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# A Review of “Fundamentals for the Academic Liaison.”

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Fundamentals of Library Instruction. Monty L. McAdoo (2012) Chicago: ALA Editions. ISBN 9780838911419

As librarians assume the role of teachers and as the perception of librarians as teachers grows, the need for a deeper understanding of what library instruction encompasses takes on greater significance. The book begins with a concise dispensation on the evolution of the concept of instruction involving the library entitled *Historical Overview of Library Instruction*, which includes a general survey of the six key formats of instruction namely; *Bibliographic Instruction*, *Library Orientation*, *Library Instruction*, *Course- Integrated Instruction*, *Credit-Bearing Courses* and *Information Literacy Instruction*. The author also describes how these terms are often used synonymously when in fact they have different emphases and why making the distinction between them is important.

In chapter two, *Who Teaches?* the issue of who is responsible for teaching addressed followed by a discussion on differences between *centralized* and *distributed* models of library instruction. The author then takes an in-depth look into many of the issues that arise in the day to day management of an instruction program in a section entitled, *Delegation of Instruction*, it also includes a brief discussion into the types of teaching models namely, *Embedded Librarians* and *Co-teaching* and their underlying aspects. The third chapter, *How Students Learn*, is an important and cogently written introduction, into the *Behaviorist*, *Cognitivist* and *Constructivist* theories of learning and the debate surrounding their relevance and use followed by a brief discussion about learning styles.

Chapters four, five and six, *Predelivery Considerations*, *What to Teach and Where Instruction Takes Place*, these chapters present an informed and nuanced view of the delivery of services, the content to be imparted and a discussion on various places where library instruction can take place. In the seventh chapter, *It's About Time* the author, turns his attention to the issue of time. And not just time management, but to actual timing. For example, at what point should instruction be scheduled and by whom? The chapter does cover specific aspects of how to manage time. And it does so in a detailed and useful way. By offering a time saving check list of sorts for online classes as well as a six step procedure for the processing requests for instruction. It also includes a model of a detailed request for instruction form. Followed by an instructive final note on scheduling generally speaking.

In the eighth chapter entitled, *Characteristics of Effective Instructors*, the author compiles a list of twelve essential skills and what he sees as the twenty-five vital characteristics of an effective instructor namely, knowledge of the subject matter, genuine desire to teach, ability to communicate effectively, sense of humor and organizational skills just to name a few. The author expounds on the concept of effective instructors with an equally informative discussion on the *Characteristics of Effective Instruction* in the ninth chapter. In this section he argues that even the most experienced instructors need to develop strategies and tactics to effectively

conduct instruction sessions. In order to manage disruptions that will eventually occur during a session. In the final two chapters, the tenth and eleventh respectively, *Assessment and Challenges to Instruction*. McAdoo produces a wide ranging and erudite discussion on the importance of conducting informal and formal assessments of library instruction. In the final chapter, he addresses some of the common misconceptions about library instruction and addressing the issue of non-librarians providing instruction.

The *Fundamentals of Library Instruction* is an excellent primer, which captures suasion and well developed arguments the essence of a vital aspect of academic librarianship. Reading it will obviate some of the pitfalls inherent in library instruction. It is an important and much needed book for teaching librarians of all experience levels.

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