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# [Review of the book The management of learning, by Ivor Kevin Davies (London: McGraw-Hill, 1971)]

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## THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING

**Ivor K. Davies. McGraw Hill.**

Among the more interesting books that made their appearance during 1971 one must include **The Management of Learning.** In 1962, when a team from the Johannesburg College of Education went to Europe to familiarise themselves with new trends in education. Dr. Davies was a senior member of the R.A.F. educational team. We visited their school and found them well ahead with programmed instruction combined with a variety of audio-visual supports, including a number of simulated techniques that in that particular year were well in advance of work being done elsewhere — except, perhaps by enthusiasts in the Shell Education Centre. Anyway, since that time when we were the guests of that almost unique officers' mess, Dr. Davies has gone from strength to strength and is now professor of Education at Indiana University. This book appeals because here is a man who not only teaches other people what he knows (which is extensive) about the methodology of teaching, he actually applies it to himself — for, after all, what is a **book** but a programme? And whether Dr. Davies regards this as a type of programmed book or — which was often recommended, he regards himself as a type of programmed teacher, the reader had better decide for himself. One agreed with his own comment that modern teachers often suffer from over-teaching (far too much organisation of the learner, with the rigidity that accompanies this renunciation of basic humanism) and that problems of learning are seldom due to pupil unwillingness, and much more often due to faulty organisation by the teacher.

The range of sub-interests in this book includes a survey of modern teaching theory as applied in the modern classroom: the teacher-manager (a section that handles the concept that a teacher is not a particularly efficient information-giver, but he may be a top-rate manager of a learning situation). Then the author considers the problems a teacher faces in planning his strategy — defining objectives, linking these with motivation, getting the whole process into an orderly format. This is followed by an excellent consideration of lesson structure, which includes decision as to the best tactic to suit a particular teaching task — where he draws very usefully and sanely on some of the more lasting benefits of programmed instruction concepts. A chapter on the use of AV aids for back-up is timely, with a great deal of NEW research detail that readers will find fascinating — that. to quote one small instance — simple line drawings are much more effective as teaching devices than full photographs. There is a very useful chapter on class size — not a matter that many teachers can control, of course. But just in case we in South Africa are feeling hardly done by, one noted with dismay his quotation of British upper limits for a variety of classes:

48% of university classes have 20 or more students.
74% of all technical colleges have 11 to 15.
Primary schools have 40.

Secondary schools have 30, though he admits there are often more. The ideal class size in Britain is almost unanimously agreed to be 24 at the school level. On the whole South African teachers have not done much thinking (though quite a little grumbling) about class sizes, and how these sizes relate to the work to be done. They have done still less research into this very interesting subjects. Summarising some of the recent research information now becoming available, Dr. Davies points out that small classes are no better than big classes if they are to be used for information acquisition and then tested in the conventional way. But where there are higher-order cognitive and where there are affective objectives, small classes have the edge of bigger ones. This chapter is a useful introduction to the general problem of size, though it excludes much relevant newer information — probably due to the exigencies of space. One was glad to see that McGregor's X and Y personality theory (which has had such an impact on thinking about management style in the Havard Business School) was introduced here, and that at last we have an educationist who tries to integrate not only the "hardware" of teaching, but the culture, background and personality of the teacher — not as a series of philosophical maxims, but as a systematic multi-disciplinary approach. His closing chapters on the measurement of learning again offer a lively if limited survey of modern thinking.

This is not so much the presentation of startlingly new ideas as the discriminating selection of recent thinking, and the presentation of ideas from a number of fields in a way that relates holistically. And it is because Dr. Davies stands or falls because of the teaching he does through the instrument of this book, that we feel that there will be many teachers who will applaud their colleague for this excellent venture.



## THE MODERNISATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

**Heribert Adam. University of California Press.**

There is no doubt that more South Africans could afford to follow the lead of their Government and enter into dialogue with those who are prepared to discuss their problems intelligently and courteously. And while Dr. Adam is no supporter of Apartheid, his most recent publication has little about it that smacks of the emotional soap-box that has so marred debate in the United Nations. His intention, indeed, would seem to be to describe the South African situation in terms of local statements and then to attempt a realistic analysis which preserves his intellectual integrity. He does not seem to be window-shopping for a left-wing audience. He points out that part of the cause of world condemnation of South Africa lies in the fact that the South African anatomy lays bare to world-view what he calls the "outdated practices of liberal imperialists".