

1-1-2014

The New University Library: Four Case Studies

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Recommended Citation

Cooperman, Larry, "The New University Library: Four Case Studies" (2014). *Faculty Bibliography 2010s*. 5198.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/facultybib2010/5198>



The New University Library: Four Case Studies. By Matthew Conner. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014. 176 p. Paper \$55 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1193-8).

The university library can be thought of as an organic institution—it changes, it evolves, it grows, and it adapts. What should a university library do to maintain a current, modern collection and resources in the face of technological, societal, and demographic changes? How can university libraries adapt to these changes successfully?

Matthew Conner, an instruction/reference librarian at the University of California, as well as the President-Elect of the Librarians' Association of the University of California, has written a timely and insightful book on how four university libraries have adapted to change (with limited resources available in their libraries) through implementation of innovative programs and initiatives. The book begins with a very detailed overview of the history of the academic library (from the nineteenth century to the present), focusing on such topics as reference, collections, buildings, and technology. The book then focuses on specific case studies from four public universities. One of the case studies, from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, details how the university recovered its programs after a disastrous flood in 2004, making this case study particularly valuable for libraries recovering from natural disasters. Each case study includes many graphics, illustrations, tables, and data to support new programs and initiatives, and describes the results of these programs. One weak point of the book is that all of the case studies discuss changes and innovations at large, public university libraries. Perhaps including case studies of changes at small and/or private colleges would have made the book a more useful guide and reference for all types of academic librarians, but that may become material for another book.

Nevertheless, *The New University Library: Four Case Studies* is a useful resource for academic librarians (primarily at large public universities) who seek guidance and assistance on how to manage change at their institutions and create relevant and thriving library programs in the 21st century. Highly recommended.—Larry Cooperman, *Adjunct Librarian, University of Central Florida Libraries, Orlando, Florida*

Snapshots of Reality: A Practical Guide to Formative Assessment in Library Instruction. By Mary Snyder Broussard, Rachel Hickoff-Cresko, and Jessica Urick Oberlin. Chicago: ACRL, 2014. 256 p. Paper \$52 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-8689-9).

Written by two academic librarians and an education professor, this book aims to introduce the concept of formative assessment to a wider library audience and to demonstrate

how formative assessment can be used in one-shot library sessions. The authors detail 48 formative assessment snapshot techniques (FASTs) that could be used as part of a library instruction session.

The authors define formative assessment as “small, frequent, and often informal assessments designed to help the educator get an understanding of students’ current knowledge and what they have learned” (5). The formative assessment snapshot techniques (FASTs) are broken down into those that could be used before, during, or after an instruction session. The authors also provide the estimated time required for a given FAST, the amount of collaboration required with the course instructor, and the information literacy standard (ACRL or Standards for the 21st-Century Learner) addressed by the assessment. Although the authors focus on how formative assessment is used to improve student learning, they offer a chapter on how it also can be used to improve librarian teaching. The authors devote a chapter to technology tools that can be used in formative assessment, and they end with a discussion of the use of formative assessment in school libraries and a description of a “culture of assessment.”

The authors do a good job of detailing the benefits of using formative assessment in one-shot library instruction. In their literature review, they note that librarians may already be using some formative assessment in their instruction sessions. This book provides these librarians with additional tools to expand the assessments they are already doing. Recognizing that adding assessment to their sessions could be challenging for some, the authors offer a number of suggestions for getting started and developing a learning community of fellow librarians. One of the challenges mentioned is that librarians struggle with having limited time in one-shot sessions. The authors helpfully provide the estimated time that would be needed for each of the FASTs. However, this reviewer wondered about how and whether more than one FAST could be used in a session in which some initial instruction and possibly follow-up instruction would need to occur. Although the authors do provide a sample guided implementation template, this reviewer would have appreciated an outline of a sample session, with timings, with the formative assessment(s) to be used. The chapter on technology use for formative assessment is useful in showing the reader how the use of technology could make the assessment process faster.

Although one chapter is dedicated to the use of formative assessment in school libraries, this book would be of most benefit to academic librarians doing face-to-face one-shot instruction sessions. Formative assessment could be a useful tool to demonstrate student learning to the larger university, and this title can help create and improve existing skills.—Qiana Johnson, *Distance Learning Librarian, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois*