

Submission – Special Educational Needs Review – Anonymous – 9th June 2015

I would like to register some observations on SEN, which may be the same as of many but I can say I have personally witnessed extensively working in education over many years.

I have seen, and continue to see, people's confidence crushed as expensive schemes and programmes are applied to give SEN teaching which in reality is simply doing the work for the learner. The questions or material is read out for him or her; the incorrectly spelt or structured language is left uncorrected. There is little effort, or perhaps knowledge, in school staff how to give children the tools to become independent learners.

Those labelled as dyslexic are nearly always, from childhood, taught to read with a 'look say' method (some even instructed to rely on pictures) and spend their lives guessing spelling. Little time has been spent at any stage in explaining to them the simplest patterns of spelling, such as when and why the consonant is doubled, prefixes and suffixes etc.

These learners fail in Primary, then Secondary, then Adult Education; a cycle of shame, despair and disempowerment. Solutions are short, maybe an hour or two of extra here and there, where the 10 weeks or so of going through texts, perhaps identifying comprehension points or punctuation, serve only to reinforce the feelings of incomprehension and inability.

In those countries which are so far ahead of the UK in language much more is covered and exercises practised in each point of language study before building up to further skills. Instead of being dull or uninspiring it is the only way to enable the child (or adult learner) to master the stepping stones and accurate use of English.

I believe Mary Warnock, all those years ago, considered SEN as a way of assisting the small number of people who may be at particular disadvantage. She has since distanced herself from the nationwide creation of a SEN economy built up to support bad teaching, over generations now.

I humbly offer my comments with best regards