

SOURCES

elementary and middle school students. Booktalks or book reviews are written for each selected title. Books listed are generally published between 2005 and 2007, with most having a 2006 copyright date. Most of the information about the books profiled comes in the form of a ready-made booktalk. The booktalks are delivered in a variety of formats, including “fun facts,” notes of interesting illustrations to show, and plenty of hooks to get the audience clamoring for nonfiction books. Occasionally, the authors slip into a review written for the librarian rather than the reader. Without distinction between the two, the casual user will need to be cautious when using *Gotcha Good!* for some quick booktalks. A large percentage of the books profiled have a black-and-white picture of the cover included. There are also eight interesting author profiles written in question-and-answer format. Five top-ten lists are scattered throughout the book with the intention of a quick list for bookmarks. However, a mixture of reading levels is included on each bookmark, making it difficult to use for any one audience. The range of topics covers most areas of nonfiction. The book is divided into seven chapters by broad subject, ranging from “American Journeys” to “Monsters, Mysteries, Mummies and Other Quirky Books,” then alphabetized by author within the chapters. Although this book has a title and author index, it is missing a subject index, which is problematic. Because of the missing subject index, it is difficult for this book to be used as a reference. It is time-consuming to find out whether a book on a particular subject is suggested. Thus, this title will primarily serve as a browsing title for a librarian looking for interesting books to buy or promote in the nonfiction area.—*Tiffany Wylie, Library Media Specialist, Truman Elementary School, Norman, Oklahoma*

The Medical Library Association Essential Guide to Becoming an Expert Searcher: Proven Techniques, Strategies, and Tips for Finding Health Information. By Terry Ann Jankowski. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2008. 150p. \$65 (ISBN 1555570-622-3).

In the preface to this new guide to online searching of biomedical databases, author Terry Ann Jankowski notes that, in the recent past, “newly hired librarians were ill-equipped either to run or teach others how to perform comprehensive literature searches on even the most commonly used bibliographic databases” (ix). An experienced teacher of searching skills and head of the Education and Information Services Department at the Health Sciences Library of the University of Washington, she has built upon her popular Medical Library Association continuing education course to create this monograph. The intended audience is library school students and librarians who have not had extensive training in database searching. Although many of the principles discussed may be applied to other bibliographic databases, the focus is on the biomedical sciences.

The book is organized around the database search process, starting with the patron interview and continuing through database selection, search construction, subject and

natural-language search principles, and evaluation and revision of search results. Along the way, the author provides several helpful checklists and worksheets for the reader, such as search request forms and a search strategy worksheet. One valuable chapter contains annotations of many key databases in the biomedical sciences, both open-access and proprietary. The author discusses several methods of revising a search depending on the client’s feedback and explains the concepts of precision and recall.

Some of the special features of this volume are a glossary of terms, exercises at the end of many of the chapters (with suggested answers), and resources for maintaining search skills. Each chapter includes references, and a list of additional resources for further study by chapter topic is provided at the end.

It is not difficult to find books that cover theoretical information on databases and the search process or books that teach nonlibrarians how to find health information on the Internet. But this book fills a different niche. It meets its author’s goal of being a practical manual for learning the process and skills for online searching of biomedical databases. It will be useful for library school students and for librarians coming from other fields to a hospital or the health sciences library.—*Betsy Tonn, Reference Librarian, Bird Library, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City*

The Medical Library Association Guide to Health Literacy. Ed. by Marge Kars, Lynda M. Baker, and Feleta L. Wilson. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2008. 314p. paper \$75 (ISBN: 978-1-55570-625-8).

The Medical Library Association Guide to Health Literacy is a compilation of chapters written by a different authors—practitioners as well as academicians. The authors’ task was to define literacy as it relates to, or forms the basis of, their work with patient information. “Literacy” can mean several different things, including the ability to read, the ability to comprehend written information, and the ability to do basic math, but the main focus of this book is on low literacy in reading, which is a major barrier to the dissemination of health information and which has a negative effect on the other features of literacy.

There are three stated purposes of this work: to help librarians “better understand the issues of health literacy,” “help others become health literate,” and “become change agents within their organizations.” People who are health literate, as defined by the American Medical Association and the authors, can recognize when they have a need for information, can read and understand the information they are given, and can determine the appropriateness of such information. This book focuses on the mechanics of low reading literacy, dealing with other areas to a much lesser extent.

The guide addresses its second and third goals in a way that is oriented toward practical solutions. This volume provides a few good ideas for working with various target populations, such as teenagers, senior citizens, and public library patrons, as well as patrons with questions regarding health

specialties generally not taken into consideration, such as dentistry and mental health.

As the editors state, this work is not meant to be read cover to cover but rather to be consulted as a reference book. Written in scholarly style and heavily documented, it would be very useful for instructional and academic environments. In one volume, researchers in allied health fields, education, and library science will find a wealth of information. This book is also a good resource for consumer health and public librarians working with the general public. General hospital librarians will also find this to be a “nice to have” resource.—*Connie Kroll, Librarian, Reynolds Hospital, Lawton, Oklahoma*

Merchandising Made Simple: Using Standards and Dynamite Displays to Boost Circulation. by Jenny LaPerriere and Trish Christiansen. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 137p. \$36 (ISBN-13 978-1-59158-561-9).

As long as libraries have existed, librarians have attempted to present their collections in such a way that their patrons will eagerly borrow them, not just to boost circulation, but also to make sure their patrons find the library material they are seeking. One term for this activity is library marketing, but can it also be called library merchandising? Jenny LaPerriere and Trish Christiansen think so. In their book *Merchandising Made Simple: Using Standards and Dynamite Displays to Boost Circulation*, the authors, long-time public librarians in Denver, use retail terminology and techniques to describe and create library displays that any library patron will love (not to mention browse, read, and borrow from).

With the use of examples of their own library displays, as well as examples of analogous retail displays, the authors provide all types of librarians with essential retail techniques to highlight their collections, encourage patron browsing, and promote positive library visits. The authors write in a clear, concise style that is easy and enjoyable to read; they also supply numerous photographs of library and comparable retail displays as well as useful chapter summaries (or “face-out assignments,” as the authors call them). The final chapter contains a very resourceful, alphabetically arranged display guide by certain popular subjects, such as car care, traveling, and crafts.

LaPerriere and Christiansen have—in a slim, readable volume—supported the contention that libraries can effectively market their collections with simple, effective, practical, and affordable merchandising techniques. This book is an essential addition for enhancing any library’s professional collection.—*Larry Cooperman, Librarian, Everglades University, Altamonte Springs, Florida*

Opportunity for Leadership: Full and Informed Participation. By Mark Winston. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 109p. \$40 (ISBN: 978-1-59158-387-5).

In *Opportunity for Leadership*, Mark Winston explores the well-known dictum that a democratic society should be

an informed one. When citizens have access to information, they are able to make better decisions; indeed, information inspires us to be more dedicated to civic participation, the result of which is a more democratic society. Winston addresses the cultural, racial, and economic obstacles that often limit our ability to be informed.

Winston opens his book by examining a pivotal case in America’s history: *Brown v. Board of Education*. He explains the arguments waged both for and against integration and quotes extensively from the Supreme Court’s final decision. By illustrating his thesis with this trial, Winston presents a powerful argument that “access to [quality] education is necessary for all, in contribution to and participation in society” (7), simply because informed participation is always more desirable than the alternative.

Winston next explains that limiting access to information—even when it is deemed offensive or “hate mongering”—can be as harmful as refusing access altogether because if the “focus” is on “silencing the offensive voices” (12), potentially valuable conversations on controversial or difficult issues are prevented. He chooses interesting and current examples to make this point, such as the battle between the Federal Communications Commission and Howard Stern; the National Organization of Women’s call for Don Imus’s termination; and Jerry Falwell’s assertion that pagans, abortionists, feminists, gays, and lesbians were responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 11. Any time we attempt to “protect various segments of society by limiting access to information” (20), we do a disservice to both society and democracy.

Moreover, the free exchange of ideas leads to “better and more precise decision making” (43). This principle applies to almost anything, be it the death penalty, politics, or decisions regarding personal choice. Books and films such as *Dead Man Walking*, *The Green Mile*, and *In Cold Blood* have exposed the public to “what some might view as the barbarism” of the execution process (46–47). Information about birth control has led to fewer pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (80). *The Daily Show* often induces more cynicism about the status quo and disrupts complacency with established procedures (93–94). Hence, our ability to make an “informed and ethical decision” depends upon our having access to quality information (73).

Mark Winston’s book is insightful and timely. His clear and compelling account of *Brown v. Board of Education* highlights his extensive knowledge of the decision. Additionally, his comprehensive documentation and thorough index will be valuable aids for researchers.

Although the topic of this book is relevant to librarianship in the broadest sense, since we all want a country in which an informed citizenry works together to participate in democracy, its thesis never specifically draws librarianship into its context. Because of this, *Opportunity for Leadership* might not be as helpful a choice for library science collections as Ed D’Angelo’s *Barbarians at the Gates of the Public Library* (Library Juice Press, 2006) or even John Buschman’s *Dismantling the Public Sphere* (Libraries Unlimited, 2003). However, it would