

## SOURCES

want to develop a numeric information program will find the cost worthwhile. Highly recommended for academic librarians interested in learning about or implementing a numeric data services program.—*Eric Petersen, Librarian, Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library.*

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**Reference Sources and Services for Youth.** By Meghan Harper. New York: Neal-Shuman, 2011. 306p. paper \$65 (ISBN: 978-1-5557-0641-8).

With this book, author Meghan Harper sets herself a tall order: She intends

to provide a comprehensive overview of providing reference service and resources . . . for school librarians and public librarians serving children and young adults, for use as an in-service training tool for paraprofessionals and aides and nondegreed staff working in children's and young adult services or current reference librarians who are new to working with children, as well as a textbook for library science courses. (xiii)

Phew!

In general, Harper achieves this goal admirably. The book is packed with information, resources, links, standards, and guidelines—a great deal of fodder for development. However, her audience may, at times, feel frustrated with the back-and-forth between school librarians and public librarians, experienced professionals and novices; the lack of focus may put readers off track. In some instances, the author includes more explanation of basic concepts than professionals require; in other places, not enough explanation is included for beginners. In some ways, this project might have worked better as two books rather than one.

The textbook is divided into ten chapters (plus a bonus chapter on core reference collections). First, of course, is the introduction to reference service. Other works such as, *Twenty-First-Century Kids*, *Twenty-First-Century Librarians* (ALA, 2010), provide a better and more thorough history of children's services. Other chapters cover developmentally appropriate practice in reference service, services for children with special needs, communication techniques, information literacy development, selection techniques for reference sources, ways to promote online search tools, and government resources for youth. All of these should pave the way to “positive and failure-free” (33) library experiences for young customers.

In the final two chapters, Harper covers evaluation, best practices, and management principles for providing reference service, including policy development and ethical considerations. Stressing that “an individual reference transaction can determine a child or young adult's perception of the library or librarian as a helpful resource or one that should be avoided” (33), Harper highlights all of the elements that can make library services successful, and child-centered, and transformative.

As part of each chapter, the author begins with a scenario featuring “Lilly the librarian,” and each chapter ends with exercises and scenarios for consideration or application to personal experience. Both an index to resources and a subject index are provided. This will be a useful resource for anyone working with children in libraries, as it offers much support and guidance for both staff and service development.—*Sarah J. Hart, Acting Children's Services Coordinator, Brampton Library, Brampton, Ontario, Canada.*

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**A Strong Future for Public Library Use and Employment.** By José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King. Chicago: ALA, 2011. 138p. paper \$70 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-3588-0).

During these economically challenging times for public libraries, authors José-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King provide arguments for continued public funding and support in *A Strong Future for Public Library Use and Employment*. Libraries have weathered recessions before and have shown consistently that when revenue sources decline, operational adjustments are made to deal with fewer resources. In addition, public libraries provide services that are particularly needed during recessions, so the use of many services increases. Griffiths and King use evidence from Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) studies, statewide return-on-investment data, and survey results to demonstrate the value of public libraries. The book synthesizes research from many sources and provides easy-to-understand statistics, charts, and graphs, all of which are valuable advocacy tools for explaining—to boards, funders, stakeholders, and the public—why libraries still matter.

Further, the book contains a comprehensive assessment of public librarians' education and career paths to date and includes trends in public library employment, such as staff structure and educational level of staff. Early chapters highlight expanded service trends and increased library visits (both in-person and online) during economic recessions. The authors' studies show that, interestingly enough, a rapid increase in online visits has not negatively affected the number of in-person visits and may actually increase them—important data to present to those who say libraries are no longer relevant!

The second half of the book details public library employment trends. During the past three recessions (1980s, 1990s, and 2000s), the number of MLS-level librarians increased, and staff structure remained relatively consistent, yet the type of work done by MLS librarians decreased in reference and research services. Although this information is certainly of interest, the real value to public library administrators, library schools, and the ALA is contained in chapter 8's ten-year forecast of the number of MLS librarians in the workforce. Measures used to forecast include the number of MLS librarians who are expected to remain in the workforce, the number lost through attrition, and the number of current vacancies. These data come from a variety of sources, such as economic models, census information, surveys, and IMLS studies. The

authors admit that forecasting is challenging, but results may be used to benchmark for future testing.

Public libraries face the same challenges during recessions that other organizations face: decreased funding, stretched staffing, and the need to do more with less. According to the authors, the current recession is unlike previous recessions in that federal, state, and local funders have accumulated substantial deficits that may require greater cuts and extend the length of the recession. So the question is: how will libraries fare? The answer is up to us.

This book offers useful research from multiple sources and provides valuable tools for advocacy and planning. Using data about trends and funding during previous recessions, the authors help libraries face the challenges of this extended recession. *A Strong Future for Public Library Use and Employment* belongs on the shelf of every public library administrator and should be shared with public library board members and staff.—Margaret Mohundro, Executive Director, Sanibel (Fla.) Public Library.

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***Workplace Learning & Leadership: A Handbook for Library and Nonprofit Trainers.*** By Lori Reed and Paul Signorelli. Chicago: ALA, 2011. 176p. paper \$55 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1082-5).

Understanding how to accomplish a task is best learned by visiting with and learning from experienced individuals. Lori Reed and Paul Signorelli use the knowledge and experiences of their colleagues as the foundation for their handbook on how best to conduct staff training and development within various library settings as well as in nonprofit organizations in general. Both authors have served as training professionals in public libraries, and much of this book's substance stems from their own experiences in managing the seemingly endless array of training functions happening in libraries across the country.

As financial resources become tighter, some of the traditional ongoing staff training and development opportunities have to be redesigned. In some cases, even the task of coordinating such offerings is being transferred to staff members who may not have experience in designing effective learning opportunities for their colleagues. The authors have designed their handbook to provide a natural progression of course development from, as they put it, "in the beginning" to "learning from success and failure." Other topics include how to train effective trainers and how to manage the explosion of online resources now available on demand for staff who may be confined by geographic location or other factors that prevent them from attending the more traditional face-to-face training workshop.

The authors offer the rather unique recommendation that training professionals should begin to develop a community of learning—either formally or informally—to assist with their own professional development. The authors provide examples of ways to move beyond the confines of one's own organization to seek out methods for growth and development. Such opportunities are available through membership and involvement in the Learning Round Table of the American Library Association and the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD).

A rather quick read, this handbook is best suited for individuals who are just getting started in the realm of staff training or for individuals who are looking simply to expand their own skills, as much of the book focuses on basic staff training principles. The examples given throughout the book are mostly from the public library perspective; however, the concepts can be easily translated for successful use in an academic library setting and even in organizations other than libraries.—Stacy G. Schrank, Employee Development Coordinator, Metropolitan Library System, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.