2011

From the Reference Desk

Tom Gilson
Against the Grain, gilsont@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg
Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6000

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact epubs@purdue.edu for additional information.
An Introduction to Staff Development in Academic Libraries is an excellent resource for staff and administrators who are thinking about establishing or revising their staff development programs. More than a “how-to” book, the case study approach provides a wealth of different perspectives and experiences for examination and consideration. The chapter titles are both “catchy” and attention-getting while still being meaningful and to-the-point. These chapters hold your interest. This book contains examples that cover topics from environment and culture to using tools such as course management systems. There is a list of figures that introduce the user to a number of tools that will assist in supporting staff development. Here one can get acquainted with a mission statement as well as the potential of software like Microsoft OneNote.

Yet another good feature of this book is that the content is more than just theory; these are actual cases where these techniques have been applied. The exercises at the end of the book help the reader develop a roadmap leading one from the thought of developing a program to its implementation. One of the best features of this book is that much of the information and techniques presented have a broad range of applications. The ideas presented can be implemented on the department level as well as for the library as a whole. I was impressed by the inclusion of a supervisor’s and various other checklists in some of the case studies. I also liked and will use the idea of a needs assessment for staff development to help target specific areas of training and support and also to assist with staff participation and “buy-in.” This is one area I would have liked to have seen a specific case study on, “encouraging staff participation and motivation.” Another area I would have appreciated a detailed discussion of was the new frontier of virtual training and Webinars, although I was well-pleased that the use of Course Management Systems (CMS) in staff development was covered. Perhaps these will be included in the next edition (hint).

All in all, a considerable amount of research is included in this book which focuses on a wide range of topics as they affect staff development and interjects topics that one may not have considered a component of staff development but should have. Some of the content, especially as it pertains to specific technologies, may quickly become dated, but I think this is a great resource for supervisors to have access to whether they’re in the library profession or not. The principles presented in this book apply to staff in general and tie together mission, outlook, and steps for ongoing success and improvement.

---

From the Reference Desk

by Tom Gilson (Associate Editor, Against the Grain, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World (2011, 9781412976855, $495) spotlights the changing status of women since 2000. It should come as no surprise that there are a lot of issues to cover. General Editors Mary Zeiss Strange and Carol K. Oyster manage to group nearly 950 articles by some 400 contributors in this four-volume set published by Sage. Admittedly, this encyclopedia approaches its mission from a feminist perspective. However, the editors argue that it is this “academic wing” of the global women’s movement that “provides the best lens through which to chart and analyze” the current status of women worldwide. As one examines these volumes, it is hard to disagree.

The articles represent “15 broad thematic categories” ranging from activism, the arts, and education to business and government and war and the military. Other categories covered include the environment, health, media, religion science, sports, sexualities, and issues affecting women’s daily lives. This insures an impressive diversity of content with entries on everything from Chicana Feminism to the Fashion Industry; Rape Crisis Centers to Body Image; Barbie Dolls to Feminist Theology; and Lesbian Adoption to Women in Combat. Most of these categories also have “signal biographies” of women whose lives “exemplify” that particular “aspect of…women’s experience.”

In addition, there are entries that reveal the status of women in individual countries worldwide. The four volumes are arranged alphabetically, and there is a very helpful Reader’s Guide that groups related entries by categories including the relevant “signal biographies.” And of course, there is a general index with volume and page designations. The articles are, for the most part, focused on facts, but instances of perceived sexism are noted, as are instances of progress. For example, the article on Body Image asks “what needs to happen for current women to be accepted for who they are rather than how they fulfill the fantasies of men in power?”

While at the same time, the article on NASCAR states that, despite being seen as a “men’s only sport,” NASCAR has “the largest number of females in high-profile, decision-making positions ranging from team owners to track presidents.” Accompanying the articles, there are a number of other features including a glossary, a resource guide of relevant books, journals and websites, and a complete copy of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action approved by the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women.

Aside from providing useful information for researchers, the Encyclopedia of Women in Today’s World offers another service to readers. It acknowledges the progress made by women, but it also points to how much more needs to be done. It also shows that the status of women is a global concern deserving of monitoring and further study. Needless to say, this title will prove a useful and highly-appropriate resource for academic libraries supporting women, gender, and feminist studies. It updates and supplements titles like the Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women’s Issues and Knowledge (2000, 0-415-92088-4, $650) and the Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History (2008, 978-0-19-514890-9, $495).

The print edition has a multimedia counterpart that, in addition to the articles and accompanying photos, provides 99 news agency video clips. There are also plans to add 500 new entries to the multimedia edition in the next two years. It has its own ISBN: 9781412995962 and is priced at $650. For more information check out this Web address: http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book235975.

Drugs and the laws and policies governing their use (or abuse) are constantly in the news. But as a recent work from Sage Reference will attest, they also constitute area of serious scholarly concern. The Encyclopedia of Drug Policy (2011, 9781412976954, $350.00) is two-volume set consisting of some 450 alphabetically-arranged entries that touch upon numerous aspects of drugs and drug policy. The emphasis is primarily on the United States, but drug policies in other countries are discuss to provide “cross-national perspectives.”

The set is edited by Mark A. R. Kleiman and James E. Hawdon, two respected scholars in the field who organize their efforts around six major categories. As you might expect, specific drugs along with their properties, uses, and effects are discussed in articles that run the gamut from caffeine to cocaine and from steroids to tobacco. A second category includes articles on federal laws like the National Narcotics Act as well as entries covering policies that regulate pharmaceuticals, alcohol, and tobacco. This category also has articles that cover the drug laws of each state. Discussions of agencies and individuals “that create and implement drug
laws and policies” as well as non-governmental advocacy organizations like MAD and the Partnership for a Drug Free America, make up the third category. The next category consists of articles on various prevention, deterrence and rehabilitative strategies and programs, along with the theories that support them. The fifth category offers an international perspective with entries for nearly ninety countries that describe their drug laws and policies. The final category turns its attention to drug-related social problems like addiction, crime, and terrorism.

Given the scope of these categories, it is obvious that the approach is broad-ranging. But the issues discussed are related and relevant. The articles are descriptive and fact-filled providing useful context as well as specific information. While the writing is intended to be as jargon-free as possible, there is a glossary of terms in case readers need clarification. Useful cross references as well as a list of further readings are provided for each entry. There is also a useful Readers Guide that groups entries into related topics as well as a general index.

The Encyclopedia of Drug Policy is one of those references that provide an organizing focus on a multifaceted subject. It brings together a great deal of related information and does so in one convenient location. Undergraduates will find it very helpful in grasping the complexities of the issues involved while scholars and professionals in the field will value the facts and solid background it offers. Academic libraries supporting curriculums as diverse as allied health and public administration will want to give it consideration.

The set is also available online and a free 30-day trial is available at www.sagepub.com/free trial.

Anyone doubting the dominant role of sports in American society need only thumb through the three volumes currently sitting on my desk. Published by M.E. Sharpe and edited by Steven A. Riess, Sports in America: From Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century (2011, 978-0-7656-1706-4, $349) shows that since its inception, America has had a special relationship with sports. Americans have traditionally seen sports as entertainment, recreation, a vehicle for personal fitness, and “a source of local, regional and national pride.” And today sports are bigger than ever. Billions of dollars are spent each year on both participating in sports and attending or viewing sporting events. Taken together it is estimated that sports generate “twice as much as the automobile industry”.

Sports in America traces the historic development of this phenomenal growth. But more importantly, it also highlights the way sports are “intertwined into the fabric of American life” and how they promote values and reflect trends. The emphasis is on how sports have “shaped American society” and in turn, how “social forces have shaped American sports.” As such, there are articles that discuss social, legal, and political issues ranging from race relations to blue laws to globalization. And naturally, there are entries on specific sports as well as influential athletes and sports figures. Readers will also find entries that focus on business issues as diverse as endorsement.

ments, sporting goods, and the reserve clause. The relationship between sports and the media is explored in articles ranging from juvenile literature to ESPN to the National Police Gazette. In addition, there are articles recounting sports impacts on individual social and ethnic groups as well as entries on organizations and governing bodies, leagues and conferences, events and competitions, and teams and venues. Appropriate “see also” references and useful bibliographies are provided for each entry. Given the topics covered and the accessible writing style, these articles make for fascinating reading for the interested sports fan as well as the student needing background for a research paper.

While the articles referenced above make up the bulk of the set, there are equally valuable essays in the first volume that take readers from the Colonial Era through to the present day, providing essential historic context. These essays should not be overlooked. They make informative and compelling reading for those interested in both sports and history. There are also other value-added features including a thematic index, a chronology, a listing of institutions, governing bodies and websites with their Web addresses, a cumulative bibliography, and a thorough index to the complete set.

Sports in America: From Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century is serious and thoughtful effort that is accessible to a variety of readers. It offers a fascinating and informed look at the history and social impacts of one of the keystones of our culture, American sports. It should find a place in public, high school, and undergraduate libraries.

Recently released by Grey House, the Encyclopedia of Gun Control and Gun Rights (2011, 978-1-59237-672-8, $165) is a second edition of a title first published by Oryx Press in 1999. This updated version provides readers with over 300 entries that offer facts and insights into the perspectives of both supporters of gun rights and those of gun control. Articles cover numerous organizations on both sides of the issue, historic events from the American Revolution to the 2011 shooting in Arizona, relevant court cases, and specific publications related to the debate. In addition, coverage includes entries on specific topics ranging from drive-by shootings and media violence to self-defense and gun collectors. There are also several articles that examine the experience of other countries as well as selective entries on individuals who represent both sides of the issue.

New to this edition is a primary source list of public documents and articles published in newspapers, etc. There are also a number of updated value-added features including a chronology, select bibliography, and three appendices; State Constitutional Gun Rights Provisions; Statutory and Constitutional Provisions Relating to the Purchase … of Firearms; and a List of Organizations. A valuable introductory essay provides background and relevant statistics, and there is a reader’s guide that organizes articles to selected topics.

Although providing some historic context, the Encyclopedia of Gun Control and Gun Rights keeps its attention on the current state of the debate. Authors Glenn H. Utter and Robert J. Spitzer provide articles that are straightforward and non-partisan in tone and presentation. There are articles on both sides of the issue. Anyone interested in this issue, from scholars needing to check a fact to college and high school students writing papers, will find this title of value. Given the controversy that surrounds gun issues, this book could be equally at home in reference or circulation depending on patron need. Depending on pricing and affordability, some libraries may want to have an electronic copy for reference and the paper version in circulation.

(Another second edition that deserves due consideration is M.E. Sharpe’s World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era (2011, 978-0-7656-8284-0, $349). Originally published as the Encyclopedia of World Terrorism (the 1997 edition was revised with a supplement in 2003), this new edition is updated and reorganized by veteran encyclopedia editor James Ciment.

Divided into six parts, the second edition begins with a group of essays that offer definitions as well as comparisons between types of terrorism like Domestic versus International and State versus Nonstate Terrorism. This is followed by two parts that start by tracing terrorism’s “historic roots” from the ancient world through the Second World War and then center on a discussion of terrorism during the post-war era up through to the present. Given its overall importance, the 9/11 attack is thoroughly covered in the fourth section with essays on the most significant topics including the victims and survivors, the emergency response, the International reaction, media coverage, the political, legal, and social issues raised, and the impact on security and defense as well as the articles on Al-Qaeda and the hijackers. The next part focuses on the tactics, methods, and the aims of modern terrorism, while the final part covers the techniques and tools employed in counterterrorism efforts.

Admittedly, this organizational scheme requires more from the reader than the traditional alphabetical arrangement. It asks that students and interested lay readers spend some time with finding aids like the table of contents, and the general index. However, the rewards are worth it. The essays are well-written and researched and should appeal to a variety of audiences, with the length of the essays geared to the importance of the topic. Each entry has a brief list of core readings as well as useful cross references. Many have sidebars containing key dates and maps and photos enhancing the text. Not only can this set be used to get background for specific topics of interest, a careful examination of the way the set is organized will give readers a strong sense of the complexity of the topic, both past and present. Public, academic, and larger high school libraries will all want to give it serious consideration seeing how important an understanding of terrorism is to a variety of interested audiences.

An electronic version is also available. For more information, check out Sharpe Online Reference at http://www.sharpe-online.com/.

Libraries interested in a single-volume treatment with a traditional A-Z arrangement may also want to consider the second edition of the SAGE Encyclopedia of Terrorism (2011, 9781412980166, $135). Naturally this title is also available online, and you can email sales@sagepub.com> for pricing information or visit www.sharpe-reference.com/ for more information about Sage Online Reference.