

Book Reviews



Julie Artman, Jeff Sundquist, and Douglas R. Dechow. *The Craft of Librarian Instruction: Using Acting Techniques to Create Your Teaching Presence.* Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016. 112 p. Paper, \$38.00 (ISBN 978-083898821-3)

The Craft of Librarian Instruction is a practical approach to library instruction in which the authors take strategies and techniques used in acting and adapt their use to strengthen the instruction that librarians do in the classroom. The links between these topics are natural; other librarians have used backgrounds in theater, public speaking, and even comedy to help others improve their teaching. Additionally, many librarians who are new to teaching can experience anxiety or stage fright when placed in front of a classroom. While it is easy to see how teaching is like anything that is done for an audience, the authors smartly expand the metaphor to create a link between an actor's motivation and the learning outcomes that many instructors create when planning a class.

The strengths of the text are its approachability, practicality, and usability for the new teaching librarian. This book is written for librarians who are teaching and in the classroom on a regular basis, as it includes many practical exercises and strategies on everything from physical and vocal preparation to building a teaching presence and persona. I would recommend this title to newer librarians who are learning what kind of instructor they want to be and still have anxiety about public speaking and who may lack confidence in their teaching. This book can also be helpful to a seasoned librarian who wants to reinvigorate his or her teaching, though that librarian may find more value in skipping around within the book and focusing on specific sections. The authors have also added resources for further reading along with sample scenarios at the end of each chapter. This title is not for the librarian who does not do any teaching or the teaching librarian who has done a deep dive into pedagogy, as such librarians will likely not learn anything that is new to them or may disagree with some of the strategies the authors promote. Those librarians who have more experience with teaching and pedagogy may find that this book is too brief and sometimes simplifies the act of teaching. The librarian who is new to teaching will find value in this brevity, as the material does not become overwhelming.

Some instruction librarians and those who study pedagogy may disagree with the techniques that the authors promote in the classroom. Librarians who ground their work in teaching authentically will take offense at the idea of working with a character or teaching persona, though they will connect with using authentic motivation for students in their teaching. Creating a script and practicing lines may help newer librarians, but in the long run creating a persona or a character that is markedly different from the personality of the librarian may feel inauthentic to some students and could inhibit any further interactions with the librarian or in the library. The authors make an excellent point when they discuss memorization, in that they include a disclaimer that librarians need to be flexible and sometimes improvise in the classroom while interacting with students. Heavily scripted classes can feel inauthentic to students and prohibit the librarians from fully engaging with the class. The authors also note that instruction librarians should reveal parts of their personalities and their motivations to show through as they create a personality that they use for instruction, though doing so in a thoughtful, intentional way. Also, all librarians who teach will agree with the authors in the importance of reflection at the end of a class and using that reflection to improve subsequent classes.

In conclusion, this book is helpful to newer librarians or even graduate students in librarianship who are working to become great teachers and can also be used as a tool to help more experienced teachers breathe new life into different areas of their teaching. While it is wonderful in its practicality, this book is a starting point or a beginning into the world of being a teaching librarian. Librarians who wish to become great teachers should continue to read and explore the literature, as well as attending presentations, conferences, or seminars on these topics as they grow as teachers. All in all, the audience for this book is written for librarians who have anxiety and possibly stage fright in regard to their roles as teachers.—*Elise Ferer, Drexel University*

Jeannette A. Bastian, Megan Sniffin-Marino, and Donna Webber. *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2015. 137p. Paper, \$69.95 (ISBN 978-1-931666-87-3)

While each discipline surely has its own body of literature produced expressly for its followers, guides written about a particular profession for those not practicing it are much rarer. Such is *Archives in Libraries*, with its subtitle *What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together* succinctly summing up the authors' thesis. While it is, as the authors state, primarily aimed at explaining archives and archivists to librarians (it's published by the Society of American Archivists), it can work the other way around as well. It's also quite usable as a guide for administrators in charge of archives, especially for those who may not have an archival background. The volume can even double as a general introduction to both library and archival science as well as a compass for those feeling the pull of both professions and not sure which way to go or which path to follow.

The authors are well matched and suited for the subject, being a trio of professionals who in their careers have crossed and recrossed the line separating libraries and archives, one that has grown more tenuous over time. Two authors are associated with Simmons College: Bastian, a professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Library and Information Sciences; and Webber, an Associate Professor of Practice there. Sniffin-Marino is University Archivist at Harvard University. Blending three voices into one, they sketch the histories and activities of the two professions and summarize the trends and developments moving the once-distinct tracks toward convergence.

Since that future point will never come, the professions will never totally overlap, making a book like this valuable and necessary. With great analytical skill, the authors deftly summarize in table form the distinctions and similarities of the two professions; it's hard to imagine it being done more concisely. Of equal interest and value are the periodic vignettes they provide, dramatizing particular situations that highlight professional differences, misconceptions, and opportunities. Various professionals, including academic archivists and library directors, as well as archivists in local history collections and at public libraries, were interviewed for the book; their comments, in shaded boxes, are interspersed at appropriate locations within the text. Endnotes follow each chapter, and there is a full bibliography and index. Sources on archival standards, with notation to a fuller web address, comprise a two-page appendix. Occasional graphics, in flow chart form, also adorn the text.

The topics covered in this slim volume (the thin paper stock covers curl almost immediately) proceed logically and are covered in a swift yet thorough manner. From a first chapter on common ground, encompassing missions, professional roots, identity and values, the discussion proceeds to language, or vocabularies, common to both professions, that can cause cohesion as well as confusion. What follows is a summary on the education of archivists and librarians, historically, and with an eye to the future.