

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Clark, Alice S., and Kay F. Jones, eds.
Teaching Librarians to Teach: On-the-Job Training for Bibliographic Instruction Librarians. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1986. 232p. \$18.50 (ISBN 0-8108-1897-3). LC 86-6598.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading, and the editors do not really live up to the aims they state for it in their introduction. Inspired by one of Joan Ormondroyd's workshops on "Teaching the Teachers," the authors decide that they may not be alone in their need for information on how to provide on-the-job training for librarians engaged in bibliographic instruction. This is the kernel of the idea for a book that will help academic librarians, presumably reference heads and bibliographic instruction coordinators in particular, plan programs to improve the teaching skills of their colleagues. A survey of Association of Research Libraries institutions, which is briefly reported in chapter 4, reveals that there is a definite need for such a book, since formal programs to improve librarians' abilities to teach are rare. A panel of expert contributors is assembled, and the result is another volume on bibliographic instruction.

Perhaps three or four of the chapters actually make good on the promise of the title and truly pertain to techniques for on-the-job training. Chapter 2, by Marilyn Lutzker, consists of observations on how to identify good potential teachers, who are the raw material for on-the-job training programs. Chapter 4, following some preliminaries on the kinds of skills required for good library instruction, reports the results of the survey mentioned above on what research libraries are doing

to build these skills in librarians who teach as part of their regular job assignments. Only fourteen research libraries indicated that they have formal programs in this area, although several others are planning programs, and yet others have what the author might consider partial programs, or at least serious efforts, in place. Perhaps more worthwhile than some of the other, more general, material in this book and more germane to its stated purpose would have been some follow-up to this survey by the editors. It might have been useful to have a detailed description of the fourteen programs said to be in existence. Also, it might have been enlightening to have more elaboration from institutions who responded, for example, that they did make efforts to instruct librarians on how to develop evaluation instruments or on how to define performance objectives.

Joan Ormondroyd's practical and useful description of how to plan and conduct a workshop on teaching librarians to teach is chapter 8. It includes as appendixes sample instructions to trainees making presentations, sample forms for critiquing presentations, selected rules for good teaching, sample situations for workshop problem-solving sessions, and suggested discussion topics. Chapter 10 is the last of the chapters that might be thought of as having direct relevance to learning how to teach on the job and is essentially about learning by doing. Sandra Sandor Kerbel provides some reminiscences of difficult or instructive moments in her own career as a librarian-teacher.

The remaining chapters of the book appear to be offered as a basic handbook for the aspiring teacher-librarian. They are

mainly practical guides to the elements of library user education or reviews of the literature on a particular aspect of that very broad and much discussed subject. Although some of the essays have no scholarly apparatus, most make reference to many of the old chestnuts in the field, for example, Lubans, *Educating the Library User*, and Roberts, *Library Instruction for Librarians*, and to numerous articles in the journal literature. Except in one chapter, there is a conspicuous absence of frequent references to two books now considered classic texts: Beaubien and others, *Learning the Library*, and Oberman and Strauch, *Theories of Bibliographic Education: Designs for Teaching*. If the book is meant to serve as a beginning textbook for on-the-job training, it would have benefited by the inclusion of a general selected bibliography.

After chapter 1, which introduces the need for the volume, the essays loosely follow the progression of organizing to do bibliographic instruction, from setting objectives to evaluating results. A few chapters seem to be dropped in at random: the results of the ARL survey, for example, and an excellent and well-documented essay by Linda Lucas, "Educating Librarians to Provide User Education to Disabled Students." The specialized nature of Lucas' chapter makes it seem out of place in this book and raises the question of the absence of similar essays on other special groups, such as minority students in Head Start-type programs or international students, who are appearing on campuses in rapidly growing numbers, presenting fertile ground for the library instruction librarian.

There seems little really new in this slender volume. The title has an appealing draw, but Ormondroyd's chapter is about the only one that actually delivers on its promise.—Paula D. Watson, *The Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*.

Douglas, Mary Tew. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Pr., 1986. 146p. \$19.95 (ISBN 0-8156-2369-0). LC 86-5695.

In *How Institutions Think*, the noted anthropologist Mary Douglas brings the dis-

tanced and objective perspective of her discipline to an examination of modern society. While she acknowledges the role of calculated self-interest in human life, she notes correctly that the prevailing zeitgeist of individualistic calculation hardly requires that the importance of rational choice be defended. Her emphasis is elsewhere, on demonstrating the inherently social nature of individual cognition, the a priori role of society in dictating the very categories and terms of thought that ultimately defeat simple reductionist efforts to find the causes for individual choice and action.

Douglas draws widely from sources in and out of the social sciences in building her case. Her eclecticism in finding the strands of her argument in Mancur Olson's classic *Logic of Collective Action* (which brilliantly draws the limits of collective action), in examples drawn from social psychology and from the history of science, and even in the nomenclature used by California vintners, makes this short book a stimulating, but also a difficult, adventure in the history of modern thought.

The main threads of Douglas' argument are drawn from the genius of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim and Ludwik Fleck's studies of the philosophy of science. Her selection of Durkheim—who was primarily a student of primitive societies, and of Fleck, a student of modern society's defining institution—follows strategically and deliberately from her premise that it is both too convenient and very wrong to exempt modern society from an objective functional analysis of thought systems on the assumption that organic, unspoken, and sacred belief systems structuring individual thought can be found only in primitive societies.

Much of Douglas' analysis is devoted to refuting various theoretical efforts to balance the books of social exchange in an attempt to redeem informed self-interest as the exclusive motor of social action. Instead, Douglas argues that only by accepting the values and thought categories of the larger group can individuals claim a sense of their identity. Indeed, she argues that true intellectual freedom must begin