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**COMPETENCE IN
MODERN SOCIETY:**

Its Identification,
Development and Release

1984, Revised 1997

JOHN RAVEN

Unionville, New York: Royal Fireworks Press
ISBN: 0 89824 532 X

From the Dust Jacket

This book is about the components of competence, the understandings, and the procedures which are required to run our administered world effectively. It is, in particular, about ways in which important motivational dispositions are to be fostered, assessed, and utilised in homes, educational institutions, and workplaces.

Dr. Raven argues that, if the members of our society are to function effectively, as individuals, or as members of the organisations of which our society is composed, they need new understandings of the role of management and the role of the employee. They need new understandings of the role of government, bureaucracy, and the citizen. They need qualities sadly neglected by educators in the past - managerial ability, initiative, innovativeness, discretion, and the ability to work effectively with others.

A set of psychological measurement principles appropriate to assessing such qualities, best termed components of competence, are described. These contrast sharply with the most widely accepted canons of psychological measurement. It is, for example, argued that it is essential to assess values prior to any attempt to measure ability.

Evidence is presented to suggest that the human resources which our society most badly needs are best fostered through processes which have been studied by relatively few psychologists and implemented by few educators other than parents.

In the requisite developmental environments people practise and develop important components of competence in pursuit of their own interests and goals. Such developmental environments are most often found in homes and workplaces rather than schools. Nevertheless the activities observed in a number of classrooms where such qualities were fostered are described.

Finally, the survey data presented in the book, despite their limitations, are deeply disturbing. They suggest that the cause of the "British Disease" is deep-seated indeed. Not only do many members of the population hold dysfunctional beliefs about management and participation, the results reveal a profound lack of interest in doing the things which effective managers need to do, lack of interest in innovation and efficiency, and little concern to support innovators. If these results are confirmed in more broadly-based surveys, they point to a future which is bleak indeed.

The book will be of interest to managers, teachers and psychometricians. . . and all those concerned with the education and training of such professionals. It will be of particular interest to all concerned with staff development, organisational development, and public accountability. Because of what it has to say about the causes of "The British Disease", it will be of interest to politicians, administrators, and social commentators of all kinds. It will, above all, be of interest to anyone who is concerned about future economic and social development.

From Reviews

A volume of considerable value, . . . rare degree of creativity. . . challenges establishment thinking in Education, Management and Psychology . . . long overdue."
Patricia Broadfoot: British Educational Research Journal.

"A remarkable text. . . written with a sense of verve and a sense of urgency which few can equal . . . his economic psychology should provoke intense debate."
Jack Whitehead: Journal of Economic Psychology.

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