Book Review

Crawford, J. 2012. Book Review of Gilton, D. L. (2012) *Lifelong learning in public libraries: principles, programs and people* **Lanham: Scarecrow Press.** *Journal of information literacy*, **6(2), http://ojs.lboro.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/JIL/article/view/BR-V6-I2-2012-2.**

Galton, Donna L. 2012. *Lifelong learning in public libraries: principles, programs and people*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press. pp.245 ISBN 9780810883567. £27.95. Pbk.

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This useful work is perhaps rather mistitled as it is principally about information literacy instruction (ILI) in public libraries to use the author's preferred term, although it explores the background world of learning theory and practice. Being an American textbook, it is primarily concerned with reporting on the US experience, although examples of good practice from other parts of the world are also included. It is a salutary thought that there is really no comparable textbook in the UK: *From lending to learning: the development and extension of public libraries.*(O'Beirne, 2010), is probably the nearest UK equivalent.

The book consists of eight chapters. There is an engaging useful introduction with some reference to information literacy (IL) training outside public libraries and a historical introduction, explaining how IL training came to public libraries. For those with no experience of learning theories, Chapter 3, 'How people grow and learn', will be particularly useful, offering as it does an easy to read introduction to educational ideas with an unsurprising emphasis on constructivism and educational humanism, which are essential to those concerned with supplementing non-formal education. Chapter 4, 'Teaching diverse groups', discusses the problems of groups with particular needs, such as immigrants. A comprehensive guide to IL work with people with disabilities forms chapter 5 (though it is worth noting this is very oriented to American laws and practices). Chapter 6, 'Planning, administration, coordination, and evaluation', discusses teaching resources, drawing heavily on higher education (HE) resources and teaching methods. Four models of public library instruction are discussed; 'Gateways to new information technologies', with its emphasis on IT and the internet, seems most relevant to UK experience and public libraries' increasing involvement in digital participation activities.

Chapter 7, 'Public libraries as nonformal cultural institutions', discusses the audience for nonformal education and draws comparisons with churches and museums where, in the latter, discovery learning is widely used. The relationship between guidance and instruction in public libraries is reviewed. Finally chapter 8, 'Instructing throughout the life cycle', outlines the lifelong learning journey from preschoolers to the elderly and the role of the public library on each stage. For public librarians, attempting to grasp the nature of the lifelong learning cycle is essential for effective training provision and this is a helpful chapter although again examples focus round the US experience. However issues such as millennial users (digital natives) are common to every advanced economy. There is quite a lengthy section on 'Elderhood' and given the increasing importance of the over-50s as internet users, often with a special interest in health matters, this is an important issue for public librarians worldwide.

Areas which receive less attention in the book are physical planning of library instruction spaces, and organisational and staffing structures. Are major changes needed to cope with what for many public librarians is still a relatively novel activity, are public librarians suitably trained for this new role and what levels and categories of staff should participate? The text is supported by a comprehensive index, bibliography and numerous references at the end of each chapter.

For a textbook primarily concerned with public libraries it perhaps leans rather heavily on the HE experience, but can still be read with profit by a public library audience.

References

O'Beirne, R. (2010). *From lending to learning: the development and extension of public libraries.* Oxford: Chandos