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Book Review

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative.* New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

Macmillan, K. and Kirker, C. (2012). Kindergarten magic: theme-based lessons for building literacy and library skills. Chicago: American Library Association. xi, 272pp. ISBN 9780838910696. $50.00. Pbk.

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School librarians, particularly those working with early school children, usually draw from an arsenal of skills when engaging in information literacy instruction, and the authors of this book certainly have extensive and varied backgrounds from which to draw. MacMillan is a writer, sign language interpreter and librarian with experience in storytelling with sign language. Kirker is a children's library associate in public libraries based in the US. Throughout this book, it's clear that the authors bring this extensive and diverse experience to the assortment of lesson plans and guides found throughout the book.

From the outset, this book contains a useful, if concise, discussion on the importance of creating memorable and positive library experiences for early school children. They outline ten principles of library instruction for early school children that are based on sound pedagogical theory (theories of active learning and awareness of learning styles, for example). The authors also remind us of the importance of adapting our library environment to be welcoming to these younger learners, so as to eliminate any physical barriers. According to the authors, school librarians have a direct role in reinforcing and scaffolding key skills in numeracy, literacy and language through their information literacy instruction. The authors also highlight issues with teaching students with disabilities, or students with English as a non-native language. In fact, it could be said that many of the authors' key principles of library instruction could underline and guide library and information literacy instruction at various levels.

The vast remainder of *Kindergarten magic* is crammed with very detailed and developed lesson plans and activities on thirty-six common school classroom topics for early school children. Each topic is systematically developed to include a section on how to introduce each topic in language appropriate for the age-group; a bibliography of books on the chosen topic complete with suggestions for their use in class; songs and prop stories; a writing and mathematical activity; homework learning objects; library skills-building activity; American Sign Language activity; Spanish language activity; and further recommended reading for the child on the topic at hand.

I particularly liked the authors' Library Treasure Hunt activity, which sees students figure out a set of nursery rhyme clues designed to orientate themselves around the library. The authors' use of playing Simon Says (Librarian Says) to teach book parts is a prime example of the familiar, accessible, and effective approaches this book takes to all the themes presented, although, it's a brave librarian who sings the "Library Pokey song" (to the tune of "The Hokey Cokey") in their library sessions. As the authors attempt to convince us, music is an effective way for some students to learn, and we are encouraged to leave our inhibitions behind.

Kindergarten magic comes armed with an impressive amount of supplementary material in the form of reusable learning objects and worksheets, flannel board patterns, and other drawings. These resources are all made available through the book's website, allowing librarians and teachers to download and use time and time again. Librarians short of the suggested materials, and with a restrictive budget, might find it difficult to resource themselves to the level needed to work with all the various reading activities.

The standard of writing found in this book is one of its main strengths. Each theme is presented in a logical and organised manner, and the authors are certainly not short of ideas and suggestions for each theme. The detail of development within each lesson plan and activity is remarkable and I

really liked the notes for each activity reminding the reader which core skills the exercise was designed to develop. For the school librarian or teacher of early school students, this book will be a resource to consult on numerous occasions.

There is no doubt that this book is aimed at librarians and teachers who are based in the United States. A number of the lesson themes such as Presidents' Day, Fall, Thanksgiving and Martin Luther King Jr. might be too focused on US traditions and themes to work in other libraries or classrooms. The recommended reading lists are all heavily comprised of US-based publications, and the Sign Language activities are all based on the American Sign Language system. Non-US readers of this book will have to either modify or exclude these themes and activities in their classroom or library setting.

Kindergarten magic is a beneficial resource to develop numeracy, literacy, language and library skills of early school students. While the book won't be of significant value to librarians like myself who are engaged in information literacy instruction with learners at higher levels, it will undoubtedly serve to help its intended audience develop an appreciation and awareness of library services amongst library users from a very early age. Now, anyone for a game of Library Vocabulary Bingo?