

I personally dislike some of the games because they are apt to make young children feel panicky. Music chairs and similar elimination games are destructive in that an undesirable effect (being "out") is obtained through no controllable cause. The eliminated children are not constructively employed during the remainder of the game. Neither are they happy, idle or quiet. As a music teacher, I have not found helpful games with balls, scarves or glasses filled with water. Some of these activities might, however, be useful to teachers who have access to a gym. And a mop!

More direction is needed on how to create the framework within which young children can improvise. In the section on Rondos, Birkenshaw suggests an entire song as the basis of experience for improvisation. However, until the children have had a great deal of experience handling short phrases, this is too long. In "Questions and Answers," we are not told how to deliberately make a phrase sound incomplete (the "question") nor how children can best be led to an understanding of what a balanced phrase is. Further, it is dangerous to suggest accompanying initial improvisations. There should be nothing to disrupt the child's concentration until he has acquired a certain facility and confidence. Nor would I heed the suggestion to use a pentatonic scale for the first pure melodic improvisations. No more notes should be used than the number which virtually guarantees a musical result: two or three at first.

It would have been very valuable to find here a discussion on the emotional climate necessary for a child to be creative — and the emotional benefits from such a climate. Kids have to feel absolutely certain a teacher thinks they're terrific before risking anything so highly personal as on-the-spot improvisations. A music teacher has to handle young egos very gently if she is ever going to hear good improvisations from her students.

Birkenshaw must be read carefully. Little nuggets of great value are tucked away here and there. The greatest asset of *Music for Fun*, *Music for Learning* is the emphasis

on music as a means rather than as an end in itself. It is so fine a book, one wishes it were perfect.

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Dennis M. Adams.
SIMULATION GAMES:
AN APPROACH TO LEARNING.
Worthington:
Charles A. Jones, 1975.
120 pp. \$6.60.

As teachers consider a more human classroom experience where children have choices, discuss freely, and demonstrate sensitivity to others rather than working at dull dittos to acquire pre-determined skills, then Adams' book, *Simulation Games: An Approach to Learning*, offers a gaming strategy where children play while thinking, problem-solving, and using language. So many curricula of the 60's reflect a strong cognitive thrust where children's learning is fragmented into skill groups and levels with each segment of instruction designed by a distant expert that Adams' succinct work is a pleasant departure.

In a lucid, persuasive style Adams describes how simulation games relate to learning by justifying play as a vehicle for children building concepts, for vicariously experiencing real or imaginary situations and developing sensitivity to feelings of others in group dynamics. While simulation games resemble role-playing and creative dramatics, they allow teacher and students to add the dimension of rules and conditions relative to the solution of a problem. Games are thus models of the real world with controlled variables.

Adams reviews many commercial educational games for their applicability to elementary and secondary classrooms: *Crisis*, a game of international relations, *Legislature*, a game in which students argue and maneuver, and *Ghetto Game* and *Blacks and Whites* which allow students to encounter problems of poverty and discrimination. He describes a group of teacher-made communication games, which, while not actual simulations, provide children with

Reviews

speaking and listening experiences in non-competitive game situations.

However, since Adams does not suggest how simulation games may be integrated into the total curriculum, we are left with only the description of a specialized teaching-learning technique. A key point which he fails to consider is the matching of game content and procedures with the concept level of the children who are participating. If a child wants to take part in the *Caribou Hunt* of the Netsilik Eskimos, then he must be able to transform his thinking to another's viewpoint; he needs prerequisite concepts and vocabulary or the game loses its significance. In *Legislature* students may use techniques of bribery or log-rolling to gain points. Thus discussions of values are inherent in the use of some simulation games, and these values should not be considered in isolation. The child and the total curriculum must be integrated.

Adams assures us that simulation games are not fads or panaceas, and an asset of his work is the introduction of alternative means of dealing with curricula objectives. For the teacher in a child-centered classroom who is seeking ways of involving children with a project or theme, in stimulating critical thinking, and in helping them play out a situation to see the consequences, this book has great relevance. The real issue is not whether or not to utilize a simulation game in the classroom, but which game matches the objectives of the project, for what purposes, and with children of which concept levels, interests, and group interaction skills.

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Margaret and Douglas Rector.
**THE GIFT IS GIVEN:
SELF GUIDED PRACTICE
OF THE SKILLS OF
TEACHING INTERACTION.**
Dunkirk, N.Y.:
Easttown Press, 1974.
119 pp. \$6.00.

The title, *The Gift is Given*, is both misleading and rather pretentious. The "gift" is the bright and clear

mirror of a teacher's self received from viewing a video tape recorded (VTR) lesson. The authors see the VTR lesson as the answer to Robert Burns' plea, "O, would some power the gift to give us, to see ourselves as others see us."

The handbook is designed as a self-guided practice manual for teaching interaction skills such as questioning, praising, and reinforcement. The authors claim the book brings together a wide variety of techniques which would cost thousands of dollars if purchased separately in commercial video tape programs. The book begins by looking at present teacher habits and by asking the reader to develop the "skill" of self-awareness. Other skills were chosen on the basis of observation of teachers over a period of years and work with experimental groups at the Teacher Education Research Center at Fredonia, New York. They include: habitual praise and reinforcement, diagnosis, involving and valuing, concept level variation, and controlling interaction through role-playing. The method of study is simple: the teacher reads the chapter for the skill chosen, records a ten minute teaching segment, and analyzes the segment with the use of the play-back guide.

Although any teacher may select a skill from the handbook and practice individually (with her own students and the VTR), the Rectors recommend that she practice skills with small groups of children outside the classroom or with peers in order to provide a low-stress, "cool" environment. The usual 30-40 student classroom situation is difficult to record adequately and provides too much stress for the teacher who is concentrating on developing new skills. The authors remind the reader that "teachers function in a perpetual overload, by the standards of other professions, who take their clients, or patients, one at a time."

Skills should be practiced with the VTR until teachers reach a point where "their responses to student needs are almost automatic." In support of this contention, the Rectors cite Alfred North Whitehead's assertion that civilization advances by extending the number of important