

Book Reviews

Organizations in Action. By James D. Thompson, 1967. Available from McGraw-Hill Book Company, 330 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036. 192 pp. \$7.95.

In this book, the various behaviors of complex organizations are treated as entities. The author, a professor of business administration and sociology at Indiana University, sets forth 95 distinct propositions concerning the functions of organizations, stated in a way that "allows them to be negated if incorrect." Thompson admits that little is known about administration within the complexity of organizations, and that serious consideration needs to be given to this aspect.

According to the author, "modern societies have been busier making complex organizations work, largely through trial and error, than studying them. As a result, we have no clear picture of what administration is or what it does, either for organizations or society, and we have no consensus on the nature of the administrative process."

The motivating force within a large manufacturing firm or organization and that within a service organization are not necessarily one and the same, even though the profit-making organization may be performing a service to a community or to society, and the service organization may be making a profit. All the factors or forces concerned in the complexity of an organization such as a large factory are not necessarily applicable, therefore, to the county planning and action groups normally associated with Cooperative Extension.

For those most interested in the behavior of individuals within organizations, part two of this book will serve as a research reference.

In the chapter "Discretion and Its Exercise," Thompson points out that "organizations have problems when individuals in discretionary jobs fail to exercise discretion, and that they also have problems when individuals in routinized jobs do exercise discretion." He further states, "We can assume that where alternatives are perceived to have equal consequences for the organization, the individual will select that alternative which favors his sphere of action—enlarging it if possible, or defending it." The author also expresses the belief that an individual will be tempted to report successes, suppressing any evidence of failure, where alternatives are present.

Some implications for persons working with older youth, particularly in the area of career exploration, may be found in the chapter "The

Variable Human." Here the author states that ". . . in preparing individuals for occupations, the social system provides them with a rather inconsistent set of aspirations, beliefs about causation, and standards. By locating jobs in technologies, on the other hand, organizations present individuals in a given occupation with patterned spheres of action. Since both sides of our accounting scheme—the individual and the situation presented to him—are patterned, we expect the resulting behavior to be patterned."

The author also emphasizes that a "job is both a unit in the organization and a unit in the career of an individual. Joining the two is a result of a bargained agreement or inducements/contributions contract."

Utilizing his knowledge of the field of business administration, Thompson has presented a very scholarly approach to an understanding of the many complexities in organizational structure and functioning and of the interdependence of organizations that may be found in the business world. Readers of this work will find that a knowledge and understanding of social science concepts and terminology is certainly beneficial. Since literature in the functioning of Cooperative Extension organizations or similar organizations is not abundant, a Cooperative Extension professional interested in this area may find this book valuable.

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A Philosophy for Adult Education. By Paul Bergevin, 1967. Available from The Seabury Press, 815 Second Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. 170 pp. \$4.95.

Is adult education good or bad? Mr. Bergevin says that adult education is neither good nor bad in itself. It is the use that determines its merits. Adult education can be "good" if it has a purpose greater than that of only teaching skills. It must help people achieve constructive spiritual, vocational, physical, political, and cultural goals so that people can take their proper places as maturing citizens.

The author suggests two alternatives as the basis upon which adult education could operate: (1) We can indicate that we have an unalterable "truth" and that we can propagate this "truth" to bring the learner to a prearranged conclusion; or (2) we can indicate that truth is complex, evolving, and difficult to come by and that the learner may have to learn to live in a state of suspension because he cannot wholly accept or completely understand what is to be learned. Mr. Bergevin supports the second alternative in his book.

One chapter is devoted to specific meanings of the term "adult education." The author classifies adult education according to three major

aspects: (1) adult education as a systematically organized program of adult learning, (2) adult education as random experiential learning, and (3) adult education as a field of study. Each aspect is discussed in some detail.

Recognizing the importance of adult educators being able to attack the problems in their field in an intelligent and vigorous manner, Mr. Bergevin addresses himself to 11 problem areas. He identifies and discusses such problems as resistance to change, the marginal citizen, pursuit of materialism, and the difficulty of attracting adults to learning programs. This concise and pertinent analysis is followed by a presentation of 12 concepts upon which an adult education program might be constructed.

The philosophy for adult education set forth in this book is based on the belief that education is an indispensable means for developing our potential, thereby enabling us to master the problems of personal maturation and social relationships. How we go about achieving the development of our potential, says Bergevin, will depend upon our goals and purposes. "Learning plays a pre-eminent role in our development or disintegration as human beings."

This book should have readership appeal for all adult educators. Even for those who have read widely in this area, the book will provide a stimulating and concise analysis of what one adult educator believes should be the ideas, principles, and goals that structure adult education in a democratic society. Mr. Bergevin has made a significant contribution to the adult education literature.

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Volunteers Today—Finding, Training and Working with Them. By Harriet H. Naylor, 1967. Available from the Association Press, 291 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10007. 192 pp. \$5.50.

As the title suggests, this is a treatise on discovering, training, and working with volunteers. The suggestions offered could increase the effectiveness and satisfaction which volunteers and others can receive because of their service. The author's years of experience in a variety of volunteer capacities is reflected in the many down-to-earth principles offered throughout the book.

According to the introduction, the author feels there are far too many able and conscientious people who are ex-volunteers because of their negative feelings about volunteer work. Some feel they were not appreciated, some that they were not making an important contribution, some that they could not manage responsibilities that conflicted with other interests and obligations.

The first two chapters give an insight on the volunteer worker for the future, threats to voluntarism, and changing patterns of training. The author discusses new forms of volunteer participation, including government influence, the indigenous leadership, and the training of "new" volunteers.

Emphasis is placed on the importance of realistically recognizing the particular motives which bring volunteers into an organization and the satisfactions which keep them going. Pointing out that most initial motivation for volunteering has some element of enlightened self-interest, the author discusses ways these motives may be used positively for the organizations, groups, or agencies which the volunteer is serving.

In a chapter on recruitment and placement, the author discusses some of the untapped sources for finding volunteers, recruitment practices, and helps to effective placement.

Other chapters focus on starting and supervising the volunteer, developing learning opportunity, and designing training events and techniques and their use. The author discusses underplacement and overplacement of the volunteer, and the value of reviewing job assignments at regular intervals. Ideas for training the volunteer are discussed, including suggestions on curriculum development, a variety of learning materials, ways to transmit information, and the importance of planning now for future needs.

The author has presented some of the results of her research relative to volunteers, and provides a large number of references for further reading. Throughout the book, she points out some of the pitfalls and limitations of traditional attitudes and practices displayed toward volunteer workers. There are practical suggestions for recruiting, training, and working with volunteers.

The Extension worker should find this book helpful in increasing his effectiveness with volunteer workers who play major roles in many Extension Service programs. The ideas for motivating and keeping the interest of the volunteer should also be of much value to executives and educators who work with volunteers.

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