

Book Reviews

Gordon, Rachel Singer. *The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide*. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, 2006. 208p. \$29.50 (ISBN 1573872563). LC 2005-36503.

The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide is a must-read for next-generation librarians (aged 25–34), their colleagues and administrators. In the face of the rapid changes in the field of librarianship and in libraries as institutions, this survival guide provides a wealth of advice, tips, and explanations on how next-generation librarians can thrive in different library environments. The author, Rachel Singer Gordon, is a NextGen librarian who documents the ever-changing world of libraries. Gordon organized the book into ten chapters and also included an index and appendices. Examples of questions that Gordon attempts to answer include: "What is unique about younger librarians' experiences? What are NextGens' responsibilities to the profession? What can NextGen librarians do now to help move their institutions—and the field as a whole—forward? How can multiple generations work together effectively in today's library?" In addition to attempting to answer the questions mentioned above, within each chapter Gordon covers a wide range of general topics as they relate to NextGen librarians including library school, job hunting, entry-level positions, stereotypes, diversity, work and life balance, and, in addition, changing the profession and advising library administrators.

The content throughout the text is based on Gordon's personal experiences, survey results, interviews, discussions, email groups and listservs, and general feedback and comments from the library community. In the Introduction, Gordon states that "this is a 'survival guide' for a number of reasons, ranging from many NextGens' growing disillusionment with certain aspects of librarianship as prac-

ticed in some institutions today, to the recognition that our profession is, in a number of ways, fighting for its own survival." Although each chapter contains a fair amount of narrative text, Gordon has—appropriately for NextGen readers' learning style—also created short bulleted lists that emphasize key concepts related to the topic being discussed.

Regardless of what stage the reader is located on the education and/or career path, each chapter offers helpful advice. For example, the first two chapters are primarily geared toward the graduate student in library school who is trying to figure out whether he or she falls into the NextGen librarian category, as well as what this categorizing means in terms of finding a job and for subsequent job-related experience. Chapter three offers techniques and advice on how to find a job and prepare for an interview. Additionally, this chapter provides helpful Internet resources, advice on how to stand out and still get a good job, things to look out for and inquire about during interviews and the job hunting process, and personal stories of how librarians survived interviews and found professional jobs.

Chapter five helps NextGen librarians analyze their personal and professional lives so they can summarize what positive attributes and qualities they can offer in the rapidly changing library environment. Not only should NextGen librarians be able to articulate positive qualities they can bring to the job, but, once they are employed, they need to be able to continue to push for positive change while confronting the infinite number of roadblocks erected by administrators and colleagues. This chapter also provides an excellent selection of online resources for continuing education opportunities to



assist NextGen librarians in keeping their skills current and marketable.

The remaining chapters in this book offer advice to NextGen librarians on what to expect in the workplace, but also how to handle different scenarios that may arise. Each chapter provides possible ideas and strategies a NextGen librarian may use in situations in which older colleagues and administrators have differing viewpoints. Appendix B lists useful Web sites and a list of recommended readings that address the constant changes in librarianship. Gordon has done an excellent job outlining what it takes for NextGen librarians to survive in the workplace and in articulating the profession's expectations that they will be able to move libraries into the future. —*Katie Nash, Elon University*

Newman, Michael. *Teaching Defiance: Stories and Strategies for Activist Educators. A Book Written in Wartime.* Foreword by Stephen Brookfield, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006. 320p. \$35 (ISBN 0787985562). LC 2006-4175.

It takes only a few pages of reading this book to be moved from curious (about its title) to motivated (How can I become an activist educator?) to inspired.

Michael Newman believes that critical thinking, a frequent aim of higher education, has been tamed. Rather than helping people recognize ideology, it has become another workplace skill and has lost its connection to social justice. Adult education itself has become "... simply too nice, too self-centered, or too concerned with maintaining the status quo." Instead of following the prevailing learner-centered focus, adult education should help people uncover their anger, examine it, and thus look outward to define the enemy, "... who is trying to lay our futures for us, who is telling us what we should and should not do, ... who is preventing us from acting effectively in our own and in others' interest." The mission of *activist* adult educators, according to Newman, is "to help people become truly conscious

... to teach choice. ... to help ourselves and others break free from our pasts, plan for the futures we want and resist the futures we do not want. Our job is to teach defiance."

Newman, now retired after twelve years as a senior lecturer in adult education at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia (UTS), has an extensive background of working, teaching, and writing in adult education and training. Prior to joining UTS, he did community education work in London and was a national trainer for the Australian Trade Union Training Authority. Although *Teaching Defiance* is his first book to be released by an American publisher, two of his books have won the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education's Cyril Houle Award for Outstanding Literature in Adult Education.

After articulating his mission, Newman provides ample material—through a combination of concepts, philosophy, critical theory, stories, and practical teaching models—to guide those who wish to become activist adult educators. One example, appearing early in the book, is his model for teaching problem solving. He illustrates this model with an exercise he developed as a trade union trainer. He divides his class into groups of three and gives each group a sheet of paper containing a succinctly worded work problem: A union representative finds that the factory manager has moved the time clocks from outside the gate to inside the factory. At the top of the sheet is the question, "What would you do?" The groups must remain completely silent while reading the problem. Then, they talk for ten minutes. In debriefing the exercise, Newman finds that groups invariably leap to solutions. He shows them the benefits of adhering to a simple, three-step discussion process: (1) What's wrong? (2) What *can* we do? (3) What *will* we do? He follows up by helping the class refine each step into discrete stages.

Besides problem solving, Newman explores why and how to teach rebel-