

## BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Evans, D. R., Hearn, M. T., Uhlemann, M. R., and Ivey, A. E. *Essential Interviewing: A programmed approach to effective communication*, Monterey, California: Brooks Cole Publishing Co., 1979.

Reviewed by:

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After my initial skepticism - "Do we really need another book on interviewing skills?" - I found myself quite engrossed in this carefully prepared programmed text. The authors indicate that the book was developed as an economical "alternative or supplement to the traditional microcounselling model of single skills training." It can stand on its own as a starting point for paraprofessionals but is recommended primarily as the basis of a workshop approach in which modeling and role-play practice are used to enrich the experience. In conjunction with a theoretically oriented text, it would serve well as the basis for an experiential component of beginning courses for professional counsellors.

Chapter one of *Essential Interviewing* provides a very brief review of the research leading up to the clarification of essential skills and the single skills approach. The influence of both humanistic and behavioral approaches is evident and the straight-forward integration of the two is refreshingly free of apology or elaborate justification.

Chapters 2 to 5 take up the responding skills: focusing and following, effective inquiry, reflecting feelings, and reflecting content. Chapter 6 reviews and integrates these skills. Chapters 7 - 10 turn to initiative skills: communicating feeling and immediacy, confronting,

self-disclosing, and structuring. Chapter 11, again, reviews and integrates the skills. All chapters are built around interview interactions that are usually quite believable. The reader selects the response which best represents the skill or discrimination under consideration. Each chapter has learning objectives set out at the beginning and a review section and multiple choice test at the end.

In all chapters the interactions and response alternatives are well designed to gradually introduce the student to the complexity of the interviewing process. In most cases the student is lead to the correct response without blatantly awful response offered as the only alternatives. In the two integrative chapters two out of three alternatives are correct; each alternative leading the student through an extended chain of interactions (each with 2 correct choices). These chapters are especially rich in their presentation of the subtleties of communication. The clear examples of the principle that there is more than one right way is a particularly attractive feature of *Essential Interviewing*.

The programmed format is weakest in the area of nonverbal communication. Here, the necessity of describing nonverbal behavior in print creates the over obvious choice situation that can make programmed texts seem patronizing. Fortunately, these sequences represent an insignificant proportion of the book. Unfortunately, most of them come in the first programmed chapter. Students may need some forewarning in order to avoid a negative set to the remaining material.

In short, this is not just another book on interviewing skills. Because of its programmed format, it is rich with examples of life-like interactions. Because of the carefulness with which the sequences have been constructed it makes a substantive contribution to our understanding of helping interactions. I believe the authors have admirably accomplished what they set out to do.