

REVIEWS

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND HUMAN AFFAIRS

By Daryl J. Bem. Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1970, pp. 114. \$3.00 (pap).

Reviewed by Lloyd W. West,
The University of Calgary.

About 350 years ago (well before the current publication pollution), Francis Bacon suggested that "some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." Perhaps Bacon's insight has more practical relevance today than ever before. Each year literally miles of colorful new volumes are added to the bookshelves of the nation, yet instructors of most courses find it very difficult to select a single basic text that should "be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

Fortunately, the publishing industry now is striving to overcome this difficulty by accommodating the modular approach to instructional design. Essentially, a module is a relatively independent or self-contained functional unit which may be used like a building block to provide a variety of unique syntheses or structural patterns. *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs* is one of a series of paperback volumes designed to serve as a module in the development of a beginning course in psychology. The entire series permits the instructor and class to select and arrange a variety of modules in order to comprise a "course" that satisfies their needs and interests.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs is written in a style which is often humorous but always beautifully clear and concise. Its content deals adequately with the cognitive, affective, and behavioral foundations of human beliefs and attitudes. In his prefatory remarks, Bem observes that "Beliefs and attitudes play an important role in human affairs." Throughout the text he elaborates and supports this observation. A considerable body of substantive knowledge regarding beliefs and attitudes not only is clearly presented but also effectively related to current social issues.

Bem's ability to distinguish between descriptive and normative language is refreshing. Although he does not hesitate to disclose his personal values, the reader is never confused as to when he is presenting descriptive data and when he is making a value judgment. Alternate positions, moreover, are given fair treatment. This characteristic of the text allows the student to practice another of Bacon's suggested study habits — "read to weigh and consider."

Of particular interest to the counselor is Bem's own theory of self-perception (pp. 57-69). Briefly, Bem notes that our concept of others is necessarily based upon publically observable cues. Analog-

ously, his self-perception theory contends that the individual monitors his own behavior and relies largely on similar external cues for self-knowledge. Bem cites considerable evidence to suggest that even our subjective internal states are interpreted on the basis of external cues. Bem's theory thus predicts that both our attitudes and our concept of self follow from and are derived from our behavior. Veridical self-knowledge does not come from introspection *in vacuo*. The implication for counseling is clear. If we wish to improve attitudes or develop self-concepts we must first help our clients to modify their behavior. Feedback from more effective ways of behaving will then result in changed attitudes and changed self-concepts.

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs merits inclusion as a module for a basic text in psychology. Despite the current excess of printed material for our perusal, it should also be "read wholly, and with diligence and attention" by all those who serve in the area of human affairs — from politicians to counselors.

JOB EXPERIENCE KITS

J. D. Krumboltz, Science Research Associates, Guidance Staff, et al. Toronto, Ontario: Science Research Associates. Kits \$154.70; Complete Set 20 Answer Pads \$11.90; Specimen Set \$3.85.

Reviewed by J. Cram, McGill University,
M. Carr, Counsellor, Lachine High School, Lachine, Québec,
and Students of Lachine High School.

The S.R.A. Job Experience Kit is designed to give high-school students vicarious experiences across an assortment of professions and occupations. It consists of 20 work simulation experiences which according to the publisher give the student an opportunity to solve problems typical of each occupation, and to be exposed to "real job activities." It is also designed to generate career exploration. The authors suggest that it be used on an individual or group basis in guidance classes.

The Job Experience Kits, like every other S.R.A. product, are brightly packaged and efficiently set up. When first opened by a teacher or counsellor they appear almost too austere, sanitary, and none too durable. However, when high-school students of all ages met them they very quickly became involved in choosing a career to explore. The process of exploration most certainly had face validity for these students since they almost invariably completed the kit they selected.

Some kits seemed more meaningful than others. *Truck driver* was too involved for the eighth grade potential truck driver. "It's just too hard."

Elementary Teacher presented classroom situations very realistically but "dealt mainly with reading — other subjects were hardly mentioned."

Veterinarian caused one student to say "you have to be very observant — my knowledge of horses and dogs helped me considerably."