

tools of the trade

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In Our Own Backyard

When considering "Tools of the Trade" for Extension professionals, there's a great temptation to look for material outside of our field. I'll admit this is a fruitful area to search, but sometimes we miss what's right under our noses—the back issues of the *Journal of Extension*.

Here is a simple, biased, annotated listing of some articles from the *Journal* that I consider *must* reading for the sincere Extension professional.

"Up the Hierarchy" by Claude Bennett, *Journal of Extension*, March/April, 1975. This is a dandy article on Extension evaluation that shows that evaluation can be done at many levels from simple data collection through objectives evaluation to accountability. As you move "up the hierarchy," it costs more in time and money and requires greater expertise. In evaluation, as in the rest of life, there ain't no free lunch.

"Power Actors and Social Change: Parts I & II" by Ronald Powers, *Journal of Extension*, Fall, 1967, and Winter, 1967. This is an old but good summary of power in social systems. Powers writes cleanly and is easily understood. Every Extension person should at least be aware of power and its consequences. These two articles can start the awareness process.

“Motivation=Benefits– Costs” by Terry L. Gibson, *Journal of Extension*, January/February, 1978. The title of this article doesn’t do it justice. Within this piece is a simple but powerful explanation of why some people can change and others can’t. People need “margin” to change and margin comes only when your resources are greater than your load. That’s the key and a very useful key to any person trying to help others.

Three articles. I could have picked many others. The point is that our *Journal* is not only up to date, but timeless as well.