oberman and Strauch's (1982) *Theories of Bibliographic Education: Designs for Teaching;* Branch and Dusenbury's (1993) *Sourcebook for Bibliographic Instruction;* Beaubien, Hogan, and George's (1982) *Learning the Library: Concepts and Methods for Effective Bibliographic Instruction;* and Breivik's (1982) *Planning the Library Instruction Program* are a few.

In more recent years, numerous books have been published to assist librarians with information literacy instruction. These include comprehensive guides like Esther Grassian and Joan Kaplowitz's (2009, 2nd edition) *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice* and Christopher N. Cox and Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay's (2008) *Information Literacy Instruction Handbook;* as well as the myriad of titles focusing on specific instruction aspects, such as the mode of delivery, particular disciplines, or assessment methods. Titles like Patricia Bravender, Hazel McClure, and Gayle Schaub's (2015) *Teaching Information Literacy Threshold Concepts: Lesson Plans for Librarians;* Ryan L. Sittler and Douglas Cook's (2009) *The Library Instruction Cookbook;* and Joanna M. Burkhardt, Mary C. MacDonald, and Andree J. Rathemacher's (2010, 2nd edition) *Teaching Information Literacy: 50 Standards-Based Exercises for College Students* provide ready-made exercises for librarians to use in the classroom.

Missing from the literature has been a practical handbook designed to train and orient new instruction librarians. This is it! Our book is intended to be the first book that a new instruction librarian encounters, providing a realistic overview of

the job and a foundation upon which to build. Once you are comfortable with the basics of being an instruction librarian, we encourage you to keep reading articles and books like the ones above, and continuing to engage with the professional conversation. We hope you will also find opportunities to add to that conversation; all voices have value!

HOW IS THIS BOOK STRUCTURED?

In part I, we briefly discuss the history of library instruction, the ways librarians learn about teaching, and why librarians who have instructional responsibilities should be formally trained to do so. We also introduce the idea of the teaching identity and offer suggestions for those who are hiring and training new instruction librarians. Here we explore environmental scans, recruitment and hiring strategies, and successful orientation, sometimes called onboarding, of new hires.

In part II we introduce the idea of "instruction librarian hats." Being a successful instruction librarian requires you to not only teach, but to be an advocate, learner, instructional designer, teaching partner, and project manager. The chapters in part II will give you an overview of each role and provide practical advice about how to succeed in each. Depending on your library and university, you may need to have more expertise with one "hat" than with others; we've included recommended readings for each hat so that you can learn more about that specific role. Each chapter includes activities for you to apply the concepts, and concludes with a common scenario experienced by instruction librarians wearing that hat. Leading instruction librarians in the United States share advice they would give to colleagues in that situation.

In part III we examine ideas linked to feedback and performance evaluation, including peer observation of instruction. The two chapters in this part focus on strategies and approaches for a new instruction librarian to evolve his or her practice and strategically seek learning opportunities to grow as a professional.

Finally, in part IV, we offer you tools and templates to help you apply the ideas that we've been talking about. A number of the suggested activities involve using these tools and templates, and these items are also available on the Web for you to download.

Each chapter of the book ends with a list entitled "Exploring the Conversation." The name is inspired by the "Scholarship as Conversation" frame in the ACRL's "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." This frame encourages scholars to seek out different perspectives to gain new insights into issues. We hope our reading recommendations, many from outside the library field, support this goal.

The number of books and articles written about information literacy is simply breathtaking. In their selected bibliography of recent resources on information literacy and library instruction published in 2015, Detmering, Johnson, Sproles, McClellan, and Hernandez Lindares identified nearly 500 sources of value published in just the previous year. Rather than trying to create an exhaustive list of sources for each area of the book, we highlight useful titles we personally recommend. These are meant to serve as a starting point.

As mentioned, we will point readers towards sources outside of the library science field when appropriate. We have identified articles and books written by scholars in other disciplines such as education, psychology, and communication which are especially relevant to instruction librarians. Often the concerns of these fields overlap with our areas of interest, and it is beneficial to know what scholarly conversations are being held outside of librarianship.

HOW SHOULD I USE THIS BOOK?

This depends on whether you are the person training a new hire, or if you are training yourself. Our hope is that individuals in both of these roles will find value in this book, and that this book will help strengthen the relationship between the manager and the new librarian. For that, we recommend that new librarians and managers work through this book together, spending time on the activities and analyzing the scenarios that we offer.

For Librarians Training Themselves

It's your first day in your new position. Congratulations! After you have completed your Human Resources paperwork, set up your computer, and decorated your office space, you may have a bit of a lull in your day. Now's a good time to break out this book and start getting strategic about how you are going to approach growing into your new role. There's a lot more to being an instruction librarian than demonstrating databases to students, and this book will help you gain a fuller perspective on the various elements that are part of your new role.

For Managers and Trainers

There is a lot to think about when orienting, training, and offering feedback to a new librarian. Whether you are training your first new librarian or have managed many new librarians, our intention with this book is to offer new perspectives on

working with new instruction librarians. In particular, chapters 2 and 13 are written specifically for managers, but we believe that each component of this book will help managers remember what it's like to be a new librarian and how they can meet these new professionals where they are in order to help them learn and grow.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this book, we use words that could have multiple meanings, but that have specific meanings within the library context. Any time this happens, we've tried to stop and define these words so that you can use them appropriately in your professional context. Let's start, though, with some basic terms that deserve a little more exploration: librarian, instruction, and one-shot.

Who Is a "Librarian"?

A good way to start a heated argument is to ask people in the library field what exactly makes someone a librarian. Is it the setting? The degree? The job duties? For the purposes of our book, we will be using *librarian* to mean anyone who works in a library, and we will be focusing on those charged with some type of instruction.

What Is Meant by "Instruction"?

Whether you call it bibliographic instruction, information literacy, user education, or some other phrase, *instruction* boils down to teaching other people how to do research of some sort. This could be course-integrated sessions, drop-in workshops, or credit-bearing courses. The skills should be useful for in-person, online, and hybrid environments.

Similarly, the authors debated whether we should call ourselves "instruction librarians" or "teaching librarians." The latter appears to be growing in popularity, but a search of recent job postings revealed that the former is still more prevalent.

What Is a "One-Shot"?

For better or worse, most library instruction in academia consists of one-time workshops in which the professors bring their students to the library during class time. Usually, the professor has an assignment that requires the students to conduct some type of library research, and the session's objective is to teach the students what they need to know to fulfill that assignment. These workshops are known as *one-shots* because the librarian is given just this one opportunity to instruct the

students. Depending on the needs and culture, some classes may come back to the library two or more times over the semester for additional instruction. For purposes of this book, "one shot" is used to refer to instruction conducted by a librarian, where the librarian is not the official instructor of record for the course.
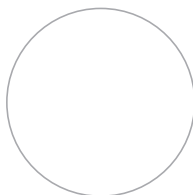
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PART 1

1

IDENTIFYING AS AN INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN

T ell me about the first time you taught a library instruction workshop:

"I arrived for my shift and was told I had a class in twenty minutes. I had never taught the content before. After the session, the lead instructor e-mailed the library director and asked that the next time she requests library instruction that the library does not just send a student assistant. Ouch!"

"The first time I taught a library instruction class was literally my fifth day on the job."

"I was brand new—three weeks from hiring date."

"I was nervous."

"I was a nervous wreck."

"I was terrified."

The above quotes from current librarians reflect the experiences of numerous colleagues, many of whom have developed into excellent instruction librarians,

- ❯ Why should you be prepared to teach?
- ❯ What kind of training is standard for instruction librarians?
- ❯ Why is subject expertise not enough?
- ❯ Why should you self-identify as a teacher?

but who admit their first sessions were rocky. For too many librarians, the entry into instruction is a trial by fire, painful for both the instructing librarian and the students.

But being an instruction librarian can be extremely gratifying. With the proper training and experience, teaching a library session can be comfortable, not nerve-wracking. Teaching allows you to interact with your students and faculty, giving you important insights into your library users. What you learn through the classroom can be applied to your other duties, including reference and collection development.

You may not have planned to become an instruction librarian but chances are, if you enter public services, at some point you will be called upon to teach. In their 2012 article, "Forget the Desk Job: Current Roles and Responsibilities in Entry-Level Reference Job Advertisements," Detmering and Sproles found that virtually all the job ads they examined also required instruction duties. This is especially interesting because in 2004, a study by Sproles and Ratledge had found that only 39 percent of reference positions required instruction. As Detmering and Sproles state, "Given this huge jump in a relatively short period, it is clear that an entry-level job candidate interested in academic reference should expect that teaching will be mandatory in any position she or he obtains and, in most cases, defined as a central component of the position" (2012, 549). In the *Ithaka S+R US Library Survey 2013* (released in 2014), library directors rated library instruction as one of the highest priorities for their institutions. About half the surveyed directors said they planned to increase staffing related to instruction (Howard 2014, para. 5).

In preparation for writing this book, we conducted an online survey in February 2013 of librarians, asking for their personal experiences as new instruction librarians. We received 567 completed surveys, with a good spread of experience:

- 6 percent had graduated from library school within the past year
- 35 percent had graduated from library school within the past five years
- 21 percent had graduated from library school within the past ten years
- 37 percent had graduated from library school more than ten years ago

When we asked participants how long they had been involved in library instruction, the percentages were very similar to the ones above, indicating that most had probably been in instruction for much or all of their professional careers.

The great majority (68 percent) reported that at the first library in which they conducted instruction, the library did not have an in-house training program. An additional 19 percent replied "other" to the question of whether a program existed; the answers supplied indicated there were informal observations or mentoring, but not an established program. If we combine these two responses, we can see that for

most librarians, formal training was not available or was minimal. Previous library publications support these findings (Hook, Bracke, Greenfield, and Mills 2003; Click and Walker 2010; Brecher and Klipfel 2014).[1]

Reasons for this vary, of course. Some of the survey respondents came to instruction with a teaching background outside of libraries, and reported that they did not need training. But for most of the respondents, training was simply not offered. "Staffing issues" were mentioned frequently as the barrier to training. Sometimes the new librarian was a solo librarian, or the only librarian with instructional duties. Sometimes the issue was that other staff members did not see it as their responsibility to teach the new librarian, or did not have the time to spend with the new librarian. There was also a reported feeling of "I learned to teach on the fly, so you should also"—a hazing ritual of sorts, similar to seasoned medical doctors who insist new medical students work very long shifts like they did.

SUBJECT EXPERTISE AND TEACHING

It's common for people who teach in college and university settings to be thrown into the classroom with little if any pedagogical training. The assumption "If you know it, you can teach it" is reflected in many graduate school curricula. Historically, most professors have not had any formal study of "teaching" in their education,[2] even though the higher education literature has documented for decades that content knowledge alone is not enough to make one an effective instructor (Weimer 1990, 4). As Robinson and Hope (2013) state, "Earning a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study is still considered the official credential for teaching at the college level" (4).

Following the publication of works by Ernest L. Boyer in the 1990s, especially *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* and *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities,* more attention has been paid to the scholarship of teaching and the training of college teachers to teach. And yet, the idea that content knowledge automatically makes you an effective instructor continues to hold sway. In her 2013 keynote speech at "The Teaching Professor" conference, Diane L. Pike identified this assumption as one that limits educational potential. "The tyranny of failing to privilege teaching expertise at least at the same level as content expertise for all categories of faculty is still more widespread than it should be," she said (as cited in Weimer 2013, para. 4).

Research studies have consistently shown that subject expertise is essential but is not the only quality needed to be a good teacher. In her books *Improving College Teaching* (1990) and *Improving Your Classroom Teaching* (1993), Maryellen Weimer discusses why the presumption that subject expertise is the sole criterion for teaching at the university level is flawed:

1. It makes the class about "covering" content rather than learning material. With this outlook, instructors focus on making sure a certain number of chapters or concepts are presented in class. Student learning is assumed, but not accommodated. It doesn't matter whether students are struggling with a concept because only x amount of time has been planned to address it. If an instructor changes the plan and less content is delivered, she will then be "behind." As Weimer (1993) says, "We are always behind, always trying to catch up, always feeling as though we are charging breathless to the course's finish" (87).

   Librarians who have taught orientation sessions can probably relate to this challenge. We might have just this one opportunity to see these students, and the temptation is to pack the session full with everything the students need to know about the library. But this approach can easily lead to overwhelming or boring students to the point that they disengage from the session and leave knowing no more than before. More content does not equal a better learning experience.

2. It discounts students' learning abilities. While recent literature dissuades one from putting too much (if any) emphasis on learning styles (Riener and Willingham 2010; Willingham, Hughes, and Dobolyi 2015), it also supports the idea that people do learn in different ways from one another. The "subject expertise" model places the teacher front and center. She is transmitting knowledge to the students, who are empty vessels waiting to be filled. For new instructors, this often means assuming that their students are just like them and would learn best just like they did. In her article "Good Readers, Good Teachers? Subject Matter Expertise as a Challenge in Learning to Teach," Diane Holt-Reynolds shares the illustrative story of "Mary," who plans to teach literature. Throughout her interviews with the researchers, Mary continually declared her intention to teach her classes as she would have liked to have been taught. "Mary's case suggests that at least some prospective teachers . . . [may be] unaware of their own expertise. They may be unable to recall or be unaware of how they have learned the processes they use and that render them expert. Unaided by their disciplines in locating the underpinnings . . . of their expertise, these skilled, talented, and desirable recruits to teaching may easily become, ironically, those who can do but who cannot teach" (Holt-Reynolds 1999, 43). It can be beneficial to remember what it's like to be a student when you become an instructor; it allows you to be empathetic to your audience. But we need to be careful not to extrapolate our personal experiences to all students. You may have understood Boolean logic because of previous math courses, but you cannot assume everyone had this experience. You also want to avoid being "Mary," so intent on what you personally liked or disliked in a session that you do not adjust the class to your current students. You may have had

a favorite professor in college who gave lectures that were thought-provoking and inspirational; this does not mean you should embrace lecture as the definitive instructional technique. As Weimer (1993) states, "The repertoire of strategies, policies, and practices you use must facilitate student learning. You cannot teach like the authoritarian and intimidating Kingfield Fisher of the television series *The Paper Chase* if what you teach is an entry-level required biology course at an institution with an open admissions policy" (14). While *The Paper Chase* went off the air thirty years ago, the quote remains relevant. A truism in higher education is, "teach the students you have, not the students you want." We'll add, "and not the student you were."

3. It views teaching as a born talent rather than a learned skill. Content is what matters and what you learn in graduate programs. You should somehow instinctually "know" how to teach the subject. Weimer (1990) says, "Many college teachers still equate good teaching with a gift bestowed by some divinity. If you have 'received' it, you have been blessed; if not, well, you must make do and not be bitter" (5). Such an outlook excuses instructors from having to work at their teaching, but it also restricts their ability to grow as teachers. If they have a disappointing teaching experience and believe content coverage is the only part they can control, they will be limited in what they can change. Such assumptions also contradict student feedback about ways to improve college teaching. In most research surveys, students have few complaints about an instructor's course knowledge. Instead, it is the faculty member's failure to communicate the knowledge in an accessible way that decreases the instructor's effectiveness (Weimer 1990, 5). Librarians who are new to instruction may be shy about being in front of an audience and think, "That's just who I am." We're not a profession known for our extroverted personalities (although to be sure, there are plenty of librarians who are not shy). We understand. Through high school, college, and graduate school, Candice had a fear of public speaking that made her dread class presentations. When she took her first librarian position, she had nightmares about having to teach workshops. But as was mentioned in the introduction, she learned to love teaching. This did not happen magically; she took professional development courses, practiced her classes, read about pedagogy, and taught and taught and taught. She built on successes and learned from failures. You can do this too. While teaching styles may vary widely, there are shared characteristics of effective instruction. Since the 1930s, scholars in psychology, sociology, and education have studied what makes someone a good teacher, and meta-analyses have found consistent patterns (Feldman 1976; Sherman et al. 1987): enthusiasm, organization, student engagement, clarity, and knowledge of and love of the subject (Weimer 1993, 7). In 2007 the Association of College and Research Libraries released the "Standards for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators," which is "intended to help instruction librarians define and gain

the skills needed to be excellent teachers in library instruction programs and to foster collaborations necessary to create and improve information literacy programs" (para. 1). Such lists can provide new instruction librarians with a game plan for how to become more effective instructors.

LIBRARY GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTION COURSES

For decades, the library literature has documented concerns regarding the lack of instructional training. In her seminal 1976 article, "Nobody Is Teaching the Teachers," Sue Galloway found that librarians who did not have previous teaching experience were unlikely to be involved with or start instruction programs at their libraries. Her strong recommendation was to add instruction classes to the MLIS curriculum. The library literature includes numerous studies of available courses at ALA-accredited schools, and over time, the number of courses offered has steadily risen (Sproles, Johnson, and Farison 2008).

In our 2013 survey, 28 percent said they had taken a library instruction course while in graduate school, with an additional 6 percent indicating they had learned about library instruction in another course such as instructional design, academic librarianship, or reference; or through an independent study.

Such courses are helpful to students, providing a foundation about instruction that can be built upon. Ishimura and Bartlett's 2009 study examined the syllabi of these classes and concluded they focus on how to provide effective instruction, as well as providing basic exposure to educational theory. The great majority also include individual presentations of lesson plans by the student, a very useful exercise given how frightening the idea of public speaking is to most people.

The growth of instruction classes in library science graduate programs reflects the welcome realization that many academic librarians will need to teach. But just as a "one-shot" library session cannot teach students everything they need to know about libraries and the research process, a single course in graduate school cannot be expected to make someone a master teacher.

In fall 2012, *Reference & User Services Quarterly* published a fascinating article entitled "What They Didn't Tell Me (or What I Didn't Hear) in Library School: Perspectives from New Library Instruction Professionals." The first section, authored by Julie VanHoose, discusses the disconnect between learning about teaching and actually teaching a library session. She states, "[Graduate classes] gave me a solid grounding in the theory of education, but I have learned that there is nothing quite like getting out there and actually teaching" (26). In her 2015 study of LIS instruction classes, Hensley noted the same disconnect: "It is difficult to reproduce the complexity of preparing and working with teaching faculty and students in real time" (10).

Virtually all of the courses include a teaching session, but teaching in front of your classmates is artificial. From VanHoose again, "In our college instructional classes there is a lot of talk about engaging students in active learning, teaching to different learning styles, and crafting meaningful assignments . . . But there is a significant difference between practicing those skills on our classmates and actually practicing them in a library instruction session. Our fellow library students are just as enamored with libraries as we are, so of course they are engaged. But those non–library lovers [i.e., students you encounter on the job] are a different ballgame" (27).

In your professional career, you will meet all kinds of students in your classes; some will be enthusiastic, some will be unengaged, but very few will be fellow librarians. Earlier, we discussed the tendency for new instructors to assume that all students were like themselves; it is equally important to be open-minded about each group that comes to you for instruction. Pay attention to your audience each time you teach. Over time, you will develop a sense of what works for your particular setting. You will know what causes anxiety in the freshmen, and what the graduate students really know. What you think is interesting or important may be completely different from your students' priorities. When teaching workshops on APA reference style, for example, Candice has discovered that showing how to create a hanging indent in Word is a sure-fire crowd pleaser.

Most important as you develop repeat customers, you will know what the student needs and desires will be based on particular professors' projects and expectations. The What's in It for Me factor (Booth 2011) must be made explicit in most library sessions. This book will give you strategies for analyzing and responding to the needs of students.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS INSTRUCTOR

Many studies have tried to identify components of librarians' professional identities (Creth 1995; Garcia 2011; Lynch and Robles Smith 2001; Watson-Boone 1998), but rapid changes in the profession, combined with the evolution of the many different types of information professionals, have made it all but impossible to pin down a core identity shared by librarians. Even for those librarians sharing a common working environment or context, such as academic librarians, the ways that librarians identify themselves and their professional roles vary greatly.

When Scott Walter (2008) wrote that "librarianship is a profession in transition," he argued that the academic librarian's increased responsibilities related to teaching and learning is a central part of this transition (51). In addition to Walter's exploratory study, other studies have examined librarians' attitudes toward teaching and whether or not they self-identify as teachers or educators. Erin Davis, Kacy Lundstrom,

and Pamela Martin (2011) found that the type of teaching with which a librarian is involved makes a difference in whether or not librarians identify themselves as teachers; for example, librarians who teach for-credit courses are more likely to identify themselves as teachers. Davis, Lundstrom, and Martin (2011) suggest that the way librarians see themselves can influence the way that students and faculty perceive them, and these authors encourage instruction and information literacy coordinators to reflect on these findings as they work with instruction librarians on their home campuses.

Developing a professional identity takes time. In her 2004 article, "Am I a Teacher? Exploring the Development of Professional Identity," Alsup argues that people who enter a teaching profession yet fail to develop an appropriate identity struggle in the classroom. Reflecting on her first year as a high school teacher, she writes, "I had thought I was prepared for my new job, so the realization that I was not as ready as predicted came as quite a shock. I knew my content, and I was knowledgeable about many creative pedagogical strategies, but I couldn't figure out how to place myself in the classroom—who was I as a teacher? How much of my old self could I bring to my class? How much of a new persona, almost a new 'person,' did I have to create to interact effectively with students? I felt disoriented and a little off balance. I didn't know how to be a teacher, even though I knew the fundamentals of a teacher's work" (Alsup 2004, 35).

While Alsup was focusing on secondary school teachers, the concerns and experiences she shares resonate strongly with us. Just as many teachers in K–12 decide to leave the field within their first five years, burnout is a known risk for instruction librarians (Sheesley 2001). Since the research indicates that teachers who are successful at developing a professional identity are more satisfied, we recommend that you, as a new instruction librarian, consciously construct one. What does it mean *to you* to be a teacher? Know that this identity can be contextual depending on the class and situation, and that it will probably evolve over time.[3]

You can develop your teaching identity by intentionally reflecting on your teaching practice. If you are a supervisor training the new hire, you can engage in structured conversations with your colleague. If you are the new instruction librarian, you can seek out opportunities to discuss teaching with your coworkers, or compose written narratives. Questions to consider include:

- What teaching methods did you use? Why?
- What technology did you use? Why? How did it support your goals?
- What kind of relationship did you build with the professor and the students?

By devoting time to such reflections, you are more likely to incorporate "instruction" into your day-to-day thinking about your job, altering your professional identity to include it. In their large study of 788 library staff, Julien and Genuis

(2011) found that librarians who had teaching duties were more positive about this aspect of the job when they participated in continuing education related to library instruction (109). Intentional reflections can be an informal way to engage in such activities.

Integrating "teacher" or "educator" into your professional identity can influence your effectiveness as a teacher, the way you are perceived on campus, and your sense of confidence and fulfillment in your role as an instruction librarian. In addition to helping you acquire the strategies and skills you need to become an effective and passionate teacher, we hope that, as you reflect on what you read in this book, you will begin to think of yourself and your colleagues primarily as educators, because that is what you all are.

✅ Activities

1. Use Google to locate an online survey of teaching styles, such as Grasha's Five Teaching Styles or the Teaching Perspectives Inventory, and complete it. As with any personality survey, we recommend you treat the results with healthy skepticism, viewing them as a way to gain insight into your preferences, strengths, and challenges, and not as permanent limitations.
2. Write a reflection discussing your personal learning preferences, and how they may help or hinder you as an instructor.
3. Begin a list of skills you wish to develop as you create your professional identity as a teacher.

✅ Exploring the Conversation

Bean, J. C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom.*
Bean's book is perfect for the librarian charged with teaching a credit-bearing course. Written by one of the leaders in the Writing Across the Curriculum movement, this book takes a very pragmatic approach to developing effective assignments that incorporate skills. The chapter on research projects is particularly interesting, although one might wish he included librarians a little more. Nevertheless, it has excellent advice, especially on grading.

Booth, C. *Reflective Teaching, Effective Learning: Instructional Literacy for Library Educators.*
Booth's book connects educational theories and instructional design principles to information literacy in an engaging, conversational manner. It is a great "crash course" for people who have not taught before. Both authors

used this text to great effect with instruction librarians in our places of work as a "book club" selection.

Buchanan, H. E., and B. A. McDonough. *The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide.*

Buchanan and McDonough's book was released while we were writing this text. It focuses on practical ways to approach the most common form of library instruction, the one-shot session, including what to teach, problem-solving classroom issues, and the basics of assessment.

Grassian, E. S., and J. R. Kaplowitz. *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice.*

There's a good reason this book is the primary textbook for many teaching classes in library schools. In over 400 pages, it details the history of user education, major educational psychology theories as applied to information literacy, designing workshops and handouts, and assessing your efforts. Candice requires her new instruction librarians to read the chapter on active learning as part of their orientation.

Kuhlthau, C. *Seeking Meaning: A Process Approach to Library and Information Services.*

First published in 1993, this important work details Kuhlthau's extensive research on how people seek information. You can see many of the behaviors she discusses also reflected in recent research initiatives, such as Project Information Literacy and The Citation Project, both of whose reports are also worth reading.

Notes

1. If you are a librarian at a large research library, you may have greater training opportunities. Walter and Hinchliffe's 2005 SPEC Kit, "Instructional Improvement Programs," found that the majority of responding Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members provided opportunities for librarians seeking to improve their teaching.

2. An important exception to this are graduate programs in English, especially rhetoric and composition. Because graduate students often teach freshman composition classes, these programs have a well-established history of providing formal pedagogical instruction to their graduate students (Pytlik and Liggett 2001).

3. See Beauchamp and Thomas's article (2009) for a very thorough review of the literature on teacher identity.

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