BOOK REVIEWS


The primary thesis of this book argues for "a teaching-learning strategy that emphasizes student-centered, heuristic activity." From that premise, the author expands on the development of the debate of theory versus practice in library education, and then goes on to describe alternative teaching-learning processes that could be used to help resolve the continuing dilemma.

The book begins with a description of the evaluation of professional education in the context of the university milieu. There is a brief description of professional education in medicine, engineering, law, social work, and teaching. The balance of theory and practice in these curricula is shown as being present and as being desirable.

A description of the development of library education and the debate concerning the inclusion of theory and/or practice in the curriculum follows. There are restatements of the effects of the studies by Williamson and Reece and of the later developments and opinions concerning the professionalization of library education. The more recent thrust has been to develop a body of theory to complement the prior reliance on practice. The value of "field work" or "practice work" continues to be of interest. The years of debate on theory versus practice have not produced a resolution. According to Morehead, there is a need to return to the early theoreticians to find alternatives to practice or field work, which can then be incorporated into the teaching-learning process.

The modes of instruction that are delineated include face-to-face instruction and independent study. The various applications include class presentations, problems, observations, projects, and laboratory work.

The library-centered library school is based on Patricia B. Knapp's work at Montteith College on library-centered teaching. From this concept a logical next step is "a specialized library which could function as the locus of the teaching-learning process." For library education, the specialized library is the library science library. Learning strategies that are discussed are the critical incident theory and the Dewey inquiry model. In seeking a resolution of the theory-practice dilemma, it will be necessary for library educators to try new methodologies even if there are risks, in hopes of finding a better way of educating today's students.

To devise a conceptual structure for a specific need is never easy, particularly when there is no unifying theory. However, to inte-
egrate theory and practice there is a need for a 
learning environment such as a working li­
brary, which becomes, in essence, the labora­
tory. This model would allow the interrela­
tionship of theory and practice. Freedom, 
relevance, and discovery are the elements 
seen as necessary to provide the methodology 
of integrating theory and practice into the 
teaching-learning process.

This volume brings together most if not all 
of the arguments pertaining to the discussion 
of theory versus practice in library education, 
and in that sense serves a useful function. The 
bibliography and references are extensive 
and add depth to the work.

There are also, unfortunately, some as­
pects of the book that detract from its 
strengths. The text is laborious to read, pri­
marily because of the extensive use of hyper­
bole and a vocabulary that does not lend itself 
to readability. The other shortcoming is the 
lack of analytical assessment of the material 
that has been gathered. The material is pre­
sented in a straightforward way, but few 
conclusions are drawn from the available in­
formation. The final conclusion that is put 
forward is perhaps too simplistic: freedom, 
relevance, and discovery will reconcile the­
ory and practice in the teaching-learning 
process. The expectation of an actual theory 
or model to address the question was not 
met.—Irene B. Hoadley, Texas A&M Uni­
versity, College Station, Texas.

A Unifying Influence: Essays of Raynard Coe 
Swank. Ed. by David W. Heron. Metu­
chen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1981. $13.50. LC 

Raynard C. Swank's distinguished career 
in American librarianship included service as 
as a director of two research libraries, as an as­
sociation executive, and as a library school 
dean. Swank received his doctorate from the 
Graduate Library School at the University of 
Chicago in 1944. After several years as direc­
tor of the University of Oregon library, he 
moved to Stanford, where he directed the 
Stanford University Libraries from 1948 to