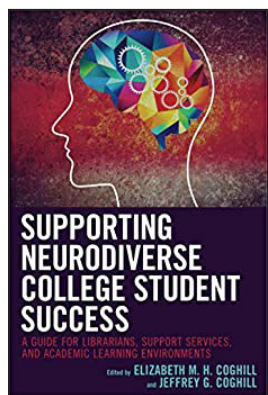


publishing's diversity numbers? This question supports So's argument that these numbers are important; and, since his numbers are based on library and research databases, I think library workers should be thinking carefully about how their work has impact on such large-scale digital humanities scholarship.—Charlotte Roh, *California State University San Marcos*

## Notes

1. As an aside, in So's analysis, he found that one of the defining features of white-authored literature is the heavy use of adverbs, so lots of qualifiers (121). I found this hilarious, but also it aligns with what we've learned about how the CIA defined good literature in its funding of the Iowa Writers Workshop and MFA programs across the country. For more on this, see Eric Bennett's *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing during the Cold War* (2015, University of Iowa Press)

***Supporting Neurodiverse College Student Success: A Guide for Librarians, Student Support Services, and Academic Learning Environments.*** Elizabeth M.H. Coghill and Jeffrey G. Coghill, eds. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020. 312p. Hardback, \$95.00 (ISBN 978-1-5381-3736-9).



*Supporting Neurodiverse College Student Success*, edited by Elizabeth Coghill and Jeffrey Coghill, aims to inspire higher education institutions to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for neurodiverse students. The authors achieve that goal by defining neurodiversity and providing concrete examples of how postsecondary learning environments can be adapted to meet the needs of college students with learning differences. Understanding neurodiversity means acknowledging that there is no “normal” brain function; differences are part of expected variations in the human brain. Further, neurodiversity recognizes that differences are not deficits.

The 12 chapters of the book are broken into different topics including academic advising, welcoming spaces for learning, and library services. Throughout, the authors stress the need to create a welcoming environment for neurodiverse students based on the understanding that all students belong. The authors connect the different topics by emphasizing overarching themes of inclusiveness and acceptance of differences. The book is well structured, with a concluding section in each chapter that offers campus essentials for high impact. These sections provide excellent recommendations that librarians and other campus professionals can put into immediate action. Each chapter also includes a campus spotlight that provides real-world examples of programs and initiatives instituted at a range of colleges and universities.

A chapter on library services spotlights the partnership between the Joyner Library at East Carolina University (ECU) and the Supporting Transition and Education through Planning and Partnerships (STEPP) Program. STEPP is a support program that serves students with documented learning disabilities at ECU. The STEPP program is housed in the Joyner Library, and a natural collaboration grew out of this physical proximity. The library participates by providing a library boot camp and one-on-one consultations to students in the STEPP Program. The importance of campus partnerships like this one is another theme that runs through the book.

This chapter also advocates for presenting the library as a “home base” or “escape place” for neurodiverse students, outlining the steps academic librarians can take to trans-

form libraries into more neurodivergent-friendly places. One way to make this happen is by implementing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is a framework for the design of instructional goals, materials, methods, and assessments that are adjusted to accommodate learning differences.<sup>1</sup> Librarians can use UDL to modify library spaces to make them more inviting for neurodiverse students. Some aspects of academic libraries like fluorescent lighting and the noise and activity associated with the modern information commons can lead to sensory overload for neurodiverse users, especially autistic students. The authors suggest replacing fluorescent lighting with LED lighting when possible and clearly denoting quiet spaces where students can be protected from overstimulation. The authors also advocate using library instruction methods based on UDL. UDL also features in a chapter on best practices for tutoring sessions, strategies that can be applied equally by librarians during research consultations. Many of these are displayed in a useful table that readers can use to apply some of these best practices to their work with students.

Another useful chapter addresses designing welcoming spaces for learners. The authors discuss how both the effective and ineffective use of space impacts students. They emphasize that educators should focus on changing the space, not the learner. This philosophy is a natural outgrowth of the UDL approach. The authors examine how space designers and educators might consider neurodiverse students when planning learning spaces. They recommend using the Autism ASPECTSS Design Index to help create spaces that are welcoming for neurodiverse students. The principles of ASPECTSS leads to spaces that are organized so that sensory stimuli are limited. These sensory limits offer a respite from the overstimulation often found in campus environments. ASPECTSS was created to help autistic students who are often more affected by sensory stimuli. However, like UDL, spaces that improve the learning experience of autistic students will benefit all students. One simple example is the use of mobile furniture in libraries or information commons areas. Neurodiverse users can take this mobile furniture and create private, quiet spaces without calling attention to themselves.

The book provides many helpful tables and figures with concrete examples. For example, a chapter on academic mentoring and coaching services includes a table of sample learning strategies with accompanying tangible examples. A chapter on self-advocacy uses case studies taken from real-world events to highlight campus adaptations that enable neurodiverse student success. Additionally, each chapter provides a comprehensive reference list that will allow readers to augment their knowledge of each topic. Throughout the book, authors give practical solutions to support and welcome neurodiverse students to college campuses. This support and inclusiveness are imperative because, as Elizabeth Coghill points out in the introduction, 11 percent of college students are neurodivergent.<sup>2</sup> As more neurodiverse students enter college, librarians, faculty, and staff will need to create an environment where these students can learn and thrive. This book is one resource that can help with that goal. —*Gerard Shea, Seton Hall University*

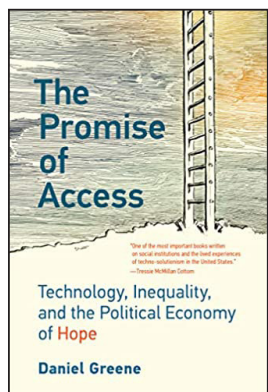
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## Notes

1. D. Sweeney and R. Zellner, "Universal Design," in *Encyclopedia of Special Education: A Reference for the Education of Children, Adolescents, and Adults with Disabilities and Other Exceptional Individuals*, 4th ed., eds. C.R. Reynolds, K.J. Vannest, and E. Fletcher-Janzen (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), [https://go.openathens.net/redirector/shu.edu?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.credoreference.com%2Fcontent%2Fentry%2Fwileyse%2Funiversal\\_design%2F0%3FinstitutionId%3D441](https://go.openathens.net/redirector/shu.edu?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsearch.credoreference.com%2Fcontent%2Fentry%2Fwileyse%2Funiversal_design%2F0%3FinstitutionId%3D441).

2. A.R. Fleming et al., "Treatment-seeking College Students with Disabilities: Presenting Concerns, Protective Factors, and Academic Distress," *Rehabilitation Psychology* 63, no. 1 (2018): 55.

**Daniel Greene.** *The Promise of Access: Technology, Inequality, and the Political Economy of Hope.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021. 260p. Paper, \$30.00 (ISBN 978-0-262-54233-3).



In *The Promise of Access: Technology, Inequality, and the Political Economy of Hope*, Daniel Greene sets out to examine “how the problem of poverty is transformed into a problem of technology” and the larger effect this has on public service-oriented institutions like schools and libraries. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2015 at three organizations—a tech start-up, a public library, and a charter school—he tells a story of public institutions adapting to dwindling state investment by embracing simplistic technological solutions to inequality, even when those who staff them seemingly know better. Why do we look to tech start-ups as models of success for public institutions when they operate under vastly different conditions? The allure of access and the promise of

technology makes an intractable problem like poverty into something that is actionable and legible to funders but sets these institutions on a path that may well end in their own undoing.

The book begins with a political history that undergirds the stories of the three organizations that follow. Recounting the policy discourse from the early 1990s, when the internet represented the promise of the Clinton administration’s New Economy, Greene examines the political use of ideas like the digital divide amid diminishing state spending and policies advancing the commercialization of the internet. The decline of the welfare state and the rise of skills training as a substitute for direct aid to the poor are key factors in how and why access to technology becomes the solution to poverty through *the access doctrine*: the understanding that those on the wrong side of the digital divide have been left out of the information economy; and, if given the right access to technology, they can be brought in and thereby lifted from poverty. This, then, brings the *hope* referenced in the title. With the right skills and training, individuals can overcome the structural problem of inequality and thrive in the global information economy. Conversely, those who cannot (or will not) be molded as competitors in the new economy are faced with an increasingly punitive and carceral state.

Using this theoretical framework, Greene takes us through three organizational settings: a local tech start-up, the MLK branch of the DC Public Library, and an entrepreneurial charter school. The backdrop for all three is Washington, DC, though the specific location is not a core concern. This is a broader story of a neoliberal urban development playbook that persists across locales: cities recruit largely white tech start-ups through tax incentives, real estate developers advancing gentrification create spaces that appeal to those workers, and—finally—public service institutions are recast in tech’s image, charged with remaking the city’s populace into entrepreneurs fit to compete in the information economy. It is this last piece of the puzzle that Greene investigates, and he largely succeeds in identifying the way that institutional transformations are enacted within individual organizations, often by the very “helping professionals” that staff them.

The book employs participant observation supplemented with interviews to form an institutional ethnography that is “less about the stories of individual people and more about the social relations within and between those different places.” Greene is a skilled storyteller, and, despite the work’s emphasis on institutions, we are introduced to a cast of characters