

https://dspace.org/

[Review of the book Teaching backward pupils, by S.S. Segal (London: Evans, 1963)]

Rose, Brian Waldron

1965
Johannesburg College of Education
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/27465
Rose, B.W. (1965) [Review of the book Teaching backward pupils, by S.S. Segal (London: Evans, 1963)]. Symposium: A Journal of Education for Southern Africa, p. 134

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

BOOK REVIEWS

Teaching Backward Pupils

By S. S. Segal; published by Evans Bros. Ltd.

Selling price in U.K. — 12/6d.

This book sets out to 'survey the nature of the problem (the education of E.S.N. children), suggest objectives, describe activities, and indicate methods of diagnosis and treatment'.

This is the type of specification likely to attrac the attention of the increasing numbers of educationists working in South Africa in the parallel field of Special School Education, and, perhaps, especially, those serving teachers, who show themselves keen to become students once again, and to follow the part-time course being offered presently by the Johannesburg College of Education, leading to specialist qualification for this particular branch of education.

The author possesses two qualifications, which readily commend themselves, namely that he is a practising headmaster, and also that he is Chairman of the Guild of Teachers of Backward Children. This attracts the reader immediately, because one has the feeling that the number of books dealing with the theoretical aspects of this type of education is in the preponderance, and that it is high time we heard more from those who have been working successfully, but who are perhaps not so vociferous.

As the Introduction puts it "the series (of articles in professional journals, on which the book was founded) was directed towards helping teachers in primary and secondary schools, who found themselves plunged into C stream (special class education) without adequate preparation . . . As more teachers pool their experience and more research comes out of the classroom, a happier and richer life will become possible for many school failures, who now swell the army of juvenile delinquents".

Quite rightly, the author puts high on his list of priorities, the aspect of the Mental Health of the child, and points out that "much of our concern will be to undo some of the damage done by repeated failure and rejection".

The core of this publication consists of a section entitled "Applied Communication Skills", which in turn has sub-sections headed "Language and Number". The emphasis throughout is on "Application" and there are some useful suggestions presented in a most readable and practical manner.

There is a section devoted to that most vital aspect of behaviour "Motivation". Anyone who ever dealt with sub-normal children will readily recall having had some difficulty negotiating this hazard.

Group and Individual Safety Training is next dealt with, as is Health Training and Habits and Physical Education. The thorny problem of Sex Education is tackled in a most enlightened and successful manner.

The book concludes with a chapter on Leisure and Recreational Activities. Again, this seems a most sensible idea, because it is precisely in the choice of this type of Leisure and Recreational activities that the less able child comes to grief, and veers towards anti-social behaviour as a more attractive alternative.

The final chapter is entitled "Choosing the Right Methods—Subjects and Projects". This is a topic which teachers find vexatious, but there is some advice to hand on how to marry the two together, so that a judicious blend is achieved for inspectorial approval.

There is a useful bibliography, for anyone keen to do further reading.

This is altogether a most useful introductory text; it is written sensibly and authoritatively, and the author conveys himself to his readers economically, clearly and without fuss.

W.G.B.