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Book Review: Emerging Strategies for Supporting Student Learning

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Review of *Emerging Strategies for Supporting Student Learning: A Practical Guide for Librarians and Educators*

By Barbara Allan

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Review of *Emerging Strategies for Supporting Student Learning: A Practical Guide for Librarians and Educators*

By Barbara Allan

New academic librarian roles and responsibilities in undergraduate engagement, instructional design, and support for instructors' adoption and use of open educational resources (OER), for example, indicate that many academic libraries are augmenting disciplinary-specific reference and instruction services with additional, encompassing support for student learning. Allan's book addresses this development by exploring emerging trends in learning and teaching in higher education. Her text "gives an introduction to the current landscape of higher education, the very diverse nature of students in colleges and universities today, as well as changing ideas about learning and teaching" (p. 1). While Allan references higher education in the United Kingdom throughout her text, her discussions on teaching strategies and student needs have universal applications for any academic librarian, including those in the United States. She is well suited to provide this overview, given her years of experience in management and teaching roles in higher education in the United Kingdom, and her advanced degrees in education, learning, and information science. Her experience as an academic instruction librarian is also evident throughout the book, particularly in her information literacy instruction case studies, but also in her focus on digital literacy and the use of technology in student life, the classroom, and workplaces. Impressively, Allan succeeds in structuring this guide so that it provides a practical, rather than abstract, exploration of the complex landscape of higher education. Short chapters (the lengthiest is 23 pages) facilitate spurts of brief, informal reading and are clearly divided into sections that offer examples, case studies, bulleted lists, quick tips, and sometimes sample lesson plans.

In the introductory chapter, Allan provides a foundation for the book by reviewing changes affecting higher education today and highlighting themes in these changes, such as the new learning landscape, changing student expectations and experiences, flexible learning, new learning spaces, employability, and internationalization. Regrettably, chapter two, "Working with Students," is a meager 11 pages and disappointing. While Allan addresses student diversity, she misses several opportunities to explore connections with emerging strategies and resources for supporting student learning. Librarian partnerships with

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campus diversity centers, as well as teaching librarians' attention to universal design for learning, for example, could have been discussed here.

In chapters three and four, Allan concentrates on connections between student success and the skills students will need as future employees. These include digital literacy, which in Allan's chosen definition envelops information literacy. Allan devotes a significant portion of chapter 3 to reviewing four information literacy models, including the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015), before discussing metaliteracy and digital badges. In chapter four, she describes how libraries can support students' future employability by providing library work experience and engaging students as co-creators of the library.

Allan lives up to her promise to explore emerging trends and radically ignores long-standing learning theories in the chapter "Approaches to Learning and Teaching." Instead, she provides overviews of David Kolb's learning cycle, Diana Laurillard's conversational framework for university teaching, and Ray Land and Jan Meyer's threshold concepts, for example. She deftly explains and summarizes key elements of each, in an approachable and pragmatic manner. Accompanying case studies would have been a welcome addition to this chapter.

Chapter six is reminiscent of other texts about learning and teaching that are written for a librarian audience, as Allan describes classroom activities for use by librarians, provides an overview of assessment, and addresses student reflection in learning. She highlights key components of each classroom activity and shares essential pointers. In most cases she does not make explicit connections to teaching scenarios or threshold concepts; librarian readers with limited teaching experience may find it challenging to implement these activities. This is one of Allan's most resource-heavy chapters and her suggestion of specific online resources that provide information literacy-related games, learning tools, survey tools, quizzes, and more, will benefit readers.

In chapters seven through ten, Allan walks the reader through the instructional design process. Here, the elements of the ADDIE instructional design model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) will be evident to many readers. Basics of analysis and design are addressed, such as attention to learners, their needs, and intended learning outcomes. Overviews and examples of designing for different teaching and learning contexts (e.g. face-to-face, flipped, blended, and online) follow, along with discussion of

instructor preparation, aligning the delivery of instruction with the course/session format, and Allan's own preparation and delivery methods for face-to-face instruction.

Allan returns to a wider view in chapter 10, where she provides an overview of the United Kingdom *Quality Code for Higher Education* (www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code) and considers the evaluation of higher education teaching and learning in general, as well as practical terms, with reference to audiences and methods. The book's concluding chapter, "Lifelong Professional Development," outlines professional development approaches and opportunities for librarians, touching on the use of social media and the development of a professional portfolio, for example.

In *Emerging Strategies for Supporting Student Learning: A Practical Guide for Librarians and Educators*, Barbara Allan excels at providing both current higher education context for librarians' support of student learning and a helpful review of current theories, practices, and trends in learning and teaching in academic librarianship. While she helpfully avoids jargon, this may also hinder the efforts of readers who set out to explore related literature. For example, several of the emerging strategies that Allan addresses correlate with high-impact practices, a phrase that Allan avoids but is readily traced in the published literature. Overall, this book is recommended for librarians who are new to and interested in teaching by academic librarians, and will also be of interest to experienced teaching librarians who are seeking to stay current with teaching and learning trends and practices in higher education.

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