

Reviews

elaborate framework he introduces us to what he calls communication checks, which are devices to ensure that the reader will know from the phrasing of an objective exactly who is the learner, what behavioral change may be expected, and the implied behavioral domain according to Bloom's *Taxonomy*. As may be seen from the examples given, he is also concerned with clear statements of evaluative techniques and criteria for success. The kinds of statements his technique produces are, I believe, very useful in the first step in curriculum design, that is, for drawing up main or overall objectives. On the other hand he appears to offer little help when it comes to reducing "developing ability" and "increasing learning achievement" to specific objectives at the level of the individual lesson or activity. There are, nevertheless, many useful points made in passing, such as on the relationship between needs and goals, the dangers of rigidity that may accompany behavioral objectives, and the difficulties that ensue if procedures are incorporated into the statements of objectives.

My chief criticism of the book, and it is a major one, concerns the way in which it is written. It is supposedly designed in light of "several learning strategies usually associated with programmed instruction." If this is so, I would hesitate to place it in the hands of students in whom I hope to nurture a positive, or at least open, attitude towards programmed instruction for certain phases of education. Mr. McAshan introduces us to a veritable thicket of jargon in Chapter Two and it requires infinite patience to hang on as he gradually develops our comprehension of these terms in subsequent chapters. I question the placement of the "evaluative measures" at the beginning of each chapter, and particularly the format for those heading Chapter One, which begin thus: "Quality education refers to the effectiveness of any educational program in meeting its own

....."

If this was designed to convince me that I needed to read the chapter, there was no problem! In any case, on the next page I found the sentence with the three words I should learn: "Quality education refers to the effectiveness of any educational program in meeting its own specifically defined objectives."

Having worked my way through the book, I am not convinced that I really need to clutter my mind with terms such as "specific non-instructional objectives" and "minimum level behavioral objectives" in order to understand and, hopefully, remember the points the author is making. These may be useful to the researcher and curriculum specialist, but I fear it is the kind of thing that would defeat my purpose in working with teachers in training or with experienced teachers in workshop situations. I do not mean that what Mr. McAshan is saying is not worthwhile; I just wish he could have said it in a simpler and more graceful manner. Perhaps it is egoism or inappropriate self-confidence, but I feel I could accomplish in lectures and discussions the same objective, but without the elaborate terminology. However, I must admit that my ideas, and certainly my repertoire of examples, have been enriched by having worked my way, in spite of irritation, through this book.

Gerald McKay
McGill University

William Oliver Martin.
REALISM IN EDUCATION.
New York: Harper and Row.
1969.
198 pp. \$2.95.

This is an outstanding book and is perhaps the only work of its kind which uses an analytic, as well as what the author calls a

phenomenological approach, to apply the classical realist principles of Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy to most of the crucial problems of modern education including curriculum and classroom practice.

Martin's analytic ability to make necessary distinctions, as well as his ability to move with ease from the level of general principle to practical, existential consequences and effects, makes his work a valuable one for all educators, regardless of their speciality. There are a few sections where the non-philosopher might have some difficulty, but these are counterbalanced by many areas where the author writes directly to controversial but relevant educational issues such as activity method, creativity, the rights of the student, doing one's own thing, guidance, the role of the university and the organization and delimitation of various subjects, disciplines and university faculties.

The author's thesis is organized around the teaching-learning relationship and divided according to Aristotle's four causes. In the first chapter where the teaching-learning relationship is analyzed, the author concludes by a factual analysis that this relationship is *triadic, asymmetrical and transitive*. The formula can be verbalized as: a *teacher* teaches some kind of *knowledge* to a *student* by some *means* for some *end* or *purpose*.

Crucial to the author's position is the notion of the truth-value of knowledge. An exaggerated child-centered view of education, or any subjective-relative view of "truth" imposed upon reality reduces teaching and learning to a diadic relation. In this event, knowledge would have to be reinterpreted in terms of use-value, as a social and functional term oriented, as a means of adjustment. Teaching becomes manipulation of the student, while knowledge becomes an ideology with an imposed rather than a discovered order. The ideological invention of "knowledge," resulting as it does in antiteaching and antilearning, occurs less in mathe-

matics and the physical sciences than in the social sciences.

Another major position the author defends is philosophy's essential role in a liberal education. Some knowledge of basic philosophical perspectives enables the teacher to teach his specialty on a *knowing why* basis, as in the new mathematics, rather than on merely a technical or elementary *knowing that* level. Then too, without the benefit of philosophy, teachers can do serious damage by subjecting their students to a mixture of "half truths, distorted truths, truths, prejudices and personal ideology" (p. 56).

At one point Martin exposes the genetic fallacy of those in the social sciences who determine the truth or falsity of a proposition by its historical, social or psychological origin. In another section he grounds even aesthetics in the ontological, declaring that aesthetics vanishes when it is reduced to the subjective. He is making the general point that either objective truth is the basis of education and morality or else all educational and social processes are arbitrary and anarchical, leaving personal preference to hold sway as the only real basis for non-technical matters. In fact, even the delimitation of the technical and scientific necessitates a dependance on some objective starting point.

This book is vast and exceptionally thorough in its scope. Even a glimpse of what is contained will impress the reader with the author's logical ability and breadth, which uses examples from various religions, the social sciences, and draws upon thinkers as varied as Marx, Dewey and Freud. Any intelligent teacher or guidance counsellor, regardless of his philosophy of education, can only benefit by an increased understanding resulting from exposure to the clarity and scope of this work.

William L. Ryan
McGill University