

9. EDUCATION OF THE PARTIALLY-SIGHTED IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

(SUMMARY)

Traditionally, the education of partially-sighted children in the R.S.A. has moved along parallel lines with ordinary education and is characterised by its academic bias.

This research became urgently necessary as a result of the dire need which exists for differentiated, vocationally orientated education for the partially-sighted children, due to the following considerations:

- a. psychological-pedagogical considerations, which demand that pupils be educated according to their individual abilities, aptitudes and interests;
- b. the present inefficient vocational training of partially-sighted young people, which results in ineffective manpower utilization and prejudice in the employment sector concerning the labour potentialities of the partially-sighted.

The phenomenon of partially-sightedness and its psychological implications was initially investigated. The conclusion was drawn that one of the primary deleterious effects of this physical condition is that the child develops a doubtful future image because of his limited employment opportunities.

The present educational system for partially-sighted young people in the R.S.A. was consequently scrutinised, with special reference to problems and shortcomings concerning differentiated education, the content of existing educational programmes, special services in the education of partially-sighted children, identification of partially-sighted children, integration of partially-sighted children in ordinary schools, teacher-training programmes, vocational training and employment, after-care and current attempts at differentiated education for partially-sighted children.

With the purpose of finding possible solutions to the problems besetting differentiated education for partially-sighted young people, the educational practices for the partially-sighted in England, the Netherlands, Belgium, Western Germany, Austria and the U.S.A. were investigated.

In some final conclusions and recommendations, the broad outlines of a differentiated system of education for partially-sighted young people in the R.S.A. are formulated, the essentials of which are that the needs of the partially-sighted can be catered for by a diversity of academic, technical, commercial and practical study courses at different levels which are orientated towards a vocation.