

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Buchanan, HE and McDonough, BA. **The one-shot library instruction survival guide**. 2nd ed. Chicago: ALA Editions; 2017. Softcover: 168 p. ISBN: 978-0-8389-1486-1. Price: USD\$50.00. Available from: <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=11856>.

Instructional librarians are very familiar with a one-shot instruction session, a “single-session, generally only 50 to 75 minutes in length” (p. 2). Research and instructional librarians at Hunter College, Western Carolina University, Buchanan and McDonough present some of the challenges and more importantly, ways to succeed when confronted with teaching this type of session. One-shots have a short length which results in them being more about bibliographic teaching (showing or demonstrating library resources) rather than information literacy instruction, reaching higher-level learning outcomes. This second edition integrates the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (FILHE)* by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), as it presents everything from initial communication through to assessment. Each of the seven chapters presents key concepts, highlights relevant questions, and summarizes the topic at end. The chapters are organized to present sections with additional resources, comparison tables, lesson learned, and vignettes that highlight examples from other librarians, providing real-life context to the ideas being presented. *The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide* is a great overview for new librarians and can invigorate established academic librarians looking to approach their instruction sessions in an innovative way. It is important to note that the book is focused on higher education settings; while the ACRL *FILHE* does have overarching themes that could apply to any library setting, some of the examples may only work in a university or college environment.

Active learning, tied to objectives that are relevant to the learner, allows for better knowledge retention and a more thorough understanding. Buchanan and McDonough present an understanding of this as they note, “In order to create a learner-centered environment, you have to stop talking and

demonstrating, give up some control, and invest time and thought in planning and designing instruction” (p. 49). Chapter Four, *How do I get them to pay attention?*, presents many different active learning techniques that can easily be integrated into one-shots, such as one-minute papers, think-pair-share, gallery walks, and concept mapping. There is also a useful table that lays out options for gathering student input instantly, using clickers, polls, index cards and even social media (p. 92). By allowing students to reflect on the topic and discuss it with others in engaging ways, they become more immersed, rather than simply watching a demonstration of a pre-prepared search in a database. These types of activities also allow for student learning to connect with the *FILHE*, such as an example that stood out under the “Information as Value” frame (p. 37-38): a librarian showed pictures of medieval libraries, with books in chains which turned into a discussion on access to information and why information is so valuable. This theme connects to today’s libraries and the services offered to students, making it is a perfect segue to the value of information and libraries. There are also instructional strategies provided for different types of settings, including online, large lectures, rooms without computers, and not even having a room available at all (where they suggest trying teaching right inside the library to show rather than tell). Since one-shot sessions can be “all types of classes, at all levels, all subjects, and in a variety of settings” (p. 79), this book gives readers potential solutions for active learning techniques no matter where you are instructing.

One of the ideas the authors dismiss is creating learning objectives for one-shot sessions, as they state, “don’t get sucked into spending too much time and energy crafting them” (p. 46). However, in their chapter on assessment, they mention that assessing students can help address learning goals. While teaching to larger concepts is a valuable approach, specific outcomes need to be defined from the beginning to assess whether or not learning has taken place. In relation to assessment, the authors do give some simple techniques for one-shots, including asking students to describe the session in a word,

writing it down on an index card, and creating a word cloud for an overall picture of the impact of the class. Buchanan and McDonough also strongly suggest following up with course instructors post-session and assessing your own presentation skills. That being said, starting with learning objects can help set the stage for the assessment process, whether assessing our students or assessing ourselves.

The greatest strength of this book is that it emphasizes that one-shots should not be a first step to building relationships; instruction should be strategic and whenever possible, integrated into the learning outcomes of the course or the program. There is definitely a challenge to this, as the authors note that often faculty do not understand the full range of library services or resources (in Chapter 2: *The teaching faculty won't/don't _____: Communicating and collaborating with instructors*). Yet holding our own

instruction to a higher standard allows for stronger information literacy for both students and potentially for faculty as well. Librarians need to look at their library's and their institution's strategic priorities and recognize that they do not have to say yes to every one-shot request that comes their way; "if you allow information literacy to be trivialized at your institution, you won't be helping anyone. It's okay to say no" (p. 25).

I would recommend purchasing *The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide*. It is straightforward, practical, and provides ideas that can be easily incorporated into one-shots. While the focus is on universities/colleges, health librarians provide one-shots in all types of settings and can use the information in this book to rethink their approach to short, standalone sessions.

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

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