

# Book Reviews



**Claire McGuinness.** *Becoming Confident Teachers: A Guide for Academic Librarians.* Oxford, United Kingdom: Chandos Publishing, 2011. 227p. \$80.00 (ISBN 9781843346296). Distributed in the United States by Neal-Schuman Publishers.

Claire McGuinness's *Becoming Confident Teachers: A Guide for Academic Librarians* is a book that I wish that I had had when I was an MLIS student formulating my sense of professional identity, or when I was a freshly minted librarian navigating the job market and preparing to interview for instruction librarian positions. In clear and engaging prose, McGuinness neatly encapsulates the critical elements of what it means to be an instruction librarian or, as she terms it, a teaching librarian. Anyone looking for readable and accessible work on the roles of teaching librarians, the basics of information literacy instruction, and building confidence in your identity as a teacher will find this to be an invaluable volume.

McGuinness's work has many strengths, and first amongst them is an emphasis on interaction with the text. In a sense, the book provides a model for the type of active learning McGuinness espouses. Five of the six chapters end with exercises and reflections that encourage the reader to think about and apply the concepts covered in that chapter. This emphasis on practical application is also reflected in chapters such as "Confidence-zappers and how to handle them," which provides concrete strategies for overcoming the challenges that many teaching librarians often face in the classroom. And this focus on confidence is another distinguishing feature of this book. While other information literacy instruction texts might focus solely on building competence, McGuinness emphasizes developing a sense of self-efficacy in addition to knowledge, skills, and abilities. This positive attitude permeates the text and,

indeed, inspires the reader to become a more confident teacher.

Each of the six chapters builds upon the other chapters preceding it so thoroughly that at times the information seems repetitive, which is perhaps the only weakness to be found in this work. However, this exhaustive coverage makes it possible for chapters to stand alone as reading assignments for a LIS class, for example, or to prepare a teaching librarian team for an instruction meeting addressing a certain topic.

McGuinness's emphasis on the practical in his book is nicely balanced by theoretical overviews that help the reader contextualize the practices she describes. McGuinness's discussion of learning theories and broad learning frameworks is especially well done. In fact, the chapter in which these discussions appear, "Preparing teaching librarians for practice: Focusing on the basics," provides such a thorough, yet concise, overview of what a teaching librarian should know, that this chapter should be required reading in LIS courses on information literacy and library instruction. Indeed, McGuinness has written such a sound and satisfying work on teaching librarianship that the whole book itself would serve as an excellent primary textbook for such courses.

But new and novice teaching librarians are not the only ones who will benefit from this book; seasoned veteran teaching librarians will also be stimulated and inspired by the ideas and strategies presented in McGuinness's text. Moreover, library administrators seeking an updated perspective on the primary concerns, issues, and challenges of teaching librarianship in today's academic library—and the future academic library—will also want to consult this work.—*Maria T. Accardi, Indiana University Southeast.*