

Book Reviews

Adult Education. By Coolie Verner with assistance of Alan Booth, 1964. Available from The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 70 5th Ave., New York 11, N.Y. 118 pp. \$3.50.

This book provides a much-needed, concise, streamlined presentation of what might be characterized as the "fourth dimension" of education. While there are many books available in the fields of elementary, secondary, and higher education, there is a paucity of literature dealing with continuing education for adults. The author squarely faces the issues of this developing field of study as well as the problems occasioned by the multiplicity of agencies concerned.

In the first three chapters, the scope, need, functions, and institutions of adult education are discussed, followed by an analysis of the adult learner and teacher. The author concisely summarizes available research on personal and social characteristics and social role of the adult learner. He describes types of leadership represented by adult educators (from part-time volunteers to full-time professionals) and the consequent problem of providing appropriate training opportunities. He points out that most adult educators enter the field in middle life or later—with training usually in pre-adult education.

Throughout the book, Verner briefly summarizes research and suggests broad generalizations. Footnotes refer the serious student to sources of additional information. However, the Cooperative Extension reader is apt to find the discussion of program planning, learning experiences, and evaluation procedures too brief; the treatment is general without concrete examples. He may have difficulty in seeing how the generalizations apply.

Another problem for the Extension reader is the terminology used. What the Extension worker is accustomed to calling instructional materials, Verner calls devices; Extension methods (talks, demonstrations) are referred to as techniques; and what Extension thinks of as approaches (farm and home visits, meetings, institutes), he calls methods. However, he provides a useful conceptualization of terms. This book could be both an interesting introduction and an appropriate summary to some of the more detailed texts on program planning, methodology, and evaluation.

In the final chapter, problems in coordinating adult education activities and the need for more research and more highly trained personnel are suggested. But the author looks forward to the day when "participation in educational activities will become such a normal part of living for

everyone that adult education will cease to have any distinctively identifiable character or form.”

The Cooperative Extension Service is referred to frequently and its activities related to other adult education agencies. This should be most helpful to Extension personnel who do not always view their work as part of adult education. This book would be a useful addition to the library of any Extension employee—for here is an insightful discussion of the larger field in which he works.

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RUSSELL D. ROBINSON
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Cooperation in Change. By Ward Hunt Goodenough, 1963. Available from Russell Sage Foundation, New York, N.Y. 543 pp. \$6.50.

The author offers this book as “an introduction to the nature of the problem of cooperation in community development.” As such, it should be of interest to those whose job it is to plan and implement programs for change. (The Extension agent is referred to frequently in the book as a “change agent.”) The author, an anthropologist by profession, comes to grips with a particular area of community development—he focuses on the “underdeveloped.” He is concerned primarily with overseas assignments in which the change agent and client often have different purposes and values that exist because of different customs and traditions.

The book is in two parts, one devoted to theory and the other to practice. First, concepts of *wants and needs, customs and function, and customs and values* are explored and related to the development process. The author explains how the change agent can use a knowledge of these concepts in resolving problems encountered in cross-cultural programs. Such material has special significance for those contemplating overseas assignments in agriculture or other technical fields. It would be a very useful reference for persons preparing for assignments in the Peace Corps, Agency for International Development, or International Farm Youth Exchange. It should also be helpful to Extension agents in this country who work with visitors from other countries. The discussion of such things as principles of group dynamics, human relations, and program development should benefit all Extension personnel.

The nature of Extension work implies a need for an understanding of group motivation, the adoption process, and some of the causes of resistance to change (such as custom and tradition). A basic understanding of these principles is needed whether the agent is working with people in

this country or abroad. Foundations of Extension programming have evolved, in large measure, from the fields of anthropology, psychology, and sociology. These fields afford a wealth of information (much of which is supported by empirical research) upon which an educational program can be built. Some of the basic concepts from these various fields are effectively interrelated by the author. The result is a theoretical frame of reference for persons who should provide leadership in community development.

Suggested reading lists and footnotes at the end of each chapter provide excellent references for students or professional workers interested in pursuing some of the topics further.

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GEORGE E. RUSSELL
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The Structure and Dynamics of Organization and Groups. By Eric Berne, 1963. Available from J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 260 pp. \$7.50.

The author's object in this book is to provide a systematic framework for the therapy of ailing groups and organizations. The text is presented as a scientific treatise on how real organizations work, and not as a manual for leaders of organizations and groups. The author contends that knowing how organizations work provides a basis for applying psychological tools by those who know how to use them.

Part I analyzes and illustrates group processes. The first chapter covers aspects of the organization of the group and the second provides a systematic analysis of it. From this framework Part II considers the organizational, individual, and private structure of groups in general. Part III deals with the individual in the group and relates these ideas to the management of organizations. In addition to the regular text, there is a helpful glossary of terms.

The strong points of the book include its practical approach to group structure and its interesting examples. But, a weakness is that the author goes back and forth between being practical and technical. This raises the question of whether the book is primarily one for professionals in psycho-therapy or for practitioners who work with groups.

Any Extension worker interested in the intensive study of group dynamics and their structure in organizations and groups would find this an interesting book. It would not be a place to find answers about problem organizations and groups.

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Problem-Solving Discussions and Conferences. By Norman R. F. Maier, 1963. Available from McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, N.Y. 262 pp. \$6.95.

This book is designed to serve as a guide in directing or leading conferences—to help a leader utilize the resources of a group so that problems, solutions, and decisions will be acceptable, imaginative, and innovative. The book distinguishes between conference methods and conference skills and describes (1) experimental findings that support the problem-solving principles set forth, (2) the improvements resulting from skill-training, and (3) outcomes produced by the use of different methods. Among those included are methods for locating problems, finding solutions, dealing with conflict and controversy, and stimulating creativity.

The book is well organized and contains basic information which Extension personnel may want to put into practice. It would be excellent for students taking a course in Extension Training and Methods but would require an enthusiastic instructor to stimulate the desired interest.

The average Extension worker would have to be motivated to continue reading after the first chapter since the book is not written in Extension language. Besides, before the average Extension worker could gain knowledge from this book, he would need to read and understand a basic book on the principles of learning or of management.

Extension workers are anxious to get help and information in an organized and concise manner. They want to know how they can do the job better; they want to know when they are doing the job right; they want to have the right type of counseling and leadership. First, they must understand the basic principles of human relations. The author points out that to become a better leader, both in and out of discussion meetings, a person must (1) inhibit the tendency to impose his will on others through persuasion, (2) acquire new attitudes about people, (3) develop better communication processes, and (4) develop new skills in general. But the suggestions for reaching these objectives could be more easily comprehended if they were simplified.

Even though the book is excellent, it is best suited as a graduate text, as a reference, or in executive training programs.

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The Teacher and Learning. By Ernest O. Melby, 1963. Available from the Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 70 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. 118 pp. \$3.95.

Experience, training, and a rich personal philosophy form the bases for the author's treatment of this timely and thought-provoking subject.

Against a backdrop of changing times, concepts, and knowledge, which is discussed in the first chapter, he sets the stage for discussing the teacher through a discussion of "what it means to learn" and "what it means to teach." Neither the community, the administrator, nor the teacher of teachers escape constructive criticism. The writing style and freedom from the use of jargon helps to insure that the ideas are understandable.

Parents, community leaders, and professionals will find the book interesting and informative. Extension workers concerned with the problems of school drop-out and the culturally deprived will discover thought-provoking ideas. Youth workers will find the book to contain excellent material for increasing their understanding of youth education and helpful in developing educational youth programs. It should be especially useful to the Extension youth worker because the material is focused on child and young adult education. However, the philosophy, challenges, and issues presented have far wider application.

The very busy worker who can find only short periods of time to read will enjoy this book. It is organized in numerous subsections which contain complete and succinctly spelled-out thoughts. The last five chapters are particularly adaptable to the intermittent reader. The author suggests that the teacher, as a learner, study his pupils, the world, himself, and his subject. The role of the teacher is outlined as that of creating an environment (1) where learning is challenging and exciting, (2) where the curiosity of the youth is stimulated, and (3) where exploration by the student into the new and unknown is rewarded. The importance of youth possessing self-confidence and a feeling that they are making progress, can learn, and that people around them have confidence in them is discussed. Implications for the teacher are also included.

The author makes a convincing plea for the teacher to concentrate on the development of the entire individual rather than just giving information from a number of specialized subject-matter fields (a challenge which he admits is difficult). He feels education must prepare the student not only for the world of today, but for the world of the future where continued learning will play a larger part. The spirit of creativity, which he equates with learning, is the ingredient identified as most needed in today's youth. The lack of such creativity is the author's paramount concern.

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DIFFICULTIES are things that show what men are. —EPITELUS.