

Teaching the New Library to Today's Users: Reaching International, Minority, Senior Citizens, Gay/Lesbian, First-Generation, At-Risk, Graduate and Returning Students, and Distance Learners. Eds. Trudi E. Jacobson and Helene C. Williams. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers (The New Library Series, no. 4), 2000. 256p. \$49.95, alk. paper (ISBN 1-55570-379-8). LC 00-35117.

Providing instruction for researchers in the effective access and use of information may well be the most important role of library and information professionals. As the library user undertakes research, the multiplicity of subject areas and the types and formats of information resources can create an overwhelming array of choices. Evaluation of the quality and relevance of the information gathered can be a challenge for even the advanced-level college student. It is the information professional who has responsibility for designing, selecting, and providing access to these information systems and resources. In addition, librarians develop and administer information services and teach, instructing users with different educational and demographic backgrounds, priorities, learning styles, and levels of comfort and facility with libraries, information, technology, and the research process.

In *Teaching the New Library to Today's Users*, the editors and authors provide a substantive contribution to the discussion of instruction in the context of library and information services. As the subtitle indicates, there are a number of "special" populations to be considered. Although there has been consistent and appropriate debate related to the determination of which special populations should be included, this publication assumes the necessity of addressing the full range of groups that may have specific needs in relation to research and instruction. As a profession, we acknowledge the importance of promoting equity, fostering diversity, and taking into consideration the differences associated with race, gender, and culture. Thus, it is clear that the con-

sideration of this expanded library clientele is simply a reflection of our understanding of reality and our professional commitment to shaping and positively influencing that reality. It also is clear that our understanding of those whom we identify as "other" in the academic environment is limited.

The authors and editors take on the challenge of considering what librarians need to know to effectively provide instruction to these select student populations. Based on practical experience, statistical analysis, history, and theoretical perspectives from various disciplines including education, psychology, and communication, this book is composed of contributions from academic librarians from a number of different colleges and universities. Several of the authors, such as Karen Downing, Trudi Jacobson, Cheryl LaGuardia, Ilene Rockman, and Kwasi Sarkodie-Mensah, are well known in the profession for their research and writing related to instruction and/or service to diverse user populations.

There are certainly difficulties involved in the compilation of a volume that aims to address the needs of such a large number of different groups. Each of the groups demands the consideration of a unique set of complex factors that define their composition, backgrounds, and needs. The editors address the fact that these groups are not monolithic in their composition or in their research and instructional needs: "International students may fall into a number of the categories covered by chapters in this book. They may be first-generation students; they might come from a variety of cultures; some may be graduate or returning students; and they may be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered." The editors and authors effectively address the diversity within these groups, as well as the commonalities among those within them. A sophisticated and well-documented discussion on the nature of diversity as an issue in academic libraries, *Teaching the New Library to Today's Users* is a thoughtful, substantive addition to the research literature.

The editors address the composition of the student population and the difficulties associated with the examination of the groups in question in the overview sections that precede the chapters devoted to the various segments of the student population. The authors provide insights on what should be considered in the design and delivery of instruction to members of these groups.

This book is well written and comprehensive in its coverage of the issues. The use of research and statistical data in support of these discussions provides sub-

stance and context. Although the writings presented reflect the authors' "research and their experiences," it is clear that the work is intended for the practitioner, as a source of "advice" for other librarians. The reader is presented with a timely, substantial, research-oriented, though practical, discussion of both the nature of various student populations and the factors to consider in providing instruction to them. This volume of writings provides worthwhile information for librarians who play such an integral role in the preparation of future graduates.—*Mark Winston, Rutgers University.*