



The Indispensable Guide to Undergraduate Research - Success in and Beyond College

Charity Hudley, Anne H.; Dickter, Cheryl L.; Franz, Hannah A.
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Book Review

Tags: critical thinking | teaching writing | undergraduate research

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This brief handbook and reference work was designed for college and university students interested in doing research. Charity Hudley, Dickter, and Franz present scholarly research as an exciting way for undergraduates to make the transition from students who learn to scholars who join an ongoing conversation as “masters of knowledge and challengers of the status quo” (5). The authors purposely construct the guide to serve not only as a resource but also as a model of a research-based approach to scholarly writing; they frequently comment on their own working methods and the research process that went into the composition of this text. The resulting book effectively demystifies the world of academia and the work of scholars, making research approachable and appealing.

Throughout the guide, the authors encourage students to pursue their academic and personal interests by becoming researchers, and they provide an impressively comprehensive roadmap for the research process. The book takes a special interest in guiding first-generation college students and students from historically underrepresented populations. The tone is collegial, and the text abounds with concrete advice about navigating the concomitants of scholarly research, from how to email a potential research mentor (80) to how to identify and access campus resources that can assist with time and energy management (49). Chapter 2, devoted to getting started, describes what research looks like across several academic disciplines and details ways different schools support and reward undergraduate research. Personal accounts from student scholars provide additional relatable voices and create the sense of a broad academic community into which readers are invited. The authors also emphasize the importance of sharing research results with a variety of audiences; Chapter 5, “Writing and Presenting Research” (91-116), describes different venues for written and oral communication

that increase the impact of a student's project, including conferences, articles, books, and social media.

A particularly valuable contribution of this book is its focus on empowering students from underrepresented populations. In addition to devoting a chapter to describing challenges that students from minority populations face and some tools for overcoming those challenges ("Underrepresented Scholars in the Academy: Making a Way," [117-142]), the authors consistently highlight the value of diverse voices and backgrounds, and especially of the new questions such diverse viewpoints can generate. They frame the importance of greater academic inclusiveness and equity in a larger conversation about the powerful impacts researchers can have on their communities, emphasizing the value of interdisciplinary scholarship and community-based research.

Although the book is addressed directly to an audience of undergraduates who are or who seek to become researchers, the authors also model numerous ways to offer such students practical support. Therefore the text may also serve as a valuable resource for teachers, mentors, and advisors who assist student researchers and ensure their success.

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