

BOOK REVIEWS

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Two publications were selected to review in this issue of the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. These books were selected because the topics they cover sometimes serve as the missing links in personnel preparation programs for individuals who provide supports for people with disabilities. The first book is a resource that describes the futures planning process. Mount and Zwernik capture the critical aspects of this process and readers can advance their own decision-making skills by adhering to the overall vision and specific elements of their work. The second book was selected based on the increasing need to advance the communication skills of professionals who work on and with teams. This book is a nontechnical summary of important observations from the author that can assist in one-to-one and group interactions.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE A Booklet About Personal Futures Planning

Beth Mount and Kay Zwernik

*St. Paul, Minnesota: Metropolitan Council, 1988,
price unknown, 45 pp.*

In my estimation, this publication is of pioneering proportion in the literature on planning for supports and services for individuals with disabilities. I chose to bring this specific resource to the readership of this journal because it contains a skillful delineation of the critically important elements of skills we all need to be participants in the planning process. On a personal note, I had the occasion to observe Beth Mount use her excellent processing skills in a sensitive and thought-provoking experience. The effect was powerful. All professionals working on behalf of individuals with disabilities must be aware of the process of futures planning.

General highlights

- Headings of individual chapters include titles

like "Finding Capacities in People," "Planning a Personal Future," "Building a Network," "Planning in Concert."

- Photographs throughout the publication add to the atmosphere of a person-centered approach.
- Colorful graphics abound throughout the chapters.
- There is good discussion on visioning and values relative to futures planning.
- A general description of how futures planning emphasizes the process of planning rather than the product of the planning is provided.
- There is an emphasis on the development of a personal profile that builds on a person's existing capacities rather than highlighting deficiencies.
- Samples of graphic presentations from sections of existing profiles are provided.
- An analysis is presented of the distinct difference in information obtained from a futures planning process and more traditional forms of planning like the Individualized Habilitation Plan (IHP).
- There is an excellent bibliography of resources to provide the interested reader with additional publications in this same general area.
- The use of nontechnical language increases audience appeal for this resource.

Specific areas of excellence

- Organizational clarity of presenting this topic is superior to most publications of its kind.
- Quotes from community change leaders are scattered throughout this resource, including the following two samples.

When thinking of doing anything in community integration, think small, think face-to-face.

—John McKnight

The future is not designed by great events, but by the small things people do wherever they are. No contribution is too small.

—Beth Mount

- Emphasis is placed on the following five areas

of essential accomplishments that should be highlighted for individuals with disabilities:

1. Community participation
 2. Community presence
 3. Choices/rights
 4. Respect
 5. Competence
- Seven principles of networking are provided from the perspective of Marsha Forest, a pioneer in the development of "Circles of Support."
 - "Effective teams strive to develop these (leadership) skills in all team members. These teams do not have one 'team leader,' but rather find ways to share leadership roles" (p. 33).
 - The general steps of the planning process are delineated and include the following:
 1. Reviewing the personal profile
 2. Reviewing the trends in the environment
 3. Finding a desirable image of the future
 4. Identifying obstacles and opportunities
 5. Identifying strategies
 6. Getting started
 7. Identifying the need for system change

Areas in which this publication can be enhanced

- From a personal note from one of the authors: "I feel there needs to be an expanded section on the process of visioning for the future."
- A superb companion book to this resource would be Bob Perske's *Circle of Friends*.
- Active involvement on a futures planning team will enhance the reader's understanding of the principles in this book.
- Continue to read publications in this concentration area, especially the excellent resources from Communitas, Inc., P.O. Box 374, Manchester, CT 06040.

Common threads throughout this publication

- This book focuses on building on current capacities.

- All of the discussion, examples, and recommendations are person-centered.
- The process relies on the collective expertise and wisdom of team members who have an interest in a person's future and how they can support that individual in attaining his or her version of a quality lifestyle.
- There is continual emphasis on the process rather than the product.

Recommendations of its utility to rehabilitation professionals

- This publication represents the planning process at its best. If professionals truly believe in the empowerment of individuals with disabilities to help shape their futures, this publication is must reading.
- A resource like this one provides a common ground for all who provide supports; it places the focus on the person and begins from there.
- I am personally inspired by the vision and values found in this publication.

YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND Women and Men in Conversation

Deborah Tannen

New York: Ballantine, 1990, \$10.00, 330 pp.

I read this book without realizing just how much the information relates to our ability to function effectively as team members. The content in this book presents the competencies lacking from many personnel preparation programs, namely, communication among team members who work on behalf of individuals with disabilities. I have used many quotes and stories from this book in my in-service training and continue to obtain excellent feedback from session participants.

General highlights

- There are short, concise chapters in a readable language.
- Dr. Tannen's observations result from years of accumulated videotapes of groups in communi-

cation and drawing comparisons and similarities across dimensions of age, gender, culture, and group size.

- The author lets the reader draw his or her own conclusions from the summaries of her observations. I liked her attitude of, This is what I believe to be true, based on my observations of people in communication.
- There are extensive reference notes (20 pages) as support for many topical areas in each chapter.
- The author is a well-respected professional who has written or edited over 10 previous books in the area of linguistics. I admire her ability to translate this information for a nontechnical audience.
- Actual scripts from conversations are included throughout the book as documentation for her key conclusions.

Specific areas of excellence

(Ten specific quotes of relevance to readers of this journal)

- “‘This is good for you.’ But the fact of giving help may seem to send the metamessage, ‘I am more competent than you’ and in that sense it is good for the helper” (p. 32).
- “Much—even most—meaning in conversation does not reside in the words spoken at all, but is filled in by the person listening” (p. 37).
- “Learning about style differences won’t make them go away, but it can banish mutual mystification and blame” (p. 47).
- “Habitual ways of talking are hard to change. Learning to respect others’ ways of talking may be a bit easier” (p. 122).
- “. . . the assumption that the alternative to independence is dependence . . . another alternative: interdependence” (p. 131).
- “Women use ‘yeah’ to mean ‘I’m with you, I follow’ whereas men tend to say ‘yeah’ only when they agree” (p. 142).
- “And being accused of interruption when you know you didn’t intend to is as frustrating as being cut off before you made your point” (p. 189).
- “A man might ask a woman, ‘Will you please

go to the store?’ Whereas a woman might say, ‘Gee, I really need a few things from the store, but I’m so tired’” (p. 225).

- “Furthermore, if indirectness is understood by both parties, then there is nothing covert about it” (p. 26).
- “The girls and women anchor their gaze on each other’s faces, occasionally glancing away while the boys and men anchor their gaze elsewhere in the room occasionally glancing at each other” (p. 246).

Areas in which this publication can be enhanced

- Readers will want to read Dr. Tannen’s previous book *That’s Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Your Relations With Others*.
- Exercises in a workbook format that request readers to analyze their own group’s interactions would be a good companion to this resource.
- Write the quotes contained in this review on the left half of a paper and request coworkers to respond to experiences in their own lives relative to one or more quotes.
- Consider bringing up a major point from this book at team meetings at your employment site.

Common threads throughout this publication

- Communication styles can be understood and this awareness can lead to more productive interchanges among group members.
- Conclusions are based on a qualitative analysis approach without preconceived biases or hypotheses.
- Much of the information contained in this book can assist the reader in better communication both at work and at home.
- There are striking similarities between the conclusions developed by Dr. Tannen and experiences in my own life.

Recommendations of its utility to rehabilitation professionals

- As rehabilitation professionals become in-

volved in both one-to-one and team processes, information contained in this book would be extremely valuable. It creates an awareness and sensitivity to different styles of communication and how often one may misinterpret a message when it was not the intent of the sender.

- It is both important and necessary to keep abreast of the literature in the area of communication. Since much of our work involves sending and receiving information, the conclusions and summaries in this book are quickly put into practice.
- I am ready for her next book!