

BOOK REVIEWS/REVUE DE LIVRES

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The Negotiated Order of the School, Wilfred B. W. Martin, Toronto: Macmillan, 1976, 178 pp. \$12.95.

Reviewed by:

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Wilfred Martin, a sociology professor, has recently completed an extensive, in-depth study of the negotiation process in education using a symbolic interactionist perspective. His study focuses on teacher-pupil and teacher-teacher interactions in traditional and open-area classrooms. He is specifically interested in an analysis of the process of resolving problematic day-to-day encounters.

Martin uses a combination of questionnaires, interviews and direct observations to gather data on the negotiation process. The analysis is done by: (1) isolating the various ambiguities and disagreements which necessitate a form of negotiation; (2) clarifying the power relations which exist between the participants; (3) identifying the strategies and stages used by the negotiators; and (4) commenting on the temporal aspects of negotiation and the perceived outcomes of the negotiation process. These findings are then used as a basis for formulating principles about the informal negotiations process in schools in particular, and in formal organizations in general.

The research is extremely valuable in providing a clear analysis of the similarities and differences

in the negotiations process in teacher-pupil and teacher-teacher interactions. There is also a systematic comparison of traditional and open-area classrooms on the negotiation dimension. One interesting finding in the area is that contrary to expectation, there are no significant differences in the negotiations that take place in the various settings. Apparently, the physical structure does not necessarily indicate the nature of the interactions that will take place; personal and organizational variables seem to be of more primary importance.

Although Martin undoubtedly provides good research and sound theory, it is unlikely that the book will have much appeal for most educators. The rigid, academic writing style, appropriate for a research report, does not lend itself to easy and enjoyable reading. It is not sufficient to simply present good content; the approach is also of fundamental importance for any meaningful presentation. Another difficulty centers around the almost exclusive emphasis on the "theoretical understanding" of the negotiation process without any explicit reference to intervention procedures. Educators require theoretical explanations, but are primarily concerned with *using* knowledge of the negotiations process to encourage behavioural and attitudinal change in themselves and others. There is a need for a more action oriented approach so that the knowledge can be integrated with practical concerns. It must be recognized, however, that as a theoretical base Martin does offer a clear and concise framework that has relevance for educators. In this respect, it is worth pursuing in greater detail.