
Academic libraries cannot function without student assistants who perform a great deal of work. These employees are supervised by librarians, but are they also mentored? This quick read is helpful for new managers who want to start with a good foundation, not only with mentoring but also with hiring and other related personnel practices for student assistants. But the author, Michelle Reale, also provides information suitable for seasoned managers who wish to focus on the needs and expectations of their student assistants.

Reale uses her experience as a supervising librarian to discuss mentoring at its most basic: “providing guidance.” Anecdotes scattered throughout the chapters provide humor and real-life glimpses into the work of mentoring and supervising students. On the one hand, the brief chapters allow this book to be read in short intervals, but on the other hand, the redundancy in some of the chapters seems to add unneeded filler in an attempt to make this book seem more than a series of related articles. The most practical knowledge comes in the discussions of disengagement (which, in this book, refers to the end of the student’s employment) and being “cruel to be kind.” In addition, a chapter on cultural considerations touches topics with which all managers should become familiar. Inclusion of practical documents, such as examples of desk rules and grounds for dismissal policies, provide helpful vocabulary to use at any library.

This book is the first to address mentoring of student assistants in a systematic way, and it fills a gap in the recent literature about mentoring in academic libraries. Recent articles on mentoring in libraries focus on piloting new internship programs or mentoring recently hired librarians. Reale’s management experiences emphasize mentoring as one of librarians’ most basic duties: the duty to educate. Her matter-of-fact tone is successful in conveying personnel management information without condescension.—Shelly McCoy, Head, Student Multimedia Design Center and Interim Head, Reference and Instructional Services, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware


With the birth of new K–12 standards in many states, curriculums are being written and rewritten. Whether as an effort to include all students and their cultures or to simply introduce different cultures to students, books can serve as a gateway into many different ethnicities. Multiethnic Books for the Middle-School Curriculum goes beyond integrating books into English or reading curriculums, offering titles for different subjects and topics.

Although the authors of the book acknowledge that they were unable to include every relevant book, they include a wide variety of titles in seven different categories with publication dates ranging from 2004 to 2010. The seven categories include health, language arts, performing arts, physical education, visual arts, social studies, and science and math. In addition to fiction, the authors include nonfiction materials, picture books, and graphic novels. The authors note that, because standards vary from state to state, they use the national standards for each book to classify it for use in teaching specific objectives. Appendix A provides the website for each subject’s standard and elaborates on the objectives included in each of those standards’ lists. For each book entry, the authors include author, title, publication date, number of pages, publisher, fiction or nonfiction designation, grade levels, a summary; and standards addressed. Appendix B includes a list of cultures, and appendix C provides a list of resources for additional information about multiethnic literature. The comprehensive index includes references by author, title, and ethnic groups.

This is an excellent resource for any educator or school librarian who wants to incorporate more books into the curriculum. Even though the book focuses on middle grades, some books are appropriate for elementary and high school. For a librarian, this book could be used as a collection development tool, a starting point for collaboration, and a list for professional enrichment. This well conceived and timely book should be an essential purchase for librarians and educators who wish to enhance their curriculum.—Melanie Wachsmann, Reference/Teen Librarian, Lone Star College, CyFair Branch, Cypress, Texas


The role of libraries in the digital age is one of the most widely discussed topics among scholars and practitioners in the information field. As higher education moves toward an increasingly online format and the open web continues to grow in its offerings, the necessity of college and university libraries is repeatedly called into question. Stielow, who currently serves as the Head of Classroom/Research Information Services at the American Public University System, explores...

Today, libraries are under constant pressure to communicate with library policymakers and stakeholders the value of library services. Understanding how to strategically gather and utilize data are a key component in successful advocacy campaigns. In her book, Say it with Data: A Concise Guide to Making your Case and Getting Results, Priscille Dando explores the process of using data to advocate what libraries are being used for and why libraries are needed.

From the title alone, it is not obvious that Dando’s target audience is school and public librarians. In the preface, Dando asserts that the target audience is “librarians and managers in school and public libraries” (vii). All of the examples included within the chapters and appendixes are specifically aimed at school and public librarians. However, because the majority of Dando’s principles and examples can be easily adapted to any library environment, the book is also relevant to academic librarians who want to learn about incorporating data into advocacy work.

The book is comprised of six chapters and seven appendixes. In the first chapter, Dando describes the “six steps that are essential to a successful advocacy message based on data” (1). Chapter 1 explores the first four steps—determining the needs, articulating the objective(s), identifying the audience(s), and determining what type of evidence to collect. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 explore the fifth step—collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data. Chapter three discusses the impact of using statistics for advocacy purposes. Chapters 4 and 5 are a detailed discussion of surveys and focus groups as a means of gathering and measuring data. Chapter 6 explores the sixth and final step—presenting the data to the target audience(s).

Chapter 2 seems a bit out of place: it interrupts the “six steps” narrative with a discussion of strategies for effective communication. This is important information that definitely enhances the overall message of Say it with Data, but its placement within the book disrupts the flow of the six essential steps detailed in chapters 1 and 3 through 6.

Librarians with little to no experience in advocating with data that measures and communicates library programs and services will find Say it with Data an interesting and practical read.—Magen Bednar, Reference Assistant, University of Oklahoma, Claremore, Oklahoma


This group of studies, conducted at the University of Rochester between 2011 and 2013, is meant to follow up on and build upon an earlier research project from 2004 and 2005. The original study was published as Studying Students: The Undergraduate Research Project at the University of Rochester. Both studies utilized ethnographic research methods common in anthropology, focusing on in-depth interactions with small groups, rather than large statistical surveys, to gain a more precise understanding of user behavior.

Each volume is divided into eleven sections with brief overviews of previous research, method, and findings. In A Second Look, each chapter has its own bibliography, as well as a copy of the survey instrument utilized. In general, this second volume’s research projects focus on different behaviors from those covered in the first book. However, a few studies are repeated; both volumes examine what faculty look for in a good paper and how undergraduates research and write their papers. In addition, both volumes include a photo survey to investigate student life and technology usage.

The rest of the projects in A Second Look take a different angle, focusing on a greater understanding of how the students use the library as space and how students integrate the library into the bigger picture of college life. One study researched similarities and differences among faculty, students, and librarians in the ways that they search for information important to them. Another study examined how students learn about the human connection to research. Several projects investigated how individuals and groups utilize the library in their academic work and build a sense of a scholarly community. One clear trend that emerged is that the “typical”