

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

operations we can perform without thinking about them. However, although few would argue that teachers should become more sensitive to students or that they should provide positive reinforcement more frequently, they must beware of responses that are *almost* automatic!

The authors recommend the use of the handbook for all levels of teacher preparation, including college instructors, and for inservice training. The text is so liberally sprinkled with commas, however, that sensitive writers may find the reading painful. (The "Foreword — To Teachers," one page in length, contains more than fifteen unnecessary or misused commas.) Composition teachers, weary from "correcting" student themes, may never read past the first few pages.

Debate may arise from statements such as: "Only by this means [VTR] can the teacher see, and understand, and relive, the many purposes and feelings that underlie each recorded action" and "Teachers now have the capability of studying and controlling the environment, *absolutely*." However, teachers may be won over on page one with the Rectors' statement that "Teachers are teachers, and are capable of teaching themselves anything they wish, as fast as they wish."

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J. M. Thyne.
PRINCIPLES OF EXAMINING.
London:
University of London Press,
1974.
278 pp. \$6.95.

Despite their detractors, examinations have played an important, and honorable, part in British education. Some forty years ago two significant books, *Essays on Examinations* (an international enquiry and report) and *Marks of Examiners*, laid divergent pathways for subsequent writers. On the one hand were those concerned with the history, practice, and general imperfections of written examinations; on the other, the critical, experimental, statistically oriented writers. Thus

libraries are littered with works which seldom add much to our previous knowledge, though in the forty years there have been considerable gains in the statistical sophistication of test construction, and there are many worthwhile texts indicating how teachers can improve the quality of their own tests. But little has been done either by a search through current examination practices or by consideration *ab initio* towards a statement of, let alone a critical analysis of, the principles which underlie examining and examinations. Thyne's book purports to consider these principles.

His premises are clearly stated. An examiner seeks to maximize the validity of the *results* of the examinations he sets. We must therefore look at the procedures by which the results are produced (behaviors given in response to questions). The behaviors are subject to evaluation; the method of evaluation must as a necessary condition yield consistent results. But the behaviors (responses) should all be relevant to the purpose of the examination. If the examination consists of more than one question, then each question should elicit responses relevant to the purpose of the examination. The totality of behaviors is a combination of part-behaviors; the form of combination, whether simply or weightedly additive, can affect the final ranking of candidates and is therefore related to the topic of consistency in measurement. Since, as Thyne shows, these conditions are necessary *and* sufficient for the results of examinations to be valid, the rest of his book contains their careful expansion and their non-mathematical translation into the practice of good examiners.

Principles of Examining has three parts: "The Meaning of Examination Results," "The Combining of Marks," "Setting Questions and Marking Answers." The first section (nine chapters) is important as a contribution to our understanding of the principles of examining; the second treats a numerate topic in an almost completely non-numerate manner; and the third should appeal to those who like to see principles translated into a "how to do it" set of exercises. The style is lucid, the language simple,