

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Competent Caregivers – Children: Training and Education for Child and Youth Care Practice*

Edited by Karen VanderVen and Ethel Tittnich  
New York: The Haworth Press, 1986. xiv + 120p. \$22.95

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The growing professional maturity of the child and youth care work field is illustrated by this book, the first, I believe, to focus on the formal preparation of its practitioners. It takes a firm stand for the breadth of the field, both horizontally, across settings, and vertically, so as to include a variety of indirect practice roles as well as direct, "on the line" practice. Karen VanderVen's two initial chapters provide an orientation and some historical sweep, a welcome developmental focus at a time when too much of what we hear and do seems to be ahistorical and acontextual — in a word, rootless. Not so this volume, which also offers the attentive reader something of a broader update on professionalization in the field.

A chapter by Henry Maier provides a detailed discussion of first- and second-order change concepts, a fundamental notion in thinking about developmental progression in child and youth care clients as well as among workers. Briefly, first-order learning is quantitative and cumulative; second-order learning represents a qualitative change, new insight, a new level of understanding. Ethel Tittnich clarifies developmental issues and learning styles that need attention in curriculum development, and James Anglin presents a nine-step model for needs assessment in the curriculum development process that could equally well be applied in assessing needs in other areas, e.g., child and youth care programming.

Charles Snow and Susan Creech review a variety of approaches to in-service training, noting the advantages and disadvantages of each. Their chapter focuses on the day care sector of the field; readers interested in other domains should not, however, have great difficulty in extrapolating to their own areas. The chapter on distance education by Roy Ferguson and Abby Manburg is a most useful introduction to this approach, which has seen rapid growth and seems likely to continue to expand.

Recruitment and selection of child and youth care personnel are discussed from a developmental perspective by Donald Peters and Suzanne Getz. This chapter can be read by practitioners as suggesting what they should expect their agencies to provide in terms of specific knowledge and skill training, supportive supervision and administration, and nurturance of their personal and professional development. A short, closing chapter by Martha Mattingly, Tittnich, and VanderVen highlights some trends for the future, and the book ends with a short, annotated list of ERIC documents and journal articles and information on their sources. It was unclear to this reviewer how or why the ten items were selected — there is no pretense made that they are the most significant in the field — and why the list was included.

What the book does not provide is information on the content of the curriculum for the training and education of child and youth care workers, except incidentally in the framework of Anglin's needs assessment example and the like, nor does it pretend to. The reader looking for details on curriculum content will need to look elsewhere; so, too, for detailed information on how best to deliver particular content to students. (Broader modalities are covered well, particularly distance education, but not questions like what should be taught through lectures, what through readings, what through films, and the purpose of the fieldwork component.) These are for another book, one that, it is to be hoped, might be available soon.

One might also wish that this book had been somewhat more analytical at various points. For example, it is noted as evidence of the professional maturation of the field that, "the beginning movement towards self-employment and private practice is also a movement towards practitioner independence" (p. 15). It might have been added, however, that the implications for professionalization are clouded by the trend in such established professions as medicine and law toward bureaucratization and loss of practitioner autonomy through HMOs, third party payers, and the like-movement in the direction of "semi-professions" as the concept has traditionally been understood. Likewise, it is noted that standards in the field are being raised and that, "institutions of higher standards must inevitably be followed by an increase in funding to support them" (p. 115). We all know that increased support is sorely needed, but are there no examples of professions that have priced themselves out of the market? Might we need to raise this possibility for consideration, rather than depending on the supposed inevitability of it all? Such questions will need to be asked by astute readers in the interest of the field.

Finally, the editing of this book is uneven and, in a few places, errors intrude on the attention of the careful reader. Yet it is an im-

portant and, in many ways, a landmark contribution to the professionalization of the field. It is certainly compulsory reading for anyone interested in training and education in child and youth care work, and perhaps in related professional and professionalizing disciplines as well. Thoughtful direct care practitioners will also benefit from parts of it through an enhanced understanding of the field, and from all of it in becoming informed consumers in finding and selecting among professional educational opportunities that may be available to them. The editors and authors are to be congratulated; those of us who care about this field are in their debt!