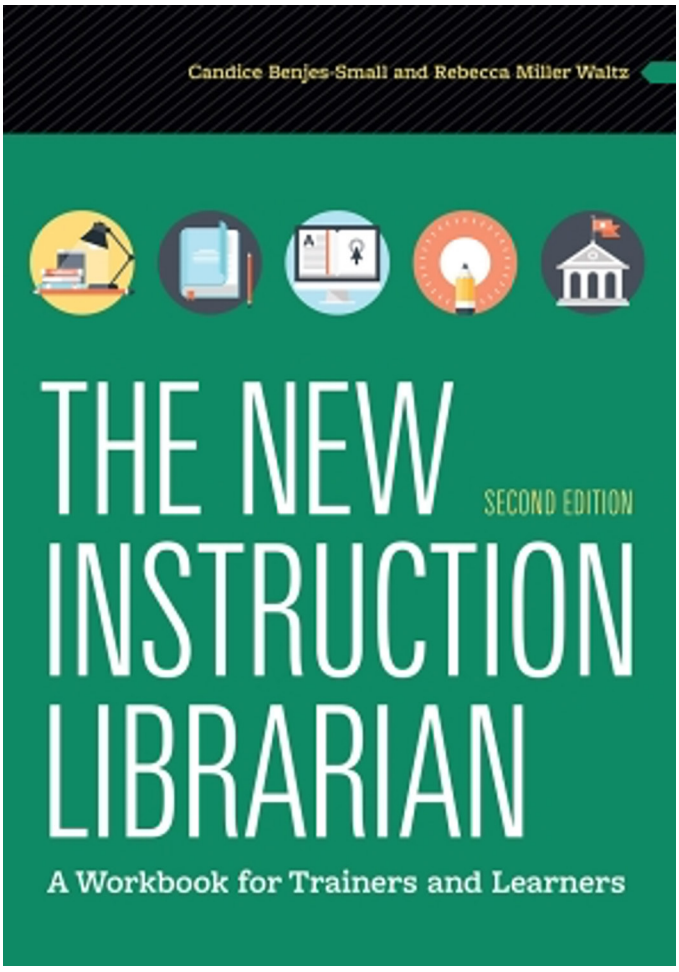
The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learners, 2nd Edition, Candice Benjes-Small and Rebecca Miller Waltz, ALA Editions, 2025. 256 pp. Softcover, $69.99. 9798892553254.

Instruction, as seen in existing literature, is a vast topic covered in disciplines beyond librarianship. New academic librarians are often expected to teach in the first few months of their job, or even earlier if the hiring date is close to the beginning of the semester. Candice Benjes-Small and Rebecca Miller Waltz's second edition of their book, *The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learner*, is a great resource for students transitioning from library school into the professional space, new librarians, and colleagues and managers supporting them or any library professional who wants to learn more about the inner workings of instruction in a college or university library for the first time.

Divided into four sections, the book uses a metaphor for librarians wearing different hats throughout the volume. Each chapter represents a different hat (a different responsibility) of a teaching librarian, along with the tasks and responsibilities that come with that hat. The strength of the book comes from its ability to connect to the reader in various formats. With each chapter organized in a succinct manner—including hands-on activities, practice scenarios, expert opinions, and a curated list of manageable resources for each chapter—the reader is not overwhelmed and can sift through the material with ease. The diverse types of examples that the book presents allow for reinforcement of information and builds upon both existing knowledge of the reader and information from the previous chapters. The chronology of the book familiarizes the reader with instruction terminology and definitions while introducing the audience to the premise of what instructional librarians do. The conversation dives further to explore the potential of instruction primarily in one-shot sessions and workshops geared toward students of all disciplines and stages of their academic careers. Authors also provide instructions on how to read the book, which suggests ways to apply concepts in the workplace and classroom.



Part 1 covers the basic questions that incoming librarians might have when it comes to teaching. Dilemmas over balancing content, theory, and practical skills in learning the material challenge the reader to think back to when they were a student

and to approach instruction from a student's perspective. In particular, the personal anecdotes from the authors who are now in leadership or more senior positions allow the reader to take a glimpse into their successful transitions from student to instructor, including the obstacles and challenges that they faced and overcame.

Part 2, the largest part of the book, spans from Chapter 3 to Chapter 11. Benjes-Small and Waltz describe the various hats librarians wear as colleagues, teachers, coordinators, project managers, learners, and beyond in order to cover the various tasks and teaching environments to which a new academic librarian must acclimatize. The orientation of the role in a particular organizational structure opens further conversations on the limits and boundaries that a new academic librarian should be aware of before creating or initiating new relationships with the campus community. Chapter 9, describing project management, draws on Nisha Mody's 2018 post from ACRLog touching on the importance of thinking outside library science, learning from peers of all disciplines, and capturing sources beyond academic articles and books (p. 149).

Parts 3 and 4 end the book with a change of perspective in instruction, providing observations of the new librarian as instructor, as well as observing other experienced instructors. The detailed guidelines on how to request to shadow a teaching session, how to act during one, and how to follow-up after paints a picture of how a successful transition from observing to eventually teaching alone could flow. Part 4 is an appendix of sample plans, scripts, assignments, and forms for new librarians to utilize when they are first developing presentations or want to learn from examples. These practical materials bridge the gap between early-career academic librarians and more senior librarians in the organization by having these materials ready to use. The concluding message of the book is particularly resonant. It is a reminder for librarians to continue to learn with a critical eye and to be open to new ideas, such as slow librarianship and identity economics as the first few years of instruction can set the tone for the career of a new academic librarian (p. 215).

A final notable attribute of the book is its commitment to referencing works of racialized scholars, librarians, and organizations. Starting with Swanson and Gonzalez-Smith's "Lived Experiences of Librarians of Color" (2018), the authors suggest the Joint Council of Librarians of Color as a potential learning forum. Mention of the peer network "We Here," also features efforts to bring attention to specific groups and communities, expanding the discussion to include diversity (p. 13, 51, 180). Chapter 11 highlights the importance of these communities and mentorship programs as potential roads for fruitful friendships in the profession and beyond. Overall, in a sea of literature of library instruction, and instruction in general, this book serves as a guidepost for new librarians starting their careers. Building off the previous edition, updates in both the literature and instructional anecdotes have strengthened the content and the core of this volume. — *Lisa Shin, Research Librarian, University of Ottawa*

References

Mody, N. (2018). *Librarianship and project management skills.* ACRLog. https://acrlog.org/2018/02/22/librarianship-and-project-management-skills/

Swanson, J., Tanaka, A., & Gonzalez-Smith, I. (2018). Lived experience of academic librarians of color. *College & Research Libraries, 79*(7), 876. doi:https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.7.876