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What They Don't Teach You in Library School (review)

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Reviews

Comptes rendus

Elisabeth Doucett. *What They Don't Teach You in Library School*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2011. ISBN 978-0-83893-592-7. US\$50.00

Elisabeth Doucett, author of *Creating Your Library Brand: Communicating Your Relevance and Value to Your Patrons*, recently released a new book based on her development as a librarian. *What They Don't Teach You in Library School* is the outcome of information gaps that she experienced as she began her new career in librarianship and of her desire to help new librarians achieve a fast, successful start. This book is part of the monographic series aptly titled *ALA Guides for the Busy Librarian*.

This book supplements but does not replace existing literature. Topics covered include searching for a first position, acclimatizing to a new work environment, and transitioning from novice to veteran. The reference-like organization of chapters clearly communicates the content's relevance to the reader. Headings point to each chapter's topic ("What This Chapter Is About"), its reason for inclusion ("Why Should You Care?"), key issues ("The Heart of the Matter"), and suggested steps to follow. A set of references can be found at the end of many chapters. A glossary is provided when appropriate. Each chapter includes relevant sample documents—check lists, survey extracts, and representative handouts—which illuminate the discussion.

Canadian readers are cautioned that suggested resources are not necessarily Canadian in focus; however, the topics are basic and fundamental to North American librarianship. These resources have been carefully selected and they are relevant. A subset of electronic resources was consulted and most URLs were found to be stable.

As a second-career librarian, I relate to the author. The chapter on presenting resonated with me as I was new to public speaking, and the treatment here will help to alleviate distress experienced by novice teachers. I appreciated the inclusion of practical information about marketing, trend tracking, strategic planning, assessment, and space management, as many librarians will find themselves on related committees early in their career. More supplementary resources on these topics would be helpful. I wish I had seen the information on choosing a first position and evaluating a work environment when I was in high school.

I especially enjoyed the section on idea management—where to look for ideas, how to adapt them, and how to convert an idea into a proposal for a new

service or event. I have not seen this kind of thinking expressed in this way before. Librarians who reflect on this approach will find it helpful and inspiring.

Given the approachable and gentle style of this book, it seemed to end abruptly. A concluding chapter noting some avenues of further personal research or next-step topics, or some other way to wrap up the issues explored in this book, would be more satisfying.

Although student librarians and new librarians are the target audience, I found that there is also much here for student groups and library associations to consider when looking for networking topics that will attract new members.

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Danny P. Wallace, ed. *Knowledge Management: Historical and Cross-Disciplinary Themes*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007. ISBN 978-1-59158-502-2. US\$60.00.

For scholars seriously interested in the study of knowledge management, this book is a must-read. *Knowledge Management: Historical and Cross-Disciplinary Themes* is an extremely thorough, well-researched guide to the entire field of knowledge management, going beyond the popular concept of a management fad from the 1990s to a variety of disciplines from much earlier days. Wallace cites philosophers, psychologists, educators, and economists as well as management gurus and information scientists to show that the field of knowledge management has deep roots, situating the field in its historical context and proving that it's not just a recent craze.

A glance at the table of contents may at first lead one to believe that this book is a collection of essays by various thinkers in the field, ranging from Charles Dewey to Peter Drucker and beyond. However, Wallace does not reproduce these earlier works but instead analyses these 'key papers' as a way to trace the evolution of the concept of knowledge management through time and academe. Wallace acknowledges both the struggle to define knowledge management over the years and the criticisms of the movement, but he manages to bring together the various threads of the topic and tie them together into a cohesive whole.

Each chapter is based on one of nine major themes Wallace has drawn out of the knowledge management literature. In each chapter he highlights key concepts and texts by seminal thinkers to help situate, define, and follow the route that knowledge management has taken through history and various disciplines. Wallace explains his methodology for selecting these key papers, and each chapter is thoroughly researched and footnoted. Wallace introduces, defines, and explores each theme before drawing out and interpreting the ideas from his chosen key papers.