

One of the few characteristics of good writers we have been able to document clearly is their consistent use of revision, though not in the sense of a final formal 'step' in the process but rather as a recurrent, often continuous activity. And yet the concept of revision, while included in several early sections of *Functional Writing*, is hardly stressed. Too often, the division into mastery-learning units obscures the need for revision; after all, if your task is to formulate tentative organizing ideas you need hardly revise. Not even the last chapter, "A Review of the Text," discusses the place of revising in the continuous process of writing.

While the text does give at least some attention to revising, it ignores syntactic fluency almost completely. It asks that students make causal connections, connect strands of argument, and so on, while many simply do not have at their fingertips the syntactic options which will allow them to indicate such relationships. The text seems to assume that students will automatically possess such opinions or that they will stumble on them while working through the assignments. To my knowledge, no evidence bears out such an assumption.

I would like to be able to report that some of these shortcomings are redeemed by an engaging style and assignments that are sufficiently motivated and fresh. Such is not the case. On the contrary, the writing is dull and often tedious ("You first present a tentative organizing idea about your information to accommodate the opposed priorities of the reader"); most topics are of the old war-horse variety ('euthanasia,' 'capital punishment'); and the assignments are often highly contrived ("You are writing a simple introductory essay concerning the effects of certain fifteenth-century inventions on the development of European society. The essay is to be included in a textbook for children of grade school age"). The cumulative effect of such topics and assignments, I'm afraid, is far less than stimulating.

Because *Functional Writing* essentially rests on such sound conceptions, I have perhaps been overly demanding in my evaluation of it. But it is indeed disappointing to find such fruitful theoretical assumptions yielding such a sterile text.

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**MARX AND EDUCATION IN RUSSIA AND CHINA.**

**Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977.**

**376 pp. \$29.95.**

This book makes a significant contribution on a subject of increasing interest, namely, the theory and practice of education in post-revolutionary Russia and China. Literature on educational develop-

ments in China is so scanty that this volume is a welcome addition not only because it gives very useful factual descriptions of the two systems, but doubly because it interprets the theory and rationale behind them. The author discusses the implications of Marx's major theories for education and consistently compares and contrasts ideology and practice in the USSR and China.

Unlike most books dealing with contemporary China, this is not simply a product of personal impressions of a visit. Ronald Price, a Senior Lecturer in Comparative Education at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, has lived there, taught courses, and written extensively on Chinese and Russian education. Well researched and well documented, the book errs perhaps a little on the side of an excess of quotations. The use of "Russia" instead of USSR was a conscious choice meant to signify Russian dominance. He points out the problems and limitations posed by the lack of availability of statistics, particularly from China. Nevertheless, the book contains a large amount of interesting data juxtaposed for comparison.

The main theme straddles an important issue in comparative education: the relationship between the theory and practice of education, analysed here in terms of interpretations of Marxist ideology. The main concern of Marxist education, Price points out, is the development of self-conscious, self-determining individuals within a cooperative community. Marx's theories on the dialectic between social consciousness and social being imply the significance of a relationship between theory and practice, which in turn suggests a link between education and productive labour. An important section of the book contrasts the concepts of labour and education in the two systems. Educators in Russia have concentrated on polytechnical education emphasizing the cognitive aspects of schooling, while Mao in China attempted to combine education with productive labour, thereby stressing the development of a critical consciousness through participation in social life. The author analyses each of Marx's main concepts in terms of education in the two countries, focusing frequently on further analysis of Mao's thoughts.

Contrasting the historical developments of the two systems, Price provides a descriptive analysis in terms of structure, aims, methods, and content, pointing out differences arising from fundamental ideological and leadership distinctions. In his analyses of the economic and socio-political institutions which also educate, his assessments of youth organizations and the army are significant. But whereas his discussion of Marx's ideas on the family and sex equality is good, Price fails to evaluate the contemporary relationship between the sexes in the two societies.

The author concludes that undoubtedly there has been spectacular educational and economic growth in both countries. But "Marxism in the USSR has in the main degenerated into official apologetics"

(p. 344), while Mao in China, he argues, came significantly closer to Marx's ideals; and Mao's China, although it had much to achieve, had begun to ask the more pertinent questions. In both systems reality speaks louder than the rhetoric which is characteristic of the two countries.

Well organized and clearly written, with a sound theoretical framework, a very informative and perceptive analysis, and a succinct bibliography, this volume is highly recommended for courses in comparative education and for people interested in socialist education.

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**LANGUAGE AND MATURATION.**  
**Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1977.**  
**180 pp. \$12.50.**

*Language and Maturation* is offered as an attempt "to summarize some of the findings on the language behaviour of children and adults, during periods of development that seem to be somehow different from each other; and to summarize some of the findings concerning the possible causes of these differences." To this end, the author's summary of the current research in language behaviour and development is divided into five chapters.

The first chapter, "Description of Language Use and Development," serves as an introduction to the topic, by briefly describing the major theories proffered by researchers from various fields to explain language acquisition in the child and language behaviour in the adult. In subsequent chapters the author traces language development from "Infancy" (a period which begins with vocalic babbling and ends with the child's production of his first words) to "Early Childhood" (a stage which ends with the child's having achieved basic linguistic competence) to "Middle and Late Childhood" and "Adulthood" (periods of further elaboration and development of competence at all levels of language). The author describes the achievements made as the individual moves through each of these stages, and discusses the proposed determinants of these observed behaviours.

A major weakness of a work such as this is that it is a tremendously difficult task to provide a brief but integrated picture of language development from infancy to adulthood. The book adequately summarizes the current descriptions and proposed causes of the maturing individual's competence at those stages which have been well-researched. However, gaps in the literature and perhaps the author's own