

Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations dictionary,*3 volumes, 2928 pp.***Reverse acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations dictionary,***3 volumes, 2877 pp.***J. E. Towell and H. E. Sheppard, editors***Detroit: Gale Research Company, 11th edition, 1987*

The sub-title needs to be quoted in full, if the range and depth of this amazing work are to be fully appreciated:

A guide to more than 400,000 acronyms, initialisms, abbreviations, contractions, alphabetic symbols, and similar condensed appellations, covering aerospace, associations, biochemistry, business and trade, domestic and international affairs, education, electronics, genetics, government, labour, law, medicine, military, pharmacy, politics, religion, science, societies, sports, technical drawings and specifications, transportation, and other fields.

In fact, over 80 fields are listed in the preface. It is in three large volumes, A-F, G-O, and P-Z; and the whole thing has been printed in reverse (i.e. arranged alphabetically by meaning) in a further three volumes. Acronyms are initial letters of a series of words (e.g. LARSP); initialisms are verbalized initial letters (e.g. DSS); and abbreviations are other shortened forms (e.g. Dr, PhD). The work also includes alphabetical symbols (e.g. H for hydrogen).

The work contains many items from the field of health, education, and language handicap—DES, DHSS, ASHA, LAD, LARSP, and hundreds more. DSS (Developmental Sentence Scoring) is in, along with 51 other DSS names from other fields. Abbreviations for journals of speech, language and hearing are well represented (though not yet CLTT), and indeed the journals coverage seems particularly strong.

This book was first published in 1960, and contained a mere 12,000 terms. The editors say they detect no slackening of pace in the speed at which new abbreviations are today being coined. I appreciate the point, as a producer as well as a receiver. Anyone who has invented a clinical procedure knows that an important step in its acceptance is to give it a good, pronounceable acronym.

Keeping track on these matters is not easy. Not only are new items being invented all the time, but old abbreviations are being updated. The historical responsibility of the editorial team is to be applauded: when an item becomes obsolete, it is not deleted, simply noted as such. Several terms are accompanied by a brief gloss, indicating their field of pro-

venience. Thus LARSP, for example, is glossed 'hearing impaired', rather than 'language impaired', but the thrust of the gloss is clear enough, when seen in contrast with chemistry, physics, etc.

The two works sell at \$180 and \$205 dollars respectively, so they won't be available in every school or clinic; but it's important to know that such works exist, and I hope many libraries will find it possible to purchase them.