

BOOK REVIEWS

COMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING LOSS. 306 pages. (\$37.50). (1994). Mark Ross, Editor. York Publisher, 16781 Shagrin Boulevard, Shaker Heights, OH 44120. (ISBN 0-912752-35-1)

Most often, when I receive a new book, I may glance at the preface, but usually do not read it closely. I do not recommend this practice if you read *Communication Access*, edited by Mark Ross. It is in the preface that Dr. Ross clearly establishes the themes and purposes, which are carried out admirably through the book. Those themes include the union of technological and legislative advances, the alteration of societal (including audiological) attitudes towards hearing impairment and its amelioration, and the personal responsibility of people with hearing impairment in achieving communication access. The themes revolve around strategies for implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Communication Access is organized into several sections. It opens with a one-chapter explication of the ADA itself. From there sections are devoted to the technologies, both high and low, necessary to achieve communication access. There are sections on large-space (or wide-area) systems, personal systems, telecommunications, visual transformations of speech, and the technological future. The one-chapter section on special populations, covering the population with hearing/visual impairments, is not devoted to technology *per se*. Most sections include two or three chapters.

A consistent feature, and, I thought, hallmark, of *Communication Access*, is its emphasis on practicality. For example, the chapter on "FM Large-Area Listening Systems," by Mark Ross, has a list of FM manufacturers. "FM Personal Listening Systems," by EllaVee Yuzon, contains several case studies for FM use. "Hardwire Personal Listening Systems" by James Dempsey, contains many practical ideas for implementation, as well as a list of purchase sources. "Combined Hearing and Visual Impairments," by Mitchell Turbin, ends with a list of resources for serving that population. These are only a few examples; the book abounds with them.

While the emphasis on practicality shows the enthusiasm of authors for their

topics, authors consistently acknowledge the limitations of many technologies. For example, Turbin's chapter discusses frankly the speed/accuracy limitations of relay services. As bright a future as T-coils might have, balanced discussion of T-coil characteristics can be found in both "Induction Loop Assistive Listening Systems" (Norman Lederman and Paula Hendricks) and "Telecommunications: Acoustic Technology" (Alice Holmes). Software for text telephones is probably a lot less familiar to audiologists than T-coils, and I found Diane Castle's balanced discussion of compatibility issues in "Telecommunications: Visual Technology" enlightening.

For the most part, academic scholarship is not a consistent feature of *Communication Access*, nor did I sense it was meant to be. Holmes' chapter was the most scholarly, including an extensive reference list. Harry Levitt referred often to research in his chapter on future trends, but did not supply references. Many chapters did not contain references to research, or did so in only the most informal way, and listed only one or two references. In one sense, I did not feel the book suffered. It was not intended as a textbook. Furthermore, the authors represent a range of disciplines and interests, from high-tech researchers, to providers of interpreting services. In another sense, the lack of academic scholarship may reflect the paucity of research on assistive technologies. We should be reminded that these technologies are important to us, and that they form an area of vast potential for research.

Throughout the book the writing was mercifully simple and straightforward. Chapter lengths were generally appropriate, though I thought one or two were overly long. In the preface, we are "warned" that there will be ample repetition of information. There was, and with the exception of the chapter on "Television Amplification Devices" (Dorinne Davis), I found the repetitions helpful, or at least not redundant.

Early on in the review, I mentioned themes evident in the book. One theme was the union of technological and legislative advances. The technological advances are obvious in many chapters, and the most obvious legislative advance is the ADA itself, though other statutes are mentioned. Several chapters, such as those by Castle, and by Janet Bailey ("Sign and Oral Interpreters"), make the link to the ADA explicit. Most chapters do not make the link as explicit, and we are left to our own logic for the connection. However, if you read the preface and the first chapter, the link is not a difficult one to make. Certainly, I finished the book with an awareness of impact of technology on law, and vice versa.

The second theme I mentioned is alteration of societal and audiological attitudes toward amelioration of hearing impairment and the communicative rights of people with hearing impairment. In some places this was explicit, and in others, implicit. For example, Yuzon's chapter on FM systems has a section called "The Professional's Role." However, it did not take section titles like that for me to become acutely aware of my role in providing assistance to clients via the tech-

nologies discussed. The theme is carried through admirably.

The last theme, that of the responsibility of the consumer who is hearing impaired, is perhaps the most controversial. Probably very few people with hearing impairment will read this book. Yet Ross, both in his preface and his own chapter, emphasizes the role of the consumer in being responsible for communication access. This is further evident in editing throughout, and in the choice of Rocky Stone to write the foreword. In its entirety, it seemed to me the message was for me, as audiologist, to work with my clients, to enable them to be responsible communicators.

Communication Access succeeds on many counts. It is a readable, practical overview of current issues and technologies. At the same time it is provocative in that it reminds us that we cannot fail, now or in the future, to consider all possible communication channels in our professional roles.

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR HEARING AIDS. Videotape. (\$19.95 plus \$4.25 shipping cost). C. Everett Koop. SHHH Publications, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Having worn a hearing aid for over 5 years, I approached this videotape rather skeptically. The videotape was designed to introduce new hearing aid users to the basics of hearing aid use. But I found it very informative, providing me with new information in some cases, and reinforcing previous knowledge areas in others. The videotape describes exactly what the hearing aid user can expect, both pros and cons, from the use of hearing aids. The tape contains information about how to care for and use hearing aids, as well as some facts regarding hearing and hearing loss. What I found most helpful about the videotape is that it advises family members, friends, and co-workers on ways to help the new hearing aid user adjust to amplification. I, for one, will be showing this videotape to my husband and son tonight! I enthusiastically endorse this videotape, and I hope that every audiologist who dispenses hearing aids will have loaner copies available for their patients.

Michelle Berry
46-year-old hearing aid user

COMMUNICATION AND ADULT HEARING LOSS. 136 pages. (\$14.95 Australian dollars plus \$6 shipping/handling). (1993). Norman P. Erber. Clavis Publishing, 12 Cooke Street, Abbotsford, Victoria, 3067, Australia. (ISBN 0-646-14156-2)

In a neat, concise little book, Dr. Erber packs in considerable information regarding hearing loss in adults. This book is designed for family members and friends of adults who have hearing loss. It provides information regarding communication, conversation, hearing and hearing loss, and ways to resolve some of the communication problems that accompany hearing loss. The book is full of practical tips about communicating with people who are hearing impaired, most of which are quite simple to implement. Most family members, for example, are probably not aware of the effects of noise on the hearing aid wearer, and Dr. Erber devotes an entire chapter to examine common environmental problems and how to solve them. The last chapter addresses things that the communication partner can do to increase the likelihood that conversation will be a shared experience. The author's frank, straightforward style helps make the information in this chapter, as well as the rest of the book, relatively easy to digest. I would love to see this book and Dr. Koop's videotape accompany every hearing aid sold to adults. Both items go a long way toward increasing the understanding of the special communication problems of adult hearing aid wearers.

Michelle Berry
46-year-old hearing aid user