

## **Engaging Diverse Learners: Teaching Strategies for Academic Librarians**

By Mark Aaron Polger and Scott Scheidlower (2017). 164 pages, ISBN: 9781440838507. \$60

**Subject:** How to be a better teacher

**Useful for:** Useful for those who teach in any setting (classroom, reference desk, etc.), especially beginning instructors.

**Format:** Chapters with index

### **Reviewer's Comments:**

Engaging Diverse Learners explores how to engage different types of learners, largely in the library classroom setting. The authors draw on the results of a survey (questions included in an appendix) of about 900 academic librarians, asking how those librarians conceptualize engagement. The survey results, summarized in the first chapter, portray an instructional atmosphere different from my experience in law schools. The vast majority of teaching these librarians report is one-shot. While we do some one-shot sessions, at Ohio State (and I imagine many other academic law libraries), we teach more for credit classes than the survey participants report. Perhaps because my students will receive a grade, the lack of engagement is less of an issue. Although these librarians seem to have different teaching experiences, many of the difficulties address will sound familiar. For example, how do you keep participants' attention in a one-shot presentation in a law classroom or before new associates? When invited to speak in a class, how can a librarian effectively work with the faculty member to ensure engagement?

The survey results offer more substance than the authors' conceptual framework does. The first of the initial definitional chapters, which discusses engagement, is more successful than the ones focusing on generations and learning groups, in part because the survey results are much more directly tied to the concept of "engagement." The chapter outlining diverse learning groups offers a short description of some groups, including veterans and LGBT students, but as the book explicitly discounts intersectionality, this chapter lacks the theoretical heft the title suggests.

The central portion of the book focuses on practical techniques for engaging students. A descriptive list of techniques would best serve the beginning instructor. More seasoned teachers will be aware of options such as flipping the classroom and using videos effectively. The following material presents a discussion of interviews with 20 librarians about their approaches to engagement, summarizing interviews with many of them librarian by librarian. Many of these interviews provide insightful moments, but a thematic organization would have drawn out the similarities and differences more effectively.

The remainder of the book addresses engaging outside of the classroom, disengagement, and marketing. Law librarians teach in many settings—at the reference desk, in classrooms, in presentations—and we share many of the marketing needs academic libraries face. These chapters offer the greatest benefit, although the reader will have to translate the concepts to a legal environment.

RIPS-SIS Legal Research Text Review

**Reviewed by:** Susan Azyndar, The Ohio State University, in 2018.