

## **Embracing Messiness in the Law Library (Without Abandoning the Checklist)**

By David McClure and Beau Steenken. AALL Spectrum 28 (July 2019).

**Article Categories:** Course Creation & Design; Legal Research Instruction for 1Ls

**Keywords:** Active Learning; Collaboration; Curriculum; Disruption; Engagement; Habits; Learning; Legal Research Instruction; Pedagogy; Process-Oriented

### **Reviewer's Summary:**

In this article, McClure & Steenken bring the concepts of *Messy: The Power of Disorder to Transform Our Lives*, by Tim Harford, to the realm of legal research. Librarians tend to prefer checklists, templates, and other organized tools. However, strict adherence to them could result in missing possible resources found through thinking outside the checkbox. The authors explore different ways of introducing messiness, such as using different fonts in assignments, or using improv as a way to learn sources of law. Bringing messiness to the library staff means taking people out of tidy, specialist silos that may prevent innovative collaborations and "cross-fertilization." Finally, they discuss applying the principle of messiness to library spaces, leading to unexpected, but fruitful interactions. They conclude by encouraging librarians to balance their preference for checklists and order while simultaneously embracing messiness.

**Summarized by:** Jill Sturgeon, University of Colorado, Wise Law Library, in 2020.