

B O O K R E V I E W S

Buzzeo, Toni and Jane Kurtz. *Terrific Connections with Authors, Illustrators, and Storytellers: Real Space and Virtual Links.* Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. 215 p. ISBN 1-56308-744-8 (softcover). \$26.50

Teachers and librarians who want to expand their efforts to instill a love of reading and writing in their students through author visits or "connections" will find everything they need in this book. Jane Kurtz, a well-known children's author and Toni Buzzeo, a library media specialist, combined their areas of expertise to produce this practical guide to connect students, teachers and librarians with authors and illustrators. What makes this book unique are the innovative ideas to connect students and authors using technology. Professionals who have hosted bookpeople in the past will discover new ways to enhance the visits. Novices will be eager to plan their first visit.

Information is easily found in *Terrific Connections* due to the physical layout. Throughout the book are sidebars (marked TC for Terrific Connection) describing actual visits or quotes from those involved. Author/Illustrator Spotlights contain short, informative paragraphs about a particular author and often include the URL of the author's website. There is a reference list of authors and titles mentioned at the end of each chapter. These are compiled into one list at the back of the book. A bookperson index, title and subject indexes are included. The URLs that were checked were still valid.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I deals with organizing successful author, illustrator and storyteller visits in schools and libraries. Buzzeo and Kurtz emphasize the amount of work and cooperation that is required to carefully plan a visit. Readers will also learn why some visits are not successful. The comments of children's authors on how they make their presentations and how they tie their books into the session are fascinating to read. One chapter is devoted to choosing the right bookperson for your group. Other chapters include creative ways to tie the visit in with the curriculum and how to prepare your audience for the big event. The Author's Wish List provides organizers with a checklist of do's and don'ts based on authors' experiences. Young Author Conferences are explained as well as organizing visits with the help of public libraries and bookstores. Suggestions on financing the visits are provided.

Part II investigates alternative connections with bookpeople. The smallest or most physically remote school will be able to implement many of the ideas presented here. The chapters in this section explore the use of fan e-mail, formal e-mail, and online mentoring programs for students. Authors are able to connect with students around the continent as they encourage them to write. Other bookpeople have been involved with chat rooms at managed sites. The Read In!, an annual global event that brings students and authors together through Internet, is carefully explained. A librarian or teacher will soon realize that a virtual visit from an author can be an exciting activity for their students.

An annotated list of author and illustrator web sites will prove very helpful for librarians, teachers and students. A few author/illustrator personal web pages are discussed in detail. Students will be excited to find activities that accompany the book they are reading. The links will provide them with additional information.

Satellite networks can be used for interactive television broadcasts. Planet Think produces two subscription-based shows that promote reading: Cover to Cover and Author's Desk. Well-known authors are able to reach large audiences through this innovative method.

At a time when education budgets are facing cuts, this book is highly recommended for a school that is searching for new ways to turn students on to reading. Grades K-12 is indicated on the back cover but most of the examples are of elementary and middle school experiences. Schools will be able to adapt the suggested ideas to fit into their own programs.

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Hurtado, Sylvia et al. *Enacting Diverse Learning Environments: Improving the Climate for Racial/Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report Vol. 26, Number 8. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, 1999. ISBN 1-8783080-88-5. ISSN 0884-0040.

"The increased cultural diversity of the nation's campuses challenges institutions of higher education to achieve fundamental change. Over the past 50 years, campuses in this country have enrolled students and hired faculty and staff who represent a broader variety of races, ethnicities, and cultures than at any previous time in history. Among the forces fueling these dramatic changes have been armed international conflicts, changes in the world economic order, major social movements, presidential Executive Orders, government legislation, federal court rulings, and increased immigration. In the process, the country has been required to confront the myth of America as a homogeneous nation in the stark light cast by a reality that is decidedly multiracial, multicultural, and heterogeneous." (p.69) This statement begins the chapter entitled "Design Principles for Improving the Climate for Diversity in Higher Education Institutions." As the authors of this volume review the research that has been done on enacting diverse learning environments, we see that much has been accomplished. But higher education in the United States remains far from the goals of the true inclusion of minorities and appreciation for diversity.

The authors of this report, with the support of the Common Destiny Alliance (CODA), reviewed recent and classic studies on diversity in higher education and presented their results to a consensus panel of scholars and practitioners who reviewed the first draft of this report and made suggestions on strengthening it. It is projected that by 2010, students of color will make up 24

percent of the population 18 and under. The climate in higher education must improve if these students are to achieve the baccalaureate degrees needed to support the nation's economy. (p.1)

The research reviewed covers a lot of ground. One section compares the services provided by special mission institutions—the historically black colleges and universities and American Indian colleges—with those of desegregated white colleges. One strong advantage of special mission colleges is seen as the abundance of role models available from a faculty that more closely approximates the make-up of the student body. Several studies have pointed out the importance of a cohort group. The more students of an individual racial/ethnic group, the less marginalized individual students feel, and the more willing they are to disclose personal feelings and contribute to class discussions.

Many studies covered in this volume recount the importance of the majority culture in learning more about the minority cultures. College students exhibit greater openness to social and political change, than people do at any other time of life (p.28) and it is advisable to take advantage of this fact by exposing students to a wide array of experiences. The authors advise that colleges must learn to dispel the predominant Eurocentrism of traditional curriculums, and increase diversity and respect for the differences that this brings, in all aspects of college life.

This book should be required reading for faculties and administrators throughout the United States. It is highly recommended for higher education library collections.

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Rodrigues, Dawn and Raymond J. Rodrigues. *The Research Paper and the World Wide Web*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999.

Useful to both the beginner and the professional, this state-of-the-art-guide equips the reader with the skills to conduct research in libraries and online through the World Wide Web. The publisher describes this book as "technically two books in one (a guide for writing research papers and an introduction to Web searching)." It provides an introduction to the basic principles of searching for information in your local library catalog, but further extends the research process by demonstrating how to use web tools for finding local and worldwide resources on the Internet.

The authors have written several guides on how to integrate the traditional methods of research using the newer forms of web searching. They begin this text with a review of the research process. The next two chapters cover the topic selection stage by providing a discussion on a whole collection of resources to tap for the best information on subjects of interest. Suggestions for tailoring research strategies to a particular field of interest, preparing a working bibliography and developing systems of note taking are offered. Web sites for the most commonly used search engines, subject dictionaries and other online library resources are evaluated on their potential value for gathering credible information on a given topic. Included in each chapter are practice boxes and end-of-chapter exercises, which allow for an interactive option for practicing and mastering each of the chapter's concepts.

Chapter 5 stresses the need to evaluate both print and web sources not only in isolation, but also in the context of the research project. Preliminary criteria such as content, currency, source of publication and coverage can be applied to all sources, while a checklist of questions help the researcher to determine the efficacy of a good web site (URL). Chapter 6 explains how mail, newsgroups, forums and listservs can be used to gather unique

information from other researchers and specialists in a particular field. Guidelines on the etiquette of using e-mail for data gathering are discussed in some detail. Titled "Taking Notes and Organizing Information," chapter 7 examines the use of bookmarks as organizational tools and, with the aid of pictorial inserts, shows how to set up electronic files and folders to organize all the resources located during the research process.

Topics such as summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting sources are covered in the first part of chapter 8, followed by a lengthy section on documenting sources in either the MLA or APA citation styles for both print and web sources. Writers of research papers will find this section most useful, as it demonstrates the proper way to integrate and cite all the different forms of electronic web sources within a research paper.

An attractive feature of this publication is the online companion web site. An interactive tutorial reinforces each of the chapter concepts by providing links to related web sites, exercises, interactive essay questions and examples of resources. A bulletin board area allows students to discuss chapter topics.

In summary, this book equips the reader with the skills to locate and assess information using both print and online resources, but offers insufficient guidance on the writing of a research paper. Over 24 pages are devoted to a sample research paper without any attempt to explain the mechanics of writing an effective thesis statement, working with a balanced outline, thinking critically about an argument or editing the final draft. However, the book would be an excellent companion to a another text which covers those principles and conventions governing the structure of a balanced research paper.

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Nilsen, Aileen and Don Nilsen. *Encyclopedia of 20th Century American Humor*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2000. 360 p. ISBN 1-57356-218-1. \$67.50

Encyclopedias are always useful books for any library. This one is also amusing.

20th century American humor gives an interesting insight into the culture of 20th century America. Drawn from all forms of existing media—print, television, radio, vaudeville, the Internet, etc., it ranges over all types of humor—literary, ethnic, performance, and many others. It is unhampered by political correctness and therefore is an honest, even harsh portrayal of what we laugh at. Gay and lesbian humor, gender and humor, disabilities and humor are some of the often-sensitive topics faced. Ethnic humor includes Hispanic, Jewish, and American Indian.

Topics covered include anti-authoritarian humor complete with a Dilbert cartoon. Children's television takes up 5 pages and has a picture from Sesame Street with Big Bird. The influence of television on 20th century America is notable. A substantial portion of the topics and many of the references within all the topics are to acts or personalities seen on the small screen. Sitcoms have a special section. Puppets and puppeteers feature a picture of Jim Henson and the Muppets. Radio, regional humor and urban legends are all included.

Styles of humour such as impersonation, irony, mime, put-downs and rejoinders, satire, self-disparagement, and

understatement each rate their own entries. Seemingly ancillary entries for magazines, museums and poetry add to this interesting collection.

Peppered with pictures, this is book is irresistible. Buster Keaton, Whoopi Goldberg, the Simpsons, Woody Allen, Emma Bombeck, Lucille Ball, Gilda Radner and Sid Caesar are all portrayed. References are made to Peanuts, Dustin Hoffman, MAD magazine and the Pink Panther among a galaxy of others.

This encyclopedia is an excellent source of ideas for that occasional speech you may be asked to give. For occasions like weddings and surprise birthday parties where you are stuck for ideas, pop open this book and something will quickly grab your attention and subsequently your audience.

From the first entry, "Academic Study of Humor", to the last one, "Wit", this is a good addition to an academic, public or personal collection. Entries include see also references and further readings. There is a good bibliography and a full index at the back of the book. While the main entries are part of the index they get somewhat lost amongst all the other material.

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Nelson, Pauline and Todd Daubert. *Starting with Shakespeare: Successfully Introducing Shakespeare to Children*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press, 2000. ISBN 1-56308-753-7 (pbk). \$23.50 US. \$28 outside North America.

"Beguile the time and feed your knowledge..." (*Twelfth Night*, 3.3). This invitation which closes the book, *Starting with Shakespeare*, provides a most auspicious opening for its review. Although Pauline Nelson and Todd Daubert dedicate their book "To everyone who had to study Shakespeare and hated it", those who already love Shakespeare and are seeking new ways to communicate this delight to their students will more gratefully receive their enthusiasm. If the authors also achieve their goal by enticing the reluctant, so much the better - the more, the merrier.

The authors' organizational skills are evidently based on experience, the best teacher of all. This book offers the kind of colleague - to - colleague exchange that feeds on what has worked. The "Let me tell you, it was fantastic; the kids loved it" kind of staff room chatter. Not only are the authors keen, they also possess an endearing sense of humour. For example, when introducing the major characters in *Hamlet*, they describe the young prince as "The James Dean of Denmark: rebellious, misunderstood, and scornful of the adult establishment The perfect teen idol!" (p.23) This comment not only introduces a touch of levity, something of which we know Shakespeare heartily approved, it also strikes a relevant note by indicating the way in which Shakespeare's characters transcend the centuries.

The introduction offers the rationale for teaching Shakespeare to elementary students, but there is no doubt that teachers and librarians in junior high schools could also effectively employ the book. It contains practical suggestions for fueling interest and lays out the organization of the book in a straightforward and readable fashion.

Part One, *Setting the Stage*, contains "Fuel for the Fire": background information about Shakespeare; "Spontaneous Combustion: ideas for cross-curricular enrichment activities"; "Fanning the Flames": advice on introducing the great man to the students, and "How Not to Get Burned": timely classroom management advice.

Part Two is entitled *The Plays*. The same approach is used for four of Shakespeare's plays: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The first section is *Who's Who*—a brief introduction of the main characters, including the phonetic pronunciation of each character's name, a useful touch. (After recently overhearing Iago's name mispronounced by students who were mimicking their teacher, this is certainly not

an unnecessary or trifling addition). *Who's Who* is followed by *What's What*, which offers illuminating background information, and *What's Happening* which reveals the basic plot line and includes suggestions for class discussion or debate. Then, *Will's Words* suggests selections for students to memorize and recite.

The section entitled *Lights, Camera, Action, Movie* offers excellent practical tips and advice on helping any movie-making session run more smoothly. Having once videotaped sixty Grade Six students enacting two thousand years of British History, allow me to say you need all the advice and help you can muster to embark on such adventurous and rewarding projects. Also provided are scenarios and mini-scripts, which include the *Will's Words* selections as a jumping off point. While the authors admit that they were forced to cut some scenes and characters, they encourage participants to create these scenes at will, as energy and interest allow.

Shakespeare, the movie, is followed by a section entitled *Don't Just Sit There* which offers thirty or more cross-curricular ideas for enhancing students' appreciation of the sixteenth century and *Hot Stuff*, suggestions for further resources.

At the end of the book the authors include parental responses to the programme in which their children have been involved. An incidental concern is that all fifteen responses are from mothers. In the second edition, let us hope the authors will include some enthusiastic appraisals from dads as well.

Aside from an index that is so short as to seem an incomplete afterthought, *Starting with Shakespeare* is delightful. Highly recommended for teachers and school librarians, this guide has been written for enthusiasts by enthusiasts - and the enthusiasm is contagious - "...joy delights in joy" as Shakespeare would say.

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Volz, Bridget Dealy et al. *Junior Genreflecting: A Guide to Good Reads and Series Fiction for Children*. Genreflecting Advisory Series, Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1999. 187 p. ISBN 1-56308-556-9. \$28 U/S. \$33.50 outside North America.

Betty Rosenberg and Diana Tixier Herald were pioneers in creating sources that identify exactly the type of books that readers are craving: genre fiction. Betty Rosenberg provided easy access to genre fiction in the first three editions of *Genreflecting: A Guide to Reading Interests in Genre Fiction*. Diana Tixier Herald continued with the fourth and fifth editions of *Genreflecting* and then created a targeted volume for an audience of younger readers in *Teen Genreflecting*. They have helped librarians and professionals identify titles and authors by arranging them in an easy to use subject format for dedicated genre fans.

Now Bridget Dealy Volz, Cheryl Perkins Scheer, and Lynda Blackburn Welborn have created *Junior Genreflecting: A Guide to Good Reads and Series Fiction for Children*. The books listed in this volume are suitable for third to eighth grades and include special icons to identify titles for grades six to eight, and picture books for older readers. Titles included are from the 1990's including reference to the three wildly popular Harry Potter titles, which will have a serial life for many more years. Information included for all titles include appropriate age level of the material, number of pages in each book, ISBN for the hardback copy, other titles if the book is part of a series or has companion novels, and any awards given to the book. Sources used to select titles for this volume were at least one positive journal review from *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book Magazine*, *Horn Book Guide to Children's and Young Adult Books*, and *School Library Journal*. Also consulted were the ALA notable book lists for young adults if appropriate to age level or genres discussed.

Chapter one provides information on reading for life and includes suggestions for establishing the reading habit. It also includes a list of resources and web sites entitled "Helpful Resources for Working with Young People and Useful Sites on the Internet." The rest of the chapters deal with the genres of: Adventure, Animals, Contemporary Life, Fantasy and Science Fiction, Historical Fiction, and Mysteries. "The Contemporary

Life" section includes further subdivisions on Family Relations, Ethnic Groups, and Problem Novels. Other topics included are Families and Family Life, Friends and Friendship, Emotions, Emotional and Physical Challenges, Child Abuse, Values, Neighborhoods, and Cities and City Life. For each chapter the authors also include short stories, paperback series, and an all-time favorite list of the authors. The book concludes with an Author/Title Index and a Subject Index. Subjects with numerous titles in the book include: coming of age, dealing with death, divorce, dragons, immigrants and immigration, moving, orphans, prejudices, slavery and world war.

Genreflecting has moved to the World Wide Web with the web site **Genreflecting Books of the Week** (<http://mancon.com/genre/>) which includes a **Teen Genreflecting Link**. Perhaps a link for children will soon be available. They provide a list of Books of the Week. World Wide Web access to suggested titles is another way to hook readers into a lifetime of reading. Now on the web one can get weekly lists to satisfy all appetites for reading.

Children in the third to eighth grades love to read genre fiction and this book was created for those readers. Children are heavy users of public and school libraries and like to borrow books from their friends. Aids to finding books they like are most welcome. This book is recommended for colleges and universities that have children's literature courses and for reference collections in public and school libraries.

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Silverman, Franklin H. *Publishing for Tenure and Beyond*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999. 168 p. ISBN 0-275-96390-X (hardcover). \$65.00. ISBN 0-275-96391-8 (pbk). \$18.95.

It's no secret that the key to getting tenured and promoted in colleges and universities is to publish, publish, and publish. Or at least that's the common wisdom. As Franklin H. Silverman says in his helpful book *Publishing for Tenure and Beyond*, assistant professors are hired for one job—teaching—but they are evaluated on their ability to do something else, that is, research leading to publications. Even though it may be tempting to put all one's energy into teaching when getting that coveted faculty position, assistant professors need to know that a solid publishing record throughout their employment at the university is key to gaining tenure. At most universities, tenure decisions and promotions to associate professor go hand in hand.

Silverman pulls no punches. He indicates that being well liked by faculty, students, and administrators is the unwritten criterion in tenure and promotion decisions, but an inadequate publication record can be used as an excuse to deny tenure. So, it is clear that those aspiring to tenure should publish as well as develop interpersonal skills. At least one article per year in a peer-reviewed publication is important, as are invited book chapters and other respectable publications. Although writing a scholarly book, especially one published by a university press, is prestigious and earns the author credit, those on the tenure track should realize that textbooks, trade books, self-published monographs, and those published by vanity presses do not necessarily benefit the author. According to the author textbooks take too long to write, stealing time from other publishing projects, and books that earn a writer money may merely incur the envy of colleagues.

Silverman has over one hundred published articles and a dozen books to his credit, so his advice about getting published is supported through solid experience. He warns that newsletter articles, book reviews, conference proceedings papers, and even articles in electronic publications do not have the weight of writing that appears in a well-established first tier journal. Some electronic journals now do have a rigorous peer review process, but many university-wide tenure and promotion committees do not yet recognize the legitimacy of online publications. Tenure-seeking authors are warned to avoid projects that are impractical or that are not likely to be completed, such as longitudinal studies, book

projects without a contract, and projects that question widely accepted theories in the discipline. Save those things until after tenure, Silverman cautions.

This book is sometimes redundant and, at times, a topic seems to be exaggerated out of proportion, such as the chapter on the fear of writing. All things considered, however, Silverman's clear writing and straightforward style offers practical advice for several key constituencies: assistant professors, graduate students, and even those who are tenured and need to have their research and publishing agenda re-energized. Instead of platitudes and clichés the author gives real help to those who need it. He compares the tenure process with a game, and gives the written and unwritten rules of the game, something that may take years of experience to determine on one's own. He also offers a 30-minute a day writing system that Silverman claims has worked for him in producing dozens of articles and books. It is hard to imagine that in 30 minutes a day complex research-based articles can be written, but this system does offer an alternative to the somewhat unrealistic search for huge blocks of time in an assistant professor's busy day of teaching, committee meetings, and family responsibilities.

Although Silverman is well entrenched in the academy, he manages to avoid jargon and to write in an accessible and refreshing style. His hints are down-to-earth and sometimes seem like common sense. However, the difficulty some in the academy have with getting published and the tenure anxiety experienced by many justify this publication and the helpful tone in which it is written. Deans and department chairs might consider giving this small volume to new professors as a way to support junior faculty members' quest for the Holy Grail of becoming tenured.

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Lepage-Lees, Pamela. *From Disadvantaged Girls to Successful Women: Education and Women's Resiliency*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997. 184 p. ISBN 0-275-95752-7. \$49.95.

This book is a timely investigation into the educational and emotional lives of twenty one American women who overcame disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve a high level of success (either MA or Ph.D. Degrees) in the academic world. The author writes sensitively and intelligently on this subject in large part because she herself came from such a background and believes that "the literature on women's resiliency is incomplete and that my personal achievement process was too difficult." Pamela Lepage-Lees makes an important contribution to the research on women's education by correcting a mistaken impression that the choice to pull oneself up by the bootstraps and overcome family and social barriers through education is in any way an easy one.

The twenty- one women whose stories are drawn upon here all had the following common backgrounds:

- They lived in either a poor working class or lower-class family as a child.
- They were first-generation college students.
- They experienced at least one type of familial dysfunction or traumatic childhood stress (physical and/or sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse or mental illness, and severe illness) (p. 8).

The style of the author is scholarly without being pretentious; it is straightforward, easy to understand and her points are amply illustrated by selected direct quotes from the women themselves, adding greatly to its credibility and interest. Lepage-Lees pursues her topic logically from the first chapter, which describes the participants themselves and then relates their characteristics to

the general traits of resilient successful women. She continues on through such common crucial aspects as their reactions to disadvantage, teachers, mentors, positive and negative aspects of schooling, achievement and development patterns, and finally family and community influences.

This study will prove interesting and validating to the many women who have managed to achieve highly in the academic world in spite of the drag of poverty and familial dysfunction. It will provide many insights to educators who may encounter such women in their classes, often unknowingly; for example, one of the common ways in which these women managed to reach their goals was by hiding the facts of their negative and difficult origins. Lepage-Lees' book should be read and taken seriously by all educators who wish to understand and assist such women and make their paths to a better life easier. Her final chapter called "Transforming Education" offers concrete and doable suggestions for changing the way in which professional development programs for teachers are carried out, based on the knowledge she gained through this and other studies, with the ultimate aim of making the achievement process less difficult for others.

Contents include four appendices: (A) Demographics; (B) Data Collection Methods; (C) Research Tables; (D) Feedback Questionnaire and Participants' Comments as well as references and an index.

This book is a highly recommended addition to academic libraries in institutions with women's studies and education departments.

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