



BOOK REVIEWS

Wright, K.C. *Computer-related Technologies in Library Operations*. Brookfield, VT: Gower, 1995. 202p. ISBN: 0-566-07632-2 (pbk).

The ever-changing field of library automation has recently seen a new addition to the market. This latest book, *Computer-related technologies in library operations*, is by Kieth C. Wright, a Professor of Library and Information Studies at the University of North Carolina.

At first glance, this reviewer, who also teaches library automation, was disappointed by the book as it was hoped that it could be used as a new introductory text. However, such is not the case. Although this book is geared to the non-technocrat or those with little experience in the field of computer-related technologies, it is a very basic guide. It is too basic for the student as it does not provide nearly enough detail on many important concepts and terms associated with the field. In addition, the lack of photographs, illustrations, and graphics does not result in an effective teaching/learning resource. Also, in order to break up the text, Wright provides small textual boxes of highlighted points. The majority of these boxes are too abbreviated to be of any use to the reader and they are actually more of a distraction than anything else.

However, it soon became clear that this book is not geared towards introductory students, but rather towards library professionals who are thinking about automating various functions within their libraries. In fact, for those who need a basic resource on specific applications of computer-related technologies, this is a very practical and useful guide. It includes chapters on: Beginning the process of automation; Circulation and catalogue systems; Automating acquisitions and serials control; Automating reference and information services; Management Information Systems; Finding additional information and selecting a vendor; Site and organizational preparation for automated systems; and The future: Where do the libraries go from here? Each chapter concludes with a List of References, Further Readings, and useful evaluative checklists which provide criteria for selection of software.

The first couple of chapters provide an overview on needs assessment, and the basic functions of the core modules of an integrated library system: circulation, cataloguing, acquisitions and serials. Enough information is provided within these chapters so that the reader will have a basic understanding of how automation can be applied to each of these functions. Much of this has been written before, however, Wright does provide an up-to-date account (complete with addresses and costs) of the various systems available. The chapter on Reference Service is a worthwhile addition as so often books on automated library systems focus only on the Technical Services department. The most interesting chapter, however, is the one on Management Information Systems as it provides a breakdown of how specific types of management information (generated from an automated system) could be utilized for making decisions related to collection development, acquisitions, circulation, reference services, technical services and scheduling information. Wright notes that not all data can come from any automated system; however, library staff should certainly be aware of the report capabilities prior to purchasing any new system. The final three chapters detail sources of further information and guidance on selecting a vendor, formulating a Request for Proposal, and preparing the physical site for automation.

The book concludes with a look at the problems and opportunities facing libraries in a technological society. Overall, this is a good resource for those who wish to implement an automation project within their library and do not know where to begin.

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Teacher Education in Industrialized Nations: Issues in Changing Social Contexts. Vol. 30, Reference Books in International Education. Edited by Nobuo K., Shimahara and Ivan Z. Holowinsky. New York: Garland, 1995, 327p. ISBN 0-8153-1458-2

I recently ran across a box full of articles and excerpts on teacher education, assembled many years ago for some research I was doing on the subject. Every one of them was criticism of one form or another. Many predicted a dire or despairing future so, when I was asked to review this volume, I was interested to see how much brighter a future was anticipated.

Teacher Education in Industrialized Nations: is the product of the 1993 Rutgers Invitational Symposium on Education, reproducing papers presented there by contributors from various faculties of education in North America, Britain and the Netherlands. Included are chapters on the United States, Canada, Japan, Ukraine, a collective Europe and England - or Britain - it is unclear which. This is the seventh volume in a series of symposia through which educators have aired their research. Previous volumes have addressed such topics as the shortage of teachers, the teaching of mathematics, and literacy.

For the conscientious educator, or others with an interest in not only public education but the effects of globalization on all forms of education and, therefore, democracy and the social order, this is an interesting work. Its format makes it an excellent reference text. The contributors appropriately only tell it as it is and wisely avoid offering blueprints for change. One thing which would be beneficial to any future editions, however, is a general index in addition to the name index included in this first one.

The recent writings of John Ralston Saul, 1995 presenter of the Massey lectures (Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization*, 1995), warn us to beware of the group jargon of "manipulating technocrats" who use language designed to prevent non-specialists access to their professional territory. This book sometimes suffers from such a flaw as well as from the prolixity so often found in works on education. Examples are "narratology," "symbolic encapsulation" and sentences such as "...how the deinstitutionalization of teacher education and the creation of special symbolic spaces of professional development schools are integral opposites of the changing specialization of teacher education in the postmodern age." (p. 17)

In most of the nations examined, the situation is not found to be encouraging. Teacher education in the Ukraine is struggling with learning about democracy and preoccupied with de-Russification. As globalization hurtles forward, pulling down national boundaries, so go the laws within them which formerly protected the weak. Ironically, as the Ukraine tries to formalize democracy, Western nations are seeing it recede to become a mere shadow of aspirations past. Japan suffers from an excess

of governmental control; Europe is wrestling with the "internationalizing" of its teacher education programmes to conform with a "European" model, with predictable resistance from the member nations of the European Community. Ivor Goodson's chapter on Canada is entitled *A Nation at Rest*, which may sound reassuring but is not. Of the two chapters on the U.S., one is a justification, via a history lesson, albeit an interesting one, of the normal schools and why teacher education lacks public and self-esteem. Teacher education in 1980-90 England is seen as "...rapid, contradictory, messy, and often incomplete ... de-theorizing teacher education ... de-skilling teachers." The chapter on "England" is just that. It is not on Britain or the United Kingdom; but the editors use these terms interchangeably with an explanatory note that the Irish, the Welsh and, definitely, the Scots will find especially offensive.

A decade ago, western nations were anxious to see their own education systems become competitive with Japan and their Western rivals. Today, the concern is to meet the needs of globalization. Little happened to improve teacher education as a result of the first concern. As regards the second, one can conclude that the ineffectiveness of teacher education as well as education at large is already a globalized fact, an unfortunate common denominator with which to approach this new phenomenon.

Readers concerned that there is some sort of crisis in both education and teacher education and wanting some material to reinforce that concern and widen understanding of the issues will find *Teacher Education in Industrialized Nations:* worthy of their attention. However, they will find little solace or reassurance that the next decade, century or millennium will see any more change in teacher education than happened in the last ones. Questions which may arise from reading it are as perennial as those asked in 1960. The papers in my box need only to have the dates changed and they would be current.

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Editor's Note: The biography of educator Donald Barnes, *A Gentleman and a Scholar* by Sharen McDonald, Shoreline, 1996, ISBN 1-896754-02-3 will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue.

Nilsen, Alleen Pace and Donelson, Kenneth L., *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, Fourth edition. NY: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993. ISBN 0-673-46652-3

"The raison d'être for adolescent literature," according to Nilsen and Donelson, "is to tell a story about making the passage from childhood to adulthood." They go on to define young adult literature as "any book freely chosen . . . by someone in [the 12-20 year] age group." Any educator or librarian, who has ever been responsible for choosing a literature text for young adults and who finds the following, albeit fictional, anecdote striking a chord, should consider this reference.

"How did you decide to use *The Scarlet Letter* this year, Mr. Jones?"

"Well, there are only eight novels with class sets available to the juniors and everything had already been checked out except *The Scarlet Letter* and *Giants in the Earth* and I'd never had any success with that." (p.447)

The authors have resisted the temptation to produce a list, and yet they have rounded up an incredible array of recommendations. This is a thorough, academic, though necessarily personal, examination of the literature available to young adults. Librarians and educators may not be familiar with many of the selections; they certainly will not agree with all of them, but they will start to re-examine some of the choices they make every day.

The reader is asked to review the stages of literary appreciation through the eyes of a younger reader and to look at the works available with insight. What are the problems facing the young today? Which books attempt to deal with these issues in a sensitive and interesting way? How are some writers taking the easy way out and letting their young readers down?

Using a thematic approach, Nilsen and Donelson, take their readers through the popular genres and look at the value of each. First under the microscope are romances, quests for accomplishment. Adventure and mystery novels offer exciting vicarious experience, while sports stories often have messages for youngsters regarding the glory of fame and its price. The gripping stories covered in the categories of the supernatural, fantasy and science fiction may require the reader to judge, to think about the consequences of an action.

In the chapter on historical writing, the educator or librarian is reminded of the obligation to separate history from historical fiction, to make young people aware of the manipulative powers of writers and filmmakers. Autobiography and biography, popular with young adults looking to take comfort or inspiration from the experiences of others, may address the difficult subjects

of death and illness, disappointments and the reality behind superficial glamour or give an insight into risk-taking and successful ventures.

Poetry, too, has its place. In recognition of the lack of background information that young readers bring to a text, modern authors are recommended as a suitable starting point to their explorations. A full chapter is devoted to short stories, drama and humour and some useful evaluation tools are offered along with further recommendations.

The format of this book is lively with several sections devoted to specific interest topics. One of these, *The People Behind the Books*, gives the reader an opportunity to hear what the writers of young adult literature feel about the world they are serving. Nilsen and Donelson feel strongly that youngsters should be able to feel the common thread with the storytellers.

An innovation for this edition is the chapter entitled *Literature in the English Class: A Few Words About Teaching*. Here the authors make no bones about the responsibilities the English teacher should bear: familiarity with texts, enthusiasm for them and empathy for the stages of reading and development of the students are vital. They go on to name seven characteristics that should be evident in good young adult literature. In these, as in the directions given throughout the book, the reader sees the tremendous moral responsibility with which the writers have chosen to burden themselves. Clearly their goal is not simply to present a list of recommended literature but to raise the consciousness of their readers, educators or librarians, regarding their responsibilities.

Nonetheless the lists are there: each chapter ends with a list of other titles mentioned in the text and 54 Focus Boxes offer selections as diverse as *Some Handy Dandy Books about Film*, *YA Mysteries*, *Across Generations*, *Dying is Easy - Surviving is Hard* and *In Orbit with Solid Science Fiction Writers*.

This is a well-indexed text that invites, even obliges, the reader to start at the beginning and work to the end. After a thorough reading it could be used purely as a reference text and a really useful one. No-one should be tempted to use it simply to look for titles without first settling down to a dialogue with the authors. Caring professionals will enjoy the support they give.

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Haricombe, Lorraine J. and F.W. Lancaster, *Out in the cold: academic boycotts and the isolation of South Africa*, Arlington, VA : Information Resources Press, 1995. xii, 158p. (includes bibliographical references and index) ISBN 0-87815-067-6 (hardcover)

Out in the cold: grew out of Haricombe's doctoral research but it has not made an easy transition into a book. All the elements of a fascinating non-fiction narrative are present: censorship; academic freedom; human rights; and higher education set in the context of apartheid South Africa.

The book deals primarily with the academic boycott against South Africa and its effects on scholarship there. The boycott is placed in its recent, historical context. "Its purpose was to isolate academics in South Africa associated with universities that supported the racist policy of the former South African government." (p. 30) It was part of a wider arsenal of sanctions, and at first "in the 60s it did not distinguish between those who openly opposed and those who supported the apartheid policies...." (p. 35) What steps were taken? How successful were they?

Of particular interest to librarians are the roles played by IFLA and ALA, and the US book boycott (Anti-Apartheid Act, 1986) which had as its specific goal the isolation of South African academics by denying them information (as did UMI when it ceased to supply dissertations). Indeed, after the mid 80s due to a variety of international actions, South African universities did become more isolated from the international academic community.

The first half of the book reflects extensive research of the literature and has resulted in a well-documented, scholarly, but uneven, work. The second half describes the authors' empirical study carried out to determine the effects of the academic boycott on South African scholarship - questionnaires were sent to a sample of 900 academics and 28 libraries. The survey methods and results are presented in detail and are augmented by extensive exhibits (i.e. tables) and appendices. This makes for interesting and informative reading. There is here a clarity and unity that is lacking in the first half.

The reference list is substantial and there is an index. Appendix 7 reproduces a selective bibliography on sanctions that was posted with the questionnaire.

The book covers a wide range of topics in general and the South African experience in particular. It would be an informative and important addition especially to a college or university library.

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