

## BOOK REVIEW

**Functional Assessment in Rehabilitation** Andrew S. Halpern and Marcus J. Fuhrer, editors. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1984, cloth, 272 pages, \$23.95.

The editors, associated with the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center in Mental Retardation, University of Oregon, and The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, Baylor College of Medicine, respectively, have assembled a nation-wide team of collaborators who recount the history of functional assessment and present an overview of self-care and vocational assessment procedures for individuals having physical impairment, mental or psychiatric disturbances, or communication problems. The contributors address policy makers, program planners and evaluators, service providers, researchers, and clients who wish an active role in their rehabilitation.

Functional assessment is defined as the measurement of purposeful behavior in interaction with the environment, which is interpreted according to the assessment's intended uses. Assessments may measure the degree of impairment, that is, restriction of some physical, emotional, or mental capacity. Other instruments aid assessment of disability, the skills and behaviors one exhibits in interaction with the environment. A third type of assessment is concerned with handicap, the disadvantage one experiences while attempting to perform a major social role, such as work, recreation, or family. The editors contend that amelioration of handicap is the ultimate goal of rehabilitation.

Assessment as the yardstick of rehabilitation has evolved from the narrow conception rooted in 15th-century Europe that rehabilitation consists of reimbursing an impaired person for the loss of function in the form of wage relief. In the 1940s and 1950s the focus shifted to providing more comprehensive services. The latest stage emphasizes accountability within all levels of the human service network, in tune with new government regulations.

Early chapters describe assessment measures for particular impairments. Generous references at the end of these chapters guide the interested reader to details of the instruments. Later chapters report research stemming from the research and development programs sponsored by the National Institute of Handicapped Research, in some instances consolidating 10 years of longitudinal study.

While the technicalities of a particular instrument for assessing a given impairment, such as hearing loss or emotional disturbance, are remote from the immediate concerns of the specialist in prosthetics, the broad principles of assessment elucidated with greater or lesser clarity by the various authors can help one to place personal experiences and practice in sharper perspective. This is most ably demonstrated in the concluding chapter, written by an impaired, but hardly handicapped, psychologist who comments on evaluation from the client's viewpoint. The diagnosis becomes quite secondary to the human values of respect, information, and power which are essential in any successful rehabilitation effort.

Functional Assessment in Rehabilitation can inspire all of us to measure the dynamic attributes of a client's performance more effectively.