REVIEWS & MORE

A WAY WITH WORDS AND IMAGES. By HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA. Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 10 pages, 2006. **REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org**

Reviewed by Karen Schwartz

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, I have had the opportunity of working on a project that examined media portrayals of people with disabilities from the perspective of the language used, allowing me a certain sensitivity to this particular issue (Schwartz & Lutfiyya, 2009). Such portrayals often bring to mind Wolfensberger's (1998) "major common negative roles into which members of societally devalued groups are apt to be cast" (p. 14).

If, as writers in the area of disability and the media suggest, mass media plays a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes about people with disabilities (for example, see Auslander & Gold (1999), Biklen (1987), Haller & Ralph (2001), and Longmore (2003)), then efforts to educate members of the media and the general public ought to help eliminate the language of negative stereotypes and create more positive portrayals of people with disabilities.

A Way with Words and Images, a booklet published by the government of Canada, seeks to address this issue by promoting "a fair and accurate portrayal of people with disabilities" and by suggesting "appropriate terminology" (p. 1) for use by the public generally and the media specifically. By equating attitudes about disability with the language we use to talk about disability, the government hopes to make people more aware of the effect negative or derogatory language has on our perceptions about people with disabilities. In creating this document, a number of national disability-related organizations were consulted.

The booklet is divided into two sections, "general guidelines" and "media coverage." The general guidelines concentrate primarily on words to avoid, and advocate for a focus "on the issue rather than the disability" (p. 4). The segment on the media touches on the areas of research, writing and reporting, by suggesting that journalists write articles on issues of importance to people with disabilities, rather than over-emphasizing "human-interest" story lines. Another part of media coverage concentrates on interviewing, providing pointers to "improve communications with persons with disabilities" (p. 5).

A removable centrefold lists "appropriate terminology and images" (p. 2). This is a chart contrasting traditional ways of describing people with disabilities with more valorizing language that can be used instead. For example, instead of using terms such as "mentally retarded, defective, feeble minded, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, simple, mongoloid," the term "person with an intellectual disability" is suggested.

Some of the phrases that are considered to be offensive in the pull-out section of the booklet include "deaf and dumb," "handicapped," "retarded," "confined to a wheelchair," "crippled," "suffers from" and "stricken with." Yet, using print media as an example, a quick check of Canadian newspaper stories in the latter part of 2008 indicates that many journalists have not gotten the message *A Way with Words and Images* conveys.

Several examples certainly beg the question: is anyone in Canada paying attention to the message in *A Way with Words and Images*? Is this approach to changing language and imagery use working? A *Victoria Times-Colonist* contributor wrote, "For all the credit given the major parties for their political cunning and strategic acumen, they're still capable of being utterly deaf, dumb and blind to the public's view of the results of their scheming" (Leyne, 2008, p. A12).

The *Globe & Mail*, a national newspaper, printed an article that contained the following language:

"Everybody with a seriously handicapped person in their life knows this fantasy. The fantasy is a place, somewhere the handicapped person will be able to live and be cared for, not as someone handicapped but as a participating member of the world, for as long as they survive" (Brown, 2008, p. F1).

A writer with the *National Post*, another Canada-wide paper, wrote, "George W. Bush (with degrees from Yale and Harvard) was borderline retarded. His IQ was said to be 91" (Schweizer, 2008, p. A17).

From the period of October 1st to November 30th, 2008, an electronic database search of the words "wheelchair" and "confined" in Canadian newspapers yielded 31 examples of the phrase "confined to a wheelchair" used in twelve different papers across the country.

Although the suggestions in the booklet are both relevant and important to the portrayal of people with disabilities, the publication has taken the unfortunate approach of providing a prescription to fix the problem. What it fails to do is provide the media and public with a greater understanding of the harm such portrayals can have. I suggest that such an understanding can provide a compelling rationale for actually making change.

Some of the issues that the booklet could have addressed include: a) why people with disabilities are described using devaluing language; b) the effect that negative language has on devalued people; and c) the importance of recognizing these effects and making change. A critical tool for discussing these issues is Wolfensberger's (1998) Social Role Valorization.

There are a number of ways in which Social Role Valorization is relevant for and might add to this booklet. The first is a brief consideration of the role of unconsciousness. Although Wolfensberger (1998) is talking about people involved in the field of human services, the idea that "unconsciousness is present in every aspect of human existence, and affects just about everything that human being do" (p. 103) is equally applicable to the media and the general public. It is more likely that individuals with disabilities will be thought of and portrayed in a more positive light if people were made aware of the "unconscious devaluations and practices" (p. 104) that are so prevalent in public (mis)perceptions about disability.

One way to raise consciousness is to understand the role that imagery can play in reinforcing or changing people's perceptions of individuals with disabilities. Wolfensberger (1998) says that an image is a "mental picture that others hold in their minds about an individual or group" (p. 63). Images are created by, among other things, what an observer is told about an individual or group and the language that is used to describe the individual or group (Wolfensberger, 1998). This information results in the creation of an "overall mental image" about people with disabilities (p. 63). Wolfensberger (1998) argues that devalued people are often engulfed in a "systematic pattern of negative images conveyed through multiple channels" (p. 69).

Another way of bringing unconsciousness to light is to make people aware that negative images held about individuals with disabilities may be the result of devalued roles into which people with disabilities have been and continue to be cast. Individuals with disabilities have been portrayed in "stereotypical" roles, such as the "other," sub-human or non-human, a menace, an object of pity or burden of charity, a child, a diseased organism, and even in death-related roles (Wolfensberger, 1998) for a very long time. Many of these roles continue to negatively impact them. People may not necessarily appreciate this long and difficult history of devaluation or the impact that such history and representations can continue to have. It is in bringing these unconscious misperceptions to the foreground that *A Way with Words and Images* would make a significant impact on its readers.

Although *A Way with Words and Images* does offer some good advice on how to depict people with disabilities in a more valorizing way, it does not go far enough in explaining why it is so important to heed such advice. Without this explanation, readers may not find the motivation to make change. Several key concepts in Wolfensberger's (1998) Social Role Valorization, such as the role of unconsciousness, the role of imagery and the effect of devalued roles, would provide more insight into why such change is so urgently needed.

Editor's Note: *A range of opinion and practice exists about language use, including within SRV circles. For additional reading, see also* Ringwald, C. (2008). Review of the book *A reporter's guide: Reporting about people with disabilities* by Betsy Southall. *The SRV Journal, 3*(1), 52–54*; and* Training Institute Publication Series (TIPS) *16*(5)*; 17*(1,2,3). *Back copies of this TIPS issue are available from the Training Institute at 315.473.2978.*

References

Auslander, G.K. & Gold, N. (1999). Media reports on disability: A binational comparison of types and causes of disability as reported in major newspapers. *Disability & Rehabilitation, 21*(9), 420-341.

Biklen, D. (1987). Framed: Print journalism's treatment of disability issues. In A. Gartner & T. Joe (Eds.), *Images of the disabled, Disabling images*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 79-95.

Brown, I. (6 September 2008). Doing the work of the heart. *The Globe and Mail (Toronto)*, F1.

Haller, B. & Ralph, S. (2001). Not worth keeping alive? News framing of physician-assisted suicide in the United States and Great Britain. *Journalism Studies, 2*(3), 407-421.

Leyne, L. (11 September 2008). Campbell decides legislature too risky. *Victoria Times-Colonist*, A12.

Longmore, P. (2003). *Why I burned my book and other essays on disability.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Schwartz, K.D. & Lutfiyya, Z.M. (2009). "What lay ahead...": A media portrayal of disability and assisted suicide. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 9*(1), 27-38.

Schweizer, P. (1 August 2008). Mind wars: Why does the media continue to buy into the myth of ignorant conservatives and enlightened liberals? *National Post*, A17.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agentry.

Karen D. Schwartz is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada. She has a Master's degree in Disability Studies & is pursuing a PhD in Inclusive Special Education.

The citation for this review is
Schwartz, K. (2009). Review of the monograph *A way with words and images* by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 49–51.

• • •

Intellectual Disability–Social Approaches. By David Race. Buckingham: Open University Press, 288 pages, 2007. REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org

Reviewed by Bruce Uditsky

David Race is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Community, Health Sciences and Social Care at University of Salford, UK. He holds a BSc in Management Sciences from UMIST, a PGCE in primary education from Sheffield City Polytechnic, and a PhD in services for adults with learning disabilities, awarded by Reading University. Race has edited a number of books, including *Learning Disabilities: A Social Approach* and *Leadership and Change in the Human Services: Selected Readings from Wolf Wolfensberger*. He is also the author of *Social Role Valorization and the English Experience* and a number of book chapters.

He has worked in the field of disability, particularly intellectual disability, since 1973, in various countries, as a researcher, consultant, writer and teacher. He has also been involved in a considerable amount of service training, both in the UK and overseas, especially in the USA and Canada. He is a member of the Institute for Health and Social Care Research. His administrative roles are as a member of the School Research Committee, the Faculty Postgraduate Committee, and the University International Research Committee. Consultancy work in the learning disability field stems mainly from Associate Membership of the North-West Training and Development Team on Learning Disability. He is one of only six overseas corresponding members of the North American Social Role Valorization Development, Training and Safeguarding Council.

Intellectual Disability–Social Approaches is a personal book chronicling Race's comparative study tour of the human services for individuals with intellectual disabilities in seven countries on three continents that have been impacted by Social Role Valorization (SRV). Race's introduction to these countries and their services were through individuals with a connection to the SRV network.

As a personal approach, Race is clear that his book is not an objective, empirically-based comparative study and deliberately so, given the inherent limitations of any attempt to comprehensively compare so many countries. As the father of a son with intellectual disabilities, he brings his obvious love and appreciation of his son to any analysis. In addition, he shares in his book other experiences that have shaped his worldview of individuals with intellectual disabilities and the services they access. Race does this to enable the reader to understand the author's perspective and to further enable the reader to render his or her own interpretation of the book's findings.

One of the features that makes this book unique is that in each country he visits, Race reflects on what life might be like for his son Adam if he lived and grew up there. These reflections are captured in sections entitled *Adam's World Tour*.

THE BOOK IS STRUCTURED as follows:

- The first chapter provides an overview of the history and demographics of the seven countries.

- Each of the subsequent seven chapters is dedicated to one country, beginning with the countries with the most comprehensive welfare states to those where services are largely agency-driven. Race acknowledges the difficulty in trying to capture the essence of a nation's services in those countries where many service variations exist across multiple jurisdictions. Each of these chapters adheres to the following outline:

  * instant reflection
  * short history of services
  * summary overview table of the service system
  * detailed examination of services
  * Adam's world tour

- The final chapter contains conclusions, a summary of Adam's virtual tour, and a closing reflection.

AS SOMEONE WHO HAS SPENT TIME in six of the seven countries Race reviews, and as a father of an adult son with intellectual disabilities, I was particularly interested in reviewing this book. Like Race, I am anxious to ensure my son has every prospect for the 'good life' and curious as to how his life might have fared in different contexts.

In many ways this is an unremarkable yet telling book. The information shared about the human services in each country, at least from my understanding, is reasonably accurate and readily available. Having the information in one book with the comparative analysis based on the author's son is very helpful but nevertheless illustrative of the limitations of a life dependent on human services. For the vast majority of individuals with intellectual disabilities, life is likely not very different from what Race describes, as so many lives are captured by human services and the policies, funding and values which govern them.

Race, although he is no doubt aware of them, did not set out to capture the exceptional story but rather chose to illustrate what is likely to be typical for an individual with intellectual disabilities. Access to the good life, as Race notes, is rare and not the subject of this book. The book is sober and somber; in my view, a necessary reminder of the significant gains achieved relative to the past but how limited the gains are relative to what is possible. The very fact that so many individual lives can be characterized by their relationship to services, policies and funding is illustrative of the lack of individuality in the lives being lived.

The book, until perhaps the last chapter, offers little critical analysis of what is observed. It is primarily a reporting of what Race learns on his travels. At times Race does connect a positive service development to SRV but there is no analysis offered as to why SRV might have been impactful in one area and not another, except for the advent of post-modernism. His views of what is positive or not harmful to individuals with intellectual disabilities–such as unpaid work if meaningful, and paid work in sheltered workshops–may be reflective of a limited vision of what is possible rather than what should be. It is one thing to observe the reality of unpaid work or sheltered employment (which for some are inherently contradictory and harmful constructs) and another to characterize them as positive.

Race draws mixed but valid conclusions with an overarching analysis that is limited in scope and depth. On the one hand there is the view that perhaps the Scandinavian countries are preferable because of the comprehensive nature of their welfare state, the equitable distribution of resources and the predictable life outcomes. Life, while it may not be as good as might be achieved elsewhere on an individual basis, is nevertheless reasonable. This is a fair assessment, but as Race appears to conclude on the very final pages, not enough and certainly not enough for his own son.

He notes the contradictory state of affairs where in less regulated and comprehensive countries, the vagaries and dysfunctionality of the human service system can be wonderfully overcome by a limited number of individuals with the support of families and allies. I would add the interpretation that the very nature of a comprehensive system might oppress the possibility for unique and full lives.

RACE CONCLUDES THAT neither the comprehensive welfare state nor the agency controlled market-driven systems are good or able enough to realize the good life for individuals with intellectual disabilities. That even in conceptualizing an idealized values-driven human service system, it is limited in what it can achieve. These services cannot replace the ability and power of families and communities to create good lives, but could at least be helpful by allying themselves with this understanding. Race is not naïve to the modern societal forces that impede this ethic but one can assume he remains hopeful.

A comparative overview of human service system across countries, while accurately describing what is, is nevertheless limited in what it can contribute to creating more inclusive futures for individuals with intellectual disabilities. As he draws his book to a close, Race returns to his son, noting his connections to community and the valued roles he has in that community. Perhaps Race's next book will take up this theme of hope, community and the good life that can be realized through the commitment, love and advocacy of families.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Readers interested in this topic may also wish to read* Race, D. (2007). Social approaches to valued roles ~ Adam's world tour. *The SRV Journal, 2*(2), 17–29.

BRUCE UDITSKY, MED, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Alberta Association for Community Living & an Adjunct Professor, Community Rehabilitation & Disability Studies, University of Calgary, Canada. Bruce is the author & co-author of numerous writings on community inclusion & social justice. He is the father of two sons, one of whom has intellectual disabilities.

THE CITATION FOR THIS REVIEW IS
Uditsky, B. (2009). Review of the book *Intellectual disabilty–Social approaches* by David Race. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 51–53.

• • •

Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America. By Jonathan Kozol. NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1988. **REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org**

Reviewed by Penelope Lyn

Much has been written about the homeless and the roots of homelessness. In *Rachel and Her Children*, Jonathan Kozol shifts the focus onto the plight of homeless families and draws our attention to a segment of the homeless population often forgotten–the children. He documents their struggles, details the effects of homelessness on children, and explains the cause of homelessness. Kozol's personal interviews with residents of a shelter hotel record the stark reality and desperation of their lives.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, a significant portion of the homeless today are families.[1] Kozol's journey began five days before Christmas in 1985. He interviewed residents at the Martinique, a shelter hotel in New York, which housed many families who shared their space with a "considerable cockroach and rodent population." Fearing reprisals from housing authorities, the residents requested anonymity from Kozol. Many residents were previously employed and encountered unfortunate life crises, which resulted in job loss and eviction. Kozol met Peter, Megan and their five children, living in two rooms plus a bathroom containing a broken toilet. A fire had destroyed their home and all their possessions. Without his tools, Peter, a carpenter, was unable to find adequate work. Another resident, Mr. Allesandro, a former maintenance worker, was forced to take half-time work when his wife abandoned him and their young family. Caring for his children interfered with his work schedule. Unable to meet rent payments, he was evicted. Rachel, a mother of four, struggled to keep her children safe in an environment where drug use was rampant. A former drug addict, Rachel understood the temptation to temporarily forget the miseries of everyday life.

Effects of Homelessness on Children

Homelessness has long-term negative effects on children. "All but a few of the children in the Martinique and similar hotels will fail to thrive in any meaningful respect" (p. 82). Many of these children Kozol was writing about were low-birth-weight babies, and thus at risk of delays in cognitive and physical development, as well as early death. Poor maternal health is one of the causes of low weight babies. Under the US administration of President Reagan (1981-1989), cuts to Medicaid, a low income health program, resulted in community health center closures, thus depriving low income women of prenatal care. Additional cutbacks to welfare benefits led to increasing numbers of families facing malnutrition. "One million people had been cut from food stamps in the first year of the Reagan presidency" (p. 82). Malnutrition often leads to cognitive and physical impairments. The consequences are dire for children suffering from hunger. Learning becomes difficult for those children who are actually able to attend school. As many as "a quarter of the hotel children are between two and three grades behind their peers in academic skills" (p. 87). Many faced added dangers from their temporary residences: most shelter hotels were unsafe, poorly maintained, cramped and squalid. Narcotic dealers and prostitutes frequented garbage-strewn hallways and stairways, with security guards often doubling as dealers. Teachers described to Kozol children asleep at their desks because the conditions at their shelter prevented a night's sleep. Kozol wrote of a generation of children, malnourished, undereducated and emotionally damaged who would face a bleak future.[2]

Lack of affordable housing is one of the causes of homelessness. Kozol used statistics from newspaper and book sources to reveal record numbers of homeless families. Joblessness had forced formerly self-reliant families into homelessness. By 1985, the US had recently dealt with massive layoffs in various industries and continued to struggle with further job loss from the cascade effect. Farmers, autoworkers and shopkeepers were the new homeless. In New York city, "50 percent of individuals served at city shelters during 1984 were there for the first time" (p. 4). At a time when "half a million low-income housing" units were lost to condominium conversion, abandonment or demolition each year, the government had also cut funds to build or rehabilitate low income housing (p. 11). The consequences impacted every large American city.

Application of Social Role Valorization Theory

The concepts of Social Role Valorization (SRV) theory can be used to analyze, and to offer potent and relevant means of address for, the situations the book described. "SRV is an empirically-based social theory that … [can be used to address] the social devaluation of individuals and groups" (Cocks, 2001, p. 13). The negative experiences common to devalued people are called wounds (Cocks, 2001): the life stories of the homeless families described in Kozol's book are replete with wounds.

The identity of those who are devalued in a society can be inferred by looking at what society values. North American society values wealth and material possessions and thus poverty is devalued. Homeless families are poor and therefore are typically devalued. Those perceived to be of little value are relegated to low social status in society and treated accordingly. Devalued groups are rejected, separated and excluded (Wolfensberger, 1998, pp. 13, 18, 20). So many homeless families were congregated with other homeless families and placed in shelters. The Martinique, now closed, housed nearly four hundred families and was just one of fifty-five such shelter hotels in New York City.[3] The families living in such homeless hotels experienced distantiation, a behavioural expression of rejection where distance is put between valued and devalued groups (Wolfensberger, 1998, p. 18).

Additionally, devaluation was reflected in the low quality housing afforded the homeless. The Hotel Carter, another shelter hotel, offered rooms for tourists as well as homeless families. Tourists stayed in clean, renovated rooms containing televisions and air conditioners, while the rooms designated for the homeless were cockroach infested, and had floors with holes and broken windows. Within the shelter, homeless families were restricted to three floors set apart from the tourist section. The managers at Hotel Carter discouraged the shelter children from using the front entrance. To board their school bus, they were "herded" to the rear exit mainly used for garbage collection. The exit opened beside a store selling "drug paraphernalia in a block of pornographic movie theaters." Every school day, these children experienced the wound of symbolic stigmatization. These devalued people were juxtaposed to negative images, furthering their devalued status (Wolfensberger, 1998, p. 17). The squalid conditions of their rooms, on top of having to exit with the trash onto a seedy street, provided powerful image messages to these children and to others, significantly reinforcing their low status.

Devalued classes so often receive substandard treatment from service systems. Many of the shelters described by Kozol were in old buildings, their walls covered with lead paint greatly exceeding levels permitted by law. Much of the paint was peeling from the walls, their sweet taste a temptation to children. Children exposed to lead face irreversible neurological damage. Medical treatment is often ineffective because the brain has already been damaged. The landlord's solution was to cover the lead paint with non-lead paint. "Medical experts for the city testified, however, that even with these measures, residents were still at risk" (pp. 153-154). The city promised that children and expectant mothers would be diverted to safe shelters. However, the city "violated a pledge made in court" and continued sending children and expectant mothers to these shelters. Homeless families residing in these shelters had been poisoned, because their devalued state placed them in dangerous living conditions, and they suffered from impairments to their body and to their functioning (Wolfensberger, 1998, pp. 12-13). This wilful, cavalier treatment from the city was unfortunately typical.

Deathmaking

A LIFE PERCEIVED AS UNDESIRABLE can be neglected and hastened toward death. "Deathmaking is a logical endpoint to social devaluation" (Hildebrand, 2004, p. 68). Kozol documented the short life of baby Benjamin. Benjamin weighed less than five pounds at birth and had contracted a viral infection leaving him "partially blind, brain-damaged, deaf, [and] hydrocephalic." His mother, Holly, was unsuccessful in obtaining stable and secure shelter. Still, the hospital repeatedly released Benjamin to his mother knowing she was in no position to care for her child. "A spokesperson for Beth Israel Hospital later said the hospital would never have released the baby had it known he had no proper shelter" (p. 119). Yet, they had issued a note to Holly's welfare worker asking that she be given shelter. The city claimed that shelter and food were provided, but according to the Legal Aid Society, the city acted only after Legal Aid had been "alerted to the child's plight" on the day Benjamin died. Society negatively values physical and intellectual impairment. Benjamin was accorded the role of subhuman, a devalued role so often accorded to impaired newborns (Wolfensberger, 1998, p. 14). Once discharged, the hospital and the city paid little attention to his needs. They failed to appreciate the struggles Holly faced in trying to care for Benjamin until the night of his death. Because of his devalued state, the system hastened Benjamin's death.

Although somewhat disorganized in content, Kozol writes directly and simply, appealing to a wide audience. The strength of *Rachel and Her Children* lies in the people revealed through the interviews. Their voices resonate with desperation and fear, and Kozol's intention is clear. His purpose in writing about homeless families was "to attest to their existence, to give witness to the toll they take upon the children of the dispossessed, and to pay tribute to the dignity, the courage, and the strength with which so many parents manage to hold up beneath the truly terrifying problems they confront" (p. 185). He succeeded.

ENDNOTES

1. In November 2008 in New York City, of the 36000 people living in municipal homeless shelters, 15800 were children. Over two-thirds of these people were living in a shelter with their family. Estimates are that ten percent of all poor children in the United States–almost 1.4 million–are homeless at some point during the year, and this percentage is rising.

2. Today in the United States, it is estimated that almost one-third of families considered 'low income' cannot afford three meals a day, that 20% of homeless children do not have regular medical care, that 20% have to repeat a school grade because of frequent absences, and that almost 15% are diagnosed with 'learning disabilities.'

3. Today, New York City's Department of Homeless Services places families in 61 homeless hotels, many of which are of substandard quality, though the city often pays over three times the market rental rate for these properties.

REFERENCES

Cocks, E. (2001). Normalisation and Social Role Valorisation: Guidance for human services development. *Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry, 11*(1), 12-16.

Hildebrand, A.J. (2004). *One person at a time: Citizen Advocacy for people with disabilities.* Newton, MA: Brookline Books.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agentry.

PENELOPE LYN lives in Toronto with her husband & son. Currently a student at Centennial College in the Developmental Services Worker Program, she has a BSc in Psychology from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

THE CITATION FOR THIS REVIEW IS
Lyn, P. (2009). Review of the book *Rachel and her children* by Jonathan Kozol. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 54–57.

• • •

A GUIDE FOR TRAINING STUDY CIRCLE FACILITATORS (2nd ed.). By S. CAMPBELL. Pomfret, CT: Study Circles Resource Center, 101 pages, 2006. **REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org**

Reviewed by Pamela Seetoo

THIS GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED AND PRODUCED by the Study Circles Resource Center, now known as Everyday Democracy, a non-profit organization that seeks to support and create community through public dialogue and problem solving. Everyday Democracy works with neighborhoods, communities, states and regions, with particular attention paid to racial equality and ethnic differences. *A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators* was developed specifically to train facilitators to conduct study circles on any range of issues within a community. Study circles can be an effective means of giving voice to all people with a common concern for the purpose of moving people to action and creating change. Facilitators of such circles have a key role in assuring that members work together cooperatively and productively. Because Everyday Democracy utilizes study circles as a primary effort and one that they encourage others to use as well, they are vested in developing and assisting others to develop competent, well-skilled facilitators. Thus the guide is intended to instruct anyone with an interest in using the study circle model. It should be noted that the goal of the guide is to train facilitators to conduct study circles and not on the usefulness or effectiveness of study circles. The guide is available at www.everyday-democracy.org and in print from Everyday Democracy.

This seven chapter manual is very specific and comprehensive in its approach. After a brief discussion regarding the purpose of the guide and the principles of study circles, the guide begins to take a step-by-step approach to developing a facilitators training program. In Chapter 2, *Building a Training Program from the Ground Up*, several areas are addressed to assist program developers to get started. Benefits to co-facilitation are discussed as is how to find and recruit good facilitators. Some tips for creating a successful and effective training are recommended and include the importance of thoroughly educating potential facilitators on the study circle process. Other items covered in this chapter include training timetables, considerations regarding training sites and determining whether or not facilitators should be paid. Finally, this chapter addresses issues related to maintaining a high quality training program. After outlining a short general agenda in Chapter 3, *The Training Agenda at a Glance,* Chapters 4 and 5 work together to clearly provide users with all they need to conduct a facilitator's workshop. Chapter 4, *Annotated Training Agenda*, lays out a complete annotated agenda whereby those conducting the sessions are prompted and instructed clearly and methodically through the presentation of the curriculum. Chapter 5, *Tips and Takeaways*, offers all of the necessary handouts and slides or overheads that facilitators will need as well as instructional guides such as *Leading a Brainstorm, Facilitation Tips for Special Situations* and *The Art of Recording*. Chapter 6, *Training Young People to Facilitate Study Circles*, amends the previous annotated agenda for young facilitators, as youth are acknowledged in this process as powerful leaders of youth. The guide ends with a chapter on evaluation tools and suggests facilitator and participant surveys as well as the use of facilitator diaries, observation, one-on-one interviews and mentoring.

MY PURPOSE FOR REVIEWING this guide stems from my membership in an Social Role Valorization (SRV) study group and my desire to see that group not only deepen their understanding of SRV but also take more relevant and potent SRV-based action. The question I asked as I reviewed this manual was, "Is this guide instructive and useful for training facilitators of SRV study groups?" So while the study circle process itself does not specifically address its applicability to many of the groups of people for whom the principles of SRV are useful, it does purport to be effective in giving voice to people of marginal status, such as those living in poverty or people in racial and ethnic minority groups, and for moving people to action.

> *Study Circles are at the heart of a process for public dialogue and community change. The process begins with inclusive community organizing that aims to draw people from all parts of the community to work on an issue of shared concern ... moving to action, people connect the ideas from the dialogue to outcomes that range from changes in an individual's attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs, to new projects and collaborations, and to institutional and policy change (p. 4).*

Given this description of the study circle process, certainly the process itself could be quite fruitful in terms of using the ideas associated with SRV and putting them into action to create change on behalf of devalued people. The very essence of the process makes way for vulnerable people to be seen themselves as valued and contributing, as having something to offer the process, and to be known as an agent of change. Furthermore, the range of effect that the study circle process can have has great relevance to the equally wide range of impact that the ideas of SRV can have when applied: ranging from change on an individual level to institutional and social policy change. If the process itself is useful, then it seems that a process for training those who facilitate the process would also be useful.

An emphasis of the SRV study group that I am a part of has been to educate people on the ideas of SRV. Through the teaching, instructing, and mentoring of this group, gains have been made within a rapidly growing agency to develop a critical mass of people with a deep understanding and knowledge of the ideas, and a desire to teach others (cf. Elks & Neuville, 2007). As we prepare for an upcoming summit of these "students" of SRV, a very intentional focus of our two days together will be to call people to action, to use this knowledge to bring about change. It leads me to think that a role that would be particularly effective in terms of bringing the study circle to a point of action is the role of the facilitator. In *A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators,* the facilitator is responsible for what happens inside a circle.

> *They help participants speak honestly, build trust across differences, explore a range of viewpoints, explore a range of approaches, explore disagreements and identify common ground, develop action ideas to make progress, think about implementation, and understand the connection of their work to the larger community (p. 5).*

The guide provides instruction in various areas and skills related to this role which is not the same as the role of teacher (a role crucial to coherent application of SRV) and is more complex than simply leading a discussion. Through this neutral role, as defined in the guide, ideas are recorded, brainstorming is captured, dialogue is prompted to action, ideas are prioritized, and viewpoints are connected, and all voices are encouraged to be brought forth. This role would have great benefit in the context of assisting people to think about a person who is devalued, or a practice or a policy that devalues a person, and to identify action using the principles of SRV. Another great advantage is that study circles are a 'non-technological' strategy for implementing change. The democratic and community orientation of such a process makes it likely that all kinds of people, human service workers and those simply wishing to create change for people, can take part in the process. In combination with students being provided with sound teaching of SRV principles, this guide has much to offer in terms of skill development for the facilitator role and effective formats for study groups seeking to implement those principles.

Reference

Elks, D. *&* Neuville, E. (2007). Implementing Social Role Valorization across a large human service organization: Lessons *&* learning. *The SRV Journal, 2*(2), 37-44.

Pam Seetoo is from Harrisburg, PA (US), where she works for The Keystone Institute as an educator & internal consultant. She has experience working in residential services & foster care for vulnerable children & adults, & has been involved in teaching & using SRV for many years.

The citation for this review is
Seetoo, P. (2009). Review of the monograph *A guide for training study circle facilitators* by Sarah Campbell. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 57–59.

• • •

Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck vs. Bell. By Paul A. Lombardo. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org

Reviewed by Thomas Malcomson

On 2 May 1927, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. delivered the decision in the Buck vs. Bell case. The court upheld the sterilization of Carrie Buck, deemed to be feebleminded–the mother of a supposedly feebleminded daughter; herself the daughter of an alleged feebleminded woman–and judged likely to give birth to other feebleminded children. The operation would stop the hereditary line of feeblemindedness, promoting "her welfare and that of society" (p. 287). The title of Paul Lombardo's book on this historic case is a play on Holmes' pronouncement in the decision that, "Three generations of imbeciles are enough."

The story of Carrie Buck's ordeal at the representative hands of the Commonwealth of Virginia is introduced through a prologue focusing on the testimony delivered in the Circuit Court of Amherst by eugenic expert Arthur Estabrook. Estabrook was testifying at the local court hearing over the order to sterilize Carrie Buck, issued by the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded. His testimony on eugenics, the hereditary nature of feeblemindedness and the diagnosis of Carrie and her family was, according to Lombardo, critical to sealing her fate. Here Lombardo sets himself apart from other accounts of the story. Edwin Black (in *War Against the Weak,* 2004) and Harry Bruinius (in *Better For All the World,* 2006) all but ignore Estabrook, and focus on a sworn affidavit by eugenic expert Harry Laughlin as the evidence which convinced the court of Carrie's defective nature. With this opening hooking the reader into the story, the author settles into recounting the eugenic movement's activities to make sterilization its weapon of choice against people with perceived hereditary problems.

The book's eighteen chapters can be divided into five thematic sections. The first four chapters deal with setting the scene on the two central contextual elements in the Buck vs. Bell story: eugenics and sterilization. Chapter 1 introduces Francis Galton's theory of eugenics and its spread to America. Lombardo rightfully places it along side other social reform movements of the later 19th and early 20th centuries, the Social Purity and the Progressive movements in particular. The creation of the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded is described along with the medical community's negative view of people with epilepsy and those considered feebleminded.

In Chapter 2, Lombardo summarizes the history of sexual surgery to 'treat' criminals, those with aberrant sexual behaviour and the feebleminded. The contemporary arguments against such surgery is clearly delineated by Lombardo, who quotes legislators, medical journal editors, and others; questioning the rationale, the effectiveness, the safety and the possible increase in immoral behaviour such sterilization surgery could promote. The pro-sexual surgery side begins to win the day by the end of the chapter, which closes on the case of Davis vs. Berry, in which the 1911 Iowa law on sterilization was before the Supreme Court of the United States. The law was revoked by the state before the decision was announced on grounds of a lack of due process and cruel and unusual punishment. The Supreme Court provided a brief comment dismissing the case and noting procedural problems with the law. In a historical moment of foreshadowing, Lombardo reveals that the ruling was written by Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

The use of pedigree studies as evidence to advance the eugenic message is the focus of Chapter 3. *The Jukes* of 1915 by Estabrook and Henry Goddard's *The Kallikaks* are used as examples, as both were heavily drawn on during the initial court hearing for Carrie's sterilization. Estabrook's twisting of Dugdale's original assessment of environmental factors shaping the Jukes' family experience into an argument for heredity is noted. The positive reception of both books by contemporaries is balanced with several negative reviews, leaving the reader with the firm sense that eugenic evidence was not blindly accepted by all.

Chapter 4 explores Harry Laughlin's drive to have sterilization legalized through state laws that would be defendable against constitutional concerns. The result is Laughlin's "model law," a formula for creating a law to stand a test case taken to the Supreme Court. The law would have a rigidly followed procedure for deciding and processing sterilization candidates, due process of notification, the right to appeal through the adversarial court system, and would avoid the concern over unusual and cruel punishment by employing vasectomy or salpingectomy as the methods of sterilization. Again, Lombardo notes the critics of such laws, but in the end the pro-sterilization voices rise louder and shape laws.

The second section focuses on the superintendent of the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded, Dr. Priddy, his prior use of sterilization and his campaign to re-write the Virginia law on sterilization. It begins with Chapter 5 focusing on Priddy's involvement in the institutionalization and sterilization of Mrs. Willie Mallory. In 1916, Priddy sterilized Mrs. Mallory without her permission and sought to sterilize two of her daughters, on grounds that they were feebleminded and engaged in, or would be engaged in, immoral sexual activity. Priddy was sued by Mrs. Mallory over the surgical assault. The jury found Priddy in the wrong, but did not award damages. This experience rattled Priddy to the point he stopped performing sterilizations and began to press for a sterilization law. The following chapter re-visits Laughlin's book and model law on sterilization. It is an awkward re-telling of information found in Chapter 4, as it focuses on how the book was finally published by a eugenic organization, after rejection by every major American publisher. Chapter 7 describes the creation and passing of the Virginia Eugenical Sterilization Act, 1924. The evidence placed before the legislature, and the public campaign to convince people that the law was needed and would stop the onslaught of 'defective' people who threatened the well being of the state, led to a swift passage of a law based on Laughlin's model.

The story of Carrie Buck, the court case which went to the Supreme Court of the United States, and her subsequent sterilization are dealt with in the third section. This is the heart of the story. Carrie's selection and the three trials are told in detail. The lawyer to defend Carrie in fighting the sterilization order, Irving Whitehead, a eugenicist and a pro-sterilization advocate, was involved in the founding of the Colony. Lombardo paints his pathetic attempt to defend his "client" in broad even strokes. Whitehead never explored how a single woman (Carrie) became pregnant while living in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs, who had raised her from the age of three after her removal from Emma's care. Carrie claimed she was raped by a nephew of the

Dobbs. Whithead never questioned the theory of eugenics or the practice of sterilization; indeed his questions to Estabrook verified the hereditary nature of feeblemindedness. His submission to the Virginia Court of Appeal was a meager five pages, while the Colony's lawyer, Aubrey Strode, wrote a forty page brief defending the sterilization order. The three issues brought forward to the Supreme Court of the United States were the essential constitutional points which the sterilization law was created to meet.

Chapter 10 deals with the Supreme Court's contribution to the sterilization of Carrie Buck. Lombardo provides details on the background of not only Holmes (who wrote the final decision) but on other members of the court. Chief Justice William Taft (the former President) was a supporter of eugenics. Justice James McReynolds was a racist and anti-Semite who favored state rights. The support for the ruling by Louis Brandeis and Harlan Stone, although mentioned, is not really explored by Lombardo. The support of the other three members of the Court–Willis Van Decanter, George Sutherland and Edward T. Sandford–is not explored. The attitudes of the Justices whom Lombardo does mention are an important addition to the story, as prior authors have focused entirely on Holmes. Lombardo examines the decision in light of the writings of contemporary eugenicists and finds close parallels with Holmes' decision, suggesting he knew the eugenic arguments for sterilization and wrote them into his decision.

This section makes it clear that Carrie Buck was chosen as the best case for sterilization that could be used to test the new Virginia Sterilization Act. It was the decision of Priddy, Strode and Whitehead to push the case all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States before the order was even presented to Carrie. With the constitutional issues of unusual and cruel punishment, due process, and individual versus state rights to protect its population from "defective" people decided in favor of the Act, the path to the sterilization of people in the state of Virginia lay wide open. In an issue focusing on individual connection with people at risk for negative outcomes, the legal railroading of Carrie Buck provides a clear and brutal example of what happens when there is no interpersonal connection with people who have been devalued. Before the law was revoked in 1979, 8,300 Virginians would be sterilized.

The fourth section focuses on the immediate outcome of the Buck vs. Bell decision. Response to the Court's ruling was both positive and negative. Critiques of eugenics warned of "the danger of error" (p. 175). Supporters praised the decision and looked forward to the wide use of sterilization. Estabrook's and Laughlin's departures from the eugenic stable are related with no loss of the irony of their hypocrisy. Estabrook's marital infidelities resulted in dismissal from the Eugenic Records Office (ERO). Laughlin's epilepsy became so severe he could no longer hide it and had to retire from the ERO as well. Lombardo connects the eugenic sterilization laws of the United States with those of other countries, notably with Germany, but also the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia in Canada. This section reviews the later lives of other people in the story; Whitehead, Strode, and Emma Buck. The honors at the time of the death for the former two stand in stark contrast with the anonymity of Emma's passing.

The final section looks at the demise of Virginia's Sterilization Act (and those in other states) as a result of the failing enthusiasm for eugenics in post-World War II America, the approach of other methods for understanding disability and disorders, sterilization's failure to end the problems eugenicists had promised it would, and the case of Skinner vs. Oklahoma. Convict Jack Skinner served as the test case for the state of Oklahoma's sterilization law. Under the law, as a three time felon, he was considered hereditarily unfit and subject to sterilization. His defense attorney fought for him throughout the course of appeals. In 1942, the Supreme Court ruled in Skinner's favor, striking down the law. This court decision and the Loving vs. Virginia case (which ruled that Virginia's law restricting marriage was unconstitutional) laid the beginning of the end of the laws based on the eugenics of the early 20th century. The continued sterilization of people in the United States included the use of "federal funds … to sterilize between 100,000 and 150,000 low-income people" (p. 248). Many of these people were threatened with the loss of welfare payments if they did not have the surgery. Others were sterilized for their mental incompetence. Some were sterilized in childhood. An appendix in the book lists the thirty-two states which enacted sterilization laws, the date of repeal and the numbers sterilized. The laws of two states, Washington and Mississippi, are listed as intact at the time of publication.

Chapter 18, "Rediscovering Buck," tells of Carrie's death, the various state apologies for their sterilization laws, the sterilization of Leilani Muir in Alberta and her subsequent compensation, and the lack of such compensation in the United States. Carrie's post-colony life was one of poverty, two happy marriages, a lengthy correspondence with the Superintendent of the Colony, Dr. Bell (Priddy's replacement, as he died before the Supreme Court ruled on his case); and came to an end in a state run nursing home. She was buried a short walk from her daughter Vivian.

In the epilogue, Lombardo places Carrie Buck's story and the court decision in the context of the American "government's power over reproduction" (p. 268). He discusses the place of the Buck vs. Bell decision (never overturned) in law, noting its citation "150 times in judicial opinions" (p. 270). Without a new overtly eugenic law going before the court, there is little likelihood of the Buck vs. Bell decision ever being overturned. Lombardo warns against the comfort some might take in court decisions which uphold individual reproduction rights, as in each case they were never said to be binding to all people or in all circumstances. With this analysis he shows all legislation touching on reproductive issues to be open to use by the state to control the individual. The positioning of the Buck vs. Bell decision with reproductive rights appears to privilege this later issue over the story of the use of eugenic ideas to eliminate people deemed unfit to live as the main place Carrie's experience has historically. This is but a detour, though, as Lombardo returns to the issue of selectively eliminating people via genetic testing and manipulation. He ends with a caution for the reader not to forget the Buck vs. Bell case (Carrie Buck's story) as we face, "today's excitement … cultural fascination, and commercial potential" in the field of genetics (p. 279). Carrie Buck's story is one of the historic markers for the dangers that are inherent within any eugenic program.

Lombardo's choice to start with Estabrook's testimony draws our attention to the power of labels assigned to vulnerable people by those deemed (by larger society) to be capable of such determination: the 'scientific' professional. Of all the people to testify in the case, eugenic expert Arthur Estabrook was the only one to visit all three Bucks: Carrie, her mother Emma (both residents in the colony), and Carrie's six month-old daughter Vivian (living with the Dobb family in Charlottesville). He talked with Carrie, performed a short form of an intelligence test on Emma, and gave "the regular mental test for a child of the age of six months" (p. 5) to Vivian. He assessed Vivian as below the average for a child of eight months of age. A social worker, who testified in the original court case, stated that Vivian looked different, not quite right. Emma was given an intelligence test when she entered the colony in 1920 and was assessed as a high grade imbecile. Carrie was assessed as a moron upon her entry into the Colony. There never was an official testing of Vivian. At her untimely death, eight-year old Vivian's report cards showed her to be a good student (who could read, write and perform math at or above the average and whose deportment was excellent). They provided the closest measure of her intellect and indicate a 'normal' person. It is a piece of irony, among many in the story, that the diagnostic label of imbecile, which Holmes attached to Emma, Carrie and Vivian, was so clearly misused. Holmes and the others didn't need to understand the labels, just apply them and let the eugenicists do their work.

Although Lombardo does not write from an Social Role Valorization (SRV) framework, the story of Carrie Buck, as he tells it, provides abundant examples of elements covered within the SRV theory. The use of negative imaging (Wolfensberger, 1998, p. 17) to create the sense in people that the targeted group was defective, atavistic, or not fully human is rampant within the eugenic movement. This is obvious within the language and photographs of the family pedigree studies, and the eugenic books and articles quoted by Lombardo. Lombardo makes reference to a picture Estabrook used in the book *The Jukes* of one of the 'Juke' women holding an infant next to a group of pigs with the caption "After their own kind" (p. 37). Estabrook employs this juxtaposition to place the targeted people in the role of lower animal.

Another example is Paul Popenoe's alteration of a wedding photograph of Carrie Buck in an article on the history of sterilization. The photo is oddly long and thin (p. 193). The odd shape of the image is a result of Popenoe cutting Carrie's husband out of the picture. A normally happy newlywed couple was not the kind of image Popenoe wanted his readers to view. Popenoe could not allow people to see a member of the group the eugenicists deemed as defective social outcasts in the valued social role of wife. Another aspect of the story focuses on the professionalization that the eugenicists sought in order to gain authority over the groups they wished to eliminate. The use of experts in court, the training of field workers to collect the correct eugenic information and the use of supposedly diagnostic labels are some of the examples of the professionalization. Related to this was the unfailing faith eugenicists held in their 'science,' which seemed remarkably resistant to contradictory evidence. Finally, throughout this book there is the multiplying of problems in one person (Wolfensberger, 1998, p. 17). Eugenicists associated the feebleminded with immoral behavior, criminal activity, living in poverty and being the cause of other social problems. The removal of one feebleminded person would solve a cacophony of issues. The tenacity of the eugenicists to advance their flawed ideas in the face of strong criticism is not only remarkable but deeply disturbing. The reader is reminded of the critical importance of a sustained, clear and convincing critique of eugenic ideas.

This telling of the Buck vs. Bell decision benefits greatly from Paul Lombardo's twenty-five years of research and writing on the topic. Lombardo's mining of archival documents gives this rendition of Carrie Buck's confrontation with the eugenicists, and their weapon of sterilization, fresh information and a strong foundation. The endnotes provide a thorough sourcing of quotes, analysis and paraphrased summaries by Lombardo. "A note on sources" provides a two page statement listing archives consulted, Lombardo's previous work on eugenics and the Buck vs. Bell decision, but is not overly helpful. A more standard listing of works cited would be better. Apart from this small problem, the book is recommended for those interested in past, and concerned about present, eugenics.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Readers interested in this topic may also wish to read* Malcomson, T. (2008). Applying selected SRV themes to the eugenic movement in Canada & the United States, 1890-1972. *The SRV Journal, 3*(1), 34-51.

REFERENCE

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agentry.

THOMAS MALCOMSON, PHD, is a professor at George Brown College in Toronto. Co-author of the textbook Life-Span Development, *he teaches a course on the history of eugenics.*

The citation for this review is
Malcomson, T. (2009). Review of *Three generations, no imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck vs. Bell* by Paul Lombardo. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 59–64.

• • •

Building Social Relationships Through Valued Roles: Three Older Adults and the Community Membership Project. By J.E. Harlan-Simmons, P. Holtz, J. Todd, & M.F. Mooney. *Mental Retardation, 39*(3), 171-180, 2001. REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ www.srvip.org

Reviewed by Joe Osburn

This article describes a three-year long federally funded project ”to expand the social networks” of “older adults with developmental disabilities” (p. 171). “Community builders” were hired and trained to: (a) connect participants with carefully selected local settings where activities the participants enjoyed occurred on a regular basis; (b) support their participation in those activities for an initial period of time; (c) “cultivate and nurture budding relationships” with other participants in the activities and settings; and then (d) “‘fade’ as a physical presence when ... on-site support is not needed” (p. 172). It was carried out by the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Center on Aging and Community, in Bloomington, Indiana (US). Fairly detailed, instructive, and respectfully written vignettes of the project’s experience with three participants, ages 47, 61, and 69, are presented as representative of the 14 mentally retarded adults served by the project.

Several positive features commend this article to potential readers.

The authors tell us that the project was based on two assumptions related to social roles, first that “through involvement in valued community roles associated with meaningful activities,” project participants “would be more likely to develop unpaid sources of social support,” and second “that participation in valued roles is not only a means to gain social support, but an end in itself” (p. 171). This articulation of basic assumptions is a positive contrast to many other service enterprises that leave their foundational beliefs in the realm of ambiguity or unconsciousness.

Of general interest from our perspective is the described project’s secondary focus on valued social roles. It is clear (e.g., from the article title) that bringing about relationships was the project’s primary aim, and that roles, community settings, and activities were its main vehicles for doing this. Without necessarily being critical of this approach, it is useful to note that the project’s goals and means, while certainly admirable and positive, are relatively limited and circumscribed in comparison to an overall SRV approach. For example, in Social Role Valorization (SRV), valued social roles would be the first-order goal, based on its premise that valorizing someone’s roles will greatly increase the likelihood that they will experience the good things in life (Wolfensberger, Thomas, & Caruso, 1996), one of which is having close, meaningful, freely-given positive relationships with other people. Also, in a comprehensive SRV approach to valorizing another party’s social roles, many other important considerations, such as multiple elements of image and competency enhancement, would also be taken into account.

Also of particular interest to the SRV culture is that this article provides a fairly detailed published account of a roles-based project; in this case, a thoughtful picture of a concerted effort to forge adaptive relationships on behalf of three individuals with typical citizens in their communities. That there are other roles-based projects in North America, Australia, Europe, and elsewhere, we know from international SRV conferences and our work within the broad SRV network; there are not huge numbers of such projects, but there are some. However, most of them are not widely known because they have not (yet) been described in easily available published sources; hence their potential for instructiveness to others about the importance and means of supporting valued social roles for devalued people is greatly constrained. In short, we wish there were more published descriptions of projects like this one.

Another appealing feature of the article is the authors' seemingly modest assessment of the project's success and value. We are told, for example, that while some participants benefitted much more than others, the "community building process" had a positive affect on all participants by "bringing a variety of community relationships into their lives." The authors also noted that "Close relationships take a great deal of time and concerted effort to cultivate, along with the plain good luck of the right interpersonal chemistry. Many of the social connections ... did not become friendships wherein time was spent together outside of the activity. However, it became evident that the relationships that were restricted to participation in organizations and activities, even though they were not friendships per se, were valuable both intrinsically as a form of social support and as potential stepping stones to more intimate alliances" (p. 179). This "stepping stones" idea, though used in reference to relationships, is very similar to the SRV teaching of "role ascent," where incumbency of one valued role often leads to acquisition or attribution of one or more other, sometimes bigger and more valued, social roles.

Also mentioned was a general benefit to the community members who became involved with project participants in that these "relationships provided an opportunity to dispel myths about people with disabilities and to promote understanding and acceptance" (p. 180). The individual stories that were presented of the three participants also brought out the fact that some community members clearly experienced and expressed a sense of positive interpersonal feelings toward the participant with whom they were involved (cf. Wolfensberger, 1998, pp. 118-120).

The vignettes contain, on the one hand, many positive examples of the participants gaining new socially valued roles, such as woodworker, musician, musical performer, student, and volunteer, as well as helpful accounts about how the "community builders" went about facilitating these. On the other hand, they also depict instances where project efforts to introduce participants into some settings and activities did not work out, or were short-lived, or where the participants' presence was not appreciated or even came to be resented, and they explain why this was so as well. The authors were clear that the "community building" process was not easy and did not always go smoothly. For instance, some settings and activities, and the typical citizens engaged in them, were not quite so welcoming as others. In such cases, the project tried various strategies to make it work, including increased effort and perseverance in winning over staff and users in some settings, trying out other venues with different activities and people, and changing "community builders." Having these descriptions of both the successes and failures provides useful information that others inclined to similar "community building" efforts can draw on productively.

The vignettes also bring out the positive feedback loop between competency enhancement and valued social roles (Wolfensberger, 1988, p. 72). By being supported in opportunities to carry out a valued role, participants developed role-related skills and abilities they otherwise might never have gained, which in turn enhanced their competent performance in that role, leading others to perceive them in a more positive light and thus to be more open to relating to them in a positive way, at least within the boundaries of the role as well as the setting and the activities in which they were mutually engaged. Besides gaining competencies that were directly role-related, participants also gained ancillary competencies as a result of being in a valued role, such as learning to ride public transportation, or how to manage money better. Their new roles also enabled some participants to regain and further develop lost or suspended skills and latent interests. Gains in confidence and initiative were also noted.

One vignette tells of how a "community builder" was able to bring about a turn-around in the generally negative attitude held toward one of the participants by his staff at the nursing home where he resided. She did this by patience, diplomacy and courtesy, but mostly by helping the nursing home staff come to an appreciation of the importance of the participant's new role and of their help in facilitating his participation in it. This could also be read as an illustration of the SRV teaching points on the importance of exchanging one devalued role for another less-devalued one, or of working to reduce the negativity of a devalued role, such as by adding valued elements to it. In this case, the devalued role of incompetent, confined nursing home resident was upgraded to the slightly less devalued role of a nursing home resident with interesting outside things to do. With their new and improved attitude toward the participant, the nursing home staff, or at least a number of them, also tended to treat him better, specifically in regard to facilitating his participation in the outside activity, such as by making sure he was up, dressed, and ready to go on time, and this positive pattern of interaction around this specific aspect of the participant's life may also have generalized to the staff extending to him more positive treatment overall (though the article does not mention if that was the case).

Another SRV teaching point is that when there is more than one way to refer to a person's role, it is more valorizing to use the more valued reference, provided that is not deceptive. One of the roles of the participant just mentioned was helping to make children's toys in what the authors called a "community woodshop." His role there may have been said to be that of a toy-maker, a woodshop worker, or a woodworker, the latter probably being the most image-enhancing. The authors note that this participant "started telling people that he was a carpenter" (p. 179); while this was at least somewhat misleading, it shows how well he understood that most others would think very highly of him if they perceived him in that clearly valued role.

The authors' summary comment regarding the project's outcomes was that these "illustrate that success in expanding social networks is linked to regular participation in highly regarded activities that are well-matched to the individual" (p. 180). To a degree, this finding reflects what SRV has to say about personal social integration and valued social participation, but SRV goes further by making a special point of the crucial importance of valued participation, meaning that it is only valorizing if the person's presence and participation is wanted and valued among and by the other people the person is being integrated with (Wolfensberger, 1988, pp. 122-124).

In the article's concluding sentence, the authors offer a modest commendation of the project, stating, "As a flexible approach, rather than a model, the use of staff members as community builders within the four-stage process described here may be a useful example for agencies seeking to implement more *person-centered services* [italics added] for adults who are either working or retired" (p. 180). However, it would have seemed more pertinent here to emphasize relationship-building or valued social roles, since these were stated major goals of the project, rather than to introduce the notion of person-centered services, which was at best only an implicit subtext in the article, and mentioned for the first and only time in the article's concluding sentence. This unnecessary conflating of concepts is one of several problems in the article; others are noted below, some minor, others less so.

Although we have since learned that the project ran from 1993 to 1996 (J. Todd, personal communication, 20 February 2009), the article does not specify this. However, this timing is worth mentioning from an SRV perspective because by 1983, SRV began to be widely disseminated via publication and training events conducted in various places in the US and elsewhere, including in the state where the project and its staff were located. Yet, the article does not tell us what, if any, role SRV played in the project's formulation and conduct. To me, this is a surprising omission, because it seems obvious that this or any other project with major emphasis on social roles would have been well guided by SRV as its main conceptual and implementive framework. So, if SRV played any such role, why is this not explained? If it did not play any role, why did it not? While we can only speculate as to the reason(s) SRV is not mentioned in the article, we strongly doubt that one of them was a lack of awareness of its existence and relevance. (The project's operating organization was, after all, a "University Affiliated Program.") Relatedly, one wonders why–instead of or in addition to referencing Wolfensberger and Tullman's 1982 outline of normalization–the authors chose not to cite any of Wolfensberger's numerous works on SRV, one of the first of these being published in the same journal in which the article under review was later published (Wolfensberger, 1983).

Including handicapped adults as young as their mid-30s in a project operated by a "center on aging" does their image no good, though if the authors perceived this problem, they did not comment on it.

In drawing conclusions about this project, one should keep in mind that it was a short-term demonstration with limited scope and purview. It was, by nature, transitory in the lives of its participants. While it was up and running, it accomplished some good things on their behalf. When it stopped, it unfortunately and inevitably left social and relationship (and possibly physical) discontinuities in their lives. At the same time, however, the project tried to buffer these by consciously "nurturing natural supports," such as encouraging friendly relations between a participant and a fellow actor on the scene so that that person would then take over doing some of the things the participant needed help with in order to engage in the role activity, e.g., giving him a ride to and from it. Instances of some of these kinds of things happening were noted. However, in line with this, it would have been helpful if the article had included discussion of what was done to "turn over" to others (for example, to a participant's family member or residential staff) the specifics of facilitating the on-going involvements of participants. The fact that this was not discussed in any detail raises a question of how well, or even if, this important transition was dealt with by the project.

In summary, in spite of these drawbacks, the project seems to have been positive in both intent and execution and to have had some degree of success in demonstrating its goals. It would, of course, be of considerable interest to learn what happened to the participants since 2001 when this article was published. How long did the involvements in the roles and relationships last for them after the project, and the extensive supports provided by its "community-builders," were discontinued. Some years ago, I evaluated another short-term project in another state that was similar to this one in scope and aim, and preceded it in time. It had noteworthy success in connecting its participants with local organizations, associations and clubs in their communities. In a recent visit with the main staff on that project, I learned that many of the involvements and relationships it generated were pretty long-lasting, and that a few of them still continue to this day, even though the project itself was completed (i.e., not renewed for funding) nearly 20 years ago. We can hope for something similar for the participants in this now completed project. Perhaps a letter to the editor of this *Journal* from one of the authors of their interesting article will respond to some of these questions.

REFERENCES

Wolfensberger, W. (1983). Social Role Valorization: A proposed new term for the principle of normalization. *Mental Retardation, 21*(6), 234-239.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agentry.

Wolfensberger, W. & Tullman, S. (1982). A brief overview of the principle of normalization. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 27*(3), 131-145.

Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S., & Caruso, G. (1996). Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, *2*(2), 12–14.

JOE OSBURN is the director of the Safeguards Initiative in Bardstown, KY, USA, & a member of the North American SRV Council.

The citation for this review is
Osburn, J. (2009). Review of the article *Building social relationships through valued roles: Three older adults and the Community Membership Project* by J.E. Harlan-Simmons, P. Holtz, J. Todd, & M.F. Mooney. *The SRV Journal, 4*(1), 64–68.

Learning to Teach Social Role Valorization (SRV)

Social Role Valorization, when well applied, has potential to help societally devalued people to gain greater access to the good things of life and to be spared at least some of the negative effects of social devaluation. This is one of the reasons why it is important for people to learn to teach SRV, so that its ideas and strategies are known and available to the right people in the right places who can apply it well. Unless people continue to learn to be SRV trainers, the teaching and dissemination of SRV will cease. Many SRV trainers for example could teach lots of people how to **implement** SRV, but not how to **teach** it to others. At a certain point there might be implementation of aspects of SRV, but the knowledge of SRV itself might not be passed on to others, such as the next generation of human service workers. Teaching about SRV, and learning to teach SRV, can be done in many ways, depending in part on one's abilities, interests, resources and so on.

The North American SRV Safeguarding, Training & Development Council has developed a specific model for teaching people to competently do two things: (a) teach Social Role Valorization; and (b) teach other people to teach SRV. People who can do the former, the Council calls "SRV trainers." Those who can do the latter, the Council calls "trainers-of-trainers" of SRV. The Council named this a "Trainer Formation Model," i.e., a model for forming or developing SRV trainers and trainers-of-SRV trainers. A description of the Trainer Formation Model is available if you are interested (http://www.srvip.org/about_mission.php); also see the article referenced below.

To find out more about studying SRV and learning to teach it, please contact Jo Massarelli at *The SRV Implementation Project*, 74 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA; 508.752.3670; jo@srvip.org. She will be able to help you or to put you in touch with someone more local to your geographic area who can be of help.

Resource

SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council (2006). A Brief Overview of the North American SRV Council's Trainer Formation Model (November 2005). *The SRV Journal 1*(1), 58-62.