June 2011

Book Reviews -- Monographic Musings

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Column Editor's Note: The ***American Library Association Annual Conference*** *in New Orleans is just around the corner, and this year's spectacular schedule offers preconferences and sessions to expand your professional knowledge and skills. How timely that this month's MM reviewers,* **Amy Gustavson** *and* **Bryna Coonin**, *are sharing their evaluation of two new* **ALA** *titles — be sure to check out these and other books at the* **ALA** *Store in the Exhibit Hall.* **Gustavson**, *who received her MLS from* **North Carolina Central University**, *is the instructional services coordinator at* **Joyner Library** *at* **East Carolina University**, *where she engages students and faculty in — among other things — quality research and effective uses of technology.* **Coonin**, *Coastal Resources Management Librarian at* **Joyner Library** *at* **East Carolina University**, *received her MSLS from the* **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**. *She also holds an MBA from* **Meredith College**. *She has most recently written and presented about open-access issues in library research and publishing. Many thanks,* **Amy** *and* **Bryna**, *and happy* **ALA***-ing and reading, everyone! — DV*

American Library Association. *ALA Guide to Sociology & Psychology Reference.* Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2011. 978-0-8389-1025-2. 320 pages. $65.00.

Reviewed by **Amy Gustavson** (Coordinator of Instructional Services, East Carolina University) <gustavsona@ecu.edu>

ALA Guide to Sociology and Psychology Reference is intended for use by academic libraries in North America, although public and school libraries can also benefit from using it. As the title suggests, the monograph is divided into two major sections on sociology and psychology reference resources. Each entry is annotated with an entry number, bibliographic citation, Dewey call number, LC call number, and annotation.

Sociology and Psychology Reference conceptualizes sociology as the study of human society, and as a result the sociology section is expanded to include a broader cross-section of resources than a reader would usually associate with sociology. The sociology section includes four well-developed chapters on general works; theory, methods, and statistics; an expansive chapter on social conditions and welfare; and race and ethnicity. Surprisingly, the social conditions and welfare chapter includes closely-related social science disciplines such as marriage and family, social work, gerontology, and fifteen other topics related to the study of human society. These three sections are a welcome discovery for librarians looking for resources in the helping professions. The social conditions and welfare chapter also provides resources on: aging and the elderly; childhood and adolescence; poverty and the poor; disabilities and the disabled; and human phenomenon such as cyberspace and the internet; alcoholism and drug abuse; and violence. The chapter on race and ethnicity focuses on African Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans.

The psychology section is divided into twelve short chapters that total a fourth of the book. It includes general works; research methodology and statistics; tests and measures; and specific psychological disciplines such as development, education, and clinical psychology. The strongest chapters are general works and tests and measures. General works lists the core of psychology reference works that should be found in all academic libraries. The tests and measurements chapter consist of the five core resources for test reviews and indexes. It should be noted that the resource entry numbers are not consistent between the psychology chapter, which begins at number one, and the book index, which continues beyond the sociology entry numbers.

I was overjoyed when I saw the announcement for *ALA Guide to Sociology and Psychology Reference* because I wanted to improve my library's reference collection in GBLT, clinical psychology, and neuroscience resources. Oddly enough, these topics are the three shortcomings of this work. The forward to the sociology section promises a section on gender studies that includes gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender (GBLT) and women's studies. Unfortunately, the chapter wasn't included in the final product. The psychology forward states that resources related to biology, mental illness, or psychoanalysis were omitted from the book. Although I can understand the reasoning for removing the multidisciplinary sections from the book, I think it's a disappointing omission for an **ALA** Edition because the work now falls short of a comprehensive resource. Most surprisingly, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) was not listed in the clinical psychology chapter or in the entire book. In light of the absence of biology, mental health, or psychoanalysis sources, readers should see the *Guide to Reference* database published by the **American Library Association** for psychiatry and medical and health sciences for resources in these areas.

Even with the noted issues, the *ALA Guide to Sociology and Psychology Reference* provides a strong foundation to sociology reference resources and a brief survey of psychology reference resources. Social science reference and collection librarians will find this resource helpful to develop reference and general collections; however, any user of this book should be aware that it is not a comprehensive resource. Please consult the *Guide to Reference* database for a more complete reference resource.

Mates, Barbara T., with **William R. Reed IV**. *Assistive Technologies in the Library*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2011. 978-838910702. 206 pages. $49.50.

Reviewed by **Bryna Coonin** (Reference Librarian, Joyner Library, East Carolina University) <cooninb@ecu.edu>

From the Reference Desk
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patrons asking for this type information as well as academic libraries supporting education and psychology courses, should take a serious look at these two resources.

The information contained in both these resources is also available electronically via subscription to **G.O.L.D. – Grey House Online Database**. For more information, pricing, etc., visit *http://gold.greyhouse.com*. 🐟

It has been twenty years since **Barbara Mates** published her 1991 volume, *Library Technology for Visually and Physically Impaired Patrons*. This new offering serves as both an update to the earlier book and also as useful barometer to gauge the progress that has been made over two decades in making our library environments accessible to all.

Why the new edition? The need to account for advances in technology is the most obvious answer, but not the only one. When **Mates** published her 1991 book, library technology

was geared almost solely to providing persons with visual and physical impairments access to the print environment. Large-print versions of books, books on tape, magnification equipment, adjustable tables, some subscriptions to a few magazines in Braille format, and maybe some text captioning for selected videos and movies were often the extent of what was possible in libraries. The wider availability of the Internet in the 1990s changed the library accessibility equation. Developments in federal

law have also had an impact on how we look at library accessibility. The *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* Sections 405 and 508 (effective June 21, 2001) and amendments to the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* in 2008/09 support the need for libraries to take a fresh look at the accessibility landscape.

There is probably no one better qualified than **Mates** to write about library accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Recently retired after twenty-five years as the head of the **Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled** (a part of the **Cleveland Public Library**), **Barbara Mates** now works as an independent consultant on accessibility options for persons with disabilities. She is a longtime member and former president of **ALA's Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)**. Additional contributions are included from **William R. Reed IV**, regional librarian for the **Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled**. **Reed** has spent more than ten years working in library services to patrons with disabilities and training patrons how to use adaptive computers and technology.

In this new edition **Mates** defines disabilities broadly to encompass individuals' with physical disabilities as well as those with cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, and autism.

A chart on page 11 shows which accessibility options are helpful to persons with varying disabilities. So, for example, speech recognition software can help users with visual impairment and learning disabilities, and Braille key tops can assist those with blindness or deaf-blindness to access some of the library's resources. Among all of the options offered, though, two of the most basic ones are useful to individuals regardless of the disability involved — an adjustable work table and correctly-designed Websites. We often assume that the issue of Web accessibility is behind us, as Web accessibility standards are in place and laws support a social mandate to design inclusive Websites. But there are no accessibility "Web police," and sometimes in our enthusiasm for the newest Web applications we do not assiduously include persons with disabilities in our usability testing efforts, or press forcefully enough to ensure that the commercial electronic products we purchase for our users can be accessed by all. So the one adaptation that can actually provide the broadest boost to accessibility is sometimes the one we ignore.

Various adaptive technology tools are described in detail, with information on the usefulness, costs, and major competitors for the various products. The products included are up-to-date and practical. Screen enlargers such as ZoomText, MAGIC for Windows, Lunar, WinZoom, and the Virtual Magnifying Glass all provide large-print access to electronic text. Providing Braille access to the Internet is now possible. Making this available is a daunting prospect for libraries because it is very specialized and expensive to do so, but for libraries with a staff committed to the training and costs involved, providing this can be rewarding for all concerned. Similarly, speech recognition software can be enormously helpful for patrons, but there are equipment and ongoing training costs involved. Costs are not trivial especially in these tight-budget times, but **Mates** includes a helpful chapter that addresses finding the necessary funding for accessibility. In an appendix, she provides an annotated list of vendors, manufacturers, and consultants.

Mates also offers suggestions for diffusing the discomfort some library staff may experience when assisting patrons with disabilities. Her sensitive, practical suggestions can help a library become a place where all users have the opportunity to be comfortable and productive when accessing library resources.

There are plenty of products available for making information accessible to all users. The challenge for administrators is to determine which are the most practical and economical for their particular library. **Mates** notes that, while there is no single configuration that will be 100% suitable for all library patrons, it is possible to find solutions that will suit the needs of many. Whether a library is making a late start on accessibility efforts or updating existing services, this book will prove to be a valuable asset. ***Highly recommended.***