

# philippine studies

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## Manual For Retreat Masters

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a description of the ideal machine and its place in the teaching of foreign languages. The teaching machine itself is no longer a novelty. Many sciences have already made use of it. But here Morton describes its use in the learning of a foreign language.

The concept of the teaching machine is based on a modern theory of the psychology of learning, that the learning process is the accumulation and amalgamation of specific segments of behavior. According to this approach, learning is making a habit of an infinite number of basic, mechanical or electrical patterns of behavior, and the means to this end are practice and repetition. The student is given the opportunity to form these new habits at his own speed by the machine in the laboratory. There he can teach himself to form linguistic habits, with guaranteed results of achievement.

This method, as proposed by B. F. Skinner of Harvard, aims at getting the student to arrive at the right answers by a series of responses to questions. The material is broken up into a very large number of small steps and auxiliary devices are provided, so that the student is led to the right answers. The machine guarantees a complete mastery of each step and thus makes the next step as easy as possible. It is also accommodated to the student's capabilities, so that he is able to proceed at his own pace.

There are two interesting facts connected with the teaching machine. The first is that the program for the machine can be constructed along either the structural or the traditional method, according to the preference of the author of the program. The second is that, once the pre-suppositions behind the use of the teaching machine are granted, i.e., that the purely mechanical operations involved in the teaching and learning of languages can be relegated to the language laboratory, then the teacher can be freed to function in those areas where he is most needed as a human teacher, namely, imagination, spontaneity, sensitivity, understanding, sympathy, humility and feeling. The machine is an aid, not a substitute for the teacher.

TEODORO A. LLAMZON

**MANUAL FOR RETREAT MASTERS.** By Fr. William (Mc-Namara), O.C.D. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1960. ix, 94 pp.

The retreat movement is certainly gaining adherents with each succeeding year. More and more priests are needed to fill the demand for retreat masters. All priests admit that retreat time is the flood-

time for God's grace, a special opportunity for awakening Christian consciousness. And yet there seems to be a general aversion, especially among secular priests, to the task of retreat master. The attitude seems to spring from a feeling of unpreparedness for such an important task. Fr. William's book should help to solve the problem.

The book is written for the high-school retreat master and outlines, sometimes in detail, the various talks that make up a high-school retreat. There is valuable advice and encouragement aplenty for the retreat master; examples of the direct, challenging, positive approach that should appeal to teenagers and spur them to action; practical hints on how to arouse interest for a coming retreat, how to plan the actual time-schedule, how to forge the various talks into a unified and vivifying whole.

Every page can be commended for its clear, inspirational, fresh style. In particular, the six chapters outlining in detail various topics of capital importance can be brought straight into the conference room and used as the actual points for meditation. With this book, plus a few example-stories to illustrate the meaning and importance of the various truths and some Gospel stories to bring out the lovable personality and fierce love of Christ for us, the busiest priest can conduct a high-school retreat which will be blessed with abundant spiritual fruit.

EDUARDO P. HONTIVEROS, S.J.