From the Reference Desk

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Book Reviews
from page 46

Guide-on-the-Side approach to teaching. Each recipe is constructed to provide students with the opportunity to actively process information in new and personally meaningful ways. Recipes include “Nutrition Information,” which provides the instructor with clear and concrete learning outcomes for each activity, and “Cooking Time and Preparation,” which includes all the necessary ingredients to adopt the activity successfully. The “Instruction Session” information breaks down each activity into manageable time chunks, keeping the activity on track and aiding in classroom time management. Perhaps my favorite part of the recipes are the “Allergy Warnings” and “Chef’s Notes,” which provide insightful alternatives and helpful tips to keep students engaged and interested in the subject matter, an immense help for instructors dealing with the real-world instructional challenges of today’s multitasking, technology-adept students.

Sittler and Cook’s library instruction recipes provide a simple, modular approach that can be implemented in their entirety or in parts to supplement existing instruction. Additionally, instructors can use the activities to help refocus lessons on digital literacy, collaborative learning, and real world application of concepts taught. The selection and care taken by the editors to provide current, contemporary learning activities is also apparent, as The Library Instruction Cookbook provides numerous activities that deal with all forms of digital literacy, including the use of bibliographic management software, mindmapping, blogging, clickers, wikis, tagging, and Webcasts. Additionally, activities like The Sous Chef Takes Center Stage: Using Experienced Students to Teach their Classmates include the use of peer instruction, providing the experienced student with a voice and acknowledgment. This collection of best practices is a valuable practical aid for new and experienced instructors alike who are trying to rethink their library instruction curriculum design and delivery. As library services move towards making finding information more like searching on Google with discovery search interfaces, students will require additional instruction on developing the critical thinking skills required for them to independently address the varying quality and often overwhelming quantity of information sources available today. The Library Instruction Cookbook is a useful tool and great example of the power of collaboration. The collection of recipes provides a diverse range of activities and viewpoints, and is a cogent example of the changing concept of library instruction from show-and-tell to the art and science of finding the right stuff.

From the Reference Desk
by Tom Gilson (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Sage’s Encyclopedia of Urban Studies (2010, 978-1412914321, $325) is informed by the notion of urban studies as an academic discipline. As the editors note, this encyclopedia “is intended to present an overview of current work in the field.” At the same time, a quick look at the Reader’s Guide in the first volume also points to a set that is interdisciplinary and international in its approach. In short, this is a reference work that is trying to accomplish a lot. Fortunately, it succeeds.

As you would expect, individual articles treat issues related to urban economics, geography, history, politics, and sociology. But there are also entries that discuss individual topical areas related to architecture, gender and sex, social space, and sustainable development. Other articles deal with subjects connected to urban planning, transportation, and urban culture, as well as those devoted to urban theory. In addition, there are overviews of the “city” during historic periods, as well as discussions of specific cities and persons that are particularly notable ranging from Amsterdam to Venice and from Saul Alinsky to Sir Christopher Wren. Although intended for a scholarly audience, the articles are written in an accessible style that will appeal to a variety of readers. Each entry provides thorough, well researched, and reliable background information on the topic, as well as bibliographies for further exploration. Aside from the already mentioned Reader’s Guide there are “see also” references, as well as a general index that provide a sense of scope and access to specifics.

As noted above, the Encyclopedia of Urban Studies succeeds in meeting its lofty goals. It gives users a definite sense of urban studies as a multifaceted discipline while at the same time providing useful information about specific and related topics. Students and other interested readers will find it a valuable starting place. It is a welcomed addition to the reference literature and should appeal to academic and large public libraries.


The Greenwood Encyclopedia of LGBT Issues Worldwide (2010, 978-0313342332, $280) is a unique reference that tackles important and controversial issues and does so worldwide. The set discusses LGBT issues in over 80 countries divided broadly among regions including the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia and Oceania, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

LGBT obviously refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people, however it “was chosen for this encyclopedia as a shorthand, yet inclusive, notation for the class of people who experience marginalization and discrimination perpetrated by heterosexual norms.” Following this broad and inclusive definition, each entry starts with background information about the country itself which is then followed by an overview of the LGBT issues at play. After this overview, individual LGBT issues are discussed including education, employment and economics, social/government programs, sexuality/sexual practice, family, community, health, politics and law, religion and spirituality, and violence. Each entry also provides an outlook for the 21st century. All of the articles are replete with a resource guide and list of bibliographic notes referenced in the text. While the arrangement of the set is logical and the entries are uniform in their structure, nonetheless, there are individual volume indexes, as well as a cumulative index in volume three to provide access. There is also a selected bibliography including Websites as well as a list of contributors to the set with their affiliations.

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of LGBT Issues Worldwide consolidates and provides information not easily found elsewhere and does readers a valuable service by adding to our knowledge and awareness of LGBT issues and concerns. It does so in an easily accessible fashion that will have equal appeal to lay readers, high school students, and undergraduates. Hopefully, any future editions will be able to broaden its coverage and include even more countries.

Libraries interested in treatments of LGBT issues in the United States will find Scribner’s Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered History in America (2004, 0-684-31261-1, $400), as well as Greenwood’s recent set LGBTQ America Today (2009, 9780313339905, $349.95), also worth considering.

Against the Grain / June 2010

<http://www.against-the-grain.com>
The following is a guest review provided by Brian McGee and Deborah Socha McGee (Faculty, Department of Communication, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 2940; Phone: 843-953-7017; Fax: 843-953-7037) <mcgeeb@cofc.edu>, <mcgeed@cofc.edu>. We thank you both for your contribution. — TG

The Encyclopedia of Communication Theory (2009, 978-1-4129-5937-7, $350) is a two-volume set, edited by Stephen W. Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss, two highly regarded communication scholars. This comprehensive work will be especially helpful for communication students, communication and other scholars looking for an introduction to unfamiliar theories, and lay readers.

Like some similar encyclopedia projects prepared in the past few decades, this work is the product of a large and diverse collection of individuals, with over 200 contributors from ten different countries. The editorial board also is international in scope. Many of the theorists represented in the present work are themselves authors for one or more entries. The entries are of between 1,000 and 3,000 words and include suggested readings for each entry.

This set is different from other communication encyclopedia projects in two important respects. First, the current project deliberately seeks to cover the range of communication theories produced by scholars working in multiple disciplinary traditions, from rhetoric and philosophy to anthropology, sociology, communication studies, psychology, political science, and journalism. In contrast, other encyclopedias have tended to feature only social scientific or mass communication theories, for example. While no two-volume effort will survey the field in a manner satisfying to all parties, the current project is eclectic and admirably even-handed in its attempt to represent a diverse array of theories and theorists.

Second, while other encyclopedias represent an array of communication topics, including explanations of communication history, communication practice, and the various communication industries, the current project is expressly focused on communication theory. This narrower emphasis will be especially useful for students who are completing introductory and advanced courses in communication theory and can turn to an encyclopedia resource that will meet their needs for theoretical content. For this project, while appropriately respectful of the histories and cultures contributing to the development of various theories, the major tenets of the theories themselves always are privileged in the individual entries, whether those theories and theorists are drawn from antiquity (e.g., Aristotle) or twentieth- and twenty-first century work (e.g., Dale Brashers, Young Yun Kim, Sandra Petronio).

The set provides added value with a reader’s guide, which puts all the encyclopedia entries into 17 general topical categories. In addition, a theorist index is supplied, as is a short and helpful chronology of the development of communication theories from the classical period to 2008. Not surprisingly, the majority of the chronology is taken up with theory development after 1950. There also is a selected bibliography of major works by topic, which appears at the back of the second volume.

The articles in all cases are signed by the contributors. “See also” references are provided. In cases where different names exist for similar or overlapping theoretical concepts, cross-references are supplied, as when a list...

**Against the Grain**

**June 2010**

*Continued on page 49*
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Against the Grain / June 2010

<http://www.against-the-grain.com> 49