

# Book Reviews

Samuel B. Magill, *Editor*

## Theory of Motivation

by Robert C. Bolles

Harper & Row

\$10.75

546 pp.

If it is conceded that the field of psychology is not only a profession but, for most of its practitioners, a business, then the training specialist must become pretty thoroughly familiar with its subdivisions, the methodology of each, the terms by means of which each group demonstrates its superiority over the others, and enough of the trade jargon so that he will not flunk his one-upmanship tests when speaking with his peers.

Some indication of the way this professional field has been fragmented during the seventy or so years of its existence is the fact that there are at least twenty professional journals, each of which serves the interests of a particular in-group of psychologists. Not the least of the problems is that the psychologists themselves keep changing their minds about the things they stand for, and yesterday's words and phrases go just as far towards dating a person who learned his psychology in the twenties, as raccoon coats and a ukulele would with today's variety of youth-in-revolt.

This book is written by a psychologist (no qualifying adjective). It therefore represents a sort of middle ground between the behaviorists, de-

terminists, materialists, vitalists, and so on. The first part of the book contains a lot of historical information on how the science developed. Then, various concepts are taken up in detail—instinct, need, the drive concept, volition, learned behavior, and punishment. Some of these ideas, the author points out are “in”—others are not. Bolles can be very scornful about these latter items because to him, they are wrong turnings along the pathway of progress. The fact that other psychologists will disagree with his conclusions disturbs him not a bit.

Some of the training man's idols are handled roughly, also. With the temperate objectivity so characteristic of the professional psychologist, he dismisses Kurt Lewin's work as being “mostly wrong.”

But the plusses outweigh the minuses. There is, for example, a reference section which extends for nearly seventy pages and cites an amazing number of books, articles, and essays, on the subject of motivation.

Whether for knowledge, for fun, or just for someone to disagree with, this author will repay your closer study.

S. B. M.

## Men Near The Top

C.E.D. Supplementary Paper No. 20  
by John D. Corson and R. Shale Paul  
Committee for Economic  
Development

Published by the Johns Hopkins Press  
\$3.00 189 pp.

About five thousand men and women serve the Federal government in the so-called supergrade levels of the Civil Service. Over sixty percent possess advanced educational degrees. Almost thirty percent are engaged in the practice of a profession, such as the law, economics, and the physical

or life sciences. The services these persons perform run the entire gamut of human activities and yet, by and large, they are anonymous people, practically unknown except to their colleagues and intimates.

This study is divided into three sections. One deals with the program manager, another with those in supportive functions, and the third, the professionally trained specialist.

The material yields important information about what these people actually do, in contrast to the official descriptions of their jobs. Each section concludes with a generalized statement of basic function, to which the individual examples may be related.

The picture which emerges is one of considerable competence as well as dedication on the part of these officials. The scope of their responsibilities is generally broader, in terms of dollars, resources, and manpower, than for equivalent positions in industry. This may be one of the chief attractions of these jobs—for, as the authors point out, it could hardly be the salaries, since similar jobs in industry characteristically pay much more.

The authors of this research study base part of their analysis on an unusual variation of the POSDEC system which they break down into Planning, Organizing, Controlling, Coordinating, Evaluating, and Appraising. These factors are used as a matrix to differentiate between the various types of jobs found in their study.

Although research reports are not usually characterized by imaginatively

stylistic language, the authors quote several good sentences, like the following from Dr. Chalmers Sherwin, a Deputy Director in the Department of Defense. Writing of the General Purpose Manager, Sherwin says:

“This type of person always has been and always will be essential . . . He is not, however, a suitable person to . . . direct modern technological enterprises. . . . A lawyer or businessman can master the essential technical aspects of a railroad or a busline. But just let him try to rationally guide the development of an inertial guidance system . . . ! “Unfortunately, the lingo of science is easy to pick up. But, as any experienced technical person well knows, there is nothing so depressing as to listen to a “general purpose” manager using all of the right words without real comprehension.”

Sounds like an argument for training development, doesn't it?

A final chapter is devoted to problems of recruitment and training. Most of these individuals entered government during times when jobs in industry were hard to get. Now, in this age of full employment, the government is no longer in a buyer's market for these superior skills. The questions of how to obtain qualified replacements, then provide developmental opportunities for those on the way up, while at the same time sustaining and improving the skills of persons already in this vital group will be the future responsibilities of an especially competent breed of training officer.

S. B. M.

---

Plan now to attend ASTD's 24th National Conference  
May 13-17, 1968, New York, N. Y.

---

