

Book Reviews

T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method. Edited by Leland P. Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, and Kenneth D. Benne, 1964. Available from John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 605 Third Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. 498 pp. \$9.75.

This well organized, concisely written book is an explanation of what *Fortune Magazine* calls the hottest thing in management training and what its authors call the development of a learning methodology compatible with behavioral science knowledge about the conditions for learning and the need for democratic action. Participants in human relations laboratories or other laboratories sponsored by National Training Laboratories at Bethel, Maine, Cedar City, Utah, Lake Arrowhead, California, or other sites, such as the Professional Youth Workers Laboratory in Michigan, will find this book most enjoyable and the content and terminology very familiar.

Extension educators will find themselves in very familiar territory when they read that section of the book dealing with the basic assumptions about laboratory method. Basically, the authors point out that the laboratory method is premised on the notion that understandings and skills of participation can be learned validly only through processes of participation in which the learner is involved. Four-H has long held that one learns best when he "learns by doing." A second familiar territory for Extension workers is the author's premise that the democratic process of group participation and group action is analogous to the scientific method, with the exception that democratic methodology must of necessity be more concerned with the "moral and other value" concerns—as well as knowledge considerations relative to policy decisions.

The first section deals with the historical and chronological development of the "T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method." The central section, a very important section for informal educators, deals with the dynamics of group process. There is a very good explanation of several concepts at work in all groups. Extension educators working as consultants, trainers, administrators, and educators in small and large formal and informal organizations would do well to understand the dynamics of dependents and counterdependents, management of polarization, defense reduction, trust formation, membership attainment, agent-member relationships, and the effects these have on the relationships

among persons who are engaged with one another for purposes of learning.

There is a very good section on the sensitivity training group, often referred to simply as the T-Group. This section includes an assessment of the development of T-Group theory and speaks to the many styles of activity in the training group. This section also includes actual dialogue from the sensitivity training group and various trainers' philosophies about the growth phases of T-Groups and their outline for laboratory experiences. This necessarily leads to the educators' personal theory of individual and social development and its consequences for the development of participants in laboratory learning.

The book generally is easy reading and the person not accustomed to reading technical science terms can move through it very rapidly.

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Documentary in American Television. By A. William Bluem, 1965.

Available from Hastings House, New York, N.Y. 312 pp. \$8.95.

Extension workers who wonder what the future holds for mass communications, who speculate about what form will be given increased emphasis, would do well to study this book.

Here clues are amply provided in broad outline and extraordinary detail to leave little doubt about the emergence of the documentary, thanks to the electronic age, as a communications force of massive proportions. Here is the raw material for predicting the possible trend in public persuasional methods, whether for political, institutional, or educational purposes. By the same token, Extension workers in search of the ultimate in effective communications might terminate their quest by focusing their attention on the book's central subject, the television documentary.

"Television," writes Dr. Bluem, "has given to the arts of social persuasion the final dimension which all documentarists of the past earnestly sought but could never summon: the control of the attention of an entire civilization." Few Extension workers need to be reminded of the impact the television documentary is making on our daily lives. By fortifying personal convictions on myriad social problems, it has helped sharpen our awareness of the total world around us. But more important perhaps is the greater sense of responsibility the various "white papers" and "special reports" contribute to our professional dealings with the public.

Who in Extension—as a representative of American agriculture—has not had to carry some of the burden of, for example, the Columbia Broadcasting System's "Harvest of Shame" or "The Silent Spring of

Rachel Carson?" And there will be others. Hence it is important to appreciate that the immediate feedback from television's treatment of these and similar issues is usually felt first at the grassroots level, where pressures are often initially assembled for society's large-scale changes. There to meet public reactions head-on is the rank and file Extension worker, who now can no longer deny having more than a passing interest in the television documentary.

This book is a documentation of the documentary. It traces the form from the beginning of photography over a century ago through its development as cinematic expression to the age of television, which has given the documentary its greatest impetus.

The author, an associate professor at the Newhouse Communications Center of Syracuse University, concentrates on the functions of the television documentary, with special attention to the problems and possibilities of its use in a free society. He has, in the words of Burton Benjamin's foreword, managed to "collate, organize, and give clarity to a new, evolving and highly volatile subject." The book is as much current affairs as recent history, because of the creative and technical advancements television continues to bring to the documentary.

Not long ago Eric Sevareid raised the issue, but left it unresolved, of the effect electronic journalism is having on our social and cultural systems. He observed that patterns of non-fiction now dominate our lives, rather than the influence of the artist, teacher, or pastor, because "imagination cannot keep up with the fantastic daily realities." One is safe in assuming that the television documentary has contributed much to this situation, that in the future it will gain even more importance in the orientation of standards and values.

Documentary in American Television is concerned with this future, and it should occupy the thoughts of all Extension workers who regard effective communications as the initiation point for realizing educational objectives. Perhaps the starting place is to determine direction, and here we might be guided by the author. "It is the *massness* of the television medium," he writes, "that dominates our hopeful applications of its potentials. But massness has its own terrors. Now that we possess this communicative means to control the course of civilization, the question all thinking men must ponder is what we will control it *for*."

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Strategies of Leadership. By A. A. Liveright, 1959. Available from Harper & Brothers, New York, N.Y. 140 pp. \$3.50.

Liveright's major thesis is his concern for the value of the individual

in an increasingly mass-oriented society. In fact, on the first page of his text, he warns that "this generation has an enormous battle on its hands if it is to maintain individual freedoms and to prevent the individual from being engulfed by the mass. . . ." His answer to this dilemma is a broad and comprehensive system of informal adult education, not only for the purposes of informing people, but to overcome their tendency to forget that ". . . most important decisions must be based as much on values, human rights and democratic principles as on purely technical considerations."

Recognizing that the bulk of such learning situations for adults must take the form of relatively small groups involved in diverse programs of informal adult education, Liveright designed his text to promote leadership in those situations. Consequently, it is not a sophisticated text, but neither is it an affront to the reader's intelligence. In its simplicity there is ample room for the development of individual and situational growth according to the capacity and inclination of the participants and the nature of the program and its sponsoring agency.

Liveright sums up the plight of the individual in contemporary society by noting that "a handmaiden of bigness is the concurrent move of decision-making away from small groups"—"individuals have less and less to say about more and more important decisions which are affecting both their immediate welfare and their future." The implication is clear—the individual must be equipped to quarterback his own destiny, and this can best be accomplished by taking citizens off the sidelines and making them players.

The difficulty in this grand scheme can be summed up in one question: How do you make people participate in voluntary programs? Obviously, this question contains contradictory concepts which cannot be resolved with traditional approaches. That is why Liveright advocates the democratic approach to small group leadership. Using this approach, successful involvement can be achieved by all participants, and their enthusiasm will "sell" others on the program.

But success is largely predicated on meeting the expectations of the major parties involved: the leader, the group, and the sponsoring agency. Will democratic leadership always meet these three sets of expectations? The author says no. For that reason, he has divided his "how-to" material into two major categories: one for group-centered leadership situations and one for content-centered leadership. With detailed (but not tedious) examples of how each system can be used to best effect, he provides a framework to be developed by leaders in a variety of small group situations.

Liveright supports the idea of developing individual leadership styles, for in making the distinction between group-centered and content-cen-

tered leadership he also acknowledges the need for recognizing program emphases (i.e., to change attitudes, to create understanding, to develop skills). Thus, with these variables in program type and emphasis, the leader's style becomes very important.

In concluding, it might be fair to say that Liveright's concern for the individual is really an expression of concern for the welfare of our entire society. Perhaps the way to best serve the interests of both society and its individual members is to be found in informal adult education programs and their potential for developing a nation of leaders. This provides Extension with a unique opportunity to broaden its service. With its organization, contacts, and the good-will of the people, it has a strong foundation on which to build a system of informal adult education programs.

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WOODROW H. SEARS, JR.

PARENTS OF TODAY should give their children some memories to guide them, memories of family life in which justice was upheld, affection unstintingly given, discipline tenderly explained and fine example habitually displayed. Thereby they move the sleeping images of good things inherent in their children toward the light.

—*The Royal Bank of Canada Monthly Letter* (May, 1964).

IN THIS EVER changing world off-campus education has crawled itself to prominence.

—FELICIDAD A. GALVEZ.

WE MUST DECIDE what it is we are trying to develop in our students before we know what we are looking for in trying to evaluate them. To evaluate, we need a clear idea of what we want to accomplish.

—RALPH W. TYLER.

TO BASE your thinking on whether you are doing well with your life or not on the approval of others is to rely on a shaky foundation.

—MICHEL DE MONTAIGUE.

THERE IS no sadder or more frequent obituary on the pages of time than "we have always done it this way."

—*The English Digest*.

IGNORANCE OF fundamentals is a greater obstacle to progress than lack of popular appreciation of known facts.

—WHITMAN H. JORDAN.

FREEDOM is the open window through which pours the sunlight of the human spirit and of human dignity.

—HERBERT HOOVER.