

Book Reviews



Breivik, Patricia Senn. *Student Learning in the Information Age*. Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Pr. (American Council on Education/Oryx Press Series on Higher Education), 1998. 173p. \$ 34.95, alk. paper (ISBN 1-57356-000-6). LC 97-35183.

Patricia Breivik's latest contribution to the educational literature provides professionals in higher education with the guidance and tools needed to change tired, dated library instruction programs into ones that can develop information users for the next century—true lifelong learners. Breivik stresses the importance of “[moving] toward a new literacy” in higher education. This “new literacy,” known to many library professionals as “information literacy,” may be new terminology to other campus leaders. This easy-to-read volume provides the rationale and means to promote and create a successful information literacy program.

Breivik, dean of university libraries at San Jose State University, is an information literacy enthusiast. Author of several papers and monographs on the subject of learning and libraries, she received the G.K. Hall Library Literature Award for *Information Literacy: Revolution in the Library* (1989), cowritten with E. Gordon Gee. In her newest work, Breivik brings the revolution out of the library and into the classrooms of institutions of higher learning.

An early chapter in this book describes the shift in higher education from an emphasis on teaching to one on learning. The author relates academia's resounding move away from traditional methods of teaching, such as lecture, that allow students to remain passive participants in the learning process to methods that require students to take an active role in the learning process. These new methods are grounded in what is known as resource-based learning, the foundation of information literacy. Breivik highlights

the important benefits of both resource-based learning and information literacy.

Especially useful are the nuts-and-bolts chapters on establishing an information literacy program. Breivik describes the process and the inherent challenges of establishing a successful information literacy program. These challenges include, among others, planning, promotion, assessment, and financial support. As varying entities on campus vie for fewer dollars, libraries must more clearly articulate their vision and goals and how these will be achieved. Breivik understands higher education's increasingly pragmatic approach to outcomes and the necessity to demonstrate success through reliable means of measurement.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the book is Breivik's savvy approach to the challenges of human resources in and outside the library. In any library, new initiatives demand time, a precious commodity. Breivik stresses the importance of planning and clarification before any project is undertaken. In the greater campus community, new initiatives evoke familiar responses from within the academy regarding research needs, incentives and rewards, and control. With this political/financial context in mind, Breivik outlines ways to garner support for new information literacy initiatives among faculty and administration.

The author's inclusion of examples of best practices and models, incorporating information literacy, from colleges and universities worldwide, gives the readers many ideas and scenarios from which to choose. A variety of information literacy programs are highlighted, whether they be in stand-alone courses, discipline-specific contexts, or introductions through a general education requirement. Readers can investigate those programs

that best fit their institution and can glean from them the parts that will best work for them. With more than twenty pages of appendices, Breivik provides ample information to support any new information literacy endeavor.

This volume is an important resource for all academic libraries that are looking at ways to create information literacy programs or to enhance existing instructional programs. Instruction librarians unsure of where to start in the implementation of a new literacy program will be well served by the information found in this book.—*Laverne Simoneaux, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond.*

Chilling Admissions: The Affirmative Action Crisis and the Search for Alternatives. Ed. Gary Orfield and Edward Miller. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Publishing Group, 1998. 132 p. \$15.95 (ISBN 1-891792-00-8). LC 98-71079.

Affirmative action is a loaded term these days. In some instances, the discussion of affirmative action focuses on the widespread discrimination in hiring and promotion practices that it is intended to address, as well as the under-representation of women and minorities in many professions and in administrative positions (including those in academic libraries). At other times, and in other contexts, the discussion is focused on what is perceived, by some, to be another type of discrimination—which they believe is being perpetuated by affirmative action policies and “minority set-aside” programs. In the academic environment, there are important considerations both with regard to the composition of faculty, staff, and student body, but also to the representation of diverse perspectives in the classroom and library.

Chilling Admissions, the publication of the results of a project funded by the MacArthur, Mellon, Rockefeller, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundations, among others, is the first publication by the new think tank, the Harvard Civil Rights Project. Working with a variety of theoretical perspectives, historical analy-

sis, and empirical research, this book is based on the premise that there is a compelling need for the use of empirical data in the investigation of issues related to affirmative action. It is also based on the assumption that there is a need to provide substantive evaluation of both the results of eliminating race, as a factor, in admissions and financial aid decisions, and of the potential for success of alternative strategies—such as affirmative action based on class—in achieving a culturally diverse student body.

The foreword and introduction, written by Harvard law and education faculty, Edley and Orfield respectively, frame the discussion in terms of the legislation and judicial decisions that have shaped civil rights and affirmative action programs and debate in the U.S., including *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, the Bakke case, and Hopwood. Other authors—including administrators and academics in the areas of law, education, public affairs, and sociology—provide historical overview and current analysis of the issues. They focus on critical legal cases as they relate to affirmative action in the states of California, Texas, Maryland, and Mississippi. These authors provide evidence which disproves many of the widely held assumptions about affirmative action, including the idea that enrollments of white and Asian students will rise sharply with the elimination of affirmative action and that only admissions, not applications and enrollment, of minorities will be affected by the elimination of race-based approaches.

Chilling Admissions is generally well-written and relatively comprehensive in coverage. The focus is on those states which have been most affected by recent court decisions and legislation. Major shortcomings are the lack of an index, and the inconsistent handling of lists of references and notes, and in the presentation and discussion of data among the chapters—the latter making comparison and synthesis difficult.

This book presents a convincing argument that the abandonment of affirma-