

Book Reviews

Curriculum Materials Collections and Centers: Legacies from the Past, Visions of the Future. Ed. Rita Kohrman.

Chicago: American Library Association, 2012. 265p. alk. paper, \$48 (ISBN 9780838986028). LC 2011-45087.

It would be hard to imagine a better book on the past, present, and future of Curriculum Materials Centers (CMCs) than this timely collection of articles by authors from thriving centers throughout the country. Rita Kohrman of Grand Valley State University and Suzan A. Alteri of Wayne State University provide illuminating histories of the development of curriculum laboratories at normal schools (vocational schools for teacher preparation) and subsequent changes in higher education that led to a devaluation of practical teacher training and hence the closing of many CMCs. Alteri maintains, however, that CMCs are more important than ever in the current K-12 climate, which calls for greater use of technology and accountability for student learning.

The book contains a series of articles that could function as a handbook and guide for librarians who manage curriculum collections or centers. These articles outline the basics of collections and functions such as the role of children's literature, textbook collecting, library instruction, budgets, staffing, mission statements, and outreach. The authors share their experiences integrating e-books and the Internet into the CMC; collaborating with school of education faculty, local schools, and community groups; and justifying the existence of the center to the parent institution. These themes will sound familiar to all academic librarians. But, as laboratories and resource centers for teachers, curriculum centers have as much in common with public and school libraries as they have with the traditional scholarly academic library.

The future of Curriculum Materials Centers should be bright. As Shonda Brisco of Oklahoma State University proposes, CMC librarians with classroom experience can create model school libraries that provide preservice teachers with the technological expertise needed today. Jo Ann Carr of the University of Wisconsin-Madison also maintains that national trends in teacher education indicate that CMCs can serve as "educational technology resource centers." They must provide access to materials but also create them by adapting to the "new role of the teacher as an instructional guide and leader for the digital age." Kathy Yoder of Bowling Green State University and Linda Scott of the University of Mount Union offer a reminder that students and teachers also appreciate the human touch that CMCs can offer.

Yes, the future of CMCs should be bright, and this book might help to make it so. But will it be read by the library school faculty and administrators who need to be preparing specialists for this kind of work? Will it be read by the faculty and administrators of schools of education who need to be promoting centers and integrating them into the curriculum? Will it be read by the library and university administrators responsible for funding? By school librarians, teachers, and principals? School board members, parents, and politicians? All of these groups are dedicated to improving education in America's schools, but they are sadly isolated from each other. Without a better understanding of each other's needs and the ability to work together toward a common goal, these disparate groups may remain vulnerable and unable to realize the potential that each knows exists.—*Jean M. Alexander, Carnegie Mellon University.*

