

essential reading and others that are worth a look

GUIDED INQUIRY: LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Carol C. Kuhlthau, Leslie K. Maniotes, and Ann K. Casparl

Stop everything you are doing, get a copy of this book, and read it cover to cover in one sitting. Kuhlthau joins forces with a curriculum expert and a museum professional to propose a solid initiative for teachers, teacher-librarians, and administrators. What is that initiative? A constant stream of collaborative, constructivist, and information-centered learning experiences. The authors propose that a teacher-librarian and two complementary subject area teachers join forces to build a learning experience using the best curricular topics with a simple but powerful information literacy model: locate, evaluate, use. This is done in a rich learning environment ranging from the traditional library resources and beyond to the community of museums and other public information spaces. The trio proposes assessments along the way that look at student motivation, responsibility, and

learning. They see student sharing and collaborative learning as the building blocks to lifelong learning and to forming the bedrock of what 21st-century learning is all about. We wish that every new teacher-librarian would not only consume, study, and think about this approach but also have an opportunity to practice this method before taking the helm at a library. The book does have a couple of drawbacks; namely, the authors did not have the new American Association of School Librarians learning standards, and they do not explore Web 2.0 opportunities in depth. But this book will hold up under a variety of environmental changes. Of course, it sits squarely in the center of constructivism, but we believe that many of its recommendations can be valuable in a school where direct teaching is the center of attention. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 168 pp. \$40.00. 978-1-59158-435-3.)

Bottom line: For one of the best reads of 2007, our assignment stands: Read this book, talk about it, and begin to understand why it is more important than teaching a few schedule-based information literacy lessons to students as they encounter teachers' assignments.

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY: A HOW-TO-DO-IT MANUAL AND CD-ROM

Belinha S. De Abreu

Media literacy and information literacy are intertwined as part of the information world that students need to manage rather than be managed by. This book, one of many on the topic, provides a sensible overview and justification for teaching the subject. This section is followed by numerous lessons on television, movies, photography, radio, advertising, and a few Web 2.0 technologies. The lessons are designed for independent instruction, but the authors encourage that these be integrated into the existing curriculum. It is unfortunate that at the end of each lesson, they do not provide tips for integration into the various curricular topics, which would have added to the value of the collection. Although they mention Web 2.0 technologies, they could have also created a whole book about managing messages and being influenced by messages in this new technology that most kids and teens are using. Finally, the CD-ROM contains all the lessons as PDF files so that the teacher or librarian can print out the lesson of interest, although it would be

just as simple to photocopy it from the text. (Neal-Schuman, 2007. 217 pp. \$59.95. 978-1-55570-596-1.)

Bottom line: Look over your shelf on media literacy and assess the number of ideas for teaching. If you need a fresh set, here is a good collection to acquire.

DEVELOPING TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Myles I. Friedman, Diane H. Harwell, and Katherine C. Schmepele

With an emphasis on using research-based practices during teaching, the authors have assembled 24 teaching strategies supported by numerous research studies. Using these techniques, a teacher and an evaluator can assess the quality of a lesson where the teacher attempts each strategy. The idea is this—the more of these strategies that are present, the higher the lesson quality. It is instructive to run down this list of research-based strategies in light of No Child Left Behind requirements, which state that teaching practices should be founded in research. As such, here are the strategies:

Taking student readiness into account	Defining instructional expectations	Providing instructional evaluation
Providing corrective instruction	Keeping students on task	Maximizing teaching time
Utilizing computerized instruction	Providing transfer of learning instruction	Providing decision-making instruction
Enlisting student motivation	Providing contiguity	Utilizing repetition effectively
Utilizing unifiers	Providing one-to-one tutoring	Utilizing reminders
Clarifying communication	Providing ample learning time	Utilizing demonstrations
Controlling classroom dispositions	Improving prediction and problem-solving instruction	Reducing teacher-pupil ratio to lower than 21 to 1
Utilizing teamwork	Utilizing question and answer	Preschool instruction

A multiple-choice test in the instructor's manual checks whether the teacher understands each strategy, and an observational checklist evaluates whether the strategies are being used effectively during a lesson. The approach suggested is to begin with a body of research and then construct a method of teaching. Such an approach covers the science of teaching, but where is the creativity? Do great teachers employ such a model as they approach their students? Of interest to school librarians is the authors' encouragement that observing the teaching of a research paper provides an observer with a great opportunity to see if all the strategies are being incorporated. If you want a chuckle, read this list of steps that a teacher should take to teach the research process. Apparently, the authors have not heard of plagiarism, libraries, information literacy, quality information, Web 2.0, or any number of problems, possibilities, and challenges of research. Back to school, it is for our authors to discover the holes. Perhaps this is the problem with the entire set. Although strategies supported by research are informative, if followed slavishly, they produce what kids would certainly term boring instruction—direct teaching that lacks spark, creativity, interest, involvement, and, yes, even higher-level thinking. As a foundational set of elements, this collection is instructive, but I hope that no school would set these “standards” as the only set of strategies to be evaluated. (Institute for Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Education, 2007. 202 pp. \$65.95. 978-0-9666588-5-9. Instructor's manual, 978-0-9666588-6-6.)

Bottom Line: Recommended as a beginning list of researched strategies, but Marzano does a better job in his *What Works* series of researched teaching methods.

THE LITERACY PRINCIPAL, SECOND EDITION

David Booth and Jennifer Rowsell

As principals have become directly accountable for student performance in their schools, they are now expected to be instructional leaders as well as school managers, particularly with respect to literacy development. This book, written by two literacy experts and grounded in the

latest research, provides principals with valuable guidance to becoming involved. Booth and Roswell take a collaborative approach to leadership and firmly believe that a schoolwide literacy team, which includes all staff, is the way to create a positive literacy culture and a program that brings increased student achievement. The authors provide a step-by-step method by which principals can create a shared vision, facilitate professional development, create a professional community, and develop an effective literacy program. This approach exists within a solid research-based context, and the book provides material on the new literacies, theories about reading, types of intervention for children who are experiencing difficulties, models of effective literacy programs, writing development as part of a literacy program, a whole-school approach to literacy, assessing the literacy program, and other aspects of literacy leadership. Throughout the book are short real-life articles by other experts, which describe effective strategies and approaches that schools and school districts have used. In stressing the team approach to literacy instruction and the creation of a schoolwide literacy culture, the authors stress that the school library and the teacher-librarian have an important role in the effort, stating that “the library should become the main focus in building a central resource to support every student and every teacher.” The authors further state that

the teacher-librarian can add support to every teacher's programs—in curriculum areas, during independent reading, for student research projects, and, most of all, by motivating and encouraging students to widen their literacy horizons and to deepen their awareness of the great variety of texts, both in print and online, that will connect them to that world.

(Pembroke, 2007. 159 pp. \$19.50. 978-1-55138-216-6.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended. The book contains a practical blueprint for building an effective literacy program, providing a solid research foundation and practical and tested strategies. Although the book was written for principals, the entire school learning community should

read and discuss it for implementation of its strategies and ideas. —*Esther Rosenfeld*

DIFFERENTIATED LITERACY COACHING: SCAFFOLDING FOR STUDENT AND TEACHER SUCCESS

Mary Catherine Moran

If as a teacher-librarian you think that it is difficult to get into the classroom to collaborate with a teacher, then read this book about the role of the reading coach. Yes, reading coaches are supposed to collaborate and co-teach. Yes, they have difficulties. It is fascinating to read their perspective on this problem and their recommendations for solutions. Read and discover that teacher-librarians, reading coaches, and, by inference, any other specialist in the school have lots in common. Do we as teacher-librarians explore the commonalities? Are we in competition for attention with other specialists? When we do collaborate with classroom teachers, are two heads really better than one? This book is worth acquiring so that both the reading coach and the teacher-librarian can read it. Perhaps reading it with another title, such as *Ban Those Bird Units!* (Loertscher, Koechlin, & Zwaan, 2005, Hi Willow Research and Publishing), would be instructive for both professionals. Certainly, the question comes around to, how can we as specialists combine our efforts and unlock that classroom door to the miracle of collaborative education rather than the dread of isolated frustration? It is an idea worth investigating, and thus, this is a great title to start exploring the possibilities. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007. 186 pp. \$26.95. 978-1-4166-0623-9.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended.

THE BEST TEEN WRITING OF 2007

Ed. by Justin Beltz

When we received this paperback collection containing selections from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, given each year, we were reminded of the wonderful opportunities for teens and kids to produce and publish their work in hundreds of contests, challenges, and student magazines, as well



**KATHLEEN
ODEAN**

> YA FICTION

GLBT (GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER)

Freak show. James St. James. Dutton, 2007. \$18.99. 978-0-525-47799-0. Grades 9–12. A drag queen at conservative Eisenhower Academy? Billy Bloom stuns his new classmates with his flamboyant outfits and unconventional views. But he slowly finds support among the Shadow People, students who resent the nasty in-crowd and get behind Billy's campaign to be homecoming queen. His campaign message: We are all, in our own way, freaks!

Hero. Perry Moore. Hyperion, 2007. \$16.99. 978-1-4231-0195-6. Grades 8–12. Meet Thom Creed, an aspiring superhero in a world where superheroes save the day. Thom, who has amazing powers to heal, joins a team of misfits out to impress the superhero leaders. Meanwhile, at home, Thom has to hide both his ambition and the fact that he is gay from his father, a disgraced superhero.

Parrotfish. Ellen Wittlinger. Simon & Schuster, 2007. \$16.99. 978-1-4169-1622-2. Grades 8–12. "You can only lie about who you are for so long without going crazy," says the narrator of this thought-provoking novel. Angela has always felt like a boy. Now that she is a high school junior, she takes the bold step of asking to be called *Grady* and be treated like a boy. It is far from smooth sailing at home and at school, but Grady finds glimmers of hope on the way.

Someday this pain will be useful to you. Peter Cameron. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007. \$16.00. 978-0-374-30989-3. Grades 9–12. Manhattan prep school graduate James, who loves art and architecture, feels that he has little in common with his peers. When he finally faces the fact that he is gay, he handles his first attempt at romance ineptly, to say the least. But it is a step that starts him on his way to maturity, in this sophisticated and witty novel.

as on YouTube and kid/teen personal blogs and web sites. We want to remind teacher-librarians across the continent that part of the library media program of promoting literacy is to encourage young people to produce, write, film, publish, and Podcast the best of their work. It is a whole new world. And although there are plenty of contests out there, the opportunities to publish are better now than at any time in the history of the world. So, whether it is this collection or another, let the presses and production facilities roll. There just might be a Christopher Palolini at your school. (Scholastic, 2007. 270 pp. \$10.00 donation. 978-0-545-05931-2.)

Bottom line: Recommended.

COLLABORATION

Patricia Montiel-Overall and Donald C. Adcock

Collaboration is one of the most talked-about elements of the library media program and the least practiced. However, not shying away from this essential element and the most powerful act that teacher-librarians can perform, our authors have collected the best articles from the last 7 years, as published in *Knowledge Quest*, the official journal of the American Association of School Librarians. It is an excellent collection with articles both theoretical and practical. It is worthy of study by individuals and groups of teacher-librarians and a worthy addition to the literature. The best writers of the field are represented, so the collection is a key piece in our professional literature. If you have one copy, the readers in your group can find your recommended articles through online databases. Thus, a study of the topic can begin with these articles and branch out into the rest of the literature. (American Association of School Librarians, 2007. 65 pp. \$22.95. \$20.65 for American Library Association members. 0-978-8389-8447-5.)

Bottom line: Essential reading.

PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING AN INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM

Ed. by Susan Carol Curzon and Lynn D. Lampert

It is always instructive to see what teacher-librarians' academic cousins—specifically,

the academic librarians—are up to in their quest to push information literacy into the curriculum. Well, they have come a long way in the past few years. One usually thinks of a required course on the library as being a part of a college student's curriculum, but that boring and largely ineffectual model has given way to models of collaboration. The editors have assembled essays from a variety of academic librarians who have been experimenting beyond library orientation and into a deep understanding of information and the various delivery methods. Academic librarians, who generally lack degrees in education, struggle at times with educational theories, but they recognize that the product that teacher-librarians send to them from the lower grades is insufficient and that many students do not adapt well to the academic environment. As we look at the collection, we hope that we can do a better job in preparing the information-literate student and communicating to these professionals what collaboration looks like when professor and academic librarian build learning experiences together. If you thought that collaboration was tough with high school teachers, meet the professors whom our colleagues have to deal with. (Neal-Schuman, 2007. 335 pp. \$75.00. 978-1-55570-608-1.)

Bottom line: Recommended for readers who are trying to get an overview of information literacy efforts beyond the K–12 arena.

STANDARD CATALOGING FOR SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES, 4TH ED.

Sheila S. Intner and Jean Weihs

This guide keeps getting better and better as a concise guide to the process of cataloging, from description to classification to subject headings of print and multimedia materials. It is useful as a text for beginning cataloging classes and as one for personal study. This work, coupled with a guide to MARC, such as Scott Piepenburg's *Easy Marc* (1999, F&W), plus a current copy of an abridged Dewey and a *Sears List of Subject Headings* should constitute everything needed for those doing original cataloging. For the rest of us downloaders, we can usually find cataloging copy from

our automated systems software. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 286 pp. \$50.00. 978-1-59158-378-3.)

Bottom line: Recommended for the purists of the field.

BEST BOOKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS, 3RD ED.

Young Adult Library Services

Association, Ed. by Holly Koelling

If the Best Books for Young Adults list is available online each year from the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), then why compile a combined list from 2000 to 2006? The answer is that this collection is much more than just a compilation of the lists. The book begins with a thorough analysis of YALSA's efforts over the years to create best of the best lists. The chapter that analyzes the trends in publishing for young adults is simply the best analysis that we have seen. It looks at trends such as the feminization of teen literature, changes in family life as represented in the books, trends in the growth of graphic novels, and many other aspects of publishing. We are then treated to

combined lists across the seven published lists of themes not used in the lists published each year. These theme lists include those of friendship, humor, love and romance, science fiction, among others, followed by a number of nonfiction themes. After this section, the collective lists are arranged by author, complete with annotations and additional indexes of various types. For any person working with teens, whether librarian, teacher, or counselor, this book is a must-have and must-read reference. The YALSA best books list is selected by adults, it is true, and not by teens, but it represents one view worth considering into the world of YA literature. (American Library Association, 2007. 360 pp. \$42.00. \$37.80 for American Library Association members. 978-0-8389-3569-9.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended.

GARY PAULSEN

James Blasingame

SHARON CREECH

Pamela S. Carroll

This series of books about favorite teen

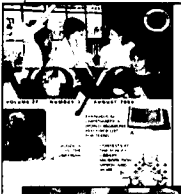
authors is for librarians, teachers, and teens who want to know their favorite authors in depth. The volumes are full of biographical articles, reflections of the authors, and essays about their most popular titles. The series would be particularly useful to aspiring young authors who need reassurance that writing can be more than just a hobby. (Greenwood Press, 2007. Blasingame: 165 pp. \$45.00. 978-0-313-33532-7. Carroll: 195 pp. \$45.00. 978-0-313-33598-3.)

Bottom line: Both are just plain good reads.

A YEAR IN PICTURE BOOKS: LINKING TO THE INFORMATION LITERACY STANDARDS

Patricia A. Messner and Brenda S. Copeland

For those who feel trapped in fixed scheduling and as though they must use the children's time to deliver some type of literature experience coupled with information literacy, the authors present one lesson per month using a picture book for each grade from kindergarten to grade 3. The



Voice of Youth Advocates

The Library Magazine Serving Those Who Serve Young Adults

VOYA is the only magazine devoted exclusively to the informational needs of teenagers.

Each issue includes:

- More than 175 reviews rated for both quality and popularity with teens
- Timely, opinionated editorials upholding youth advocacy
- Articles by librarians, teachers, novelists, and others who work with teens
- Teens' own opinions in reviews and notes from the Teenage Underground
- Annual annotated booklists

Praise for VOYA

"VOYA is the only magazine that matters for librarians working with young adults....Simply, the best there is."

—Patrick Jones, Author of *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries*, (3rd Ed., 2005) and the young adult novels *Things Change*(2004) and *Nailed* (2006)

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following are the information literacy topics covered for the school year: orientation to the library, arrangement of the library, reading enrichment, understanding information, online catalog, and information on the Internet (2 months). Each lesson has some sort of worksheet and quick project, complete with patterns. If the children are going to be exposed to such activities that are disconnected from the curriculum in the classroom, we recommend that such fun projects be guided by a paraprofessional or volunteer. The lessons here are simple enough for either adult to work through and enjoy with the children. For you as the professional, we recommend that you spend the time that you normally would on the types of activities that connect to the curriculum to further the students' learning that teachers are concerned about. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 163 pp. \$35.00. 978-1-59158-495-77.)

Bottom line: Not recommended for the professional teacher-librarians.

ONCE UPON A TIME: USING STORYTELLING, CREATIVE DRAMA, AND READER'S THEATRE WITH CHILDREN IN PREK-6

Judy Freeman

Judy Freeman has more ideas for using children's literature than almost anyone we know. In this volume, she packs songs, readers theater, great-book lists, best professional books, good web sites, and more to attract librarian and teacher to make reading fun, exciting, creative, and beneficial to the literacy program of the school. That is how we view this work being used. The teacher-librarian, as a part of the school's literacy team, not only infuses skills into the language arts program but cares about helping children build a love of literature and creative expression. Used alone, such activities are fun but pointless if connections are not being made with larger literacy goals in mind and practice. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 276 pp. \$35.00. 978-1-59158-663-0.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended for teachers and teacher-librarians who are on a quest to move beyond just deadly skills.

TEACHING AND LEADING FROM THE INSIDE OUT: A MODEL FOR REFLECTION, EXPLORATION, AND ACTION

Judy F. Carr, Janice R. Rauske, and Stephen Rushton

The interviews have been done, and it is reporting time by my graduate students who are studying to become the next crop of teacher-librarians. The stories repeat themselves: The person interviewed is hanging on for a couple more years until retirement, locks up the library as much as possible from any visitors, is technophobic, never attends professional conferences, is avoided by the faculty . . . and about any other horror story that one can imagine. Can this picture be true of colleagues who began their careers many years ago full of hope, vitality, and dreams? Have the dreams been smashed by poor funding and lack of support, and were they dashed so long ago that the mantra is now just "hang on until I can get out"? Whatever the reasons, it seems that the stereotype of the librarian keeps being reinforced. If you are reading this review, you are probably not a candidate for the book under consideration, but perhaps we could all use some self-assessment to see how well we are holding up under the strain. Our authors present a method of reevaluating where we are and where we are going, from our perspective and from that of others. After reading the suggestions here, perhaps we can pass this book to a colleague who needs it, or we can find an excuse to hold a general discussion on this sensitive topic. A larger question is, what do school districts, principals, and other administrators do with professionals who are not meeting their potential but have years of service still ahead? It is a major problem. And perhaps this book is one approach that to consider. (Corwin Press, 2007. 139 pp. \$22.95. 978-1-4129-2667-6.)

Bottom line: Recommended.

VIRTUAL REFERENCE ON A BUDGET: CASE STUDIES

Ed. Teresa Calston and Michael Pullin

How can we reach the Google generation? A group of doctoral students at the University of North Texas attacked one part

of this problem by investigating, proposing, and recommending ways to use direct communication with various patrons of school, academic, and public libraries. Various chapters describe serious library proposals and recommendations by a team of doctoral students. In the chapter covering schools, the team investigates and proposes a system for a high-tech high school in Michigan using instant messaging as a way to connect students to the library. The instant-messaging concept attacks a common problem: We as teacher-librarians have to be in the faces of our patrons to make any sort of meaningful impact on the use of information. As such, we found the proposals here forward thinking and worth testing and refining as we enter the social networking phase of the world of Web 2.0. (Linworth, 2007. 191 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-58683-287-2.)

Bottom line: For the brave and realistic professional, consider this volume's advice with every other idea that you can get your hands on. Recommended.

CREATING EQUITABLE CLASSROOMS THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH

Ed. Cathy Caro-Bruce, Ryan Flessner, Mary Klehr, and Kenneth Zechner

Imagine yourself as a teacher-librarian in a major professional development effort with teachers who are developing learning units targeted at kids who do not usually do well in the classroom. Imagine subjecting your teaching methods to action research so that you are focusing on strategies and their effect on learning. As we read through these excellent self-examinations of the teaching of 10 teachers in the Madison, WI, school district, we marvel at what a difference can be made when teachers take the time to focus on learning outcomes. Yet, the teacher-librarian is nowhere in sight even though we are confident that there are strong teacher-librarians in the Madison schools. We recommend that a group of teacher-librarians read and discuss the case studies presented here. Then imagine what would happen to these learning experiences if you were collaborating with the teacher in such action research studies of what quality teaching and learning looks

like. What would a collection of published case studies look like in your school or district? What would teachers and teacher-librarians learn as a result of such a project? As a reviewer, I predict that the profession of teacher-librarian would be healthy indeed if such publishing happened. Anyone up to the challenge? To get started, read and share the stories in this book. (Corwin Press, 2007. 303 pp. \$37.95. 978-1-4129-3667-5.)

Bottom line: Recommended.

BEYOND BIRD UNITS: 18 MODELS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN INFORMATION-RICH AND TECHNOLOGY-RICH ENVIRONMENTS

David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin, and Sandi Zwaan

This book can be considered a sequel to *Ban Those Bird Units!* published in 2005, but it also stands on its own. Its aim is to provide a comprehensive rationale and exemplar for creating research activities and units that emphasize critical thinking rather than gathering facts. As such, it is structured into 18 think model chapters, each of which provides a detailed and unique model for an effective approach to creating a higher-order thinking activity for students. Each model chapter contains a planning tool, an explanation of the model and possible topics, comprehensive notes on the model, several examples (for various grade levels), and templates for use with students. Types of think models include a concept jigsaw puzzle, a problems/possibilities jigsaw puzzle, a decision matrix model, a reinvent-a-better-way model, a learn-by-doing model, a teacher-directed Quest model, and a learner-directed Quest model. An important part of each model is the "So What?/What Next?" feature, which goes beyond student acquisition of knowledge by extending the learning with an activity that has students designing a major question and has them taking real-world action, sharing their expertise in a meaningful way. Each of the models is innovative and creative; each honors the principles of developing higher-order and meaningful research activities for students; and each is developed in a comprehensible and practical manner. Also, each model is

created so that students use a variety of print and electronic resources (an information-rich environment) and a variety of technology tools. The comprehensive introduction provides an overview of the approach to student learning (and teaching) that the writers are taking, an explanation of the models, and a discussion of the critical role of the information- and technology-rich environment that is necessary for implementation. (Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 2007. 243 pp. \$35.00 978-1-933170-37-9.)

Bottom line: Highly Recommended. Use this book to help you work with classroom teachers to get rid of bird units and to develop the kind of rich, relevant assignments that your students deserve and will thrive on. —*Esther Rosenfeld*

USING MICROSOFT OFFICE TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

Allan F. Livers

We are familiar with a number of project books that try to give ideas for enhancing student learning through technology. Many of them are simply cutesy ideas and even clever ideas, but they have little promise in enhancing learning. This book is one of them. Lots of ideas here. Few of any consequence. Turns out, technology does not make a difference when we use it in many of the ways suggested here. True, a few ideas might actually facilitate student learning by making it efficient, but there are too few of these to merit the purchase of this book. (Corwin Press, 2007. 255 pp. With CD-ROM of templates. \$37.95. 978-1-4129-4122-8.)

Bottom line: Not recommended.

BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, SUPPLEMENT TO THE EIGHTH EDITION: PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 6

Catherine Barr and John T. Gillespie

For years, Gillespie (and now Barr) has collected in a single-print volume a major selection tool combining the various review journals of the field. This volume covers 2006 through March 2007, and as with other volumes, the annotated books are arranged in major categories corresponding to the Dewey system. They not only give a

BOOKMARKIT



RACHELLE
LASKY BILZ

ADULT BOOKS FOR OLDER TEENS

SCHOOL DAYS

Gentlemen and players. Joanne Harris. HarperCollins, 2006. \$14.95. 978-0-060-55915-1. A new teacher arrives at St. Oswald's School for Boys, and events are set into motion that threaten to ruin it. Employing the imagery of a chess game, Harris spins her intricately plotted tale of revenge around a staggering secret.

The headmaster ritual. Taylor Antrim. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. \$13.95. 978-0-618-75682-7. Father-son relationships, political fanaticism, and boarding school life are examined in this compelling novel. New teacher Dyer Martin and the headmaster's son, James Wolfe, become involved in a dangerous secret agenda from which they must save themselves and their school.

The miracle life of Edgar Mint. Brady Udall. Vintage, 2002. \$14.95. 978-0-375-71918-9. In a voice entertaining and heartbreaking, Edgar Mint relates his story, from being run over by a U.S. postal jeep to living at the Willie Sherman School, within foster care, and beyond. Edgar is an unforgettable protagonist whose view of life is humorously profound.

Prep. Curtis Sittenfeld. Random House, 2005. \$13.95. 978-0-812-97235-1. When 14-year-old Lee Fiora from Indiana wins a scholarship to a tiny boarding school in Massachusetts, her life changes drastically. By turns amusing and sad, Lee's coming-of-age story is an incisive look at teenage identity, peer pressure, and alienation.

School's out. Christophe Dufosse. Penguin, 2007. \$14.00. 978-0-143-03811-5. Pierre Hoffman takes over a middle school classroom after its teacher's suicide and finds himself with a group of distinctively odd students. Darkly amusing and suspenseful, this chilling tale is a page-turner, right up to the shocking ending.

BOOKMARKIT



SARA
CATHERINE
HOWARD

> JUNIOR NONFICTION

PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING . . .

Gerald R. Ford (Presidential Leaders). Mary Mueller Winget. Twenty-First Century, 2008. \$29.27. 978-0-8225-2509-8. Grades 7-12.

Ford's personal and professional life is thoughtfully chronicled here, including his parent's divorce in 1913, 5 months after he was born. This now-complete series of all the U.S. presidents includes a timeline in each, source notes, a bibliography, a further-reading list, web sites, and an index.

Our country's first ladies. Ann Bausum. National Geographic, 2007. \$21.68. 978-1-4263-3337-3. Grades 6-12. From Martha Washington to Laura Bush, each first lady is featured with a full-page photograph, a fact box, and a narrative description of her life and service. Each chronological grouping of first ladies begins with a general statement and a timeline of political and social events.

Presidential races: The battle for power in the United States (People's History). Arlene Morris-Lipsman. Twenty-First Century, 2008. \$30.60. 978-0-8225-6783-7. Grades 6-12. George Washington did not run for office, and he never campaigned. The history and evolution of the current system of electing a U.S. president are explained here, supported by political cartoons and photos. Included are election results for all the presidential elections, as well as extensive source notes, a selected bibliography, and an index.

Richard M. Nixon (Presidents and Their Times). Billy Aronson. Marshall Cavendish, 2008. \$21.95. 978-0-7614-2428-4. Grades 6-10. Aronson presents an informative and easy-to-read portrayal of a complex president, with beautifully laid-out photos and fact pages. Readers learn about Nixon the man—not just the politician remembered only for his resignation. Back matter includes a timeline, a glossary, further information, a bibliography, and an index.

brief description of the book but record the location of at least two reviews for the title. Many teacher-librarians now use automated selection tools provided by vendors of automation systems that update books with their reviews on an ongoing basis. However, for those who prefer the printed editions, this one is available and is useful for building larger collections where coverage of certain topics is essential. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 445 pp. \$40.00. 978-1-59158-574-9.)

Bottom line: Recommended.

READERS AND LEADERS

Susan Steffensen Romaine

Increasing the amount of nonfiction that students read is one major way to also increase achievement. Promoting a balance between fiction and nonfiction is more likely to boost literacy than is emphasizing narrative only. Thus, it is a welcome sight to find a book that promotes biographies. Activities have been created for books about Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, Melvil Dewey, Helen Keller, Harry S. Truman, Norman Rockwell, and Anne Frank. The activities are appropriate for upper elementary school and middle school. They can also be used with some modification in high school. There are reading activities plus suggestions for pursuing the study of the vocation or special trait of the person. For example, studying Braille is the extended activity for Helen Keller. Although the author does not recommend that studies of famous people be integrated into larger concept studies, we actively suggest this idea. For instance, what students learn about one figure can be combined with their knowledge into larger patterns, such as characteristics across people, studies of various periods, and how these people made unique contributions. Reports about one individual so often result in a cut-and-clip job. Our recommendation is to use the suggestions made by the author but then carry them further into a big-picture or *so what?* activity. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 145 pp. \$35.00. 978-1-59158-516-9.)

Bottom line: Recommended if the people presented fit your curriculum.

INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT IN K-12 SETTINGS

Lesley S. J. Farmer and James Henri

As school children in North America become diverse and the global connections become central to our society, it is valuable to get an international perspective on problems faced far beyond our schools. Farmer and Henri represent perspectives of the United States, Asia, and Australia. Putting their ideas together, they look at a more global view of assessment than what has been done in the recent past. Through a theoretical work, the authors look at culture, education across borders, various types of globally used assessments, and a variety of other factors that would lead the reader to consider as policies for information literacy are being considered for regional or national documents. We found many helpful checklists throughout the volume that challenge our personal knowledge as we formulate local policies. For advanced readers looking beyond boundaries, this book is an essential tool. For the browser, look for the bulleted lists to compare your perspective with those of the authors. The bibliography is also an excellent source of articles about information literacy from around the world. (Scarecrow, 2008. 201 pp. \$35.00. 978-0-8108-5695-0.)

Bottom line: Recommended.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SELECTION

Phyllis J. Van Orden and Sunny Strong

For those entering the field of teacher-librarianship and taking a class in children's materials, the authors provide a basic guide to choosing the best children's books. They cover the expected topics of criteria for general selection and criteria for special audiences (e.g., children with disabilities, books with gay themes), along with selection guides and problems dealing with selection. However, if I were teaching a children's materials course these days, I would have to select a second text to use with this work, to cover multimedia and Internet materials for children. So, although one cannot be critical about the authors' failing to include a genre that they never intended to cover, a gaping hole in this work involves the use of various



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PETERS**

PICTURE BOOKS

automated systems as tools for selection, which have significantly reduced the old, manual-selection time. Thus, this work is solidly in the traditional camp and leaves us crying out for current and future directions. (Neal-Schuman, 2007. 238 pp. \$59.95. 978-1-55570-584-8.)

Bottom line: Recommended with reservations.

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

Ed. Anna L. Vance and Robbie Nickle

The American Association of School Librarians conducts annual fall forums that concentrate on important topics for teacher-librarians. This collection of papers from the 2006 forum on assessment is a rich and thought-provoking collection from major presenters, such as Allison Zmuda, Vi Harada, Barbara Stripling, Marjorie Pappas, and others. This work is an important document of theory and practice upon which teacher-librarians can base their policies and practices. (American Association of School Librarians, 2007. 62 pp. \$22.95. \$20.65 for American Library Association members. 978-0-8389-8446-8.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended.

STORY PROOF: THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE STARTLING POWER OF STORY

Kendall Haven

We have been hearing recently about the trend away from narrative fiction as the choice of a new generation. No Child Left Behind may have something to do with this if there is such a trend. Personally, I have been recommending the inclusion of nonfiction and informational books in the fare that we promote to children and teens. Haven comes at us with the most articulate defense of story as an essential element in education. A longtime storyteller himself, Haven has published many collections that stimulate conversation and interest on the part of the listener. He looks at the tradition and examines the research behind story to make his major point that we cannot ignore this genre and that we do so at the peril of effective teaching and powerful teaching strategies. Today, through Web 2.0 technologies,

every young person has unlimited ways to write, perform, and share story, and each is doing it through blogs, video, and Podcasts—something never before seen in history. So, in the face of drill-and-kill reading programs, Haven reminds us that story can and is as powerful as ever. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 157 pp. \$25.00. 978-1-59158-546-6.)

Bottom line: This is a good read. A powerful reminder. Thanks, Kendall.

WORTH A LOOK

THE WRITING CIRCLE

Sylvia Gunnery

The author provides a comprehensive guide to using writing circles as a strategy for having students work collaboratively on all aspects of the writing process. The book includes sample lessons, step-by-step activities, and other strategies and suggestions. (Pembroke, 2007. 96 pp. \$18.00. 978-1-55138-217-3.) —*Esther Rosenfeld*

LEAP INTO LITERACY: TEACHING THE TOUGH STUFF SO IT STICKS

Kathleen Gould Lundy

This book contains practical strategies and lessons for creating relevant learning activities that excite, engage, and motivate students. The author uses a questioning approach that develops critical thinking skills, and she provides a variety of creative techniques, including role-playing, reader's theatre, expressive movement, tableaux, and drama games. (Pembroke, 2007. 128 pp. \$20.00. 978-1-55138-212-8.) —*Esther Rosenfeld*

YES, BUT—YOU CAN TEACH SO KIDS WANT TO LEARN!

Susan Church, Jane Baskwill, and Margaret Swain

The authors provide a variety of comprehensive project strategies that will engage students while building their literacy skills. Project topics include developing critical consumers, learning through the arts, advocating through the community, and practicing social justice. Extensive project descriptions and organizers are provided for each topic. (Pembroke, 2007. 120 pp. \$20.00. 978-1-55138-211-1.) —*Esther Rosenfeld*

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Comets, stars, the moon, and Mars: Space poems and paintings.

Douglas Florian. Harcourt, 2007. \$16.00. 978-0-152-05372-7. Grades 1-3. "The universe is every place / Including all the empty space . . ." From our sun on out, Florian takes readers on a tour of the solar system and beyond with a mix of flowing, sometimes funny rhyme, paired to his instantly recognizable collage illustrations.

Jupiter stone. Paul Owen Lewis. Tricycle Press, 2003. \$15.95. 978-1-582-46107-6. Grades 1-3. A stone's long journey through space ends when it falls to Earth; then, it resumes when a boy persuades an astronaut to carry it back beyond the atmosphere. Big, deep pictures make it easy for children to dream of the vast distances that the stone travels and where it might land next.

Moon plane. Peter McCarty. Holt, 2006. \$16.95. 978-0-805-07943-2. Grades K-1. In soft, gray-toned illustrations, a child dreams of taking flight over land and ocean, then out to the moon and back.

Space boy. Leo Landry. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. \$16.00. 978-0-618-60568-2. Grades 1-2. Nicholas wants to go to bed, but his house and neighborhood are so noisy that he packs a snack, puts on his space suit, and blasts off for the moon until things quiet down. Simple cartoon illustrations carry viewers from a familiar domestic setting to the moon's rugged, butter-colored surface and back.

Zoom! Zoom! Zoom! I'm off to the moon! Dan Yaccarino. Scholastic, 1997. \$15.95. 978-0-059-095610-9. Grades 1-2. With infectious enthusiasm, a child counts down and blasts off on a space journey that will have young readers and listeners eager to come along for the ride. A high-energy send-off, positively festooned with exclamation points and illustrated in equally emphatic colors.