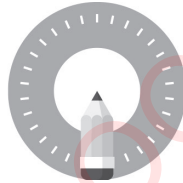


Candice Benjes-Small and Rebecca Miller Waltz



THE NEW INSTRUCTION LIBRARIAN

SECOND EDITION

A Workbook for Trainers and Learners

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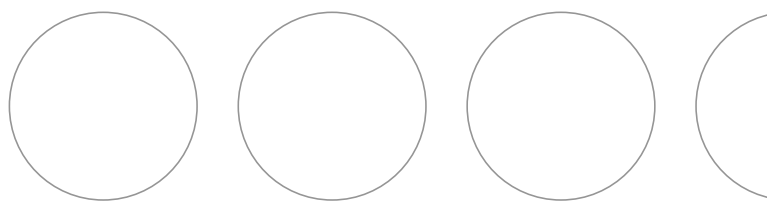
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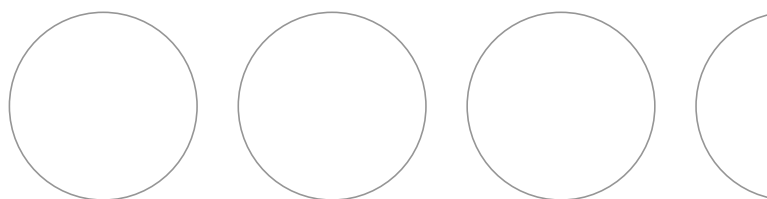
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Preface

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

This book reflects the myriad of experiences we've had at multiple institutions, but libraries aren't a monolith. We recognize that our perspectives and advice might not be an exact fit in every way, but our goal is that every librarian should be able to find something useful within these pages.

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 with a concentration in reference and happily took an information specialist position after graduation at the University of Southern California's Norris Medical Library. 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. In 2018 she moved to William & Mary (W&M) to become head of research services, and one of her first acts was to convene book groups to discuss this book.

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 had 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 hopes that this book can help bring supervisors, mentors, colleagues, and new instruction librarians together into supportive communities of practice. When Rebecca stepped into a new (to her) role as head of library learning services at Penn State University Libraries in 2015, she immediately got involved with the University Libraries' Instructional Community of Practice. She credits her successful transition into an associate dean position in 2022, also at Penn State University Libraries, to the support and self-reflection the Instructional Community of Practice encouraged and often thinks about how much her leadership style and philosophy have been influenced by her pedagogy and experience in the classroom.

We are also products of our environments. As a Gen X librarian, Candice entered the profession just as libraries were embracing the internet. The very first library workshop she taught as a graduate student was an introduction to the World Wide Web. At the medical library, she had mostly health sciences students and hospital administrators in her classes, which focused heavily on

searching databases like MEDLINE, CINAHL, and Chemical Abstracts. As a history major, she often found the search topics could be intimidating, but the audience was generally appreciative. When she moved to Radford University most of her teaching was directed toward undergraduates in general education classes. In these cases, the research questions were easier but she had to develop new ways to keep the students engaged. It was in this setting that her interest in pedagogy really took off. In addition to her day job, she has been an adjunct professor teaching information literacy instruction for both Syracuse University's and Old Dominion University's American Library Association (ALA)-accredited library science programs.

When thinking about how her work experiences have shaped her understandings and perspectives, Rebecca realized her entire professional career has been spent at R1 land-grant institutions: Louisiana State University, Virginia Tech, and Penn State. At each of these institutions, librarians held faculty status, which means Rebecca was offered the space and time to pursue service and scholarship opportunities that have directly impacted her perspectives on information literacy and teaching and her overall career trajectory. Like Candice, Rebecca has also served as an adjunct instructor for Syracuse University's library science program and has learned through engaging in communities of practice with other LIS instructors. All of these experiences and relationships have influenced the lens Rebecca uses to look at libraries, information literacy, and instruction.

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.

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WHY A SECOND EDITION?

We completed our manuscript for our first edition in the summer of 2016. It's hard to overstate how much has changed since then, on the global, professional, and personal levels. Within the United States, the ripple effects of the 2016 election, the COVID pandemic, the #MeToo movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, the recession, book bannings, and so much more have fundamentally changed our society.

Within librarianship, the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Fobazi Ettahr's article on vocational awe, and a higher profile for work related to equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion have greatly shifted the conversations about library instruction. In each chapter, we completed and updated our literature reviews, intentionally adding more current works throughout and providing more context to our narrative.

As the world and profession have changed, so have we. When we were asked to write a second edition, we did a thorough rereading and recognized that our perspectives, shaped by our identities as white, cisgender, heterosexual women, inevitably influenced the first edition. We can now see that we didn't yet have the inclusive or critical lens to tackle the systemic issues of class, race, and gender in our field. We welcomed writing a new edition to better address the divergent experiences in librarianship.

Our professional lives have also broadened, bringing us into contact with diverse librarians and libraries. Recognizing that some of our work had been too specific to institutional norms, we intentionally took a more person-centered approach in this edition. We exchanged chapters on hiring and performance evaluation for ones that discuss critical information literacy and sustainability in the profession. (The chapters from the first edition are still available in W&M's institutional repository, ScholarWorks.) Throughout the other chapters, we sought to promote an ethos of kindness and grace for ourselves, our learners, and our colleagues.

As we complete this manuscript in the spring of 2025, we feel that it accurately reflects our goals for this edition: providing a practical guide for people new to library instruction, while incorporating research, scholarship, and perspectives that offer a more complete and equitable understanding of the field. We are committed to our own ongoing learning and welcome feedback on our progress.

As you read this book, we invite you to absorb what is useful and add what is unique to you (to paraphrase Bruce Lee).

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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 et al. 2003; Hensley 2010). In the 1980s and early 1990s, various 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 several.

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 ed.) *Information Literacy Instruction: Theory and Practice*, Christopher N. Cox and Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay's (2008) *Information Literacy Instruction Handbook*, and Natalie Greene Taylor and Paul T. Jaeger's (2021) *Foundations of Information Literacy*, as well as the myriad of titles focusing on specific instruction aspects, such as the mode of delivery, particular discipline, or pedagogical lenses. Titles like Mary K. Oberlies and Janna Mattson's (2018) *Framing Information Literacy: Teaching Grounded in Theory, Pedagogy and Practice*; Danielle Skaggs and Rachel McMullin's (2024) *Universal Design for Learning in Academic Libraries: Theory into Practice*; Kelly McElroy and Nicole Pagowsky's (2016) *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook*; Heidi E. Buchanan and Beth A. McDonough's (2021) *The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide* (3rd ed.); and Candice Benjes-Small, Carol Wittig, and Mary K. Oberlies's (2021) *Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences* provide ready-made exercises for librarians to use in the classroom.

This book takes a broader view than most. Although what happens in the classroom is an essential part of being an instruction librarian, there are many other roles such librarians must play. Collaboration with teaching faculty, library colleagues, and university administrators is a core responsibility that happens in numerous settings. As ACRL's (2017) *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*

states, these different roles—or hats, as we call them in this book—“are intended to help librarians situate our individual work experiences within the broader work of academic libraries and within academic communities” (under “Purpose of the Roles,” para. 1). We hope this more holistic approach will provide context for instructional work.

Our book is intended to be a practical handbook designed to train and orient new instruction librarians. This may 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 previous ones and continue 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 1 we briefly discuss the ways librarians learn about teaching, why librarians who have instructional responsibilities should be formally trained to teach, and how librarians develop a teaching identity. We then explore the history of library instruction and information literacy and conversations that surround these topics, especially related to critical pedagogy.

In part 2 we introduce the idea of “instruction librarian hats.” Being a successful instruction librarian requires you not only to teach but to be an advocate, learner, instructional designer, teaching partner, colleague, project manager, and often coordinator. The chapters in part 2 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 practice applying 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 those situations.

In part 3 we focus on strategies and approaches for a new instruction librarian to evolve their practice and strategically seek learning opportunities to grow as a professional. A chapter on peer observation details how to approach this strategy both as an observer and as the one being observed, while our last chapter examines how to build sustainable practices that allow for professionals to flourish.

Finally, in part 4 we offer templates to help you apply the ideas that we’ve been talking about throughout the book. These can be especially helpful when completing the activities suggested in most chapters.

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Each chapter of the book ends with Exploring the Conversation. The name is inspired by the “Scholarship as Conversation” frame in ACRL’s (2016) *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 2023, Carolyn Caffrey et al. identified 343 journal articles 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. At times these sources may be from outside of the library science field. 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. The items in Exploring the Conversation are meant to serve as a starting point and hopefully stimulate further discussion between you and colleagues.

HOW SHOULD I USE THIS BOOK?

The answer to this question 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 the latter, we recommend that new librarians and managers work through this book together, spending time on the activities and analyzing the scenarios that we offer.

Because this book is meant to be both broad and practical, we have also found it to be useful as a book club selection for communities of practice. When Candice joined W&M in 2018, she held numerous discussion groups with new colleagues focused on the first edition. Some of the changes we implemented in this edition reflect feedback from these conversations. We have also heard from librarians at other institutions that the Ask the Experts scenarios have served as case studies for small group discussions.

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.

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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. 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. Anytime 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 think about and 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.

In chapter 2, you will read a more thorough discussion of what *information literacy* means, and how the phrase has evolved over time.

What Is a “One-Shot”?

Most library instruction in academia consists of one-time workshops in which the professors bring their students to the library during class time; a 2018 study by Julien, Gross, and Latham found that 87 percent of librarians with instruction responsibilities used this method. 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. Although this term is commonly used throughout the profession, we do want to note that librarianship is consciously moving away from language like *one-shot* that may be associated with violence. The phrase *single-session instruction* offers an alternative for instruction librarians to use.

In recent years, there has been a lot of debate as to whether one-shots are an effective use of student and librarian time. We offer a selection of readings in *Exploring the Conversation* for those interested in learning more about these viewpoints.

EXPLORING THE CONVERSATION

Benjes-Small, C. “There’s a Baby in the Bath Water: In Defense of One-Shots.”

College & Research Libraries News.

Written as a response to Nicole Pagowsky’s “The Contested One-Shot,” this brief essay argues that the one-shot is useful for relationship building and point-of-need and that critiques of the one-shot are often reflective of the university culture, which would not be solved by a change in teaching methodology.

Pagowsky, N. “The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures.” *College & Research Libraries.*

Pagowsky’s essay serves as both a call for proposals and a call for change, arguing that the one-shot structure is insufficient for effective teaching and learning and that it is time for us to disrupt the systems that push one-shots.

Pho, A., S. Abumeeiz, K. V. Bisbee, N. Mody, R. Romero, W. Tranfield, and D.

Worsham. “You Only Get One Shot: Critically Exploring and Reimagining the One-Shot Instruction Model.” *College & Research Libraries.*

This article explicitly explores how early-career librarians learn about one-shots and imagines how the model might be improved.

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