RUSQ considers for review reference books and professional materials of interest to reference and user services librarians. Serials and subscription titles normally are not reviewed unless a major change in purpose, scope, format, or audience has occurred. Reviews usually are three hundred to five hundred words in length. Views expressed are those of the reviewers and do not necessarily represent those of ALA. Please refer to standard directories for publishers’ addresses.

Correspondence concerning these reviews should be addressed to “Professional Materials” editor Karen Antell, Public Services Librarian, Bizzell Memorial Library, University of Oklahoma, 401 West Brooks St., Norman, OK 73019; email: kantell@ou.edu.


This concise but complete guide to accessibility will be beneficial to libraries of all types. Kowalsky and Woodruff
Effective Difficult Conversations: A Step-by-Step Guide.

In Effective Difficult Conversations, these authors succinctly define difficult conversations, outline key preparation steps, detail how to manage the conversation, explain the need for documentation, and emphasize how to maintain the professional relationship.

In this well-organized guide, three preparation steps are outlined: 1) getting clear, 2) gathering resources, and 3) clarifying the message. Getting clear focuses on the four key questions that a manager should explore prior to having a difficult conversation: Do you need to have this conversation at all? Why do you need to have this conversation? Why do you need to have this conversation now? How do you schedule this conversation? The next chapter emphasizes the need to seek out background information, gather resources, and consult with others. The final step in preparation is to clarify the message in order to achieve a positive outcome.

In chapter 5, the authors do an excellent job of outlining how to manage the conversation, explaining how to approach the conversation in six steps: state the facts, ask, listen, engage to understand, pay attention, and explore options. This approach is a reasonable and appropriate game plan that is valuable to new managers learning how to develop the managerial skill set as well as to experienced managers seeking to enhance their skills. The next segment illustrates why and how to document such conversations and how to remain supportive of the employee. The authors outline this step-by-step process in a clear and objective manner and elucidate the process using realistic examples and detailed, sound human resources advice.

In addition, the authors have included chapters on having difficult conversations with co-workers, conducting such conversations in relation to change management initiatives and reorganizations, and having difficult conversations with one’s boss.

In ten succinct chapters, Soehner and Darling have produced a well-written, accessible, and valuable guide for library managers at all levels in all types of libraries. They show that the ability to conduct difficult conversations effectively and productively is a skill that contributes to managers’ integrity and compassion. This book will be useful to library human resources professionals seeking to advise and counsel managers, and it could also serve as a tool for training and developing library supervisors and managers.—Pat Hawthorne, Associate Dean for Research and Education, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada


Many instruction librarians face the challenge of teaching information literacy skills successfully and engagingly during one-shot library instruction sessions. In their new edition of The One-Shot Library Instruction Survival Guide, Heidi Buchanan and Beth A. McDonough offer guidance on incorporating ACRL’s Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (adopted in 2016) into one-shot library instruction sessions.

When ACRL released the Framework, many professionals debated how the six frames would work with one-shot instruction sessions. Buchanan and McDonough argue that the Framework’s focus on big ideas and flexibility will help librarians plan successful one-shot sessions. They encourage librarians to incorporate activities that require students to investigate and think critically about information. The book covers practical ideas on using the six frames, inspired solutions for difficult assignments, vignettes from actual librarians in the field, assessment techniques, and suggestions for how to make information literacy relevant to students.