Essential classification is the key text on classification for any library or information studies student, and this second edition is a timely update of a work that was first published over 10 years ago. Intended for an audience of beginners, the first chapters really go back to basics introducing the concept of classification in general; but as a text packed full of practical exercises, the later more in-depth chapters will be of use to anyone involved in the pursuit of classification.

Brougton introduces us to the basics of classification, and explains the differences between different types of classification (such as entity/phenomenon, aspect and folk taxonomies) and different types of relationships (such as semantic and syntactic); and that there are three basic types of classification structures (enumerative, analytic-synthetic, and faceted).

There are warnings about cross-classification (which is a bad thing), and the extent of hospitality and flexibility (can a scheme accommodate new topics?). Once these are understood, the reader can move on to content analysis.

"The problem of aboutness" is something which all classifiers will struggle with at times, and Broughton's chapters on content help to allay fears with how to cope with difficult items. I especially like one of her fundamental laws of classification – *"Never classify by the title!"* and I am sure many of us have dealt with items where this law is especially pertinent, or have come across CIP data which has fallen foul of it. Concepts of specificity and exhaustivity are explained, and difficulties surrounding individuals are looked at.

While still looking at what books are about, Broughton discusses controlled indexing languages and the disadvantages of natural languages, before going into a more detailed exploration of the Library of Congress Subject Headings. Within the chapter on basic headings the beginner is warned that one of the easiest mistakes to make is to assign headings that are too broad, in the mistaken belief they are being helpful. We are also reminded that in general no more than six headings should be assigned to an item (although it's nice to know that even LoC break this rule on occasions). In addition because this book is aimed at beginners, there is also a brief section on the convention of adding subject headings to a catalogue record, including the importance of punctuation.

The next chapter looks at structured headings, and the reader is given information about geographical subdivisions, free-floating subdivisions, and the use of name headings. These two chapters combined give a neat introduction to the use of LCSH, and a brief look at FAST headings.

From chapter 14 onwards Broughton starts to discuss classification schemes, firstly in general terms, and then more closely with chapters specifically dedicated to Library of Congress Classification (LCC), Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). The introduction to classification schemes advises a novice on how best to navigate a scheme new to them, and warns not to classify from the index, or to invent classmarks. Simple but useful advice, such as to read the instructions, is given.

The reader is introduced to each classification scheme by being given the brief historical background to its creation, and an explanation of how it is constructed with pros and cons included. For instance LCC as an enumerative system can prove to have lengthier more complex schedules than some schemes, has repetition of concepts, and classes cannot be constructed; but is seen to be easy to use and simple to apply. Although the primary explanations of the schemes are based on the print copies, the web versions are also discussed, with any advantages laid out.

One of the LCC chapters gives a very useful introduction to the use of tables in LCC which are not intuitive, and I found this of especial benefit. For anyone coming to classifying using one of these schemes, but not having used them before, they will find plenty of clear advice, and useful exercises to help them understand how it works. Following on from these specific schemes Broughton next concentrates on faceted classification in general and discusses Ranganathan's theories and principles.

Towards the end of the book Broughton moves away from elucidating individual schemes and take a broader overview. Managing classification looks at the upkeep of schemes from an editorial viewpoint, and managing schemes locally; it provides advice on what to think about if you are in the position to choose a classification scheme for you library, and to be aware of who is doing the classification, and who the end users are.

The final chapter of the book takes us into digital space, looking at the various ways classification interacts with the online world; from the use of the web versions of scheme documentation, to user interface discovery layers that sit on top of library catalogues, and from the classification of digital material to social classification and 'folksonomies', via the arrangement of online resources. We are also taken through ontologies, RDF triples and the semantic web.

Having only been treated to brief sessions on 'cat & class' when I completed my library Masters, most of my skills as a cataloguer have been learnt on the job. Broughton's work is something I wish I had been introduced to at an early stage in my career, and even now it has clarified and emphasised many pertinent concepts and ideas. Useful aids in the book include the bullet point summaries that accompany every chapter, the many practical exercises, and the useful glossary and bibliography. I would suggest *Essential Classification* as a welcome addition to any cataloguer's book shelves, but especially to those at the start of their career.

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