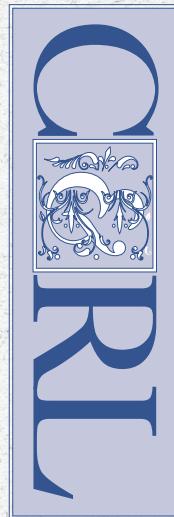


# COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES



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## Introduction to the Special Issue

# Critique as Care: Disrupting Narratives of the One-Shot Instruction Model

Nicole Pagowsky

A collective feeling seemed to characterize responses to the “Contested One-Shot” guest editorial I wrote one year ago, which turns a critical eye to the one-shot instruction model.<sup>1</sup> It also invited proposals for this special issue that you (virtually) hold in your hands. Collective does not necessarily mean all of the same feelings or opinions, but there was an overwhelming indication of catharsis in reading about and potentially contributing to a special issue that would dig into this oft-criticized instruction model. There were additionally a handful of defensive reactions to support the one-shot. It is clear that this topic draws out strong feelings and needs space for critique and discussion.

Casting a critical eye toward instruction librarianship’s discourse would include investigation concerning: What stories do we tell about ourselves, individually and collectively, in relation to one-shots? What stories do one-shots implicate about us externally? How are systems and structures replicated in the one-shot model? What impact does this have? What agency do we have? I think these questions are at the heart of this special issue and are what this group of authors ultimately examine: critical investigation and reflection about how librarians engage in teaching—in relation to, and also beyond, the one-shot model.

When deconstructing one-shots and the attendant rhetoric surrounding library instruction work’s often transactional nature, transparency through specificity in how we construct, describe, and evaluate our instruction models is important—especially because these transactions exist within systems that reinforce and reflect oppressive conditions more broadly. Lack of specificity—or abstraction—in the way we perpetuate narratives maintains the systems. David James Hudson has discussed this in regards to racial capitalism and its enduring dominance (2022). Abstraction can also be violence, as Samuel R. Delany has written on the evasion of detail in AIDS sexual health information, particularly impacting gay men (2021). Avoiding precision continues to render hegemonic systems as invisible. Taking on the responsibility to elaborate is how we connect and create possible change. Authors in this special issue have been adept at engaging with specificity in order to critically examine and problematize one-shots, from varied points of view. They offer depth and creative approaches to discussing these issues that affect us in our work, reflecting from and reverberating to larger issues. I will introduce individual articles toward the end of this entrance to the special issue, as well as provide more context on the publication

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process. What I intend to discuss in the space preceding are coalescing themes and sticky points to further tie the special issue together.

Engaging in critique can be a risk, particularly so when a format or procedure is so ingrained that it is viewed as common sense. As Sara Ahmed points out, "Complaint catches how those who challenge power become sites of negation: you become a container of negative affect, one that is leaky: speaking out as spilling over" (2019, p. 174). I do not want to conflate critique and complaint as meaning the same thing, yet there is overlap. Why critique one-shots if that is our only way into working with faculty and reaching students? It is the only option we have if we do not have the agency to question and imagine differently. What if it is the only way to prove our "value" since one-shots are easily quantifiable? To that, I say we need different ways to conceive value projects. This is not the only way; it is not our only chance. I am not claiming that one-shots are entirely problematic all of the time. However, this deep-seated, and perhaps innate at this point, instruction model does need to be problematized for us to even have the option to break free. We can do this through the lens of critique as care, meaning we critique because we care and hope for better.

There is not some pernicious force strategizing to further deprofessionalize instruction librarians' doubly feminized work, but rather, we have systems in place that maintain the status quo. Barthes delineated how mythologies work, turning history into nature by assimilating ideological discourse through the stories we maintain (1957). Powerful structures are made invisible by becoming nature; *it's just how it is*, and these myths reinforce their appearance as "timeless and universal, submerging their historical and contingent nature" (Huppertz, 2011, p. 89). We carry this way of viewing the world without being able to see how it is imposed because we repeat the narrative unaware. De-mystifying taken-for-granted practices is how their inner workings and related effects are revealed. Problematising one-shots does not imply any particular decree; it is instead a way for us to see how to make our way to other possibilities, and how larger issues impact and are impacted by replication. A significant roadblock to engaging with this critique is power and each of our own levels of agency. Keeping agency in mind as coloring experience, I draw to the forefront common themes that envelop one-shots, those of which coalesce in this issue's articles: time, care, and hope.

## Time

You know what usually happens: the usual is a field of expectation that derives its contours from past experience. The usual is the structural in temporal form.—Sara Ahmed, 2019, p. 164

Time can be viewed as a commodity that connotes value, and narratives constructed to uphold this form of quantification maintain mythology. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson reveal how a culture's values will be aligned with its metaphorical structure; actions based on those values can then be justified and normalized (2003). Within the one-shot, experience and use of time quantified as a resource is a primary aspect, dictating what and how much can be covered,<sup>2</sup> if relationality is possible, and how much agency is accessible to the library instructor. This could be present in felt intangibles described with the metaphors of not *having* enough time—whether to teach or to prepare; feeling rushed and *losing* time; or exasperation in time *poverty*. Considering time as a substance, or the one-shot as an entity, organizes us

ontologically, and “Once we can identify our experiences as entities or substances, we can refer to them, categorize them, group them, and quantify them—and, by this means, reason about them” (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, Section 6).

Experiences of time are co-constructed differently based on situation and standing. Western cultural values about time expressed in the metaphors above are not present in all cultures. We reinforce our perceptions and perpetuate mythologies to uphold our experience and quantification structures. Temporal diversity—other worlds outside of hegemonic linear and capitalist timescapes—does exist, and we must consider different experiences and perspectives in how we view and value time and the one-shot. Ellen Samuels and Elizabeth Freeman refer to crip time to elucidate the contrast in temporal realities of disabled academics, and how they “have always done the same work as our peers in profoundly different temporalities” (2021, p. 247). Crip time can be thought of and used as survival and world-making in opposition to the normative violence of capitalist time (p. 249).

Another temporal differentiation is between linear and kinship time. Kyle Powys Whyte explains that linear time is what westerners are most familiar with, unfolding in uniform, sequential units; whereas kinship time is felt through shifts in relationships of mutual care and requires taking responsibility for others (2021, p. 42). Though referencing the climate crisis and continued subjugation of Indigenous peoples through nation-state environmental interventions, Whyte’s points relate here. He distinguishes the harm that reliance on linear time can reinforce through reactionary measures: When it feels as if time is running out, “taken-for-granted strategies get employed to protect the taken-for-granted state of affairs from disruption” (2021, p. 45). This harm is reproduction of hegemony and continued disenfranchisement through reinforcing procedures of dominant groups and structures. We profoundly experience hegemonic timescapes and their reproduction in library instruction when one-shots are planned out, delivered, and measured through linear time, typically being reactionary and causing overwhelm. One-shots, as I stated in my editorial, “keep us in a holding pattern of reactionary yes-people unable to enact our own agency within campus power structures” (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 303).

Within higher education, Ian Kinchin characterizes reactivity as a “neoliberal booby trap [of] short-term fixes” (2022, p. 180). Existing primarily in reactivity offers no opportunity for reflection, questioning, or work toward change; the only option is to stick with how it has always been done using taken-for-granted strategies. It coincides with the one-shot being in academic time, which keeps us frantic with little space to be creative or critical. Margaret Price connects the structure of linear, academic time with intensification and sustainment of structural inequalities:

[Academic time] draws on both postmodern (for the masses) and premodern (for the elite) systems of timekeeping and practices a special regime of nontransparency with regard to how time is spent, while at the same time increasing technologies of surveillance and encouraging self-surveillance. (2021, p. 262)

We experience bureaucratization of the linear units of time we do our work in, meaning an emphasis on counting where quantity proves value of the individual worker and of the library. Perspectives on value are individually focused in how we quantify our own output. When measurement is constructed to represent the library, it typically is not collaboratively

or collectively focused, but rather an aggregation of individuals' metrics. As Mark Fisher explains, neoliberalism claims to be anti-bureaucratic through flattening of hierarchy, but by moving more responsibility onto the individual academic *qua* responsibilization, bureaucracy is enforced through isolated self-surveillance (2009, p. 40). Diligence in one's own constant, unending quantification of time and output for institutional measurement can stand in for being a good teacher, worker, librarian. Fisher's point is apropos of how permanent and ubiquitous measurement generates perpetual anxiety (p. 39). Expectations to produce a high quantity of outputs to prove value can lead to constant worry about the future, and proliferate competition rather than relationality. This anxiety-driven future-focus brings forward a number of questions that branch out from what I introduced above, and what I would stress as considerations for future research: What stories are we telling about our instruction programs, the status of librarians, and our roles on campus by collecting information in this way? What ideology or mythos does this quantification reinforce? Why does the one-shot continue to be a unit of measure? Why are we counting *these* numbers in *this* way? Enumeration is an ideological project, and we must be clear on who, why, and how we are counting.<sup>3</sup> If we think of one-shots as a replication of capitalist structures, it makes sense for each individual to be responsible for expanding output, and for the work to be individually counted and self-surveilled.

Perhaps J.K. Gibson-Graham's argument that "it is the way capitalism has been 'thought' that has made it so difficult for people to imagine its supersession" (2006, p. 4) is prescient here in why we have been stuck in our instruction models for so long. When we say one-shots are our only option, or it is the way it has always been done, we maintain the hegemonic timescapes and measurement tactics that reinforce this story. The purpose of ideology is to disappear and remain invisible, foreclosing on imagining anything different. It ossifies in obscurity through the mythology of capitalist time, linear time, abled time, straight time.

Queer temporality is another alterity to affirm relationality and solidarity. Thinking with queer temporalities, as José Esteban Muñoz argues, can help us work toward collective futurity, moving away from individualized, isolated futures. Muñoz notes in order to achieve the former rather than the latter, we must have awareness that:

Evidencing protocols often fail to enact real hermeneutical inquiry and instead opt to reinstate that which is known in advance. Thus, practices of knowledge production that are content to merely selectively cull from the past, while striking a pose of positivist undertaking or empirical knowledge retrieval, often nullify the political imagination. (2007, p. 458)

As I stated above, all of the themes I am discussing are articulated through the fraught issue of agency. We can be aware of hegemonic temporal structures that we feel trapped in—and bringing awareness to that is one step—but do we actually have the agency (or energy!) to even imagine something different, and to make change? This question is emphasized further when we see how the pandemic has amplified existing inequalities. Banu Ozkazanc-Pan and Alison Pullen question "how the interplay of agency and structures lead to certain 'choices' by certain bodies/people, and what alternatives there might be to purely economic imaginaries of productivity in our lives" (2020, p. 5). Granted, we are not all mired in unending cycles of one-shots semester after semester,<sup>4</sup> but there are those who are, and using this model as a

totalizing structure has an impact on how we engage with and measure our work as a field, as well as how we are able to imagine futurity and perceive hope for something better. So it is important to think about who is existing in this model, who has the choice and agency to exist differently, and what those differentiations reinforce.

Coming back to Whyte's discussion of "kinship time," the idea of mutual responsibility for relationality (kinship, care) to reframe our experience in time and with each other is one way to imagine differently. Jessie Loyer connects kinship and time with library instruction, pointing out how:

[R]elationality is a complicated concept and librarians are already pushed for time. So the prompt to 'do more' is challenging. With what time? With what resources? *wâhkôhtawin*, a *nêhiyaw* concept of relationality that defines roles and responsibilities, may give us clearer guidelines on who librarians are accountable to and responsible for—a chance for further research. (2018, p. 155)

Loyer primarily focuses on relationality and care between library instructors and students, which as she states, tends to be unsupported institutionally. Another aspect to consider where institutional care is lacking, aside from supporting care via pedagogical relationships between librarian and student, is care and kinship within the field itself.

## Care

Moreover, a true politics of relation is attuned to the disagreements, conflicts, and tensions that animate solidarity projects oriented around shared points of struggle.—Ronjaunee Chatterjee et al., 2020

Temporality and relationality (or, time and care) are connected through being socially situated, rather than time being an abstract category (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2015, p. 694), with isolated, felt effects. A focus on care has been more recently brought to the fore in feminist studies in order to overcome these harmful outcomes in a number of fields. To think of relationality as reparative to current structures could cultivate imagining reciprocal care as utopia. Ideally, all care would be relational and reciprocal, as kinship is responsibility for care. However, a politics of care has been fraught from histories of valuing and devaluing of this labor; inequitable expectations for those who are expected to care and who gets to be cared for; conflation with positive affect that skews care toward feminized characteristics of nurturing (and related implications); and impasse when care ultimately contributes to persistent capitalist logics, rather than being used for liberatory world-making. If there is not a true culture of kinship for interdependence and respect for boundaries, relationships are precarious with unequal expectations—particularly so for those within historically marginalized groups. This requires reflection on how the cost of care, and when we are unable to care, can turn into sites of violence from existing structures.<sup>5</sup>

Considering this in academic libraries, Maura Seale and Rafia Mirza have stressed the essential condition for institutional reciprocity in care, "understanding library work as a profession, not a vocation, as labour, not as religious calling, acknowledges that this reciprocity

must flow to the workers as well as the institution and that institutions are sites of historical and ongoing structural oppression and inequality" (2020, p. 9). Ethics of care *can* be emancipatory, and we should think about how to use care to create more liberatory and equitable worlds. At the same time, we must use critique to question what seems apparent as we live and work in sites that reinforce structural oppression and inequality, which we in turn can ourselves ultimately reinforce as we exist within these structures. Within the realm of one-shots, we must consider omnidirectional flows of care impacting unbalanced affective economies between librarian-student, librarian-faculty, librarian-librarian, and librarian-institution.

Michelle Murphy introduces the idea of "unsettling" care. Connected to Donna Haraway's idea of "staying with the trouble" and Sianne Ngai's concept of "ugly feelings," critique used to unsettle can be seen as care in and of itself. Unsettling intends to disrupt non-innocent narratives and colonial legacies related to belonging, rescue, and sympathy through troubling sedimented arrangements (2015, pp. 721–722). Mindfulness about "romantic temptations" caught up in care as collective panacea clarifies what can be a disconnection between what *feels good* and concomitant geopolitical implications (p. 725). Particularly for professions undergirded by care-work (both librarianship and teaching, for example), and especially for predominantly white fields (librarianship in particular), unsettling even hopeful rejoinders to problematic entrenchments is necessary. Aryn Martin et al. illuminate these concerns, as "[i]t is in this sense that care makes palpable how justice for some can easily become injustice for others" (2015, p. 627).

Care is often envisioned through normative, dominant identities, as many structures and relationships tend to be. In discussing race and feminist care ethics, Parvati Raghuram stresses how efforts toward care are typically theorized through the normative white body, and because of this, "[require] that care is disassembled as well as put together as a critical practice in order to shape care ethics" (2019, p. 631). Looking to ethics of care for Black women, Mekada Graham discusses this in context of the social professions, cautioning on the inadequacy of normatively-theorized relationship-based ethics for the concerns and needs of Black women (2007, p. 204). For higher education specifically, Jennifer Nash describes the "body problem" for women faculty of color, "the ways in which our bodies must be mitigated, performed, inhabited, toned down, and played up in a variety of ways depending on institutional and student demands" (2021, p. 31). There are already so many assumptions and expectations that academic structures cause women of color to contort into, that care structures—when functioning in unequal affective economies—can further complicate. There are divergent expectations on women faculty (or librarians) of color that can affect who carries the burden of caregiving and how they are perceived in engaging with that care. Additionally, how is relational care felt when there is historically entrenched inequity and lack of inclusion in a field: Can care be truly reciprocal in such circumstances?

My intent is not to foreclose on care ethics as a way forward, but rather to examine contradictions and potentially harmful outcomes. It is not that care is a problem in and of itself, but lack of agency and power asymmetries in connection with care is where concerns arise. This can be particularly palpable in doubly-feminized care work such as the convergence of librarianship and teaching on the periphery. Kinchin pinpoints this in how teachers need sufficient agency: agency to *know*, as he states—and I will add: agency to *have the choice*—when to care and when not to care (2022, p. 174). In unequal affective economies, we must consider how we define, value, and assign or expect care.

## Hope

What we are talking about here is the hardest problem: understanding the difficulty of unlearning attachments to regimes of injustice.—Lauren Berlant, 2011, p. 184

Cruel optimism is characterized as when a goal or desire winds up actually being an obstacle in one's ends toward *the good life* (Berlant, 2011). There is attachment to an object or trajectory through belief that life circumstances will improve, whether it is psychic fulfillment, financial security, prestige, or other attributes of what the good life would mean for an individual. While cruel optimism traps individuals in perpetual striving for that which might not be there, hope promotes collectivity and solidarity toward relational futures.

Berlant uses the term "misrecognition" to explain how fantasy recalibrates desire to affirm projection onto the object of desire (p. 122). How does our field use the exercise of misrecognition in regards to one-shots? I want to stress that my argument, both in this introduction and my previous guest editorial, is not that one-shots are always horrendously wrong; it is more about how we conceive of them and project desires onto their structure that often do not materialize that can in fact cause harm. Berlant references Vassilis Tsianos and Dimitris Papadopoulos' list of affective responses to this paradox. Some examples they provide of nervous-system symptoms resulting from immaterial labor include:

- Vulnerability: the steady experience of flexibility without any form of protection
- Hyperactivity: the imperative to accommodate constant availability
- Simultaneity: the ability to handle at the same [time] the different tempi and velocities of multiple activities
- Recombination: the crossings between various networks, social spaces, and available resources
- Restless: being exposed to and trying to cope with the overabundance of communication, cooperation, and interactivity
- Unsettledness: the continuous experience of mobility across different spaces and time lines
- Affective exhaustion: emotional exploitation, or, emotion as an important element for the control of employability and multiple dependencies (Tsianos & Papadopoulos, 2006).

One-shots are, by bug more than intentional design, a factor in librarianship's cruel optimism.<sup>6</sup> For those in particular who are bound up in what seems like never ending one-shot cycles, or those in precarious labor roles, or those who feel a broader lack of agency, consider if any of these descriptions feel uncanny to you.

Cruel optimism obstructs us from collectivity because we are preoccupied with our individual goals that keep us optimistic and distract us from solidarity. When cruel optimism alchemizes collective issues into those of the individual, averting us from solidarity, there is an imperative to trouble the dominant narrative and how we relate to one another. As linear time divides us through isolation and competition, kinship and care should be thought of as a collective project in solidarity for hope. Lisa Duggan posits hope and hopelessness as dialectical rather than oppositional, suggesting the more accurate negation to hope is complacency (2009, p. 5). Feelings of hopelessness do not nullify interrogating subjectivity and imagining

differently. If functioning as a dialectic, there will be shifting and gradients in affect, which inspires solidarity toward a collective futurity.

Moving toward imagining differently and ostensibly taking action can be complicated. As Sarah Amsler and Keri Facer pinpoint, “adequate responses… require radical modes of thinking and acting which people formed and socialized through formal education in the global North—despite being able to identify the problem—are often ill-prepared to imagine or engage in” (2017, p. 2). They further validate “that this system systematically diminishes opportunities for creative emergence and spaces of political possibility in order to reproduce itself at the level of society” (p. 9). Thinking in linear time manufactures how we might imagine differently, where linear causality and the western need for certainty sequence social imagination. From this impasse, imagination and action can be precluded by the overwhelm of complacency and lack of agency. An instantiation of this could be categorizing hope and imagination for utopia as naivety, which stifles inertia by writing off these social projects as frivolous or futile.

We could consider the hope/hopelessness dialectic as collective, where turning away through complacency is isolated and individual. Bureaucratization’s future-focused anxiety of individualized output metrics is an antecedent to the privatization of stress (Fisher, 2009), and when we experience lack of fulfillment, overwork, burnout, or endless competition, we are divided and contending with alienation. Alienation critique purports that this phenomenon occurs when we become divorced from that which we created or believed to be a part of us. Rahel Jaeggi explains how alienation is palpable as “objectified relationships that appear to take on a life of their own over and against individual agents” (2014, p. 24). Seeing alienation reproduced in higher education, Jill Blackmore connects bureaucratic audit and accountability culture, which “can lead to disaffection and alienation from teaching, as academics ‘turn off’ as teaching becomes routinised and non-reflective, which, ironically, in turn impacts on quality” (2009, p. 864). Our field established the one-shot model to meet a need, yet we might find ourselves currently alienated from what was once deemed essential. In routinized, repetitive, non-reflective work, if we use the perspective on the traditional meaning of one-shots as singular, repetitive, ephemeral (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 300), it would not be surprising to see alienation imbricated with one-shot instruction in these circumstances.

As I discussed, ideology and related mythologies reproduce themselves to appear as natural and become invisible. We need hope and the ability to imagine utopia to go beyond identification of what is obscured. Nash articulates how affect theory invites us to consider “how structures of domination feel,” and that “simply naming structures fails to do justice to how they move against (and inside of) our bodies” (2021, p. 30). To bring these ideas together, Margaret Price engages the intersection between alienation and time, to move toward hope through slowing and breaking down timescapes of academia in order to “understand how it is mobilized to divide workers against one another,” and against ourselves. Through seeing through this dynamic, we move closer toward imagining better futures and taking collective action (2021, p. 258).

## Conclusion

The shape of these alternative avenues of inquiry remains undetermined and contested. If many of us share a dissatisfaction with the state of the field, we also internally disagree about how it might otherwise be shaped. A primary aim of our

future endeavors is to render these disagreements the stuff of collective deliberation.—The V21 Collective, 2015

Through this introduction, I have connected time, care, and hope, which although appear potentially neutral can be ideological projects, impacted by agency or lack thereof. It can be a struggle to think differently and envision what is not-yet or not-yet-conscious toward something different. Walter Mignolo, from the perspective of decoloniality, introduces the provocation for epistemic disobedience, to “de-link” from western modernity. Mignolo explains “that it is not enough to change the content of the conversation, that it is of the essence to change the terms of the conversation” (2009, p. 162). In changing the terms, we must consider different timescapes as frameworks for how we could imagine relationality and hope. One-shots are not in a binary of good versus bad, but rather in a spectrum with varied experiences resulting from differing levels of agency and marginalization.

Even for those who enjoy one-shots and have had primarily good experiences with them, I urge us to think collectively and in solidarity because not everyone has that experience or has the agency to flourish in this model. This is why imagining and taking action toward change must come collectively. For change to happen, we need to normalize these ideals as a field, rather than attempting to individually, separately push back. Both hoping for a better future or being content with the present are not excused from facing problematic regimes in our field that persist in many arenas—one being the one-shot model. Chatterjee et al. expresses this accountability profoundly for the field of Victorian studies, another primarily white, hegemonic field currently scrutinizing its mythology, saying that

Wanting a different future does not imply a utopian closing of the eyes to the injuries of global racial capitalism. On the contrary, it demands seeing and feeling them more acutely than before. Or, to be more precise, it demands a more equitable distribution of that seeing and feeling. The present, perhaps, is always a portal, and there is no doing away with the drag of our past. (2020)

They emphasize shared points of struggle in solidarity, and not turning away from the work of troubling, unsettling, or problematizing the mythology of a field. Solidarity thrives through conflict and discourse. As guest editor, my hope is that conflict and discourse are drawn out in this special issue and ignite further research and imaginings.

The authors in this issue question, examine, and reflect on one-shots through varied approaches and perspectives. Before I provide a primer on what these articles contribute, I would like to first offer context on the making of this special issue. Often, the behind-the-scenes work of editing and peer-review, and even multiple revisions by authors, are invisibilized and the amount of effort put into publication is unknown.

When *C&RL* published the CFP attached to my guest editorial last year, the response was immense. I was heartened to see that so many were impassioned to talk about one-shots, and I received in total just over 80 proposals. Additionally, *C&RL* has been open to experimentation in this issue, and it has been both a fantastic and overwhelming experience to offer authors a choice between open/developmental or traditional peer-review. The disposition of peer-review for this issue was collaboration and mentoring, to use discussion to engage with articles rather than solely critique. Peer-reviewers added exponential

value to this issue, and their work must not go unnoticed. I will thank them in alphabetical order at the end of this introduction. Because some authors went through traditional review and reviewer anonymity needs to remain intact, I have asked authors who went through developmental review to not name specific reviewers in their acknowledgments. Last, you will perhaps be surprised to notice that some authors (including myself) have opted for APA style, rather than the journal's standard Chicago style. *C&RL* was open to experimentation in this issue on citation style, and so I was able to offer authors the choice between APA and Chicago.

Now, finally, to introduce the authors and their contributions. Beginning the full-length articles section, Annie Pho et al. use critical reflection as methodology to investigate how the one-shot model has become so ubiquitous with lasting presence in the field. The authors engage with reflective interviews among themselves and additional participants to consider how power and positionality influence acculturation, burnout, and tensions between transactional and relational iterations of the one-shot. As we perpetuate our structures through story and mythology, it is important to use personal reflection to challenge dominant narratives. As with Pho et al., other authors engage with these different approaches and theories to examine contradictions in order to help us consider creative alternatives to imagine new futures. From a more empirical perspective, Dani Brecher Cook uses meta-analysis to examine one-shots' efficacy. Looking toward precision and rigor in collected studies, Brecher Cook establishes reasoning for why there is lack of consensus in the field and where we should re-evaluate our focus, methodology, and interpretation of results.

The next two articles interrogate the non-performativity of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives in libraries and beyond, and how that serves as analogy to one-shot models. Sofia Leung elucidates how one-shots can serve as afterthoughts and band-aid quick-fixes to larger problems, similar to how EDI portends to cure an institution through mere existence or even in name. Leung uses the approaches of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and decoloniality to problematize these inherent similarities, drawing us to "what is the point" of both of these endeavors. Karen P. Nicholson and Maura Seale additionally caution against capitalization on one-off approaches to both library instruction and EDI through the lens of neoliberalism, responsibilization of the individual, and the violence of practicality. All of these authors look toward relationality and care through pedagogies of affect to begin to amend the results of injurious one-off implementation.

Zoe Bastone and Kristina Clement question whether one-shots truly serve us in the way they are idealized, or if they instead proliferate faux-equity and ultimately cause harm, particularly for disabled learners. Cautioning on neglectful care toward ourselves, while upholding internal and external expectations for outward care, Bastone and Clement consider a 360-view of how care functions in affective economies. Contributing to a multi-faceted analysis of harm, Yi Ding exposes tensions in how the expectation for flexibility is feminized and its profound reverberation in a feminized field. From de-valued instructional labor, Ding engages feminist and intersectional lenses to imagine toward equity.

Veronica Arellano Douglas and Joanna Gadsby take a different approach to considering the one-shot, making the argument that this instruction model can serve a positive purpose through not giving temporal enumeration the primary focus, and instead look to relationality. The authors argue that outcomes of mutual care could be possible if we are able to get unstuck. Concluding the full-length articles, Lalitha Nataraj and April Ibarra Siqueiros imagine futurity

through pursuing alterity in timescapes and epistemic demeanors using autoethnography. Addressing the harm of hegemonic systems, particularly for those identifying as BIPOC, Nataraj and Ibarra Siqueiros draw us toward greater relationality, slowed temporality, and epistemic justice in our instruction models.

To offer space for engagement with creative imaginings, experimentation, and flexibility from more standardized academic writing, this special issue additionally has a section of six shorter submissions to complement the full-length articles. Nora Almeida provides levity by engaging us with a clever reenactment of the one-shot experience that many will likely relate to. Urszula Lechtenberg and Carrie Donovan posit innovative instructional model considerations that offer examples for moving beyond the one-shot's limitations. Sajni Lacey looks beyond pedagogy toward racial imposter syndrome in the classroom, and how burnout can be a result of this experience. This contribution encourages greater consideration toward how these instruction models can catalyze inequitable impacts for those with intersectional identities. Gina Schlesselman-Tarango and Monideepa Becerra discuss how they implemented their Critical Information Literacy Leadership Institute as an alternative to the one-shot, with perspectives from both a librarian and teaching faculty. Specifically addressing special collections and archives, Colleen Hoelscher discusses how the one-shot model can solicit gatekeeping instructional practices and instead urges teaching from the perspective of a guide. Last, Michele Santamaria and Jessica Schomberg map a vaccination metaphor onto one-shots to question perception of their practicality and common-sense, troubling how we consider the narrative and mythology of this instruction model.

In this multifaceted special issue toward problematizing the one-shot, the authors and their contributions will hopefully prompt more discussion and deep critique. As Judith Butler affirms, "A structure only remains a structure through being reinstated as one" (1997, p. 139). Critique is care, and to have the possibility for imagining differently, we can use hope to disassemble hegemonic structures in solidarity and work toward more inclusive and equitable futures.

Thank you to all the peer-reviewers who added astronomical value to this special issue, sharing their expertise via time, care, and hope. Reviewers (some also authors) are listed alphabetically by last name, and those with an asterisk reviewed more than one manuscript: Nora Almeida, Roberto A. Arteaga, Candice Benjes-Small, Nimisha Bhat, Nicole Branch, Carolyn Ciesla\*, nicholae cline, Erica DeFrain\*, Carrie Donovan, Meghan Dowell, Gabrielle M. Dudley, Romel Espinel, Sarah Fancher, Lindsay Hansen Brown, Colleen Hoelscher, Kate Joranson, Sajni Lacey, Jorge R. López-McKnight\*, Jessie Loyer, Talitha R. Matlin, Rafia Mirza, Lalitha Nataraj, Nirmala Nataraj, Margy MacMillan\*, Torie Quiñonez, Jennie Quinonez-Skinner, Michele Santamaria, Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, Jessica Schomberg\*, Maura Seale, Maribeth Slepodnik, Eamon Tewell, Richard Thai, Matthew Weirick Johnson, Sam Winn\*, and Desmond Wong.

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## Notes

1. You might start with the guest editorial if you have not yet read it, to see what has spawned this issue and subsequent discussion. The guest editorial focuses more on library instruction and the intricacies of one-shots, whereas this article is concerned with the bigger picture. <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/24912>
2. “If you can fill the one-shot fifty minute / With a good two hours worth of info lit”-From Margy MacMillan’s poem in MacMillan, M. (2005). Open résumé: Magic words for assessment. *College & Research Libraries News*, 66(7), 516-520. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.66.7.7476>
3. Reid Gómez, personal communication, 2022
4. Personally, this is not my current situation; however, I had the experience at a former institution of delivering approximately 30-50 one-shots per semester, with a 6-8 hour shift on the reference desk when I was not teaching. It takes a psychic, psychological, and physical toll.
5. Reid Gómez, personal communication, 2022
6. These concepts can dovetail with Fobazi Ettarh’s “vocational awe.”

# You Only Get One Shot: Critically Exploring and Reimagining the One-Shot Instruction Model

Annie Pho, Salma Abumeeiz, Kristina Vela Bisbee, Nisha Mody, Renee Romero, Wynn Tranfield, and Doug Worsham

This article explores the one-shot library instruction model by asking critical questions about how it has become ubiquitous in the field. The authors developed these questions with the intent to understand how early-career librarians become acculturated to one-shots, how social identity and positionality shape instructional practices, its impact on burnout, equity, and sustainability, and how the one-shot could be reimagined. This article employs personal critical reflection as a methodology, using interviews with the team of authors and two external participants. Analysis of the interview data showed themes of organizational acculturation with one-shot training, empowerment/disempowerment to employ different instruction models, and the tension between the transactional and relational nature of library instruction. Through these reflections, the article advocates that a relational instruction model helps promote equitable, reflective teaching and learning experiences for librarians and students alike as a way to disrupt the tradition of the one-shot.

## Introduction

*“The one-shot felt like a house everyone in the library had always lived in, and for some reason, no one knew exactly why we weren’t allowed to go outside.”*

This poignant quote, written in an email inviting fellow authors to collaborate on this article, kicked off a series of conversations exploring how and why one-shots became a standard practice in the sphere of academic library instruction. Nicole Pagowsky’s editorial (2021) about deconstructing power structures that inform “the contested one-shot” inspired this group of authors

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to reflect back on our own understanding and perspective of the one-shot model and act upon Pagowsky's call "to expand our pedagogical imagination through questioning what appear to be common-sense practices in order to create better systems and structures" (Pagowsky, 2021). Many instruction librarians start their careers teaching information literacy sessions using primarily one-shots. For many, this model is ubiquitous, unavoidable, and something they may never be able to move past. Those who do ask questions, either related to pedagogy or workload, often find themselves facing challenging power dynamics, including resistance from colleagues, supervisors, and teaching faculty. Whether they question the one-shot or not, many librarians find themselves repeating the same sessions over and over, with little time left to deeply reflect on their practice. As we began to ask questions about how the one-shot came to be, the authors informally reflected on their experiences with one-shots, rooted in questions about pedagogy, gendered and racialized dynamics, age, ability, and more. In our planning meetings, many of us began to think about the connections between positionality of the librarian and power, equity, and burnout as it connects to the one-shot model. Some of these issues we noted were exacerbated by the pandemic, with library workers being forced to teach through traumatic events (Esguerra et al., 2022).

In alignment with expanding our imagination (Pagowsky, 2021) and attempting to understand why we weren't allowed to "go outside" (Worsham, 2021), the authors decided to use critical self-reflections to develop a set of questions. Critical self-reflection is an underused approach to assessment practices and provides a humanist lens through which librarians may think about their labor. This culminated in the development of semistructured interviews with each other, as well as colleagues who are further along in their careers, to discern the following about one-shots: the stories behind how and when one-shots are introduced to librarians as a given practice; how librarians at various career stages qualify and categorize them; and what they demonstrate about feelings of scarcity, power, and relevance in academic libraries. The hope is that, through these varied positions, this article will provide a multifaceted perspective and better understanding of one's relationship to one-shots throughout different stages of a librarian's career. The intention of this project was never to take a binary stance on whether one-shots are necessarily "good or bad." However, we question the many ways in which the one-shot is passed down as a default expectation without critical investigation and reflection. The team of authors, who come from different social identities, educational backgrounds, and work experiences, sought to use first-hand accounts to explore how our current concepts of one-shots came to be and how they might be reimaged to promote equitable, reflective teaching and learning experiences.

## Lit Review

For the purposes of this article, we are defining the one-shot as "when a faculty member invites a librarian into the classroom to provide one-time information literacy instruction, typically related to a research assignment" (Nicholson, 2016). Library instruction began in 1870, around the same time higher education in the United States expanded. In the 1960s, bibliographic instruction arose as a way to bridge the gaps in the reference model due to the large growing number of students who needed research help (Hopkins, 2017). In the 1970s, information literacy began to be defined, and in the 1980s university libraries began to expand their teaching program outcomes to encompass information literacy, beyond just library literacy, focusing on the application of information, techniques, and skills for using information tools and primary

sources, and information being used for problem solving (Behrens, 1994, 310). Divisions of labor within the academic library grew to meet demands for public-facing services. Historically, the practice of library instruction was shaped to meet the rising information needs of university students but always as a supplement to the students' curriculum, not originally developed to stand on its own as a course. Through this historical understanding, we can see how the one-shot model was established.

Librarians have explored how to move beyond this model in a variety of ways, including partnering with campus stakeholders within an institution and "engaging faculty both as learners and as educators," which "can help disperse information and digital literacies across the university curriculum" (Sharun & Smith, 2020). By engaging with faculty as partners and teachers of information literacy, librarians are better able to engage with students through multiple avenues. This supports faculty feeling invested in their students applying what they learned from librarians.

There are significant challenges for librarians who teach within the confines of the one-shot model. Karen Nicholson (2016) writes, "The library and information science (LIS) literature is replete with discussions of the pedagogical weaknesses and practical constraints of [the one-shot] approach, yet it remains the dominant model for information literacy instruction in North American higher education nonetheless" (Nicholson, 2016, 25). She connects the neoliberalization of time and productivity as a significant challenge to deep engagement and critical thinking. This aligns with how the one-shot model is upheld as a neoliberal instruction model, which is much more focused on skills such as database searching or call number recognition than critically engaging with resources. In addition to this, the time and effort that is put into this particular pedagogical model takes away capacity for librarians to engage in other intellectual endeavors like research (Smale, 2017).

Aside from the pedagogical challenges of the one-shot, this model is also prone to causing burnout among library workers. In more recent years, instruction librarians have written about their experiences of feeling burnt out due to the pressures of their jobs and their teaching load (Arellano Douglas & Gatsby, 2019; Accardi, 2015; Griffin, 2017). This discourse builds upon previous literature that explores burnout and stress for librarians, going back as far as the 1980s (Affleck, 1996). Many of the factors that contribute to librarian burnout include: balancing workload expectations, having to present information in a cheerful manner while teaching, and library instruction being undervalued (Becker, 1993). Historically, librarians have been trained and expected to focus on patron satisfaction, which is shaped by librarian behavior, rather than seeing it through the lens of a partnership or reciprocity (Pena & Green, 2006). Providing instruction, whether in the classroom or through reference assistance, can be transactional rather than collaborative, which contributes to burnout, especially if a librarian is balancing a high workload.

As outlined by Hudson, who critiques notions of practicality and efficiency that define library work, "We emphasize efficiency, brevity, speed ... Library service without friction, to repurpose Bill Gates's capitalist imagery" (2017, 3). These frictionless, capitalistic logics that underscore library work may explain, at least partially, why quantity is valued over quality, as well as the expectation—as articulated by several interviewees—that library workers often cannot decline teaching sessions, even those requests with minimal prep time. Capitalistic logic manifests as consequences beyond feelings of urgency, efficiency, production, and value among library workers. It creates precarity and scarcity, which further exacerbates our abil-

ity to reach and teach students meaningfully, while also reducing our capacity to care for ourselves and one another. As noted by Henninger et al., ideologies of precarious, disposable labor—presenting in libraries as internships, contract work, fellowships, and staffing shortages—can result in “stress, marginalization, burnout, turnover, leaving the field” (2019, 2).

When it comes to managing burnout, there is a narrative in the profession that it is one’s personal responsibility to promote resilience, self-care, and well-being to mitigate burnout (Berg, Galvan, & Tewell, 2018). But burnout for instruction librarians is a very real phenomenon that requires interventions at an institutional level to reduce workload and increase recognition for the work of the librarian (Becker, 1993). We can further problematize this with Fobazi Ettarh’s reflections about vocational awe, the notion that libraries are inherently good and sacred, and question whether librarians should accept burnout and low salaries as part of their work experience (Ettarh, 2018). Additionally, austerity and budget cuts lead to more precarious roles in libraries, as seen with limited term appointments and fellowships. This has reverberating impacts on the quality of services we deliver (Lee, 2020) and our ability to form relationships and community. If moving beyond the one-shot model requires relationship building, we must consider how precarity and burnout don’t allow for it.

## Methodology

As a practice, critical self-reflection has not always been treated as an effective method of assessing librarianship, in particular pedagogical assessment. There are inherent challenges to the assessments currently considered standard practice in library instruction. One-shot instruction is linked to assessment methods that use sterile information gathering, as made popular in the education discipline (Critten, 2015). The application of critical self-reflection used in this article is intended to both extend the reach of assessment practices and identify opportunities to look at librarians’ relationship to one-shot instruction in new ways.

Using semistructured, qualitative interviews with eight librarians at various career stages—including the authors and two participants external to the writing team—we sought to understand various perceptions and experiences with one-shot library instruction. To balance the number of early- and mid-career librarian authors of this study, two late-career external participants were also recruited. For each interview, one team member delivered questions to the interviewee, while another team member was present to take notes. All interviews were guided by a question list (included in appendix), and all interviewers underwent Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Notes from each interview were uploaded to Taguette, a qualitative coding program, where responses were tagged to identify broader concepts. Each concept was then analyzed separately, and larger themes emerged. The team of authors worked through these themes and reflected further through writing and dialog. Authors had agency to go back to their own quotes to ensure that the notes reflected what they intended to communicate in their interview.

It is worth underscoring that this article does not intend to be nor can it be exhaustive or objective with our interview sample and analysis, and we push back against academic imperatives that demand these should (and can) be aspirational outcomes. Instead, we posit our study, which uses narrative and lived experience as a lens through which to unpack differing and overlapping experiences with one-shot instruction. In sharing this lens, we hope to engage with and inspire an ongoing conversation around one-shots, including how they are applied, when they work well, how they reproduce harms, and how they might be reimaged.

## Context

We want to acknowledge limitations to our approach for this project. The majority of librarians involved in this study are based in West Coast institutions. Many of the librarians on this research team work or have previously worked at the same institution, so these perspectives are not necessarily generalized for the field. The two late-career librarians we interviewed for this study are both white, one male. Our sample of interviewees is not representative of librarianship as a whole, and every experience is unique and subjective.

## Results

### *Overview of Interviews*

This study's nine interviewees included two late-career, four mid-career, and three early-career librarians. All interviewees have experience conducting library instruction in some capacity. As our findings demonstrate, what constitutes "library instruction" differs depending on the librarian and context. For instance, some librarians believe technology training is independent of information literacy instruction, while others regard the two as inextricable. Similar divergences emerged in attitudes toward burnout, acculturation, and dis/empowerment with regard to the one-shot instruction model. While all of our interviewees were introduced to one-shots early in their professionalization process—either as students or during their first library job—their perceptions of the sustainability, librarian agency, and equity of one-shots differed depending on the positionality, organization, and professional role of each interviewee. In the proceeding analysis, we trace these divergences and continuities among our interview sample and consider how we may use these observations to reimagine the one-shot instruction model.

## Analysis

### *Acculturation/Organizational Culture*

"When I first started teaching, I was given a pre-set of slides, but I don't know who made the slides. They were like, 'this is what you do.' I remember kind of hating it. I didn't have guidance or mentorship. I was just doing what I was told."

For many, an initial understanding of the one-shot and library instruction began even before library school, with their experiences as undergraduate students. Though as undergraduate students, none of the authors recalled the term "one-shot" being used, the general consensus was that these foundational experiences with library instruction as students were, unfortunately, uninspiring and lacked emphasis on the process of research as an exploratory practice. Some of the interviewees recalled skipping their library instruction sessions as a student, being unimpressed, and experiencing a lack of personal connection with the librarian teaching them. They recalled these classes feeling rigid without dialog between the students and the librarian. These early experiences with library instruction that interviewees described as rote and depersonalized were also the foundation for early professional experiences where interviewees were expected to deliver this instruction themselves in this same style.

In our conversations, interviewees described their evolving understanding of the one-shot as they transitioned from graduate school to professional library positions. Many of these conversations explored the role of early professional experiences with library instruction, recalling how the organizational culture at their affiliated academic institutions shaped their own instructional

practice. Librarian responses to the organizational culture of the specific institutions where they work and their relationship to the larger process of acculturation is noteworthy. Acculturation occurs on multiple levels, producing an intersection of expectations based on both professional and institutional affiliations. Acculturation to the one-shot mindset can begin early in the professionalization process. The one-shot is often introduced through library coursework and through the onboarding processes in professional and preprofessional positions. It's also worthy to note that most of the authors took one library instruction course as electives. This suggests that, for librarians who enter the field with little, if any, previous teaching experience, the definitive presence of the one-shot model in library education and training not only establishes a librarian's formative understanding of instruction; it can also limit how a librarian conceptualizes instruction in the future, as conveyed by the quote that introduces this section. Additionally, collaboration styles are often dependent on organizational culture. One interviewee noted how they had freedom to collaborate, change, and modify content and styles in a former institution but felt like they were hitting a wall trying to collaborate at their current institution.

Institutional reliance on the one-shot did not necessarily equate to institutional stagnation. Many respondents described how the practice of the one-shot was stubbornly situated within the status quo of their organization's culture. However, in some cases, the reputation of the one-shot was inferred to be dynamic and constitutive where session expectations were co-created by the librarian and the instructors whose classrooms received the one-shot. Our data showed that this also was dependent on the institution and the positionality of the librarian.

Acculturation could also be weaponized. Several respondents noted that punitive pressure was applied to librarians who deviated too far from instructor expectations. One librarian noted how a particularly dissatisfied instructor attempted to leverage the influence of library leadership in an effort to coerce the librarian into compliance. In these situations, librarians found it difficult to deviate from organizational culture. The ability to establish boundaries was largely dictated by one's reputation and tenure within an organization, whether those boundaries opposed institutional culture or not. Responding librarians generally agreed that individuals further along in the promotion process felt more empowered to deviate from organizational norms. There was general agreement among respondents that course directors or service programs and library managers share responsibility in shaping organizational culture and countering the more corrosive elements of the one-shot approach.

Exactly how and when organizational culture around the one-shot can change is still up for debate, but several librarians noted how expectations of both librarians and instructors can shift over time with appropriate action. Adopting language about the shared understanding between librarians and instructors can be effective, especially when applied in the form of a contract or agreement between the two parties. As an example, one librarian noted how the form used to request a one-shot session expressed the expectation that instructors remain in the room during library sessions. This isolated act may not result in sweeping reform; but, when paired with progressive policy and supportive leadership, this approach may be used to uphold values that better reflect the pedagogical goals of instruction librarians.

### *Empowerment/Disempowerment*

"A lot of my instructional work required pushing back and questioning, and that was only possible as a result of multiple privileges: title-based, identity-based,

and a level of job security that is only afforded to ‘full’ librarians. I think we need to recognize that experimentation and the ability to question or say ‘no’ to such entrenched practices currently requires taking on significant professional and financial risk, which is not always an option—especially if you are early in your career and already experiencing marginalization and discrimination. In order to expand our creative imagination around the one-shot, we need to reduce and remove these risks and harms in order to make experimentation more possible for everyone in our organizations.”

Many of the participants talked about their own ability to have ownership and agency over their approach to teaching. In our conversations and interviews with each other, discussions about if and how we attempt to say “no” to one-shot requests and how flexible we felt in adjusting our own pedagogy became major themes. However, empowerment, agency, and privilege are so interlinked; it’s hard to look at a librarian’s ability to make changes or say no to instruction requests without examining their positionality and the culture of their institution.

On the positive side, many participants mentioned that they had great collaborations with their faculty and felt they had agency to be creative with their library instruction practices, at least to some degree. A majority of the interviewees were still beholden to the one-shot model but found ways to be creative within this structure. An early-career librarian said that, within the sessions and time she is allotted, she felt she was able to tease out what students are looking for. She didn’t feel instructors said “no you can’t do that.” As long as the librarian centered the assignment, instructors were flexible about what was covered. Another early-career librarian felt like she had some flexibility but had to be discerning in her approach because she was concerned about creating tension with the faculty member she was working with. Even within the confines of the one-shot model, quite a number of the interviewees were empowered to be creative and work with their faculty to explore different avenues of teaching information literacy.

The ability to have agency over one’s teaching approach sometimes requires establishing and upholding boundaries with one-shot requests, but not all librarians have the support to advocate and push back, depending on their positionality (Pagowsky, 2021; Chesley & Anantachai, 2018). One interviewee reported that her department tried to question teaching one-shots that did not seem to be aligned with the goals of her library unit; but, when the library administration found out, they were unhappy and opposed the change, seeing it as a diminishing of services. Through our interviews we saw that the ability to push back on faculty expectations was dependent on whether the library administration would back up the librarian or department that was trying to say no, and the librarian’s status within the library, whether based on their experience level or their own positionality/social conditioning.

Where does that leave those who don’t have privilege? The ability to feel empowered in a library instruction program can often be at the whim of power dynamics that play out at the institutional and individual level, which we found in our interviews. These power dynamics between librarians and faculty often lead to misconceptions of librarians as inferior members of the teaching community. One interviewee stressed that in libraries we have to think about the power dynamic from an institutional view of the library and how we’re seen as a service and faculty are seen as “the academia.” In some institutions, librarians are faculty but that is not the case in every library; even with librarians who have faculty status, this divide still

exists. One interviewee noted she also felt that the power dynamic was almost a class issue, pitting librarians against others within the academy, with other faculty who question what librarians even do all day. Connecting this back to librarianship as a feminized profession, we have to reckon with the public perception of the library that exists within the institution that there is an unspoken service provider relationship (Pagowsky & DeFrain, 2014). Social identity, positionality, and privilege also impact a librarian's ability to advocate for themselves or to be able to make pedagogical changes.

The pandemic has heightened this ability to negotiate expectations of one-shots. One participant discussed feeling obligated to teach during stressful and traumatic events while under duress, referencing pressure to keep teaching during the January 6, 2021 Capitol insurrection.

"I could tell the class was distracted, but didn't want to cancel the class and risk the relationship with the faculty member. It was hard to get myself and the class to care about scholarly publishing when history was being made."

Everything that we have done over the last two years has been in a crisis, and librarians have been expected to show up as if everything were normal and perform. At what point can the librarian be empowered to say no? If the students are stressed, if the librarian is over-worked, if the team is short-staffed, if there is a major traumatic event, and the librarian still cannot say no, can we ever say no?

### *Transactional vs. Relational*

A resonating outcome of the interviews was a projection of the paradigm between task-based instruction and values-based instruction. All interviewees noted that local protocols for assessing library instruction consider the quantity of students reached, but not the content of instructional interactions, pedagogies used, or preparation on the part of the librarian. One interviewee reflected on definitions of "value" relative to library instruction, noting that "narrow and quantitative definition[s] of value" equate—and indeed reduce—success with numbers.

The application of quantitative measures to assess one-shot efficacy, including the number of sessions delivered in a given time frame, the number of students reached, and even teaching minutes, signal prevalent assumptions that underpin libraries and library work. As noted by Magnus, Belanger, and Faber, libraries' reliance on quantitative assessment tools position students as "customers or consumers whose individual, immediate needs must be satisfied in order to retain library market value in an increasingly competitive educational landscape" (2018, para. 9). As reiterated by our interview sample, without measurable standards for success beyond numbers, the qualitative outcomes and preparation involved in library instruction are undervalued, thereby reducing both students and instructors to transactional variables. Further, librarians are forced to consider more abstract notions of "value" and success beyond programmatic assessment, such as personal feelings of fulfillment or learning ascertained during and following a teaching session. As noted by one interviewee, "If I'm not getting the high of a good classroom session, I take that personally. It's a lot of pressure..."

How might we sustain meaningful, transformative instructional interactions if our labor within and related to teaching is not recognized outside numerical values? As noted by one interviewee, the emphasis on quantitative measures signals librarian disposability and inhibits our ability to "have meaningful interactions with our students." The pressure born of this

need to increase numerical outputs seems ingrained in the profession, irrespective of one's career status. Comments from a retired librarian emphasized the imposed pressure related to limited time with students: "I have them for a short period of time. I have to be selective with my time and energy." Thus, there is pressure to maximize our time and influence in the classroom, but this predicament seems at least partially self-constructed since there is little institutional oversight for programmatic assessment. Participants were circumspect about where the alignment of institutional values and their own personal values intersect in response to assessment. These factors also contributed to librarians feeling burnt out.

The treatment of instruction as task-based and transactional is a consequence that weighs heavily on this study's authors, who regard relationship-building as fundamental to the long-term reframing of one-shots. As noted by all of this study's interviewees, the one-shot model works best when it is the beginning of an ongoing partnership with students and faculty, who maintain that connection in various ways after the session has concluded, including following up for research consultations and project collaborations. The exhaustion born of attempting to forge relationships without institutional support, coupled with the widespread employment precarity in the library profession (manifesting as contract, casual, and part-time work arrangements), further inhibits our ability to do meaningful work. As noted by Lee, "[u]nstable work environments ... affect the services we provide. It's harder to build sustainable programs, projects, and services with temporary staff. Relationships and institutional knowledge, both central to library work, are forfeited when a contract ends" (2020, para. 7). As echoed by one early-career interviewee:

"We're in an age of precarity, scarcity, shrinking budgets, and we aren't compensated for it. This disproportionately impacts marginalized people and people with less job security. This reverberates throughout the profession. When doing excessive labor and going above and beyond becomes the norm, our exploitation becomes part of the workflow. Being available at the drop of a hat is just one piece of it. This impacts some colleagues more than others."

Transactional instruction models coupled with precarity and scarcity thus have reverberating consequences on the quality of the teaching we deliver, our workforce's ability and availability to meet those instructional needs, and the extent to which we are able to build relational instruction partnerships.

## Conclusion/Future Directions

As we analyzed the interviews, we realized just how connected the experiences of a librarian teaching one-shots is to their positionality, experience, and institution. The question arose of how much the organizational culture of the library or the university played into how a librarian felt or approached one-shots. As we found in our interviews, how much a librarian felt empowered to uphold boundaries, experiment, or collaborate was very dependent on their institution. The connections among labor, one-shots, sustainability, and burnout became very clear, signaling that teaching a large number of one-shots every year has impacts on the librarians who have to teach them. Ironically, as we were looking at the connections among library instruction, one-shots, and burnout, we were also working on this project during a transitional fall semester. Typically, the fall semester is a very busy time for instruction librarians and was

compounded in this case by many of us returning to working on-site after a year and a half of working remotely in a pandemic. The amount of stress this brought on introduced new questions about the efficacy and sustainability of the one-shot model.

Through our interviews and conversations, we saw how the labor model of the one-shot weighed on many of us and our interviewees. At some point, most of us talked about the need for self-care and having boundaries with our instructional approaches. To help mitigate burnout, boundaries need to be set for librarians to be able to have more agency in the kind of work they want to engage in, and to ensure that their own pedagogy is effective. This requires clear directives from leadership and professional development support. Teaching one-shots just because that's the way it has always been done made some respondents question how valued their labor was. Spending time and energy teaching the same sessions over and over again, coupled with not knowing how one's institution values this work, prevents meaningful introspection and incentives on the part of the librarian to reflect on and improve their practice. It also positions teaching librarians as interchangeable, as long as they meet imposed (or imagined) teaching quotas. Leadership needs to recognize our labor and provide avenues for support and professional development. Change has to also happen at an institutional level.

If one-shot instruction moves toward relational models and away from transactional ones, another way forward would be to advocate for equitable labor conditions for library workers. A well-resourced, compensated, protected library team is well suited to support mutual well-being, equally distributed labor, and the cultivation of long-term relationships with campus partners, thereby delivering higher-quality instruction, one-shot or otherwise. Thus, participation in labor organizing within our field to ensure the protection of library workers will have reverberating impacts, including strengthening our communities of practice (Rea, 2022).

Just as this project began with a conversation, we need to have more conversations around how our institutional labor is valued by our academic communities, how to create more equitable workloads, how to create space for relationship building, and how we break the cycle of merely handing down the one-shot model as the only frame of reference for teaching information literacy. Early-career librarians shouldn't just be handed down this one-shot tradition; instead, they should be encouraged to learn more and develop pedagogical skills, creating sustainable and programmatic instructional practices and ways to build creative collaborations. Library leaders and administrators should provide clear directions about assessment that go beyond a quantitative value and prioritize programmatic approaches that encourage deep critical thinking and learning. Re-envisioning the one-shot model is a multifaceted approach that requires support and creative leadership at many levels. If the pandemic has taught us anything, we are creative, adaptable, and able to shift swiftly, so we believe meaningful changes to the one-shot are possible and we can "go outside" after all.

## APPENDIX

### Interview Questions

*Questions serve as guidelines for a conversation between interviewer and interviewee.*

- Remember to do Oral Consent first
- The notetaker can paste the questions in the Zoom chat while the interviewer interviews.

### Opening Questions:

*Can you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your career in libraries?*

1. Can you talk about your experience with information literacy or library instruction?
2. How do you define classroom instruction? How much is/was classroom instruction part of your roles and responsibilities? When did instruction emerge as a job responsibility?
3. In your own words, what is a one-shot? How do you categorize it? Is it defined as instruction? Outreach? Reference?
4. What was your first experience with a “one-shot”?
  - a. As a student?
  - b. As a librarian?
5. Have you always called it a one-shot or was it called something else? Does your description of a one-shot change depending on who you’re talking to?

### More Depth:

6. In your work with teaching one-shots, what felt flexible and within your power to adapt or change? What felt like it was stuck or couldn’t be changed?
7. How has technology shifted your teaching approach? Has it shifted the focus away from information literacy and more toward technology-based instruction (in other words, how to use Zotero, how to search in PubMed)?
8. What do you think the purpose of the one-shot is?
  - a. *Optional:* How much is the one-shot about delivering content vs. forming a relationship?
9. How does your institution measure success of one-shot sessions? (that is, number of classes or students, ACRL statistics) How do you personally gauge the success of your instruction? What has your experience been managing both your definition of success with your institutions?
  - a. *Optional:* Have you felt like you had to achieve a certain number of one-shots each year to be viewed as successful or effective as a library worker/professional?
10. What dynamics did you notice or experience with the instructors and the students while you were teaching one-shots?
11. How often have you tried to change or modify the course instructor’s expectations of you in your instruction? How empowered have you felt to experiment or change your teaching practices?
12. Do you think there is a connection between burnout and the one-shot instruction model?
13. What do you think is the connection between equity/power dynamics and the one-shot model?

14. Have you or anyone you know ever tried to say “no” to a one-shot request? What happened?
15. How do you see the one-shot instruction model evolving and where would you like to see it go? If you could do IL instruction any way you wanted, what would it look like?
16. What do you think is library leadership’s responsibility in mitigating burnout or being aware of and advocating for policies that preserve library workers’ workload?
17. Is there anything that we didn’t ask that you would like to tell us?

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# Is the Library One-Shot Effective? A Meta-Analytic Study

Dani Brecher Cook

The one-shot instruction session is a dominant mode of teaching in academic libraries. While many conference presentations and articles about methods have been shared, there is little consensus about whether a single library session promotes student learning about information literacy topics. This meta-analysis gathers studies that employ quantitative measures of student learning in an attempt to determine if the one-shot is an effective modality for learning. Results indicate the need for a more critical look at the grouping of “one-shot” as a methodology and the need for further robust research on acquisition of student learning outcomes in the one-shot context.

In academic libraries, the most pervasive method of providing information literacy instruction is the so-called “one-shot,” where students in a given course attend a single session facilitated by a librarian during their academic term to learn about conducting library research (Nicholson, 2016). Since the one-shot is so broadly used in the academic library context, there is a clear need for a meta-analytic review of the literature, so that library practitioners can make informed choices about how to spend their time, resources, and efforts in supporting undergraduate student learning. The aim of this meta-analysis is to attempt to answer the research question: Does the academic library one-shot result in improved information literacy knowledge and/or skills of undergraduate students?

So-called “bibliographic instruction” emerged in the 1980s; and, by the 1990s, it was firmly entrenched as a key component of academic librarians’ work (Martin & Jacobson, 1995). Almost as early, the one-shot began to receive criticism as an effective teaching tool (Gavin, 1995). As Bowles-Terry and Donovan put it, “one-shot instruction sessions were born out of necessity,” yet they have continued to be the dominant mode of work for instruction librarians (Bowles-Terry & Donovan, 2016, 137; for more recent statistics, please see Hsiesh, Dawson & Yang, 2021, 3). While many librarians may prefer other ways of engaging with students, the constraints on library instructional engagement remain. Due to the prevalence of one-shot sessions (which encompass a wide variety of pedagogical approaches), there is a significant and divisive literature about the overall goals of the one-shot model of information literacy instruction, as well as the method’s efficacy. Can meaningful learning occur in a single librarian-mediated session? Some practitioners claim that this method is “preposterous for many librarians” (Walker and Pearce, 2014), while others assert that the one-shot is a valuable tool for student learning (one example:

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Wang, 2016). In her recent editorial, Pagowsky (2021) claims that the one-shot is “transactional and keeps us in cycles of ineffectiveness.” The literature ranges from self-reports of student attitudes and behaviors toward the library, to pre- and post-testing of specific knowledge, to authentic assessments<sup>1</sup> of information literacy in student work at the end of a term. While the profession was called upon to robustly assess learning outcomes in instruction as early as Davinson (1984) and Barclay (1993) and the literature has grown large since then, there continues to be little agreement on which outcomes are meaningful measures, best practices for experimental design, and assessment instruments.

The category of the “one-shot” includes a diverse range of pedagogical approaches, goals, and outcome measures, all bound together by the common qualities of being a single standalone, time-limited (often 45- or 60-minute, though may be as short as 15 minutes) session. Within the academic library context, the one-shot is meant to deliver information literacy knowledge, which can be measured and understood in a variety of ways. Sobel & Sugimoto (2012) found that instruction librarians use a wide variety of assessment tools and outcome measures, with a focus on access and resource selection. Between 2000 and 2016, many studies used the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards (2000) to determine outcome variables (for instance: Hsieh & Holden, 2010; Rosenblatt, 2010), and other studies continue to use specialized subject matter information literacy standards from ACRL (such as Tran et al., 2018). After the adoption of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in 2016, the literature moved away from Standards-based outcomes assessment to concept-driven outcomes (examples: Hurley & Potter, 2017; Tomaszewski, 2021). Yet other studies employ entirely different frameworks for information literacy assessment, such as the Research Readiness-Focused Assessment (Wang, 2016), or focus on the diversity of source types used (Howard et al., 2014). Despite the wide variety of outcome measures and assessment types, these studies are often framed as measuring the efficacy of the one-shot in teaching information literacy-related outcomes.

Within the literature examining one-shot library instruction, there is a broad range of quality of studies as well. Early assessment literature from the 2000s has been criticized for its reliance on convenience sampling, as well as a lack of emphasis on long-term retention of skills (Spievak & Hayes-Bohanan, 2013). However, more recent literature tends to be more expertly designed and executed, though longitudinal studies remain scarce. Additionally, most of the literature focuses on early-career undergraduate populations, such as introductory writing courses or college-preparedness courses, with very few studies examining graduate populations.

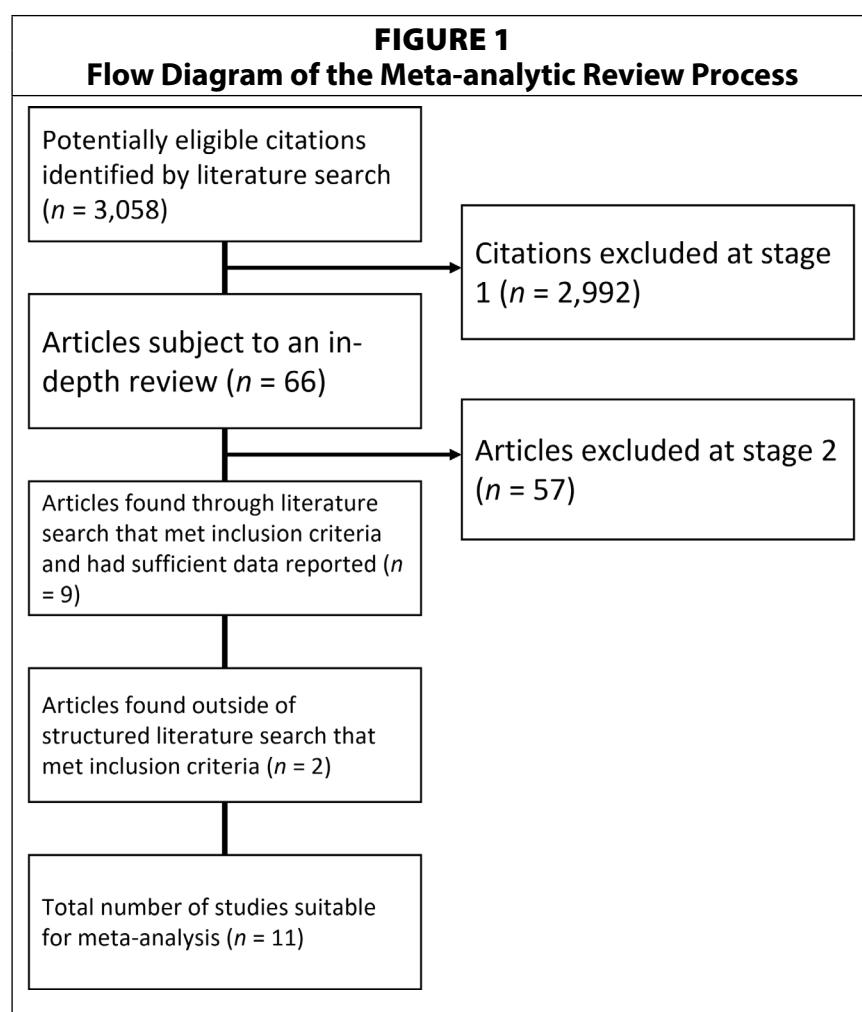
## Methods

Meta-analysis was selected as the most relevant method for conducting the work of examining the aggregate impact (or not) of the one-shot. A meta-analysis is a formal review that collects relevant studies that examine the same topic (but may have different methods or specific outcomes) and synthesizes their results using statistical methods.

Relevant studies were identified by searching LISTA (Library, Information Science, and Technology Abstracts), Library Literature and Information Science Full Text (H.W. Wilson), ERIC, and Education Source in October 2021. The search strategy combined the terms (“one shot” OR “one-shot” OR “single-session” OR “bibliographic instruction”) AND (assess\* OR evaluat\* OR measur\* OR test\*) AND (undergraduate OR college OR university) AND (librar\* OR information literacy), and was not restricted by date range. The bibliographies of studies that met the search criteria were mined to identify additional studies.

Case studies, quasi-experimental studies, and experimental studies were all considered for this meta-analysis. To be included in the meta-analysis, studies had to test the educational effectiveness of a one-shot library session, meaning that researchers examined a dependent variable that measured knowledge acquisition gained from the one-shot experience. For the purposes of this meta-analysis, the researcher did not include studies that examined GPA or course grade as outcome variables, as these are controversial metrics with many potential confounding variables (examples: Fisher, 2018; Robertshaw & Asher, 2019). Studies that measured affect, confidence, or anxiety were excluded. Studies that investigated the effectiveness of online modules, multisession instruction, or term-long courses were excluded. Only publications from journals were considered for inclusion in the meta-analysis. Prior to making this decision, recent conference proceedings from LOEX and ACRL were examined. Eligible participant populations were undergraduate students at community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. Studies were not limited by publication date. Due to the researcher's language limitations, only studies in English were included. Only peer-reviewed journal publications were considered for inclusion. The researcher reached out to a small group of authors to ask for additional information about their studies to determine if they could be included. While there is an emerging best practice in the social sciences to include two independent reviewers in conducting a meta-analytic review (Siddaway, Wood & Hedges, 2019), the present meta-analysis was conducted by a single reviewer.

As shown in figure 1, 3,058 potentially relevant citations were retrieved from the structured literature search. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to determine the relevance of the article, as well as to preliminarily identify whether the article was a research study. Of those, 66 articles were subject to in-depth reviews, including examination of the methods and data reported in the results and discussion. To be included in the meta-analysis, study design needed to be experimental or quasi-experimental and include a measure that indicated difference due to the one-shot intervention. Nine of those articles included relevant data, such as a t-statistic, chi-squared statistic, or mean and standard deviation



for the researcher to calculate an effect size estimate. Articles that did not include the size of the population,  $n$ , were not included. Two other articles were identified by citation mining.

After identifying the 11 articles for the present meta-analysis, the researcher entered data extraction elements in an Excel spreadsheet. Some articles reported more than one study or variable that could be used (such as M.E. Cohen et al., 2016). Elements included were independent variable, dependent variable, study size  $n$ , degrees of freedom, one-tailed  $t$ -value,  $p$ -value, and effect size  $r$ . For articles that reported  $t$ -statistics, the effect size  $r$  was calculated using Cohen's equation:

$$r = \sqrt{\frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}}$$

(Cohen, 1965). Only two articles in the meta-analysis reported chi-squared statistics, and the effect size was calculated using:

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2(1)}{n}}$$

(Rosenthal, 1991). The articles were also coded to represent population characteristics (in other words, major or general education, class standing), institution type, length of the one-shot session, and experimental design (that is, authentic assessments versus pre- and post-testing) to conduct moderator analyses. Please see appendix for the codebook. The total  $n$  of these studies is 1,572. From 11 identified studies, 16 effect sizes were able to be calculated. Fisher's transformation ( $z_r$ ) was also calculated by the researcher. A summary table is available in figure 2.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Summary Table of Articles Included in Meta-analysis**

Article	Dependent Variable	n	df	t	Effect Size $r$	$z_r$
M.E. Cohen et al. 2016	Score on information literacy (IL) content quiz	64	67	-6.94	0.646698	0.7696
M.E. Cohen et al. 2016	Score on IL content quiz	24	23	-1.51	0.30032	0.3099
Howard et al. 2014	Number of sources used	207	205	0.94	0.06551	0.0656
Howard et al. 2014	Simpson Diversity Index	199	197	1.2	0.08519	0.0854
Howard et al. 2014	Usage of library sources	207	205	3.48	0.2362	0.2407
Hurst and Leonard 2007	Number of source types used	184	182	-5.35	0.3686	0.3868
Lantzy 2016	Score on IL content quiz	31	31	9.46	0.8618	1.3003
Lantzy 2016	Score on IL content quiz	26	24	4.69	0.6915	0.8509
Martin 2008	Type of information resource used	200	1	N/A (=1.612)	0.0898	0.0900
Mery, Newby, and Peng 2012	Score on IL content quiz	32	62	2.6465	0.3186	0.3301

**FIGURE 2**  
**Summary Table of Articles Included in Meta-analysis**

Article	Dependent Variable	n	df	t	Effect Size <i>r</i>	<i>z</i> ,
Portmann and Roush 2004	Score on IL content quiz about source usage	38	37	-0.055	0.0090	0.0090
Spievak and Hayes-Bohanan 2013	Selection of a reliable source	119	1	N/A (=3.85)	0.1508	0.1519
Tewell 2014	Score on IL content quiz	90	89	1.536	0.1607	0.1621
Walker and Pearce 2014	Score on IL content quiz	69	68	-6.134	0.5968	0.6882
Walker and Pearce 2014	Score on IL content quiz	69	68	-6.754	0.6336	0.7475
Wilhite 2004	Score on IL content quiz	13	12	-2.3	0.5531	0.6229

All data were analyzed using Jamovi 1.6 and the MAJOR meta-analysis package for Jamovi.

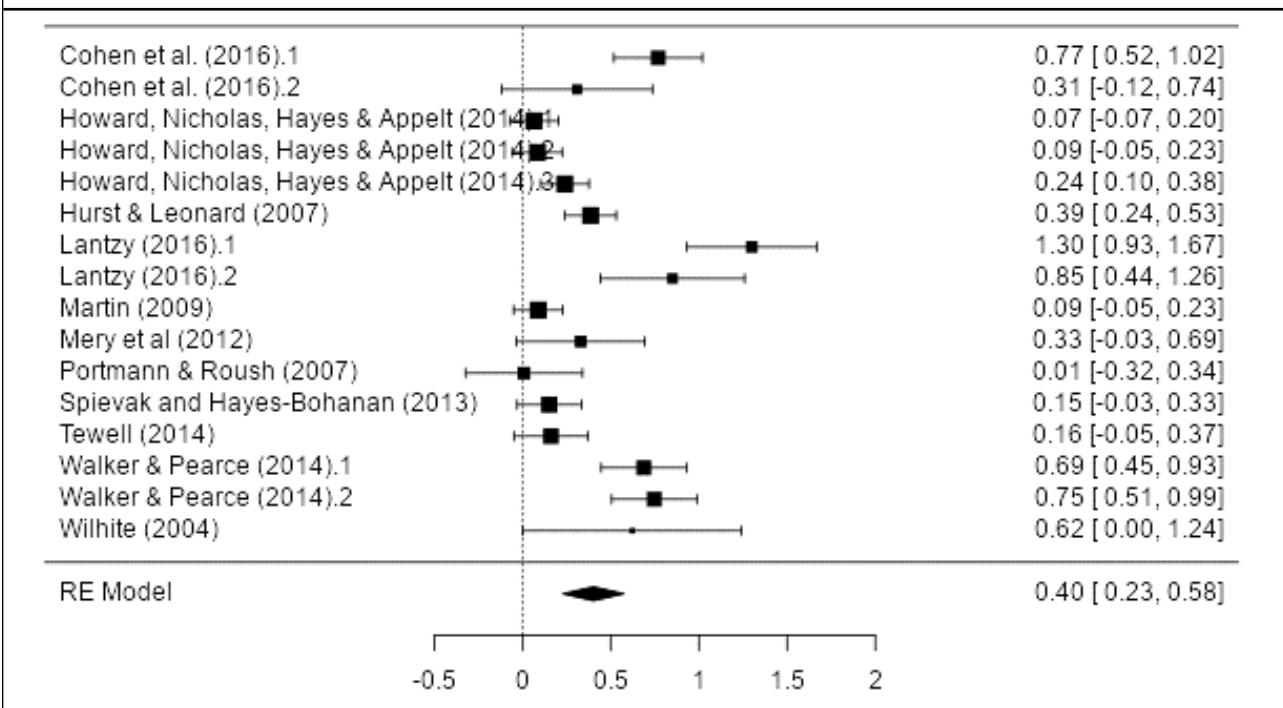
## Results

Of the 11 papers under examination in this meta-analysis, five conducted paired sample t-tests, four conducted independent-samples t-tests, and two conducted a chi-squared test for their statistical analyses. When researchers did not report the type of t-test conducted, unless it was explicitly stated that individual scores were paired, the present researcher assumed an independent samples t-test.

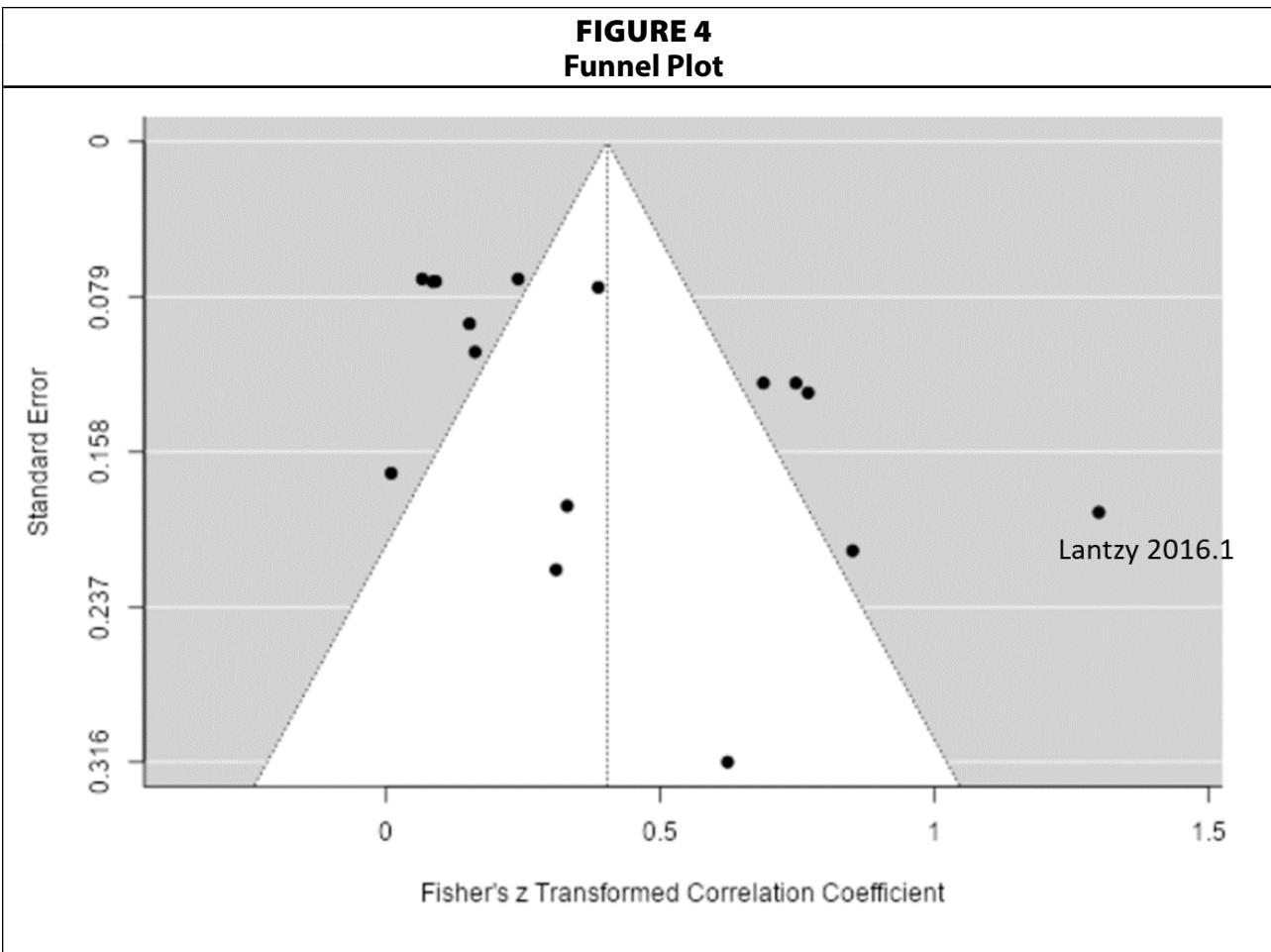
Only one study was truly experimental, taking a sample from a population and dividing it into treatment and control groups (that is, Howard et al., 2014). The majority of the studies ( $n = 8$ ) in the analysis were quasi-experimental, and used a pre-test/post-test design. Most study populations included convenience samples to some degree, which may impact the outcomes of the studies. For example, we could imagine that instructors who opt their courses into a study on educational effectiveness may care more about teaching, and thus be better teachers; or that students who agree to take an optional class and assessment may care more about learning.

All 11 of the studies in this meta-analysis yielded p-values in the expected, positive direction, indicating that, at the least, one-shot library instruction does not seem to damage student learning. Heterogeneity testing indicates that the students are significantly heterogeneous ( $\tau = 0.326$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This means that there is significant variation in the results of the various studies, which is expected due to the wide variety of methods and outcome measures in these studies. In a fixed effects model, the overall effect size *r* is 0.268. In a random effects model ( $K = 16$ ),  $z = 4.53$ ,  $p \leq .001$ , 95% CI: (.229, .577).<sup>2</sup> Converting Fisher's *z* back to *r* for ease of interpretation, *r* = .383. As can be seen in the forest plot in figure 3, half of the studies' 95% confidence interval includes 0. When a confidence interval includes zero, that indicates that there is a chance that there is no treatment effect and, in this case, that the one-shot makes no difference. Examining the moderator variables, there does not appear to be a specific characteristic that unifies the studies that have confidence intervals that do not include zero—they all share characteristics with other studies that do include zero.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Forest Plot for the Random Effects Model**



**FIGURE 4**  
**Funnel Plot**



One study (Lantzy, 2016.1) may be overly influential, as can be seen in the funnel plot in figure 4. That single study creates asymmetry in the funnel plot. A symmetrical funnel plot would indicate that precision of the studies increases as sample sizes get larger. This funnel plot indicates that the literature may be missing smaller studies. It is likely that the asymmetry in this funnel plot is due to the strong heterogeneity of the studies under review.

Moderator variables of interest were also considered. Institution type does appear to have an effect ( $p = .007$ ), with midsize public institutions demonstrating the largest effect sizes. The researcher also investigated if the effect measured is a meaningful moderator variable. Does looking at a specific outcome (such as the number of web sources cited) have a different effect size than a more diffuse variable (for instance, change in information literacy score)? Comparing Howard, Nicholas, Hayes & Appelt (2014) with Walker & Pearce (2014) and Portmann & Roush (2004) indicates that the effect size is significantly different at the  $p < .05$  level for these two groups ( $t_1 = 17.0, p = .04$ ). The analysis showed that change in information literacy score on a standardized test was more apt to be changed than the number of web sources cited. For the practitioner, this may indicate that measures of learning that require students to apply their knowledge in new contexts may be more difficult to attain than answering test questions specifically aimed at information literacy concepts taught in the class.

Finally, a publication bias analysis was performed. Publication bias examines whether studies that have significant results are more likely to be published than those that show null results. As librarianship is a heavily practitioner-focused field, there may be several factors at play here: Practitioners may be more likely to contribute to the gray literature (though a review of the recent proceedings of the LOEX conference yielded no additional candidates for inclusion); practitioners may not be incentivized to publish when their methods do produce a statistically significant result; or there is not an incentive for practitioners to conduct robust assessment of one-shot instruction sessions. The Begg and Mazumdar Rank Correlation was rejected as an approach due to the limited number of studies available (Begg & Mazumdar, 1994). However, the Rosenthal Method for Fail Safe N finds that approximately 874 null-result studies would be required to have a significant effect (Rosenthal, 1979), meaning that a relatively large number of studies would have to have not been included to drive the overall effect size to zero.

## Discussion

While it is not possible to draw causal inferences from the studies included in the meta-analysis, as most of the studies were quasi-experimental in design, large amounts of evidence could begin to make a case for causality. Since only 11 studies were considered in this meta-analysis, the researcher hesitates to draw any kind of causal conclusion; the wide range of the 95% confidence interval could also be narrowed by the inclusion of more studies. The heterogeneity of the methods is a benefit of the studies meta-analyzed in this article, as it allows us to feel more confident in generalizing the findings (Rosenthal, 1991, 129).

The overall effect size of the one-shot intervention on measures of learning in these 11 studies is approximately .383 (this varies depending on fixed or random effect models). According to Cohen (1977), this is a medium effect size, meaning that it is likely to be noticeable. The 95% confidence interval goes as low as .226, meaning that it is possible that the effect size may be much smaller. Empirically, this meta-analysis indicates that there is some positive effect of the one-shot instruction session. That being said, it is important to note that in every

study but one, outcomes were measured directly after the library instruction session. The literature reviewed for this meta-analysis, then, cannot comment on how efficacious one-shot instruction might be over time. Additional investigation and more robust studies are needed.

It should also be noted that effect sizes were universally small ( $r < .2$ ) in studies where an authentic assessment was employed. This is an important feature, as it may indicate that one-shot instruction has limited effectiveness in actual skill-building, as opposed to being able to answer factual questions on a quiz. For interest, the researcher performed meta-analytic processes on two smaller data sets: one consisting of the articles that employed information literacy-related tests, and the other of the articles that used an authentic assessment. For the studies that employed tests, a random effects model yielded ( $K = 10$ ),  $z = 4.71$ ,  $p \leq .001$ , 95% CI: (.335, .814). For studies that employed authentic assessments, such as analysis of source selection, a random effects model yielded ( $K = 6$ ),  $z = 3.29$ ,  $p \leq .001$ , 95% CI: (.069, .271). This indicates that one-shots that are targeted at specific skills to be measured on a test are more likely to have an effect than those that ask students to perform authentic tasks. As most research requires students to perform novel searches, evaluation, and synthesis, it should be considered if the one-shot adequately builds those skills.

This meta-analysis does not review the literature of other instructional models, such as embedding librarians in courses, developing comprehensive online learning modules, or scaffolding information literacy instruction over an entire course in collaboration with faculty instructors. Meta-analyses of these literatures would also be warranted, and effect sizes compared.

In the present meta-analysis, two moderator variables were investigated: The type of dependent variable measured, and the type of institution where the study was conducted. Both variables were significant. There was a significant difference between specific variables examined and more general outcomes, which indicates that the field may benefit from clearly defining desired learning outcomes for one-shot library instruction, and measuring them across multiple studies. One potential moderator that would be interesting to explore, though not possible with the present literature, is the teaching experience of the librarian.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned from conducting this meta-analysis, though, is not about the effect of one-shot instruction on student learning, but rather about the state of the library instruction literature (or perhaps the preparation that librarians receive in research methods). Of the 3,058 articles initially identified in the structured literature search, only 66 (or ~2%) were studies of educational effectiveness. Of that 66, only 9 (or 13.6%, or 0.2% of the original set) reported enough data and conducted sufficient statistical analyses to be included in the present meta-analysis. Even within the 11 articles ultimately included in the meta-analysis, there were small problems with data reported; one article misreported the degrees of freedom in a chi-squared test, causing the researcher to independently redo the analysis. Another article transposed greater-than and less-than signs, so that when they reported that a finding was not statistically significant and had a small  $t$ -value, they claimed  $p < .05$ . These transcription errors cause some concern for the validity of the data presented in these articles; but, because the literature is so sparse, the researcher did opt to include them in the meta-analysis. Two studies were rejected when percentages of students reported resulted in fractions of humans, indicating that missing values were not adequately reported. The field would benefit greatly from additional studies that clearly and accurately report statistical tests, including precise  $p$ -values, effect sizes, and confidence intervals. The vast majority of

studies in this field report descriptive statistics (primarily mean values and frequency tables) and a smaller number report percentages that fall into specific categories ("relative risk"), but more meaningful and informative analyses could and should be performed. In addition, well-designed experimental studies of the effect of the one-shot intervention would enrich the field and introduce the possibility of drawing causal inferences. The preponderance of the case study makes it challenging to trust the results of the meta-analysis.

Given the continued prevalence of the one-shot in library instruction, the field should consider an increased focus on robust assessments of their efficacy. This may require additional statistical or methodological training and support for library practitioners. Further, the results of the present meta-analysis should encourage the field to reconsider the classification of the one-shot as a "method." The one-shot is not a monolith, but instead encompasses a wide variety of outcome variables, pedagogical strategies, timing, and populations, and being able to compare studies that are more alike would yield more meaningful and actionable results for library practitioners. This study indicates that there is likely more to unpack in terms of what differentiates an effective one-shot from an ineffective one. Replication studies at different institutions may also be warranted. In conclusion, the researcher hopes that this meta-analysis spurs additional investigation into the field and that a more directional meta-analysis may be possible in the future.

## APPENDIX

### Codebook

Variable	Possible Values	Definition
Student Category	Community college students; undergraduate students	The population studied, as identified by the original study authors.
Discipline	English; education; business; sociology; unknown/general	The type of course that the one-shot was associated with, as described by original study authors.
Institution Type	Community college; small liberal arts college; mid-sized public; large public	The type of college or university where the study took place, as identified by the original study authors.
Experimental Design	Pre- and post-test; quasi-experimental; survey; portfolio assessment	The type of study that was conducted, as reported by the original study authors. Some studies used more than one design and were coded as such.
Length of Session	45 minutes; 50 minutes; 60 minutes; 75 minutes; 90 minutes; not described	The length of the one-shot session where outcomes were being measured. Not all studies included the length and were marked as such.
Analysis Type	Chi-squared; independent sample t-test; paired sample t-test	The type of analysis conducted on the data collected to report on the outcome variable.
Dependent Variable Type	Test; authentic assessment	Describes the type of measure that was used to describe the change in the dependent variable. These were selected and coded by the present researcher.

### Notes

1. According to Wiggins (1989), the creator of this phrase, authentic assessment is a “true test” of student learning, where students are asked to demonstrate application of knowledge in an exemplary and nonstandardized task. Examples include essays, portfolios, and research projects.
2. Fixed effects models assume there is a single central tendency and can only be generalized to other populations of the same ilk. Random effects models generally have a smaller effect size but are more generalizable and amenable to heterogeneity of studies. This is the case in this analysis.

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\* = included in the meta-analysis

# The Futility of Information Literacy & EDI: Toward What?<sup>1</sup>

Sofia Leung

This piece examines the parallels between one-shot library instruction and one-off equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) workshops. Library and Information Science/Studies (LIS) as a field problematically frames both information literacy and EDI as add-ons or afterthoughts to the work of library and information workers. This framing tells on itself when the field/profession turns to one-shots, one-off EDI workshops, or other band aid solutions to larger systemic and structural issues. Without actually “solving” anything, these types of neoliberal solutions become part of what enables and extends white supremacy’s hold on LIS (Hudson, 2017; Leung & López-McKnight, 2021). What are we hoping to accomplish with the one-shot? What are we hoping to accomplish toward and with information literacy and EDI? In other words, what’s the point of information literacy and EDI?

In the United States, library and information science/studies (LIS) as a field problematically frames both information literacy and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)<sup>2</sup> as add-ons or afterthoughts to the work of library and information workers. This framing tells on itself when the profession turns to library instruction one-shots, one-off EDI webinars or workshops, or other bandage solutions to solve larger systemic and structural issues. Without actually “solving” anything, these types of neoliberal solutions become part of what enables and extends white supremacy’s hold on LIS (Hudson, 2017; Leung & López-McKnight, 2021). The performative nature of one-shots and checklist EDI works to hide what is truly at stake in the larger ongoing battle for the story of this nation-state known as the United States. At the time of this writing, November 2021 (and again in March and April 2022), there are a growing number of challenges to books on race, in addition to the challenges that often occur to books with LGBTQ themes (Noxon, 2021; NPR, 2021). This is after months of racially motivated dog whistles that called for Critical Race Theory to be banned from K–12 education (Demby, Kung, & Donnella, 2021). And of course, that follows the Trump administration attempts to prevent federal funding from being used on trainings on diversity, Critical Race Theory, white privilege, the New York Times 1619 project, and anything that could be construed as “divisive and harmful sex- and race-based ideologies” (Cineas, 2020).

All of these challenges to how the history of the United States is taught and understood by younger generations are at the core of why information literacy and EDI are such prohibitive structures that do not allow time for historical or political context, nuance, or deeper

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understandings of anything, really. When EDI as an office (or officer) is isolated within the institution and its work is segregated from the daily work of the institution within which it is meant to operate, it is nearly impossible to transform said institution. If placed into the format of a training, the work of EDI then becomes the work of individuals, rather than that of the institution, and the point is not to challenge the status quo, but to maintain it. Similarly, when librarians are given a limited amount of time and agency, we are often forced into focusing on the practical skills outlined by whoever invited us into their classroom. We are faced with the very real concerns of wanting the students to “succeed” in their assignments, their classes, their time in academia. But what then is the purpose of the one-shot or the one-off training? How do they get us toward the goal of information literacy or the goal of EDI? What is the purpose of information literacy? What is the purpose of EDI? What are we actually teaching our students to do? Would we even know what to teach instead?

As a child of immigrants and a Chinese American woman<sup>3</sup> working at the intersection of academic libraries and social justice education, I find myself able to draw strong parallels between the work of information literacy and that of EDI. As a former academic librarian,<sup>4</sup> my understanding of information literacy and EDI are specific to my experience of and with those structures as they exist within academic libraries. The way I am defining the one-shot here is a requested library session of any length that is either connected directly to an upcoming class assignment or is meant to be an introduction to the library—services, collections, spaces, and the like. Similarly, one-off EDI workshops or trainings are a single session of any length on a topic within the scope of EDI, usually nonthreatening topics such as implicit bias (to avoid personal responsibility), cultural competence (as though individual education can end structural oppression), white privilege (rather than supremacy and again, a reliance on individual understanding), among others. Some folks would consider my current work falling within the boundaries of EDI and to an extent, it does.<sup>5</sup>

Nicole Pagowsky (2021) writes, “within a curriculum, the one-shot has no memory of where information literacy has been and no vision of where it is going” and that has been my experience of one-shots and one-off diversity trainings, as well. There are many critiques of one-shots; the one that resonated with me was that one-shots are often removed from the context within which information literacy could or might be useful in real-life situations. However, as my own understanding of how white supremacy, racism, settler colonialism, and capitalism, among many other systems of oppression, grew, I realized the critiques of one-shots were not digging deep enough. As I have written elsewhere with Jorge López-McKnight (2020; 2021), these critiques lacked an acknowledgment, let alone a comprehension, of white supremacy’s roots in one-shots, in information literacy, in our field, in academia. What they lacked was not only the recognition that one-shots are a tool of white supremacy, racism, settler colonialism, and capitalism, but that one-shots obscured what information literacy is actually doing.

Education scholars have explored this extensively in their own field. H. Samy Alim and Django Paris (2017) write, “The purpose of state-sanctioned schooling has been to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent White imperial project, with students and families being asked to lose or deny their languages, literacies, cultures, and histories in order to achieve it in schools.” Education and LIS as fields are more than tangentially related, particularly in academic settings. I would argue that the purpose of information literacy and EDI have also been to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent white imperial project (Honma, 2005; de jesus, 2014; Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016; Chiu, Ettarh, & Ferretti, 2021). Information

literacy and EDI as paradigms serve as containers for the types of liberal values libraries (and universities) espouse—democracy, access, intellectual freedom, diversity, and the like. Those values are specifically coded to whiteness<sup>6</sup> and are alluded to in the name of what the US nation-state considers freedom. The one-shot and one-off are manifestations of white supremacist settler colonial thinking. They function as a cog in the machinery of the white imperial project, while at the same time, shielding that machinery from view.

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2018), both education scholars, ask a set of questions that serve to open up what wants to be hidden: “what is at work in all of this work? What does this work care about? What animates and compels this work? What does this work believe about itself and others?” These questions create a framework through which we can explore the purpose of information literacy and the purpose of EDI in the context of academic libraries. They help us understand what all of these areas are working toward and how to evaluate what this work is accomplishing. They challenge us to question the assumptions we make about our work in libraries and academia. They ask us whether this is the work we thought we were doing and if we should continue down this path. Critical Race scholar George Lipsitz gave a talk at the 2008 American Library Association conference, where he said, “we have a role to play in deciding what will be remembered and what will be forgotten, who will be included and who will be excluded, who will speak and who is silenced” (9). It can be easy to downplay our role as librarians, as memory workers, if we forget to look outside our day-to-day work, to see the connections between what may seem like small choices but have larger consequences over time. After all, it’s no mistake that most of us learn a highly sanitized history of the United States from our formal education, one that glosses over the horror and trauma of enslaved African peoples and the genocide and erasure of Indigenous peoples. The struggle for what belongs in library collections or in school curriculums is part of this larger struggle of who is allowed to tell the story of the United States, who is allowed to have access to that story, and who is able to control the master narrative that shapes what this nation-state is and will become.

In this article, I will explore how information literacy and EDI operate as tools of settler colonialism and white supremacy and examine the similarities between one-shots and one-offs as particular expressions of those systems. I will move to theories of Indigenous refusal and Black resistance, as well as Indigenous conceptions of relationality, to think toward whether liberation is possible within LIS.

## What is at Work in Information Literacy and EDI?

### *Conceptions of Knowledge*

Putting forth specific understandings of information and knowledge—how they are formulated, collected, organized, accessed, and used—is vital to how white supremacy and settler colonialism have justified and maintained themselves as systems of power. White supremacy, in the words of legal scholar Frances Lee Ansley (1989), “is a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings.” It is an ideology based on political, economic, and cultural constructions of whiteness as human (and therefore, superior), whiteness as objective, and whiteness as the norm. It is the ideology behind slavery and anti-Black racism, which are the bedrock of racial capitalism, racism,<sup>7</sup> and settler colonialism. Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) defines

settler colonialism as “contexts where the territorial infrastructure of the colonizing society is built on and overwhelms the formerly self-governing but now dispossessed Indigenous nations; indeed, settler colonial polities are predicated on maintaining this dispossession.” In other words, settler colonialism as a system requires the ongoing elimination and erasure of Indigenous peoples of those lands. This allows white settlers to make claims of indigeneity to the land and everyone else then becomes foreign or other (Patrick Wolfe, 2006). Using these definitions, I will explore how white supremacy and settler colonialism are embedded in and upheld by systems of knowledge, information literacy, and the very institutions that gate keep knowledge production and access.

The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education’s release coincided with my early years as an academic librarian and heavily influenced my understanding of how LIS views the concept. So I use their definition: “Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning” (2015). The coded language of this definition is a reflection of what bell hooks called the imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy we live in (Yancy & hooks, 2015). Information has been constructed and obstructed through the eye of the white settler colonial state, where information must be “produced” and have value like any other form of capital, something to be discovered, owned, and conquered. The ACRL frame “Authority Is Constructed and Contextual” provides a guide of how to think critically about authority with regard to information. However, it does not mention how authority is constructed by systems of power and oppression like white supremacy, racism, and capitalism (Battista et al., 2015) or that authority is dependent on one’s positionality within a society ruled by these same systems. Nor does it challenge why authority is necessary to and for knowledge creation.

In her groundbreaking book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa & Ngati Porou), deconstructs the ways in which imperialism is embedded in Western knowledge systems. She summarizes a set of interconnected Western colonialist ideas about history that are directly connected to the ways in which we currently frame information and knowledge in LIS:

1. “The idea that history is a totalizing discourse...
2. The idea that there is a universal history...
3. The idea that history is one large chronology...
4. The idea that history is about development...
5. The idea that history is about a self-actualizing human subject...
6. The idea that the story of history can be told in one coherent narrative...
7. The idea that history as a discipline is innocent...
8. The idea that history is constructed around binary categories...
9. The idea that history is patriarchal” (2012, 31–32).

Western society’s understanding of knowledge is premised on the idea that all knowledge is universal and therefore must be known and shared. This is based on the assumptions that all human societies share the same values and characteristics, that we all agree on the binary categories that some “authority” has decided knowledge falls into (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), that knowledge can only be created by specific types of people who fit standards of whiteness—white, cisgender, male, and able-bodied—and in specific formats—the written word. “History

was the story of people who were regarded as *fully human*" (ibid.). White supremacy, racism, and settler colonialism dictate who is regarded as fully human and, again, it is those who fit the standards of whiteness.

If knowledge and information must fall within the bounds of whiteness, it means that only a master narrative of white settler progress is being told. That has led to what Myrna Morales and Stacie Williams (2021) call epistemic supremacy, which they define as "societal systems, infrastructures, and knowledge pathways that facilitate and uphold the conditions for tyranny and fascism by destroying any system of knowledge (epistemicide) not controlled by the ruling class as a means of facilitating racial monopoly capitalism." Not only does epistemic supremacy erase Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and other nondominant forms of knowledge, it serves to bar BIPOC from telling their own stories. It opens the door to the stealing of knowledges and culture from Black, Indigenous, People of Color by white people while justifying it through the common cause of science and progress. In more specific instances of white settler colonialism, Indigenous scholars Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Elena Duarte remind us that:

"Indigenous peoples are also told that unless their ways of knowing can be codified as a form of property—with private property and the commons being the operational standard of nearly all laws under modern nation-state forms of sovereignty—they cannot be protected by authorized legislative and judicial bodies" (2020, 412–413).

Their point is that Indigenous knowledge has to be interpreted through the structures of settler colonial governance to be "protected" from settler colonial governance. That this might be antithetical to Indigenous belief and knowledge systems is of no consequence to the white settler. Indigenous knowledge only becomes Knowledge when it is represented as such by the white settler. This is an argument Indigenous scholars have had to repeatedly make because their authority has been constructed by others. Sarah Viren (2021) wrote an article about Andrea Smith, a scholar whose false claims of Cherokee ancestry were revealed more than a decade ago, but whose reputation remains intact. Viren discusses "the conviction felt by non-Natives that the land, but also the knowledge, cultural heritage and identities of American Indians belong to the rest of us."

This same conviction shows up in Toni Morrison's concept of the *white gaze* and what Tuck and Yang (2014) call the *settler colonial gaze*. Alim and Paris (2017) discuss how liberatory and expansive pedagogy could be by not teaching to those dominant gazes, that those gazes require a specific way of being that must be understood through and toward whiteness. There's inherently a demand within the white settler colonial gaze that requires that the Other be knowable, explained, made legible to whiteness. Tuck and Yang point to Nelson Maldonado-Torres' work to state that "Knowledge of self/Others became the philosophical justification for the acquisition of bodies and territories, and the rule over them. Thus the right to conquer is intimately connected to the right to know" (2014, 224). Settler colonialism necessitates that knowledge take a particular form to be valid and, therefore, worth preserving.

Not only must knowledge be created and owned by a white, settler patriarchy, but it must take a specific form and provide a particular function. Tuck and Yang write that "Research is just one form of knowing, but in the Western academy, it eclipses all others. In this way, the

relationship of research to other human ways of knowing resembles a colonizing formation, acquiring, claiming, absorbing, consuming" (Tuck & Yang 2014, 237). Knowledge exists in its highest, most "objective" form, as shaped through the academy, when it appears as research. As Tuck and Yang explain, other ways of knowing become taken up by researchers (settlers) to be reformulated into that which follows the rules of research. Thus, the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and racialized peoples become enveloped by the conquering force of colonialism. Tuwhai Smith makes clear that "Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state)" (2012, 8). In other words, "research" is being used as a tool of imperialism, colonialism, and other systems of oppression, to codify what is allowed to be knowledge. Research as a particular class of knowledge lends itself to being owned as all things must be in a capitalist society. As Cheryl Harris establishes in her seminal article, "Whiteness as Property" (1993), in order for whiteness to be conceived of as property, or as a series of rights that white people are entitled to, Indigenous peoples and their knowledges must be erased, or in this case, repurposed for ownership by whiteness. Sandy Grande writes, "Within settler societies, the university functions as an apparatus of colonization; one that refracts the 'eliminative' practices, modes of governance, and the forms of knowledge production that Wolfe (2006) defines as definitive of settler colonialism" (2018, 48–49). The university, as the main conduit of research, polices knowledge production, organization, and preservation. And as an arm of the university, the library is the chief officer of that system, meant to house and regulate research under the codes of colonial governance.

### *EDI as Enclosure*

There is a rather circular, absurdist, and ironic nature to the existence of EDI. The university was created to purposefully exclude Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander peoples from higher education. That lack of inclusion and sense of belonging eventually led the university to develop EDI "as an office and an ideology" (Ferguson, 2021) to address the concerns of those BIPOC allowed into the university. However, those of us who have experienced what it means to be a "diverse" person in a predominantly white institution (PWI) know that, as Sara Ahmed writes, "The more the words circulate, the less they seem to do" (2019, 149). Roderick Ferguson (2021) and Rinaldo Walcott (2021) both foreground diversity, which here I will use interchangeably with EDI, as institutional responses to the demands for transformative change from student activists and social movements. Diversity as an office functioned as what Ferguson called "a pressure relief valve within the system to control or limit the pressure put on the system by movements internal and external to the campus" (2021). Diversity as an ideology serves as an institutional containment where "[diversity offices] emerged as part of an agenda to tell us, staff, students, faculty, how to be in the university, how to relate to it, how to see ourselves as part of it" (Ferguson 2021). He is arguing that diversity as both an office and an ideology were created purposefully to prevent social change. It is an enclosure into which go the demands, complaints, and stories of minoritized and marginalized people on campus and where they will remain. As Walcott writes, "we have developed a network of subinstitutions like human rights offices and tribunals, diversity offices and officers, equity offices and officers...as an apparatus invented to do important work and keep whiteness satisfied so that its legitimacy is not under attack" (2019, 399). Diversity or

EDI becomes part of the structure intentionally excluding BIPOC knowledges and the peoples themselves from the university.

Tuck and Yang point to Troy Richardson's analysis of "'inclusion as enclosure" (2011, 332) [as] the encircling of Native education as part of a well-intentioned, multiculturalist agenda. Such gestures...reduce the Indigenous curriculum to a supplement to a standard curriculum" (2014, 235). By including particular preapproved aspects of Native education, the institution indicates which parts of Indigenous culture do not endanger coloniality and through that inclusion can gesture toward what Patrick Wolfe calls inducements, which Sandy Grande defines "as a tool of the affective economy through which the desire for recognition has been cultivated... in the context of Indigenous-state relations" (2018). As Grande points out, the inclusion itself is an inducement by the university (2018). But, at the same time, as Leigh Patel states, "Being omitted from curricula creates a distinct form of harm for students, including white students, as they become more entrenched in the ideology of white supremacy, without being taught the harm that white supremacy has done" (2021, 4). We can see this now in ourselves, as former students, wherein many of us lacked an understanding of libraries' white supremacist assimilationist origins (Honma 2005) and its ongoing, purposeful exclusion of BIPOC from this profession and library spaces.

EDI as a structure of institutional enclosure and inducement is particularly harmful because it creates the illusion that the institution desires transformative change or that the solutions lie within the institution. However, all it ends up doing is replicating structures of white supremacy. Walcott warns us against inclusion, writing that "the extension of benefits not only demobilizes more radical calls for transformation but also simultaneously produces disposable populations in its wake" (2019, 402). In other words, only some of us get to be included and the rest are tossed to the side. But that inclusion is always precarious and contingent; all of us are expendable in the eyes of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism. Walcott goes on to say that we have to question the very idea of value, which is too intertwined with racial capitalism to be used as the foundations of EDI. As he writes, "Falling under the logic of inclusion, but a singular inclusion, we are expected to celebrate individual 'success' as if it is collective" (Walcott 2019, 402). Under the thrall of inducements and individual freedoms, we can easily overlook the struggle for collective liberation. Our individual liberation should not be at the cost of other peoples' liberation.

### **Expressions of Enclosure: The One-Shot & the One-Off**

It is important that we understand the library one-shot session and the one-off EDI workshop as particularly insidious mechanisms through which white supremacy and settler colonialism manifest. They extend the enclosure through their very design. More specifically, their form is dictated by their function. One-shots can give the library, sometimes the librarians, a false sense that information literacy is happening, one one-shot at a time. They are particularly virulent because they appear innocuous, even virtuous (for instance: "we're doing the good work of information literacy!"). And in the case of EDI one-offs, they allow those requesting or attending them a sense of accomplishment, a gesture toward EDI. By including these "extraneous" topics as add-ons, the institution can create more inducements: look, we recognize that we have a problem and now look, we solved the problem with this additional session. "The investment in new can imply old patterns can simply be changed by a change of image. You can change the image but not change the organization.

You can change the image in order not to change the organization" (Ahmed 2019, 150). The university will choose to invest in new words, new images in the form of one-shots and one-offs to prevent change, while at the same time performing motions toward change with those very words and images. Then, when change has clearly not been made, one-shots and one-offs function as distractions and window dressing that can allow us to point to the one-shot or the one-off as the problem rather than the institution itself. Nonaccountability is intentionally built into the system.

How are the one-shot and one-off similarly formulated? By their very nature, each is considered a one-and-done session that must fall within previously dictated time constraints (see table 1). They are framed as external to the work at hand, whether it be coursework or the work of the organization at large. Someone must be invited in and asked to present specific library-related or diversity-related topics that must be practical and applicable to the participants. By keeping EDI and information literacy separate from other institutional work, they do not run the risk of challenging any of the power structures, if they were ever at the risk of doing so. And their isolation allows them to be the silver bullet or sole scapegoat for future demands from minoritized and marginalized groups. The work of EDI and information literacy is further constrained by labor practices (only certain people with specific degrees or work experience are authorized to do this work) and (non)accountability (who is the institution accountable to when nothing changes?).

**TABLE 1**  
**Comparison of the One-shot Information Literacy Session and One-off EDI Workshop**

One-shot Information Literacy Session	One-off EDI Workshop
Time-limited, one-and-done	Time-limited, one-and-done
Separate and additional topic	Separate and additional topic
Content must be practical/applicable	Content must be practical/applicable
Lack of follow-up/accountability/reflection	Lack of follow-up/accountability/reflection
No sense of continuity or space for relationship-building	No sense of continuity or space for relationship-building

The structure of the one-shot/one-off workshop impacts the type of pedagogy one can bring into the space. It makes it difficult to build lasting relationships, to create knowledge communally, to do the work collectively, and limits the amount of care, trust, or patience we can show students or participants—all elements that are necessary to establishing transformative change. The format ensures we keep to white supremacy's false ideals of urgency, efficiency, and expedience (Okun, 2021) in the name of capitalism. There is little room for the messiness of historical or social context. There is little time for conflict, different perspectives, or challenges to the status quo. The focus on the practical allows us to ignore the ideology behind our practices (in other words, white supremacy) and our complicity in these systems (Hudson, 2017). The one-shot, as many of you already experience, is usually not nearly enough time to talk about what is at work in information, research, and higher education. Within the profession's desire for practicality lies "narratives of clarity," as Hudson (*ibid.*) describes it, that combined with LIS's imperative for legible categorization within white colonial bounds leads to an inability to deal with nuance and complexity.

The time-bounded, practical structure of the one-shot gestures toward the practicality of the content as well. The one-shot is often in the service of an assignment from the instructor that asks our students to learn only one way of knowing—research. We are teaching them to find the *right* keywords, using databases owned by big publishers, or conducting a literature review for “indisputable” or “authoritative” peer-reviewed sources, and the like. We are teaching them to think of information as capital instead of questioning why information should be regarded as capital. We are doing the work of capitalism in our desire to be practical, clear, and objective. The research paper itself is teaching to a white, Euro-centric, academic gaze that does not leave room for the type of creativity and critical thinking that encourages students to imagine worlds outside of white supremacy. As Tuck and Yang state, “The academy as an apparatus of settler colonial knowledge already domesticates, denies, and dominates other forms of knowledge. It too refuses. It sets limits, but disguises itself as limitless” (2014, 235). Our teaching within these spaces/systems of white settler colonial knowledge make it difficult to be anything other than complicit in the domestication of other forms of knowledge. The one-shot and the traditional research assignment encourage students to think of disciplines as hard boundaries, that different areas of study cannot cross over into each other, spread, and cross-pollinate. If we are not able to discuss how all of our institutions are connected to larger systems of oppression, then we continue to give students the impression that information and knowledge are objective, innocent, and universal. And even for those of us who have imagined doing things differently and actually managed to do so, there is often no supporting infrastructure or departmental (let alone administrative) support for the type of instruction that would challenge the way “things have always been done.”

In my experience as a participant of one-off EDI workshops or trainings, they often end up operating as a salve to white discomfort. The construct of the workshop itself is problematic, as David James Hudson has written, “liberal anti-racism locates the problem of race squarely within the realm of the (ir)rational individual” (2017, 14). When racism is framed as individualistic rather than systemic or structural, there is a patent misunderstanding that it can be solved through solely educational means or to check off the diversity box (Ahmed, 2012). Although, as Hudson points out, the word “racism” is rarely used, because (again) to do so would be to acknowledge complicity. Like information literacy in a one-shot, EDI topics are often presented without social or historical context because the whole point is to avoid examining how white supremacy and settler colonialism maintain and exert power. Even if a single workshop was able to sufficiently address power dynamics of race, gender, and class, the most it can do is raise awareness. By itself, a one-off EDI workshop is never going to effect change, although again, that is not its purpose.

While in my last role as an instruction librarian, I had a minor revelation that the small changes I tried to make in my pedagogy and the content of my instruction sessions would never be enough against white supremacy. Because I, as an individual, would never be able to change a system on my own and if I could not convince my colleagues or administrators or whoever, then my work felt futile. The reality of this revelation was depressing, but it also helped me to realize that the questions Tuck and Yang asked cannot be answered within the institution, that justice is not possible within the institution. This realization opened the door to Indigenous and Black theories of refusal and resistance that offer up different approaches to dismantling systems of oppression.

## Refusing Information Literacy and EDI

“What happens when we refuse what all (presumably) “sensible” people perceive as good things? What does this refusal do to politics, to sense, to reason? When we add Indigenous peoples to this question, the assumptions and the *histories* that structure what is perceived to be “good” (and utilitarian goods themselves) shift and stand in stark relief. The positions assumed by people who refuse “gifts” may seem reasoned, sensible, and in fact deeply correct. Indeed, from this perspective, we see that a good is not a good for everyone” (Simpson, 2014, 1).

Audra Simpson’s theory of refusal comes out of the experiences and practices of the Mohawks of Kahnawà:ke who refuse citizenship in the United States or Canada because they will not give up their knowledge of self and sovereignty (2014). I want to be careful not to conflate what I am arguing for here with the struggles for Indigenous sovereignty because they are in no way the same at all. Tuck and Yang make a point to “caution readers against expropriating Indigenous notions of sovereignty into other contexts, or metaphorizing sovereignty in a way that permits one to forget that the struggles to have sovereignty recognized are very real and very lived” (2014, 243). What I hope to do is draw inspiration from and extend this thinking, action, and ways of being into the realm of LIS, much as Grande does with the university or Tuck and Yang do with social science research. Grande also brings in Black radical thinking, particularly from Robin D.G. Kelley, which I do here, in addition to the work of Rinaldo Walcott.

Kelley writes that Stefano Harney and Fred Moten “argue that the university is dedicated to professionalization, order, scientific efficiency, counterinsurgency, and war—wars on terror, sovereign nations, communism, drugs, and gangs” (2016, 158). If the goal of the neoliberal, corporate university is to churn out rule-abiding citizens ready to slot into a capitalist economy—and not creative or critical thinkers interested in challenging systems of oppression—then we have to understand that the university will not save us (Kelley, 2016; Ferguson, 2021; Walcott, 2021). The epigraph by Simpson opening this section moves me to question our society’s perception of “good things” and what it means to be “sensible.” For many of us, a college degree and all that it brings with it is a good, sensible thing. What we are taught, what we are teaching, is good and sensible. Our profession’s thirst to be good (Ettarh, 2018) is in collusion with our devotion to practicality or being sensible. But we cannot allow the false promise of information literacy and EDI—and that of academia—to distract us from their true intention: to uphold white supremacy and settler colonialism. Instead, what would it mean to refuse information literacy and EDI in the context within which we in libraries and academia have employed them? What would it mean to refuse the library one-shot or the one-off EDI workshop in those contexts? How do we resist their easy allure? What could we redirect our time and energy toward instead?

If we do not question the very idea of value, which Walcott writes, “is always already linked to capital and its racial economy rather than ideas about human work” (2019, 402), then the liberatory futures we thought we were working toward are already compromised. As Fannie Lou Hamer said in a speech at the Founding of the National Women’s Political Caucus in 1971, “Nobody’s free until everybody’s free.” This idea, at the center of which is what Kimberlé Crenshaw now calls intersectionality, is what needs to animate and compel this work—to return to Tuck and Yang’s questions. Collective liberation is what should drive

our work, not values<sup>8</sup> dictated by an organization that has already shown itself to not care about Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Kelley writes that for Black communities, "The impulse to resist is neither involuntary nor solitary. It is a choice made in community, made possible by community, and informed by memory, tradition, and witness" (2016, 161).

## Toward Relationality

I have thought in the past—how come I was never taught this or that in school? Or how did I never read this in my graduate program? However, much of my political and critical awakening has happened and continues to happen outside of formal education and formal understandings of US history, society, and culture. My experiences as a racialized, gendered person led me to look for other understandings of the world that better reflected those experiences and to find other people interested in the type of deep critique Kelley describes in "Black Study, Black Struggle." In reading Kelley (2016), Grande (2018), and Tuck and Yang (2014), and my own experience of what Tressie McMillan Cottom often says, "The institution cannot love us," I have come to understand that the institution will not save us. I/We cannot rely on an institution (LIS or the library writ large) to dismantle the very things keeping it upright. Audre Lorde always already knew, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (1984, 112). The answers do not lie with or in the institution.

Instead, I want to turn to what Grande calls "the un-demand, the un-desire to be either *of* or *in* the university" (2018, 62). That means turning away from the politics of recognition, the desire to fit in and be a part of, to assimilate into whiteness as it is embodied by academia. That does not mean rejecting the space academia and libraries can create, but to refuse the inducements that can often lure one into thinking that we are doing something for the "right" or "good" reasons. "The journey is not about self...it is about the disruption and dismantling of those structures and processes that create hierarchies of individual worth and labor" (Grande, 2018, 60). We will have to continuously question our own motivations for doing this work because it can be easy to be drawn in by the sparkling temptation of awards, promotion, tenure, popularity, branding, or whatever bigger and better carrots are dangled in front of us.

Refusing information literacy, EDI, and their attached inducements within academia opens us up to other ways of being and knowing. In their article, "Centering Relationality: A Conceptual Model to Advance Indigenous Knowledge Organization Practices," Sandra Littletree (Diné/Eastern Shoshone), Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit), and Marisa Elena Duarte (Pascua Yaqui) generously share Indigenous conceptions of knowledge, which center relationality. They write, "[we] depend on Cree scholar Shawn Wilson's (2008) conceptualization of relationality, or the acknowledgement that we all exist in relationship to each other, the natural world, ideas, the cosmos, objects, ancestors, and future generations, and furthermore, that we are accountable to those relationships" (2020, 414). If our idea of knowledge centered on relationality, we would be able to be in reciprocity and mutuality with one another, with our students, with the communities excluded from institutions. Grande defines reciprocity as "being answerable to those communities we claim as our own and those we claim to serve. It is about being answerable to each other and our work" and mutuality as "the development of social relations not contingent upon the imperatives of capital—that refuses exploitation at the same time as it radically asserts connection, particularly to land" (2018, 61). It would mean questioning who and what we serve in libraries and who and what we are actually answerable to. It would mean putting care and compassion for one another, for the land,

first, remembering the importance of ancestral connections, and moving toward collective, ever-changing ideas of liberation. It means connecting back to the land you are on, to those you are in community with, and finding those answers together.

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## Notes

1. This article builds on a keynote I gave for the Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium (CLAPS) in 2020, which was heavily influenced by a book I co-edited with Jorge López-McKnight, *Knowledge Justice*. Thank you to the organizers of CLAPS for inviting me and providing me the opportunity to explore this topic and always to the book contributors and Jorge for being in collective knowledge-making with me. The title is a reference to a book, *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education*, edited by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2017) as this article draws much inspiration from the book and its introduction, in particular.

2. EDI is often represented by any number of interchangeable acronyms D&I, DEI, DEIA (A standing for accessibility) or simply by “diversity” or “diversity and inclusion.”

3. This article is written by a racialized cis woman of color, one raised in an imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy and who is still divesting from those hegemonic ideas. While I am fully aware that my primary audience will end up being white, because LIS and academia are primarily white, the audience I write to is other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color library workers thinking and working through what does not feel right to them about one-shots, library instruction, information literacy, libraries, EDI, and academia. I use BIPOC, a term of solidarity among People of Color, while also understanding that it is still a highly contested term among People of Color. I do not use it lightly nor do I use it to conflate the highly complicated and complex relationships among and between different racial groupings. Where it is necessary to be specific, I will do my best to name the group I mean.

4. In this case, my work experience in libraries has mainly been in both public and private predominantly white universities (they granted academic degrees at every level—bachelor, master, and doctorate) with a heavy emphasis on research (not teaching). I acknowledge that there are many other types of academic institutions (community colleges, tribal colleges, Historically Black colleges and universities, etc.) that I do not have experience in and cannot say whether my understanding of one-shots and information literacy would be the same in those institutions.

5. Of course, I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge that a third (if not more) of the requests I receive for workshops and trainings fall within this category. I do try to address it directly in my work—that these one-off workshops will do very little toward moving the needle. But I have definitely benefited financially from this framing of the “problem of race,” something I am trying to move away from. However, at the same time, I have had to step away from working in a library to say the things that I thought needed to be said in those trainings because I could not say them at work without retaliation from colleagues, supervisors, and administrators.

6. Ironically, I, as a person of color, have had to become well-versed in whiteness and in understanding what whiteness is, often then have to explain it to white people. First, race is a social construct, which means that it is “shaped in specific historical, social, and political contexts” (HoSang and Molina 2019, 1). Who is considered white has changed repeatedly over time, to the point that sociologists even have a term for it: whitening. It “refers to the way the white race has expanded over time to swallow up those previously considered non-whites, such as people of Irish, Italian, and [non-Black] Jewish heritage” (Kuo 2018). Whiteness, then, is a tool of control or, as Todd Honma has written, “‘Whiteness’ works as an invisible and elusive structure of [power that inflicts harm and violence on those considered not white], one that allows for constant reinvention and rearticulation to protect the interests of a white racial ruling class” (2005). Stewart (2017) neatly encapsulates Cheryl Harris’ concept of whiteness as property: “the very idea of whiteness and the racialization of white people over and against all others is the invention of propertied, Protestant Christian, Western European settlers in the Americas. Whiteness was the means of preserving their wealth and status within an ideologically theocratical capitalist system” (2017).

7. In this instance, I refer to Merriam Webster’s definition: “the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another” and “a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.”

8. ALA's core stated values are access, confidentiality and privacy, democracy, diversity, education and life-long learning, intellectual freedom, the public good, preservation, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability (2006).

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# Information Literacy, Diversity, and One-Shot “Pedagogies of the Practical”

Karen P. Nicholson and Maura Seale

This essay examines the information literacy one-shot in conjunction with similar one-off training approaches often found in diversity education. Through this lens, we interrogate the ways that superficial approaches to complex issues such as mis- or disinformation and racism inhibit the kinds of engagement and (un)learning that transformative pedagogy requires as well as the structural conditions that give rise to such approaches. We find that information literacy and diversity one-shots emerged within the neoliberal turn in higher education and share a common philosophical foundation in liberalism and a belief that educated publics will come to consensus in the interest of the social good; they are based in narratives of individual deficiency, empowerment, and self-work. They are “pedagogies of the practical,” practices that ultimately fail to challenge white supremacist structures in higher education. Because education is about affect, emotion, and beliefs as well as knowledge, transactional one-shots can never truly be transformational or liberatory. We conclude by considering the role of affect in teaching and learning, and how “pedagogies of emotion” might help us to better address power and race in the information literacy classroom.

## Introduction

In the context of the call for proposals for this special issue of *College & Research Libraries*, which asked us to consider information literacy one-shots in relation to “effective teaching practices; assessment; and power structures related to care-work and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI),”<sup>1</sup> we were reminded of the recent claim by Sofia Leung and Jorge López-McKnight that information literacy remains centered in “the racist, misogynistic, capitalist, colonialist history and legacy of libraries,” impacting our work and relationships.<sup>2</sup> We pondered whether the information literacy one-shot could ever truly be an effective antiracist or antioppressive practice, one that seeks to challenge or transform librarianship’s racialized power relations.<sup>3</sup> This led us to think about other kinds of one-off “trainings” in higher education that also engage with positionality, power, and race, such as implicit bias and microaggression trainings, and to ask ourselves, beyond their common abbreviated format, beyond their effectiveness (or lack thereof), what else do they share with information literacy? The insights that emerged from this “contradictory coupling”<sup>4</sup> are the subject of this article. In establishing parallels between information literacy one-shots and similar

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approaches to diversity education, we seek to interrogate the ways that superficial approaches to complex issues inhibit the kinds of engagement and (un)learning that transformative pedagogy requires and the structural conditions that give rise to such approaches.

While Library and Information Studies (LIS) scholars have explored information literacy through the lens of social justice for nearly a decade,<sup>5</sup> it is only recently that attention has been paid to information literacy in relation to issues of race as well as ethnicity.<sup>6</sup> This is somewhat surprising, given that critical approaches to literacy seek to address “meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foreground the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context.”<sup>7</sup> Pedagogy is more than choices made by teachers about instructional strategies and classroom management techniques; it is also the sociopolitical contexts and values connected to teaching.<sup>8</sup> It is with these ideas in mind that we undertook this exploration. We learned that the discourses and practices of information literacy and diversity share a common philosophical foundation in liberalism (liberal pluralism and liberal multiculturalism) and a belief that educated publics will come to consensus in the interest of the social good. They both emerge in the context of the neoliberal turn in higher education, marked by a focus on managerialism, metrics, outcomes, student satisfaction, and “consumerist attitudes towards learning,”<sup>9</sup> including instrumental approaches to the development of students’ marketable skills. Moreover, as information literacy and diversity have become institutionalized—produced, reproduced, and managed by the institution<sup>10</sup>—they have been stripped of any radical critique. Finally, while information literacy and diversity practitioners may be invested in their work, myriad structural factors stand in their way. They occupy a marginal status on campus, and the success of their efforts is hampered by uneven institutional commitment, of which the decontextualized, abbreviated, and episodic format of the one-shot, which cannot foster the trust necessary to engage participants in the critical conversations necessary for transformative learning, is but one manifestation. In summary, we contend that information literacy and diversity one-shots are what David James Hudson describes as “pedagogies of the practical,” practices that ultimately “entrench structures of white supremacy” in higher education.<sup>11</sup> In our opinion, because education is about affect, emotion, and beliefs as well as knowledge, transactional one-shots can never truly be transformational or liberatory. In the final section of this essay, then, we consider the role of affect in teaching and learning, and how “pedagogies of emotion”<sup>12</sup> might help us to better address power and race in the information literacy classroom.

A few caveats are in order. First, the bulk of the literature we are drawing from considers information literacy and diversity in the context of American higher education. The work of Sara Ahmed, which considers diversity in the UK context, and that of Lisa Hussey and David James Hudson, both of which focus on diversity in LIS, nonetheless suggest broad commonalities across the Anglo-American higher education sector.<sup>13</sup> Second, we are not saying information literacy and diversity one-shots have no value—only that their value is limited. Finally, while one-off interventions are common in information literacy and diversity paradigms, they are not the only approaches that exist.<sup>14</sup> Our aim instead is to interrogate the discourses and practices of information literacy and diversity as exemplars of higher education’s persistent recourse to instrumental, market-based solutions to address complex social issues. To paraphrase Ahmed, whose book *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* laid the groundwork for critical diversity studies, we seek to question what we are doing when we are doing this work<sup>15</sup> and to consider how we might do things differently.

## Liberalism

Both information literacy and diversity discourses are rooted in liberalism, the hegemonic ideology within modernity. In *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning*, David Theo Goldberg delineates liberalism's core concerns, demonstrating that, through a commitment to individualism, universal principles applicable to human beings as rational agents, and careful institutional planning, "liberalism seeks to transcend particular historical, social, and cultural differences" and engender social progress.<sup>16</sup>

Information literacy's fundamental premise, namely that providing people with information skills will necessarily lead to better social outcomes,<sup>17</sup> is founded in liberal ideals. In their analysis of early information literacy texts, Lisa G. O'Connor claims that "the idea that simply providing people with more or better information (and even the skills to use the information)" will redress social inequities fails to acknowledge "the resilience of systemic cultural repression,"<sup>18</sup> including the role that libraries have played in such repression. In a related vein, Marcia Rapchak argues that the absence of race in the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education* masks the "structural [intersectional] oppression of people of color"<sup>19</sup> within information environments. Using the "Authority Is Constructed and Contextual" frame as an example, Rapchak highlights the liberal multicultural paradigm within which the *Framework* apprehends diversity as a celebration of differences in "worldviews, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural orientations."<sup>20</sup> Maura Seale further argues that the *Framework* might best be understood as a liberal approach to the problem of information literacy.<sup>21</sup> The *Framework* is inconsistent in its analysis of power; promotes a universalizing approach to learning; reproduces narratives of progress; focuses on individual rationality, agency, and learning; downplays history and context; and embraces institutionalism as the means of achieving information literacy. As Seale contends, the *Framework*'s assumption that information literacy can ultimately be achieved through the actions of rational individuals functions well within neoliberalism, which similarly emphasizes the primacy of individual action.

Other analyses of the discourses around information literacy also reveal this tendency to reinscribe liberalism. Alison Hicks and Annemaree Lloyd's recent discourse analyses of the professional literature on information literacy reveal multiple narratives around information literacy and library educators, both outward-facing—intended for higher education colleagues outside the library—and inward-facing—directed at librarians.<sup>22</sup> In outward-facing narratives, information literacy itself is primarily seen to be a project of personal empowerment, providing "learners with the skills, attitudes, behaviors and understandings" necessary for making "appropriate and informed choices" now and in the future.<sup>23</sup> The treatment of those involved with the project of information literacy is quite different, however. Hicks and Lloyd suggest that outward narratives marginalize and erase library instructors and their work, while inward-facing narratives portray librarians as unfit for their role: incompetent, underprepared, unassertive, and disempowered. They also portray learners as fundamentally deficient: "overwhelmed, passive, uncritical and plagiarizers."<sup>24</sup> As is the case with the *Framework*, Hicks and Lloyd's analyses demonstrate that broader information literacy discourses are rooted in liberal understandings of individualism, consistently turning to individual agency and action to argue for the necessity of information literacy. The diffusion of information literacy is seen as a form of progress; to move from information illiterate to information literate is to become a better individual learner. Information literacy discourses prioritize influencing the reasoning of individuals rather than effecting structural or political change. Moreover, as Hicks and Lloyd

suggest, the focus on the learner's deficiency locates information literacy within individual behavior, rather than the social contexts within which people use information, limiting the scope of any sort of empowerment.<sup>25</sup> Although the *Framework* does gesture toward emotion and affect, information literacy discourses largely favor individual reason and rationality, where information literacy itself is understood to be about developing competence through cognitive change. Indeed, it is this framing that lends urgency to the information literacy project. Conceived at a time when librarians found themselves sidelined by educational reforms and confronted by public fiscal crisis and perceived technological threats, information literacy reaffirmed the importance of librarians as educators.<sup>26</sup> Recent controversies around mis- and disinformation, propaganda, and the popularization of the term "fake news" continue to legitimize the enduring value of the information literacy project.<sup>27</sup> As O'Connor underscores, "the liberal pluralist function of information literacy.... assumes that truth is historical and apolitical; an objective, demonstrable reality that everyone can ascertain if they simply draw on their ability to evaluate information around them critically."<sup>28</sup>

But what if our beliefs are not solely based on reason, rationality, and learning? Gabriel N. Rosenberg has recently argued that understanding Trumpism as "Trump's supporters are misinformed and need better information" is fundamentally wrong; Trumpism is instead "a structure of feeling."<sup>29</sup> Neither Trumpism nor other populist movements are the concern of this essay, but Rosenberg's analysis does point to the ways in which the information literacy project prioritizes reason, rationality, learning, and the cognitive to the exclusion of the emotional and affective, and to the way in which feelings might also play into how we learn and process information. Similarly, in *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, Arlie Russell Hochschild describes the "deep story," her conceptual framework for understanding how her white interviewees negotiate their political subjectivities: "A deep story is a *feels-as-if* story — it's the story feelings tell, in the language of symbols. It removes judgment. It removes fact. It tells us how things feel."<sup>30</sup> The deep story of Hochschild's interview subjects entails waiting in line to access American prosperity and progress while marginalized groups constantly cut in front of them. Hochschild takes great pains to explore the social terrains of her interviewees — church, schools, media, local and state government — and the ways in which they both challenge and reinforce this deep story. Hochschild also challenges the interviewees, revealing the extent to which what one believes to be true is as much, or even more, a matter of feelings as of facts, logic, reason, or rationality. Racism, misogyny, and homophobia are key elements of this deep story, but emerge primarily out of feelings rather than reason. How, then, can information literacy (and diversity) instruction that functions only at the level of learning and cognition actually address the deep story? Hochschild carefully attends to the large and complex systems that structure the material realities of her interviewees' lives and create the conditions that make the deep story feel so strongly true, but these systems are not legible within individualist information literacy work.<sup>31</sup>

Discourses of diversity are similarly rooted in liberal values of individualism and self-work. In the context of the postwar racial project in Western nations, diversity "reorganizes and redistributes the meaning and continued significance of race around abstract ideals of equality, fairness, and market opportunities."<sup>32</sup> The fundamental paradox of the Anglo-American diversity paradigm, that which makes it historically distinct, culturally powerful, and ultimately ineffective as a form of social redress, lies in its separation of "discussions about diversity, difference, and multiculturalism from more uncomfortable conversations

about inequality, power, and privilege."<sup>33</sup> Diversity discourse simultaneously portrays race as "everywhere and nowhere," just another identity.<sup>34</sup> It also portrays racism as "accidental (as if every now and then, it just happens)" and anachronistic, belonging to the past.<sup>35</sup> Diversity "happy talk," a widespread celebration of racial, sexual, class, religious, cultural, and ethnic differences as equal and beneficial to everyone, has become a mainstay of Anglo-American culture, formalized in legal decisions, curricula, and training programs.<sup>36</sup> Decoupled from social justice and racial equality, diversity discourse works to shore up whiteness as normative and neutral, while ascribing racial innocence to white institutions.<sup>37</sup> While this discourse putatively acknowledges difference, it fails to address systemic inequality, thereby working against progressive racial politics.<sup>38</sup> The cultural identities, practices, and artifacts of Black, Indigenous, and people of color are instead primarily apprehended as enrichments to the white cultural experience.<sup>39</sup>

Drawing on the work of Goldberg, Hudson analyzes the LIS diversity paradigm as liberal anti-racism, demonstrating how it locates race "within the realm of the (ir)rational individual."<sup>40</sup> Race figures "as a fixed, apolitical human attribute" and racism is perceived as "individual error, bias, or incompetence," inhibiting growth and creativity within the profession and causing exclusion.<sup>41</sup> Addressing racism is a matter of education, of self-work, achieved through cultural competence, implicit bias, and microaggression training; the diversification of collections and programming; and recruitment, retention, and advancement initiatives. As Lisa Hussey points out, the act of reducing race to diversity, and group problems to individual problems, relieves white guilt, obfuscates power relations and systemic inequalities, and sustains white supremacy.<sup>42</sup> Through their analyses of diversity in Anglo-American institutions of higher education, Ahmed and James M. Thomas further demonstrate that institutions, not just people, can admit to racism and accept "treatment" as a sign of reconciliation, healing, and progress.<sup>43</sup> Admitting to institutional racism thereby becomes a performative speech act, a way of "getting over it."<sup>44</sup>

### **Information Literacy, Diversity, and the Neoliberal Turn in Higher Education**

The discourses and practices of information literacy and diversity emerged in higher education in the 1980s in the context of neoliberal reforms that brought an increased market orientation to the sector to drive innovation and economic growth on the one hand, and institutional efficiency and accountability on the other. In the global knowledge economy, human capital—"the knowledge, skills, competencies, and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity"<sup>45</sup>—drives economic growth, purportedly attracting new capital investment and creating high value-added, well-paying jobs.<sup>46</sup> Producing job-ready graduates enables higher education administrators to demonstrate institutional alignment with economic policy objectives and assures taxpayers and policy makers of the strong return on investment of a university education. Because skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, and cultural competence are perceived to hold the capacity to bring about desired outcomes and financial rewards, they become conceptualized as "things" to be acquired and measured.<sup>47</sup> Students are therefore encouraged to see and describe themselves in terms of their marketable or transferable skills. Central to this "reincarnated concept of skill" is that idea that skills can be "inculcated" into learners through training.<sup>48</sup>

The emergence of information literacy in the context of this neoliberal skills agenda for higher education has been well documented.<sup>49</sup> The concurrent emergence of discourses of

diversity, “the rationalization of racial inclusion” in higher education,<sup>50</sup> is perhaps less well known in the LIS context, however.<sup>51</sup> Derived from “the imbrication of neoliberal doctrine with contemporary racial ideology,”<sup>52</sup> contemporary diversity discourse represents a shift in higher education away from the affirmative action and equal employment opportunity movements of the 1970s and 1980s toward diversity as a celebration of difference and a global skill.

Within the context of this neoliberal turn, diversity is recast as a form of human capital, a way to foster understanding of and respect for cultural differences within the workplace, thereby providing employers and laborers with an edge in the global economy.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, reframing diversity as cultural competency means that *all* employees need to become cross-culturally competent, not just members of majority groups.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, diversity improves the experience of white students by preparing them as workers for a globalized world.<sup>55</sup>

In the context of academic libraries, Hudson contends that the motivation to address racism stems from a desire to achieve full productivity and advance the institutional mission.<sup>56</sup> Diversity matters not because it reduces racial inequality, but rather because it is seen to promote “personal portfolio growth” and corporate or institutional success.<sup>57</sup> In the words of Ahmed, diversity represents “good practice,” “a set of practices that enable an organization ‘to look good.’”<sup>58</sup> Discourses of diversity and other skills are performative: by their existence alone, they enact “an active identification with futurity and the market,”<sup>59</sup> holding open the possibility of increasing returns. A commitment to diversity (along with excellence, leadership, communication, and teamwork) enhances reputation; it therefore becomes central to the academic mission and to recruiting and marketing efforts by universities, colleges, and academic libraries.<sup>60</sup>

Thomas describes three processes through which diversity in higher education is “economized”—that is, that it is managed, produced, and justified through economic values and practices: diversity as investment, diversity as metrics, and diversity as affective labor.<sup>61</sup> First, diversity as investment requires reimagining diversity as a tool for enhancing institutional and personal portfolios.<sup>62</sup> Through this process, diversity work is converted into a series of market-oriented tasks.<sup>63</sup> Next, diversity metrics define, measure, and report progress, the “extent to which diversity as investment is made ubiquitous” through efficient processes.<sup>64</sup>

As a matter of workplace equity, diversity’s progress is measured not by whether historically marginalized groups have greater access to power, resources, opportunities, or decision making but by the number of employees who demonstrate self-investment and self-improvement [by completing diversity training or participating in diversity events].<sup>65</sup>

Assessing the effectiveness of diversity initiatives is not important; what matters is the *performance* of meeting objectives—checking the boxes. Finally, diversity as affective labor describes the process through which “a set of affects associated with diversity” such as satisfaction and excitement are mobilized, fueling investment and demonstrating progress while obscuring power and inequality.<sup>66</sup> Through this labor, which falls disproportionately to minoritized and marginalized faculty, students, and staff, creating “new forms of exploitation by way of expropriation of their racial differences,”<sup>67</sup> diversity becomes an intangible institutional asset, the main beneficiaries of which are white students.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the creation of this “inclusion bureaucracy” allows the institution itself to control the outcomes of dissent, protest, and activism.<sup>69</sup>

LIS scholars Jennifer Brown, Nicholae Cline, and Marisa Méndez-Brady make similar claims, underscoring the inequitable burden of responsibility that Black, Indigenous, and people of color bear for advancing libraries’ diversity agendas, including leading diversity committees and teaching cultural competencies to white colleagues. Diversity becomes a way for institutions to “perform wokeness” rather than to acknowledge and demonstrate accountability for dismantling interconnected inequalities.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, in many American libraries, a key strategy for advancing diversity objectives is to create the role of diversity resident, a position designated for early career, contractually employed librarians of color, thereby enabling institutions “to offset and offload a complicated array of responsibilities and expectations onto racially marginalized librarians”<sup>71</sup> while simultaneously freeing up nonmarginalized librarians from engaging in this work, even though they also stand to benefit from it.

Similar processes exist in the context of information literacy discourses and practices. Information literacy teaching, a form of gendered, affective labor that facilitates the development of students’ academic skills and subjectivities, serves to reproduce the academy itself.<sup>72</sup> Librarians are nonetheless challenged in their efforts to embed information literacy into the curriculum because it is commonly seen as remedial or transactional, a service carried out for the benefit of both the teaching faculty and students.<sup>73</sup> Supporting the institution’s educational mission is demonstrated through processes of counting and accounting that focus on information literacy events as statistics (classes, consultations, reference transactions) rather than student learning or engagement.

Ahmed’s concept of organizational modes of attention, the ways that institutional discourses and practices “come into view”<sup>74</sup> or are obscured according to their perceived value, is instructive here. According to this concept, work that is of less value, that is difficult to accomplish, or creates friction, disappears from institutional priorities, advancing only by means of personal commitment and effort. Ahmed observes “if diversity is not someone’s agenda, then it tends to fall off the agenda.”<sup>75</sup> This observation is easily extended to information literacy work, often described as invisible, neglected, or liminal.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, when certain kinds of work, such as the work of information literacy and diversity practitioners, are less valued, those organizational units responsible for performing this work also end up less valued.<sup>77</sup> In a related vein, Barbara Fister argues that, if librarians have failed in their efforts “to make information literacy a universal educational outcome,” it is because information literacy “has no specific place in the curriculum. It’s everywhere, and nowhere. It’s everyone’s job, but nobody’s responsibility. In many cases, the people who care about it the most have had their jobs felled by the austerity ax.”<sup>78</sup> Such forms of less valued work therefore require a champion, someone with the institutional social capital necessary to turn personal commitment into institutional commitment.<sup>79</sup> Diversity practitioners work to routinize or embed diversity within the institution, both persisting against institutional resistance and mobilizing techniques to accomplish this work.<sup>80</sup> Information literacy librarians likewise find themselves jostling for “a seat at the curricular table”<sup>81</sup> and seeking out faculty champions to advance their agendas.

## Practical Pedagogies

Having outlined the ways that information literacy and diversity discourses and practices are positioned within the academy, we now return to the issue of the one-shot as a pedagogy of the practical. To some extent, LIS and diversity studies scholars have explored the ways that the one-shot model aligns with and advances the aims of the neoliberal university. Using time

as a heuristic, Nicholson argues that the information literacy one-shot, with its “superficial, skills-oriented approach,” is in sync with the “corporate time” of the neoliberal university.<sup>82</sup> Nicole Pagowsky notes that the requirement to use metrics to demonstrate support for the institutional mission, even when such metrics do not “adequately demonstrate student learning, good teaching, [or] collaborative relationships with faculty,” may compel librarians to adopt skill-based pedagogies.<sup>83</sup>

The pedagogy of the practical takes a slightly different form in diversity one-shots. Applebaum argues that implicit bias one-shot trainings are limited by the concept of bias as “hardwired” in individuals, and therefore inevitable and normal; a focus on individual belief rather than the institutional or systemic conditions that enable bias; and the assumption that unknowing can be corrected by awareness.<sup>84</sup> Jessi Lee Jackson further contends that, while implicit bias training is commonly presented as an effective, evidence-based strategy, these claims have been questioned by anti-racist scholars and activists.<sup>85</sup> Thomas draws attention to the gap between a shared belief in the value of diversity practitioners’ work and the institutional diversity regime that “enables and supports the very conditions of racial inequality that diversity initiatives mean to address.”<sup>86</sup> In the words of Jackson, one-off diversity trainings are examples of what Ahmed refers to as “the non-performativity of anti-racism,” namely “ostensibly anti-racist (non)practices that maintain contemporary racist realities.”<sup>87</sup> The diversity one-shot’s practicality emerges in its assumption that racism is not structural or systemic, but resides within individuals, and that one-shot trainings will cure those individuals. One-shot trainings do not require much institutional investment but do allow for the collection of metrics and the development of diversity “skills” and do not challenge the structural inequities that pervade higher educations.

Teaching is care work that can negatively impact those who perform it.<sup>88</sup> Because it is feminized and racialized, care work is especially open to exploitation.<sup>89</sup> One-shots can therefore exacerbate burnout, particularly for women, people with disabilities, and Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Despite being aware of this, librarians often justify doing them in the name of service. Making a connection between librarians’ professional service ethic and the persistence of the one-shot, Christine M. Moeller argues that understanding information literacy as a service rather than as collaborative work perpetuates gendered stereotypes; invites inauthentic, ineffective pedagogical practices; and contributes to the reproductive and emotional labor of librarians.<sup>90</sup> In related work, Mirza, Nicholson, and Seale contend that “accepting last-minute requests for classes, teaching more classes than [one] can handle, or spending countless hours tweaking content” reinscribes vocational and institutional awe, subjecting librarians to “relentless care without replenishment.” Such practices further uphold white savior narratives and the archetype of the benevolent white woman in the library.<sup>91</sup>

## Instilling Small Cracks

Both critical LIS and diversity scholars have recently suggested that an engagement with theories of affect might afford the possibility of a critical engagement with race in the classroom.<sup>92</sup> Informed by feminist and queer theories, the affective turn in the humanities and social sciences marks a conceptual “shift in thinking about the intersections and interrelations of discourses and social and cultural forces on the one hand, and the human body and individually-experienced but historically situated emotions and affects, on the other.”<sup>93</sup> Affect understands emotions not just as individual psychological and physiological phenomena but

as integral to the practices, activities, and forces that shape our interactions with each other and the world around us.<sup>94</sup> Affect is an *in-between-ness* that emerges "in the capacities to act and be acted upon."<sup>95</sup>

In a foundational article that explores the role of emotions and bodies in mobilizing racism and hatred, Ahmed proposes an economic model of emotions, an *affective economy*, in which emotions create connections between people.<sup>96</sup> They are not simply feelings, but also create and sustain relationships between individuals and groups. Affective economies are made up of situated, shared, and embodied practices; in this framework, whiteness, racism, and (information) literacy are understood to be things that we *do* with others in particular sociocultural, political, and historical contexts. This understanding allows us to move beyond binary logics of fixed identities, in the case of race, and individual, bounded cognitive skills, in the case of literacy. Thomas suggests that affective approaches to racial politics are founded on notions of "shared spaces and practices," not "racial identity (sameness and difference)."<sup>97</sup> Literacy practices also involve values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships; they exist *in-between*, in the relations between people and within groups and communities and in shared understandings represented in ideologies, institutions, and social identities.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, because power overdetermines how people interact,<sup>99</sup> affective economies can create, perpetuate, strengthen or subvert power disparities, determining "what bodies can and cannot do (or should and should not do)" in particular spaces.<sup>100</sup> Michele R. Santamaria's autoethnographic exploration of academic libraries as purportedly neutral, democratic white "fantasy spaces" and the ways that students of color uphold and subvert them as they assert their right "to take up space in libraries and fashion their own, sometimes fantastic narratives,"<sup>101</sup> provides a powerful example of affective economies and racialized power in LIS.

Drawing on Foucault's notion of technologies of power, critical education scholars have theorized whiteness as an affective technology, "through which affects and emotions come to be instrumentalized, containing certain social norms and dynamics of inclusion/exclusion with respect to one's self and an Other."<sup>102</sup> Neoliberal practices also leverage affect to produce and reinforce desired behaviors and subjectivities; in the neoliberal university workplace, these include flexibility, lifelong learning, entrepreneurialism, and a willingness to accept work intensification.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, diversity as liberal multiculturalism draws on an affective technology of happiness to assuage white guilt and obscure the persistent whiteness of institutions such as universities, while diversity as self-work echoes neoliberal technologies of affect.<sup>104</sup>

Affect has recently been invoked to theorize issues central to information literacy and diversity work, including affective labor, resistance, and antiracist pedagogy. Lisa Sloniowski offers a feminist reading of librarians' often invisible, pink-collar public service work as a form of affective labor.<sup>105</sup> Making a connection between affect, emotional labor, burnout, solidarity, and critical self-reflection, Kate Adler and Lisa Sloniowski contend that an affective lens that attends to both patriarchy and white supremacy enables us to "see clearly how unevenly emotional labor is distributed" in the neoliberal university, and how it impacts some workers more than others.<sup>106</sup> In their view, incorporating affect offers potential for doing intersectional, social-justice work.<sup>107</sup> Julia Ismael, Althea Lazzaro, and Brianna Ishihara similarly explore the affective, gendered, and racialized care work of teaching in higher education, highlighting the ways that it is at odds with the intensification and acceleration of work in the neoliberal university.<sup>108</sup> In the context of advancing DEI efforts in libraries more broadly, Jennifer Brown, Jennifer Ferretti, Sofia Leung, and Marisa Méndez-Brady highlight the value of peer mentorship

and communities of practice, particularly for early-career librarians of color, albeit not without underscoring the additional labor that such practices demand.<sup>109</sup> From these examples, we can see that resistance can also be understood as “a flux of affects” producing (un)anticipated (micro)political effects that confront power.<sup>110</sup> While not always progressive or emancipatory, acts of resistance can nonetheless produce “alternative affective spaces” that allow for new ways of being in community.<sup>111</sup>

In contrast to pedagogies of the practical, antioppressive pedagogies can therefore be understood as “pedagogies of emotion,”<sup>112</sup> founded in shared practices of caring, solidarity, and resistance. In the words of Mita Banerjee and Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, affect reveals “the gap between knowledge and belief” required for the deep learning of higher education.<sup>113</sup> Affective pedagogies enable us to see educational encounters as emerging and unfolding in the moment rather than as expected and foreseeable.<sup>114</sup> Similarly, Ahmed describes feminist pedagogy as “the affective opening up of the world through the act of wonder, not as a private act, but as an opening up of what is possible through working together.”<sup>115</sup> How might the one-shot accommodate a pedagogy of emotion without further exacerbating exploitation and burnout, particularly for library workers of color? We acknowledge that, as care workers under neoliberalism, we work within a space of contradiction that relies on care work and care workers but does not value either. We turn to Leung and López-McKnight’s suggestions for “more authentic, liberatory, and imaginative” approaches to library teaching, particularly their emphasis on small interactions as transformative.<sup>116</sup> Barbara Fister echoes this emphasis, noting that, because small changes occur on a human-scale, they can make a big difference in peoples’ lives.<sup>117</sup> Small changes to library teaching practices offer an opportunity to resist the pedagogies of the practical that dominate library instruction but do not require substantially more labor from library workers. Greater attention to affect can therefore “instill small cracks” in pedagogical spaces and practices, liberating students and teachers from existing affective investments in racial oppression.<sup>118</sup>

## Conclusion

Leung and López-McKnight call on library educators to “explore our teaching and learning experiences against, and through, white supremacy—while interrogating, and responding to critical library instruction.”<sup>119</sup> In this essay, we have attempted to take up this call by considering the discourses of information literacy and diversity one-shots. Because education is about affect, emotion, and beliefs as well as knowledge, because it is about sociocultural practices and not just cognitive skills, transactional one-shots can never truly be transformational or liberatory. As Fister reminds us, our information literacy efforts must address the fact that our information environment is, and will continue to, reflect the assumptions of the social world.<sup>120</sup> This includes race and racism, and addressing them requires trust, care, and persistence; understanding antiracism is a process, not an outcome. What’s missing from these well-intentioned interventions is a recognition that “canned classroom situations don’t necessarily transfer to more complex realities.”<sup>121</sup> Information literacy and diversity are not “skills” to be obtained through training; they are situated, affective practices embedded within particular sociopolitical contexts. An affect-informed praxis would work to destabilize the pedagogies of the practical that otherwise structure our information literacy and diversity work.

## Notes

1. Nicole Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures,” *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2021): 300, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.3.300>.
2. Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight, “Dreaming Revolutionary Futures: Critical Race’s Centrality to Ending White Supremacy,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 14, no. 1 (2020): 22, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2020.14.1.2>.
3. David James Hudson, “On the (Anti-Racist) Politics of Anti-Racism Research,” 2nd Annual Lecture on Research & Scholarship, Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians, May 11, 2021, <https://youtu.be/3lkqk7B9Y0Q>. In this article, we use “information literacy” in the broad sense of the term to include both mainstream and critical approaches.
4. This expression was used by Christine Pawley in her examination of the concepts of information and literacy that are joined in information literacy. Christine Pawley, “Information Literacy: A Contradictory Coupling,” *Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 73, no. 4 (June 27, 2003): 422–52, <https://doi.org/10.1086/603440>.
5. See, for example, *Information Literacy and Social Justice*, eds. Shana Higgins and Lula Gregory (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2013); Andrew Battista et al., “Seeking Social Justice in the ACRL Framework,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 9, no. 2 (2015), [www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=v9i2p111&path%5B%5D=214](http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=v9i2p111&path%5B%5D=214); Laura Saunders, “Connecting Information Literacy and Social Justice: Why and How,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (2017): 55–75, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2017.11.1.47>.
6. See, for example, Jessie Loyer, “Indigenous Information Literacy: nêhiyaw Kinship Enabling Self-Care in Research,” in *The Politics of Theory and the Practice of Critical Librarianship*, eds. Karen P. Nicholson and Maura Seale (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2018), 145–56; Marcia Rapchak, “That Which Cannot Be Named: The Absence of Race in the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” *Journal of Radical Librarianship* 5 (2019): 173–96; Leung and López-McKnight, “Dreaming Revolutionary Futures”; Veronica Arellano Douglas, “WILU Closing Plenary Session,” *Libraries + Inquiry*, 2021, <https://veronicaarellanodouglas.com/information-literacy-2/wilu-closing-plenary-session/>; Rafia Mirza, Karen P. Nicholson, and Maura Seale, “Acting ‘As If’: Critical Pedagogy, Empowerment, and Labor,” in *The Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium: An Anthology of Works*, eds. Anthony R. Sanchez and Yvonne Mery (Chicago, IL: ACRL, in press).
7. Mary R. Lea and Brian V. Street, “The ‘Academic Literacies’ Model: Theory and Applications,” *Theory into Practice* 45, no. 4 (2006): 369, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4504\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4504_11).
8. David James Hudson, “On Critical Librarianship & Pedagogies of the Practical,” Keynote Address, *Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium*, Tucson, AZ, February 25, 2016.
9. Cathy Eisenhower and Dolsy Smith, “The Library as ‘Stuck Place’: Critical Pedagogy in the Corporate University,” in *Critical Library Instruction: Theories and Methods*, eds. Maria T. Accardi, Emily Drabinski, and Alana Kumbier (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010), 314.
10. Ferguson outlines the concept of institutionalization in the context of the rise of the minority interdisciplinary (departments of race, gender, and ethnicity, and fields such as queer studies) into the academy in the 1960s and 1970s. Ferguson asserts that this emergence “was not simply a challenge to contemporary power as manifest in academia, the state, and global capitalism but was, rather, constitutive of it.” Rod Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Matthew Johnson argues that universities co-opt dissent selectively, thereby rendering racial inclusion and racial inequality compatible. Matthew Johnson, *Undermining Racial Justice: How One University Embraced Inclusion and Inequality* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).
11. David James Hudson, “The Whiteness of Practicality,” in *Topographies of Whiteness: Mapping Whiteness in Library and Information Science*, ed. Gina Schlesselman-Tarango (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2017), 206.
12. Michalinos Zembylas, “Pedagogies of Strategic Empathy: Navigating through the Emotional Complexities of Anti-Racism in Higher Education,” *Teaching in Higher Education* 17, no. 2 (2012): 118, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2011.611869>.
13. Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Lisa Hussey, “The Diversity Discussion: What Are We Saying?” *Progressive Librarian*, no. 34/35 (2010): 3–10, [www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL34\\_35/003.pdf](http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL/PL34_35/003.pdf); David James Hudson, “On ‘Diversity’ as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies: A Critique,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i1.6>.
14. Information literacy can be integrated into the curriculum and addressed by instructors as well as librarians. It can also be addressed at the reference desk, in consultations, and broader library programming. Likewise, diversity and inclusion programs in academic libraries include diversity plans, recruitment and retention

initiatives, programs to promote an inclusive workplace, and various staff development strategies, including "training on conflict management, implicit bias, microaggressions, cultural and gender identity, and safe zones." Toni Anaya and Charlene Maxey-Harris, *Diversity and Inclusion*, SPEC Kit 356 (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2017), 4, <https://doi.org/10.29242/spec.356>.

15. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 16.
16. David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1993), 5.
17. Lisa O'Connor, "Information Literacy as Professional Legitimation: A Critical Analysis," *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science* 50, no. 2 (2009): 81, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40732566>; Kimmo Tuominen, Reijo Savolainen, and Sanna Talja, "Information Literacy as a Sociotechnical Practice," *Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 75, no. 3 (2005): 329–45, <https://doi.org/10.1086/497311>.
18. O'Connor, "Information Literacy as Professional Legitimation," 81.
19. Rapchak, "That Which Cannot be Named," 173.
20. Rapchak, "That Which Cannot be Named," 180, emphasis in the original.
21. Maura Seale, "Enlightenment, Neoliberalism, and Information Literacy," *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship* 1 (January 2016): 80–91, <https://doi.org/10.33137/cjal-rcbu.v1.24308>.
22. Alison Hicks and Annemaree Lloyd, "Relegating Expertise: The Outward and Inward Positioning of Librarians in Information Literacy Education," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* (June 6, 2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006211020104>; Alison Hicks and Annemaree Lloyd, "Deconstructing Information Literacy Discourse: Peeling Back the Layers in Higher Education," *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 53, no. 4 (December 2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000620966027>.
23. Hicks and Lloyd, "Deconstructing Information Literacy Discourse," 6.
24. Hicks and Lloyd, "Deconstructing Information Literacy Discourse," 6.
25. Hicks and Lloyd, "Deconstructing Information Literacy Discourse," 8.
26. O'Connor, "Information Literacy as Professional Legitimation," 79–80; Emily Drabinski, "Toward a Kairos of Library Instruction," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 5 (September 1, 2014): 480–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.06.002>.
27. See, for example, Barbara Fister, "Lizard People in the Library," *Project Information Literacy* (February 3, 2021), <https://projectinfolit.org/pubs/provocation-series/essays/lizard-people-in-the-library.html>; Nicole A. Cooke, "Tell Me Sweet Little Lies: Racism as a Form of Persistent Malinformation," *Project Information Literacy* (August 11, 2021), <https://projectinfolit.org/pubs/provocation-series/essays/tell-me-sweet-little-lies.html>.
28. O'Connor, "Information Literacy as Professional Legitimation," 82.
29. Gabriel N. Rosenberg, "The Apophenic Thrall: Trumpism in the Shimmering Empire," *Substack Newsletter*, <https://bearistotle.substack.com/p/the-apophenic-thrall>.
30. Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York, NY: New Press, 2016), 102.
31. There has been some work on information literacy and affect. Laura Saunders and Melissa A. Wong provide an overview, as does Alison Hicks. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education, too, as Saunders and Wong point out, touches on affect through its inclusion of dispositions. Laura Saunders and Melissa A. Wong, *Instruction in Libraries and Information Centers* (Urbana, IL: Windsor and Downs Press, 2020); Alison Hicks, "Moving Beyond the Descriptive," *Journal of Documentation* 76, no. 1 (2020): 126–44.
32. James M. Thomas, "The Economization of Diversity," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5, no. 4 (2019): 471, <https://doi.org/10.1177/233264218793981>; Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).
33. Joyce M. Bell and Douglas Hartmann, "Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Cultural Ambiguities and Consequences of 'Happy Talk,'" *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 6 (2007): 905, 906.
34. Ellen C. Berrey, "Why Diversity Became Orthodox in Higher Education, and How It Changed the Meaning of Race on Campus," *Critical Sociology* 37 (2011): 587, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920510380069>.
35. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 48.
36. Bell and Hartmann, "Diversity in Everyday Discourse," 910.
37. Johnson, *Undermining Racial Justice*, 2.
38. Bell and Hartmann, "Diversity in Everyday Discourse," 896.
39. Bell and Hartmann, "Diversity in Everyday Discourse," 910.
40. Hudson, "On 'Diversity' as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies," 12.
41. Hudson, "On the (Anti-Racist) Politics of Anti-Racism Research."
42. Hussey, "The Diversity Discussion," 3–10.
43. Ahmed, *On Being Included*; James M. Thomas, *Diversity Regimes: Why Talk Is Not Enough to Fix Racial In-*

*equality at Universities* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020).

44. Ahmed, *On Being Included*, 47.
45. Center for Educational Research and Innovation (1998), *Human Capital Investment: An International Comparison* (Paris, France: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1998), 9.
46. Marnie Holborow, “Neoliberalism, Human Capital and the Skills Agenda in Higher Education: The Irish Case,” *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS)* 10, no. 1 (2012): 97, [www.jceps.com/archives/693](http://www.jceps.com/archives/693).
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48. Urciuoli, “Skills and Selves in the New Workplace,” 218.
49. See, for example, Shirley J. Behrens, “A Conceptual Analysis and Historical Overview of Information Literacy,” *College & Research Libraries* 55, no. 4 (1994): 309–22, [https://doi.org/10.5860/crl\\_55\\_04\\_309](https://doi.org/10.5860/crl_55_04_309); O’Connor, “Information Literacy as Professional Legitimation”; Nathaniel F. Enright, “The Violence of Information Literacy: Neoliberalism and the Human as Capital,” in *Information Literacy and Social Justice*, eds. Luu Gregory and Shana Higgins (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2013): 15–38; Maura Seale, “The Neoliberal Library,” in *Information Literacy and Social Justice: Radical Professional Praxis*, eds. Luu Gregory and Shana Higgins (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2013): 39–61; Emily Drabinski, “Toward a Kairos of Library Instruction,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 40, no. 5 (September 1, 2014): 480–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2014.06.002>; Karen Nicholson, “Information Literacy as a Situated Practice in the Neoliberal University,” in *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*, eds. M. Griffis, H. Julien, and L. Given (St. Catharines, ON: Canadian Association for Information Science, 2014), 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.29173/cais864>; Karen P. Nicholson, “‘Taking Back’ Information Literacy: Time and the One-Shot in the Neoliberal University,” in *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook. Volume 1, Essays and Workbook Activities*, eds. Kelly McElroy and Nicole Pagowsky (Chicago, IL: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2016), 25–39; Karen P. Nicholson, “On the Space/Time of Information Literacy, Higher Education, and the Global Knowledge Economy,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 2, no. 2 (2019): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.2424/jclis.v2i1.86>; Nicole Pagowsky, “A Pedagogy of Inquiry,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 9, no. 2 (2015): 136–44, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2015.9.2.190>.
50. Thomas, “The Economization of Diversity.”
51. For further analyses of diversity discourse in the LIS context, see Hussey, “The Diversity Discussion”; David James Hudson, “The Whiteness of Practicality”; Hudson, “On Diversity as Anti-racist Critique”; Hudson, “On the (Anti-racist) Politics of Anti-racist Research.”
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# Serving Everyone or Serving No One? Examining the Faux-Equity of the One-Shot

Zoe Bastone and Kristina Clement

While the one-shot model of instruction is the most common model of library instruction, a review of the literature highlights that academic librarians have struggled to identify how and if it is possible to meet curricular needs. This theoretical literature review takes a critical look at the one-shot and argues that this model fails to be the equitable model we think it is. This literature review examines the one-shot by examining its role in combating or upholding information privilege, whether it can be used when supporting learners with disabilities, and what alternatives exist for instruction practices going forward.

## Introduction

In March of 2020, universities, and their academic libraries, across the globe were forced to pivot from in-person to online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic libraries were tasked with identifying how to exclusively offer their services and resources virtually: instruction, research assistance, and access to collections.<sup>1</sup> This process of reimagining and tailoring library services to this current crisis has caused many practitioners and researchers to ask themselves what will need to change when this situation is more stabilized.<sup>2</sup> Even in the fall of 2021, when we were writing this article, libraries were offering their users varying degrees of access to their physical spaces, services, and resources.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is in itself its own crisis, academic libraries have been in crisis over their instructional practices for much longer. Throughout the last decade, especially as academic libraries have migrated from using the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Standards for Information Literacy* to the *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*, librarians have noted a disconnect between the skills they are tasked with cultivating in their students and the modality of instruction available to them. Commonly, instruction librarians use the one-shot model of instruction, even though it is recognized that this model of instruction does not allow for deep retention of information literacy concepts<sup>3</sup> and "has no memory of where information literacy has been or where it is going."<sup>4</sup> One of the major arguments for the one-shot is that more students get exposure to library services, resources, and information literacy skills; but, with the knowledge that the one-shot is less likely to impart deep critical thinking skills and generally assumes that students are equal learners, is it possible that

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the one-shot actually does more harm than good? Likewise, if we superficially categorize our students by the skills they should have by a specific point in their academic journeys, how are we missing the mark in creating an equitable environment for all learners—not just the ones who fit our generic profiles? Finally, is this mutually agreed-upon, yet contested, model of instruction working against our core values as a profession—such as providing the “highest level of service to all library users through... equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests?”<sup>5</sup>

To analyze these questions, this paper aims to review a selection of the literature and discuss the role of the one-shot by examining three things: 1) whether the one-shot really serves our needs or if it is a force that furthers inequity to our students and us as a profession; 2) its role in upholding or dismantling information privilege; and 3) the impacts of how we provide instructional support to learners with disabilities. Though this paper seeks to analyze and understand the complexity of equity, or lack thereof, in the one-shot, it is uncertain at this time what solutions should be employed to address this issue. That being said, we look forward to interrogating the literature so that we can begin to find ways to progress toward forms of more equitable library instruction in higher education.

## **Positionality Statements**

The ability to understand our role in upholding or cultivating authority can occur through the process of social positioning, “where partiality, not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims.”<sup>6</sup> Born out of the philosophy of standpoint theory, social positioning takes into account how one’s intersectional identities inform knowledge creation and acquisition.<sup>7</sup> As such, it was important for us, as the authors of this article, to reflect on our positionality in relation to these topics discussed in this article.

**Zoe Bastone (she/her/hers):** I am a cis-gendered white woman who is also neurodivergent. Throughout my roles as a student in higher education, I was largely unaware of the services and resources available to me. This certainly impacts my work as an academic librarian who provides information literacy instruction and has responsibilities in outreach and engagement. My position in the context of this paper and in my professional work is to highlight the disparities of the student experience and access to information.

**Kristina Clement (she/her/hers):** I am a cis-gendered, able-bodied, neurotypical white woman. While I have experienced some marginalization in higher education because I am a woman, I also have experienced significant privilege in librarianship, as I represent the majority demographics of the field—white and female. My privilege and status as a majority member of my field places me in a position where I benefit from the systems of oppression that have long existed in higher education. My position in the context of this paper and in the greater context of my profession as an academic librarian is to challenge the status quo and work to build better systems and praxis that create space and place for the equitable education of students and the equitable treatment of librarians (both by others and by ourselves).

## **Faux-Equity in the One-Shot and Librarianship**

As we began to examine the role of the one-shot, we were struck by the disconnect between the intended goal of creating more equitable, impactful learning environments and the lack of movement toward meaningful change. This is certainly the case in LIS literature surrounding the one-shot, where researchers and practitioners generally agree that the one-shot is one

of the least effective methods of teaching information literacy concepts.<sup>8</sup> Still, we continue to adopt and adapt different forms of the one-shot in an attempt to preserve the existing infrastructure using whichever technique is currently the most popular, which have included modeling around threshold concepts,<sup>9</sup> boosting engagement opportunities,<sup>10</sup> or gamifying the session.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, there are other factors that are likely at play, including faculty expectations of the library and its information literacy instruction, time constraints, and the overall institutional resistance to change that is keenly felt by the library and requires a significant amount of effort and labor on behalf of librarians that has led to the continual use of the one-shot. Finding the right term to describe the disconnect that we were feeling was difficult. In the beginning of her editorial, from which this paper was inspired, Nicole Pagowsky aptly describes the one-shot as a “faux-innocuous activity,”<sup>12</sup> which struck a chord for us and was close to but not quite the exact feeling about the one-shot and equity that we were trying to name. After reviewing the literature, we started referring to this dynamic as “faux-equity,” which we feel strikes at the heart of the problems with the one-shot instruction session and equitable instruction practices.

In reviewing major LIS databases, we sought to find terms analogous to the concept of “faux-equity.” We searched the terms “faux equity,” “fake equity,” “false equity,” and the term “performative equity” in the major LIS databases and Academic Search Premier. Unsurprisingly, none of these terms generated any literature results. Outside of LIS or multidisciplinary databases, the closest term we found was “fakequity” (a combination of the words fake and equity). The term “fakequity” was found on Erin Okuno’s and the consulting firm Equity Matters’ *Fakequity* blog. Okuno coined the term “fakequity” and defines it as all talk and no action where you expect different results but the systems stay the same.<sup>13</sup> This definition resonated with us, as we noticed that this definition embodies much of the sentiment of what we consider to be faux-equity and the topics discussed in this paper.

One example of faux-equity in LIS scholarship comes from Devina Dandar and Sajni Lacey’s 2021 article in which they use critical discourse analysis and critical pedagogy to analyze the language used in first-year library instruction sessions.<sup>14</sup> As Dandar and Lacey point out, the language we use in our instruction is inherently academic and therefore exclusionary, so thinking about the language we use can make our instructional practice more equitable overall and can help us understand why the language we use makes us, as instructors, better conduits of information literacy and critical thinking.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Amanda Folk, in her 2019 article, uses the theory of cultural capital to present the idea that information literacy as threshold concepts is a form of academic cultural capital that may disproportionately affect students whom higher education marginalizes.<sup>16</sup>

That being said, to provide a definition of faux-equity for the purposes of this paper, it helps to look at the separate parts of the term. Faux-equity is not actually being fair or just in the way that people are treated, despite appearing to be so. In terms of faux-equity in information literacy instruction and the one-shot instruction session, it can be helpful to examine the differences between equality and equity and how they exist in the library classroom.

- **Equality** is giving each student the same resources, the same time to learn about the resources, and the same activities to reinforce the presented knowledge—essentially, a one-shot instruction session.
- **Equity** is giving each student the opportunity to find the resources that they each need to grow and thrive in their coursework, the flexibility and autonomy to take the time they

need to learn about the resources, and multiple ways to complete activities to reinforce their knowledge.

The one-shot instruction session, by nature, makes it incredibly difficult to achieve equity for all students because its inherent design provides equal support for students, rather than equitable support. It is impractical to believe that students will all learn and absorb information in the same way via the one-shot.

Some authors, like Zoe Blecher-Cohen, have recognized the inherent difficulties of the one-shot when combating issues such as library anxiety in first-year students. Blecher-Cohen frames the struggle to be accessible to students as a call for flexibility that challenges where the library begins and ends.<sup>17</sup> This is also embodied in Leah Morin's 2021 article, which focuses on developing an ethic of care that expands outside the one-shot. Morin's approach includes providing availability outside work hours; sharing their personal cell phone number and encouraging students to text them for assistance; and maintaining that the librarian exists solely to help students with their research.<sup>18</sup> This may indeed give some students what they need to succeed, and it may feel like an equitable practice; but, in reality, it makes us "beholden to cycles of ineffectiveness that create burnout."<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, practices like these highlight how we misplace our finite energy in resources toward the ideals embodied in vocational awe.

Coined by Fobazi Ettarh, vocational awe is defined as "the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique."<sup>20</sup> Ettah notes that one of the complexities of vocational awe is that librarians see themselves as saviors who "[expect] that the fulfillment of job duties requires sacrifice."<sup>21</sup> This overarching mindset sets an unrealistic standard for practicing librarians, as libraries are staffed differently and require different levels of instructional support. In addition, this mindset has the potential to cause significant damage—such as burnout—to the librarian who practices it. This is particularly true for library staff members with disabilities or chronic illnesses that would impact their ability to perform at such a level.<sup>22</sup> It is important to remember that even equitable practices have to come with boundaries. The profession of librarianship may be founded in service to others, but we cannot forget about service, kindness, and equitability to ourselves. If we discount or ignore our needs as professionals and as humans, we run a dangerous risk of not giving ourselves the space to reflect and grow our instructional practices, meaning we will never escape our faux-equitable practice.

## Concepts Surrounding Faux-Equity

In reviewing the literature, we began to question what existing scholarship would contextualize and describe faux-equity, particularly as it exists in the disciplines of education and LIS. This quickly introduced us to scholarship regarding knowledge creation, particularly the philosophy of epistemology. Formally, epistemology analyzes the nature of knowledge and how it is constructed.<sup>23</sup> Conversations surrounding epistemology are far-reaching in their interdisciplinary applications; but, in recent years, epistemology has been reviewed through a social justice lens. Feminist scholars throughout the 1960s and 1970s argued that prejudice and bias inform understanding of the female experience and that a careful consideration of the vast array of scholarship—often produced by men—had in constructing knowledge about the female experience.<sup>24</sup>

In the latter half of the twentieth century and into the early aughts of the present millennium, epistemology evolved as scholars began to question the roles of authority in their

disciplines and how that authority marginalizes and suppresses valuable voices that should be included in further discussions. For example, philosopher Miranda Fricker defined these actions as epistemic injustices that fall within two categories: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice impacts the ability to see one's credibility; hermeneutical injustice is systematic in nature and denies access or the ability to create knowledge.<sup>25</sup> These injustices are often done without our awareness, especially when we do not take into account our roles in upholding or working against constructed authority.

The philosophy of epistemology and the concepts of epistemic injustices have only recently begun entering the conversation in LIS literature as scholars critically examine how the profession's actions are continuing a lineage of suppressing users' access to information and creating knowledge. Patin et al. highlight a gap in the literature regarding how libraries and other information institutions commit epistemic injustices, despite its being against the professions' core values. They note that ongoing epistemic injustices contribute to epistemicide, which happens "when several epistemic injustices occur which collectively reflect a structured and systemic oppression of particular ways of knowing."<sup>26</sup> A year later Patin et al. returned to the concept of epistemic injustices by reviewing the different epistemic injustices most prone to librarianship. Of these injustices, they conceptualize the term curricular injustices, which "is used to suppress and eliminate the creation of rival, alternative knowledges. This exertion of power denies an education that allows for diverse epistemologies, disciplines, theories, concepts, and experiences."<sup>27</sup>

These discussions surrounding epistemology, epistemic injustices, and epistemicide greatly influence how we consider the one-shot's role in upholding faux-equity. Dangerously, it should be considered that the one-shot is in itself a form of curricular injustice, where librarians and students equally struggle to engage meaningfully in the knowledge transfer and creation process. While the goal is to promote ongoing inquiry into research and lifelong learning, librarians instead become complicit in what Paulo Freire described in his banking model of education. In this model, the instructor treats their learners as objects upon which the instructor can deposit knowledge.<sup>28</sup> The problem with this approach is that it fails to account or acknowledge the lived experiences of the learner. This frequently is the case in the one-shot, where librarians often do not know the students they will be teaching ahead of time, but expect that all students will receive, interpret, and integrate the session's information in the same way. These circumstances are not only faux-equitable, but have the potential to engage in epistemicide.

### **The One-Shot: Upholding or Dismantling Information Privilege**

To understand how faux-equity impacts academic libraries, it is important to first understand librarians' complex relationship with information privilege, which was introduced in the ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy*, under the frame "Information Has Value." As part of the key dispositions affiliated with "Information Has Value," learners "are inclined to examine their information privilege."<sup>29</sup> It should be noted, however, that ACRL does not provide a definition of information privilege. Criticism of the *Framework* highlights a disparity between the key skills and concepts that instruction librarians provide and the lack of resources to implement them. Hsieh, Dawson, and Yang, in a 2021 survey of academic librarians, noted that 12 percent of their total participants ( $n = 84$ ) felt that the *Framework* was hard to comprehend, citing the language and theoretical approach to these concepts as barriers

to implementation.<sup>30</sup> The lack of clarity surrounding the language included in the *Framework* certainly applies to the concept of information privilege.

In the absence of a pronounced definition, scholars have been left to their own devices to define information privilege. Char Booth was one of the first to explore the concept of information privilege in their blog *Info-mational*. Booth asserts that "information privilege situates information literacy in a sociocultural context of justice and access."<sup>31</sup> Hare and Evanson build on Booth's work by contextualizing it within higher education and academic libraries by pointing out that instructors and students have a responsibility to leverage their elevated access to information to combat the existing information inequities.<sup>32</sup> This raises the important question of whether our primary mode of instruction, the one-shot, serves in our goal of understanding and overcoming information privilege. Furthermore, as long as the profession continues to use the one-shot as its primary mode of instruction, are we furthering faux-equity by not fully comprehending the importance of information privilege in our profession?

There are a few examples in the literature that examine the use of the one-shot to equalize information privilege among students. One such example is the case study from McCartin, Evers, and Markowski that assesses the one-shot's impact on their students' ability to complete an assignment.<sup>33</sup> McCartin et al. used their assessment to determine what gaps in knowledge students had post-session, such as identifying the reputability of sources and combating misinformation. This assessment led to librarians being able to advocate for curriculum changes that invited librarians into the course earlier. Librarians regularly express the need to be further integrated into courses to better teach information literacy skills and to scaffold information literacy across the curriculum.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, centering student feedback can foster reflection on how to reform their instruction to better serve the needs of their students, including considering delivering information literacy instruction through a lens of information privilege.

Another approach some take is to focus their one-shot sessions around developing information literacy skills in the context of disciplinary threshold concepts. This can also be dangerous, as designing instruction around threshold concepts relies on normative student profiles (for example, able-bodied, neurotypical students with similar educational backgrounds, and so on). Egan, Witt, and Chartier discuss in their 2017 article how they balanced their one-shot sessions across four years of disciplinary curriculum. They note that many institutions focus their library instruction programs around first-year students, which often leads to students feeling overwhelmed by the content of the session. Furthermore, the authors argue that students have no real method at that time to apply these freshly developed information literacy skills on an assignment.<sup>35</sup> While it is beneficial to apply these threshold concepts across the curriculum, articles such as these fail to address how students who do not fit within the given structure, such as transfer students or students with disabilities, find their way in this instruction program.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, even pivoting one-shot sessions to workshops, while providing more nuanced conversations surrounding information literacy, have the potential to lose students along the way, as noted by Van Houlson in 2007.<sup>37</sup> These examples highlight a real need for librarians to consider the timing of their instruction, lest we miss key demographics of students.

Furthermore, if we recognize that our attempts to provide balanced, scaffolded instruction may leave out students, we are furthering faux-equity because we fail to level the difference in our learners' information privilege. Instead, academic librarians rationalize the continued use of the one-shot by turning attention to the instructors and students they serve. For example, with students, their perseverance and mindsets are called into question when they do not

meet the specific outcomes or goals that are established for them. “[This] creates an environment, however, where students are defined in terms of deficits and their lack of perseverance in striving toward goals determined by an educational system that is structurally unjust.”<sup>38</sup> Beilin echoes this sentiment in his piece surrounding the adoption of the *Framework*, noting that “much of the rhetoric of information literacy, including that of the Framework, represents the world of information (the Framework refers to it as the “information ecosystem”) as something that must be mastered by individual students making their own ways through an educational institution out into the world.”<sup>39</sup> Heinbach, Paloma Fielder, Mitola, and Pattni also explore the concept of deficit thinking in their 2019 article in which they look specifically at the experiences of transfer students and the assumptions surrounding what they lack when they enter the four-year university.<sup>40</sup> In general, deficit thinking “...manifests in practice by believing that students who in any way do not conform to a ‘traditional’ or privileged financial situation, home life, or route to education are not likely to succeed.”<sup>41</sup>

Turning our attention to disciplinary instructors, there is evidence in the literature that librarians are not solely responsible for the failures of the one-shot. For example, Melissa Bowles-Terry and Carrie Donovan note in their examination of the one-shot that librarians are often faced with two distinct models of curating collaboration with departmental instructors: grassroot relationship building and systematic approaches. Both of these methods have flaws, as the grassroots method relies solely on the librarians’ ability to build relationships; more systematic approaches, such as faculty workshops, require incentives that will appeal to instructors.<sup>42</sup> Either way, the librarian is at the mercy of their departmental faculty to recognize the value of their information literacy instruction.<sup>43</sup> From the instructor angle, English professor Margaret Torrell reflects that many instructors often “won’t let librarians into our classes. And if [they] do, [they] want the one-shot lesson, maybe because that’s all [they] have time for, or perhaps because some of us don’t believe a librarian can offer much beyond the standard search techniques we trust that our students mastered in their first year at college”<sup>44</sup> The result, Torrell argues, is that instructors are complicit in upholding information privilege because students leave the course unable to contextualize academic and popular sources within the larger information landscape.<sup>45</sup> It is clear from the literature that university faculty agree that information literacy instruction from the library is important, but it rarely translates into meaningful library collaborations.<sup>46</sup>

The power imbalance often found between librarians and departmental instructors, where librarians are little more than guest lecturers in a class, can spell dangerous results for the students both parties serve. When we are not treated as equal partners in the curricular experience, librarians are at an inherent disadvantage because they are more likely to be unaware of the challenges students face in the classroom. Likewise, students are left to their own devices to develop their own information literacy skills. The very logistics of the one-shot model creates an inequity of information by assuming that students have enough time and resources provided in the session to obtain the information literacy skills that their instructors expect. Likewise, if we are supposed to treat scholarship as a conversation, then how can the one-shot model be both the start and end of the conversation? Can our preferred method of instruction be considered effective if we are unaware of who we are excluding because of our lack of awareness of the faux-equity in the one-shot model? In fact, the *Framework* does not truly allow for a proper examination of information privilege because it does not adequately support social justice in the praxis of critical librarianship.<sup>47</sup>

## Instructional Support for Students with Disabilities

The one-shot raises many concerns regarding supporting students equitably, which also comes with the inference that all students arrive into the classroom with the same access needs. A recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics revealed that 19 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary schools have disclosed disabilities;<sup>48</sup> yet there is evidence to suggest that many undergraduate and graduate students have not disclosed a disability due to lack of awareness—perhaps even from a lack of a diagnosis—or fear of receiving pushback from instructors.<sup>49</sup> This knowledge complicates the already questionable one-shot when considering that librarians often enter classrooms without knowing who may or may not need accommodations based on disability or other learning needs.

The reality of the situation is that librarians rarely ask instructors whether they have students with disclosed disabilities. Graves and German noted in their study of ARL-affiliated libraries that only 5 percent of the libraries studied exclusively provided an accommodation statement as part of their instruction program website.<sup>50</sup> Most of the library websites that Graves and German reviewed did have disability information to varying degrees, though most of the information was related to spaces, services, and technology, with instruction being noticeably left out. In fact, of the 49 library instruction forms reviewed, only 10 had some sort of accessibility and/or accommodation statement or a field to describe accommodation needs.<sup>51</sup> This study did not look into how often faculty reported their students needing accommodations during library instruction, but we, the authors of this article, whose libraries both ask about accommodation needs on their instruction forms,<sup>52</sup> can speak from lived experience and say anecdotally that faculty rarely report that they have students with accommodation needs. Our experience is not surprising. Lombardi, Murray, and Gerdes conducted a survey in 2011 that sought to investigate the associations between faculty participation in diversity training and their adoption of universal design practices for their courses and found that, while faculty who had completed the training agreed that inclusive practices were a good idea, few actually implemented it.<sup>53</sup> Studies such as these illustrate quite clearly that faculty are creating significant barriers for students with disabilities and yet are still insisting that their classrooms are equitable places. In fact, the same could be said for instruction librarians who neglect to inquire about student accommodations ahead of library instruction sessions.

As a discipline, the field of education has struggled with supporting students with disabilities in their identities as learners and contributing scholars. In the literature, those with intellectual and learning disabilities are underrepresented as the subjects of educational research—though they are widely discussed. One explanation for this phenomenon can be found by examining how researchers account for epistemological diversity. Coined by Siegel in 2006, the concept of epistemological diversity refers to beliefs and belief systems, research methodologies, modes of inquiry, and research questions that inform how one can access, interpret, and create knowledge.<sup>54</sup> Epistemological diversity becomes especially complicated when applied to individuals with intellectual disability, as they are often treated as incapable and unable to participate in educational research. This is, in part, because of the existing structure built on the belief that able-bodied and able-minded individuals are the only ones capable of knowledge production.<sup>55</sup> As such, these voices are not represented in the literature, making it difficult for us to understand completely how we can best empower them as consumers and creators of knowledge stemming from their lived experiences both inside and outside academia. The fact that education as a discipline is uncertain how to interact with

learners with disabilities impacts the librarian's role as an educator, despite many librarians feeling that they missed instruction training in their MSIS/MLS courses.<sup>56</sup>

To be in alignment with our core values and roles in furthering knowledge creation and sharing, librarians and other educators need to give epistemic agency to all learners—not just those who fit the description of who is traditionally seen as having power and contextual authority. In genuine attempts to support students with disabilities, along with their other intersecting identities that impact their educational experience, many librarians have begun to implement the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Created by CAST, formerly known as the Center for Applied Special Technology, UDL offers a framework that ensures multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression in the classroom.<sup>57</sup> When employed, UDL allows the learner to take charge of how they engage with instructional materials, moderate their workload, and demonstrate their knowledge. There is a general consensus in LIS literature that using UDL in the library classroom is a good idea, but there are significant barriers toward implementation given that most instruction librarians attempt to retrofit their instruction to include UDL principles instead of starting over from scratch to make UDL a foundation of their instruction programs and individual pedagogy.<sup>58</sup> UDL is one of the most successful ways to create an equitable classroom environment, and there are significant examples of effective implementation in the library classroom. One of the most in-depth examples comes from Chodock and Dolinger of Landmark College, a higher-education institution specifically for students with learning disorders. Their study outlines how they have used the UDL framework to create an approach to library instruction that they describe as Universal Design for Information Literacy, which helps set up students with neurological disorders and learning disorders for success in the library classroom and beyond.<sup>59</sup> Designing and providing instruction that is intentionally equitable and inclusive to students with diverse learning styles speaks to the core tenets of librarianship, and it is our responsibility as instruction librarians to provide these equitable experiences for students.

To dismantle the faux-equity of the one-shot as it relates to serving students with disabilities, the library profession as a whole must reframe the ways in which we approach library instruction and make a concerted effort to center disability in our pedagogical practice instead of continually retrofitting. Whitver explores the dangers of retrofitting the learning experience and the challenges that are faced when trying to apply UDL principles in the one-shot model:

If librarians truly want to center disability within the library instruction classroom, they must move beyond the legal dictates of accommodation and retrofitting, and instead design their classrooms as flexible laboratories of engagement and learning. This environment, moreover, must not focus on the typical body. To move beyond retrofitting, librarians need to create environments that imagine a new system entirely.<sup>60</sup>

Retrofitting our instructional practices to tenuously center disability in our pedagogy only really serves to perpetuate the injustices of the accommodation process and further excludes all students from adequately participating in the learning process. By controlling the barriers to accessible learning in the library classroom through the unyielding application of the one-shot instruction session, whether it be intentional or not, we run the significant

risk of committing participatory injustice against students with disabilities by deciding who belongs and who does not.<sup>61</sup>

## The Path Forward

This is only a start to the conversations that need to happen surrounding faux-equity. This paper is not intended to solve the problems inherent to the one-shot instruction session, but rather to shed light on the faux-equity that we have created for ourselves within the one-shot. That said, there are recent examples in LIS scholarship that highlight attempts to understand and rectify the faux-equitable practices inherent in our profession. For example, in grappling with vocational awe, librarians are attempting to overcome it by adopting critical and feminist pedagogies of librarianship.<sup>62</sup>

In light of the emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only have academic libraries shown very clearly that our claims of equity fall to the wayside at the first sign of stress, but an ethic of care has become a more prominent conversation for librarians as we try to balance supporting our faculty, staff, students, selves, and coworkers.<sup>63</sup> Providing an ethic of care in the classroom is a noble effort that often uses feminist pedagogy to dismantle the power structures that exist between the teacher and the student and instead create a learner-centered environment where differences and individuals are respected.<sup>64</sup> Caring for our students past their ability to acquire, digest, and use information is vital to developing strong relationships. It would seem a natural action to implement an ethic of care in the library classroom; however, these examples present their efforts as equitable for the students, but range in their ability to account for the sustainability and replicability of their practices.

When it comes to serving students with disabilities, it is our responsibility to use our power and position to advocate for better forms of instruction that are equitable and inclusive to all. This includes putting an end to deficit thinking about students and their abilities in the classroom. In his 2020 article, Eamon Tewell points out that deficit models of instruction support and perpetuate forms of oppression and that students who are lacking in various ways become responsible for their perceived deficits, whereas students who are perceived as “normal” are not responsible for their own success because they can rely on the systems that were built for them.<sup>65</sup> Because of this, our information literacy instruction, which is ultimately informed by the larger educational system, tends to reflect the deficits that are present in the values of the programs, departments, and universities for whom we work.

It is not enough to try to teach students about their own information privilege (or lack of it). We must take it upon ourselves to examine our own information privilege, along with the position we hold as library instructors and life-long learners, so that we can start genuine conversations about how to create a more inclusive, equitable practice for our profession. One possible way to examine our own information privilege is through the growing case for information social justice and recognizing information as a human right. In her 2017 article, Laura Saunders discusses our need to analyze the potential and actual applications of social justice in the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*. Saunders examines the case for information social justice and information as a human right with a focus on the need for reflective practice; she argues that, ultimately, if information is a human right, then information literacy must be one too.<sup>66</sup>

Another essential way to examine our information privilege is to recognize and acknowledge our own biases as a path toward cultural humility. Twanna Hodge suggests learning

cultural humility to come to terms with and earnestly examine our own biases to truly advance our profession.<sup>67</sup> We have to be willing to put in the work to self-reflect, identify our values, be vulnerable, figure out how we perceive the world, and learn how that affects our interactions with each other and those we serve. As Hodge puts it, “understanding who we are as individuals will help us become better professionals.”<sup>68</sup>

Heather Hackman also puts forth five components for social justice education in her 2005 article that translate especially well to information literacy instruction: “In particular, helping students use information to critique systems of power and inequality in society, to help them ask who benefits from said systems, and to encourage them to consider what aspects of our social structures keep those inequalities alive are all important and necessary ways for students to become more engaged in social justice education.”<sup>69</sup> Social justice education may be key to fully understanding the connection between information privilege and faux-equity, but only if we are also dedicated to understanding our information privilege.

In this vein, we recognize that the concept of faux-equity deserves further exploration and consideration. Critical librarianship, critical pedagogy, and information literacy as social justice may be parts of the path forward, but we believe that this topic deserves further consideration and interrogation by academic librarians who want to bring equitable practices to their library instruction. Likewise, understanding the role of faux-equity in other areas of librarianship and LIS scholarship will further contextualize how we can all grow as information professionals.

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## Notes

1. Farne et al., “COVID-19 Protocols in Academic Libraries in Canada and the United States.”
2. Sewell, “Creating a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Library Orientation”; Carroll and Mallon, “Using Digital Environments to Design Inclusive and Sustainable Communities of Practice in Academic Libraries.”
3. Jacobson, Gibson, and University at Albany, SUNY, “First Thoughts on Implementing the Framework for Information Literacy.”
4. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
5. American Library Association, “Core Values of Librarianship.”
6. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges.”
7. Ibid.
8. Latham, Gross, and Julien, “Implementing the ACRL Framework.”
9. Christensen, “Designing One-Shot Sessions Around Threshold Concepts.”
10. Walker and Pearce, “Student Engagement in One-Shot Library Instruction.”
11. Smale, “Learning Through Quests and Contests.”
12. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
13. “Welcome to the Fakequity™ Blog.”
14. Dandar and Lacey, “Critical Discourse Analysis as a Reflection Tool for Information Literacy Instruction.”
15. Ibid.
16. Folk, “Reframing Information Literacy as Academic Cultural Capital.”
17. Blecher-Cohen, “The Student Connection.”
18. Morin, “The First-Year Library Instruction One-Shot.”
19. Pagowsky, “The Contested One-Shot.”
20. Ettarh, “Vocational Awe and Librarianship.”
21. Ibid.
22. Schomberg, “Disability at Work.”
23. Lechte, “Epistemology.”
24. “Feminist Epistemology | The A-Z of Social Research—Credo Reference.” There are additional theories that intersect with epistemology, such as decolonial and postcolonial theories. Both of these are worth examining through the lens of faux-equity and though not the focus of this paper, would be excellent topics for future research.

25. Fricker, "Introduction."
26. Patin et al., "Toward Epistemic Justice," 2.
27. Patin et al., "Interrupting Epistemicide," 1310.
28. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
29. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."
30. Hsieh, Dawson, and Yang, "The ACRL Framework Successes and Challenges since 2016."
31. Booth, "On Information Privilege," para. 1.
32. Hare and Evanson, "Information Privilege Outreach for Undergraduate Students."
33. McCartin, Evers, and Markowski, "Student Perceptions of Information Literacy Skills and Curriculum before and after Completing a Research Assignment."
34. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow"; Egan, Witt, and Chartier, "Going Beyond the One-Shot"; Van Houlson MA, "Getting Results from One-Shot Instruction"; Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot."
35. Egan, Witt, and Chartier, "Going Beyond the One-Shot."
36. Christensen, "Designing One-Shot Sessions Around Threshold Concepts."
37. Van Houlson MA, "Getting Results from One-Shot Instruction."
38. Tewell, "The Problem with Grit," 138.
39. Beilin, "Beyond the Threshold," sec. A Critical Information Literacy Perspective on Threshold Concept Theory, para 4.
40. Heinbach et al., "Dismantling Deficit Thinking."
41. Ibid., sec. Deficit Thinking and Strengths-Based Approaches.
42. Bowles-Terry and Donovan, "Serving Notice on the One-Shot."
43. Pagowsky and DeFrain, "Ice Ice Baby."
44. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow," 119.
45. Torrell, "That Was Then, This Is Wow."
46. Moran, "Disconnect"; Stebbing et al., "What Academics Really Think about Information Literacy."
47. Gregory and Higgins, "Reorienting an Information Literacy Program toward Social Justice."
48. "Digest of Education Statistics, 2019."
49. Scott, "NCCSD Research Brief-Access and Participation in Higher Education: Perspectives of College Students with Disabilities."
50. Graves and German, "Evidence of Our Values."
51. Ibid.
52. It should be noted that one of the authors works for a branch library at her university and that there is inconsistent messaging across the Libraries' instruction pages regarding accommodations in the classroom. Her branch does ask for accessibility and accommodation information on its instruction form. It should also be noted that the other author is recounting her time at her previous job (during which this article was researched and written) and the instruction form at that institution, not her current institution.
53. Lombardi, Murray, and Gerdes, "College Faculty and Inclusive Instruction."
54. Siegel, "Epistemological Diversity and Education Research."
55. Taylor, "Knowledge Citizens?"
56. Goodsett and Koziura, "Are Library Science Programs Preparing New Librarians?"
57. "About Universal Design for Learning."
58. Chodock and Dolinger, "Applying Universal Design to Information Literacy."
59. Ibid., 24.
60. Whitver, "Accessible Library Instruction in Practice," 384.
61. Patin et al., "Interrupting Epistemicide," 1311.
62. Duffy, Rose-Wiles, and Loesch, "Contemplating Library Instruction."
63. Chenevy, "An Emergent Pedagogy of Presence and Care: Addressing Affect in Information Literacy Instruction"; Douglas and Gadsby, "Gendered Labor and Library Instruction Coordinators: The Undervaluing of Feminized Work"; Sloniowski, "Affective Labor, Resistance, and the Academic Librarian."
64. Morin, "The First-Year Library Instruction One-Shot."
65. Tewell, "The Problem with Grit."
66. Saunders, "Connecting Information Literacy and Social Justice."
67. Hodge, "Integrating Cultural Humility into Public Services Librarianship."
68. Ibid., 269.
69. Hackman, "Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education," 106.

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# Feminized Flexibility, One-Shot, and Library Professionalism: Oxymoron or Opportunity?

Yi Ding

What perceived role do one-shot information literacy sessions play in the professional status of librarianship? In what way is this perception resulting from and contributing to the feminization of instructional labor? How will criticizing and/or changing one-shots disrupt or perpetuate gender and other forms of inequity? All these questions demand historical, theoretical, intersectional, and practical examination to inform equitable instructional models and pedagogies in academic librarianship. In this article, the author discusses one-shots' impact on academic library instruction as feminized labor by theorizing manifestations and perceptions of flexibility. By reimagining professionalism with a feminist and intersectional lens, the author concludes that destigmatizing gender stereotypes in imposed flexibility and embracing practices of autonomous flexibility in one-shots are key for library instructors and administrators to advance both workplace and student equity.

## **Author Positionality: How I Came to This Topic**

In my current role coordinating library online instruction, designing alternative pedagogy and instructional materials to engage students in information literacy education other than in-person one-shot sessions has always been my professional responsibility. However, when reflecting on the connections and conflicts between one-shots, feminization, and professionalism, I constantly question my motivations behind these efforts and my positionality as a female librarian of color, a scholar mother, and the youngest untenured faculty member at my library. My critique of the gendered view of professionalism and flexibility stemmed from my own anxiety to seek recognition from students, faculty members, and colleagues as a junior professional sometimes through overworking, innovating for its own sake, and gathering quantitative data with few in-depth conversations with patrons. Reading literature on "flexibility penalty," which will be discussed later in this article, reminded me of my stress and burnout during and after maternity leave to handle my one-shot sessions. As a first-generation Asian American immigrant who almost dropped out of college due to financial burdens, I also value the intersectional perspective to understand LIS in light of racial, gender, and class identities and inequities. My institution is developing our first credit-bearing information literacy course, and I hope my intellectual inquiry can guide my engagement in the envisioning, implementation, and evaluation of an equitable instructional model.

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## **Background: Contextualizing “One-Shot” through Feminized “Flexibility” and Masculinized “Professionalism”**

In library and information science (LIS), the one-shot refers to the most prevalent library instructional model that is brief, single-session, and often skill-based.<sup>1</sup> Even though some positive student learning outcomes of one-shot sessions have been identified in different studies,<sup>2</sup> this model is often considered a shortcoming of librarians’ teaching and even a cause for systemic problems of the profession.<sup>3</sup> Scholars have acknowledged that the term is used to demonstrate “the futility” of library instructional sessions,<sup>4</sup> which are criticized for not cultivating an understanding of the complex research process.<sup>5</sup> The negative connotations of “one-shot” has distinctive significance in academic librarianship as a loaded term since it suggests a critique of its detriment to identity and status of the whole profession, not just student learning outcomes. Although LIS professionals have been conducting studies to improve one-shot sessions,<sup>6</sup> library instructors are aware of the universally negative connotation of “one-shot.” We use the term often when criticizing this instructional model with colleagues, but rarely when communicating with a general audience about expectations of library instruction.

Although these scholarly discussions and views held by practitioners are valuable, few articles have contextualized existing critiques or one-shots through an equity lens. Among these few, Nicholson builds on Drabinski’s insights on the connection between time, capital, and academic librarianship labor, and provides a valuable time lens in pinpointing the systemic problems of one-shots.<sup>7</sup> The short amount of time of both one-shot sessions themselves and of response time for last-minute instructional requests from disciplinary faculty are considered as evidence of the commodification of information literacy teaching labor at neoliberal universities where efficiency is always prioritized.<sup>8</sup>

Other than temporality, no other features of one-shots have been extensively conceptualized, among which flexibility is an important one. To elaborate, when discussing pedagogical approaches required by “corporate time,” Nicholson mentions the significance of “flexible delivery and pace,”<sup>9</sup> but like other LIS scholars, she does not explore more about flexibility in LIS and one-shots. This might be unsurprising to most people, as discussions of flexible management and workplace flexibility in LIS, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>10</sup> seem to have portrayed flexibility as positively perceived in librarianship. It may seem counterintuitive to connect critiques of one-shots to flexibility. However, as Nicholson notes, flexibility is an important requirement in neoliberal universities to ensure students acquire skills as customers. Also, it is important to make a distinction in labor studies between employer-led flexibility (that is, imposed flexibility) and employee-led flexibility (in other words, autonomous flexibility), with the former demanded by others and negatively correlated with work-life balance and pay and the latter honoring individual choice and generally beneficial for workers and retention of employees.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, to fully understand one-shots in neoliberal universities, we need to critically examine manifestations and perceptions of flexibility in library instructional labor.

Interestingly, there are gendered connotations of “flexibility” in professional settings including LIS, and these connotations are interconnected to disproportionately negative associations of “feminization,” a phenomenon extensively discussed in LIS. Specifically, whether advocating for “workplace flexibility,”<sup>12</sup> meaning giving female employees more autonomy over the number and means of working hours, or critiquing the “flexibility penalty,”<sup>13</sup> meaning female employees are penalized for requesting flexible work arrangements, scholars have always associated flexibility with female needs and challenges at the workplace. Men

who seek flexibility at the workplace may be stigmatized as less masculine.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, while feminization could indicate *numerical* increase of the participation of women “in a context traditionally reserved for men,”<sup>15</sup> when social sciences scholars discuss concerns with some professions including librarianship as semiprofessions, feminization is often attributed to or blamed for and thus imbued with a *symbolic*, negative meaning.<sup>16</sup>

Feminization and professionalism of the teaching field can inform our understanding of this gendered perception of flexibility. Literature on the feminization of teaching has critical discussions on the dichotomic perceptions of teacher professionalism in contrast to that of educational experts. Notably, perceptions of flexibility played an important role in this difference. For example, married women were not allowed into the teaching profession until the mid-1900s, and it was not a dedication to career ambition that was highlighted in public discourses about *numerical* increase of female teachers. Instead, what justified feminization was the fact that teaching integrated well with motherhood, due to a more flexible schedule and tasks with nurturing values also demonstrated in childrearing.<sup>17</sup> Just as Grumet advocates for the subtle, flexible responsive language to children in teaching,<sup>18</sup> qualities associated with flexibility such as sensitivity and caring in teaching have also been inevitably feminized (symbolic feminization) during the transition of more women entering the workforce (numerical feminization). Historically, teaching was considered a feminized profession that emphasized morality of the teachers to adapt to students’ changing needs rather than disciplining students to follow set rules. Teachers were considered “second mothers....and flexible workers”<sup>19</sup> and flexible work structure in turn indicates a “feminine work arrangement.”<sup>20</sup> For decades, flexibility, instead of rigor, which is culturally associated with masculinity,<sup>21</sup> dominated characteristics perceived of effective teachers and remains an important pedagogy.<sup>22</sup> This focus on flexibility does not mean that teachers are not required to deliver rigorous *content* to students, but that they are socially recognized as most effective when being adaptable to student needs in the *method* of such delivery, such as by demonstrating empathy and multiple ways of engagement, especially to students who are in particular situations or need to cultivate independent learning skills.<sup>23</sup> These gendered perceptions of flexibility and rigor also do not indicate a normative dichotomy between rigor and flexibility. For example, culturally responsive teaching, which encourages flexibility in teaching such as through providing flexible scaffolding without rigid structure, aims to enhance “authentic engagement and rigor.”<sup>24</sup>

These gendered perceptions in teaching resonates with the perceived conflict between masculine-coded professionalism in other fields and feminized identity of the library profession. The perceived lack of professional expertise resulted in the coining of the term “semi-profession” by sociologists to describe teaching, social work, nursing, and library-keeping.<sup>25</sup> The idea of a “semi-profession” is prevalent in Garrison’s influential feminist analysis of the history of library work in that there is no “clear-cut conception of professional rights and responsibilities.”<sup>26</sup> This parallels with how professionalism is often associated with masculine-coded behaviors such as enacting rigid standards and making decisions as experts for clients instead of serving their changing needs.<sup>27</sup> As such, manifestations of flexibility in a profession may be considered contrary to the strict rules and responsibilities as well as the autonomy and status of other professions. As Garrison discusses, feminine values were associated with library work to reconcile the inconsistent value between individualism traditionally celebrated by male professionals and altruism traditionally expected of women, especially mothers. In this way, newly feminized occupations including the library field and teaching consider altru-

ism as both innate in women and important to the profession. Feminized professional values including altruism, which correlates with flexibility by definition and based on empirical research,<sup>28</sup> resulted in the stereotype of skills required in these professions as being natural, which justified their low compensation and status.<sup>29</sup> Just as success is measured not by promotion to higher levels in teaching, libraries are misperceived by many to be sacred places of “vocational awe” that justify the contribution and even sacrifice of library workers with low compensation.<sup>30</sup> Both concepts of flexibility and professionalism gain gendered connotations, with the former being feminized and the latter masculinized.

Therefore, to advance equity goals in LIS, we need to pinpoint the concept of flexibility by revisiting professionalism in the one-shot instructional model through a feminist lens. With existing literature focusing on one-shots but not feminized perceptions of one-shots, it is particularly important to examine critiques of one-shots in the overall perception of the library profession beyond the time lens to supplement existing feminist analyses of status and labor in LIS.<sup>31</sup> This article fills a gap of theorizing the tensions between librarians’ professionalism, feminization, and flexibility through an intersectional analysis of the one-shot model. The author will argue that disrupting gendered stereotypes of flexibility in one-shots is key to the advancement of racial, gender, and class equities in LIS both for library instructors and for patrons.

### **Analytical Lens: The Reproductive/Productive Labor Dichotomy in Academic Librarianship**

The unique status of academic librarians is our higher education professional setting where most other instructors are disciplinary faculty teaching credit-bearing courses, many of whom also produce research. Due to perceived limitations in teaching time, pedagogy, and content, it is not surprising that the one-shot model has often been contrasted with the for-credit model by many LIS scholars. The for-credit model is considered beneficial to not only achieve more intellectually rigorous student learning outcomes, but also improve the teaching status of academic librarians on par with other instructors in higher education.<sup>32</sup> When problematizing the professional status of academic librarians in contrast to that of credit-bearing course teaching faculty, scholars often apply the framework of Marxist feminist theory on the divide between reproductive and productive labor, with the former often referring to instruction and service and the latter scholarship.<sup>33</sup> The concept of reproductive labor is core to discussion of gender inequality in Marxist feminism as it frames the devaluation of feminized labor belonging to the domestic sphere and with less utilitarian value to the society.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, feminists have attributed the gender pay gap to the undervaluation of service work as rote, unskilled labor and/or as take-for-granted labor that nurturing women could naturally do for free.<sup>35</sup> Just as teaching is seen as natural to women as discussed in the last section, instructional librarians could be perceived as natural teachers to help and support others, which justifies the low status, autonomy, care, and even compensation of their one-shot instructional labor as in domestic work and the teaching profession.<sup>36</sup>

It could be argued that, since most one-shot sessions only involve interactions between instructional librarians and students during one class period, it is understandable that no creative pedagogy, in-depth content, or seriousness of the topic could be established, and the professional status of librarians is undermined because of this time restraint. How-

ever, disciplinary faculty frequently invite guest speakers to lecture, and they are treated as experts rather than merely service providers, and they are even applauded for adding innovation, engagement, and relevance to the classroom.<sup>37</sup> Flexibility in the one-shot model can explain this distinction of treatment. Specifically, in contrast to credit courses taught by domain experts who are compensated based on a set number of classes to teach, who have the autonomy to develop content and include formal student assessment, and are evaluated by students at the end of the course, one-shot session instructors must cater to the schedule and content needs of the class instructors who request the one-shots and rarely conduct assessment or receive evaluations in every session. In contrast to guest lecturers who have the autonomy to opt in or out and decide on delivery content and pedagogy, library instructors are expected to be available to teach as needed about skills to complete specific research assignments often designed solely by course instructors.<sup>38</sup> This manifestation of flexibility in the time, amount, compensation, and feedback of labor provided in one-shot sessions mirrors traits of domestic labor done by women, demonstrating feminine qualities discussed earlier such as altruism and further corroborating the aforementioned feminized perception of flexibility that leads to low status. Flexibility is further demonstrated in the perceived highly scalable and transferable content covered in one-shot sessions, making this type of instructional labor easily categorized as repetitive labor like other reproductive labor.

Just as reproductive labor is undervalued and abused in a patriarchal system, flexibility is deemed important for the efficient operation of a neoliberal system, but it could be imposed by employers and not equitably compensated for or driven by employees. When suggesting alternative models to one-shots, some practitioners suggest approaches such as a programmatic or consultancy model where librarians can contribute to the for-credit course content, pedagogy, and time allocated to library instruction.<sup>39</sup> What these different approaches share is autonomy, which aligns with the autonomous flexibility in contrast to the imposed flexibility. Specifically, imposed flexibility is to accommodate the schedule, content, and pedagogy needs of teaching faculty due to asymmetrical power dynamics between librarians and teaching faculty<sup>40</sup> or that between librarians and administrators' or institutional need of efficiency, but librarians need autonomous flexibility to determine the means and amount of instructional labor. The biased perception that feminized flexibility could undermine masculinized professionalism in one-shots may lead to imposed flexibility as it fuels the narrative that instructors of one-shots are less professional and do not require autonomy.

This bias may also exacerbate misconceptions on how people assess dissatisfaction, stress, and burnout in instruction that leads to harm of librarian well-being. When debunking the myth of vocational awe, Ettarh warns that unjust expectations of the feminized library profession can lead to or exacerbate burnout.<sup>41</sup> Imposed flexibility is a form of unjust expectation rooted in gendered perception of teaching, library labor, and flexibility. Just like female depression and burnout in reproductive labor are downplayed and there is a systemic prejudice dismissing the physical pain of women in the medical field,<sup>42</sup> biased perception toward flexibility of one-shots might also undermine the legitimacy of instructional librarians to feel or express any concern with their own well-being. Instructional librarians might feel more pressured to fulfill unjust expectations of imposed flexibility, leading to stress, enforcing the patriarchal academic system when there's a threat (expression of dissatisfaction, stress, or burnout), and creating a vicious cycle of burnout.

## Intersectional Lens: Library Instruction and Race, Class, and Other Marginalized Identities

While a feminist analysis is helpful to dissect the gendered flexibility demonstrated by one-shots, it is also important to consider other forms of inequities in understanding feminized library instruction labor.<sup>43</sup> First, LIS is not immune to the classist belief in a binary between skilled and unskilled labor in neoliberal market and immigration policies and discourses.<sup>44</sup> The perception that one-shots are intrinsically less rigorous than other instructional models due to demonstrated flexibility in time, content, and pedagogy may reinforce both gender and class inequities. The attribution of reproductive labor to be unskilled correlates with women's low class and parallels the extensive discussion on the negative impact of one-shots on librarian status blaming feminization. Moreover, the gendered stigmatization male professionals face in female-dominated professions including librarianship is more prevalent in low-status jobs and can further exacerbate the gender and class segregation in these professions.<sup>45</sup>

Second, the inequity caused by bias toward flexibility and stigma over one-shots may disproportionately impact instruction librarians of color and other minority groups. Although the previous section discusses a universal detriment of downplaying emotional labor to instruction librarians, research has shown that minority academic librarians tend to respond to racial and ethnic stereotypes with overworking and vocational awe.<sup>46</sup> Specifically, minority academic librarians may not only overwork to "prove ...expertise," but also engage in behaviors to mitigate the influence and demonstration of "emotional responses ...interests, relationships, values."<sup>47</sup> As such, minority academic librarians might be more inclined to agree to last-minute instructional requests of library workshops and be more reluctant to negotiate instructional content and pedagogies as a way to accommodate patron needs or to avoid emotional responses. These behaviors can be considered demonstration of flexibility, which is stigmatized as feminine and therefore less valuable than rigorous work, adding to the existing gender bias as well as gendered racial identities such as feminization imposed on Asian Americans<sup>48</sup> and masculinization imposed on Black Americans.<sup>49</sup>

## Practical Lens: The Value of One-Shots and Flexibility

Many LIS researchers and instructors have asserted various pedagogical and programmatic suggestions to provide supplemental or alternative teaching models to the one-shot.<sup>50</sup> There were even grassroots efforts to resist teaching one-shots altogether to push for faculty partnerships.<sup>51</sup> How will different strategies and the perceptions underlining them disrupt or reinforce gender and other forms of inequities, for both academic librarians and students?

Since the first wave feminist movement, there has been a division of ideas on whether femininity should be celebrated as an asset of the female professional or minimized as a cause of inequality.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, some LIS scholars suggested both altering the one-shot instructional model and reframing the pervasive perceptions of library work including instruction as service to notions of librarians as partners, experts, and even education reform leaders.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, others have advocated for librarians to embrace the feminization of librarianship by making visible and celebrating our reproductive work to disrupt neoliberal goals.<sup>54</sup> A redefinition of professionalism, which is masculine-coded as in contrast to feminized librarianship, one-shot instruction, and flexibility, is helpful to reconcile these two approaches. Scholars have elaborated on some manifestations of professionalism to be domain knowledge, autonomy, mission to serve clients, positive relations with other professionals in the field, and code of

ethics.<sup>55</sup> How do we advance gender and other forms of equities by revisiting the role of flexibility in professionalism in one-shots? This practical section will recommend principles for LIS practitioners to consider when implementing different strategies to combat deprofessionalism, described by scholars in academic institutions to signify the distance from professional values for the sake of business outcomes.<sup>56</sup>

First, recognizing the value of flexibility in one-shots is important to advancing equitable student learning outcomes and university culture that align with our professional mission. Combating devaluation of feminized labor that the one-shot model represents should not mean a rejection of the entire model, especially the service component. Otherwise, by refuting and devaluing the flexibility and service nature of library instruction, we might be diminishing the value of service labor of other staff members in academia including library staff and reinforcing the class and racial hierarchy. While it is true that the short length of one-shots could limit librarians' ability to cultivate domain knowledge, it could provide flexibility beneficial for the well-being and success of students, library instructors, and universities. Literature has extensive discussions on benefits of a flexibility culture in the workplace to both employees and employers, especially to the retention and promotion of marginalized employees, and flexible pedagogy and schedules in the LIS field could particularly benefit outreach to marginalized communities.<sup>57</sup> In teaching theories, flexibility supported by effective pedagogies including Universal Design for Learning is crucial for inclusive learning.<sup>58</sup> One important trend during the pandemic was to balance rigor, which has been traditionally emphasized in higher education, and flexibility.<sup>59</sup> As Accardi notes, the low status of librarians paradoxically affords "more freedom to experiment" with pedagogy than credit-bearing course instructors, and the one-shot model "has more flexibility that progressive librarians can take advantage of."<sup>60</sup> For all these reasons, library instructors should embrace manifestations of flexibility in one-shots and apply flexible pedagogy that best fits diverse teaching styles and student needs.<sup>61</sup>

To achieve this goal, it is important to distinguish between imposed flexibility and autonomous flexibility, with only the latter affording library instructors with autonomy and benefiting library instructors with marginalized gender, race, age, class, and other statuses.<sup>62</sup> In addition to the benefits of autonomous flexibility, researchers have found a negative association between occupational burnout and psychological flexibility defined as the ability to "be aware of and accept thoughts and feelings at the present moment, and at the same time, to act according to one's own values and goals."<sup>63</sup> Recognizing the value of one-shots and that of flexibility will provide a more supportive environment to increase psychological flexibility, which could reduce burnout. In the case of the one-shot, it is important for library instructors to feel comfortable to discuss not only flexible schedule, but also other pedagogical values and goals with disciplinary faculty and supervisors. To achieve this, libraries should have instruction request guidelines that set expectations of time (for instance, two weeks' minimum arrangement time, length, and number of sessions), method (such as in-person vs. online, pedagogy, technological tools), and content (for example, skills covered, academic freedom) for disciplinary faculty. Ultimately, flexibility of library instructors should be autonomous and valued, not imposed and demanded. The guidelines must allow for negotiation and mutually agreed-upon terms and benefit both the disciplinary and library instructors.

This approach requires a holistic understanding of librarianship professionalism on an administrative and institutional level that transcends and expands its current masculine characteristics to prevent library professionals from falling into deprofessionalism. Since the

bureaucratic control in deprofessionalization is considered both as contrary to professionalism and as a result from an overrationalization of organization that contrasts with emphasis of emotional and relational labor often associated with women, it follows that professionalism celebrating feminine labor and values is key to maintaining high engagement of professionals and quality of work. Just as teacher professionalism could be understood differently from more masculine-coded professionalism to be about effective education with “mutual respect, love, loyalty, harmony and cooperation,”<sup>64</sup> autonomous flexibility can enable academic library professionals to exhibit high skills adaptive to diverse academic, civic, and emotional needs of patrons, of themselves, as well as changes in the world the library profession is situated in.

## Conclusion

The quality of flexibility in librarianship demonstrated by one-shots can lead to a perceived lack of commitment to serious professional identity and intellectual rigor. This perception results in many critiques of one-shots, which overlook the importance of flexibility in educational equity and workplace equity. Worse, together with the feminization of teaching and librarianship, this perception may exacerbate the gender stereotype of and the class, racial, and other inequities within the profession. We should take an intersectional approach to reframe the feminization and subsequent devaluation of library work represented by one-shots as an opportunity for instructional librarians to revisit imposed flexibility and embrace autonomous flexibility in one-shots and instruction labor.

Teaching exclusively one-shots could indicate an institutional inertia to support student needs, but criticizing all one-shots and suggesting alternative models or new pedagogies could also be driven by a dichotomic understanding of productive/reproductive and skilled/unskilled labor, an anxiety to innovate at the expense of real patron needs and library instructor well-being, and ultimately an expediency to avoid nuances in feminist endeavors. The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges and opportunities for educators to rethink effective teaching and for administrators to rethink leadership to support student, staff, and organizational success. In leadership theories, one important trend is to transition from the Newtonian, linear way of chasing predictability and efficiency, to the quantum, dynamic way of embracing flexibility and interconnectedness.<sup>65</sup> We need to reach a holistic understanding of professionalism with nuanced distinctions yet connectedness between values and interests of organizations, of professions, of professional organizations, of professionals, and of patrons. By allowing for, advocating for, and ultimately celebrating autonomous flexibility in one-shots, we can advance student and LIS equity and reach a holistic understanding of professionalism with feminist values.

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# The Power of Presence: One-Shots, Relational Teaching, and Instruction Librarianship

Veronica Arellano Douglas and Joanna Gadsby

## Introduction

In *Connected Teaching: Relationship, Power, and Mattering in Higher Education*, Harriet L. Schwartz presents “relationship as a site and source for learning.”<sup>1</sup> It is both *where* the learning takes place and the mechanism *through which* we teach and learn, making it the “essential driver of teaching and learning.”<sup>2</sup> Application of relationship and relational thinking to academic librarians’ work as educators has gained traction in recent years, yet the concept of teaching and learning as a relationship remains one that we idealize in librarianship as occurring only through longer-term experiences like teaching credit-bearing courses or becoming embedded in classes for the duration of a semester or quarter.<sup>3</sup> The one-shot—a one-time-only information literacy or research workshop that takes place within the context of faculty-led courses—is seen as a consolation prize: ineffective, exhausting, tacked on, and demoralizing.<sup>4</sup> However, there are one-shot classes or workshops that leave us, as librarians, feeling connected to students and faculty, deeply moved by the learning that has happened in the last hour or two (and in the hours of planning before the class even occurs). Conversely, we may have taught semester-long courses that leave us drained, questioning the purpose of the hours spent in the classroom. So what, then, is the difference? What is the quality that makes some teaching experiences fulfilling and others exhausting for librarians?

We contend that the difference is a feeling of connection through growth-fostering teaching and learning relationships, where we have changed or been changed by others, whether they be students, instructors, or both. To explore this concept, we apply Schwartz’s model of relational or Connected Teaching to librarian teaching practices. Through analysis of the relational practices present in Connected Teaching, we argue that duration of teaching interactions is less vital to Connected Teaching than *quality of presence*, which is a commitment to openness, mutual respect, and a willingness to change and grow through the educational interaction.<sup>5</sup> When applied to the discourse around one-shot library instruction, we believe that a focus on Connected Teaching, rather than time spent teaching (one-shot, multiple workshops, courses, and the like), can help us become unstuck from ineffective teaching structures, methods, and approaches. This is not an *in-defense-of-the-one-shot* article. Instead, it is our attempt to separate temporal pressures from the capacity of librarians to teach through and toward relationship.

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## What Is Connected Teaching?

Schwartz has written the most comprehensive text on Connected Teaching, describing it as an approach, “stance,” or “way of being” in an educational encounter “rather than a set of steps” or checklist.<sup>6</sup> This can seem nebulous when practical application feels imperative, but it is an intention that sets a foundation for meaningful educational practice.<sup>7</sup> The foundation for Connected Teaching rests on three elements: “relationship, identity, and emotion,” where relationship is the core of the educational experience, shaped by the acknowledgment (or lack thereof) of the limitations of our identities and our ability to know ourselves and our emotions.<sup>8</sup> It is rooted in Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), a feminist model of psychological development that “posits that connection is at the core of human growth and development.”<sup>9</sup> RCT was developed in the 1970s and 1980s as a response to commonly accepted Western psychological models that valorized the separation of self and pathologized individuals who did not conform to the cis, white, heterosexual, autonomous, self-sufficient ideal man.<sup>10</sup> The originators of RCT, Jean Baker Miller, Judith V. Jordan, Irene P. Stiver, Janet L. Surrey, and Alexandra Kaplan, all practicing therapists at Wellesley College and educators themselves, witnessed and experienced the negative impact of separation-as-ideal in their professional practice. Together, their scholarship emphasized that humans “grow through and toward relationship,” naming their theory self-in-relation and later relational theory.<sup>11</sup> As their circle grew to include additional theorists such as Maureen Walker and Joyce Fletcher, the importance of culture in dis/connection and the experiences of marginalized people transformed relational theory to RCT.<sup>12</sup>

Application of RCT has expanded beyond a therapeutic context into social work, education, and librarianship.<sup>13</sup> Within each of these disciplines and practices, relationships are sites for “personal growth and intellectual development.”<sup>14</sup> They are the mode and method through which we learn, and Connected Teaching is an expansion of this idea. Schwartz states that Connected Teaching can happen in both “single meaningful interactions and longer term teaching relationships,” making it an ideal framework through which to view the practice of teaching librarianship in all of its forms and iterations.<sup>15</sup> The emphasis is not on time spent with students or the duration of an educational experience, but rather on the openness to relationship and connection on the part of both teacher and learner. Within this state of being, Schwartz believes that the qualities outlined as essential for growth-fostering relationships are both present and created: “energy, knowledge, sense of worth, action, and a desire for more connection.”<sup>16</sup> As librarians who were taught that our time with students in one-shots, research consultations, or reference interactions is fleeting, the idea of all of the above-mentioned qualities being present in a brief interaction or short class can seem unlikely. However, if we reflect on instances of teaching that left us feeling fulfilled, we may find traces of each of the aforementioned elements in our own experiences as well as those of our students.

## Brief Encounters

As we think about moments of connection in our work as teaching librarians, we may have entire courses, one-shot classes, or even discrete interactions during class time that come to mind. Through her Connected Teaching approach, Schwartz writes that even brief encounters have the potential to be high-quality connections.<sup>17</sup> There is just as much opportunity for disconnection with learners during a semester-long course as there is the ability to connect with them during a one-time class. It is not guaranteed that either of these interactions will

be meaningful, but that is not a reason to write off brief encounters as unworthy. Instead of expending energy focusing on the little amount of time we find ourselves with in traditional one-shot instruction, we can ask ourselves, “What can make even brief encounters meaningful?”

There is no way to cover the amount of content we might want to introduce and discuss with students in just an hour-long session, so we often oscillate between two extremes: 1) I just want students to remember my name and know that the library is available to them; or 2) I will cram as much content as possible into this session (and accompanying libguide) so that they will have something to turn to later. Yet neither one of these solutions leaves us feeling fulfilled because they assume a deficit that may or may not exist. We may assume that students will never learn what they need to learn from us, or that the class itself is ineffective (it might be), or that there is not a shared interest in learning. We put so much pressure on the brief encounter of the one-shot because of its precarity that we end up centering everything but the time spent together and assume (for better or worse) that this is the only time we will be together with the people in the room. Yet there is potential for all encounters to be a place for connection if we put aside *assumed needs*—what we assume students, faculty, and the institution need—and instead focus on the learning experience at hand. We can then focus on the *expressed needs* of those in the teaching and learning encounter and begin to view them through the lens of relationship.<sup>18</sup> We recognize that this can be complicated by the expressed needs of an institution for accountability, metrics, assessments, or, more broadly, proof of value, but, through connection, we aim to shift the answer to these demands in a way that is not done at the expense of the expressed needs of learners. In focusing on learners, we believe that we can still meet institutional needs through compelling stories of learning through connected teaching.

Most teaching librarians have likely had the unfortunate experience of walking into an instruction session planned for in collaboration with the instructor, with a certain lesson plan, outcomes, or ideas in mind, only to learn that the students were not at the assumed stage of their assignment progress. As librarians, we rely on the input of the instructor, a natural occurrence given the nature of a one-shot instruction session, and assume they know their students’ needs. The instructor may have just assumed from spending the past few weeks in the classroom with students that what they needed from a library instruction session was an intensive guide to literature searching using academic resources. Yet as we begin a dialogue with students, it becomes clear that the students don’t really understand the purpose of a literature review and need some time to understand how to structure and direct their research. This moment may seem scary—suddenly, the brief time we have with the students isn’t what we thought it would be; however, taking a few moments at the start of class to establish a connection and conversation creates an opportunity for a meaningful interaction that could potentially extend beyond the classroom.

Seeking moments like these that have the potential for facilitating real connection does not automatically equate with adding in more time with students.<sup>19</sup> We can take the time we have to tackle assumptions and uncover needs. As Nel Noddings states, “time spent on building a relation of care and trust is not time wasted,” so whatever time we have, however brief, is best used in relational connection.<sup>20</sup> Joan Piorkowski and Erika Scheurer’s article on developmental writing students highlighted how brief interactions with professors can be “caring encounters that spur motivation” and note that these demonstrations of care do not need to

be elaborate.<sup>21</sup> Rather, the professor or instructor shows that they are relationally available to students and establishes a foundation of care through their small actions or suggestions. These positive connections make the students more willing to seek out help in the future and increase their sense of agency, which is an example of growth-in-relationship.<sup>22</sup>

Discourse around one-shots can and should shift toward being open to the possibility of relationship, what Noddings calls “a caring occasion,” rather than coverage of content.<sup>23</sup> In doing so, we are also laying a foundation for John Dewey’s concept of “continuity of education.”<sup>24</sup> This is often applied to multiyear classrooms with the same teacher where students can form strong relationships with peers and the teacher; but, for our purposes, in libraries, we can apply this idea to the way that we interact with learners at all stages of their educational journey (as first years, thesis writers, new researchers, and so on). We may or may not see the students in our one-shot classroom again, but that doesn’t mean they won’t be interacting with our colleagues. Through a Connected approach to teaching, we are setting a foundation for learners and the library colleagues who may have occasion to interact with one another. Each of them can come to expect a level of receptivity and at least a willingness to be open to high-quality connection when it is needed or desired.

## High-Quality Connection

In pursuing Connected Teaching, our goal as librarians is to foster high-quality connection through educational experiences, whether they be brief or lengthy. To understand high-quality connection, we must look to both RCT and feminist ethics of care. It is through the lens of these relational theories that we are able to articulate what a high-quality connection feels, sounds, and/or looks like to everyone involved in the teaching and learning relationship. The following relational practices are ones that we believe can be incorporated into the practice of teaching librarianship regardless of the duration of instruction, creating educational experiences that foster connection, validation, and the kinds of work that leave both librarian and learner feeling attuned to one other, reinvigorated, and fulfilled.

### Care

The concept of care in education appears simultaneously in work by Nel Noddings, Carol Gilligan, and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, and Tarule in the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> All center the relationships inherent in learning situations, but Noddings’ definition of the caring relationship places it squarely within an educational context. In Noddings’ work there is a *carer* and *cared-for*, with both parties playing their own role.<sup>26</sup> She acknowledges that in education this relationship is unequal, with the carer holding more power than the cared-for; however, “both parties contribute to the establishment and maintenance of caring.”<sup>27</sup> The carer is attentive, “interested in the expressed needs of the cared-for,” and demonstrates that the cared-for has been heard, even if the carer cannot meet those needs. The cared-for “shows somehow that the caring has been received.”<sup>28</sup> It’s important to note here that this is not about gratitude. The cared-for does not need to give thanks, but, rather, offer some acknowledgment that the caring has been received. This could be as simple as a student revising a literature search approach after an in-class discussion with a librarian who offered a new way of thinking about their topic. It is a small, powerful moment that demonstrates the impact the librarian (carer) has on the students (cared-for).

In establishing a climate of care, we also acknowledge that there are times when we cannot, as carers, meet the needs of the cared-for.<sup>29</sup> It may be because of limitations in resources

or ability or because the needs of the cared-for are beyond the scope of our role as teaching librarians. Instead of struggling to meet the needs of the cared-for that we know cannot be met, we can instead focus on “maintaining the caring relation.”<sup>30</sup> A student may need far more intensive help in class than we are able to offer in the time that we spend with them. They may need time to think through options for their research topics or consider new avenues to pursue their ideas and would benefit from extended discussion with their instructor. Then, later, if we have maintained an open relationship, they know that we are available to help with their exploratory research, when they’re ready.

We acknowledge that the concept of the caring relationship can seem problematic in a feminized profession like librarianship, where feminine-coded behaviors and soft skills are routinely assumed but not valued in the workplace.<sup>31</sup> There can be hesitation in adopting the language of caring in our work out of fear of taking on the role of a “mommy librarian”; however, care, as expressed in feminist theory, is not about mothering.<sup>32</sup> As Nodding states, “the behaviors...that mark the mother-child relation are rarely appropriate for other relations.”<sup>33</sup> Nor is this caring about emotional labor, which is an oft misunderstood concept. As introduced and defined by Arlie Hochschild, emotional labor “is the work, for which you’re paid, which centrally involves trying to feel the right feeling for the job. This involves evoking and suppressing feelings.”<sup>34</sup> The kind of care we are advocating for in this particular framework within the context of librarianship is an opportunity to foster growth in others and ourselves through a learning relationship, marked by clear relational roles, boundaries, needs, and expectations on the part of both parties. In practicing care and connection through a relational lens, the burden of emotional labor is lessened because the librarian is present, remains relationally aware, and has enacted boundaries that allow them to function. This care is not about manufacturing false or suppressing existing feelings “to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.”<sup>35</sup> Rather, it is about honoring who we are and the moment we are in with others.

### ***Relational Authenticity***

Relational authenticity is essential to a caring and therefore Connected Teaching relationship. It “is not the same thing as total honesty” on the part of the teacher or learner, nor does it mean placing the needs of the teacher above those of the learner.<sup>36</sup> Rather, it is about maintaining a sense of relational clarity—what our roles are in the relationship—and, within those boundaries, demonstrating to the other that we are impacted by them.<sup>37</sup> The feeling of having impacted, moved, or, more broadly, *mattered* to another person is extremely powerful. As Schwartz states, “some of my most memorable and motivating experiences as a teacher have been when I felt I mattered in the lives of students, I brought something important to their growth.”<sup>38</sup> Conversely, students feel the same impact of intellectual and personal mattering from us, describing “interactions as important not only when a professor complimented their work but also when they sensed their ideas or work were important to the professor.”<sup>39</sup> Schwartz calls this phenomena “intellectual mattering” and emphasizes its importance in growth and self-worth on the part of learners and the fulfillment of teachers.<sup>40</sup>

Without relational authenticity, there can be no *mattering*. By being relationally authentic, we show students the impact they have on us, which is an essential piece of the learning relationship. We also foster the ability for students to tell us what matters to them and how they are impacted by our words and actions in the classroom. Responsiveness is key. We

have likely all been in classrooms (online or in person) where we are met with blank stares or silence from learners; as students, we may have been ignored or overlooked by teachers ourselves. This kind of nonresponsiveness causes disconnection and may even signal a “kind of danger” to learners who have previously been negatively impacted by unresponsive individuals in their lives.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to note that the relational authenticity and responsiveness that fosters connection is rooted in boundaries, which RCT encourages us to consider as “a place of meeting.”<sup>42</sup> Roles are clear but can shift and change depending on the needs of the learner; at times the student may become the teacher, sharing with us content knowledge or experience that enriches our understanding of a concept or idea. This “authenticity in movement” thrives on the “respect, clarity, and responsibility” that boundaries bring.<sup>43</sup> Instead of reacting instantaneously to a student comment, question, or action based on what we think our role dictates we should say or do, we can take a moment to pause and speak/act with intention.<sup>44</sup> In doing so, we are deliberately setting or reinforcing boundaries, sharing with students how we are affected by them and noticing how we affect them in turn.

### ***Being Present and Open***

It would be disingenuous to say that all classes and instructional experiences will necessarily turn into high-quality connections.<sup>45</sup> However, if we are not *open* to moments of connection and care, then they will surely not occur. But what does it mean to be open? Both Schwartz and Jordan emphasize the importance of *quality of presence* in connection. Rather than “spend more time with students” or extend ourselves beyond healthy boundaries, we can instead focus on what Schwartz describes as “making small moments bigger.”<sup>46</sup> To be truly *present* with students in the classroom is to be engaged “in a momentary commitment to be with the other.”<sup>47</sup> It is not just about showing up, the kind of “presenteeism” that is marked by simply existing in a space and/or performing the actions that we believe students and teachers should exhibit.<sup>48</sup> Our time in the classroom may be brief, but within that time, we are committed to being changed and moved by our students. We are committed to truly listening to understand, not just react.

We may have encountered students in our classroom who on the surface express frustration over evaluating information sources they’ve found via their usual research methods for inclusion in a research paper. Yet, as we *listen* and *engage* with the student, we learn that their real confusion stems from not understanding the discourse that takes place in academic research papers. They aren’t necessarily confused by the act of evaluating sources but by the purpose and point they serve in their writing. A brief interaction in the classroom that begins with a student asking, “Is this a good source for my paper?” is really a bigger discussion about college writing, the students’ previous academic experience, and how they get the help they need. Through dialogue we can begin to uncover students’ needs and cultivate their trust in their own learning process.

In this example we’ve made a brief but total connection. We’ve moved beyond our assumed needs of the student to those they actively expressed. In doing so, we’ve avoided the trap of “virtue caring” where we assume we know what students need and completely bypass the listening and dialogue present in a growthful relationship. These are the caring efforts that “often misfire, and the students who most need to be part of a caring relation suffer most.”<sup>49</sup> In contrast, “relational caring” occurs when we set a foundation of relationship through at-

tentiveness, relational authenticity, and presence.<sup>50</sup> We are creating a potential opportunity for our students to connect with us and us to connect with them in turn. This is the *openness* that leads to exchange and what Elbow calls “the yoghurt classroom,” one that “provides a culture for growth.”<sup>51</sup>

### ***Empathy***

As central as empathy is to caring and connected teaching, it’s a concept that is often misunderstood and maligned. Popular understanding of empathy characterizes it as an emotional reaction, one that is unconscious, innate, and automatic. Yet when viewed through a relational lens, empathy is a “complex cognitive and emotional state... one that requires work towards developing a well-differentiated sense of self as well as an awareness of and appreciation for another’s subjectivity,” or personhood.<sup>52</sup> The practice of empathy is an intentional process that embodies a high degree of cognitive and affective labor to ensure that we are practicing *empathic accuracy*.<sup>53</sup> We are not “attributing to the other feelings that we would have under similar conditions.”<sup>54</sup> We are understanding our reaction, differentiating it from their own, and attending to their state in the learning process. This is best illustrated via the following example:

A student in a psychology course shares a loosely formed research topic idea they’ve been considering with you and their classmates. They are interested in learning more about the relationship between anxiety, sleep, and academic performance, contextualizing their interest by stating that they aren’t getting the kind of sleep they need because they’ve been feeling so stressed out lately. As a teaching librarian, our initial impulses might be to focus on the topic at hand, ignoring the personal anecdote, or to address the personal context with expressions of sympathy and relatability. “I know just how you feel. Work has been crazy and my own sleep has been awful. Don’t worry about figuring out your research right now. Just focus on yourself.” In pursuing the former approach we disregard a critical piece of information and moment of connection the student has shared with us; and in responding with the latter statements we focus on how *we* would want to be talked to in that moment rather than on what the student needs and wants.

To facilitate the empathy needed in Connected Teaching, we need to practice reflection, consider where our feelings begin and where those of the student end, and respond in a way that leaves the connection open to further dialogue. There is a mutuality present in empathy that can seem at odds with the inherent power differential of the classroom. Is a student responsible for showing empathy to a teacher, who has the power to assign grades and structure the learning experience? As librarians we exist outside this traditional teacher-student power dynamic, but we are not without our own power in the classroom. We don’t necessarily give up our power in empathetic, connected teaching experiences. Rather, we ideally facilitate a sense of *power with* students, showing them that we are here to help them learn and grow into their own power as we are empowered to be our best teaching self in the classroom.<sup>55</sup> Empathy is not the act of giving of oneself until there is nothing left. Instead, it gives those engaged in this deliberate practice the opportunity to set boundaries, express vulnerability without fear of repercussion, and seek help in supportive environments.<sup>56</sup> We are then able to “share in both the empowerment and the vulnerability that enables risk taking in teaching and learning, and in doing such, we can all find both joy and security in the work.”<sup>57</sup>

## Disconnection/Reconnection

In better understanding the foundations for high-quality connection, it becomes abundantly clear that Connected Teaching is a way of being in our work as educators, not a checklist of activities.

We cannot ever guarantee the kind of high-quality connection that we want to facilitate in our classrooms, be they one-shot or not, but, as previously mentioned, adopting a relational mindset and practice opens us to the possibility of connection. There are, however, times when connection never materializes or breaks down altogether. While we cannot do much about the former—connection and relationship, are, after all, dependent on more than one person—we can focus on the latter. If our time with students in one-shots is brief, it's important to address moments of disconnection in a reparative manner, and be prepared to let go of situations and individuals for whom connection remains elusive.

## Asymmetrical Primacy

One way that disconnection can take root is by failing to acknowledge the asymmetrical primacy inherent in many educational relationships. Schwartz describes asymmetrical primacy as an uneven perception of the significance of interactions, with the patient-doctor relationship being a prime example.<sup>58</sup> The patient views a visit to the doctor as very important, and has their own needs and questions at the forefront of their mind; however, to the doctor, they are one of many patients they will see that day. Viewing our work as teaching librarians through this lens, we know that professors and students do not place the same importance on one-shot instruction sessions as teaching librarians. Within the teaching librarian-faculty dynamic, the instruction session holds greater weight for the teaching librarian because this is their primary (many times, only) interaction with this class. But for the faculty member, it is one class in a series of many during the semester, a part of what might be a very taxing teaching load. Conversely, within the teaching librarian-student dynamic, a one-shot instruction session for an English composition class might be one of many a librarian facilitates throughout the semester. But to the new college student, this is their first time meeting and learning from an academic librarian.

Considering the asymmetrical primacy inherent in one-shot adjacent teaching relationships is critical to empathetic accuracy and understanding the perspectives of our colleagues and students. As an example, consider the following:

In chatting with one adjunct instructor before the start of a one-shot class for English composition, a librarian learned that he was teaching 6 courses across 2 universities to make ends meet. He wanted to do the best for his students, and in his mind that meant a library instruction session before a research paper, but he did not have the downtime that semester to reconsider his assignment or approach to teaching students about research. In learning this, the librarian was able to resolve feelings of disconnection with the instructor, and refocus on the opportunity to establish a longer-term relationship where they could re-examine a research assignment over the summer months. Conversely, the instructor learned from the librarian just how time-consuming and stressful it was to coordinate one-shots for multiple sections across English composition and understood how valuable their time was throughout the semester. A short but powerful conversation is just one way to understand the disconnection of asymmetrical primacy.

## Sharing Power/Power Dynamics

In our most fulfilling librarian-faculty educational relationships, there is a sense of mutuality and active collaboration. The plans that we make for library instruction (in a one-shot or more)

involve giving each other space to teach according to our own expertise and complementing one-another's knowledge. We are, in essence, modeling collaboration and a healthy, growthful relationship for students. When we co-teach, we are open to being changed by one another, which is recognizable to the other people in the room. We are sharing power with each other as well as the students, because the instructor has taken the time to build relationships with their students before working with the librarian. A climate of care has been established in the course and continues into the one-shot session. We can feel the "good vibes" in the room and the students engaged in learning expect to be heard.

In contrast, our most troublesome librarian-faculty relationships are often marked by misunderstanding and power struggles, or what Rector-Aranda refers to as *hierarchical disconnection*.<sup>59</sup> We have not been able to collaborate in a way that demonstrates mutual respect or a *power with* dynamic, in which power is shared and each party in the relationship feels empowered to do their best work. Here is one example:

After several semesters of trying to work together with an instructor without a satisfactory result, the librarian and the instructor agreed to work with the students separately. The librarian works with the students in this class without the instructor present, allowing librarian and students to connect more easily. This may be due to an existing disconnection between the professor and the students, or a lack of a caring classroom climate; however, it may be friction caused by a power imbalance between the two people leading the session (the instructor and librarian). In this case, repairing the connection between librarian and instructor may no longer be possible, but creating a connection between librarian and students can still occur.

### ***Self-Protection***

As demonstrated in the previous scenario, not all disconnection is necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes educational relationships need to end or be remade into something new. Sometimes resistance simply cannot be overcome. In *Caring Professors: A Model*, Barbara Thayer-Bacon and Charles Bacon recognize that not all students want to be a part of a caring, connected relationship in the classroom.<sup>60</sup> They may be used to a more traditional style of learning and view connection as a waste of time. They may feel uncomfortable with connectedness after multiple attempts at developing connections with instructors have failed over the years.<sup>61</sup> If students are from a marginalized group, they may automatically adopt a stance of relational inauthenticity as a protective measure in the classroom.<sup>62</sup> All of these potentials for disconnection on the part of students are also seen in the teacher librarian or instructor as their own self-protective methods. Teaching is hard. Caring is hard. To engage in relationship in an educational context asks a lot of everyone involved. To connect, we must sort through power dynamics, remain open to relationship despite past failure or trauma, and engage in challenging conversations around identity and what/how we learn. The kind of disconnection that occurs from self-protection is not often or easily repaired, but we can take the opportunity to reflect and learn from it.<sup>63</sup> From that activity, we make ourselves more open to connected teaching relationships in the future.

### **Conclusion**

Noddings reminds us that "a climate in which caring relations flourish"<sup>64</sup> should be a goal for all educators; for some teaching librarians, that notion feels counterintuitive to the circumstances in which we most often teach. A single class session (or less) while working with a professor with whom you may or may not have an established relationship does not seem

ideal for developing trusting relationships with students. Yet we have experienced these moments in time as powerful sites of connection, regardless of time limitations. When we are open to the possibility of high-quality connection in one-shot instruction sessions, we are offering the possibility of establishing and maintaining a climate of care. When we create opportunities for receptive listening<sup>65</sup> and reflection in these brief classes, we demonstrate mattering to the students and to their instructors, opening the possibility for movement and change. The quality of our presence in the classroom becomes greater than the duration of the encounter.

The structures and demands present in academia often prevent us from concentrating on quality versus quantity, making it more important that we move toward those moments of connection. By cultivating care with empathy and authenticity, we communicate to others that we see them as vital participants in the learning process. We can refocus on responding to expressed needs as carers, during which we may need to “put aside temporarily the demands of the institution.”<sup>66</sup> And when moments of disconnection occur, it is okay to view them as a type of real injury<sup>67</sup> from which we need to heal, through reflection and regrouping for our future interactions. We currently are working and learning in a time of tremendous fatigue; it is both more difficult for us to maintain enthusiasm for teaching and for the students to reciprocate as part of a mutual relationship.<sup>68</sup> Mending these injuries and disconnections may not be within our reach, and recognizing when to let go and seek alternatives is an important part of this process, as well as honoring where everyone is in this moment. This intentional cultivation of care and connection requires that we also nourish ourselves through self-care and care from encouraging colleagues; seeking out those who support us through mutual respect and empathy will help us further our own climate of care.

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# “Slow Your Roll”: Making Time for Reflection and Diverse Epistemic Practices in Library Instruction

Lalitha Nataraj and April Ibarra Siqueiros

As librarians consider ways to engage students in research, particularly those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), it's increasingly apparent that the transactional nature of the one-shot instructional model is inadequate for fostering thoughtful and critical discussions about information literacy and the scholarly publishing cycle. The one-shot also amplifies librarians' attendant anxieties related to quantitative data collection and capitalistic work expectations. Additionally, socially constructed ideas around time, along with narrow epistemic perspectives that center Western thought, stanch librarians' abilities to critically teach students about the research process. Incorporating autoethnography to exemplify the concepts discussed in the paper, the authors argue for a slow, relational approach that deprioritizes widget-like technical training in favor of student and librarian reflection, redresses epistemic injustices in scholarly research, and, most importantly, celebrates multiple epistemologies and expertise.

## Introduction

Prior to the pandemic, our teaching and learning department was already contemplating ways to make instruction less transactional and tutorial-focused to embrace a critical information literacy pedagogy that encourages thoughtful reflection about how information sources are created and disseminated. In her May 2021 *College & Research Libraries* (C&RL) guest editorial, Nicole Pagowsky noted that “the fabric of transaction is practicality, which prioritizes efficiency and is framed as common sense” (p. 303). This practicality, manifested in the ways we represent ourselves to library users as “pragmatic, solution-oriented professionals,” (Hudson, 2017, p. 207) is grounded in a white, Eurocentric monoculture that pervades higher education values and norms. Whiteness has always been the dominant worldview in the United States and is a “socially informed ontological and epistemological orientation” (Gusa, 2010, p. 468). With domination comes the “ability to set the terms by which other groups and classes must operate” (p. 469). In this way, whiteness is expressed through the institution’s urgent insis-

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tence on collecting quantitative data that is then used to assess student success and justify the library's value (Nicholson et al., 2019). D'Ignazio and Klein ask us to be critical of power structures in data collection by explicitly naming whose interests are prioritized in the dataset and whose are marginalized or completely left out (2020). Similarly aligned with this thinking, Nicholson et al. point out that only focusing on "what is quantifiable and measurable in the present moment in order to construct a known future" (2019, p. 66) elides historical legacies of marginalization and structural inequities.

Instruction librarians measure and collect data on information literacy outcomes during the one-shot session, which has been the "*dominating* [emphasis added] force of how we engage in library instruction" (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 300). The one-shot emphasizes a positivist, Westernized research framework that assesses students' competency "based on predetermined ideas of what a person should know, which is then measured indirectly through various forms of "objective" tests. Such an approach does not address whether that person is capable of putting that knowledge into practice" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 11). When it is completely unrelated to or disconnected from the curriculum content, the one-shot becomes an ahistoric and immutable tool that "has no memory of where information literacy has been and no vision of where it is going. It is ephemeral within cycles of ineffectiveness" (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 300). Often, assignments leave little room for students to be critical of existing research, which results in information literacy teaching praxis rarely focusing on the long-standing problematic nature of scholarly publishing. The global north has revealed deep-seated racial bias by elevating English-language content and limiting access while also conflating "low-quality publishing" with scholarship that is open access and/or originates in the global south (Roh & Gabler, 2020, p. 142).

The publishing dilemma is part of what the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines as scholarly communication, or "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use" (Association of College and Research Libraries, n.d.). Given the short amount of face-to-face time we have with students during the one-shot, instruction librarians very briefly (if at all) touch on scholarly communication, let alone its troubling, systemic inequities. The research process becomes staid due to our constant emphasis on objectivity and minimal inclusion of the researchers' own positionalities within the scholarship. Ideally, engagement and investment in research stems from the students' intellectual curiosity, piqued by their own connection to the topic. Yet, students struggle to acknowledge their own pre-existing interests or expertise because they're preoccupied with locating and citing external scholarly sources, often part of an arbitrary assignment requirement. Frequently, students don't understand *why* scholarly, peer-reviewed journals are esteemed in academia, nor do they realize that these sources of information are often steeped in white research traditions that have excluded other epistemologies, notably those from non-white cultures (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Epistemology is the study of knowledge while epemicide is the systematic suppression, devaluation, and killing of knowledge systems that fall outside of Western traditions (Patin et al., 2021). An incredible reckoning faces library and information studies (LIS) workers, but instead we continue to wreak epemic violence through our tacit approval and reverence of the peer-review process (2021).

Librarians peddle the fiction that peer-reviewed sources are credible, noting reasons such as they're always written by experts in the field, filled with objective data, and are rarely

biased due to the double-blind peer-review process—criteria that we have deeply failed to unpack and critique with emerging undergraduate scholars. When disciplinary faculty ask undergraduates to “find and independently negotiate research” (Carlozzi, 2018, p. 660) without encouraging serious critique of that scholarship, it is hardly surprising that students profoundly struggle with identifying appropriate sources. By framing the discovery and evaluation of scholarly articles as “library skills,” professors reduce this critical aspect of the research process to a technical task without context (Ackerman & Arbour, 2016). Professors often forget that they’ve long relied on what Leckie calls the “expert model,” which entails a “long process of acculturation, an in-depth knowledge of the discipline, awareness of important scholars working in particular areas, participation in a system of informal scholarly communication, and a view of research as a nonsequential, nonlinear process with a large degree of ambiguity and serendipity” (1996, p. 202). Undergraduates often do not possess the built-up years of disciplinary knowledge or scholarly networks from the outset to navigate resources confidently, and they also share with us that they simply don’t have time to do the requisite background research needed for a foundational understanding of their topic. Because “they do not think in terms of an information-seeking strategy, but rather in terms of a coping strategy” (p. 202) students admit to crafting papers with preformed arguments and then adding citations afterward to support their assertions. Rather than being guided by (or even initiated into) existing research, students attempt to meet their professors’ requirements without necessarily inserting themselves into the scholarly conversation.

The one-shot instruction session complicates librarians’ abilities to engage in meaningful discussions about the nature of research and its complete immersion in Western pedagogy because we are so absorbed in granular, technical details of database searching. Constrained by limited face-to-face time with students in the classroom, as well as increasing teaching loads for first-year information literacy courses, instruction librarians frequently lack the space to self-critique their work, as well as help students be reflective about what they’re learning. The one-shot also amplifies the attendant anxiety of “centering... quantifiable success” (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 303) and the capitalistic expectation of doing more work with less time (Nicholson, 2019) in information literacy instruction programs. In addition to contending with accountability measures meant to regulate (and potentially undermine) librarians’ work, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) workers find their expertise regarding their approach to teaching challenged more often than their white counterparts (Nataraj et al., 2020). Working in rigid environments that prioritize quantitative metrics over qualitative ones forecloses librarians’ attempts to converse with students about justice in information processes. Suppressing justice-oriented dialogue in the classroom is especially damaging to BIPOC librarians since this work not only validates our BIPOC students, but is also a redressal of the marginalization we ourselves have felt within librarianship; in the classroom, with our students, we harness a collective power.

In this paper, we discuss how socially constructed ideas around time (Nicholson, 2016; Drabinski, 2017; Shahjahan, 2015, 2019; and Soklaridis et al., 2021) impact students’ ability to self-reflect in the research process. We suggest that moving away from the one-shot session into more sustained, reflective spaces allows librarians to repudiate deficit-thinking frameworks and empower students to articulate inclusive student-scholar identities that account for their cultural wealth, which includes linguistic skills and familial and community networks (Yosso, 2005). Using autoethnography, we reflect on our experiences as two cisgender female

BIPOC instruction librarians striving to consistently have a social justice orientation in our work by incorporating culturally responsive and validating pedagogies (Quiñonez & Olivas, 2020). Entrenchment in Western knowledge systems and structures emphasizes separation and competition, but transgressive and relational pedagogies (hooks, 1994; Rendón, 2012) helps us establish affirming familia counterspaces (Quiñonez & Olivas, 2020) where BIPOC students and librarians thrive. Taking inspiration from Leung and López-McKnight's call to dream revolutionary futures (2020), we argue for re-envisioning the information literacy classroom as a site of radical possibility in which we celebrate the co-existence of multiple epistemologies and expertise.

### **"Who has the time?" Neoliberalism, chrononormativity, and the positivist paradigm**

While introspection and reflection are emphasized in disciplinary curriculum, in our experience they are not fully considered or acknowledged instruction methods that professors expect librarians to use in one-shot information literacy orientation sessions. Rather, information literacy is narrowly perceived in such a way where librarians are seen as "more responsible than faculty for helping students construct strategies and equally or less responsible than faculty on all other performance indicators" (Kelly, 2019, p. 229). When professors do not have clearly defined parameters for a one-shot information session beyond a 10-minute talk that includes a cursory database demonstration, it feels fraught for the librarian to raise a more considered teaching approach (Meulemans & Carr, 2013). Or, when librarians' methods are described as "magical," reflection and critical research scaffolding processes (such as moving from basic to advanced knowledge consumption and comprehension) are rendered invisible in the IL classroom.

Reflective pedagogy takes time that isn't often afforded to librarians during the one-shot, given what Shahjahan refers to as the neoliberalization—policies and practices associated with free-market capitalism—of education where "academic work has become more intensified through technologies and through corporate techniques of managerialism, accountability, and surveillance" (2015, pp. 488–89). Nicholson notes that information literacy is one manifestation of academic capitalism where "librarians...stake a claim for themselves in the higher education curriculum—and more broadly, in the information or knowledge economy" (2016, p. 27). Nicholson (2016) and Drabinski (2017) use the Greek temporal concepts of *chronos* and *kairos* to explain how reflective practices in library work are impacted by neoliberal logics of production and efficiency. *Kairos* is a specific moment in time "married to action and context" (Drabinski, 2017, p. 77) where librarians navigate two types of kairotic narratives: compliance and critical pedagogy; the former is embedded in neoliberal bureaucracy including data tracking and measurement of outcomes, while the latter (which we discuss in greater detail later in the paper) entails engagement with "critical theories and practices that contest traditional notions of power and authority and are increasingly becoming the mainstream of information literacy work" (p. 78). *Kairos* is the value ascribed to time, based upon various social, political, or economic contexts (Drabinski, 2017), while *chronos* is how we manage our work within the literal constraints of time (Nicholson, 2016).

Our understanding of *chronos* is derived from a "Judeao-Christian notion of time as linear, constant and irreversible" (Shahjahan, 2015, p. 490). When we started quantifying the measurement of time in minutes, hours, seasons, and other units of measure, we became more

conscious of productivity and efficiency (2015). Eventually, Western colonial logic weaponized time as a means to classify “indigenous and other subaltern individuals and groups in terms of the degree to which they are out of sync, behind in development, anachronistic, and resistant to progress” (p. 490). Our awareness of time in higher education is heightened by greater regulation and less tolerance of diverse (and slower) approaches that might derail efficiency (Nataraj et al., 2020).

In the *kairos* of compliance (Drabinski, 2017), librarians have adopted a corporatized, and at times, impersonal approach to teaching—*chronos*—due to the university’s shift from lifelong learning and exploration into a preparatory space for students to eventually enter and contribute to the global knowledge economy (Nicholson, 2016). Consequently, the one-shot session manifests when professors struggle to negotiate a balance between “[accelerated] tempo of teaching, learning, and research” (p. 30) and room to self-reflect and develop critical pedagogy. Soklaridis et al. refer to this temporal tension in academia as chrononormativity, where faculty must follow particular expectations to meet standards of tenure or academic promotion (2021). Scholars are evaluated based upon quantity of publications and citations, operating under the principle that working faster results in tangible rewards, whereas a slow approach calls into question a person’s qualifications and ability to be successful in academia (Soklaridis et al., 2021). The concomitant pressures placed on faculty results in pedagogy that follows the “highly scheduled and regulated rhythm of bureaucrats, managed professionals, and student-clients” (Nicholson, 2016, p. 29). This rhythm disrupts librarians’ abilities to critically connect curriculum content to information literacy concept; we are also treated like interchangeable widgets (“if you’re not available, can another librarian fill in?”) rather than valued for our subject expertise and relational approaches to teaching.

The *kairos* of compliance further manifests in professors’ perceptions of information literacy pedagogy through a positivist paradigmatic lens that emphasizes objective realities “without the values of the researchers or participants influencing its development. Knowledge, when appropriately developed, is truth—that, it is certain, congruent with reality, and accurate.” (Park et al., 2020, p. 691). By limiting the types of resources students must work with, professors elevate positivist research by applying natural sciences methodologies to social contexts and disregarding the application and value of qualitative knowledge (Deitering, 2017). We frequently encounter assignments where students must locate a scholarly, peer-reviewed empirical research article on a topic of their choice with the caveat that the information must come from a specific list of disciplinary journals. Students experience frustration as they attempt to identify the task priority: is it finding relevant scholarship on their topic or ensuring that the information is sourced from what Wilson (1991) referred to as a cognitive authority? According to Wilson, a cognitive authority has specialized expertise but this authoritativeness “is a matter of social perception and recognition. It is not what you ‘really’ know but what others think you know that gives you authority; you get cognitive authority by getting others to think you know things” (Wilson, 1991, p. 260). Our attempts to steer users toward vital sources that are not published in journals from the professor’s list feel fruitless because students wish to follow the assignment exactly as it is written. Librarians are baffled by such a task—is the assignment’s purpose to encourage students’ critical engagement with the scholarly conversation or to underscore what is deemed credible and authoritative in the academy? These are not mutually exclusive goals, but students treat them as such, unable or unwilling to critically question their professors’ expectations. Cognitive authority saves the

researcher time from having to do in-depth checking of expertise because knowledge is assessed and accepted at face value based upon “respected” criteria such as the journal’s high impact factor, English-language, and rigorous peer-review process. Here, cognitive authority represents epistemic dominance, underscoring that information cannot be construed as neutral or objective, given that its creation and dissemination is intertwined with processes that privilege Western knowledge (Morales & Williams, 2021).

### **Something’s Missing: How the One-Shot Perpetuates Epistemic Injustice**

In discussing cognitive authority and positivism, we consider what Fricker terms hermeneutical injustice, a type of epistemic injustice where unequal power and lack of hermeneutical—theory of interpretation—resources severely impinge upon the ability of nondominant groups to understand or explain their specific experiences (2007). Epistemic value is determined by those who hold elevated stature based upon white privilege while those who navigate various intersections of oppression, including BIPOC women, are viewed as “less credible...[and] unworthy of consideration, [which creates] strong divides between those who are considered ‘experts’ and those who are considered ‘ignorant’ (Albornoz et al., 2020, p. 67). The one-shot instruction session is a venue where librarians perpetuate hermeneutical injustice (Patin et al., 2021), especially when we fail to surface questions of white supremacy in scholarly information processes.

We (the authors) grapple with meeting professors’ expectations of what constitutes the “proper” way to do research while also contending with our own complicity in perpetuating epistemic injustice, particularly the hermeneutical type, through the one-shot session. We see epistemic justice as a threshold concept that we had to initially negotiate in our teaching. Originated by Meyer and Land (2003), the theory of threshold concepts states there are singular and fundamental “habits of mind, dispositions, and practices that are unique to [particular disciplines]” (Atherton & Meulemans, 2020, p. 151). Atherton and Meulemans use the threshold concepts framework (TCF) as a pedagogical tool in transformational learning (TL) to show how particular characteristics in TCF like *liminality*—occupation of a nonlinear, in-between space where learners realize they “have not grasped a concept, are aware they do not grasp the concept, and do not yet know what to do in order to progress in their learning” (2020, p. 153)—leads to a complete reformulation of frame of meaning that cannot be unlearned. Once we understood the highly biased and problematic structure of academic publishing, we had to do a couple of things: 1) separate our LIS positionality from our BIPOC positionality as we became aware that we lacked the hermeneutics (or means to interpret) to name what was missing from the scholarly conversation—voices like ours; and 2) refuse to be silent about epistemicide and implore our students (especially those who are BIPOC) to be critical of the sources they had previously accepted without question.

Patin et al. note that curricular injustice occurs when there are no physical resources, including scholarship that falls outside of dominant knowledge frameworks, as well as scholars who have an intimate understanding and application of non-Western knowledge, to overcome epistemicide (2021). If the status quo curriculum relies on ahistorical notions of Western superiority, students assume that the curriculum is based upon a “‘natural’ progression of knowledge building over time” (p. 1310), instead of an intentional quelling of other ways of knowing. Guided by a *kairos* of compliance, the one-shot instruction session impedes epistemic growth, but if reconfigured through a *kairos* of critical pedagogy, it can be a site for liberatory, transformational learning.

In a *kairos* of critical pedagogy (Drabinski, 2017), librarians confront existing structures of power as well as carve out spaces that illuminate and uplift epistemologies and ontologies—ways of being—in academia that have been historically relegated to the margins. One critical step toward liberatory praxis is pedagogical dissent (Rendón, 2012), where we actively resist ingrained systems by “[working] through the political structures of the institution” (p. 114). Because of our vulnerability in the mostly white spaces of academia, BIPOC librarians lack the political capital to immediately (and completely) dispense with the hallowed one-shot format. Still, we work with what we have by applying the key principle of emergent strategy,\* “small is good, small is all” (brown, 2017, p. 41), to slowly shift the paradigm through microchanges.

### Ruminating on the One-Shot: Autoethnographic Reflections

Here, we turn to autoethnography, which challenges majoritarian narratives by providing space to reflect and, at times, heal the wrongs that have been done to marginalized communities. Autoethnography “focuses on self-interrogation and self-reflection” (Quiñonez et al., p. 253), and as two BIPOC librarians, this process can make us feel incredibly vulnerable, particularly as we discuss ways to bring cultural wealth of Communities of Color (Yosso, 2005) into the classroom. These assets include linguistic capital, or the ability to share information in more than one language as well as “communicate via visual art, music, or poetry” (Yosso, 2005, p. 78). April is bilingual as well as a visual artist and brings these vital aspects of her cultural identity into the classroom. We also draw on our immigrant (Lalitha) and first-generation (April) heritages to illuminate how our own “sense of...history, memory, and cultural intuition” (p. 79) help us connect with and validate our BIPOC students.

#### *April:*

Inspired by the work of Quiñonez and Olivas, I learned about using validation in the classroom to affirm student voices and experiences and “nurtu[re] a familia atmosphere built on trust and familiarity” (2020, p. 5). Their research helped me continue to build off of their application of Rendón’s validation theory framework (1994) to first-year library instruction. The General Education Lifelong Learning (GEL) course at CSUSM teaches first-year students how to be engaged in the classroom and in campus life. Lessons include being open about the hidden curriculum; that is, the oftentimes unspoken expectations of college students, such as knowing disciplinary vocabulary and how to write in the style of a certain discipline. Students learn about evaluating information and how to read and analyze scholarly articles. GEL has certain sections that are geared toward specific programs, two of which include Pathways to Academic Success and Opportunities (PASO),<sup>†</sup> which is taught by instructors who are trained to work with Latinx students and College Assistance Migrant Program Students (CAMP),<sup>‡</sup> which is geared to students who come from migrant and seasonal farm worker backgrounds.

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\* adrienne maree brown’s Emergent Strategy (2017), inspired by the work of Octavia Butler, is a radical self-help philosophy that provides a blueprint for the future. We understand that the world is composed of ever-shifting patterns; but, by understanding and learning from these, we have the power to influence change.

† <https://www.csusm.edu/paso/index.html>

‡ <https://www.csusm.edu/camp/index.html>

One summer, I was assigned to work with two GEL PASO and CAMP sections where the instructors decided to combine their classes. When we all met to discuss the lesson plans, one of them asked me, “What’s your story?” I talked to them a bit about my background; that I was a child of Mexican immigrant parents from Tijuana (a city on the other side of the San Diego border), a first-generation college student, and the first in my extended family to earn a master’s degree, for which I moved to New York City. I talked to them about what it was like growing up crossing the border back and forth and how much impostor syndrome I had during graduate school. I even shared a story of how I was homesick during that time and cried in a train after hearing a subway performer play Mexican folk music on an acoustic guitar. The professors asked if I’d be comfortable sharing my stories with students throughout the sessions since it connected to some of the lived experiences of the students and I agreed that it could add a meaningful layer. Prior to this, I had taught only one GEL PASO section where I briefly mentioned being a first-generation college student who struggled to navigate higher education and how the GEL learning outcomes would have benefited me. My colleague, Torie, shared that she never had a class like GEL to show her the ropes of college, so her vulnerability was surprising to me, because that’s not something I had ever seen incorporated in library instruction before. The summer I taught for the combined CAMP/PASO GEL sections, I shared my story to kick things off and noticed throughout the session that both instructors engaged me by asking me questions, either in connection to my college experience or a tip I could share about a particular part of the lesson plan I was covering. I realized afterward that they were validating me, by making space for my own story while also showing students how to engage with a librarian by asking me to elaborate on different parts of the research process. But the process was also relational because the professors foster connection by drawing me also into their course, emphasizing the importance of our cultural assets in the academy.

The other piece of this is that PASO/CAMP GEL instructors validate students before I meet with them. This stood out to me the first time I taught one of their sections because the students were actively participating in the session when asked questions and engaged with the activities. I also noticed that each time I taught one of these sections I learned from students and the professors. It’s a cycle of sorts—I’m there to teach, but I’m also there to learn; it becomes a community of learners and a community of validation.

Given this experience, I incorporated my background as a visual artist to devise a creative teaching medium for PASO/CAMP GEL sections: a research scrapbook zine that students used to document their time with me. I wanted to incorporate this in Spring 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic took place and working from home meant we shifted our teaching to an asynchronous, virtual mode. For the following two semesters, I taught these sections virtually, but the lively participation I experienced before started to wane and I felt like something was missing in this modality. I had trouble finding ways to incorporate my zine idea in a virtual setting. Though GEL PASO returned to in-person instruction in Fall 2021, the instruction librarians collectively agreed to provide only virtual instruction for first-year courses that semester. Still, I shared my zine idea with the professor and we coordinated a handoff of materials before the first session I had with the students. The zine included the activity worksheets we used when we taught in person, but I wanted to find ways to cultivate validating and relational conversations with students through a means that facilitated authorship of their own stories in a creative, reflective way. Based on research from Quiñonez and Olivas (2020), the first inner page included these self-reflection prompts:

Take a moment to think about where you are in your student-scholar transformation. You might be able to answer all or part of these questions, or you might want to return to them as we talk more about these experiences. Write or draw out your answers below:

What existing skills, interests, lived experience, identities do you have?

How might these influence the way you see yourself as a student-scholar and how you perceive or approach the research process?

Before providing time to answer these questions, I shared my own connection to them with a slide to visualize each part. For the first question, I mentioned I'm an artist, that I took up guitar again recently, and how I grew up crossing the San Ysidro-Tijuana border back and forth. I connected these activities to the research process because I value making visual/creative approaches to research, getting frustrated by guitar notes reminds me of when I feel stuck in researching, and often identify barriers in research just like the border wall is a physical barrier. When I asked students to share, they mirrored my responses; one shared a similar story about playing guitar and how they need something to hook them in a song they're learning in order to keep going and how that is similar to doing research, and another how they are also an artist and that impacts their approach to research in a similar way. Cultivating validation by making space for these insights allows students to identify and reflect on their own skills and unique cultural assets so that they can then connect how it all factors into their educational experience.

### ***Lalitha:***

Collaborative practices are vital to critiquing epistemic practices that stanch our ability to come up with sustainable solutions to issues that affect us in the real world. In Fall 2020, I joined a campuswide working group at CSUSM currently working on regional climate justice issues, comprising faculty and staff across a wide range of disciplines. The group is broken up into subcommittees focusing on different aspects of addressing climate justice. As the subject liaison to both the American Indian Studies and Environmental Studies departments, I volunteered for the Climate Justice and Indigenous Knowledge (CJIK) subcommittee, which explores how indigenous knowledge is central to any and all resolutions about climate issues; the work of CJIK includes developing a student-produced podcast and participation in a broader campus climate justice teach-in Spring 2022. During the teach-in, which included valuable input from our student community, I drew on scholarship by Eve Tuck, K. Wayne Yang, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith—prominent Indigenous Studies scholars—to emphasize how the library facilitates conversations through a decolonizing lens, which is vital to rectifying the damage done by Western knowledge systems to Indigenous communities.

Tuck and Yang note that decolonization isn't a casual project; rather, it explicitly concerns how settler colonialism has "[disrupted]... Indigenous relationships to land [and] represents profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (2012, p. 5). Linda Tuhiwai Smith powerfully writes that "...'Research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary...It appalls us that the West can desire, extract, and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultane-

ously reject the [creators of these ideas]" (2021, p. 1). The first step toward curricular justice is not a question of simply "making room" for the Indigenous epistemologies in the one-shot classroom, but building the actual room around them. Inspired by Nimisha Bhat's library instruction that de-centers whiteness, I asked students in an anthropology course on healing modalities to share in a crowdsourcing activity (2022), what types of knowledge they consider valid in scholarly research and I received rote responses (e.g. scholarly articles, books, etc.). However, when I stressed the importance of centering indigenous perspectives (Bhat, 2022), particularly since scholarship on allopathic medicine dominates database content, I really sensed a distinct shift, a palpable relaxation among students. Some of the BIPOC students confided that they were researching curanderos—traditional healers in Latin America—and felt personally connected to their topic but weren't sure if they could write from an experiential lens. Here, I validated students, assuring them that their own pre-existing knowledge on their topic could not be discounted, and actually presented an opportunity for them to enter (and redirect) the scholarly conversation. Additionally, the professor with whom I often collaborate on this particular course asks students to interview practitioners of their chosen healing modalities and weighs this part of the assignment more than locating traditional scholarship.

My experiences with the CJIK and anthropology healing modality course have taught me that, when it comes to conversations around pedagogical practice related to Indigenous epistemic justice, BIPOC librarians, especially, have to break away from "how it's always been done" because such educational traditions were designed to make us question our own cultural beliefs and be complicit in our own oppression. While this realization initially saddened me (all that time lost!), it has also been liberating to dismantle retrograde views and herald a new way of doing things in the classroom. But most importantly we have to trust Indigenous scholars and tribal communities to be the stewards, authorities, and disseminators of their knowledge systems.

### **Shifting Away from the One-Shot Mindset**

So, rather than doing away entirely with one-shot instruction, we take a structural and holistic approach toward understanding how a one-shot mindset, which emphasizes rational and objective processes, has diminished our ability to be imaginative and inclusive in the IL classroom. We have also begun gravitating toward epistemic inclusivity through Sentipensante Pedagogy, which emphasizes the tension between what is observed and what is intuited. Derived from a term in the work of Eduardo Galeano, sentipensante is "a combination of two Spanish words: sentir, which means to sense or feel, and pensar, to think" (Rendón, 2012, p. 136) and where rationality and intuition coexist. Sentipensante counters epistemic injustice through transdisciplinary pedagogical approaches based upon simultaneously valuing scientific exploration while also "eliciting social awareness within the student and teacher, and some form of social change in and out of the classroom" (p. 136). Sensing/thinking practice cultivates what Rendón calls personas educadas, individuals who navigate objective, rational types of information (2012) while also drawing from their own funds of knowledge (FoK). Originally coined by anthropologists Velez Ibañez and Greenberg (1992), funds of knowledge is a term used to describe the culturally specific household skills to help marginalized communities navigate the dominant culture. In the context of pedagogical practices, FoK is the experiential knowledge students bring into the classroom to enhance their learning, as well as challenge deficit thinking educational frameworks. In valuing funds of knowledge, we engage in what hooks calls

transgressive pedagogy or calling on students to cross established boundaries of learning and make “education the practice of freedom” (1994, p. 12). But to encourage students’ participation in epistemic inclusivity, we establish a *familia* counterspace by showing emotion and vulnerability in the classroom through self-disclosure about our own educational journeys (Quiñonez & Olivas, 2020; Rendón, 2012). Through teaching and our own scholarship, we address (and redress) the epistemic harm caused by deficit frameworks, including the assumption that “minority students...are at fault for poor academic performance because... [they] enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills” (Yosso, 2005, p. 75). Such perceptions foster a ripe environment to disregard and diminish pre-existing cultural capital of Communities of Color in order to privilege White knowledge (Yosso, 2005).

To repair the damage wrought by formative educational experiences, we rely on relational-cultural theory (RCT)—a therapeutic framework that examines the complexities of human relationships—to show how revealing our own vulnerabilities and being authentic in the classroom can engender trust (Quiñonez et al., 2021). How do we make time for this kind of engagement? It is in this moment or *kairos* that we make a definitive choice, which initially feels risky for untenured BIPOC librarians who are constantly having to conform to and justify their roles within a largely white profession (Nataraj et al., 2020). Ford observes that the library profession seems to prioritize empirical and quantitative research for our own scholarship because, “*on the whole, it takes less time* [emphasis added]” (p. 236). “For academic librarians whose main duties are to serve patrons, whose education and training is an applied profession, not a doctoral degree in a research field, it makes sense that straightforward research methods dominate our literature” (p. 236). But our commitment to BIPOC students inspires us to “teach to transgress” (hooks, 1994) when we bring our own valuable knowledge into the one-shot session, which includes sharing scholarly contributions of BIPOC scholars and normalizing speaking Spanish or code switching in the classroom (Quiñonez & Olivas, 2020).

Another epistemic shift entails inclusion of interpretive research paradigms where the “emphasis is on sensemaking, description, and detail...[and] human action constitutes subjective interpretations of meanings” (Given, 2008). Interpretive paradigms challenge positivism by legitimizing subjectivity and making room for multiple epistemologies in research, which is an exciting possibility in the IL classroom since it relates to the formation of student-scholar identities. Lalitha has also started gently informing professors and students that she will no longer spend inordinate amounts of time in the one-shot demonstrating effective search techniques within algorithmically biased databases; instead, she pivoted to uncover student expertise and curiosity to help users become more invested in their research topics. We now encourage students to spend more time going down internet rabbit holes like investigating “unacceptable” sources such as Wikipedia, or even perusing Instagram and Twitter hashtags to develop salient research questions and search keywords. These “small” changes in our lesson plans create a greater impact, in terms of how librarians ultimately retain agency in the classroom while also empowering BIPOC students to privilege their cultural assets. When we bring up bias, we are not just talking about how research is conducted to illuminate only one particular “side” of an issue (though that’s obviously critical as well), we are also surfacing the overall problematic structure of scholarly publishing that has historically omitted the work of women and BIPOC, which is a deeper dive than most students and their professors expect in an information literacy orientation. We observe that there’s often a note of pleasant surprise from some of the professors when we raise issues of epistemic and scholarly publishing bias with undergraduates.

## Conclusion: A Radical Praxis of Reflection

We see the limitations and disservice that happen when the primary or sole request in one-shot sessions is to demonstrate database searching (or, some other discrete skill) since this is seen as the more practical or useful skill. Indeed, that is a part of the research process, but centering practicality obscures the uncomfortable, liminal spaces that students occupy when moving from basic to in-depth comprehension of their topics. Too, the process of reflection gets short shrift, which is unfortunate since it is an especially important concept introduced to students in general education courses, often taken during their first year. While continuing to be confined by one-shot sessions, we aspire to make them meaningful, and yet library instruction still feels Sisyphean, particularly when students and professors cannot progress beyond a narrow view of information literacy grounded in technicality rather than criticality. More radical, transformational action is needed to completely break free of the *kairos* of compliance and move us towards a liberatory *kairos* of critical pedagogy. To that end, we “slow our roll,” advocating for more thoughtful, considered processes that strengthen librarians’ positionality as instructors and co-learners, rather than trainers.

Giving students the space and guidance to reflect and create self-referential learning objects such as zines counters quantitative data assessment practices, simultaneously providing them with validating artifacts to which they can return over and over as they refine their information literacy skills. Qualitative data from zines also offer both librarians and students a profound understanding of how BIPOC students construct their scholar identities and act as counternarratives to epistemic white supremacy. Zines, along with de-centering whiteness in IL instruction, are part of what Hall and Tandon refer to as knowledge democracy, which is a constellation of strategies intended to move us beyond reflection into collective action (2017). One of these actions includes collaborating with professors on curriculum mapping by auditing syllabi (Patin et al., 2021) to create scaffolded information literacy curriculum that inspires the necessary thinking vital to dismantling extant ideas around scholarly creation in favor of rebuilding educational structures anew (Leung & McKnight, 2020). bell hooks wrote that transgressive pedagogy invokes experience “as a way of knowing that coexists in a nonhierarchal way with other ways of knowing, [so as to lessen] the possibility that it can be used to silence” (1994, p. 84). ¡Seguimos adelante! Let’s raise our voices and get on with it.

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# Library Tautology: A Reenactment of the One-Shot

Nora Almeida

*I have the hammer, I will smash anybody who threatens, however remotely, the company way of life.<sup>1</sup>*

If there's one thing you learn today, let it be this: keywords. Not specific keywords but the idea of them. If you whisper the correct keywords into the algorithm, you will achieve relevance. If you don't achieve relevance on the first try (which is super common), imagine you're an academic with a specialization in a super-niche disciplinary area who wrote a research article. Then imagine keywords you (they) would use and try those.<sup>2</sup>

I used to start with "write down every word you can think of related to your research topic" but no one understood why we wouldn't just google.

Why do you think you're here? I say now at the beginning, why even use the library?

One student says "the library is more reliable." But they don't say what it's more reliable than.

I try it a different way: what kinds of sources might you find at the library that you can't find on the internet?

"Books," someone says. And they're right but it's not the answer I was hoping for.

If there's one thing you learn today, let it be this: a cursory understanding of knowledge production and dissemination processes, which is why we need to log in from off campus.<sup>3</sup>

Show of hands...has anyone ever encountered a paywall in the wild?

A short economics lesson: Academics create intellectual products that are trapped in these databases. The labor of intellectual production is unwaged and subsequently monetized by companies who sell it back to universities. So these products are attached to capitalist value but indirectly. Like I'm standing in front of you getting paid for this. And you're paying to be here but you're not paying me.<sup>4</sup>

Not just anyone can read this stuff...is what I'm saying. Without the login.

Questions?

I'm sorry but I don't know *your* username or password. After our library session you can visit the understaffed help desk downstairs.

Transition: I've internalized a concept and I'd like to transmit it to you but I also want you to engage in constructing it.

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Can you guess what it is?

Good guess but a university can't be the author because a place doesn't have the capacity to write.

A hint: some of the people who write academic articles are in this room.

"Students?" someone offers, hesitantly. Sometimes, I say, but usually professors.

We all look at their professor who seems startled and is probably an adjunct who juggles so many contingent jobs that they don't have time to write.<sup>5</sup>

And, I say, lowering my voice a little as though to let them in on a secret...when I'm not teaching students how to do research, I write academic articles about teaching students how to do research.<sup>6</sup>

This does not accurately describe my scholarly output.

The students look skeptical, like they can't think of a single human being who would want to read an article like that. And I empathize.

Confession: I thrive in an atmosphere that combines boredom with urgency. I rely on meta-analysis as a pedagogical crutch.

Reminder: your own experiences are examples of primary sources if you write them down. We are all knowledge producers here.

Watching you try to use the interface makes me an empirical researcher.

Now, I will conduct labor on behalf of a non-intuitive platform.<sup>7</sup> "EBSCO abhors a preposition," is a joke I like that no student has ever understood.<sup>8</sup>

See how you can slide the date filter until you are confined within a specific timeframe—like recursive intervals of 50 minutes. Or you can use these radio buttons like you're shopping online, an experience you've likely had before.<sup>9</sup>

Later we can unpack the "find it" button because I like unearthing broken links behind the discovery layer in front of a live audience.

Is anyone feeling confused? This interaction doesn't have a lot of context so that's totally normal.<sup>10</sup>

Transition: I'm going to roam around while you engage in active learning or experiential learning or learning by discovery. I'm just a facilitator, I say, winking at the professor who is grading papers and doesn't notice me.<sup>11</sup>

Is everyone finding stuff?

Advice: if you're not getting what you need, try a different operator.

Reminder: the database is not predictive but responds to certain directives. For example, univers\* = universal = university.<sup>12</sup>

Let's evaluate some sources. How about this article about public sector austerity? Let's take a look before the vendor cuts off access because we're behind on payments.<sup>13</sup>

Is this a reliable source?

That's true. Reliability is subjective....and contextual but let's gauge how this critical framing is landing with your professor.<sup>14</sup> They're not into it. Let's talk more about the indicators of reality. I'm sorry, I mean: reliability.<sup>15</sup>

Where on this virtual artifact would you look for those?

If there's one thing you learn today, let it be this: always be skeptical but also always defer to the assignment guidelines that your professor never shared with me.<sup>16</sup>

I'm assuming there is an assignment and will reference it often to lend our interaction gravitas.

Confession: I believe the capacity to spontaneously construct a high-energy performance is an asset as a critical pedagogue. However, I have questions about the conflation of efficacy and eye contact.<sup>17</sup>

Which rubric would you use if you were me?<sup>18</sup>

Sadly, we're almost out of time but here's the button to email yourself the articles you found. Here's, for some reason, a paper worksheet with URLs on it. Here's where you can chat with a librarian (not a robot) the night before your assignment is due.

Oh, and we didn't get into citations but you can just push this button and poof! Imagine how much you can impress all of your friends with perfect MLA citations if you can ever find this button again.

One sec... before you leave, I need you to manually type this faded bit-link that my colleague wrote on the whiteboard last year into your browser. It's a two-minute assessment that will help us improve these sessions for future students.

I think about the strangeness of the phrase "future students" and wait two long minutes and remember the time a professor directed her students to applaud at the end of a one-shot. It made me feel embarrassed and grateful. I've never otherwise been emphatically congratulated for something I do so routinely.

Don't be a stranger, I say, while the students leave.

I turn off the projector. It is warm and humming.

The room is empty. I feel alive beneath oppressive fluorescent lights, buoyed by the friction of an exchange that I'm also relieved is over.

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# Undoing Our Instructional Past: Envisioning New Models for Information Literacy

Urszula Lechtenberg and Carrie Donovan

Considering all that we know about learning science, design principles, and reflective practice, is the one-shot instruction session an effective mode of knowledge transfer? If we could build information literacy initiatives from the ground up, based on students' prior experience and how they learn, our teaching would not be limited by past practice and our instructional roles could evolve in new ways. As a result, we would design and lead information literacy through a combination of opportunities such as teacher-training programs and instructional consultations intended to build scaffolded research assignments; librarian-faculty collaborations that prioritize the transferability of knowledge while honoring and disrupting disciplinary ways of thinking; and learning objects that provide an intentional structure for sustaining information literacy at our institutions.

## Re-envisioning Ourselves

At the same time that we consider the potential for adjusting our teaching practices, we must rethink our instructional identities—expanding beyond direct librarian-student interactions toward the broader roles of facilitators of learning. Acknowledging the personal, organizational, and institutional issues that present barriers to adapting new identities is the first step to changing them. This will involve rethinking the roles we have as educators, the metrics we use to communicate the value of the library, and the perception of librarians as service providers. Although great risk is involved in this kind of change, the rewards that come with applying our expertise to large-scale questions around student learning will be transformative.

Focusing our instructional energies and intentions on student learning rather than librarians' teaching frees us from defining our instructional impact with basic metrics and allows us to work toward curriculum-integrated programs in which we are positioned as facilitators rather than the keepers of information literacy. A critical aspect of building new strategies is to acknowledge that large-scale curricular change involving information literacy will require risk-taking, iteration, and time. As Pagowsky reminds us, "curricula unfold over time, which are at odds with the singular and repetitive one-shot."<sup>1</sup> With the educational expertise and influence librarians have cultivated at our institutions, we are well-situated to do the work required to move information literacy education from temporary and transactional to integrated and intentional.

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Undoing the beliefs, behaviors, and systems that underpin library organizational cultures as they relate to our teaching will take time as well. Beginning with internal communication regarding structures for reviewing librarians' teaching and methods of measuring impact, we will need to address why teaching an ever-increasing number of one-shots does not necessarily correlate with success. Instead, librarians and library leadership must understand that integrating information literacy into student learning in targeted and intentional ways may result in fewer one-shots ultimately, but those declining statistics are necessary to allow for the capacity to develop new opportunities and deeper relationships. Building consensus and awareness around the benefits of instructional initiatives that prioritize student learning is necessary for shifting a decades-long de-facto instructional practice that centered on librarians' teaching. To engage with this idea, we have to step back from current practices to allow for the bandwidth for re-envisioning, rather than approaching it as an additional task.<sup>2</sup>

As participants in learning organizations, librarians are accustomed to taking on new tasks to adapt to change. We are less familiar with the process of discontinuing practices that are no longer of service.<sup>3</sup> In our current and former workplaces, the authors of this piece experienced success in transitioning information literacy from one-shots to a more integrated approach by:

- Providing instructor training and ready-made activities, learning modules, or lesson plans for course instructors of multisession courses such as Introduction to Composition
- Offering workshops in collaboration with campus teaching centers to support the design and implementation of research-based assignments and assessments
- Incentivizing course and curriculum reinvention around the research process through grant opportunities for faculty (course-level) or departments (curriculum-level)

Through this work we have come to understand that replacing one-shots with intentionally designed and sequenced information literacy interventions across the curriculum is not a zero-sum game, but a chaotic process of re-envisioning and undoing that happens over time. Despite the challenges inherent in this kind of professional change, it has allowed us to progress toward more meaningful learning, relationships, and teaching in our respective careers.

## **Sustainability or Bust**

Professional development for faculty around teaching information literacy allows for a more holistic approach that reaches more students. It also addresses issues of sustainability inherent to the one-shot model in favor of approaches that are more humanizing for librarians and empowering for faculty and students. Librarian-led efforts around assignment design allow us to guide conversations, clarify expectations, and help teaching faculty more clearly articulate their own pedagogical approaches.<sup>4</sup> To move toward sustainability means redefining our role as information literacy consultants rather than service providers.<sup>5</sup> Through instructional consultations, librarians and faculty can identify the best interventions to match student learning outcomes, rather than situating the one-shot as a default solution because it is what we know. This will change who, how, and what librarians teach, but letting go of our sense of ownership over information literacy can create leadership opportunities and the ultimate risk/reward for ourselves as educators.

The authors of this piece are aware of our privilege that affords us the opportunities to practice leadership and risk-taking in supportive environments. As white women working in libraries at a public R1 institution, we are committed to examining the ways this privilege has enabled our work and continues to inform our choices and goals. We are hopeful that

the work we are doing to make instructional practices sustainable will be to the benefit of library colleagues outside of formal leadership circles who face issues of burnout or job creep. Building sustainable practices requires professional capital that not all instruction librarians have in their workplaces, often due to job expectations or potential backlash. Organizational positionality and power are required to effect change, which is challenging for our colleagues of color due to the cycles of oppression that are deeply rooted in libraries and the academy.<sup>6</sup> It is through a process of questioning, learning, and envisioning that we can begin to undo the long-standing practices and ongoing cycles that have influenced library pedagogy and recenter our work around students and their learning.

Breaking down existing structures through sustainable practices that honor students' experiences and prior knowledge may be approached incrementally at first, as early interventions and small moments can have a great impact. One possibility involves librarians' developing more intentionality and criticality around teaching information literacy through digital learning objects, lesson plans, and activities that can be incorporated directly into a course by teaching faculty. When developed using sound instructional design principles, digital learning objects can be effective in educating students about the research process. Another opportunity involves engaging students as content creators of learning objects and amplifying their voices through peer-to-peer learning experiences shared across courses. Teaching faculty might not be accustomed to this type of sharing but librarians can model the practice, as exemplified by Project CORA and the ACRL Framework Sandbox,<sup>7</sup> to advance the cross-disciplinary development of transferable information literacy concepts.

## In Conclusion

The more that we develop a range of instructional talents, the more authentic it will feel to embrace new roles that integrate information literacy into students' lives and learning through courses, curricula, and communities. From this intentional practice, we will develop the imagination to make information literacy more sustainable, measurable, and integral to student learning across disciplines. Celebrating our capacity to create institutionwide partnerships must be accompanied by a concerted effort toward letting go of past practice and ownership of information literacy that has resulted in the "culture of more" with regard to library instruction. Only then will we escape the limitations of the one-shot session to embrace new roles, challenges, and possibilities as library instructional praxis continues to evolve.

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## Notes

1. Nicole Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures," *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2021): 300, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.3.300>.
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# Racial Imposter Syndrome, White Presenting, and Burnout in the One-Shot Classroom

Sajni Lacey

I am a cis-gendered, white passing, able bodied, biracial settler woman of Sri Lankan and English ancestry. I currently live and work as an uninvited but grateful guest on the traditional territory of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples in what is now known as Kelowna, British Columbia. I am also grateful to have been a guest on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum Nations, in what is now known as London Ontario where I was born and raised, and completed both of my degrees. I strive and commit to learning, unlearning, reflecting, and being humble as I grow in my knowledge, understanding, and actions towards my part in decolonization and reconciliation.

## Author Positionality

Racial imposter syndrome [RIS] is difficult to define, as it is hard “to nail down exactly what makes someone feel like a “racial imposter” due to its being subjective to the individual and their lived experiences.<sup>1</sup> To define it from a broader sense, “[i]mposter syndrome is a psychological term that refers to a pattern of behavior wherein people (even those with adequate external evidence of success) doubt their abilities and have a persistent fear of being exposed as a fraud.”<sup>2</sup> While feelings of imposter syndrome [IS] can be attributed as negative, acknowledging their existence can be used to critique the structures that enable them to occur.<sup>3</sup> For people from mixed racial backgrounds, who may not look racialized, or have the cultural experiences of their backgrounds, RIS can show up as the belief that they do not have a right to claim or present that identity.

As the previous quote points out, even knowing we have the “right” to claim space or identities, we can consistently feel doubt about how much we can assert that right when our identity does not align with our appearance. This feeling can lead to facade trauma, described as the emotional fatigue of BIPOC women, where the individual perception of “how others view them is exhausting and wears on their wellbeing.”<sup>4</sup> As a self-proclaimed racial imposter [RI], this represents the core issue of identity in the one-shot classroom, the exhaustion that comes with constantly thinking about how others perceive my racial identity, whether or not they think that identity is justified, and how much explanation I can or should provide about it.

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I constantly experience the fatigue of feeling that I am not *enough* of a racialized person to claim that identity. This disconnect between how people see me—the identity that they place on me (white)—and how I identify myself (not-white) is exhausting. This is most evident in conversations around my name: why is that your name? Or, when I share my background, why are you not darker skinned? I have spent much of my life anticipating reactions to myself, my name, and my identity. At the same time, I acknowledge that, as a white-passing person, I benefit from a tremendous amount of privilege; I recognize that my experiences of racism and bias are heavily filtered through this; therefore, sitting at the intersection of races and cultures makes it difficult for me to feel a part of any particular one.<sup>5</sup>

I bring this with me into the one-shot classroom. Walking into any classroom can be intimidating, even when you have done it many times before. After eight years of teaching, I still get nervous being in front of a class. More specifically, I assume that students see me as a white woman, that this is the identity they place on me. As a result, I have been unsure of how to present myself in these spaces, whether it is okay to identify as not-white while experiencing white privilege, if I am taking up too much space outlining my identity in the one-shot classroom, and whether it benefits anyone but myself to make that identity clear.

I do feel a responsibility to bring a part of my racial self into the classroom. This is partially for the students who may not see themselves reflected in these spaces, but also for me to claim some of that space for myself. I feel motivated to state my identity at the start of class and to connect that identity to the information literacy classroom as a place for myself and students to bring their lived experiences and knowledge into the work. I want to use my time in that space to facilitate conversations and explore topics that recognize and identify the flaws and inherent inequities within the library and academia. However, the time constraints of the one-shot, and providing a session that serves all students equally, makes the flaws of the one-shot clear. For me, the performative nature of it requires a level of authenticity that is often not true to my racial identity and in fact condones the white supremacist structure of academia. I persistently wonder why I should even try to take up this space, which leads to exhaustion and burnout.

Compounded by my RIS, this burnout, emotional fatigue, and depersonalization has led to some cynicism. I do not feel that what I am doing in these one-shots is meaningful or valuable in many contexts, in addition to feeling like I cannot bring my identity into the space without taking up time. It is a challenge when you want to do more, but also worry that you instead could be inhibiting student learning by repeating surface level skills training.<sup>6</sup> Considering these factors and the volume of one-shots I teach (70–100 each year), it is no wonder that I feel burnout.

So what am I moved to do then as a RI? I do see an opportunity to leave breadcrumbs in my teaching, through what I say and show in these sessions. Examples of breadcrumbs can be seen throughout the literature: through what examples are shown,<sup>7</sup> presenting problems,<sup>8</sup> and questioning authority in information sources.<sup>9</sup> I use some of these strategies, but I also make intentional comments in the classroom to let students know that there is more to unpack than what I am showing them.

For example, I often teach the peer-review process and the role it plays in identifying “quality” of sources. I like to talk about the white, Eurocentric focus that it often takes. I only say a couple sentences about this, often cloaked in humor, and encourage students to reach out to me if they want to learn more. And some do! This is not a big thing—it may seem like

the smallest of things—but introducing the idea of who gets to participate and whose voices are represented is meaningful for me. The second approach is when talking about authority of sources. Students quickly identify academics as an authority they should be using for their work. I attempt to use this to introduce the idea that lived experience and community knowledge are other forms of authority. Again, these are not big ideas. These are small breadcrumbs that I hope give students a sense that there is more to explore within their assignments and outside of the classroom.

As an educator and someone with RIS, leaving these breadcrumbs does a lot for me. The constraints of the one-shot make it difficult to engage students beyond the surface level. By inserting these small opportunities to think beyond what the library has to offer at face value, I am able to push the boundaries of what it means to be in the one-shot space as a multiracial person.

All of this is to say that who we are in the classroom is complicated. Bringing our full selves is impossible, often not safe, and not something we should feel required to give up in a structure that does not value thoughtful, intentional, and integrated instruction. Leaving these breadcrumbs is one way that I have found space to signal my own values, identity, and critiques of what can be done in a one-shot. This helps to ease some of that tension and emotional exhaustion I feel by knowing that the one-shot does not do what we hope it does in terms of providing meaningful learning opportunities for information literacy.

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## **Notes**

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9. Katelyn Angell and Eamon Tewell, "Teaching and Un-teaching Source Evaluation: Questioning Authority in Information Literacy Instruction," *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (2017): 102, <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/comminfolett/vol11/iss1/5/>.

# The Critical Information Literacy Leadership Institute as Alternative to the One-Shot: Q & A with a Faculty Partner

Gina Schlesselman-Tarango and Monideepa Becerra

In spring 2021, the Pfau Library and Teaching Resource Center (TRC) at California State University, San Bernardino developed a virtual Critical Information Literacy Leadership Institute, which was meant to introduce the foundations and pedagogical applications of critical information literacy (CIL) so departmental faculty could teach it and advocate for its integration across campus. The institute was a new approach to faculty development at the Pfau Library, as it engaged a multidisciplinary team and incorporated leadership and advocacy training. Though some library-led workshops and activities had been co-sponsored by outside units, they had never been developed and led by faculty or campus leaders other than librarians. Such an approach asks that librarians give up, to a certain extent, “control” over CIL on their campuses. While this might be uncomfortable for those who are understandably concerned about sharing their already minuscule institutional space and power with others, participants can benefit from a collaborative approach that leverages the strengths and experiences of those who are invested in CIL but “live” outside the library. And because Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, a librarian, was an institute co-lead, participants still understood her—and by extension, her colleagues in the library—to be knowledgeable resources on all things CIL.

Below, Monideepa Becerra, professor of public health and then-TRC director, addresses questions to expand on the initiative, illustrating how such an approach can serve as a viable alternative to the one-shot model of library instruction and can allow for the “deeper learning, critical thinking, and inclusive pedagogy” that Nicole Pagowsky argues the one-shot can elude.<sup>1</sup>

## **Q & A with Institute Co-Lead, Dr. Monideepa Becerra**

*As a faculty member in public health, how did you first learn about CIL and why did it resonate to the extent that you approached the library to partner on this project?*

I first learned about CIL through the Pfau Library’s faculty learning community. During this time, discussions on gun control were prevalent, especially in public health classes. A common discussion item, often raised by students, was the lack of evidence to support gun legislation. Several students, with a diversity of personal opinions on gun legislation, often noted that,

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while as public health professionals we strive for evidence based-practices, the push toward legislation without evidence, especially in the form of peer-reviewed literature, seemed contradictory to practice.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately for me, this provided an ideal scope for discussing the information cycle, a concept I explored during the ongoing CIL learning community. This learning opportunity opened the doors to how I looked at information, funding sources, the information cycle itself, from whom and to whom information is shared, and so on. It provided a much-needed context for discussing gun control research and related funding and how that impacts information flow. Immediately, I began to integrate everything I was learning into my graduate classes and then eventually the undergraduate courses as well. Since most of the graduate students were working professionals in the field, this approach created substantial, in-depth discussions in the classroom on the power of information and the social justice foundations of CIL. This further enabled me to choose the best approach to involve undergraduates in discussing the role of the information cycle in public health communication strategies. What I learned during my CIL training completely changed my approach to teaching, and—even to this date—I have had alumni reach out to me and bring up our discussions of CIL. The impact CIL had on my pedagogical approach coupled with the direct impact on how our alumni lead themselves at work were driving factors for this collaboration.

***Could you walk us through how the institute was set up?***

Five probationary faculty fellows from various departments were competitively selected to participate in asynchronous modules, followed by a synchronous leadership and advocacy training with two college deans. The modules were crafted by you (Gina Schlesselman-Tarango) and me, as well as a campus assessment expert, and they addressed disciplinary approaches to CIL and socially responsible pedagogy,<sup>3</sup> featured examples from faculty who had successfully integrated CIL into existing courses, and highlighted best practices in assessment. In addition to responding to reflection questions and other prompts throughout, fellows submitted a final product detailing how they planned to implement CIL into their course(s) and completed a self-assessment of their leadership skills and action plan on how to advocate for CIL on campus.

***What is unique about this approach to faculty development?***

Traditionally, faculty development has taken the one-shot approach that is characterized by one or, periodically, a few workshops that introduce faculty to a novel concept. While such a model can inform faculty of new pedagogical approaches, it does little to promote continuation of learning, application of content to practice, or the opportunity to evaluate implemented strategies. Further, even in learning communities where some of these facets can be addressed, the knowledge and implementation of learning remains limited to the participants. With the institute, our goal was to not only provide faculty the opportunity to learn CIL and create a teaching and assessment plan, but also become agents of change on campus. As such, it focused on promoting leadership skills, especially on networking and creating buy-in from other faculty who could spearhead their own departmental and college-level CIL activities, resulting in a snowball impact of the institute beyond those who directly participated. As a result, faculty not only learned key CIL concepts and implementation and evaluation strategies, but they also gained first-hand direct training from campus leadership on strategies to become CIL advocates themselves.<sup>4</sup>

***Why do you think it is important that faculty be the ones driving and delivering CIL content in their courses?***

Faculty have direct and sustained access to students and, in turn, students' perceptions and performance related to new content and pedagogical approaches. As a result, faculty-focused initiatives can provide opportunities for authentic student learning that other approaches—like the one-shot—may not. This is especially true for CIL, which seeks to critically analyze existing norms of information flow, the role of power and privilege, and how these intersecting factors impact the general population. Faculty have direct access to a diversity of students and the experiences that these students bring to the classroom. As such, they are in an ideal position to create a safe space for students to discuss CIL, address societal barriers to the equitable flow of information, and more. By participating in the development of faculty to teach CIL rather than solely delivering one-shot instruction sessions, librarians can be true collaborators and partners in the curriculum development process rather than support staff or mere "helpers and assistants, and sometimes even, sadly, babysitters."<sup>5</sup> As for the institute, while we are confident participants understood that they would be teaching all CIL content in their courses, in the future we can be more explicit that, in their advocacy efforts, fellows should too celebrate librarians as collaborators rather than (perhaps unintentionally) as "helpers" who can deliver a decontextualized one-shot.

***Any advice for others involved in faculty development who want to offer a CIL workshop, institute, or the like?***

There is no one center or one person who knows everything about pedagogy or faculty development. While centralization of the process of delivery can help with logistics, it is important to remember that faculty directly impact students. To train the next generation of interdisciplinary leaders, faculty too must be open to learning from fields with which they are perhaps unfamiliar. Those providing faculty development opportunities should be open to such collaborations as well. Often, our hierarchical approach to academic leadership can limit cross-collaboration and/or willingness to practice shared governance. But to truly ensure faculty are provided holistic training opportunities, it is critical that those involved be open to letting go of their position, their authority, and, in turn, their perception of power and be willing to work with others who have valuable resources to provide.

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## **Notes**

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4. See Andrea W. Brooks, Lynn Warner, and Jane Hammons, "Information Literacy Leadership: The Traits We Didn't Know We Had," *College & Research Libraries News* 82, no. 6 (2021) for an example of another faculty development approach that incorporates information literacy advocacy.

5. Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot," 304.

# One-Shots in Special Collections and Archives: Moving from Gatekeeper to Guide

Colleen Hoelscher

Instruction in special collections and archives spaces has evolved from the once ubiquitous show-and-tell sessions, but it remains reliant on the one-shot model where classes visit the reading room to work with primary source material in a standalone session. As Nicole Pagowsky points out, “One-shots are transactional; content is requested and then deposited into student’ minds...”<sup>1</sup> In special collections, this content takes the form of preselected rare books and manuscripts on a given topic, with which students interact for an hour or so before continuing on with their semester. These sessions, particularly at smaller institutions, are often limited by the breadth of the repository’s collections, which may have only a tenuous connection to course assignments and learning objectives.

One-shots in this area rely on the librarian or archivist leading the session to preselect the materials that students will examine. Identifying potential materials in finding aids and catalogs is a skill that novice student researchers often lack, and so the time-consuming work of paging materials across multiple collections needs to occur before the one-shot session takes place. Some materials may have preservation concerns that limit their use in the instruction setting, and unprocessed materials from our backlogs may be useful to fill instruction needs, but is inaccessible to anyone outside of repository staff. While current pedagogical models in special collections encourage hands-on experiences with the primary source materials, the librarian/archivist leading the session is still almost always the one choosing what those materials will be.

When the archival materials being used in an instruction session are selected by a single person, that individual has complete power over the contents of the class. Whose viewpoints are being shared? What stories are being told? The biases of the librarian/archivist influence all of these decisions—and in a field that is predominantly white, this curatorial bias often upholds institutional racism. We may no longer be gatekeepers preventing students from handling materials, but we are still mediating their direct access to the full range of archival materials. Students leave these sessions aware of only a small fraction of our holdings, and lacking the skills to independently conduct further archival research.

Scholars have shown how established systems of oppression based in race, gender, and class influence archival collections at every stage of processing and use. Privileged groups are more likely to have their records collected by a repository; Lael Hughes-Watkins’s work provides clear guidelines for reparative archival collecting and outreach, showing others how to inclusively collect and promote materials from previously excluded communities.<sup>2</sup> Follow-

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<sup>1</sup>Colleen Hoelscher is Special Collections Librarian and Assistant Professor at Trinity University; email: [choelsch@trinity.edu](mailto:choelsch@trinity.edu). © 2022 Colleen Hoelscher, Attribution-NonCommercial (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) CC BY-NC.

ing acquisition, archival materials are described in finding aids and catalog records, where oppressive and othering language is common. Jessica Tai has argued the need for archival institutions to conduct reparative redescription of finding aids and catalog records, and *Anti-Racist Description Resources*, a practical guide from the Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia, provides concrete steps to address such racism in archival description, as well as an extensive annotated bibliography of scholarship in this area.<sup>3</sup> Once processed, archival materials become available for researchers to use; such access is influenced by structures of white supremacy, as identified by Michelle Caswell and her students.<sup>4</sup> When considering online access to materials through digitization, Dorothy Berry argues that the history of unequal representation of materials from marginalized communities is a pressing issue for our field.<sup>5</sup> Instruction with rare materials is no different from these other aspects of archival management; structural racism and bias are built into the current model of curated sessions.

How can we provide students with meaningful, unmediated access to the materials in our special collections and archives? It is time to steer our faculty colleagues away from traditional one-shot visits to the reading room altogether. Instruction sessions with the entire class can instead be viewed as scaffolding for independent research visits to the archives. These reimagined sessions should focus on providing students with the tools and skills to navigate finding aids; students would leave these sessions empowered to search for and identify materials that support their research assignments.<sup>6</sup> Shifting the focus from viewing and handling archival materials to finding potential sources also removes the limitations imposed by the contents of our individual collections; for instance, a student may identify a source at another repository that can be better incorporated into their research.

This model will require greater collaboration with course instructors, supporting the development of assignments that can draw upon individual research using the materials in a particular archives or special collection.<sup>7</sup> Of course, this approach is not a magical cure-all for the systemic injustices that exist within our corner of the academic library; curatorial bias will continue to be a concern throughout the acquisitions, processing, cataloging, and digitization processes. These problems need to be conveyed to students as part of the skill-building instruction session.

The pedagogical shift from show-and-tell to hands-on interaction that has taken place in special collections and archives during the past few decades is a notable improvement, but the time has come for those of us working in instruction with primary sources to follow the leads of our colleagues in the areas of acquisitions, processing and description, and digitization. Emphasizing archival skills instead of archival materials centers the individual student's research needs and empowers the student with unmediated access to primary source materials. The librarian/archivist no longer has the role of gatekeeper or curator, responsible for choosing the materials used in a class session; instead, they are a guide, leading students on a path to independent research with primary sources.

## Notes

1. Nicole Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures," *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (May 2021): 301.
2. Lae'l Hughes-Watkins, "Moving Toward a Reparative Archive: a Roadmap for a Holistic Approach to Disrupting Homogenous Histories in Academic Repositories and Creating Inclusive Spaces for Marginalized Voices," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 5, no. 6 (2018).
3. Jessica Tai, "Cultural Humility as a Framework for Anti-Oppressive Archival Description," *Journal of*

*Critical Library and Information Studies* 3 (2020); Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia, *Anti-Racist Description Resources* (2019), [https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr\\_final.pdf](https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf).

4. Michelle Caswell, "Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in Archives," *Library Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 2017): 222–35.

5. Dorothy Berry, "Centering the Margins in Digital Project Planning," *Journal of Critical Digital Librarianship* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2021): 15–22.

6. The SAA-ACRL/RBMS *Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy* (2018) provide a helpful framework for identifying learning objectives for this kind of instruction session.

7. There have been numerous, excellent case studies published on semester-long collaborations between special collections and teaching faculty, particularly in the *Case Studies on Teaching with Primary Sources* series from the Society of American Archivists. Of particular note are: Cinda Nofziger and Emily Swenson, "Success in the Long Term: Learning Objectives in a Semester-Long Research Course," *Case Studies on Teaching...* 8; and Kara Flynn, "Scaffolding Primary Source Research and Analysis in an Undergraduate History Research Methods Course," *Case Studies on Teaching...* 12.

# It Doesn't Matter How Many "Doses": One-Shots Aren't Cures

Michele Santamaria and Jessica Schomberg

Drawing from Wendy Holliday's use of metaphor to generate exploration around information literacy discourse,<sup>1</sup> we pose some preliminary ideas about mapping a vaccination metaphor onto one-shots. We do so to offer another lens through which to explore the mechanisms and implications of one-shots being viewed as common-sensical and unassailable. Thus, we apply the timely vaccination metaphor to dig deeper into damaging assumptions about one-shots investigated in Pagowsky's "The Contested One-Shot."<sup>2</sup> These assumptions include the claim that more sessions circumvent the problems of one-shots and that one-shots create transferable knowledge for learners. Finally, this article considers how these assumptions inform and are informed by prevalent understandings of how misinformation works.

Just as vaccines can be construed as "the solution" rather than one tool in a larger-scale effort, so have one-shots become relied upon to "inoculate" learners against information literacy deficits that they should no longer exhibit further on in their academic careers. While vaccines have recently been discussed in terms that suggest that they are magical cloaks that protect against infection, what they really do is train your body to fight off disease. As we've seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines can provide protection that reduces the chances of hospitalization and death for many people, but they don't prevent transmission or mutations; for that we also need nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). Seen this way, the "failure" of a single shot (a one-shot!) should not be ascribed to the librarian who did not administer the needed dose, or, as Pagowsky argues, "doses" as one-shots, plural, are arguably the same as a singular "one-shot" without curricular integration. As "tacked-on" additions with little relationship to the curriculum (in this metaphor, little relationship to NPIs), one-shots cannot provide "immunity" to misinformation whether they are "boosted" by more one-shot content or not. Like older vaccine formulas trying to respond to new mutations, static one-shots also cannot, in and of themselves, assist students in responding to new information literacy contexts. Or, to frame this within the vaccine metaphor and in terms of corresponding learning implications, students given the "one shot" of information literacy frequently fail to apply what they have learned to new information literacy situations in ways that demonstrate they have been able to transfer knowledge. Once "exposed" to information literacy, learners are not equipped to "fight off" misinformation even if they can correctly evaluate for what it is. As other librarians have noted, "The tactics we've taught students for evaluating items one at

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a time provide slim defenses against the networked efforts of organizations that flood feeds, timelines, and search results.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, as has been recently confirmed in a study conducted on digital literacy,<sup>4</sup> the ability to correctly evaluate information does not predict whether an individual will choose to spread misinformation. While this study named the literacy at hand as “digital,” the competencies involved clearly have overlap with what librarians consider to be information literacy and with the content of so many of our one-shots. Thus, to return to the vaccination metaphor, “inoculation” through one-shot pedagogical strategies geared against misinformation does not mitigate “spread.” Even if we manage to assist learners in their ability to more reliably evaluate information, that doesn’t mean that they’ll make the ethical choice about sharing misinformation. There is something irrational at play. The one-shots present a “common sense” approach to misinformation in which librarians are viewed as metaphorically inoculating students against practices like sharing misinformation they’ve already accurately evaluated as false. But, as we see with discussions about neutrality, this “common sense” approach does not factor in information systems that “inflict structural violence on BIPOC,” nor does it acknowledge the motivations behind any other form of epistemic injustice.<sup>5</sup> It also doesn’t account for research around “sticky” information, which sometimes sticks around even after being corrected because it’s linked in people’s heads with other information they know to be true or because it provides them with a sense of safety or because it is a norm within social groups.<sup>6</sup> As discussed by Maura Seale in relation to information literacy practices informed by the Standards, this “mechanistic” and “simplistic” view of how someone becomes information-literate is also “positivist” in its disregard of the means of knowledge production.<sup>7</sup> Positivism approaches the world by observing it and reducing complexities in the attempt to identify universal patterns without acknowledging the social construction of knowledge.<sup>8</sup> From this positivistic, mechanistic perspective, becoming information literate should then be “procedural,” as scripted and carefully controlled as many of our one-shots.

When we cling to the applicability of the “one-shot”-as-vaccination metaphor, we are left with a sense of befuddlement: why don’t students know what they’re supposed to know about evaluating a source by their third year of college? After all, they received the right dose of IL at the very beginning. Following that train of thought, we might very well think that the solution to the problem is a “booster.” *What we need is more one-shots!* But thinking along those lines prevents us from taking on the implications of fundamentally misunderstanding how information literacy works, especially in a time rife with misinformation. And, perhaps even more powerfully, we continue to neglect the role of our students as agents in an information ecosystem in which they are not just acted upon but also function as actors, making choices that are frequently not common-sensical, checklist-oriented, or as predictable as the one-shot model.

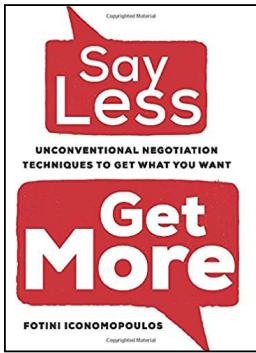
What we instead propose is to shift the metaphor that the vaccination one-shot enacts and reconsider IL instruction as one part of a suite of nonpharmaceutical interventions: practices based in community, with each member responsible for playing a role in the well-being of the group and with librarians, faculty members, and students working and learning together. As Barbara Fister notes, students come to us with knowledge of how information works in social media contexts and can be great advocates in their home communities, sharing “what they know and are learning about information systems to their friends and families beyond academia.”<sup>9</sup> As we’ve seen with the pandemic, a single shot given to a single person isn’t enough to stop it. We need to think beyond the individual.

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## Notes

1. Wendy Holliday, "Frame Works: Using Metaphor in Theory and Practice in Information Literacy," *Communications in Information Literacy* 11, no. 1 (July 2017): 16.
2. Nicole Pagowsky, "The Contested One-Shot: Deconstructing Power Structures to Imagine New Futures," *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 3 (2021).
3. Alaina C. Bull, Margy MacMillan, and Alison Head, "Dismantling the Evaluation Framework," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (July 21, 2021), <https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2021/dismantling-evaluation/>.
4. Nathaniel Sirlin et al., "Digital Literacy Is Associated with More Discerning Accuracy Judgments but Not Sharing Intentions," *Misinformation Review* 2, no. 6 (December 2021): 3.
5. Amelia N. Gibson et al., "Struggling to Breathe: COVID-19, Protest and the LIS Response," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion an International Journal* 40, no. 1 (2021): 77, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-07-2020-0178>.
6. Charlie Warzel, "The Bad Ideas Our Brains Can't Shake," *The Atlantic: Galaxy Brain* [newsletter], (February 22, 2022), <https://newsletters.theatlantic.com/galaxy-brain/62071e1adc551a0020867247/trust-the-science/>.
7. Maura Seale, "Information Literacy Standards and the Politics of Knowledge Production: Using User-Generated Content to Incorporate Critical Pedagogy," in *Critical Pedagogy and Library Instruction: An Edited Collection*, eds. Maria Accardi, Emily Drabinski, and Alana Kumbier (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010), 222.
8. Philip Kwaku Kankam, "The Use of Paradigms in Information Research," *Library & Information Science Research* 41, no. 2 (2019): 85–92, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2019.04.003>.
9. Barbara Fister, "Lizard People in the Library," Project Information Literacy: Provocation Series (February 3, 2021), <https://projectinfolit.org/pubs/provocation-series/essays/lizard-people-in-the-library.html>.

**Fotini Iconomopoulos.** *Say Less, Get More: Unconventional Negotiation Techniques to Get What You Want.* New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2021. 332p. Paper, \$22.99 (ISBN: 978-1443459525).



Let's be honest. Librarians, broadly speaking, could use a boost to their negotiation skills. If you step back and think about it, we negotiate frequently in all aspects of our work. Whether navigating a meeting, discussing the details of a contract, or assisting a patron, this book provides skills and perspectives that will boost confidence and help librarians achieve results.

The author begins by expanding the reader's perception of "negotiation." Iconomopoulos presents different types of negotiations on a spectrum from competitive to collaborative. Most people imagine the most competitive styles when they hear the word negotiation: parties squaring off across a table wearing their best poker faces with a goal of getting what they want.

In reality, there are many other points on the negotiation spectrum that will be familiar to those in the library profession. For example, negotiations with vendors and service providers often follow the lines of what Iconomopoulos describes as "concession trading." Concession trading sits in the middle of the author's spectrum between the extremes of competitive and collaborative styles of negotiation. The individuals involved recognize that there is a value to maintaining a relationship between the parties and that compromising can result in something that everyone can be satisfied with. Moving from the middle of the negotiation spectrum toward the collaborative side, Iconomopoulos describes additional negotiating styles including the Win Win and the Partnership. These styles provide examples of negotiating that librarians practice with peers day to day.

Iconomopoulos emphasizes that recognizing the competitive level type of the negotiation you face can help you take steps to prepare for success. This book prompts the reader to reflect on multiple aspects of any negotiation: who you are negotiating with and what their goals and expectations might be. The author also prompts readers to reflect on where they are and what they want as essential to thoughtfully crafting a successful approach. This emphasis on contemplation and preparation is repeated throughout the book. This key takeaway should be very appealing to members of our profession. As a librarian, I love to do research and document what I have learned so I can put it to work. I have found that I feel more confident and less stressed if I am prepared for a conversation.

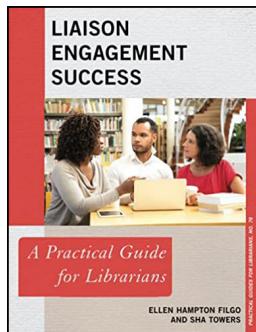
The final section focuses on communication. Iconomopoulos stresses the importance of mindset and how it impacts our ability to convey what we mean not only with our words, but with our tone and our body language as well. She highlights the value of taking your time and choosing words wisely. It's okay to take that pause so you can convey what you want in the most thoughtful and succinct way. The author wraps up the discussion of communication by emphasizing the importance of asking constructive questions, not only as a way to gather knowledge but also to manage conflict. This focus on asking quality questions will appeal to librarian sensibilities; it is reminiscent of a quality reference interview. When conducted skill-

fully, the librarian has all the information they need to assist an individual, while the person feels supported and engaged.

Iconomopoulos builds pauses for review and reflection between sections of the book. These provide a quick synopsis of key concepts to help readers reflect and digest before introducing new content. The content is light and relatable with a plethora of engaging real-life examples. I found the book to be easily digestible and entertaining, as well as informative.

The past few years have provided librarians with a number of challenging situations to navigate. Negotiation skills are critical to advocate for ourselves, for our staff, and for patrons in the new paradigm. If you are feeling ill equipped, use the lessons in this book to pause the fear and the feelings of powerlessness. Use this resource to develop the skills necessary to stay calm and effectively communicate no matter what the circumstances.—Kathleen Berry, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

**Ellen Hampton Filgo and Sha Towers.** *Liaison Engagement Success: A Practical Guide for Librarians*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. 158p. Paper, \$65.00 (ISBN: 978-1-5381-4463-3). LC Z682.4.L44 F57.



Academic libraries have experienced a myriad of changes during the past few decades as new technologies have led to significant shifts in how people view and use their services. In the midst of these changes, liaison librarians have had to adapt to ensure they meet the needs of their diverse communities. In *Liaison Engagement Success: A Practical Guide for Librarians*, authors Ellen Hampton Filgo and Sha Towers explore this topic and address ways that liaison librarians can enhance their services and develop strong connections with faculty and students. Filgo and Towers both hold leadership positions within Baylor University Libraries and have extensive experience working with liaison librarians. Their deep knowledge of and enthusiasm for developing liaison programs permeate the book and make it a highly readable and effective guide.

The first four chapters of the book serve as a foundation for greater understanding of the necessary elements of success in the work of all liaison librarians. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for modern liaison librarianship, describing the changes over time that have led to a prominent focus on engaging with users. Chapter 2 explains the importance of getting to know various department members such as program directors, staff, and faculty. An emphasis is also placed on becoming familiar with faculty members' curriculums and areas of research. Chapter 3 describes specific mindsets that are crucial for modern liaison librarians. Essential skills such as adaptability, emotional intelligence, empathy, and communication are discussed. Chapter 4 then gives specific ways of conducting outreach with a focus on developing connections through online and in-person methods.

The next part of the book shifts to a narrower focus. Chapters 5 through 9 discuss liaison work in specific disciplines. These include the humanities, social sciences, STEM, the ARTS, and professional disciplines such as journalism and public administration. Chapter 10 highlights the importance of building connections with nonacademic units. This can apply to liaison librarians in general as well as librarians whose primary focus (outreach, student success, and the like) requires working with student affairs and other groups. Chapter 11 has a similar theme of collaborating with others, but here the focus is on working with fellow

liaisons, functional specialists, and technology specialists. Each chapter includes practical tools that can be applied right away. One example is librarian listservs that are related to the various subject areas. In addition, stories from liaison librarians are identified throughout each chapter to give further insight into different ideas and strategies; snippets from each of these stories are also compiled at the end of each chapter. While the full texts of the stories are not included in the book itself, they are included in a free PDF available at [https://rowman.com/WebDocs/Supplement\\_Stories\\_of\\_Liaison\\_Engagement\\_Success.pdf](https://rowman.com/WebDocs/Supplement_Stories_of_Liaison_Engagement_Success.pdf).

The final two chapters are geared specifically toward leaders of liaison programs. The main areas discussed include developing a framework for success, creating a shared vision of engagement, and conducting effective assessment of liaison work. These chapters in particular highlight a main strength of the book as the authors share their personal experiences and resources they've developed as liaison librarians and leaders of liaison programs. One example is the specific templates the authors' teams have created and used for tracking liaison activity and instruction data. Templates of a postinstruction survey and research consultation follow-up survey are also included. These templates will be a valuable resource for librarians at other institutions to build upon in the assessment of their own work. These materials may be especially useful for liaisons in libraries that have never implemented one or more of these types of tools before. A second example is a thorough and clear description of how the authors used a work retreat to create a shared vision for how to successfully do liaison work. The text lists specific and replicable tasks, including reflection and group work designed to identify best practices as liaisons.

One minor criticism is centered on the supplemental stories of outreach strategies listed in many of the chapters. In total, there are 56 of these stories in the online PDF. While these stories are helpful in providing a more varied understanding of how liaison librarians have served faculty and students, their presentation is less useful than it might have been. For example, the authors could have included one or two whole stories within each chapter of the book itself as opposed to snippets. These could have been combined with commentary that delved further into how these stories could be connected to exemplary liaison librarian practices. Including more of this narrative content in the text would have increased the breadth of the book itself, rather than requiring readers to visit the website to learn more.

As a whole, *Liaison Engagement Success: A Practical Guide for Librarians* serves as an excellent resource that will be useful to a few specific groups. New academic librarians who may not yet be familiar with all of the ways to engage in liaison work will benefit from learning about specific strategies they can immediately use in their work. Seasoned liaison librarians can learn new ways to approach their work by reading the stories of other liaison librarians. The book can also be helpful for individuals seeking to enter a career in academic librarianship, including librarians from other settings or LIS students who wish to gain a greater insight into the type of work liaison librarians do in universities and colleges.—*Andrew Chae, San José State University*

**Shannon Mattern.** *A City Is Not a Computer: Other Urban Intelligences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021. 200p. Paperback, \$19.95 (ISBN: 9780691208053).

When Grand Valley State University completed their Allendale, Michigan campus library's remodel in 2013, it reflected a specific vision for a transportation hub, which is probably why it feels like an airport when I go to work. What does it mean to embrace that intense liminality?



People, ideas, objects, community, as always transitioning from one space to another, until they're required to hold still, lockdown, and quarantine. This metaphor is expansive and full of the possible, though I occasionally wonder about its limits. Hubs, nodes, and clusters in networks (and their associated movements) expose the limits of developmental metaphors, and so I've read Shannon Mattern's *A City Is Not a Computer: Other Urban Intelligences* with this in mind.

*A City Is Not A Computer* is written with a density that invites revisiting over a lifetime. Mattern's parsing of the "metaphors that give rise to technical models" will engage a variety of readers looking to complicate and otherwise reimagine how people understand information. There's a useful critique of the city-as-computer model's actual outcomes in various smart-cities projects here. Hailed as transformational and innovative, they're taken up and quickly abandoned by companies. Mattern shares the story of Alphabet, who treated their failed project, Sidewalk Toronto, as an engineering problem and not a philosophical one, along with their city partners like Toronto Public Library, engaged largely in order to privacy wash and create the illusion of neutral facilitation between Sidewalk Labs and the residents of Toronto. Worse than abandonment, Mattern cites projects like Google's Tree Canopy Lab and Microsoft's Tree Equity Score as examples of city-scale interventions, as though the absence of trees in low per-capita income neighborhoods in Los Angeles were the result of poor people and not a conscious series of policy decisions shaping the environment. *A City Is Not A Computer* argues that technologies can augment, but not substitute for, human and community intelligences.

Mattern opens with a chapter on consoles, mission control rooms, and dashboards. It explores where these consoles make visible the often invisible structures and work, while inviting surveillance and encouraging paternalist nudges in design. The dashboard is itself a representation of faith, that the consoles we develop will actually drive resource allocation and help us divine "impoverished understanding" of what can be known about the work of libraries (12). Key performance indicators are not so much "key" but rather the items most easily measured within our systems. It's why, for example, our professional organizations do not coherently track student savings with authored and adopted Open Educational Resources, or spend on Article Processing Charges, or otherwise incentivize similar metrics. Nor can those organizations reasonably describe a commitment to open infrastructure. Open Access remains coded as a "trend" along with questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The systems producing statistics that drive how academic libraries describe themselves to each other and to funding agencies cannot meaningfully explicate the work of libraries. Although Mattern brings up many examples throughout the chapter, I'm reminded I have yet to encounter a dashboard or console that displays the time, processes, and knowledge required to maintain a dashboard.

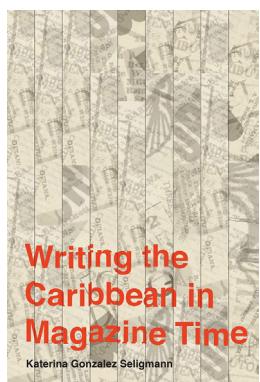
As many library workers consult a variety of dashboards and consoles in their jobs, the university functions in the same structures where Mattern draws her attention. Universities build (and buy) dashboards for Covid-19, scholarly production and funding, strategic planning, diversity initiatives, and surveillance under the pretense of various interventions. Mattern takes the design of the dashboard in a variety of spaces and untangles the new forms of expertise, literacies, and communications demanded by these codified assemblages and ontologies. Because dashboards are also a form of marketing, they define boundaries around what *is* and *is not* a system, library, city, space, disaster, community (43).

Complex infrastructure often invokes stopgaps to manage the measurable effects of a problem. What it means to make, in the context of those infrastructures, is an “enactment of [city] knowing—which cannot be reduced to computation” (72). It’s unsurprising that this conclusion flows immediately into a discussion of libraries and public knowledge in chapter 3. Mattern complicates the library’s position in these projects and within itself: libraries could have a “productively adversarial” role against “smart” initiatives (81). Moving fast and breaking things tends to strain resources and break people. Mattern cites practitioners, theorists, and those who work in hazy, less defined spaces of expertise, and the text is stronger as a result. Mattern engages with maintainers, writing with a voice that inhabits *doing* and *observing* with few peers.

Mattern does masterful work that only scholars willing to pay the interdisciplinary taxes required to develop this analysis can achieve. Mattern draws from architecture, technology, libraries and archives, archeology, sociology, and media studies with ease. Mattern is able to graft and weave more specific vocabularies of maintenance across scale. Because so much necessary work exists at each of these scales of repair, *A City Is Not a Computer* provides tools to better make legible and understand both the work and its often overlapping scope. One review will not do justice to this achievement, but the scholarship, advocacy, and communities that follow certainly will.

A city is not a computer. Neither is a library. Mattern’s work will find readers of both utility and joy, and each of these readers will develop different metaphors, reclaim knowledge, and reframe value propositions. As each of us confronts what it means to exist in liminality in this moment of strangled, unevenly distributed momentum, Mattern’s research is a striking and necessary text that resonates in multiple disciplines, a handbook to ethically reconstitute the world.—Scarlet Galvan, Grand Valley State University

**Katerina Gonzalez Seligmann.** *Writing the Caribbean in Magazine Time*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021. 216p. Paper, \$29.95 (ISBN: 9781978822429).



In this book, Katerina Gonzalez Seligmann traces the way literary magazines in the middle of the twentieth century created different senses of geographical belonging and affiliation for their readers. She explores how these journals created relations to locality and elsewhere that betrayed their desires for specific kin relationships. Seligmann accomplishes her ultimate goal of mapping polycentric networks of infrastructure, ideas, and literature for us that are worthy of study in their own right, without reference to the global centers of literary production where capital fuels larger infrastructures that we are constantly in danger of confusing for value.

At the center of the book is the concept of “location writing.” In chapter 3, “*Gaceta del Caribe* v. *Orígenes* in Cuba: Black Aesthetics as Battleground,” Seligmann focuses on the cultural combat between these two magazines. The former wants to work in close alignment with Black culture, which it rightly sees as closer to the Cuban reality. As Seligmann writes, “the Caribbean location enunciated by *Gaceta del Caribe* functioned strategically to covertly orient the national literary canon and the Communist Party in Cuba away from a Eurocentrist orientation toward the politics and aesthetics located in Black popular culture.” In other words, the title of the journal, its entries, and its constant geo-cultural ref-

erences point to the Caribbean instead of Europe, doubling down on the relation to an Afro-descendant base. The latter, on the other hand, wants to look toward Europe, minoritizing the literature that finds kinship with the Black popular culture of its own surroundings. The journal does this mostly through an overvaluing of rarified language that points inward to a whitened refinement of the spirit, and outward to the European literary traditions of the time, overtly desiring to be recognized by them. *Origenes*, Seligmann shows, participates in the erasure of race and geographic affiliation to an actual Caribbean reality, precisely because this is the quintessential universalist move that we associate now with Eurocentrism and European literary and philosophical traditions. In this sense, *Origenes* does location writing by decentering its own location. In their opposing strategies, these two adversary magazines write into being a geographical imaginary that determines their literary output. They write or erase location, and those locations and erasures drive their writing in turn.

These world-building and kin-building strategies are masterfully excavated in the other chapters as well, each looking at a different language tradition, with the last chapter returning to the polycentric whole. In each of the chapters, as she does in the third, Seligmann reads both the whole journal and selected entries to gather her evidence. In chapter 1, she sets the methodological stakes for location writing, arguing that we should read the dominant trend in this period to be the move toward a pan-Caribbean identity, as *Gaceta* would have it, not *Origenes*. I was persuaded by this but was left wondering if studying other journals of the period, exhaustively going through the wider Caribbean, would yield a more mixed result. That's work that remains to be done, and (in full disclosure) Dr. Seligmann and I are planning a digital archive of Caribbean literary and cultural magazines of the twentieth century that may help us answer that very question, among others. Surely the methodologies she lays out in this book will comprise our main toolkit. That said, Seligmann is always careful to point out how location writing of a Pan-Caribbean, decolonial affiliation will always be "incomplete," and she is, of course, right.

In chapter 2, Seligmann looks at *Tropiques*, a journal founded in Martinique by poet Aimé Césaire, cultural critic Suzanne Césaire, and philosopher René Ménil in 1941, with a five-year run that would come to have an outsize influence that reaches our own time. This chapter delineates the first concrete example of "location writing" in action oriented toward a Pan-Caribbean identity, and imagined as a decolonial cultural project. Despite this orientation—and opposed to *Gaceta* and more in line with *Origenes*—*Tropiques* still imagines itself in a relationship with Europe and European traditions, even if contestatory. This analysis aligns with the explicit desire of the editors to join a Universal through an uplifting of their Particular circumstances. This Universal is not to be confused with the racist, exclusive Universal of European humanism, as Seligmann elegantly suggests, but is grounded instead in a reimagined Universal that already has room for the particularities of the Caribbean. This is location writing at its best. This is also the chapter where Seligmann introduces the centrality of infrastructural conditions in making, unmaking, or limiting the possibilities of location writing.

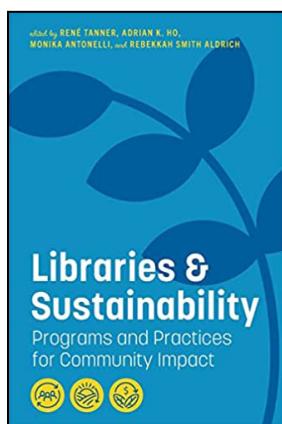
For me, reading this book as a former Digital Scholarship Librarian, and for the readers of this journal, Seligmann's analysis of the role of publishing infrastructure—in particular the relatively feeble one of the Caribbean compared to centers of capital—opens up valuable avenues for debates about our collection practices and the networks implied by our growing digital practices. Her analysis connects the production of literature, beyond the simple material realities of print literary magazines, to the very concept these magazines have of themselves,

the literature in their pages, and their audiences. In her book, publishing infrastructure is not an invisible and neutral container for content, but a force that actively shapes it. Seligmann captures this most concisely in her discussion of the journal *Bim* from its humble Barbadian origins to its status as a broad-based anglophone Caribbean journal: “I consider the infrastructural capacity of a magazine to generate literature to be shaped by the set of possible relations it may establish to other forms of literary infrastructure.”

In other words, these literary magazines cannot be understood fully until we place them in relation to the range of actual and relevant infrastructures they imply. If *Origenes* adopts a Eurocentric tack, it does so in relationship to European infrastructure. If *Bim* becomes West Indian, it does so in relation to the specifics of cross-Caribbean infrastructures. This astonishing insight opens the book to a librarian reading, especially for those libraries that see themselves today as the architects of a hybrid—digital and analog—cultural and historical record.

While Seligmann does not address libraries or archives directly in her discussion of infrastructural relations, she does provide useful concepts for us to carry on the conversation as stewards of one of the central infrastructures of world literature. These concepts emerge most clearly in chapter 5, when Seligmann departs from her “slow reading” of specific journals, turning to cartography to elucidate the location-making of the journals. Through a series of maps and careful analysis, she teases out three axes for cartographic location-making that can help us imagine literature that is not compelled to gravitate toward the centers of capital. These concepts are “authorship, circulation, and influence,” and Seligmann designs provocative maps from these to help us visualize the geographic imaginaries and realities at play in her book. For us, these three concepts serve as an invitation to imagine the many more axes that will help us be better partners, and perhaps even co-stewards, of these polycentric literatures around the world—always responsive to the idea that the moves we make will have a role to play in the future cultures that will matter to us.—*Alex Gil, Yale University*

***Libraries and Sustainability: Programs and Practices for Community Impact.*** René Tanner, Adrian K. Ho, Monika Antonelli, and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, eds. Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2021. 176p. Paper, \$49.99 (ISBN: 9780838937945).



In 2019, ALA adopted sustainability as one of the core values of librarianship, highlighting the importance of libraries to be resilient in this changing world. The conversation has morphed from merely “thinking green” to adopting the “triple bottom line” view of sustainability. Practices should aim to be environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible to be considered sustainable. This book aims to explore how libraries can address the issues of sustainability, looking into some actions that are proving successful in communities. This collection of essays constitutes a wide view of sustainability, offering myriad ways to promote the library as a leader for sustainable communities. The book is split into four parts: leadership, planning, programming, and transformation. Each section includes ideas that can be implemented at many libraries alongside suggestions that challenge how libraries operate in their communities and how we educate a new generation of librarians.

As expected, the book includes multiple essays about sustainability programming (think repair clinics and DIY events), discussion of collection development initiatives like seed libraries

and working with green publishing, and suggestions about producing sustainable conferences and large events. Other authors address issues related to planning and development, including sustainable buildings, permaculture, and makerspaces. The running themes of the book echo the ideas of the library serving as a community model, with short-term and long-term goals meant to produce more sustainable practices. There is a way, no matter how small, that each library can adopt a sustainable habit. The variety of ideas in this book gives readers the chance to look around their own library and consider, "Could we do something like that?"

Multiple essays revisit the importance of the library as a member of the community. Community-embedded libraries have opportunities to shape behaviors through sharing sustainability information, providing a model of change: "Libraries are perfectly positioned to be both the inspiration and the catalyst within their communities when it comes to nurturing sustainability as a mindset" (3). This line encapsulates the roles that libraries serve in their communities, inspirational and motivational for patrons and for staff. Michele Stricker's essay "Rapid Library Disaster Response and Recovery for Community Resiliency" points out that being a leader in the community is about more than just serving as a role model. It also means acting in times of crisis. When another once-in-a-lifetime weather event hits, how resilient is the library to quickly recover and assist in the recovery of others? In "Community-based Librarianship," a new model for educating sustainability-minded librarians launches at Texas Woman's University for rural Texans. Libraries prove to be assets to their communities when they are responsive and adaptable, and these essays take that to heart.

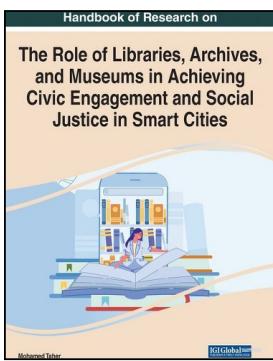
The idea that libraries are neutral helpers is not congruent with the perspective that libraries can be a grassroots force for sustainability. Neutrality only serves the status quo, and the status quo is not sustainable. Views expressed in these essays position libraries as pushing for meaningful change, at individual branches as well as the larger institutions that encompass them.

Shaking off the vocational awe and idea that libraries are *prima facie* good, we must be self-critical in how we may be engaging in oppressive and unsustainable actions, on our own or on behalf of our libraries. In Erin Elzi's essay "Why We Can't Talk about Sustainability in Libraries without Also Talking about Racism," the author asks, "Does the library prioritize educating its community about these environmental injustices in which it is a proponent? Does it spend as much time urging the larger system to divest, urging its community to vote when divestment is on the ballot, as the amount of time it spends on promoting small individual acts of waste reduction?" (111) Acknowledging that individual acts are very important, Elzi's point about the larger forces that can undermine sustainability goals is an important part of the conversation. This essay raises many questions. How can libraries speak truth to power while remaining economically feasible? How can libraries create more equitable outcomes in their community? How can libraries function in an environmentally sound way within a system that participates in unsound activities?

This book contributes good ideas and crucial questions to carry on conversations around promoting sustainable libraries, while addressing the three bottom lines of sustainability that the ALA has adopted as a value. There are also questions to guide our thinking moving forward. This book contains sustainability ideas that will work for all libraries. Those working in academic libraries may be energized with new programming ideas or community-based outreach for across campus, or encouraged in long-term planning to incorporate makerspaces, or inspired to start conversations around pushing for sustainability within their institutions.

The strength of these essays is the applicability across libraries, from rural to academic. Each essay has something to offer, a question to ponder, a library to imagine, and a sustainable future at which to aim.—*Lindsey Jackson, University of Texas at Austin*

***Handbook of Research on the Role of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in Achieving Civic Engagement and Social Justice in Smart Cities.*** Mohamed Taher, ed. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2022. 565p. \$295.00 (ISBN: 978-1799883630).



Organizations such as Libraries, Archives, and Museums (LAM) impact social justice (SJ) and civic engagement (CE) all over the world. This handbook explores these topics from different perspectives, uncovering the relationships between the LAM institutions and the communities they serve. The authors aim “to fill the gap with a sufficiently comprehensive critical overview of the role played by LAM in achieving SJ and CE,” examining the subject in a novel way, and on an impressive scale. The book is broken into four sections: the workplace, participation in the community, theory in the community, and smart cities. Each section includes chapters that look at how these institutions contribute to the

life of the city from the perspectives of educators, archivists, curators, and librarians.

A strength of this collection is the diversity of international authors, all of whom examine shared problems and offer broad solutions that will be useful to a range of practitioners and will inspire further research. The book emphasizes the global nature of the problems we face, offering ways for information professionals to search for solutions together. Too often, LAM professionals work on the same problems in isolation, reinventing the wheel repeatedly. Additionally, the authors present a broad range of methodologies, such as interviews, literature reviews, case studies, and analysis. This will be valuable for LAM students as they are introduced to the many types of research they could perform in their careers.

Any contemporary title meant to explore the impact of LAM institutions on cities must attend to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Taher handles that well here. The introduction discusses global surveys on Covid-19, and the survey instruments appear in the appendices. Separating the survey from the rest of the book ensures its relevance past the pandemic era while maintaining the ability to address it. While some chapters discuss the pandemic’s impact, it is not the primary focus. Chapter 20 looks at technology and civic engagement through case studies of Barrie and Toronto, Canada. While the authors mention the role of Covid-19, the focus is on popup sidewalk labs and an entrepreneur-in-residence program at the Toronto Public Library. Covid-19 has impacted everyone and, in turn, has impacted how we handle service in LAM. While some doors were physically closed, others were virtually opened as the pandemic led to a greater focus on digital access to services. However, virtual service does not solve everything, as this has exacerbated the digital divide. Chapter 6 explores the importance of community engagement, while chapter 7 delineates the repercussions of Covid-19 on traditional approaches to community engagement work. This is just one example of Taher’s clever editing, positioning chapters such that they directly address each other. The concluding survey about LAM responses to Covid-19 offers strategies for a “new normal” that emphasizes digital literacy and media activism.

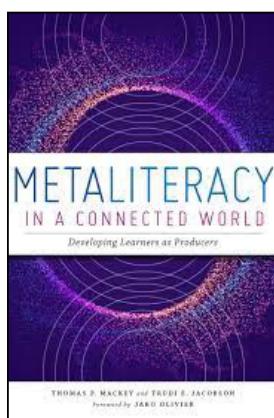
Several chapters focus specifically on libraries, archives, and museums in Canada. Chapter 11 is a standout example, looking at missed opportunities in the Toronto Public Library’s

approach to the Kutchi Cultural Association of Canada, a diaspora organization that aids newcomers in integrating into Canada. Several chapters offer excellent background on LAM community engagement and social justice work in India, South Africa, and online. The international scope will appeal to students, researchers, and practitioners who will appreciate the broad scope of research topics.

The authors use a range of writing styles, from highly accessible to more scholarly and complex. This means the book will be most at home in academic collections, though a general audience will also find it of interest. The book deploys keywords and definitions at the end of many chapters, making concepts accessible to a wider range of readers. For instance, one author defines the digital divide as “the gulf between those who can access digital information and those who could not access digital information” (140). Such definitions make the handbook more useful for the lay reader.

The book is a wellspring of international knowledge. Handbooks like this one highlight and explain the work going on worldwide. LAM workers who want to avoid reinvestigating problems that have been solved elsewhere will find much of value here.—*Kaia MacLeod, University of Calgary*

***Metaliteracy in a Connected World: Developing Learners as Producers.*** Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson, eds. Chicago, IL: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2022. 232p. \$64.99 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-4944-3).



Is the term “information literacy” a valuable descriptor of what we try to teach as librarians? In *Metaliteracy in a Connected World*, Thomas Mackey and Trudi Jacobson make a strong case for the adoption of the metaliteracy framework, a pedagogical model that seeks to empower learners to be reflective and informed consumers and producers of information in an increasingly connected (digital) world. This monograph builds on Mackey and Jacobson’s previous efforts, spanning two decades, to normalize metaliteracy as the framework for teaching and learning in libraries.

You may have used the term “metaliteracy” to describe information literacy. In the first two chapters, Mackey and Jacobson describe the metaliteracy framework as a model informed by other pedagogical approaches, such as critical thinking, self-directed learning, and metacognition, as well as influential learning theories, including Paulo Freire’s problem-posing education, among others. In brief, the metaliteracy model is constituted by four components: domains, characteristics, roles, and goals and learning objectives. The metaliterate learner is trained in four domains: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and behavioral. Each domain fosters one or more key characteristics of a metaliterate learner, such as being adaptable, open, collaborative, reflective, and civic minded, among others. Finally, each characteristic is associated with a specific role, such as that of a teacher, collaborator, communicator, or researcher. Metaliteracy goals and learning objectives serve as learning principles for educators looking to apply the model in practice. Chapter 2 explores the relationship between metaliteracy and multimodality. This is crucial, given that a metaliterate learner is at once a consumer and producer of information. Mackey and Jacobson point to the digital environment in which learners are operating—an environment constituted by text, hypertext, audio, video, and AR/VR—and encourage educators to

take advantage of this medium to foster producers while maintaining reflective practices.

As this short summary suggests, the first two chapters are packed to the brim. Until chapter 3, Mackey and Jacobson's discussion focuses on defining the parameters of metaliteracy in theoretical terms, focusing on iterative development and precedential learning theories, with brief gestures toward how metaliteracy may present itself in the classroom. The theoretical discussion, from Piaget's Social Construction of Knowledge to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and the development of Bloom's Taxonomy, is illustrative of Mackey and Jacobson's knowledge and passion. While thorough, these chapters may leave certain readers wishing for a translation of the metaliteracy framework into concrete practices. For those readers, chapters 3 and 4 deliver.

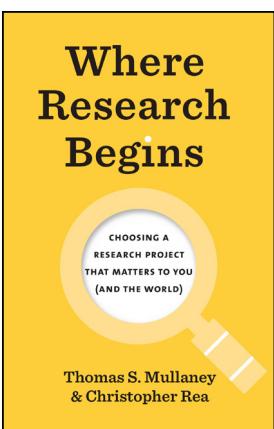
Chapter 3 focuses on the intersection of metaliteracy and open pedagogical practices. In short, open pedagogy, defined as a practice that positions the learner as a "constructor of knowledge through their own discovery and creation processes," is in many ways a practical distillation of the metaliteracy framework. Indeed, asking learners to demonstrate proficiency through the act of creating an openly licensed and reusable object is an example of the learner-producer paradigm in practice. Chapter 4 continues this discussion by offering specific examples of how metaliteracy and open pedagogy can work in the classroom, such as nondisposable assignments (editing a course textbook, creating a syllabus, editing Wikipedia, and so on).

Chapters 5 and 6 will not appeal to every reader. The former is a comprehensive case study of an online course on metaliteracy developed by one of the authors, while the latter "explores how metaliteracy encourages individuals ... to be effective digital citizens" (165). While the learning activities in chapter 6 are interesting, the overall content is likely not applicable for most academic librarians; how often does a librarian get the chance to develop and run a MOOC?

Librarians interested in pedagogical theory and the development of teaching and learning more generally will do well to pick up a copy of this title. One criticism is that the book does not address some of the stark realities of library instruction, as evidenced by some of the examples offered in the final chapters. In particular, the authors would do well to acknowledge the underresourced and overworked conditions in information literacy departments and the consistent last-minute requests for instruction from faculty that are interested in bibliographic instruction rather than, as the book suggests, cultivating "productive digital citizens"—and one could go on. Indeed, breaking out of this loop may be the first step in adopting a framework such as the one proposed in this book. A second step may include adopting some of the excellent resources included in the appendix of this title, which provide starting points for activities and lessons that model the metaliteracy framework.—*Cal Murgu, Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada*

**Thomas S. Mullaney and Christopher Rea.** *Where Research Begins: Choosing a Research Project That Matters to You (and the World)*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2022. 216p. Paper, \$17.43 (ISBN: 978-0226817446).

Self-centeredness is not a personality trait that we normally value in our society. However, when it comes to research, nothing will capture our focus and attention as much as researching a topic that has personal significance to us. This is one of the central themes of this book: our questions should drive the research process. Unlike many books that are targeted toward



experienced researchers who benefit from a nuts-and-bolts approach to how to conduct research, this text primarily serves as a guide for the novice researcher. The book will also offer insights to experienced scholars seeking alternative approaches to the research process. Mullaney and Rea also address the often neglected but important suggestion that we conduct research with a purpose in mind, employing evocative language to demonstrate how researching from the self-centered perspective helps students figure out what to do before they begin the process of research in earnest.

What sets this book apart is its challenge to conventional wisdom about how the researcher should embark on the process of research. The

authors make the subtle but important distinction between a research topic and a research question, arguing that understanding the difference is essential to designing a research project that is self-focused and intended to have a positive impact on society. Researchers who draw on their true passions and set their own research agendas can make more significant contributions to the betterment of society. This is the key to becoming a self-centered researcher.

Self-centered research is a practice of research that emphasizes the importance of setting out on our own research journey, recognizing the importance of ethics in the research process, while coming to grips with our own abilities and limitations as researchers. In other words, we need to know enough to know that we don't know enough. Unlike other books that explain the research process, this book helps the researcher understand their questions and problems at the outset of a research project. How being vulnerable makes us better researchers. Why we should listen to our inner voice. The importance of writing things down and proper note taking, an exercise that I refer to as outlining with emotion, reflection, precision, and purpose. How to overcome challenges during the research process. Why establishing a *Sounding Board* to bounce ideas off is important. How having a trusted critic helps the researcher to be a reflective thinker who will develop a mindset and perspective to help them make better decisions. And how research that begins as an introverted process evolves into an extroverted project, with the intention of changing the world.

The book consists of two parts with six chapters. The first part of the book focuses on becoming a *self-centered researcher*, a researcher who writes for yourself and not about yourself. In this section, the authors address how to formulate questions that will drive the research process. The book goes on to address the importance of the preliminary research needed to *Educate* your questions, by finding and using primary sources to generate nuanced and better formulated questions in order to discover the *Problem*. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how to pose and enhance questions that will guide the research process. The final chapter of part I concludes with a step-by-step guide to designing a project that works for the researcher with the focus on project planning, that is rooted in the questioning and the use of sources.

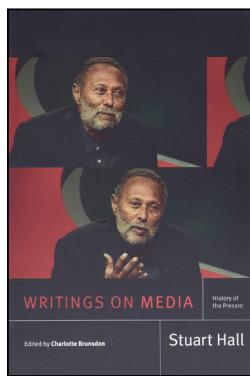
In the second part of the book, *Get Over Yourself*, the authors posit how important it is to identify researchers who share your problem and how to find the problem collective, which the authors define as "envisioning the various problem-centric intellectual connections and affiliations we can discover and create during the research process." The final two chapters address how to navigate your field of research by finding the most appropriate sources and how to begin your research project. The book ends with a section entitled "What's Next in Your Research Journey." This is a fitting ending from my perspective because it reinforces

one of the central themes of the book: research is a process, without a predetermined beginning and end point.

The authors make a compelling argument, tested by their own teaching and research, as they pay special attention to the journey of research. One of the main takeaways is the need for researchers to eschew the dispassionate research process for an internally focused one. The research journey should enhance our capacity to be free and to help students live more fully and as better-informed citizens of the world. The overall goal of this book is to provide a guide to develop reflective researchers. The authors accomplish this by providing a practical and useful guide on how to conduct research as an inwardly focused project that is also meant to impact the world. The questions that we articulate should also guide us and challenge our assumptions; while fortifying our desire to know, it is important to keep in mind that our research is only as good as our questions.

This book is an updated and sanguine alternative to some of the better-known books on how to conduct research, namely because it is more than just another how-to book. It's a "how to think and question" guide, focused on placing the researcher at the center of the research process. For this reason, and the fact that this book was informative and enjoyable to read, I would highly recommend it to academic librarians who are engaged in their own research, as well as those teaching students how to conduct research. It is the ideal life-long learning manual, one that will assist the reader in becoming a self-centered researcher whose research is self-directed and focused on making a change in the world.—*Darren Sweeper, Montclair State University*

***Writings on Media: History of the Present.*** Stuart Hall and Charlotte Brunsdon, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021. 352p. Paper, \$28.95 (ISBN: 978-1-4780-1471-3).



Stuart Hall (1932–2014) was a massively influential cultural theorist, and his work continues to inform much critical analysis on race, history, and media. Hall was a black Brit, emigrating early in life from Jamaica. Hall spent most of his years teaching and writing about race and nationality in Britain from the Postwar period through the early twenty-first century. Hall's work informed—and continues to inform—much critical historical and sociological work in the United States and elsewhere. Hall was a prolific theorist. *Writings on Media: A History of the Present*, a new anthology of Hall's writing, aims to do historical and biographical justice to the remarkable breadth and diversity of Hall's work across medium and focus.

In her introduction, editor Charlotte Brunsdon explains that, in the work of curating and organizing these analyses, she expected to include Hall's "major works." Ultimately, however, Brunsdon foregoes that approach in favor of something much more ambitious: to produce a collection that reflects both what and *how* Hall theorized. The collected works are delightfully varied in ways both formal and stylistic. Some of Hall's "major" works are featured (Chapter 14 is Hall's brilliant "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media"); but elsewhere we are treated to less well-known analyses that show Hall's remarkable range and boundless curiosity. This is one feature of *Writings on Media* that makes it such a special and satisfying collection. Further, this variety comports to one of Hall's central ethics: what might be called (to borrow Freire's term) a truly "dialogical" kind of analysis: this collection's range of prosaic mode, methodological approach, and intended audience, from one analysis

to the next, offers readers all sorts of different “ways into” Hall’s work.

These works are organized into three formally defined sections: “Part One: The Photograph in Context,” “Part Two: Media Studies and Cultural Studies,” and “Part Three: Television.” And, owing to Brunsdon’s excellent curatorial work, each of these sections begins with analyses from Hall that are particularly preoccupied with methodological approach to the specific form at issue. The sum of these parts is truly mighty. Not only does *Writings on Media* offer the most diverse and comprehensive collection of Hall’s work anywhere, it also offers as good a foundation as I have encountered on which to build a practice of critical analysis—particularly critical media analysis. This latter quality also makes this review feel like an opportunity to propose a rather broad and ambitious set of possibilities: that *Writings on Media* stands not only to be a touchstone text for the fields of critical media studies and cultural studies in which Hall labored, but also to be a truly transformative text for the field of library and information sciences (LIS). In particular, *Writings on Media* stands to benefit those people in LIS interested in critical information literacy (especially media literacy), as well as those people interested in what might broadly be construed as questions of power, politics, and history in LIS (such as antiracist librarianship).

Hall’s analyses of photojournalism and news media in Part One stand out as particularly instructive works in this collection that stand to add much needed complexity and context to critical LIS studies. As Brunsdon notes in the Introduction, this collection “does not propose that Hall’s media analyses can be digested to produce a one-size-fits-all method that can now be applied” across form, time, and context (7). Instead, Brunsdon suggests that Hall’s project of critical analysis might help sharpen and supplement analyses in other disciplines—to aid in a “search for analytic resources to render any particular analysis more adequate to its object” (7).

Particularly in the last decade, much work in LIS has been dedicated to critical media literacy—particularly to studies of “mis- and disinformation.” Much critical media literacy scholarship encourages readers to engage with journalistic content with questions like: “*how close to the truth* is this news story? Is this news story *objective or not?*” Given these guiding questions, the resultant analysis is often framed in the simple dyad of True and False, without reckoning with the fraught social practices of signification at play in journalistic texts. As Hall argues in chapters 4 and 5 (“Determinations of News Photographs” and “Reconstruction Work: Images of Post-war Black Settlement,” respectively), “The News”—far from a straightforward recounting of “what actually happened”—is in fact a powerful “social practice” (79–81). “The News,” Hall argues, is a discursive procedure that reproduces what is “widely known” (“consensus” and “hegemonic” knowledge) and what is “remarkable” (that is to say, “newsworthy” or aberrant) in a particular social context (68–70). Consequently, “The News” performs a sort of ideological maintenance and reinscribes power relations.

Further, Hall’s analyses (particularly in Part One) feel instantly relevant to those most foundational (and, indeed, still contested) questions of curation, archiving, and cataloging—what these seemingly straightforward practices of collection, description, and ordering *do* to the objects they handle, and how they impart and transform the meaning of these objects in ways that have much to do with the social order at the moments of both collection and representation to an audience or user. Hall’s capacity to be as detailed—if a good deal more accessible—in his analysis as, say, Buckland, while also making arguments about power and discursive formation, and explaining the logic that undergirds each argumentative move he makes along the way, is brilliant in its own right. It also indicates remarkable possibilities

for these analytical forms, which we might model our own analyses after—in critical media literacy and other areas of LIS scholarship.

Part Two, “Media Studies and Cultural Studies,” shows Hall writing more directly about the titular discipline in which he worked, reflecting on pedagogy and critiquing the strategies and discourses of projects of resistance (especially antiracist projects) within these fields. Chapter 12, “Mugging: A Case Study in the Media,” is a particular highlight of this section. Hall’s analysis takes as its object the widespread and peculiarly racialized news coverage of a spike in “muggings” in early 1970s Britain. Hall begins with a fantastic interrogation of the seemingly banal terminological device of “the mugging,” explaining how recently this term has taken on its current criminological definition, and how the very language with which these crimes are commonly described produces fraught and overdetermined social and cultural meanings about race, crime, and policing. This chapter in particular provides a fabulous model for critical historical and discursive analysis, furnished with complexity and care, and deftly argued on the page. This robust reading also comes in at *under six pages*. As such—beyond its merits as a piece of prose—it would also make for an excellent model in any graduate or undergraduate course on critical media literacy. It is such a rich examination, but it is also—crucially—argued in plainspoken terms. Hall engages history with deference and delight, he writes about race with complexity and curiosity, and he neither moralizes at the reader about racism nor avoids the fundamentally moral questions at issue in what he terms the “common-sense racism” that informs so many narratives in media.

In chapter 14, “The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media,” Hall approaches questions of race and racism in media in broader and more theoretical terms. Hall explores the ways media “define and construct the question of race in such a way as to reproduce the ideologies of racism” (177). In the final pages of this discussion, Hall expresses frustration about the ways that many antiracist projects tend to undermine each other (and themselves) by “taking absolutist positions” and succumbing to self-righteousness (199). Both of these lines of critique are resonant in contemporary US racial discourses, and the latter observation locates an important area of reflection for contemporary antiracist projects—in LIS and otherwise.

Finally, Part Three, “Television,” begins with another elegant and methodical framework for analysis (Chapter 15, “Television as a Medium and Its Relation to Culture”) before tackling questions particular to the televisual form, like mass-mediation and corporate power, TV’s unique combination of the artistic and the banal, and the manipulative power of TV advertising. Chapter 19, “Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse,” offers a wonderful treatment of some of Hall’s most influential theories about how to critically “read” media texts in all of their complexity. These ideas include how to grapple with questions of social meaning involved in media texts, from their production by creators, to their consumption by viewers; what Hall terms “encoding” and “decoding,” respectively. Here we see Hall at his most systematic and directive, laying out these schemes of critical analysis with great precision, rendering his critical analytical approach structurally and diagrammatically. He also describes the complexities of making claims about meaning given the messiness of subjectivity and temporality in epistemological matters, offering “levels” of possible ways of “decoding” a media text—ways of reading that comport to “dominant” and “hegemonic” systems of meaning in a particular social context, as well as ways of reading that involve counterhegemonic or “contrary” interpretation (263). Hall’s attention to these complexities makes his analysis flex to

changing contexts of media objects as well as the ways in which interpretation gets inflected by things like “irony,” attempts at “resistance” to hegemonic ideology, and reactionary attitudes and movements. This furnishing of an analytical scheme that deals with interpretation as fundamentally multiple and always-shifting charts a path for critical discourses in LIS that tend to render objects in ways more singular and fixed.

Both critical information literacy and discourses of power and history in LIS share high stakes, and, though much creative and meaningful work is happening on these subjects, there is also much exhaustion—even despair—that surrounds the big, important questions to which these investigations lead us: *how do we deal with information literacy in a moment characterized by unique epistemic crises? How do we reckon with a profession that seems uniquely haunted by racialist, colonialist, and imperialist ideologies? How do we live and labor ethically, effectively, and—most importantly—together?* Our current historical moment has seemed only to intensify these already daunting questions. In critical information literacy instruction, in particular, there is a sense of such great urgency that, in instructional situations, our comporting to “pragmatism” overrides desires for complexity; that we must sacrifice analytical depth and build instructional tools on simpler and familiar premises like True/False or Biased/Objective, if we hope to impart a sufficiently accessible critical practice in our students.

In *Writings on Media*, Hall’s work suggests that, *precisely because of the urgency* of the problematics in which these disciplines aim to intervene, we must be proportionately careful in how we build our analyses. This collection offers us—in LIS, in education, in these projects of knowledge production, maintenance, and purveyance—an auspicious and instructive blueprint for how to build these analyses. And, most remarkably, it has afforded me new curiosity and excitement about the questions that shape these crucial issues. That is the final, irreducible, profound thing here: that you too might encounter this collection and find yourself possessing a greater appetite for—as well as new approaches to—these questions.

I want to close this review in the same way that Brunsdon begins the text. In the first sentences of this collection, Brunsdon describes Hall’s relationship with media—“reading newspapers, watching film and television, listening to the radio”—and constructing his analysis thereabout: “He loved doing this, even if he didn’t always like what he saw or heard” (1). This is the true magic here: what Hall furnished for us during the course of his life, and what Brunsdon has collected and contextualized in *Writings on Media*, is an invitation into Hall’s world—to see the world as he did. This vision is bright eyed, and delighted, and serious, and humble—Hall was never satisfied in his ambitious investigation, even as he possessed such singular clarity at each point along the way. There is a lot you can read—theory, especially—that will tell you how the world is, and how you ought to feel about that, and how you ought to proceed given these absolute truths. Just the same, there is much writing that will tell you how everything you know—or thought you knew—is wrong, and what sorts of moral and intellectual deficiencies you possess because of that ignorance. Hall is not interested in those things. In all of his prose, it is unmistakable just how much Hall absolutely wants you *in it with him*, and to share his questions, and to identify possible answers, and to figure it out with you. And, *that* is a very precious gift indeed.—Max Wiggins, University of Maryland, College Park