Review of *Group Work with Children and Adolescents: Prevention and Intervention in School and Community Systems.* Steven R. Rose. Reviewed by Bart Grossman.

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Book Reviews

Steven R. Rose, *Group Work with Children and Adolescents: Prevention and Intervention in School and Community Systems*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. $29.95 papercover.

As a teacher of group work and chair of a Pupil Personnel Services specialization in an MSW program, I consider Steven R. Rose's *Group Work With Children and Adolescents: Prevention and Intervention in School and Community Systems*, something of a personal favor. While the use of groups is growing rapidly in schools, practical knowledge of group work is often missing. As a result of the diminished attention to group methods in schools of social work since the late 60s it is, at times, difficult to locate field instructors who are capable of providing students with appropriate direction and supervision in this area of practice. The models of group practice students experience in schools are often ungrounded in knowledge of group design or development.

In this partial void, books like Rose's are vital. This work is part of the valuable Sage Sourcebook Series Edited by Armand Lauffer and Charles Garvin. Like the other volumes in this series, the book is practitioner-friendly; short, specific and prescriptive. The first part of the book offers a review of key concepts and foundation theories. It cannot, in a few short pages, take the place of a more traditional introductory text. However, it provides a bridge from theory to the specifics of group design, delivery and evaluation.

This section emphasizes such issues as school organization and personnel considerations—i.e. the impact of the school system as a context for group practice. The author reflects his sensitivity to context throughout, featuring problem-solving models and approaches rather than longer term psychotherapeutic designs that fit uneasily in most schools. The message is clearly that group work in schools must connect with the central educational mission of these institutions in order to be supported and effective.

Chapter 3 offers a very useful framework for analyzing the "processes of (group) practice." Rose highlights initial planning

including composition, member assessment, and the selection
of activities, techniques and leadership styles. He relates these
processes and activities to stages in the life of the group. There
is an extremely useful discussion of both formative and sum-
mative modes of group evaluation, moving from descriptive to
more rigorous designs, but remaining within the capacity of the
individual school social worker. The last chapter in Part One is a
helpful summary of key research findings about the effectiveness
of group intervention.

Taken as a whole, Part One sends a strong message about the
need for a goal directed, empirically-based approach to interven-
tion with children in schools, without making such an approach
intimidating to the practitioner. A wide array of technique is
presented—role play, group activities, art etc., with consideration
of their fit with group purpose and the developmental stages of
participants. Discussion is seen as one strategy rather than the
"default" program it so often becomes when leaders are unaware
of other possibilities.

Section II of the book carries the framework into four spe-
cific areas of application—parental divorce, peer relationships
and social competence, mental health and substance abuse, and
school performance. In each area Rose discuses the nature of
the problem, the purposes of group work with this problem and
context, steps in planning, composition and assessment, models
of leadership and specific group activities. Each chapter ends
with a full-blown case example of a group intervention, consider-
ing the impetus, design, development and individual and group
outcomes.

These chapters are gifts to the student practitioner who often
completes the reading of introductory texts asking, "So, what do
I actually do?" Rose demonstrates how the school social work
thinks her/his way from a problem to a group solution. He
includes references to specific assessment tools, and successful
models, exercises and activities.

The most effective of these chapters is the one on divorce.
The chapter on mental health and substance abuse is, perhaps,
too broad in scope and does a better job with the later than the
former. Certainly, more detailed works are available on each of
these areas, however Rose offers the generalist school practitioner

a clear starting point, a way to get grounded and specific guidance for approach the literature.

Such a small book (just 159 pages of text) cannot be expected to cover everything completely and the book has some gaps. Most perplexing is Rose's neglect of evaluation in the applications section. After such a useful introduction to evaluation one wonders why he didn't provide more examples of effective, feasible evaluation designs.

Mention is made of cultural competence and inter-cultural issues are featured in the section on peer relationships. Cultural issues in design are less fully treated in the other chapters.

The growing field of learning disorders may deserve greater attention than it gets here. Perhaps the development of group technologies has not proceeded to the point where a separate chapter could be written. However, this is certainly a problem that would benefit from more experimentation with group interventions for children, parents and teachers.

Nonetheless, Rose's *Group work with Children and Adolescents*, is an effective marriage of theory and practice that will be valuable reading for group work and school social work students and a useful tool for school social workers.

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Neil J. Smelser, *The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999. $35.00 hardcover, $24.00 papercover.

Neil Smelser's book is composed of a series of papers written over an academic career. They all spring from the creative tension inherent in being an academic sociologist while training and practicing as a psychoanalyst. Smelser is one in a long tradition of intellectuals in other fields who have been influenced by psychoanalysis, including anthropologist Alfred Kroeber and Sanskrit scholar (now turned man of letters) Jeffrey Masson. Depending on one's perspective, psychoanalysis is either long dead, or continues to be a central influence in the understanding of human beings. It is arguable that the ongoing presence of intense debate