

Book Reviews

Elliot W. Eisner.

**THE EDUCATIONAL IMAGINATION:
ON THE DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS.
Second Edition.**

New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985.

386 pp. \$41.45.

In *The Educational Imagination*, Elliot Eisner discusses curriculum development and, to some extent, evaluation and research from a wide variety of perspectives. This book is not intended to be a guide for the designer, the evaluator or the researcher, but it is intended to provoke thought about the fundamental assumptions and issues inherent in the curriculum field. The author raises questions and rarely proposes single solutions; the reader is taken through a stimulating and sometimes frustrating analysis of the educational system.

Eisner carefully defines and distinguishes among kinds of curricula and the assumptions, values, and perspectives underlying each approach. He places the field of curriculum development in its historical and social context. The process of curriculum planning is discussed in some detail, including the roles various institutions and individuals most often play. Considerable attention is paid to the role of the teacher; teaching, evaluation, and even educational research are portrayed as artistic endeavors. Five examples of educational criticism (a form of evaluation or qualitative research modelled on art criticism) are provided to highlight this perspective.

Overall, *The Educational Imagination* is a thoughtful and readable analysis of the area of curriculum development. It is important, at this time, to emphasize the complexity of the teaching and learning process, and to consider the assumptions underlying our approaches to the design and evaluation of curricula. During the 1970s, educational research, teacher training, and graduate programs in education attempted to emulate "scientific" approaches. As a result, the best research was seen to be that which employed an experimental design, carefully controlling for all "variables" (individual student and teacher

differences; environmental differences) and examining the effect of a specific treatment. At the same time, teaching materials were carefully and systematically developed, yielding step-by-step hierarchical designs with criterion-referenced measures of mastery at each step. Educators are now beginning to realize that in our attempt to be scientific and to create a technology of teaching we have perhaps overlooked much that is important in education.

On the other hand, it is essential that we do not discard the gains that were made through the scientific or systematic approaches and Eisner is, at times, in danger of encouraging this. He argues, for example, against the use of behavioural objectives on the grounds that they do not describe more complex types of student learning. At the end of one section on the limitations of objectives, we find the statement, "The multiple choice test is simply not adequate for everything" (p.116). This illustrates the implication, found throughout the book, that the systematic design of instruction leads to an assembly line type of approach which may be suitable for training programs, but not for education.

If the reader takes care not to be persuaded to discard all course objectives and burn all the educational research journals, **The Educational Imagination** is likely to provide some valuable insight into the processes of curriculum design and evaluation.

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R.D. Kellough and P.L. Roberts.
**A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS:
PLANNING FOR COMPETENCE.**
New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985.
512 pp.

This resource guide for elementary school teachers is a sensible handbook for beginning teachers and teacher educators. The volume is concerned with the whole aspect of teaching competency and how to develop the skills needed to be considered "a competent professional". As in other texts of this genre there are the usual chapters about planning instruction, writing and classifying instructional objectives, and dealing with classroom management situations. These are cohesively presented with practical examples for teachers' use. However, unlike the book **Classroom teaching skills** by Cooper et al. (1982, Heath Pub.), a well known guide to teaching, this new resource book includes three chapters with handy instructional guidelines for the teaching of reading, writing, computers, science, the arts, physical education, and a foreign language. Additionally, each chapter is followed by appropriate questions for class or group discussion and a selected list of readings and references on the topic of the chapter. A good example of the usefulness of this guide is the excellent chapter on looking for a job and on writing a resume as