2014

Review of The Embedded Librarian's Cookbook

Megan E. Welsh

University of Colorado Boulder, Megan.Welsh@colorado.edu

Recommended Citation

Review of *The Embedded Librarian's Cookbook*

Megan E. Welsh (megan.welsh@colorado.edu)
University of Colorado Boulder

Cassandra Kvenild and Kaijsa Calkins, eds. *The Embedded Librarian's Cookbook*, (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2014), 180 p.

Second in a series of "cookbooks" published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Cassandra Kvenild and Kaijsa Calkins "serve up" their own edited volume comprised of recipes for successful embedded library initiatives in *The Embedded Librarian's Cookbook*. This title employs the successful structure of Sittler and Cook's *The Library Instruction Cookbook*[1] and complements content Calkins and Kvenild's previously published in *Embedded Librarians: Moving Beyond One-Shot Instruction*.[2]

The editors, both from the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, gather contributions on the general topic of embedded librarianship from librarians employed at community colleges, four-year institutions, and major research institutions located around the world. Though entries detail projects at specific institutions, the versatility of the recipes transcends the location and type of the originating institution, allowing these projects to be adapted according to the readers' own library environment. The audience for this title is clear: academic librarians interested in embedding librarians and library services in the broader institution should read this book. Those involved with planning and implementing instruction-related activities and those charged with outreach and promotion responsibilities will also be interested in this title.

This book contains valuable information ranging from simple advice about contacting and fostering positive relationships with subject faculty

(see Ferrer-Vinent's recipe about embedding in Organic Chemistry labs, p. 62) to creating more complex concoctions like information literacy websites that can be embedded in an online classroom environment (see Simning & Bennett's recipe, p. 156). Cookbook entries are divided among the book's two main parts: the first details a variety of embedded instruction opportunities while the second focuses on assessment and long term planning. Maintaining the "cookbook" metaphor within these two parts, recipes are filed in appropriate sections with catchy titles such as "Regional Cuisine: Embedding in the Disciplines" and "Menu Planning: Creating a Long Term Plan for Embedded Instruction." Each "recipe" represents a different project containing complete details about the experience with information about the intended audience, steps for preparation and implementation, equipment needed, and more. A favorite component of many recipes is the "Allergy Warnings" section containing "useful cautions from the authors, based on their experiences over time" (ix). For those readers interested in more information about each project, they may contact the authors directly using their email addresses that are clearly printed in the author line at the beginning of each entry.

The cookbook metaphor is a benefit to the reader who is immediately empowered to take these "kitchen tested" projects and adapt them for his/her own purposes. Authors provide the reader with inspiration to take the project idea and make it work in the reader's own library setting. Entries in this book are short, easy to follow, and the "recipe" model is this book's greatest strength, making the projects seem more approachable to the reader. Each contrib-

uted recipe is reminiscent of a concise poster presentation, demonstrating a consideration for the time-constrained librarian who is able to read a three page entry more readily than a twenty page research paper. Though short, and avoiding an over-emphasis in research, many entries still contain notes and a list of recommended resources.

Criticisms of this title are minimal. A handful of authors connected the ACRL Information Literacy Standards with their entries, identifying how each project aligned with the established standards in the field. This was a welcome addition to the description of the project, but it would have been beneficial to the reader if additional authors connected their entries to specific standards. Also, the quality of images used to highlight the text-based entries was inconsistent throughout this volume. Some visuals were more clear and readable than others. Despite this, the author contact information is so easily available at the beginning of each entry that the reader could easily request images from the authors directly if needed.

Recipes are structured formulas for culinary success, yet they also allow for improvisation and individual tastes. Here, Cassandra Kvenild and Kaijsa Calkins have provided librarians with the opportunity to satiate their appetite for opportunities to embed librarians at their institutions. Readers will be inspired to transform these recipes to create individualized success. This is an excellent addition to the literature on embedded librarianship and a must-read book that would find good company next to *The Instruction Librarian's Cookbook* and *Embedded Librarians* on any professional bookshelf.

Endnotes

[1] Ryan L. Sittler and Douglas Cook, *The Library Instruction Cookbook* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2009), 196 p.

[2] Cassandra Kvenild and Kaijsa Calkins, eds., *Embedded Librarians: Moving Beyond One-Shot Instruction* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2011), 248 p.

2