proaching the subject matter that, librarian-like, helps or-
organize the information for future use. It seems clear that RA is
most effective as a group effort and that the service becomes
more valuable as it is adapted to local needs.

Saricks admits that training in RA is difficult; the sub-
ject matter can be overwhelming. Saricks’s book helps to
mitigate that effect and offers a practical method for bring-
ing together patron and product, something we should all
take advantage of in this era of questioning the relevance of
libraries.—James McShane, Director, Kent Memorial Library,
Suffield, Connecticut

The Real Story: A Guide to Nonfiction Reading Interests. By Sarah
Statz Cords. Edited by Robert Burgin. Westport, Conn.: Libraries

The Real Story is a unique handbook that helps readers’
advisors recommend nonfiction titles to library patrons based
on their preferred genre, subject, or writing style. Sarah Statz
Cords states, “Librarians must recognize that there will always
be books within subjects that most patrons, happy to browse
in their habitual subject areas, would never see but might
enjoy nonetheless” (xix).

While nonfiction’s increased popularity is part of a larger
media trend toward films based on true stories, docu-
mentaries, and reality shows, Cords encourages mixing fiction
and nonfiction advisory because readers may enjoy both
nonfiction and fiction on the same topic. Titles cover 1990
to 2005 and include starred reviews from review sources,
award winners, a few titles from her library’s sorting truck,
and a few classics.

Within each chapter, Cords explains the development and
appeal of the genre, subject, or style. The bulk of each chap-
ter lists some of the best titles in that genre or subject area,
along with a short list of titles to start with, fiction read-alikes,
further reading, and references. Four appendixes provide lists
of political pundits, spiritual writers, awards, and resources
for nonfiction books. Bold index tabs help the reader flip to
the next chapter.

In the “Biography” chapter, Cords points out that sports
biographies may appeal to readers of true adventure because
both contain “elements of the most exciting competitions or
hardest-fought battles” (215). She spends a lot of time on
“Relationships” and “Making Sense . . . ” (of ourselves, of our
culture) titles because they are well liked by readers, there are
no corresponding subject headings, and they are not shelved
near each other in libraries. Some truly fun sections cover
celebrities and superstars, humorous memoirs, and “gentle
family reads.”

The Real Story distinguishes itself by being the only non-
fiction readers’ advisory (RA) book that includes annotated
recommended titles, explains each genre’s development and
appeal, and suggests related fiction titles. Librarians who
want to know more about the basics of nonfiction RA should
consult Robert Burgin’s Nonfiction Readers Advisory (Libraries
Unlimited, 2004).

Reading The Real Story is an enjoyable learning experi-
ence. Knowing the appeal of nonfiction genres, subjects, and
styles will help reference librarians immensely and will help
their readers discover how exciting well-written nonfiction
can be.—Margie Ruppel, Reference and Interlibrary Loan Librari-
ian, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville

Student Guide to Research in the Digital Age: How to Locate and
Evaluate Information Sources. By Leslie F. Stebbins. Westport,
099-4).

Each year one encounters new research guides. However,
the Student Guide by Stebbins is worth serious attention. Liv-
ing up to its intention of being “essential reading” (xi), it does
a masterful job of integrating critical thinking skills, informa-
tion sources, and database searching techniques, all in one
concise paperback.

Following a chapter outlining the basic steps of research
(identifying a topic, choosing research strategies), the Student
Guide leads users to sources for books (including e-books),
magazine and journal articles, primary sources, biography,
laws and court cases, and government documents. In addi-
tion to the usual subscription databases, the Student Guide
judiciously mentions reference books, microfilm series, and
freely accessible Web sites, thus enabling students to find
helpful information, regardless of how digitized their own
libraries have become.

Critical thinking and evaluation are important parts of
each chapter, and Stebbins tailors her suggestions to the types
of sources at hand. For instance, she encourages users of pri-
mary sources to look for internal and external consistency
in the creator’s story and suggests that readers of autobiog-
raphies find out whether a ghost writer was used. Whenever
the Student Guide encourages readers to use a database, it uses
partial screenshots to illustrate how to adjust search fields
appropriately and compose a valid search with Boolean op-

There are only a few improvements one could suggest.
Knowing the popularity of business as an undergraduate ma-

Some guides, such as Jeff Lenburg’s Guide to Research (Facts On File, 2005), excel at listing pertinent reference
titles and subscription databases for an array of disciplines.
Others, such as those by Pyrczak Publishing, explain surveys,
statistical software, and other concerns of graduate-level stu-
dents and empirical researchers. However, the Student Guide
by Stebbins is the best literature guide for undergraduates
that has crossed this reviewer’s desk. Highly recommended
for high school, college, and public libraries.—Bernadette A. Lear, Behavioral Sciences and Education Librarian, Penn State Harrisburg Library, Middletown

**SOURCES**


As the title suggests, this work addresses research on information seeking in a school setting. The study is a recreation of groundbreaking research done at a university-affiliated laboratory school. Gross revisits the original school and, additionally, two other schools (both private) to test the validity of the original work. The author does a thorough job of acquainting the reader with the background, context, methods, and results of the investigation. Appendices are included to allow for replication of the work by others. Although Gross seems to belabor the history and background of the study, the idea that this could be a handbook for researchers seeking to replicate her work explains the minute attention to detail the author provides.

For school library media specialists, the results of this study include no surprises. The fact that the study was done in 1997, when the Internet and information technology were just moving into the school setting, means that the results might be somewhat dated. These information tools are now commonly available to most students.

Gross’s suggestion that library media specialists spend more time in formal instruction of information retrieval skills, based on observation of just three schools, seems overly bold considering the narrowness of the data pool. *Information Power*, the school library media specialist’s bible, addresses our responsibility for this. Finding three professionally trained library media specialists who do not teach these skills formally represents an anomaly, not the norm.

Practicing library media specialists will find little revelation in this text. However, researchers of information science will probably find much from which to springboard.—Ann Miller, Library Media Specialist, Eisenhower Elementary, Norman, Oklahoma


Would you like to start a teen book club or make an existing one better? If so, Libraries Unlimited has added another wonderful resource to their Professional Guides for Young Adult Librarians series that will offer assistance to both public and school librarians.

Kunzel and Hardesty have a deep respect for the teen library patron and offer several strategies for “getting to know” the teens you serve. They provide both motivation and how-to instructions for planning, facilitating, and evaluating a teen book club. This text is broken into two parts. The first section discusses the specifics of what a teen-centered book club is, how to determine what your teens want, and provides examples of thirteen different models for successful book discussions. Issues of promotion and marketing are also covered in the latter chapters of the first section. The second section of the book gives step-by-step, hour-by-hour instructions for facilitating a book club from the first meeting to the last, including valuable advice on book selection, dealing with disagreements, and evaluating the program’s success.

What makes this text unique is the attitude of the adult’s role in the book club. The authors use the title “teen-centered” very deliberately. Their intention is not for the adult to pick out a book, invite teens to join, and lead the discussion after everyone has had a chance to read the book. Instead, they encourage the adult to take a step back and allow the teens the majority of the control in the book club. According to the authors, the adult’s responsibilities are to “1) Provide a safe environment and consistent structure; 2) Model, support, remind, nudge, and occasionally instruct or intervene to foster leadership/book club values and behaviors; 3) Provide all the behind-the-scenes support the club needs to succeed; and 4) Get out of the way!” (6).

*The Teen-Centered Book Club* is a must-have for any librarian considering offering a book club for teens.—Karin Perry, Library Media Specialist, Whittier Middle School, Norman, Oklahoma


It can be difficult for high school librarians to find a connection with students of a very different generation. In *Using Pop Culture to Teach Information Literacy*, Behen demonstrates how to incorporate today’s teen trends into our teaching style and make learning fun for our students. Themes are designed around current pop culture television shows, and Behen gives examples of how to use these themes successfully with different grade levels and in different subjects. Included are examples of PowerPoint presentations designed with the theme of the reality television shows *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* and incorporating game show themes based on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*?

This book places importance on (1) involving the entire school in developing an information literacy model, and (2) how it will be implemented at each grade level. Helpful suggestions are included on how to encourage teachers and administrators to incorporate information literacy skills into lessons across the curriculum. Examples of Behen’s information literacy model are given for each grade level, making it easy for librarians to adapt to their own uses. Also included are helpful ideas for promoting the library program to both students and parents, including contests, workshops on creating “Zines,” and bringing in parents to show them how their children can make use of the library and its resources. This book will help bring new life and interest into any secondary school library program.—Elaine Warner, Library Media Specialist, Norman North High School, Oklahoma