

in the act of re-forming himself as the present volume.

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**Leo D. Leonard and
Robert Utz.**
**BUILDING SKILLS FOR
COMPETENCY-BASED
TEACHING.**

New York:
Harper and Row, 1974.
248 pp. \$6.95.

**Robert Utz and
Leo D. Leonard, eds.**
**THE FOUNDATIONS OF
COMPETENCY BASED
EDUCATION.**

Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt,
1975. 184 pp. \$6.75.

Leonard and Utz co-authored a "how-to-do-it" book on competency-based teaching in 1974 and one year later co-edited a collection of essays on competency-based education.

The first book, *Building Skills for Competency-Based Teaching*, does not deliver what it purports to deliver — a model to provide the reader with the basic strategies and competencies needed to individualize instruction. James Cooper, in his Foreword, claims that its unique feature is that it models the process which it attempts to teach. Alas, both the authors and Dr. Cooper must have a different operational definition from this reviewer of what constitutes an "individualized instructional module." Cooper states that each chapter is organized as a learning module — "a self-contained learning package" with behavioral objectives, appropriate learning activities, a pretest to assess the entering level and a post-test to evaluate competency. These components are present, but not in the format one would expect in a self-instructional package. The pretests al-

ways begin with a note to the *teacher*, not to the student, and the *teacher*, not the student, is expected to evaluate the responses to both the pre- and post-tests, as no criterion of acceptable response is provided. The lack of a good instructional model detracts from the book's usefulness, but the chapters do give useful background information for developing competency-based curriculum.

Utz and Leonard make a very strong case for the use of behavioral objectives in curriculum planning. Included in the Introduction is a summary of the response made by James Popham in defense of the use of behavioral objectives. The authors state that a behavioral objective approach does not necessarily exclude affective concerns, foster conformity, inhibit student freedom or dehumanize the student. The use of behavioral objectives is obviously the cornerstone of their presentation of the competency model. In this respect, they do practice what they preach and behavioral objectives appear for each of the chapters.

There are five skill areas presented. The first two, the authors admit, are not related exclusively to a competency-based curriculum. They obviously consider them as pre-requisite skills (although they do not use that term) for any classroom teacher. The first chapter is titled "Developing Self-discipline." Although there would be general agreement that this should be the ultimate goal of all management strategies, there is not even an oblique reference to this ultimate objective. The objectives and content of the chapter are designed to help teachers specify problem behavior in specific, observable terms and to design appropriate strategies "to promote the behavior you wish to develop" or "to eliminate the problem behaviors." One might challenge the selection of content of Chapter 2, "Applying Learning Concepts." The objective of the chapter is presumably to sensitize the teacher to motivational factors in student learning. Utz and Leonard refer briefly to the terms "artificial" and "real" learning from John Holt's *How Children Fail*,

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Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, the use of reinforcement and punishment. The four remaining chapters contain a brief overview of Bloom and Krathwohl's taxonomies, show how to evaluate a module and use tests diagnostically, and provide ways to assist the student in transferring theoretical knowledge to a practical application.

Certainly, the book might be useful as a supplementary reference. The notes, bibliographies, and some of the chapters are good. In terms of format, however, the book is dated.

The second work, *The Foundations of Competency-Based Education*, appears to be an attempt to provide academic respectability for the competency movement by relating its origins to several established disciplines. Leonard and Utz state with unreserved enthusiasm that the purpose of the book is to demonstrate that philosophy, history, psychology and sociology have already made a

contribution to the CBE movement. The contributing authors generally reflect reserved optimism.

Whether the articles were commissioned or selected, the editors should have exercised tighter control. There is an unevenness about the book which to some extent detracts from its usefulness; the styles and content range from scholarly to mundane; some articles would interest a graduate student while others are more appropriate for an undergraduate; there is unnecessary repetition, and some content is of questionable value. However, despite its flaws, the book is useful in promoting scholarly evaluation of curriculum models used in contemporary education. With judicious selection, many articles could provide supplementary reading for students in teacher education programs.

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COMING:

Precepts, Policy and Process: Perspectives on Contemporary Canadian Education

Editors — J. Donald Wilson and Hugh A. Stevenson

Publisher — Alexander, Blake Associates, London, Ontario, 1977

- How did education develop? . . .
- What prospects are there for Canadian education in a troubled society and a very troubled world? . . .
- Key issues in teaching, curriculum and policy alternatives . . .
- The conclusions are surprisingly optimistic . . .