

Reviews

This kind of statement might bring howls from the unconverted such as "Do we really want to encourage boys to become 'abandoned dancers'?" My answer is, "Yes, we do" — if this "frees" the dancer and opens the way to fuller living.

Gray and Mager claim that,

Our purpose in teaching is to afford people opportunities to develop their human capacities fully. Our approach and premises are based on theories of developmental psychology. (p. 4).

I have myself used improvisational drama as a tool in exploring the possibilities of education through art. This in no way detracted from the developmental aspects of drama — but augmented them. In *Liberating Education* the emphasis is on therapy by means of 3-way psychological learning: teacher/student; student/student; and student with himself. All possible combinations of relationship are explored and the excerpts from both tapes and journals show that the students were enriched by this exploration of themselves and their environment.

The authors succeed in their presentation of principles, techniques and experiences, to demonstrate the vast possibilities developmental drama opens up. The capabilities of students are so often in question that it is exhilarating to read a book by human beings who realize how pitifully seldom during their school years most students' inner resources and abilities are called upon. "Never underestimate your pupils" is the unspoken maxim of this book, which contains detailed examples, techniques, aims and concrete facts enough to keep several dramatic workshops going for years. The book is clear and easy to read. For me, it is marred only by its ambiguous and pretentious-sounding title which seems to be a contradiction of the Boleslavsky adage, "The object of education is not to know but to live." (p. 1)

Education is a process, not some

static thing somehow imprisoned. However, once one understands that the title comes from the remark of a clinical psychologist, "A liberating education" (p. 2)—that is, a freeing method — the title then does justice to the book.

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Margaret Gillett &
John Laska, eds.
FOUNDATIONS STUDIES
IN EDUCATION:
JUSTIFICATION AND
NEW DIRECTIONS.
Metuchen, N.J.:
The Scarecrow Press, 1973.
423 pp. \$10.00.

Ordinary mortals, writes Prof. Gillett, can count on two inevitables, death and taxes; teacher trainees may depend on three — death, taxes, and History of Education. You could add Educational Sociology, Philosophy, and other constants whose enduring presence in education faculty calendars seems to indicate that a teacher ignorant of Ryerson, Durkheim, or Plato is no teacher at all.

Foundations Studies in Education seeks first to justify these inevitables through offering some good essays by writers like Maxine Greene, Wayne J. Urban, and Margaret Gillett herself in order to identify what teachers-to-be might expect to learn from the so-called foundations. The book serves a second, different purpose, however. In the 60's, foundations scholars saw fit to ally themselves closely with corresponding disciplines in Faculty of Arts departments. Conversely, the editors of *Foundations Studies* . . . ask "whether or not foundations of education are worthy of being considered an independent study," and, by implication, propose the American Educational Studies Association as the appropriate body for helping to bring about this self-sufficiency. To borrow Prof. Gillett's image, this is both bad and good news.

First the bad news. Books stemming from self-conscious debate

among scholars tend not to attract readers outside the field. Laymen confronted with such volumes assume the status of Wimbledon spectators. And students assigned a work given largely to examining the "worth" of a mandatory subject not surprisingly question its timeliness.

Now the good news. Given its professional orientation, *Foundations Studies* . . . provides balance. In Part One, John Laska describes foundations' historical shift from dependence to independence, introducing widely contrasting pieces by such writers as James Bryant Conant who deplora patched-up foundations curricula, and James L. Kueth who optimistically heralds a discipline of education. Enjoying Margaret Gillett's witty introduction, Parts Two and Three look respectively at teacher preparation and new directions, scanning the range of concerns from R. Freeman Butts' views on methodology, through Colin Greer's critical stance regarding historical revisionism, to Paul Nash's elegant words on humanistic and behavioral studies in teacher education.

On balance, here is a useful collection principally addressed to professors of the variously-described foundations subjects. Perhaps it will help us clarify what we hope to achieve in educating teachers. Possibly, too, in some indirect way, it will remind us of our ultimate clientele, the girls and boys in our schools.

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**Rodney W. Napier &
Matti K. Gershenfeld.**
GROUPS:
THEORY AND EXPERIENCE.
Boston:
Houghton Mifflin, 1973.
311 pp. \$9.50.

This book, with an accompanying instructor's manual, is intended as a non-technical guide and text to small group processes. Its intended audience consists primarily of those who are not specifically trained in

group dynamics — students, community leaders, mental health workers, business and organizational consultants, etc. The format consists of eight chapters, an authors' preface, an editor's introduction, an appendix and an index. Each chapter contains two parts — a theoretical section which provides a conceptual framework and presumably gives the reader a "language for observing groups as they operate"; and an experiential section which suggests a number of applied training exercises which have the supposed effect of supplementing theoretical understanding with first-hand observations of "groups-in-action." During the course of the eight chapters, problems of perception, communication, membership, norms, goals, leadership, decision making and group movement are all tackled. The appendix focuses on the skills which a group facilitator (i.e. the reader) must acquire before he begins to intervene in groups using the skill exercises given in each chapter.

In the reviewer's opinion, the value of Napier and Gershenfeld's contribution is highly suspect. Most portions of the text are replete with vague, over-generalized statements about group phenomena such as: "Among strangers the norm is usually to participate, while among friends it is easy to become sidetracked" (p. 30). The authors attempt to mitigate skeptical reactions to such statements by surrounding them with more esoteric phrases like "the feedback process," "defensive communication," "group maintenance roles" and "group harmony." Unfortunately, little effort has gone into defining such verbiage in terms of the empirical reality of the small group situation. Thus, while the authors may be correct in suggesting that the reader acquires a language for talking about groups, it is doubtful that he will understand what he is talking about. The countless illustrations and examples — some taken from group encounters, some from other