



THE MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW

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The Library Science Shelf

The Innovative School Librarian

Sharon Markless, editor

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The best solutions to some problems are not the most obvious. "The Innovative School Librarian: Thinking Outside the Box" is a guide for librarians who want to promote literacy and library use but have exhausted conventional methods. Discussing the school librarian's vision for their library's future, the reputation of the library, and bringing the library to more prominence in the school, author Sharon Markless puts together quite the volume to help readers better grasp the limits and options librarians can undertake in order to achieve their goals.

Enhanced with appendixes filled with useful references, "The Innovative School Librarian" should be at the right hand of every ambitious librarian, and is a solid entry into any collection dedicated to library science.

The Book Review

Professional Reading

BARNETT, Diana. *Putting It All Together: Teaching the Research Process.* 74p. illus. Web sites. Upstart. 2009. pap. \$17.95. ISBN 978-1-932146-99-8. LC number unavailable.

This well-organized and to-the-point title focuses on practical application of the AASL standards of information literacy for student learning in middle and high schools. The research process is broken down into eight integrated steps, with teacher modeling ideas and printable student exercises for each one. The exercises are generic enough to use with any group of students, or easy enough to alter to meet the needs of a specific research assignment. A sample research project rubric is included, which can be used to help students identify the task as well as evaluate the final product. The sections have titles such as "Collecting Information," "Organizing Information," and "Citing Sources." An excellent starting point for teaching research.—*Sharon R. Pearce, Longfellow Elementary School, Oak Park, IL*

HOLLEY, Pam Spencer, ed. *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens.* 228p. index. CIP. ALA. 2009. pap. \$45. ISBN 978-0-8389-3577-4. LC 2008049691.

YALSA's Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults (PPYA) and Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers (QP) lists have been welcome reference tools for librarians. Now these lists have been combined to form this wonderfully useful desk reference. The first four chapters focus on introducing users to ALA's Young Adult Services Association's (YALSA) origins, history and selection processes of the QP and PPYA lists, and programming and display ideas relating to books on the lists. However, the real stars of the book are the three chapters of annotations and groupings by theme for all the books chosen for the lists from 1999 to 2008. Titles are divided into nonfiction, fiction, and a final chapter that combines both fiction and nonfiction books into theme-oriented booklists. The main entries include superb annotations that are a bit more detailed than those featured on the YALSA Web site. A great collection-development tool that would help librarians beef up their YA holdings.—*Traci Glass, Eugene Public Library, OR*

LUSHINGTON, Nolan. *Libraries Designed for Kids.* 173p. charts. diags.

illus. photos. appendix. further reading. glossary. index. CIP. Neal-Schuman. 2008. pap. \$85. ISBN 978-1-55570-631-9. LC 2008032537.

Lushington's guide will be invaluable to librarians and boards of trustees as they consider renovating, expanding, or creating new service areas for children and teens. Beginning with a general discussion of the value of libraries to young people, the book goes on to examine a history of libraries and services to minors, and then gets into the meat of the topic. Step by step, Lushington guides the planning team through creating the library program utilizing demographics and community input, which will help with determining the size of the facility. However, the largest sections of the book focus on design considerations to both enhance the user's experience and to most efficiently organize and supervise the collection and facility. Of particular interest is an explanation of how traffic flow, adjacency, and spatial relationships can be improved for better line of sight, access to material, and ease of use. In addition, Lushington addresses lighting, furnishings, signage, graphics, displays, and staff areas as important components of the greater design as a whole. The author ends with case studies of smaller and larger redesigns of two libraries. The black-and-white photos that illustrate some important design considerations are too grainy to be of much use. Overall, however, this book is a strong consideration for any public library considering the improvement of youth-services spaces. Appendixes list selected suppliers, architects, and further readings, including titles and articles on renovating school libraries.—*Susan Riley, Mount Kisco Public Library, NY*

MARKLESS, Sharon, ed. *The Innovative School Librarian: Thinking Outside the Box.* 202p. charts. appendix. bibliog. index. Web sites. Facet. 2009. Tr \$110. ISBN 978-1-85604-653-4. LC number unavailable.

Written for school librarians, administrators, library students, and those in library governing positions, this book looks at the numerous challenges in providing the best support and services for students and presents many thoughts and creative ideas for addressing them. It begins with an important discourse on numerous aspects of professionalism, such as management, technical and social,

and then on professional values and philosophies of school librarians. The discussion continues with how others, such as teachers, students, and parents, view our roles, and how these differing perceptions influence how we do our jobs. Innovative ways to improve communication and the value of knowing and understanding the communities we serve are stressed, as is the importance of knowing how our learners learn, the best ways of assessing their needs, and so on. Evaluating ourselves, staying positive and maintaining professionalism, inspiring others and being inspired, making needed and necessary changes all help us to continually renew ourselves in our positions. Vignettes of real experiences enhance the narrative. The book was originally published in Britain, and some expressions, terminology, and acronyms may not be clear at first, but they don't detract from the volume's valuable content.—*Susan Shaver, Hemingford Public Schools, NE*

WILLIAMS, Jennifer. *Oobleck, Slime & Dancing Spaghetti: Twenty Terrific At-Home Science Experiments Inspired by Favorite Children's Books.* 192p. diags. illus. reprints. bibliog. CIP. Bright Sky. 2009. pap. \$14.95. ISBN 978-1-933979-34-2. LC 2009000876.

Using children's literature as a springboard, this title provides a series of science experiments designed to explore concepts and ideas that spring from various stories. At the beginning of each chapter, a children's book is nicely summarized. The author then explains a related science concept, suggests discussion questions that connect the experiment to the story, and offers ideas for taking the project further. This is serious science, and the experiments cover concepts including polymers, chemical reactions, and non-Newtonian fluids. For example, Tomie dePaola's *Strega Nona* is used to introduce children to the idea of acid-base reactions as they perform an experiment that creates "dancing spaghetti." The experiments do a really wonderful job of emphasizing the importance of observation and data collection. The writing is relatively clear, though adults with a limited science background may stumble with a few of the explanations. Overall, this book is great choice for home use and science units.—*Lindsay Cesari, Baldwinsville School District, NY*