

Planning for Instruction Training: Implementing an On-the-Job Training for Library Instructors

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Planning for Instruction Training:

Implementing an On-the-Job Training for Library Instructors

Livia Piotto

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Readers will be able to

- design a training plan to support on-the-job training for new instruction librarians;
- adapt library instruction theoretical frameworks into practical approaches to design an on-the-job training that can be easily adjusted to different individuals;
- identify institute-specific practices that have an impact on library instruction to recognize instructional needs and opportunities; and
- assess basic instructional design principles and frameworks to develop their own instruction toolkit for improving their teaching skills.

Introduction

The need for instruction training for librarians is not new because, as Oakleaf et al. noted, “Librarians teach. It might not be what we planned to do when we entered the profession, or it may have been our secret hope all along. Either way, we teach.”¹ However, it is also evident that there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to instruction training.²

The majority of newly hired instruction librarians receive their training on the job, and this type of training remains the “primary means of learning” in academic libraries.³

This chapter describes the implementation of an instruction training plan developed to assist early-career librarians and librarians with no previous instruction experience with developing the basic skills for teaching information literacy in an academic environment. The existing literature on this topic is already plentiful. There are general and comprehensive guides, explorations of the topic with a practical approach, and the many publications that provide sample lesson plans for the library instructor to use as guides and inspiration.⁴ Building from the existing literature, this case study offers a real-life example of how an instruction training program meant to support an on-the-job approach to training new instruction librarians can be implemented.

Institutional Context

John Cabot University (JCU) is an American liberal arts university based in Rome, Italy, and through the years it has grown into a university that attracts an international body of students, of which most are Italians and Americans. In time, the Frohring Library at JCU has become a vital ally for ensuring that students grow to become savvy researchers and critical learners.⁵ Instrumental to this end was the development of an instruction program that was started in 2006 when I was hired as reference and instruction librarian. Once I started the job at JCU, I realized quickly that this was more than a standard reference job. When I learned that I would be responsible for providing instruction in the form of library orientations and information literacy instruction, I did what anyone would have done: I started reading and learning about information literacy instruction. Unfortunately, I was alone in this endeavor without someone to mentor or teach me how to teach. This meant I had to learn by trial and error. There was a lot of error. I ultimately discovered that this on-the-job training was very common, and I could not have learned what I did in a classroom during my formal preparation for librarianship. It is frequent for instruction librarian training to occur primarily in the workplace, and few librarians learn to teach after receiving formal training, as noted by Kilcullen in 1998: “Librarians are self-taught and teach other librarians to teach. Instruction librarians learn how to teach library instructional sessions by trial and error, by reading the literature, by communicating with colleagues, and by attending conferences and workshops on teaching.... They are constantly teaching and learning how to teach.”⁶

In time, the needs of the instruction program grew so much that the library needed to hire new instruction librarians. Initially, the training of the new librarians was simply an informal passing of the knowledge acquired in the field, then I realized that this knowledge could have been the basis of a more structured instruction training for future colleagues. The instruction training plan that was then developed aimed to teach librarians with no previous instruction experience the basics of what it means to be a library instructor. The training plan builds its strengths on a mix of theoretical learning, observation activities, and practical applications. The recent need to hire, and therefore train, new instruction

librarians has provided an opportunity to update and formalize the training plan. JCU did not invent anything special, we just adapted the answer to a common need in our context.

The instruction training plan is based on the ACRL documents and guidelines related to instructional practices, including the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*⁷ and the *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*.⁸ These documents, which may not necessarily be known by librarians with a non-American library science background, informed the best practices of the instruction program at JCU.

Development of On-the-Job Training for Library Instructors

JCU library is relatively small, and the entire staff participates in shifts at the central circulation desk, the only staffed workstation during evenings and weekends. This makes the onboarding experience for new employees very comprehensive and time-consuming. Training cannot just focus on instruction. Moreover, the instruction training cannot happen overnight, and past experience suggests that the new instruction librarian should spend at least one semester familiarizing with how the university works and with how the organizational structure might have an impact on the teaching job.

Ideally, the instruction training should not take place when the term is in full swing, as there is not much time left for regular training sessions when the rest of the staff are already busy with their duties. There is always the risk that the new instruction librarian will be left to figure things out on their own. Training instruction librarians requires a lot of time and energy and, above all, constant dedication. Therefore, the onboarding procedure can be scaffolded in such a way as to cover the initial broad responsibilities expected of all staff members, especially if training is to take place after the semester has already begun. More in-depth training for reference work can be provided later, while the newly hired librarian can begin to use the knowledge gained by becoming familiar with the institution and interacting with students and faculty. Finally, the new instruction librarian can start their formal teaching training. Because the line between reference and instruction work is often blurred anyway, we can easily use reference work as one-on-one instruction practice that can help the new instruction librarian overcome “stage fright” by familiarizing with resources and assignment requirements.⁹ This scaffolded training plan is also intended to allow for a more gradual teaching experience.

Keeping in mind that a one-size-fits-all approach is not ideal for training library instructors, the plan developed at JCU presents a focus on analyzing the Frohning Library and the university environment as factors influencing how teaching is understood in our specific context. Backward design is the primary strategy implemented to help newly hired instructional librarians develop measurable learning outcomes, create instructional activities that foster authentic learning, and apply appropriate assessment techniques. The training plan itself follows a backward design approach. After setting the learning outcomes, we worked backward to develop the assessments and the activities that would enable the new instruction librarian to get started with the new job.

JCU Training Plan Learning Outcomes

- Analyze the organizational and instructional environment to identify instructional needs and opportunities and to define audiences.
- Recognize the various roles instruction librarians play in various contexts.
- Familiarize with basic instructional design principles (e.g., backward design, big ideas, outcomes, learning assessment, and activity sequencing).
- Apply backward design to a variety of library instruction services, both within and beyond classroom instruction (e.g., one-shot sessions, course co-design, learning objects).
- Develop an understanding of assessment techniques to evaluate instructional opportunities.

The training plan is also designed to accommodate a variety of teaching techniques and learning styles by including: an extensive list of reading recommendations (to help those who favor a verbal learning style or simply to read more about the topic);¹⁰ experiential learning opportunities to accommodate those who prefer learning by doing; and opportunities for observing other colleagues teaching in a real-life setting (to favor those that need to see how things happen not just in an abstract sense).

Where We Teach: The Environmental Scan

Given that we firmly believe that “instruction is an institute-specific scenario,”¹¹ it is fundamental for a new instruction librarian to become familiar with the organizational culture and therefore with its teaching culture. In our training plan, the newly hired librarian needs to spend a significant amount of time getting to know the characteristics that define the institution, starting from the university and library missions. Instead, librarians who move from different positions to become instruction librarians should already be familiar with the institutional context, so less time should be spent on this initial step of the training. In either case, however, it is worth starting the training with an environmental scan to better understand both the library environment, its instruction practices, and the broader organizational environment.

Although time-consuming, an environmental scan is a good way to learn about the organizational context in which new instruction librarians will be expected to teach. In the case of frequent turnover of instruction librarians, this exercise can also be of great benefit for the library as an organization, as it offers the possibility to monitor how the institutional environment changes and to react to these changes. If the library does not have a programmatic document for environmental scanning, a good tool is “Analyzing Your Instructional Environment: A Workbook.”¹² While this was developed before the implementation of the ACRL Framework and it still refers to the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, the workbook provides a structure for drawing a comprehensive picture of the “unique situation” that defines the instruction program.

After gaining an insight into the macro-environment in which the instruction program is placed, the new instruction librarian needs to better understand how the library teaching

efforts should relate to the broader academic curriculum. To this end, our training plan includes engaging in a curriculum mapping activity. Ideally, using this activity as an iterative assessment of the sequencing of library instruction practices should become part of the regular library operations. Curriculum mapping allows the library to examine the academic curriculum offered by the university, align the information literacy teaching with what is actually taught in the classroom, and identify information literacy instruction gaps and opportunities. This is time-consuming and difficult to carry out on a regular basis, but it is helpful when things change drastically—for example when the general curriculum is revised, new majors are implemented, or when new library staff is hired. Curriculum mapping provides the means to understand the institutional context from a strictly teaching perspective: what is taught? What are the general education prerequisites? What types of assignments are the students required to work on? In short, curriculum mapping can support library instruction at the point of need, and it provides a blueprint to create a programmatic engagement within the academic curriculum. Moreover, as Jacobson and Gibson noted, “information literacy librarians will need to conduct systematic curriculum analyses and design curriculum maps to identify those courses and programs that are the most natural “fit” or homes for the six frames”¹³ in order to better incorporate the Framework discourse into a broader conversation that would go beyond the walls of the library and would then foster collaboration with the faculty.

Knowing the curriculum alone is not enough, it is also essential to get to know the people with whom the instruction librarian will then have to collaborate, who they are, their faces, what they do and teach in class, what they ask the students to do, and what their research interests are. A new instruction librarian first needs to get a sense of the place where they landed and who could become a potential teaching partner and collaborator. This is even more important in a small institution like JCU, where everybody knows each other and their roles. Getting to know the people is vital to create lasting relationships and build trust.

This phase of the training plan can take anywhere from one week to a few months. There is no way that an instruction librarian can teach confidently without knowing the surrounding environment and the contextual practices linked to the curriculum. Becoming familiar with the broad context in which the teaching takes place and getting to know the people who shape that environment is just as important as learning how to teach.

One Librarian, Different Roles

Inevitably, as the new instruction librarian learns about the environment, the organizational culture, and the academic curriculum, they begin to develop an understanding of the different roles they must play in their day-to-day job. As many have noted in recent years,¹⁴ the profession and practice of an instruction librarian typically involve a range of different roles and responsibilities, which are, of course, institution-specific.

Knowing which roles an instruction librarian is expected to play is an essential part of the training of new instructors at JCU, where, for example, the instruction librarians, in addition to their in-classroom teaching responsibilities, provide reference services to the community (both walk-in and scheduled consultations),¹⁵ act as a liaison for two to

four academic departments, support the collection development within the disciplines in which they specialize, and provide support as instructional technologists for the LMS platform. All of these roles require specific training, which in some cases overlaps from role to role (i.e., reference is a kind of instruction, curriculum knowledge for reference and instruction is essential for collection development as well, and being an instructional technologist requires providing some kind of instruction to the faculty). In any case, the specific organizational culture of JCU has a major impact not only on the content and modalities of library instruction but also on the extensive training that we need to put in place to coach newly hired instruction librarians.

There is No Training without Theory First

However, when creating our plan for instruction training, we decided to prioritize only the roles of instructional designer and teacher, leaving the training for the other roles to be completed separately. For new instruction librarians, especially those who did not have the opportunity to receive any formal training about theoretical and practical aspects of teaching in library school, these two roles—despite having been the subject of extensive study over the past few years—remain the main roadblocks.¹⁶ The training plan that we developed at JCU includes a brief overview of the major learning theories that are typically used in information literacy instruction: behaviorism, which focuses on observable behaviors and how these can be influenced by external motivations; cognitivism, which emphasizes what happens in the brain during learning; and constructivism, which emphasizes the role of the learner in the learning process. We then move on to the fundamental concepts of instructional design, including the basic models used in instructional design, such as the ADDIE framework (analysis, design, development, implement, evaluate), and other models that were inspired by it (USER,¹⁷ the Teaching Tripod Approach,¹⁸ Understanding by Design¹⁹).

This part of the training, because it is largely based on theoretical concepts, is mostly carried out with a series of reading assignments recommended to the newly hired instruction librarian. While the training provides a preliminary summary of learning theories and instructional design frameworks, the new instruction librarian has the opportunity to delve into concepts that may have already been covered in library school. For those librarians who are completely new to the idea of also becoming teachers and instructional designers as part of their job, this phase of the training is a good opportunity to explore the basis of these two roles. Reading about the theories is then completed by reflection and discussion with the trainer, who provides further guidance integrated with their personal experience.

During an on-the-job training program like the one JCU uses, learning theories and instructional design models are easily overlooked. The reason can be traced to the fact that instructional design frameworks and theories are usually applied to semester-long teaching contexts, while library instruction does not necessarily follow the same modalities.²⁰ To accommodate the specific needs of the library teaching context, instructional design models must be scaled down. We believe it is essential to incorporate these theories in the training program because instructional design models give librarians the framework they

need to create engaging lessons. However, learning about instructional design frameworks is rarely fully applicable to the constrained time provided by on-the-job training such as the one developed at JCU. Therefore, the time devoted to this theoretical part of the training may vary significantly depending on many factors, including the new instruction librarian's prior knowledge of the topic. Moreover, if the training is set to start before the beginning of the term, theories and frameworks can be examined more thoroughly, whereas, once the semester has already begun and the training needs to start, priorities need to shift, and the theoretical background is likely to be left aside.

Lesson Plans: Where Theory and Practice Meet

In addition to focusing on what it means for an instruction librarian to become a teacher and an instructional designer and to learn the theories behind these two roles, the core of the training plan developed at JCU aims to establish a connection between these theories and their practical application in the classroom. Our training plan, therefore, places a lot of emphasis on designing the teaching (and, hopefully, learning) experience and how to create a lesson plan, which is the bridge between the design theories applied by the librarians in their role as instructional designer and what actually happens in the classroom during the teaching practice. As librarians learn to apply instructional design theory in the classroom, the roles of instructional designer and teacher become intertwined.

At JCU, we have chosen to use a backward design approach to design our instruction training plan because this is also the structured approach that we recommend for outlining teaching and learning experiences. Within this approach, evidence of learning is identified through assessment and then a plan is developed that allows the instructor to appropriately sequence the content to be delivered and the activities that will be employed to enforce student learning and understanding.²¹

It is true that developing a lesson plan is time-consuming, but what we try to emphasize during the training is that spending more time at the beginning engaging in thorough lesson plan development means that the instruction librarian will end up spending less time in the long term. Once developed, lesson plans can be reused for sessions that are repeated over time, for sessions that are similar in content and structure, and they can be tailored to suit different needs in different contexts. At JCU, we have outlined a lesson plan template that all librarians are encouraged to use, so we don't have to create something new whenever we are asked to prepare a session.²² We have developed the content for our template based on what Benjes-Small and Miller have identified as the essential components of an effective lesson plan.²³ Moreover, lesson plans can easily be reused and shared among librarians and, ideally, with faculty as well. We have created a shared repository of all lesson plans created by the instruction librarians, and we reuse and adapt these documents based on the specific needs.

As part of their training, the new instruction librarian is encouraged to access and review the shared lesson plans to become familiar with the structure of the template that we use and to better understand the components of a well-developed lesson plan. Reviewing and revising lesson plans created by others is an introductory activity in preparation for creating lesson plans from scratch. After the new instruction librarian has become

familiar with the organization and design of a lesson plan, the training starts focusing on its three main components: the learning outcomes, the assessment, and the instructional strategies and learning activities they will employ in the classroom.

Developing Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes that outline what the librarian envisions the students will be able to know and do after the instruction session are the most important part of the lesson plan. The training plan implemented at JCU places an emphasis on learning outcomes, as learning outcomes are likely to be the foundation upon which lessons are structured. Extensive literature already discusses how learning outcomes should be developed, and we follow the models that are already commonly used in library instruction.²⁴

Our training for instruction librarians not only focuses on developing specific learning outcomes. At JCU, we emphasize that “big ideas,” which Wiggins and McTighe identify as the concepts that give “meaning and connection to discrete facts and skills,”²⁵ are central for helping students transfer their learning from one context to the other. Using the backward design process, the instruction librarian can develop learning outcomes starting from these big ideas. Once the abstract big idea has been identified, the instruction librarian can connect it to the specific skills and understanding that the students should gain after the instruction, and therefore they can define the learning outcomes.

The specific model that we have chosen to follow for writing learning outcomes is based on the formula developed by Gilchrist and Zald, which combines verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy with an action phrase demonstrating learning at some level of mastery.²⁶ This formula is especially helpful for beginners because it breaks down the learning outcomes into discrete parts and it provides a frame that prevents instruction librarians from trying to cover more content than can be realistically included in the allotted instruction time. Having to think about what we want students to learn activates a reflective process that prevents developing more learning outcomes than are needed.

To provide further guidelines to develop meaningful learning outcomes, we have also adapted the SMART method that George T. Doran developed for goals and objectives.²⁷ Library instruction learning outcomes should be

- student-centered: the focus is on the student learning experience;
- measurable: the librarian should be able to measure or judge the outcomes;
- appropriate: the learning outcome is suitable for the discipline and for the level of understanding of the students;
- realistic: the learning outcome represents what students can realistically accomplish given the time allotted and the assignment the professor has developed; and
- transferable: students should see that they are learning something that will last and that can be transferred to other contexts.²⁸

Since practicing the construction of learning outcomes based on the “students will be able to + action verb + in order to” formula might become quite an abstract exercise when taken out of context, we encourage new instruction librarians to rely on course syllabi, conversations with the faculty, and departmental or programmatic learning goals to get a sense on how to develop meaningful outcomes for specific contexts. Additionally, new

instruction librarians can practice applying the formula and using the SMART method by revising learning outcomes developed by colleagues for past instruction sessions available in the shared lesson plan repository. Capitalizing on what others have done has proved to be a good way to help librarians understand how learning outcomes work in a given context and how they relate to the actual instructional activities.

In an effort to provide further tools that could guide new instruction librarians in better understanding the learning outcome development process, we have noticed that, compared to the past when instruction librarians could use the practical language of the ACRL Standards to draft learning outcomes, now it is more challenging to combine the abstract language of the ACRL Framework with the one that would be more appropriate for learning outcomes. Some useful tools we have successfully identified that can support librarians in adapting the abstract concepts included in the Framework into skills-based outcomes are the following:

1. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox (<https://sandbox.acrl.org/>)
2. ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Toolkit (<https://acrl.libguides.com/c.php?g=651675&p=4571135>)
3. Project Cora (<https://www.projectcora.org/>)
4. PALNI LibGuide on the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (<https://libguides.palni.edu/ilframework>)

These tools are all extremely useful to guide librarians in adjusting the language of the “big ideas” of the Framework to the measurable skills of the learning outcomes. The companion documents to the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, which have been made available so far, have also been helpful in practicing with learning outcomes writing. These documents reformulate the abstract concepts that define the Framework into a more concrete form that is easily adaptable as learning outcomes by adapting the frames and, in particular, the knowledge practices and dispositions to a variety of disciplines.²⁹

Getting Started with Assessment

Because of their measurable nature, learning outcomes should ideally be developed with an eye toward identifying valid evidence of learning through assessment. Additionally, gathering evidence cannot be separated from the activities that the instruction librarian will then develop. This is the reason why the training plan that we have implemented considers the definition of what the instructor wants to assess and the instructional activities that will be assessed (steps 2 and 3 in the backward design process) as a single conceptual unit of training.

Teaching assessment to new instruction librarians can be challenging because librarians tend to be relegated to teach one-shot sessions, and it can be hard to assess whether any learning has happened in similar situations. This is typically what happens at JCU, where instruction librarians are invited to teach one class session, two if they are lucky. In such contexts, it can be difficult to find the time to assess what the students learn in a meaningful way. This is the reason why learning outcomes become essential in guiding

the instruction librarians to create a learning experience that could provide some evidence of learning. When we focus on achieving the intended learning outcomes, assessment becomes less overwhelming. Moreover, assessment can also be used by teachers as a way to improve teaching skills because “when educators assess learning repeatedly and make instructional changes over time, their pedagogical skills increase.”³⁰

In our prior experience, we have found that the Kirkpatrick model is a good tool for describing what instruction librarians should aim for when it comes to assessment, even for one-shot sessions.³¹ The author first heard of this model while she was enrolled in an online continuing education course,³² and she felt that it would be beneficial to include the model in the training because “it helps clarify what can be evaluated and assessed given the time and resources at your disposal.”³³ The four levels outlined in the model can easily be incorporated into library instruction to assess various facets of the teaching and learning process regardless of the duration of the instruction (one or multiple sessions within the same course). During the training at JCU, we encourage new instruction librarians to pay attention to what each level in the Kirkpatrick model measures and on which aspect of the instruction the instruction librarian should focus:

- Level 1: Reaction—measure of the level of satisfaction of the students
 - Did everything go well during the instruction session? Is there anything that can be improved?
- Level 2: Learning—formative assessment of the evidence of learning
 - Have the students met the learning outcomes developed for the instruction session?
- Level 3: Behavior—summative assessment to verify whether a change in behavior happened after the instruction.
 - To what extent have the students changed their research habits after the instruction session? Are they capable of transferring the knowledge acquired to different contexts?
- Level 4: Results—measure of the “return on investment.”
 - This final level goes well beyond the class borders and corresponds more to the strategic goal of having an academic education: becoming a life-long critical thinker.³⁴

We typically focus on the first two levels of the Kirkpatrick model, especially in the one-shot library instruction sessions we provide at JCU, and we try to teach new instruction librarians to turn any assignment or classroom activity in which students do or produce something into an opportunity for assessment. We model our assessment on classroom assessment techniques (CATs), as activities that can be scaffolded throughout the library instruction session, and that help students become more effective, self-assessing, and self-directed learners. CATs provide a way to assess the students’ reaction to the instruction, giving the librarian the opportunity to hone their teaching skills.

The training on CATs is mostly based on the foundational text by Angelo and Cross³⁵ and its subsequent application to the world of libraries by Bowles-Terry and Kvenild.³⁶ At JCU, we encourage new instruction librarians to familiarize with both texts to gain a general understanding of classroom assessment techniques in general and to get a sense

of which CATs can be meaningfully adapted and incorporated in a library instruction setting. To start experimenting with and learning how to apply different CATs, one exercise that can be effective is to work with the shared lesson plans and identify teaching moments that might require alternative CATs. However, learning which classroom assessment techniques are effective in which context depends once again on individual practice, trying and applying specific techniques, maybe failing in using them in the wrong context, reflecting on errors, and transforming these techniques into new activities that might be more fitting for a specific instructional context. For this reason, our training plan also encourages new instruction librarians to observe an experienced colleague during their instruction session. Observing how others integrate CATs into their instructional plan to engage with students and assess specific aspects of their learning experience is a great way to familiarize themselves with the concept of assessment.

Sharing, Observing, Teaching, Reflecting

As we have mentioned several times, working with more experienced colleagues and observing what others have already done are major components of the training plan developed at JCU. Using and revising shared teaching materials is an exercise that helps new instruction librarians practice skills learned during the training, but it also provides the opportunity to receive constructive feedback from a double perspective. For example, the new librarian can receive feedback on their progress in creating clear, specific, and measurable learning outcomes, while the rest of the team can gain a fresh perspective that they could use to revise the learning outcomes in line with recent changes in the instructional context.

Moreover, in the first couple of months, the new instruction librarian is not only encouraged to learn about instructional design theories and practical ways to develop lesson plans in their entirety, but they are also encouraged to observe as many information literacy sessions as possible in a variety of disciplines and settings (one-shot sessions, workshops, embedded sessions). Observations can be very helpful for librarians new to the profession in overcoming any initial anxiety they may have about being in front of an audience. At the same time, shadowing experienced instruction librarians can help the new librarian understand what happens in the classroom. Observing and taking notes about how colleagues incorporate active learning techniques, assess student understanding, and integrate CATs to engage students and then debriefing after an instruction session allow the new instruction librarian to seek clarifications on specific events that happen in the classroom. Observations help put theory into practice and give a sense of common and shared practices within the library instruction program. This practice also allows the new instruction librarian to see different teaching styles in action, different ways of delivering content, and, potentially, different communication styles, while becoming familiar with the basics of instructional design.

After learning the theory and observing others putting it into practice comes the moment in which the new instruction librarian has to start experiencing what it means to be in the classroom. All the theoretical training sessions are accompanied by activities that are meant to replicate—and potentially prepare for—real-life classroom situations

(rewriting learning outcomes for observed instruction sessions, ideating or adapting assessment activities, and creating a full lesson plan in collaboration with other colleagues), but eventually the librarian has to start teaching in the classroom. And, of course, after observing more experienced colleagues, the following step is to ask to reciprocate and to have the new instruction librarian observed as they start teaching solo. Receiving feedback allows them to adjust their pace, timing, the organization of the content, and the clarity of the exposition. Observing and being observed in the classroom encourage discussions and stimulate constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.³⁷

With its focus on participatory learning and observations, the training plan that we use at JCU encourages the use of reflection as a tool for reviewing what goes well and what goes wrong during the teaching time, to learn from mistakes, adjust imperfections, and constantly improve. Reflection cannot be forced; it is a personal activity that can, however, become a transformative experience since it induces learning by simply thinking about one's own experiences and actions and by reflecting on observation feedback. Each part of the training can stimulate reflection both as an individual practice and as a team activity. All training exercises can become opportunities to discuss the rationale for specific instructional choices, from the chosen learning outcomes to the classroom assessment techniques implemented. Reflection is one of the most powerful professional development tools available to instruction librarians. As Reale noted, by being reflective, instruction librarians become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, they are not afraid of engaging with their emotions in a classroom setting, they are aware of their purpose in the classroom, they recognize when they are wrong by admitting their mistakes and trying to correct them, and they strive for learning from those mistakes.³⁸

Conclusion

Although an instruction librarian's first few months on the job are very important, training does not stop there because it is impossible to cover everything that has been said and written about teaching techniques and practices in the library world in just a few training sessions. The on-the-job training is a necessary component of the job in and of itself. It continues as circumstances change and as teaching practices evolve in response to what happens in the classroom and outside of the classroom in the broader institutional environment. The teaching itself is part of the learning, and "the more that librarians teach, the more they may realize how much there is to learn about teaching. The learning becomes an ongoing process."³⁹

At JCU, we strive to provide the tools necessary for ongoing training, and one way to do this is by promoting active participation in the teaching activities as an integral component of the training itself. On-the-job training allows instruction librarians to immediately apply their knowledge in a practical sense. This type of training allows the new instruction librarian to engage in teamwork from the very beginning, and it provides the new librarian with the opportunity to become the fresh eye that can help revise old practices. Moreover, since library instruction can happen in a variety of contexts, and it can be approached in multiple ways, from reference services to the development of instructional

materials (research guides and online tutorials), from co-design collaboration for creating assignments, learning outcomes, or entire courses to credit-bearing information literacy courses, the on-the-job training promotes adaptability as instruction librarians have to face a variety of teaching situations and challenges as needs evolve.

However, one of the downsides of an on-the-job training plan such as the one we advocate for at JCU is that it does not allow for formal planning or a formalized structure. This type of training can surely follow certain guidelines, but it mostly depends on multiple factors, including the new librarian's prior knowledge regarding library instruction and the timing of when the training happens. This is the reason why, despite all the efforts to create a training plan that could be reused every time one needs to train a new instruction librarian, "a training plan is something that should be unique to each individual you hire" because each new individual would necessarily have a different background and experience.⁴⁰ We also need to take into consideration that on-the-job training can be very time-consuming, especially if the hire happens mid-semester when there is not enough time for a general onboarding and finding dedicated time for training activities is not so easy. Nevertheless, on-the-job training is what most instruction librarians get, and we need to try and create the most meaningful opportunity for providing guidance in a job that constantly changes.

APPENDIX A

Instruction Plan

Title or topic of the lesson plan.

Optional: class for which the lesson plan has been initially developed.

- It is important to know in which broader context the library instruction session is going to fit in because that context has an impact on what and how the librarian will teach.

Frames Addressed

List 1 or 2 that are the primary focus of the session.

- It is important, although not essential nor required, to put the session within the Framework context and try to identify the “big ideas” that underlie the teaching plan.
- The “big ideas” represent the response to those bottlenecks where students get stuck in their learning. The bottlenecks are the core concepts for a discipline, and they provide an opportunity for the instruction librarians to link information literacy concepts to specific disciplines, thus creating collaboration opportunities to work with faculty that have both content expertise of their discipline and knowledge of how and where students get typically stuck.

Learning Outcomes

Include 2 or 3 learning outcomes.

- Learning outcomes are usually tied to the frames addressed, and they are also linked to the assessment that will be chosen for the instruction session. They define what students will know and what they will be able to do.

Estimated Total Time Required

Indicate the total time requested by the professor.

- Knowing the real time allotted for the library instruction session is vital. The professor requesting the session might expect the librarian to free up some time at the end to allow the professor to collect papers or talk about future assignments and homework. A good strategy is to plan for less time than the full class period but be ready to add more content or more backup activities in case there is some extra time left.

Outline and Activities

Use the table to create an outline for the instruction session. Include the step-by-step of what you do in the lesson (lecture time, activities, group discussion) and the estimated time for each part. The content of the lesson plan can be as detailed as a real script, or it could only be a bullet point list of concepts and tools that you would like to include in the session.

You can include here the modality to deliver the content (lecture, point-and-click demonstration, Socratic conversation, etc.).

Besides the content to be shared, the lesson plan should also include:

- Activities for learners to engage with ideas
 - Learning activities are essential because they promote active learning, they create a more engaging experience for the students, they can be used as assessment, and they allow the instruction librarian to move “From sage on the stage to guide on the side.”
- Anticipated length of time for content-sharing and learning activities
 - Each part of the lesson plan (both content and activities) should be timed to provide a temporal framework that can help structure the lesson plan and make good use of the time allotted. As previously mentioned, planning for less time but preparing backup activities in the case of running too fast is always a good strategy.

Plan	Time in minutes
Introduction	
Wrap-up and conclusion	

Assessment Method

What strategies or assignments will you use to assess student learning? How will you know that they have made progress toward your learning outcomes?

- This should include classroom assessment techniques during this lesson. You may also have other assessments that are longer term, which are integrated into the course you work with.
- The assessment method used really depends on many factors, including the learning outcomes developed for the session, the learning activities that you want to incorporate, and the actual time that can be dedicated to the assessment itself.

Tools, Materials, and Resources

- Including what is going to be needed during the session (e.g., technology, materials for group activities, handouts) helps you remember that logistics also have a crucial role in instruction delivery.

Notes

1. Megan Oakleaf et al., “Notes from the Field: 10 Short Lessons on One-Shot Instruction,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 6, no. 1 (2012): 6.
2. Candice M. Benjes-Small and Rebecca K. Miller, *The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learners* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2017).
3. Sheril J. Hook et al., “In-House Training for Instruction Librarians,” *Research Strategies* 19, no. 2 (2003): 100, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resstr.2003.12.001>.
4. See for example: Candice M. Benjes-Small and Rebecca K. Miller, *The New Instruction Librarian: A Workbook for Trainers and Learners* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2017); Patricia Bravender, Hazel McClure, and Gayle Schaub, *Teaching Information Literacy Threshold Concepts: Lesson Plans for Librarians* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries Library Association, 2015); Christopher N. Cox and Elizabeth Blakesley, *Information Literacy Instruction Handbook* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2008); Samantha Godbey, Susan Beth Wainscott, and Xan Goodman, *Disciplinary Applications of Information Literacy Threshold Concepts* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017).
5. For a more comprehensive description of JCU’s institutional context and the difficulties of being an American institution in a non-American context, see Livia Piotto, “Researching Rome: The Librarian as Research Mediator,” in *Library Partnerships in International Liberal Arts Education: Building Relationships Across Cultural and Institutional Lines*, ed. Jeff H. Gima and Kara J. Malenfant (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2020), 9–20; Tara Keenan, Manlio Perugini, and Seth N. Jaffe, “Changing a Teaching Culture in an International University Context: Introducing English and Research Competencies for the Price of a Cup of Coffee,” in *Library Partnerships in International Liberal Arts Education: Building Relationships Across Cultural and Institutional Lines*, ed. Jeff Hiroshi Gima and Kara Malenfant (Chicago: Association for College and Research Libraries, 2020), 53–62.
6. Maureen Kilcullen, “Teaching librarians to Teach: Recommendations on What We Need to Know,” *Reference Services Review* 26, no. 2 (1998): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907329810307623>.
7. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, Association of College & Research Libraries, American Library Association, February 9, 2015, <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
8. *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, Association of College & Research Libraries, American Library Association, May 15, 2017, <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/teachinglibrarians>.
9. Melissa N. Mallon, *Partners in Teaching and Learning: Coordinating a Successful Academic Library Instruction Program* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

10. The full list of readings can vary depending on availability of resources.
11. Caitlin A. Bagley, *Fundamentals for the Instruction Coordinator*, ALA Fundamentals Series (Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2022), 33.
12. “Analyzing Your Instructional Environment: A Workbook,” *ACRL’s Instruction Section* (blog), December 2010, <https://acrl.ala.org/IS/instruction-tools-resources-2/higher-education-environment/analyzing-your-instructional-environment/>.
13. Trudi Jacobson and Craig Gibson, “First Thoughts on Implementing the Framework for Information Literacy,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 9, no. 2 (2015): 104, <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2015.9.2.187>.
14. *Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians*, Association of College & Research Libraries; Benjes-Small and Miller, *The New Instruction Librarian*; Jessica Cole, “Instructional Roles for Librarians,” in *Curriculum-Based Library Instruction: From Cultivating Faculty Relationships to Assessment*, ed. Amy Blevins and Megan Inman (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Janice M. Jaguszewski and Karen Williams, “New Roles for New Times: Transforming Liaison Roles in Research Libraries” (Association of Research Libraries, 2013), <https://www.arl.org/resources/new-roles-for-new-times-transforming-liaison-roles-in-research-libraries/>.
15. The training for the reference work is done separately for those newly hired librarians who are new to this work. Although this training also benefits from a knowledge of the institution and the academic curriculum, it mostly focuses on the reference interview process and an analysis of the complexity of the librarian/patron interaction following the standard behavioral guidelines developed by RUSA.
16. Dani Brecher and Kevin Michael Klipfel, “Education Training for Instruction Librarians: A Shared Perspective,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 8, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2014.8.1.164>; Eveline Houtman, “‘Trying to Figure It Out’: Academic Librarians Talk about Learning to Teach,” *Library and Information Research* 34, no. 107 (October 9, 2010): 18–40, <https://doi.org/10.29173/lirg246>; Eveline Houtman, “Asking ‘Good Questions’ about How Academic Librarians Learn to Teach,” in *The Grounded Instruction Librarian: Participating in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, ed. Melissa Mallon et al. (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2019), 17–30; Sandra J. Valenti and Brady D. Lund, “Preparing the Instructional Librarian: Representation of ACRL Roles and Strengths in MLS Course Descriptions,” *College & Research Libraries* 82, no. 4 (2021): 530–47, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.4.530>.
17. Char Booth, *Reflective Teaching, Effective Learning: Instructional Literacy for Library Educators* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2011).
18. Joan R. Kaplowitz, *Designing Information Literacy Instruction: The Teaching Tripod Approach* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017).
19. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 2nd edition (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2005).
20. At JCU, most of the library instruction sessions are one-shot sessions. Often, multiple sessions are delivered within the same course, but there is minimal programmatic organization, and faculty tend to request sessions when they think these sessions best fit in their courses.
21. Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*.
22. See Appendix A.
23. Benjes-Small and Miller, *The New Instruction Librarian*.
24. Debra Gilchrist and Anna Zald, “Instruction & Program Design through Assessment,” in *Information Literacy Instruction Handbook*, ed. Christopher N. Cox and Elizabeth Blakesley (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2008), 164–92, https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1145&context=lib_articles.
25. Wiggins and McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, 5.
26. Debra Gilchrist, “Writing Student Learning Outcomes,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Z7E9vHuyX4>; Gilchrist and Zald, “Instruction & Program Design through Assessment.”
27. George T. Doran, “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management’s Goals and Objectives,” *Management Review* 70, no. 11 (1981): 35.
28. Piotto and Spasov, “Co-Designing Information Literacy Experiences.” Another checklist, adapted from Gilchrist, says that outcomes should be: measurable or “judgeable,” clear to students, faculty, and librarians, integrated within the session, within the course, within the program, developmental and sequenced, transferable, related to institutional definitions and documents (including the

- Framework), matched to the level (course, 50-minute session, program, etc.), balanced (using a variety of levels in the Bloom Taxonomy), representative of what the students will do. Gilchrist, “Writing Student Learning Outcomes.”
29. “Politics, Policy, and International Relations: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2021, <https://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/ppirs/acr-ppirsec>; “Research Competencies in Writing and Literature: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2021, <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/researchcompetenciesles>; “Social Work: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2021, https://acrl.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=62704385; “Women’s and Gender Studies: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2021, https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/wgs_framework; “Journalism: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2022, https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/acrl/content/standards/Framework_Companion_Journalism.pdf; “Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2022, https://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/standards/Framework_Companion_STEM.pdf; “Sociology: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2022, https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/acrl/content/standards/framework_companion_sociology.pdf; “The Framework for Visual Literacy in Higher Education: Companion Document to the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” Association of College & Research Libraries, 2022, https://www.ala.org/sites/default/files/acrl/content/standards/Framework_Companion_Visual_Literacy.pdf.
 30. Megan Oakleaf, “The Information Literacy Instruction Assessment Cycle: A Guide for Increasing Student Learning and Improving Librarian Instructional Skills,” *Journal of Documentation* 65, no. 4 (2009): 541, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410910970249>.
 31. Kirkpatrick Partners, “The Kirkpatrick Model,” 2022, <https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/the-kirkpatrick-model/>.
 32. Eric Ackermann and Candice Benjes-Small, “Crash Course in Assessing Library Instruction,” Library Juice Academy, 2017.
 33. Dominique Turnbow and Annie Zeidman-Karpinski, “Don’t Use a Hammer When You Need a Screwdriver: How to Use the Right Tools to Create Assessment That Matters,” *Communications in Information Literacy* 10, no. 2 (2016): 145.
 34. Candice Benjes-Small, “A Primer for New Teachers,” *The Future Academic Librarian’s Toolkit*, January 1, 2019, <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/librariesbookchapters/1>.
 35. Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, 2nd ed, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993).
 36. Melissa Bowles-Terry and Cassandra Kvenild, *Classroom Assessment Techniques for Librarians* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association, 2015).
 37. Katelyn R. Tucker, “Teaching Me to Teach: A New Librarian’s Experience with a Structured Training Program for Information Literacy Instruction,” *Virginia Libraries* 59, no. 1 (2013).
 38. Michelle Reale, *Becoming a Reflective Librarian and Teacher: Strategies for Mindful Academic Practice* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2017), 42–43.
 39. Houtman, “Asking ‘Good Questions,’” 23.
 40. Benjes-Small and Miller, *The New Instruction Librarian*.

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