

Overall, the work provides a useful primer on the topic. Due to its broad scope, it will introduce readers to EBLIP practice, though those interested in more detail will need to consult the journal *Evidence Based Librarianship and Information Practice*, which Koufogiannakis cofounded and edited. Academic librarians will be especially interested in the chapters on practitioner research (Wilson), academic libraries (Somerville and Kloda), and special libraries (Fisher). Ultimately, readers will agree with the underpinning argument of the work; as Fisher asks in his chapter, "Who is going to admit to making irrational decisions, employing conjecture-based practice or flying by the seat of their pants in order to get by in the workplace?" (151). —Richard M. Mikulski, *Drew University*

Mastering Subject Specialties: Practical Advice from the Field. Ed. Karen Sobel. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Libraries Unlimited, 2016. 184p. Paper, \$70.00 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3964-1). LC 2015-043485.

"*Mastering Subject Specialties* aims to share honest, thorough advice from subject specialists with those who may be interested in entering similar fields or simply exploring the range of possibilities," writes Karen Sobel, the editor and associate professor and research and instruction librarian for art, architecture, music, and urban planning at the University of Colorado Denver. This statement is a succinct summary of what one will find in the book, and it is a beneficial read for both new and seasoned librarians. A timely work, *Mastering Subject Specialties* is a helpful guide for those who need more information on how to become a subject specialist or how to move across and up the library food chain. It is filled with advice and detailed guidance from those in the field and it serves as an exploration tool for anyone connected to librarianship.

With respect to the introduction and the final two chapters, each chapter is written by a subject specialist currently working at universities across the United States. The subjects included in this book are reference and instruction generalists, physical sciences, biological sciences, engineering and applied science, art, music, law, literature and languages, area studies, government information, education, psychology, sociology, and social work, history, religion, and philosophy, business, and health sciences. Sobel posed eight questions to each of the fourteen subject specialists who authored a chapter, which they answered in depth. Topics include subject specialty crossover, the range of settings each specialist can work in, special requirements for the position, coursework, internships and work experience that would prepare one for the specialty, how to move up the "ladder," professional organizations to join, and professional or scholarly publications to follow for the best information in the field. Each author, with his or her their own experiences, provides the standards and norms in each respective subject area when answering the questions. It is recommended to pursue the chapters on the subject specialties that interest one the most, as there is a clear trajectory on how to prepare for each specialty.

With that being said, every reader should study the introduction and the final two chapters, as they pertain to everyone. The introduction, written by Sobel, speaks about how the characteristics of a specialist position and the academic institution where it is located will affect a librarian completely. So whether one is a new librarian looking for a first position or a seasoned librarian looking to make a move, there are many factors that link the subject specialties discussed in these introductory chapters, and contemplation of these factors can aid one in making informed decisions about one's place in the field.

The final two chapters, "Changing Fields within Academic and Research Libraries," written by Josiah M. Drewry of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and "Preparing to Move up the Ladder," written by Lisa Norberg of K|N Consultants, are also

must-read chapters for anyone in or interested in the field of academic librarianship. They discuss all major duties and best practices that make up the contemporary subject specialist, including collection development, instruction and reference consultations, outreach, and assessment. Becoming a “star subject specialist” means “recognizing and mastering transferrable skills,” says Sobel. It also means unlocking the library’s value for its patrons and being flexible, curious, and reflective.

While some readers and librarians may find mentorship when preparing to be an academic librarian nonessential, the final chapter, “Preparing to Move up the Ladder,” does mention it as being vital to learning more about the position one eventually wants to take on. Chapter 12, “History, Religion, and Philosophy Librarianship,” is the only other chapter to mention mentorship and guidance, which, if seen as vital, should have been mentioned elsewhere, or possibly posed as a ninth question to be answered for each specialist. This whole chapter is useful, however, as it speaks to how librarians can either grow in their current positions or choose a new job wisely. With concrete, and sometimes obvious but forgotten, suggestions on how to “move up the ladder,” such as doing the job well, having a positive attitude, respectfully collaborating with others, knowing the rules, taking risks, and embracing change, this concluding chapter gives hope and meaning to the rest of the book.

The strengths of the text are certainly its practicality, educational nature, and usefulness for those for whom academic librarianship is their chosen career choice. The text is fiercely positive and speaks to the belief that the education librarians provide has the power to enrich the lives and minds of all involved. The “I don’t know, but let’s find out together” attitude of librarians is visible throughout the text, and it is obvious that the authors of each chapter enjoy what they do and have a solid foundation of advice and guidance behind them. In addition, the text is well-rounded, similar to the duties of a librarian, and an unparalleled read for anyone in need of more information about the field and subject specialties in the field. The book and chapters within are well organized, and it is obvious that each chapter is written by an expert in each subject specialty.

In conclusion, *Mastering Subject Specialties: Practical Advice from the Field*, is rich with sage advice for those looking into specific subject specialties of academic librarianship. This is a rare guide book for MLS students and practicing librarians, as it offers valuable insights beyond the basic information taught in classes about academic librarianship. It provides the background and skills necessary to hit the ground running in any position. Librarians serve a liaison role, which is why they have survived all of the changes that libraries have seen. They provide a connection or a bridge from patron to library resources. They must “communicate up, over, and across” to illustrate their and their library’s value. While there is no conventional path to the top in librarianship, this book gives clear instructions that any librarian or future librarian can follow to achieve success in his or her career path. —*Marisa Soltz, California State University, Long Beach*