

---

# Access Is Not Problem Solving: Disability Justice and Libraries

ALANA KUMBIER AND JULIA STARKEY

---

## ABSTRACT

In this paper we advocate for an understanding of *access* that both responds to the pragmatic needs of the American Library Association's "Core Values of Librarianship" (to guide professional practice and education) and helps librarians and library workers imagine how we might transform the systems, beliefs, and practices that make libraries and the profession inaccessible and inequitable. We are interested in expanding our shared understanding of access so that it includes a professional ethic of accessibility, justice, and collaboration. We bring to this argument a set of knowledges, experiences, beliefs, and politics that inform our understanding of what access is and what it could be. Specifically, our understanding of access and accessibility is shaped by our participation in disability justice activism, disability studies communities, and our personal experience. We suggest that thinking in solidarity with disability justice movements can be beneficial to all of us: librarians, library workers, and our communities of users; those of us with disabilities; those of us who are living without illnesses or disabilities; and those of us who move between disabled, ill and not.

The American Library Association's (ALA) "Core Values of Librarianship" (2004, n.p.) identifies Access as a Core Value and asserts that it is vital that libraries ensure that "all information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users." The Core Value of Access emphasizes ready, equal, and equitable access to information for all. This value suggests that library patrons should not have difficulty accessing information resources provided

by the library, that the same information should be available to all users, and that all users should be able to access all of the library's information resources. Under this value, providing access also involves figuring out how patrons with different access needs (for example, sighted and blind patrons; technologically savvy and technologically inexperienced patrons) can access the information provided by the library. The notion of ensuring *equal access* to information is, according to Nancy Kranich (2005, n.p.), "derived from the concept of fairness as uniform distribution, where everyone is entitled to the same level of access and can avail themselves if they so choose," while ensuring *equity* requires a commitment to justice because "fairness also demands remedies to redress historic injustices that have prevented or diminished access in the first place: for, just as there can be no fairness without equality, there can be none without justice." By emphasizing *equity* as well as *equality* in its Core Value of Access, the ALA promulgates an expectation that North American libraries will provide access to information resources in ways that accommodate and meet *all* users' needs. This conceptualization of Access as a matter of equity requires library workers to account not only for the needs of individual users, or of specific groups of users but also for the contexts (social, cultural, historical, material, and economic) that shape our users' terms of access.

The ALA Access statement directs readers to section B.2.1.14 of the *ALA Policy Manual* titled "Economic Barriers to Information Access," which indicates that the Association understands economic challenges to be the major obstacle to Access. Indeed, in addition to reiterating the Association's charge that libraries provide ready, equal, and equitable access to information resources, the policy statement argues that publicly funded libraries should not charge user fees, and opposes legislative or regulatory limits on access to information as a condition of funding for public libraries (ALA Council, 2013, p. 13). The "Core Values of Librarianship" and *ALA Policy Manual* anticipate economic and political threats to Access. By framing Access in this way, the documents position access as a concern that libraries can address by focusing on funding and political advocacy and ensuring that our systems enable users to connect with and access the information that libraries provide.

The ALA's Core Values are intended to name and describe the values that librarians, as members of a professional community, share (Weisinger, 2003, p. 34). The values originated in response to "an urgent recommendation of the 1999 Congress on Professional Education calling for an official guiding statement," and as such they are also designed to support and guide professional education (Gerhardt, 2000, p. 17). When a Core Values task force proposed an early iteration of the values in 2001, the ALA leadership and those on the task force believed that the stakes for their adoption were high. Don Sager (2001, p. 149), the group's chair, argued that "without a common set of core values, librarianship could not be

considered to be a profession.” The first set of eight core values was created through a process of collective deliberation by a subset of librarians. Members of the task force identified the values they felt were relevant to all libraries, and the list of over a hundred values was then “distilled” or “reduce[d]” (depending on whose account you read) into a list of eight statements (Weissinger, 2003, p. 34). A statement proposing that libraries provide “assurance of free and open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works” was second on that list (p. 34).

With its emphasis on the already-extant, dominant commitments and functions of librarianship, the task force’s eight values statements promulgated a set of practices and attitudes as Core Values. These reflect the interests, beliefs, and ideological frameworks to which their creators and endorsers subscribed. Although these creators were no doubt well-intentioned and likely understood their function on the task force as representative (of the interests and beliefs of other librarians and of the profession), it is important to remember that the values emerged out of conversations among a group of librarians living and working in a particular cultural, political, historical moment. Although this group of librarians was representative in some ways, the task forces assembled to work through this first and later iterations of the Core Values could not possibly have represented the politics, value systems, histories, theoretical frameworks, and practices of the multitude of American librarians. The stakeholders in the room, the contributors and codifiers, were members of one professional group, all of whom could afford membership dues, pay for (or have employers pay for) their travel expenses, and take the time away from work to participate in such deliberations.

While the Core Value of Access in its brief iteration emphasizes justice and equality, the longer explication of the value in the *ALA Policy Manual* focuses on practices, operations, and suggested interests. In this way the guidance that professionals receive on ensuring equity and access maintains, and protects, a status quo. Thomas Weissinger (2003, p. 33) suggests (and we agree) that the Core Values adhere to an orthodox, positivist worldview rooted in Enlightenment thought and sustain “prevalent social views about diversity and equity.” They do this as part of their work to “standardize education and training of new librarians and govern decision-making by addressing problems regularly confronted by professionals” (p. 35). The statement treats *equity* and *access* as economic, political, and technical problems to be solved, but does not challenge librarians to assess, and reassess, what access and equity mean beyond the level of practice, or beyond the level of access to materials or information. The statements do not create space for other possible avenues for enabling access or thinking about equity.

In this paper we advocate for an understanding of Access that both responds to the pragmatic needs of the Core Values statement (to guide pro-

fessional practice and education) and helps librarians and library workers imagine how we might transform the systems, beliefs, and practices that make libraries (not just information resources) and the profession inaccessible and inequitable. We are interested in expanding our shared understanding of Access so that it includes a professional ethic of accessibility, justice, and collaboration.

We, like the members of the Core Values task force, the ALA Council, and everyone else who participated in the articulation of the Core Values, bring to this argument sets of knowledge, experience, beliefs, and politics that inform our understanding of what access is and what it could be. Specifically, our understanding of access and accessibility is shaped by our participation in disability justice activism, disability studies communities, and our personal experience. In a move akin to that made by advocates for universal design, who build environments and enact pedagogies designed to be “as accessible as possible from the outset, to as many people as possible” (Hamraie, 2013, n.p.), we suggest that thinking in solidarity with disability justice movements can be beneficial to many of us: librarians, library workers, and our communities of users, those of us with disabilities, those of us who are living without illnesses or disabilities, and those of us who move between disabled, ill and not. We bring disability into conversation with the existing professional understanding of access because disability scholars and activists have already developed frameworks for access that are centered on justice, and have articulated approaches to becoming accessible that start from commitments to equity and interdependence. In other words, we can learn from and build on the work that disability scholars and activists are doing, and do so in productive ways that will benefit many of our users.

### LEARNING FROM DISABILITY STUDIES

In order for our argument to align with the work of disability scholars and activists, we need to share a working understanding of *disability*. Many readers may be familiar with the understanding of disability articulated in major U.S. legislation, like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA seeks to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities in areas of employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government facilities, services, and communications and telecommunications (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).<sup>1</sup> The definition of disability articulated in the ADA emphasizes individual experiences of capacity and impairment. According to the act, a person with a disability is someone who experiences “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,” has a record of this kind of experience in the past, or “is regarded as having such an impairment” (U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, n.d., n.p.). The focus of the ADA is on the individual worker and his impairment.

In libraries, disability is often conceptualized in ways that align with the ADA definition. This is understandable because libraries are organizations where people are employed and access public accommodations. Libraries may also be state- or locally funded public institutions that provide services and access to information. Although many libraries remain inaccessible (and do not meet the ADA requirements), librarians may be aware of the ADA because of the ways in which their buildings are or are not structurally accessible. Later in this paper, we will return to one indicator of libraries' ADA-informed framework: the professional literature, which focuses on service to people with disabilities, and to a lesser extent, the employment of librarians with disabilities. While this way of thinking about disability is not wrong per se, it is important to recognize its limits.

The ADA's framing of disability as an individual issue aligns well with what disability studies scholars and activists call the *medical model of disability*. The medical model positions disability as a medical problem, as something to be rehabilitated or treated at the individual level. Disability studies scholar Alison Kafer (2013, p. 5) asserts that this way of conceptualizing disability "frames atypical bodies and minds as deviant, pathological, and defective, best understood and addressed in medical terms." In this model, specific kinds of human variation are ascribed with meaning (and are often pathologized and deemed undesirable or inferior). When we think of disability in this way, we imagine it as a problem that resides in particular people's bodies, something that they and their caretakers are responsible for correcting, managing, or curing. This way of framing disability also encourages a collective societal understanding of how we should respond to disability: as something to be dealt with through medical research and treatment, drawing on the resources of individual and familial support networks.

Thinking about disability as something that is not just an individual concern has significant ramifications for our understanding of access, both inside of libraries and beyond. We (the authors) find disability studies scholar Tanya Titchkosky's (2011) theorization of the relational characteristic of disability helpful for making this point:

The disabled, people with disabilities, disabled individuals—these terms . . . represent concepts used to notice and orient self and other. Whether as self-identification or as a label for groups and individuals, disability is also a way to perceive and make sense of the bodies, minds, senses, emotions, comportments, and even gestures of people. . . . To conceive as something as disability can be understood as an oriented act of perception, intimately tied to evaluation that guides interaction. This orientation grounds the critical understanding that disability should be regarded as that which exists between people; one cannot be disabled alone. (p. 5)

In this framing, disability is an inherently relational, social matter; it is something that *happens*, over and over, in interactions among people.

When we think of disability in this way, our understanding of access needs to also fundamentally shift. Access becomes more than solving problems, making resources available, or putting the best, most usable system into place.

Titchkosky's theorization of disability and access can help librarians understand how the current Core Value of Access relies upon a traditional, dominant logic. At present, Access, as conceptualized in the Core Values, is something that users have or do not have. The library is positioned as the arbiter of access for users. Titchkosky argues that when we (the collective *we*—social humans, in libraries and out in the world) think of access as something one “has” or “personally needs,” the “idea that the world is ‘naturally’ for some and not for others is reproduced,” and it “seems ‘only natural’ that some forms of embodied existence have trouble accessing the stuff of daily life, such as it is,” while others (that is, people with disabilities) are excluded (p. 6). Here is where our redefinition of the Core Value of Access has the most at stake. As librarians interested in equity and justice, we do not want to perpetuate an ideological system that naturalizes the inclusion of some users and the exclusion of others because that is the way things have “always” been.

When we think of disability as a problem to be solved or limit our thinking to ADA compliance, we miss opportunities to understand disability in more nuanced ways and think more broadly about what creating accessible, inclusive libraries could mean. In order to expand our shared understanding of disability beyond the ADA definition and the medical model, we introduce a major concept in disability studies and activism: the *social model of disability*.

#### *The Social Model of Disability*

While disability scholars and activists attend to individual experiences of impairment, they also ask us to pay attention to the social dimensions of disability. They assert that “disability” is not just a medical matter but is also a socially constructed experience. Disability scholar-activist Mike Oliver (1990) coined the phrase “social model of disability” to describe this framework in which the focus shifts from individual persons’ medical diagnoses and impairments toward the material, physical, and social environments that impose limitations or create barriers for people with impairments. By reframing disability as an experience that is shaped by social, cultural, historic, political, and economic factors, disability scholars and activists are able to explore how these factors impact people’s lived experience of impairment. Equally important, this reframing allows scholars and activists to analyze the social practices that actively disable people: marginalization, stigmatization, disenfranchisement, stereotyping, and the perpetuation of inequitable living and working conditions. Thinking about disability as an effect of power relations (Garland-Thomson, 2005, p. 1557) means that we critically engage individual and collective experi-

ences of being disabled, the forces and practices that disable, and the opportunities to transform oppressive relations.

Disability studies scholarship demonstrates a commitment to theorizing the contexts and power relations that shape disability experiences. During the 1980s and 1990s, disability studies grew from the work of activists who transitioned into the academy. They investigated the political and social dimensions of disability, focusing largely on analyses in the areas of public policy, social services, civil rights history, and sociology (Oliver, 1983; Shapiro, 1994; Stone, 1984<sup>2</sup>). Starting in the 1990s, humanities scholars also gained prominence in the field. They theorized the implications of disability representations in different historical and cultural contexts, exploring what happens when scholars take disability into account in their studies of embodiment, aesthetics, identity, normalcy, citizenship, nationalism, and narrative (Davis, 1995; Garland-Thomson, 1996; Snyder, Brueggemann, & Garland-Thomson, 2002; Snyder & Mitchell, 2006).

At the same time, critical disability autobiographies and memoirs entered the academic landscape (Bérubé, 1998; Brownworth & Raffo, 1999; Clare, 2009; Grealy, 1994; Lorde, 1982, 1996; Mairs, 1996; Wojnarowicz, 1991). The authors of these works give voice to their own experiences and shape the terms of disability representation as cultural producers. In a review of feminist disability studies literature that included a number of autobiographies and memoirs, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (2005, p. 1582) suggests that this work encourages its readers to “reimagine more deeply what it means to have a dynamic and distinct body that witnesses its own perpetual interaction with the social and material environment.” Importantly, these texts explore how their subjects’ disability experience is also shaped by gender, race, sexuality, and class status. For example, in *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*, Eli Clare (2009) presents his life story in relation to the ecological and economic environments he grew up in (working class in an Oregonian lumber town), making it clear how his family’s working-class status, the different forms of violence he experienced (structural, environmental, familial), and the forests, rivers, and beaches where he found solace all contributed to his growth and development. And he shares how communities of queer, feminist, and disabled activists and comrades created spaces in which he feels he belongs, crediting them with helping him proudly claim his embodiment, heal from the sexual abuse and torture he experienced growing up, and develop a radical, multi-issue politics.

Like Clare, disability studies scholars have also recognized the importance of exploring how disability intersects with other aspects of personal or collective identities, embodiments, and contexts, and how power relations manifest at these intersections. They have examined how disability experiences extend and complicate politics and modes of analysis in feminist studies (Garland-Thomson, 1996, 2005; Hall, 2011; Wendell, 1996),

queer theory (McRuer, 2006; Samuels, 2003), and African American studies (Bell, 2011). Recent work in the field has theorized disability as an assemblage, focusing on the relational and phenomenological nature of disability (Bost, 2010; Erelles, 2011; Kafer, 2013; Titchkosky, 2011). These analyses treat disability, race, sexuality, class, gender, and nationality as categories that emerge through “events, actions, and encounters between bodies” rather than as characteristics or attributes located in specific persons (Jasbir Puar, cited in Kafer, 2013, p. 10), and bring material, political, transnational, and economic concerns to bear on their analyses.

The literature we describe here, accompanied by survey-style anthologies like *The Disability Studies Reader* (Davis, 2013) and *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies* (Watson, Roulstone, & Thomas, 2012), offer an orientation to the field of disability studies for the interested reader. The concept of *access* that we propose in this paper is highly informed by this literature and the work of disability activists. We have learned that thinking about disability requires a “both/and” approach (a way of thinking indebted to Chicana theorizations of third-space consciousness): librarians and library workers need to recognize that disability is experienced by individuals in specific ways, requiring particular (material) accommodations, and that disability is a “fluid, contextual social relation” that exceeds technological solutions, changes to a built environment, or better symbols of inclusion (Ben-Moshe & Powell, 2007; Fritsch, 2013, p. 142; Licona, 2012).

In keeping with a both/and approach, we also remind readers that the understanding of disability we have gleaned from the disability studies literature is informed by and intertwined with what we have learned from disability activists. We agree with disability studies scholar Nirmala Erelles (2014), who argues that

[i]t is not possible to think with disability studies and not be accountable to the actual material realities that are foregrounded in [activists’] powerful and passionate writing on desire, struggle, pride, resistance, revolution and pain. It is their work that has taught me to think with disabilities and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the generosity of their labor that is sometimes appropriated by credentialed academics with little acknowledgement or recognition of the conditions within which this knowledge was produced. (n.p.)

Like Erelles and other disability studies scholars, we build our argument using tools and knowledges that have been offered to us by our academic and activist comrades. We recognize the legitimacy and relevance of both intellectual traditions in our work for access in libraries and encourage others to value and draw on hybrid scholar-activist knowledges as well.

#### *How Disability Is Conceptualized in the Library and Information Science Literature*

The understanding of disability as a social, relational entity both aligns with and diverges from the ways it is presented in the professional-library



literature and policy documents. At present the ALA addresses disability-related policy and practice in a few different places. Although disability is not explicitly named in any of the short Core Value statements, we find it in the *ALA Policy Manual* (ALA Council, 2013) in sections on “Key Action Areas for the Association” (part of a diversity goal, A.1.5); conference arrangements for people with disabilities (A.7.1.3); library services to persons with disabilities (B.2.1.20); principles for digitized content (part of the equity and access section (B.4.6.2); equal opportunity employment (B.9.3); and the policy on “Library Services for People with Disabilities” (B.9.3.2). This last section concerning library services is the most extensive section of the *ALA Policy Manual* dealing with disability. The policy was submitted by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), an organization within the ALA that provides professional development and networking opportunities for librarians serving “special populations,” advocates for universal access for all library users, and publishes accessibility toolkits and standards for services to users with disabilities (ASCLA, 2006). Also available on the ASCLA website, the policy opens with the statement:

The American Library Association recognizes that people with disabilities are a large and neglected minority in the community and are severely underrepresented in the library profession. Disabilities cause many personal challenges. In addition, many people with disabilities face economic inequity, illiteracy, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment and the broad range of societal activities.

Libraries play a catalytic role in the lives of people with disabilities by facilitating their full participation in society. Libraries should use strategies based upon the principles of universal design to ensure that library policy, resources and services meet the needs of all people. (2001, n.p.)

The opening of this policy does some helpful rhetorical work: it recognizes the challenges that people with disabilities face in accessing libraries—as both patrons and workers; and it acknowledges the ways in which disability experience has social, economic, and political stakes. The full policy (beyond these introductory paragraphs) addresses the scope of disability law, describes legal mandates and areas of compliance for libraries under the ADA, and specifically names the ways in which services, facilities, collections, technologies, employment, library education, professional development, and ALA conferences and publications must or should be made accessible. This is all good, although it is important to remember that the work the policy performs is not in itself transformative, but descriptive.

The Library Services for People with Disabilities policy, like the institutional diversity policies that feminist scholar and diversity worker Sara Ahmed (2012) writes about in her work on institutional inclusion, both documents the inequality of the profession and “becomes usable as a mea-

sure of good performance” (p. 84). Documents like the ALA disabilities policy can identify benchmarks for change, and in general terms suggest what practical changes are necessary to meet those benchmarks. It is important to remember that policies are not substitutes for action (p. 101). As Ahmed observes, sometimes the production of diversity-related policy documents produces a “‘marshmallow feeling,’ a feeling that we are doing enough, or doing well enough, or even that there is nothing left to do” (p. 101). The document can function as evidence that the problem (diversity—or in our case inaccessibility) is taken care of because it has been thought about, addressed, and codified in an official, documented way. Even when it is clear that writing and endorsing an organizational policy document is not enough, the manner in which a policy is written can shape the ways that people think about its subject and the kinds of action the policy promotes. While the Core Values statement on Access and the Library Services for People with Disabilities policy aim for more than compliance (this is evident in the disability policy in the sections that include guidelines for what libraries “should” do, in addition to what they legally “must” do), they still encourage what Ahmed calls a “tick-box approach” (p. 106) to the problem of disability. In such a “tick-box” framework, what matters most is meeting specific, measurable goals and treating a given concern—for example, diversity or accessibility—as a problem to be solved through reaching performance indicators. In other words, the assumption is that when we have done things A, B, and C, we have achieved diversity or accessibility and hence are free to go about our business as usual with a clear collective conscience.

Like the Core Values statement and the ALA disabilities policy, the professional literature treats accessibility mostly as a matter of finding the right solutions to problems faced by patrons with disabilities who navigate our systems and access our materials; for example, services for users with vision impairments. It is not difficult to find smart, helpful, practical, and up-to-date recommendations for best practices for adaptive technologies—tools that help users with disabilities access information resources both inside the brick-and-mortar structure of the library and beyond (Booth, 2012; Brown & Freund, 2010; Guder, 2010; Mates & Booth, 2012). As Heather Hill (2013) found in her content analysis of disability and accessibility in the library and information science (LIS) literature, much of the literature focuses on electronic accessibility (p. 139). A quarter of the articles that Hill analyzed focused on web, database, and software accessibility, and the three other most popular themes for articles were services to persons with disabilities, program or project descriptions, and product descriptions. Her study confirmed earlier analyses that found that “there is little actual research focused on disabilities,” and that “much of the literature is focused on describing difficulties and recommending solutions” (p. 140). The focus of this literature aligns with a larger social

framework for understanding disability as a problem. Titchkosky (2011) reminds us that while this is the dominant, naturalized way of thinking about disability, there are alternatives. She suggests that members of institutions do more than focus on solving the problems that impairment and disability present to us: members should also “begin to study how it is that these bodies, minds, or senses have been made sense of as problems” (p. 135). If we think about disability in ways that do not focus on the problems to be solved, then we move away from thinking about disability as an object for research, as something to be quantified or known, as a factor to be entered into cost-benefit analyses, and as a troublesome glitch in the otherwise smooth, efficient operations of a system run by able-bodied workers.

There is evidence that library workers mean well and that they try to work within the existing frameworks for understanding disability (as a problem) to provide services to users. To readers who are not accustomed to thinking of disability as something other than a problem to be solved, the library literature suggests that the profession is doing well by our patrons when it comes to identifying accessibility barriers and providing solutions to them. For example, *Services for Users with Disabilities*, an Association of Research Libraries (ARL) SPEC kit, includes well over a hundred pages’ worth of exemplary library policies of services to users with disabilities, and reprints of individual ARL member libraries’ web pages enumerating the specific tools, services, and pathways through which users can gain access to library resources and adaptive technologies (Brown & Freund, 2010). It is easy to imagine from library disability-services pages and the literature that libraries are anticipating and responding to the needs of people with disabilities. It would seem that libraries are doing well if they are delivering all that they promise on their websites and in their professional literature. However, while this emphasis in the literature is helpful, it does not attend to the larger structural, systemic, or social transformations that could enable access for people with disabilities. This literature treats access as a matter of many minor adjustments and fixes and, like the university disability-services statements that Titchkosky (2011) studies, reiterates the idea that disability is “a personal need which requires evaluation, services, or counseling, rather than collective action or exploration, [and] requires us to engage disability in individualized terms” (p. 12). By focusing on solving individual users’ problems and positioning the library as able to provide services to users on its own terms (namely, encouraging patrons to submit specific documented needs, with libraries responding on a case-by-case basis), the literature does not attend to the larger structural, systemic, or social transformations that could enable access for all users; in other words this literature treats access as a matter of many minor adjustments and fixes rather than a sustained commitment to evaluating what access means for all users.

Another constraint inherent in the literature has to do with who has been involved in its production. As Hill (2013, p. 141) observes, “there is limited information in the research coming directly from people with disabilities.” In our research for this paper, we found only a few articles that (re)present or analyze users with disabilities’ perspectives, the most extensive of which was Clayton Copeland’s (2011a) qualitative study “Library and Information Center Accessibility: The Differently-able Patron’s Perspective.” This study models a socially oriented, critical-theoretical approach to studying library accessibility—exploring how dominant attitudes and assumptions about disability inform library services and accessibility, and how patrons who are “differently-able” (Copeland’s preferred terminology to recognize patrons’ abilities) navigate library spaces, systems, and services—and makes recommendations for further research and accessibility-praxis within the profession.

Copeland’s work with differently-able patrons as research informants and study participants is still unusual in the field. In her content analysis of the LIS literature, Hill (2013) found that only 36 percent of research articles involved participants with disabilities, all of whom were engaged in “either information-seeking or accessibility-testing research” (p. 140). This means that the majority of research being conducted in these areas, within the profession, is being conducted with able-bodied researchers. Using the following example, Hill illustrates a major reason why it is important to involve users with disabilities in research:

The predominant approach to testing accessibility is to have fully able-bodied researchers perform testing. While this approach is perhaps quicker, it may make for cases of token accessibility over true accessibility. Even if an environment is deemed to be accessible based on current standards, there can still be a gap between technically-accessible and user-friendly. Research has shown that able-bodied participants who test for general standards can still miss accessibility challenges. (p. 141)

Hill’s argument for the involvement of users with disabilities in accessibility testing is important not just because it means that the results of those tests would be more accurate but also because involvement of users in these projects is a way of building connections with disability communities and recognizing the value of distinct user perspectives.

Hill’s example of the difference between the experiences of users with disabilities and nondisabled users also resonates with Ahmed’s (2012) observation about how the experience of *inaccessibility*—in her work, encountering (metaphorical) “brick walls”—is different if one has not experienced obstacles. She writes that diversity workers (like users with disabilities) develop a critical orientation to access through the experience of “coming up against” particular brick walls, arguing that “[t]o those who do not come up against it, the wall does not appear—the institution [or, in our case, the library website, space, or resource] is lived and experienced

as being open, committed, and diverse” (p. 174). For able-bodied users, the experience of participating in a usability test may be reassuring—and may offer an opportunity to have that “marshmallow feeling” by participating in an effort to make things better for users with disabilities (replicating a problematic hierarchy of *doing for* which emerges in that moment). But the able-bodied user does not bring a bigger picture into the testing scenario; an able-bodied person “wearing a blindfold to ‘experience blindness’ suggests that the only thing there is to learn about blindness is what it feels like to move around in the dark. The meaning of blindness . . . is completely encapsulated in the experience of wearing a blindfold” (Kafer, 2013, pp. 4–5). However, users with disabilities may bring to the testing scenario knowledges, workarounds, and ways of completing tasks that able-bodied users have never had to develop or have not learned by being in community with other people with disabilities. This rich experiential knowledge is lost when users with disabilities are not involved in the research process.

There is another critically important group concerned with access (and equity as well) within the profession, a group of people who barely appear in the research or literature: librarians with disabilities. Our research confirmed what Ed Garcia, Arianne Hartsell-Gundy, Jessica Hernández, J. Porcaro, and Jennifer Walker (2010) observe, that

it is difficult to give definite numbers related to the number of people who have disabilities and even harder to get data related to the number of librarians who have disabilities. . . . Professional associations such as the American Library Association do not systematically collect this information. Most of the data that has been gathered is self-reported, and some people hesitate to disclose a disabling condition. (p. 6)

The literature searches we performed when researching this paper yielded very few articles about the experiences or perspectives of people with disabilities working in libraries, whether as professional librarians or as staff (Barlow, 1995; Copeland, 2011b; Johnstone, 2005; Sager, Bruni, Davis, & Robinson, 1998; Ziglar, 2006).

The articles we found on librarians with disabilities focused on the personal and professional narratives of individual library workers with disabilities who had succeeded in completing their professional education, getting hired, and making significant contributions to their organizations or institutions. Stories like these can be inspiring and informative for people with disabilities who are considering becoming librarians or library workers; additionally, they can help change the belief that people with disabilities cannot or should not work in libraries. But these accounts do not appear regularly enough, nor are they published widely enough, to significantly alter popular perceptions. Articles focused on personal accounts sustain a focus on disability as an individualized phenomenon, and librarians with disabilities as exceptional cases, rather than analyz-

ing access to the profession in terms of structural or systemic inequalities (Bourg, 2014).

This is a moment when it is helpful to remember the both/and approach to thinking about access and accessibility. It can be informative and useful to learn how individual people have negotiated their experience with disability while working in libraries and to get a sense of how libraries can accommodate workers with particular disabilities or conditions. But if we tell these stories over and over again and do not consider how to change the terms of access to the profession or the way we think about disability in the profession, we will not get beyond the “tick-box” approach to realizing our professional values of access and equity.

### A TRANSFORMATIVE VALUE OF ACCESS

One way to transform our collective, professional understanding of Access and move beyond individually focused, problem-focused ways of thinking about disability in the profession is to engage the framework of *collective access*. The notion of collective access, articulated by activists like Mia Mingus (2010a, 2010b), understands disability as intertwined with other aspects of embodiment and lived experience, and thus connects disability justice activism with antiracist, feminist, reproductive justice, queer, and prison abolitionist movements. The framework of collective access also centers *solidarity* and *interdependence*—on these terms, creating access is a shared responsibility and requires a shift in thinking. Instead of understanding access as the result of specific accommodations for individuals, collective access focuses on developing strategies for practicing mutual interdependence and supporting access for communities. We highlight here some tenets of disability justice and collective access frameworks that are particularly relevant to libraries and librarianship.

#### *“Nothing about Us without Us”: Community-Informed Access and Professional Participation*

The popular disability justice slogan “nothing about us without us,” which has been an organizing concept for disability rights activists since the early 1990s, centers the social and political experience of disability (Charlton, 1998, p. 17). Its central demand is that the people most affected by a given policy or practice should participate in authoring, designing, and/or setting the terms on which it will be enacted. “Nothing about us without us” argues that people with disabilities should be involved in decisions regarding disability in many arenas: in the creation of accessible material and social environments; in the care and treatment that intimately affect our livelihoods; and around policies and legislation at multiple levels. At its fullest realization “nothing about us without us” also implies leadership by people with disabilities—not simply participation. Reading the call that the Creating Collective Access (2010) organizers put out to fellow “crips

and allies/comrades” in their inaugural organizing moment,<sup>3</sup> it is clear that they foreground a collective approach in their work, led by people with disabilities:

We are disabled and chronically ill queer women of color who will be in Detroit this summer attending the Allied Media Conference (AMC) and the United States Social Forum (USSF). We are working to create collective access for crips in Detroit.

We envision a community-built-and-led collective access network of crips and our allies/comrades working to help each other to create and practice the kind of access, community and crip love that we know is possible! We want to help create access for us in ways that also builds community, care, crip solidarity, solidarity with non-disabled comrades and is led by crips! We want to stretch and think about collective access, resisting against the individualization of access in our world and movements. (n.p.)

In the context of librarians’ Core Value of Access, “nothing about us without us” can usefully frame our thinking as we imagine how we could enable access to more than our materials and live up to the promise of a professional commitment to access in many forms. What could fuller participation and leadership by people with disabilities mean for the profession? In the sections that follow, we suggest how transformative the conceptualization of Access might translate into practice.

#### *Recruit, Educate, Hire, and Support Library Workers with Disabilities*

To make our profession accessible and equitable, members need to make practical commitments to equitable hiring and training or education for people with disabilities who are interested in working in libraries at any level—as staff, librarians, or administrators. Fortunately, a model for developing, funding, and implementing a scholars’ program, similar to the Spectrum Scholars, though with a focus on people with disabilities, already exists in the form of a 2010 “Emerging Leaders” report for ASCLA (Garcia et al., 2010). Among its recommendations are recruiting students with disabilities, and those interested in serving people with disabilities, into LIS master’s degree programs; pairing students with mentors in their area of professional interest; providing tuition scholarships and funding to attend ALA conferences; encouraging student participation in a professional learning community; and promoting students’ leadership development and networking activities (pp. 9–12). These proposed actions foster equitable access to the profession by offering financial and social support, facilitating the professional connections and mentoring essential for career development, and recognizing the leadership potential of librarians with disabilities. The proposal cannot be implemented at present because for a program like this to work, ALA would need to expand ASCLA’s staff (and we call on it to do so). It is, at the very least, encouraging to know that emerging leaders have already identified access to the profession for

people with disabilities as a critical issue facing libraries and have demonstrated what an equity-minded approach that education, hiring, and retention for people with disabilities would entail.

*Engage People with Disabilities (Users and Nonusers) in Our Planning, Decision-Making, and Service-Design Activities*

Increasing the number of library workers with disabilities is not enough to fulfill the promise of “nothing about us without us.” In order to understand how users with disabilities access and experience library spaces, services, and resources, we need to ask them; in order to understand the barriers to access for people who are not users, we also need to conduct outreach and research with people with disabilities in our local communities to understand why they are not already users and how the library may become accessible for them. In her study on differently-able patrons, Copeland (2011a) provides a model of the kinds of questions that libraries could ask of their patrons. She asked her participants about the in/accessibility of three different types of libraries (in which they all had experiences), about how accessibility to these libraries could improve, about the perceptions of LIS professionals toward differently-able patrons, and whether (and if so, how) negative perceptions held by LIS professionals could be changed and improved so as to better serve differently-able patrons. Copeland’s questions exemplify the both/and approach to access that we employ in this paper: she asks her respondents to talk about the logistical aspects of making libraries accessible and the attitudinal barriers to service that patrons may experience, thus providing readers with the information about material and social transformations necessary to improve access for all patrons.

*Publish Perspectives of People with Disabilities and Disability Studies Scholars in the Professional Literature*

While our literature review demonstrated that members of the profession care about accessibility of library resources and are developing frameworks and best practices for assistive technologies, we and other researchers (Copeland, 2011a; Hill, 2013) found that the literature did not feature many narratives, perspectives, or authorial voices of library users or library workers and librarians with disabilities. LIS literature has the potential to amplify the voices of users who do not usually get to comment on, or effect changes to, aspects of accessibility that are more symbolic than material, but that have very real consequences. Amelia Koford’s (2014) recent study of how disability studies scholars interact with Library of Congress classification schemes and subject headings is a helpful example of how research can bring users’ voices, experiences, and knowledges into the literature.

In her article Koford goes beyond a disability studies–informed critique of the subject headings and represents the responses that scholars have to



the subject headings as they encounter them, and describes the scholars' strategies for negotiating the limitations and biases of nonpreferred terminology. The scholars' observations and practices not only provide feedback on subject headings and knowledge-organization practices but also highlight opportunities for critical library instruction around disability-related research in the process. By conducting her research with participants who have significant experience searching for critical interdisciplinary scholarship in disability studies (instead of looking for clinical or medical literature on disabilities, conditions, or illnesses), Koford raises awareness of a perspective on disability that many librarians may not possess.

*Think Intersectionally about Access*

While the focus of this paper is making libraries accessible for people with disabilities, it is crucial to remain aware of how disability intersects with other aspects of people's identities and embodiments, and to remember that systems of privilege and oppression often work in tandem. We agree with the organizers of Creating Collective Access that it is important "not just [to] think about disability as separate from class, age, race, queerness, family, children, gender, citizenship, violence, but . . . [to] understand it as intimately connected" (Mingus, 2010b, n.p.). People experience the lived realities of their disabilities in different ways. For example, people who share a diagnosis may have very different experiences of access to treatment, education, employment, and social services based on their class, race, citizenship, and geographic location. Like many of our other user groups, there is diversity within the category of "people with disabilities," and one set of accommodations will not necessarily work for everyone.

If we only involve white people with disabilities in our collaborations, for example, we will not develop approaches to access that respond to the different histories of oppression, contemporary microaggressions, and other practices that privilege some groups (and assume the benefits of privilege that accrue for members of those groups) over others. In her work on intersectional librarianship, Fobazi Ettarh (2014) explains why we cannot assume that white people who experience a particular kind of oppression can speak or make recommendations for others in that group. She analyzes recent writing by white librarians who advise others experiencing discrimination based on gender or sexuality to "lean in," be their "whole selves" at work, act as advocates for themselves in the workplace. While the authors' advice is designed to be empowering and helpful, Ettarh observes that

these conversations are instigated by people from white, middle-class backgrounds and are grounded in their experiences of privilege. This is unsurprising: most of the field falls within this demographic. It can be more dangerous for POC [people of color] to speak up or "lean in" at the workplace. Compounded with other identities such as disability

or gender, to visibly be their whole selves can seem impossible. Fear of job loss or not hiring; fear of not being allowed to use appropriate restrooms; or even fear of physical violence are just a few of the very real issues that are swept under the rug when loud and explicit advocacy are offered as blanket advice. The “Lean In” advice is, in fact, about how to have it all, while offering precisely zero guidance on how to dismantle the structural barriers to gender equity that still impede most women. Not only does the “Lean In” and “Speak Out” advice ignore structural barriers such as racial discrimination and poverty, it ignores the different cultural views of women. When a white woman negotiates and advocates for herself she is seen as “greedy, demanding or just not very nice” and “people report that they would be less inclined to work with them, be it as coworkers, subordinates, or bosses.” However, when a woman of color, and especially a black woman, advocates for herself, not only does she have to contend with all of the negative associations the white woman faces, [but] additionally, it is seen as anger or being “uppity,” also known as the “Angry Black Woman” stereotype. So when POC, especially women of color, express similar ideas it’s not seen as an expression of confidence and leadership, but rather insolence and insubordination, and part of the “Angry Black Woman” or “Spicy Latina” stereotypes. (n.p.)

Reading Ettarh’s example, it is possible to imagine how librarians or patrons of color who also have disabilities would be wary of making the same kinds of requests their white coworkers and peers would make. All librarians and library workers do not experience the workplace in the same way, and it is possible—especially when other kinds of power relations are in effect—that two workers with the same impairment might be treated differently by coworkers or patrons. If librarians bring an intersectional approach to our access praxis and we can learn how our own biases and privileges affect our interactions with our coworkers and patrons, then we can foster an intersectional framework in our collaborations with users and develop programs, services, and strategies based on what we have learned through these collaborations.

*Access and Equity Require Challenging the Status Quo and Dismantling Ableism*  
When we bring the framework of *collective access* into conversations with conventional library understandings of access, one of the biggest shifts we make is from thinking about accessibility as a matter of problem solving at the “tick-box” level to accessibility as part of a larger project to dismantle ableism in our libraries. When we conceptualize access in this way, we are asking libraries to understand it as an ongoing project, one that will transform our profession and organizations in ways we cannot anticipate. In her essay “Reflection toward Practice: Some Questions on Disability Justice,” Mingus (2014) offers a set of questions that groups and organizations interested in doing the work of disability justice can ask of themselves as they collaborate or partner with people with disabilities and members of other nonprivileged/nondominant groups. We suggest that these ques-

tions can be used to frame outreach and engagement work in libraries. Examples of the list of questions that Mingus recommends we ask include the following:

- Why does disability justice matter? To you, to your community, to our struggles for justice and liberation?
- Is your motivation more about “bringing disabled people to our table” (or just making “your work accessible”), rather than a true effort to challenge and dismantle ableism and able-bodied supremacy in your organization/community (which could very well mean a shifting of your current priorities and work)?
- Do you have disabled people of color with lived experience and political depth of understanding of disability justice in supported and valued leadership? [Not] just token disabled people who won’t challenge the status quo?
- Why are you committed to ending ableism and able-bodied supremacy? How can you work towards ending ableism and able-bodied supremacy [in] your current work? How does your current work perpetuate ableism and able-bodied supremacy? (2014, pp. 112–113)

Reading just this selection of Mingus’s questions, we can imagine the very different conversations we could have about access in libraries. What if the Core Value of Access was defined not only by the librarians of the ALA Council but in conversation with our users, especially those who have experienced a variety of barriers? What if, following Titchkosky (2011, p. 4), we did not conceptualize access as something that one has or does not but as something that happens among people, in space and time, over and over again? What if we did not just think about access in terms of resources but also in terms of participation in libraries? How can we ensure that the professional “we” (the membership), who commits to our Core Values, is truly diverse and inclusive? And what material resources will we dedicate to render participation in the profession and our libraries equitable? These questions are points of departure, part of a praxis of access that grows from asking questions, what Titchkosky describes as a “politics of wonder” (p. 16). When we ask questions about how libraries came to be the way they are and how librarians have come to know about disability, we can examine how our beliefs and attitudes have shaped relationships, workforces, and services in our libraries, identify ways by which to intervene in the present, and imagine together what a transformative, collective commitment to access involves.

#### *Physical Access (Still) Matters*

Finally, we still need to get into the building, to have access to the bathrooms, to be able to maneuver through the stacks, and to work at desks

or workstations that are healthy for us. We cannot access information or transform the profession if we cannot get in the door.

In their introduction to a recent issue of *Disability Studies Quarterly* devoted to “Growing Disability Studies,” disability studies scholars Michelle Jarman and Alison Kafer (2014) advocate for theorizing, questioning, and thinking about access while also keeping pragmatic concerns in mind. As those of us who work in libraries develop strategies for imagining and implementing an expanded concept of Access as a Core Value, we should pursue questions aligned with those that Jarman and Kafer pose:

We are troubled by the possibility . . . that schools, colleges, and universities can develop disability studies courses and programming without simultaneously pushing for increase access for disabled students. What does it mean to teach disability studies courses on campuses with inaccessible buildings or with faculty and administrators who are unsympathetic, even hostile, to accessibility concerns and requests for accommodations? Or to tout disability studies courses and programming while simultaneously holding students’ ableist expectations of time and self-sufficiency, refusing to offer accommodations or shaming students for asking “too much”? What does it mean to divorce questions of *physical* access from questions of *economic* access? . . . Can we . . . demand that the growth of the field be accompanied by a growth in access (and “access” understood broadly, radically), making space for more students and faculty to participate fully in their universities, regardless of their disability identifications, both within disability studies and beyond? (n.p.)

Jarman and Kafer do more than model a way of thinking that we can adapt for libraries: they also invite collaboration between scholars and librarians. Reading through this list of concerns, library workers might identify opportunities for outreach—specifically, ways that they might partner with disability studies scholars and activists on their campuses or in their communities, with students and faculty with disabilities, and with offices of disability services, financial aid, and physical facilities to imagine and implement multidimensional approaches to access on campus. Taking this even further, we suggest that local disability activists and communities of people with disabilities can join the conversation, offering the perspectives of those who may have already completed postsecondary education or been denied access to local institutions. Thinking about access in this way creates a space in which librarians can foster new relationships and strengthen the library’s integration in its community.

## CONCLUSION

In proposing an approach to Access that centers equity and justice, we align ourselves with others in the profession who recognize the promise of a critical return to our Core Values. When we render our libraries ac-

cessible in ways that exceed access to information, we also contribute to the enactment of values like diversity and social responsibility. As Myrna Morales, Em Claire Knowles, and Chris Bourg (2014) assert in their work on diversity and social justice in academic libraries,

To truly embrace our social responsibility for promoting social justice, librarians and library leaders must . . . acknowledge the ways in which library practices frequently contribute to inequity, marginalization, and injustices; and commit to transforming our practices and standards in ways that leverage the power, expertise, and responsibility of academic librarians and libraries as forces for social justice. (p. 448)

A truly transformative approach to access involves examining the power relations that have created and sustained the conditions in which we work, that have enabled some people to become librarians and not others, and that have allowed us to consistently exclude members of our communities, and, in collaboration with people with disabilities, imagining how things could be otherwise and working toward our shared, expanded notion of access.

## NOTES

1. We use the phrase *people with disabilities* (instead of *disabled people* or *the handicapped*) to foreground the subjectivity and personhood of people living with physical impairments, chronic illnesses, psychosocial disabilities, and cognitive/intellectual disabilities.
2. For a thorough bibliography of very early disability studies work concerning attitudes toward people with disabilities, see Elaine Makas (1981).
3. *Crip* is a term that some disability activists and scholars have claimed to resignify the historical (and derogatory) *cripple*, in a rhetorical move akin to the reclamation and resignification of *queer* by people who identify as queer.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- American Library Association (ALA). (2004, June 29). Core values of librarianship. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/statementspols/corevalues>
- American Library Association (ALA) Council. (2013). *ALA policy manual*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual>
- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). (2001). Library services for people with disabilities policy. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaisues/librarianservices>
- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA). (2006). ASCLA organization. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaurassoc/aboutascla>
- Barlow, C. (1995). Don't just serve people with disabilities—hire them. *American Libraries*, 26(8), 772–773.
- Bell, C. M. (Ed.). (2011). *Blackness and disability: Critical examinations and cultural interventions*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Ben-Moshe, L., & Powell, J. J. (2007). Sign of our times? Revis(it)ing the international symbol of access. *Disability & Society*, 22(5), 489–505.
- Bérubé, M. (1998). *Life as we know it: A father, a family, and an exceptional child*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Booth, C. (2012). Accessible by (universal) design. *Library Technology Reports*, 48(7), 43–43.
- Bost, S. (2010). *Encarnacion: Illness and body politics in Chicana feminist literature*. Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press.

- Bourg, C. (2014, January 28). Sitting and thinking: Some post #libtechgender panel thoughts [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://chrisbourg.wordpress.com/2014/01/28/sitting-and-thinking-some-post-libtechgender-panel-thoughts/>
- Brown, M. S., & Freund, L. (2010). *Services for users with disabilities*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.
- Brownworth, V. A., & Raffo, S. (Eds.). (1999). *Restricted access: Lesbians on disability*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- Charlton, J. I. (1998). *Nothing about us without us: Disability oppression and empowerment*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clare, E. (2009). *Exile and pride: Disability, queerness, and liberation*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Copeland, C. A. (2011a). Library and information center accessibility: The differently-able patron's perspective. *Technical Services Quarterly*, 28(2), 223–241.
- Copeland, C. A. (2011b). School librarians of the 21st century. *Knowledge Quest*, 39(3), 64–69.
- Creating Collective Access. (2010, July 10). About. Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20100710211349/http://creatingcollectiveaccess.wordpress.com/about>
- Davis, L. J. (1995). *Enforcing normalcy: Disability, deafness, and the body*. New York: Verso.
- Davis, L. J. (2013). *The disability studies reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Erevelles, N. (2011). *Disability and difference in global contexts: Enabling a transformative body politic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Erevelles, N. (2014). Thinking with disability studies. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 34(2). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4248>
- Ettarh, F. (2014). Making a new table: Intersectional librarianship. *In the library with the lead pipe*. Retrieved from <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/making-a-new-table-intersectional-librarianship-3>
- Fritsch, K. (2013). The neoliberal circulation of affects: Happiness, accessibility and the incapacitation of disability as wheelchair. *Health, Culture and Society*, 5(1), 135–149.
- Garcia, E., Hartsell-Gundy, A., Hernández, J., Porcaro, J., & Walker, J. W. (2010). *Revision of IMLS 21st century librarian grant*. Retrieved from <http://connect.ala.org/node/106020>
- Garland-Thomson, R. (1996). *Extraordinary bodies: Figuring physical disability in American culture and literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Garland-Thomson, R. (2005). Feminist disability studies. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(2), 1557–1587.
- Gerhardt, L. N. (2000). Core meltdown. *School Library Journal*, 46(8), 17.
- Grealy, L. (1994). *Autobiography of a face*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Guder, C. (2010). Equality through access: Embedding library services for patrons with disabilities. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 315–322.
- Hall, K. Q. (Ed.). (2011). *Feminist disability studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hamraie, A. (2013). Designing collective access: A feminist disability theory of universal design. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 33(4). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3871>
- Hill, H. (2013). Disability and accessibility in the library and information science literature: A content analysis. *Library and Information Science Research*, 35(2), 137–142.
- Jarman, M., & Kafer, A. (2014). Guest editors' introduction: Growing disability studies: Politics of access, politics of collaboration. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 34(2). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4286>
- Johnstone, J. (2005). Employment of disabled persons in the academic library environment. *Australian Library Journal*, 54(2), 156–163.
- Kafer, A. (2013). *Feminist, queer, crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Koford, A. (2014). How disability studies scholars interact with subject headings. *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, 52(4), 388–411.
- Kranich, N. (2005, March 3). Equality and equity of access: What's the difference? Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/offices/oif/iftoolkits/toolkitrelatedlinks/equalityequity>
- Licona, A. C. (2012). *Zines in third space: Radical cooperation and borderlands rhetoric*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Lorde, A. (1982). *Zami, a new spelling of my name*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lorde, A. (1996). *The cancer journals*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Mairs, N. (1996). *Waist-high in the world: A life among the nondisabled*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Makas, E. (1981). *Attitudes and disability: An annotated bibliography, 1975–1981*. Washington, DC:

- National Institute of Handicapped Research / School of Education, George Washington University. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED218855>
- Mates, B. T., & Booth, C. (2012). Information power to all patrons. *Library Technology Reports*, 48(7), 7–13.
- McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip theory: Cultural signs of queerness and disability*. New York: NYU Press.
- Mingus, M. (2010a, May 3). Wherever you are is where I want to be: Crip solidarity [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2010/05/03/where-ever-you-are-is-where-i-want-to-be-crip-solidarity>
- Mingus, M. (2010b, August 23). Reflections on an opening: Disability justice and creating collective access in Detroit [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2010/08/23/reflections-on-an-opening-disability-justice-and-creating-collective-access-in-detroit>
- Mingus, M. (2014). Reflection toward practice: Some questions on disability justice. In C. Wood (Ed.), *Criptiques* (pp. 107–114). N.p.: May Day.
- Morales, M., Knowles, E. C., & Bourg, C. (2014). Diversity, social justice, and the future of libraries. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 14(3), 439–451.
- Oliver, M. (1983). *Social work with disabled people*. London: Macmillan.
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The individual and social models of disability*. Paper presented at the Joint Workshop of the Living Options Group and the Research Unit of the Royal College of Physicians on People with Established Locomotor Disabilities in Hospitals, London. Retrieved from <http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Oliver-in-soc-dis.pdf>
- Sager, D. (2001). The search for librarianship's core values. *Public Libraries*, 40(3), 149–153.
- Sager, D., Bruni, M., Davis, J. L., & Robinson, M. (1998). No barriers to service: Librarians with disabilities. *Public Libraries*, 37(2), 114–115.
- Samuels, E. (Ed.) (2003). Desiring disability: Queer theory meets disability studies. *GLQ*, 9(1/2), 233–255.
- Shapiro, J. P. (1994). *No pity: People with disabilities forging a new civil rights movement*. New York: Times Books.
- Snyder, S. L., Brueggemann, B. J., & Garland-Thomson, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Disability studies: Enabling the humanities*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
- Snyder, S. L., & Mitchell, D. T. (2006). *Cultural locations of disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stone, D. A. (1984). *The disabled state*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Titchkosky, T. (2011). *The question of access disability, space, meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2006, April 25). Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9805.html>
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (n.d.). Facts about the Americans with Disabilities Act. Retrieved from <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/fs-ada.cfm>
- Watson, N., Roulstone, A., & Thomas, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Routledge handbook of disability studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Weissinger, T. (2003). Competing models of librarianship: Do core values make a difference? *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 29(1), 32–39.
- Wendell, S. (1996). *The rejected body: Feminist philosophical reflections on disability*. New York: Routledge.
- Wojnarowicz, D. (1991). *Close to the knives: A memoir of disintegration*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ziglar, F. (2006). My point of view? *Tennessee Libraries*, 56(1), 92–93.

---

Alana Kumbier is the critical social inquiry and digital pedagogy librarian at Hampshire College, Amherst. She is the author of *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (2014) and coeditor of *Critical Library Instruction: Theories and Methods* (2010). Her work has been published in *Critical Journeys: How 14 Librarians Came to Embrace Critical Practice*, and *Make Your Own History: Documenting Feminist and Queer Activism in the 21st Century*. She is currently working on *Zine Scenes*, a digital humanities project focused on 1990s feminist and queer zines and the subcultures in which they were produced and circulated.

Julia Starkey is a technology loving librarian who has worked for over 10 years in academic libraries. She received a B.A. from Harvard University in folklore and mythology and an MLIS from Simmons College. Her work has appeared in *Lessons from the Fat-o-Sphere*, authored by Marianne Kirby and Kate Harding; *The WisCon Chronicles, Vol. 3: Carnival of Feminist SF*, edited by Liz Henry; *The WisCon Chronicles, Vol. 4: Voices of WisCon*, edited by Sylvia Kelso; *The WisCon Chronicles Vol. 5: Writing and Racial Identity*, edited by Nisi Shawl; *The WisCon Chronicles, Vol. 6: Futures of Feminism and Fandom*, edited by Alexis Lothian; and *The Journal of Transformative Works*, Vol. 3, "Pattern Recognition: A dialogue on race in fandom communities." She has been involved with accessibility initiatives at the WisCon convention, including writing documentation and policies that are used as models of accessibility best practices at other conventions.