

“Inclusion - A Question of Didactics of a General Education”

A critique of “inclusion-pedagogy”
as an artifact of segregation not yet overcome¹

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No matter what a child’s constitution might be,
it has got the right to learn everything important about the world,
because it lives in this world.

1. Introduction to the Problem²

The term “inclusion” describes teaching practices for which the demand of fully satisfying the “individual need of remedial measures” of every pupil, handicapped or non-handicapped, is of fundamental concern. Its realization extends clearly beyond the definition of inclusion in a narrower sense. It describes in a general way teaching in classes that are heterogenous not only because of the pupil’s “handicaps”, their different levels of development and starting points of learning, but also because of their different languages, religions, nationalities and cultures.

Education wins the attribute “democratic” - stemming from reform pedagogy - where the endeavourment is made to realize the demands of an inclusion in a narrower and a broader sense (2) by didactics that are able to concern themselves curricular with the complexity of “epochal-typical key-problems” (Klafki 1991) of our time, to make these transparent according to the developmental levels of the pupils and to present them differentiated in teaching processes and learning environments. When this can be accomplished on the basis of each pupil’s present level of competence of perception, cognition and activity (behaviour), focussing on the individual’s “next zone of development” (Vygotskij 1987), and without measures of “selection” and social “segregation” or repressive disciplining measures, education wins the attribute “humane”. Both factors characterize “inclusion” - as I understand it - as a reform pedagogic approach.

The negation of the possibility of so-called full inclusion and the assumption that practice itself has proved this, results from an undialectical, polar view of the problem. It results from the ignorance of a revision of our view of the human being and handicap - a revision that is possible in the mirror of existing scientific findings - and from a strategy of the realization of inclusion that concerns itself mainly with organization and methods of teaching, gravely neglecting didactics, I would even talk of an abstinence from didactics. The negation of “development-logical didactics”, basing on theories of personality and psychology of development, equals the pedagogic making impossible of total inclusion. In didactics today, such

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2 In the scope of the internationalization of the debate on “inclusion” in Europe, the German term “Integration” (in a narrower and broader sense) is termed “Inklusion” (translated as: “inclusion” or “inclusive education”). The further differentiations made in this paper are: “allgemeine (Regel-) Pädagogik” (translated as “general (regular) pedagogy”; it means the dominant education system of the present); “Allgemeine Pädagogik” (translated as “General Education”; it means **the educational system which includes inclusive education**) and “Integrationspädagogik” (translated as “inclusive-pedagogy”; it means trials to realize inclusive education without to overcome the ‘general (regular) pedagogy’. Those trials are the absolutely dominant in the German speaking countries today). Those German terms have no appropriate terms in the English language. This applies to the question of didactics especially. The differentiation between “general (regular) pedagogy”, “General Education” and “inclusive pedagogy” should be helpful to work out what Inclusion means (≠ General Education without any kind of segregation) and to understand this article.

a progressive orientation is by no means reached yet, although interaction-theoretical, communicative, intercultural and system-theoretical facts are beginning to influence didactic reasoning. From the earliest beginnings of the inclusion movement - until today - we can observe, that a didactics-discussion concerning so-called "inclusion-pedagogy" has not taken place. This is equally cause and result of the dilemma which exists at the base of the inclusion movement, namely to pursue by the means of inclusion the concern of "segregation" - which can be proved (Feuser 1995) - enlarging the hierarchical school-system from five to six subdivisions³.

Inclusion-pedagogy inevitably has got to stay bound up with measures of "external differentiation", endeavouring to focus on the individual by means of thinning out and reducing offers of teaching and learning in the curriculum and regards subject matters, in the sense of "individual curricula" - depending on the anticipated ability of performance of the handicapped and non-handicapped pupils. Working toward the goal of the inclusion movement (in a narrower and a broader sense) as outlined in the beginning of this paper, inclusion is educational scientifically concerned with the elaboration and realization of a "General Education" as it has not yet existed in history. Finally, it will be characterized by the definition of the *cooperative relations* of teachers and learners in lessons that will be organized on the grounds of their own findings. "Inclusion-pedagogy" is hardly more than a new adjustment of an educational system that segregates socially and reduces subject matter, now trying to turn to a more modern view. But this education guarantees the maintenance of the hierarchically organized educational system and with it a mainly class-specific protection of the privilege to receive education. **Therefore the concern of inclusion cannot be satisfied by "inclusion-pedagogy", but has to pursue a non-selecting and non-segregating "General Education" and with it "development-logical didactics"**. "Inclusion-pedagogy" is and remains an artifact of the selecting and segregating educational and teaching system. In my view this is illustrated - amongst others - by the declaration of the *cooperation-model*⁴ as the inclusion model in general as well as by the efforts made to guarantee the maintenance of special schools by labeling them "remedial centres with pupils" nowadays. In the GEW (teachers' union), vds (association of pedagogues for the handicapped) and elsewhere, influential opinions circulate stating that the goal ought to be revised if the necessary financial and personal resources for the so-called full inclusion cannot be provided. Thus, a conservative-pragmatic view of inclusion begins to predominate quietly but increasingly in the heads of many people.

For a long time, we have not been able anymore to speak of a competition between-of two different models. Today, inclusion is dominated by the endeavourment of an

- **"external (school-) reform"** of the hierarchical subdivided school system with selective inclusion of handicapped pupils, similar to the endeavourments of comprehensive schools (though excluding handicapped pupils) to organize the intermediate grades. This is practiced by both *objective-differentiated teaching* (organized to let different pupils achieve different objectives) and learning *using individual curricula* (different curricula for

3 Subdivisions in the German educational system are (in secondary I; 5th or 7th grade): Hauptschule (- lowest level), Realschule (- middle level), Gymnasium (highest level, can lead to university), Gesamtschule (- comprehensive school, but without students with handicaps), Sonderschule (- special schools for handicapped with different kinds of handicaps). The 6th subdivision could be a school for inclusion-pedagogy. By this inclusion will be part of segregation in our school system.

4 In this type to practice »inclusive education« the handicapped pupils remain students of a special school, e.g. for mentally retarded. But they have their classroom in a regular public school and are trained there by special teachers. Those classes are associated with classes for non-handicapped pupils, who are students of the regular public school. For some special subjects they are taught all together; may be some hours the week.

handicapped and non-handicapped pupils at the same school), which inevitably leads to an *external differentiation* of teaching - even if practiced in the same classroom. The internal structure of the subdivided school system remains unchanged. The endeavourment of an

- **“internal (school-) reform”** in connection with inclusion and with it of the overcoming of the subdivided school system by the establishment of a *“General Education and development-logical didactics”*. This idea so far has not obtained a sufficient awareness in educational science nor in the heads of teachers. General Pedagogy and development-logical didactics accomplish to make *objective-differentiated teaching and learning offers* in principle for all pupils in joint lessons that make *objective-differentiated and cooperative learning of one and all (everyone-body together)* in “one school for all” possible by the means of “internal differentiation” (Feuser 1987 a/b, 1989, 1995; Feuser/Meyer 1987). This means an individualization of a general curriculum under consideration of the pupils’ different levels of development, in all grades during their schooltime (grades will then be understood to be only formal).

2. The Historical Process of the Development of a General Education⁵

For the conception of a General Education three factors seem to be of constituent relevance:

1. The emerging mutual approaches and overcoming of the historical parallelism of general (regular) pedagogy and and special education;
2. A clear new conception of education as a General (inclusive) Education and the inclusion of the field of “special education” into educational science, where the idea of inclusion in substance is influenced by and practiced on the grounds of a well-founded reform pedagogical understanding.
3. The development of an “inclusion-pedagogy” that tries to readjust the subdivided educational and teaching system in order to fit in handicapped children and pupils, implying the upkeeping of selecting and segregating teaching practices.

In detail:

As long as **“special education”** exists as an autonomous facultative discipline, it executes in theory and practice the social- and education-political “administration” of persons with handicaps that are ostracized by a segregating and selecting social practice. Especially by exercising the function of (selecting) diagnosis, that has been delegated to it, but also by its philosophical and anthropological basic assumptions, the special education takes an active part - practically and theoretically - in the process of separation and setting apart of handicapped persons in special institutions. The ethic that ought to be accepted, namely to realize education and teaching also for persons with handicaps and to grant educational equality, cannot be valued as a compensation of the involved effects of social exclusion and the process of discrediting of handicapped.

In this matter, the **so-called “general pedagogy”** - I call it “regular education” in my papers to differentiate it clearly from a developing “General Education” - does not present any difference in the field of persons considered to be non-handicapped, with the background of its orientation at norm standards and the principle of performance and normality, that largely negates subjectivity. This has happened since the beginning of dividing of the functions of education and teaching, i.e. of professionalization and scientification of education. So-called “general (regular) pedagogy” is bound up with the principle of selection and segregation in the hierarchically

⁵ The illustration in the appendix outlines the following train of thought and illustrates the connections.

subdivided school system and as such a “special education”. This is the foundation of the parallelity of the two systems.

Especially since the time of the European Enlightenment, in both fields efforts can be registered to demand equal opportunities to receive education for all and a practice of teaching oriented at the individual. This demands not to deny education to anyone because of registrable individual characteristics, status or class but to “*teach everything to everyone*” (Comenius 1985, 11) and to let every person learn in an appropriate way, i.e. according to his (her) potential and oriented at what potentially can become of him (her). Also the necessary organizational and pedagogic-therapeutic aids will have to be provided. In all this, the endeavourment is expressed to “democratize” and “humanize” education, as fundamentals of the objective of reform pedagogy. “Inclusion” describes the *cooperative learning of all pupils, working on a shared topic, under consideration of internal differentiation by individualization*. It requires the unification resp. the overcoming of the two systems in theory and practice of educational science. Today, such a “General Education” is thought of in both systems, well-substantiated by educational scientific findings - in contrast to the so-called ‘regular’ and the ‘special’ education.

The term “**education for the handicapped**” is linked with a development that has been concerned with the evidence and realization of the ability of persons with severe impairments (e.g. coma, apallic syndrome, autism) to learn and to be educated, on the background of the analysis of their social, socio-economical as well as individual situations and focussing on their concrete biographies in the sense of rehistorization. A fundamental, scientifically well-substantiated revision of the view of the human being and of handicap, relating to the impaired person, is constituent here. This makes it possible to disprove assumptions about persons with severe impairments, as formulated by bio-ethics and other philosophical concepts within the scope of the debate on the value of life and the demands for a “new euthanasia”, regarding the status of those people as persons. Philosophers of bio-ethics (Singer 1984, Singer/Kuhse 1993) base the ethical justification of the killing of handicapped people on those assumptions.

The new **conception of general education** by KLAFKI marks a comparable development for the field of “regular pedagogy”, which accomplishes in an exceptional way the inclusion of topical reform demands as a priority, as e.g. V. HENTIG expresses in his books “Schule neu denken” (1993) and “Bildung” (1996). This is accomplished especially by the substantiation of the term of education in the sense of the “theory of categorizing education” and its defense as well as continuation in specific emphasis of the European Enlightenment. During the transition of an education for the handicapped into a General Education, the fundamental factor of an understanding of reform pedagogy of inclusion, anchored in the demand for democracy and humanity, becomes apparent, when KLAFKI (1991) explains that latitudes of interpretation and activity develop in the context of experience of the numerous contradictions of modern societies. By these latitudes the individual is discovered as a person potentially able to think, have a share in decisions and act accordingly. This makes it possible to formulate the individual’s right to develop his (her) potentials in cooperation with others, with equal rights and to realize them in practice. With the conscious inclusion of every person into this right⁶ and in recourse to the “idea of political democracy *and* the idea of a relative autonomy of pedagogy as an administrator of the right of the young person to develop his (her) potentials including the chance to have a share in decisions concerning the development of society”(p. 50), not only the dialectic of the formula “Questions of education are questions of society” becomes transparent in new contexts, but also the integrating function of the inclusion movement as such, regarding the educational- and social-

6 Though KLAFKI does not exclude any person, the extensive exclusion of persons with severer handicaps makes their inclusion expressis verbis indispensable.

scientific conception of a General Education. General Education is characterized by a more differentiated and complex standard than the endeavours of an additive construction of inclusion from regular and special education in the sense of “inclusion-pedagogy”.

The “theory of categorizing education” by KLAFFKI (1963) in a narrower sense implies an understanding of education as “the quintessence of processes in which the contents of the material and mental reality unfold, and this process is - looked upon from the other side - nothing but the act of acquirement by and of a person becoming aware of those contents and their connections as reality” (p.43). The reference to this theory points out the dimension of didactics. In the same way that education has to be recognized as a democratic civilian right and as a requirement for self-determination, it has to be, according to KLAFFKI (1991), “*education for all*” in the “medium of the general” (p. 53).

This characterizes the question of didactics in a new way. *In this context, I understand didactics as an operator of educational science having to perform the transformation of didactics from “questions of education and society” into concrete educational and teaching practice and the transformation of the empirical experiences into the reflexion on and evolving of the theory of educational science.* In my view, KLAFFKI offers three factors to settle this question: The phenomenon of the “double-sided acquirement”, the categories of the “elemental” and “fundamental” and, within the conception of the general education, the curricular concentration on “epochal-typical key problems”. The designation of the new conception of general education, the effective factors of which are the categories of the “elemental” and “fundamental”, stays in pedagogical tradition dominantly linked and bound up with the question of object, i.e. the subject matter concerned, as far as into the fundamentals of the new conception of general education - the “epochal-typical key problems”. Under the aspect of the dialectic of human learning processes, the subject-sided designation of these categories become absolutely indispensable.

3. Central Factors of Subject-Oriented “Development-Logical Didactics”

Proceeding from the epistemological position which - in short - states, that the world as we perceive, experience and understand it has to be understood as an internally reconstructed reality of the experienced exchange of the person with the world and that the psychological functions - from the dimension of recognition to language and consciousness - are products as well as tools of these processes, it cannot be assumed, that the world in its material and mental reality makes a person understand but that it has to be acquired in active exchange processes with it. Every dissipative-autopoietic system (not only from the system-level human being) is altruistic on principle. Referring to the human being and its existential dependency on the reflexion of itself in the own species, according to MARTIN BUBER's statement (1965) “A person needs a ‘You’ to develop an ‘I’” (p.32), this referentiality, specific to our species, is the base of the potential to understand the world. We could also say: *A person acquires the material world through other persons and other persons through the material world - in joint cooperation.* Or put differently: Occurrences which produce a potential of information, in relation to the own biography - in the scope of processes of self-organization - transform into experiences that (subjectively) make **sense** to the system. In the form of **meaning**, this **sense** realizes itself as the process of the formation of information (Feuser/Jantzen 1994). This means, amongst others, that no human (dynamic) form of being can be *senseless* (i.e. detached from sense), because it cannot be released from an altruistic cooperation as well as no observable result of human development can be “pathological”. On the contrary, every result of human development is **development-logical** in the sense of the integration of a person's starting and environmental conditions into his (her)

system with the help of his (her) given means, according to the effecting attractors⁷. The subjectively experienced “sense”⁸ is an attractor of particular dynamic force and - as emphasized earlier - in the same way product as well as tool of self-organization. Or put differently, in reflexion of BUBER: *A person becomes the ‘I’, that we are as a ‘You’ for him (her)!*

This means that for the human being “sense” and “meaning” are the dominant and motive-forming levels behind which his (her) needs and emotions stand. In my opinion, in KLAFFKIS theory of general education this fact is included in the “epochal-typical key problems” on the curricular and didactic level. The presented facts can be summed up as the “shared topic”, as I describe it regarding General (inclusive) Education. The “*cooperation on a shared topic*” thus characterizes a didactic fundamental, which represents the “necessity of democracy, in the same way as - under consideration of the “necessity of humanity” of reform pedagogy - the “*internal differentiation by the means of (development-logical) individualization*” (of the shared topic) becomes a second didactic fundamental which is closely connected with the first.

For the analysis of the factors relevant for development-logical didactics, epistemologically, we use postrelativist reasoning, as I call it. It is not rooted, as could be expected, in the Arts, but in the natural sciences that increasingly turn to philosophy again: physics, especially thermodynamics and quantum theory, chemistry and biology. The fundamentals to understand and explain an according view of the world and with it a view of life and the evolution of all living matter, including the development of the individual, are anchored in complex theories that, in my opinion, are summed up in the theory of so-called (radical) constructivism⁹ (v. Foerster et al. 1997, Glaserfeld 1997, Schmidt 1992), the self-organization- and co-evolution-theory (Jantsch 1984, Prigogine 1993). An according fundamental study shows that every living system, orienting itself regarding its environment in such a way that it changes during each cycle of exchange, can be understood as nothing else but open to the environment. This referentiality to the world connects itself to the internal referentiality of the system because of which it can, on the one hand, stay identical with itself and, on the other hand, reconstruct in itself the transacted and experienced exchange processes (by the means of its system), i.e. it accumulates knowledge about the world in relation to the self. Such systems are considered to be functionally open to their environment, concerning their qualities, and as operationally closed, considering the reconstruction of the world within the system (Maturana 1985, Maturana/Varela 1990).

7 Attractors are operators that give structural development inside a system a “certain direction” and speed. E.g. the development will progress into the direction of a personal structure that we then perceive and classify as a mental handicap or as autism-syndrome. Operators perform processes of transformation in the sense that the energetic potentials that build up and operate between the systems in the field of the systems’ phases, are transferred by exchange processes into the systems’ structural changes, which - generally speaking - determine the according characteristics of the systems. Environmental conditions are *all* quantities (and their qualities) that influence a person’s exchange with his (her) environment during the course of his (her) development; this includes conditions that lie inside the single system, between the exchanging systems and that surround the systems which are in the process of exchange.

8 Extra-systemically, the category “sense” describes an operating function that is directed at another dissipative-autopoietically structured unit in the joint ecosystem. Thus, in the sense of the relation-operating function (L), it brings forth objective meanings, i.e. complexity (of relations). Intra-systemically, this category describes the unity of the plan of the own (a system’s) evolution, generated in reference to the own (system’s) biography, in the sense of the “advantageous resulting effect” - as ANOCHIN (1974) uses the term - a successful functional stabilization of the system far from balance, in the sense of a borderline cycle (Feuser 1994).

9 The theory of radical constructivism has to be criticized radically from the view of the epistemological positions that this paper is based on, as its solipsistic and agnostic tendencies could pervert this position in its ideas of how understanding is formed. This cannot be specified any further here.

This leads to the realization that “handicap” is a product of the integration of “interferences” that a person experienced, into his (her) system by the means of his (her) system that have developed during the course of his (her) biography. What *we* perceive in a person and classify as handicap, has been brought forth *by him (her)* but did not originate *from him (her)*.

These epistemological positions also indicate a new understanding of human development (Feuser 1992). It can be understood as a continuously changing, dynamically organized, structural change of a system, which is induced by occurrences in the environment and is directed towards increasing complexity and diversification. Thus, in the process of development itself,

1. the complexity and differentiation of the (material and personal) environment, with which the system is in exchange (this characterizes the function of learning that underlies development), have more impact than the system’s means of internal representation and reconstruction of this exchange which themselves are essentially a product of this exchange.
And
2. the possibility of change, i.e. what can become of a (even severely handicapped) person according to his (her) potential is of primary importance, and his (her) momentary situation - compared with this - of secondary interest.

This does not say that we should regard a person in his (her) present situation only as the not yet possible - on the contrary: A person in his (her) present situation is the momentary possible with regard to possible changes; thus he (she) is competent, no matter how handicapped he (she) might appear to us.

Referring to the discussed conception of education, under consideration of the “steps of understanding-cognition” of the world in the sense of development-psychological components, this enables us to realize a subject-oriented education, which is oriented at the gain of understanding and not at accumulation of knowledge. Didactically, this requires the concept of “three-dimensional didactics” - opposed to the theories and models of didactics relevant today. These “three-dimensional didactics” are concerned with

1. the judgement of the momentary competence of perception, cognition and activity (“actual zone of development”) as well as the children’s and pupils’ “next zone of development” (Vygotskij 1987) in the sense of an “*analysis of the structure of operations*”, related to the development,
2. the pointing out and organization of an adequately structured environment of learning and activity, under consideration of the opportunities of the children’s activity and behaviour which depends on the above specified factor (as well as on the other environmental conditions of their development; e.g. a handicap), in the sense of an “*analysis of the structure of activity*”, and
3. in this structured environment of learning and activity, the children’s and pupils’ active confrontation with (exemplary) subject matters, that have been prepared in the sense of the “*analysis of the structure of subject matter*”.

Thus, the “object side”, so to speak, serves the purposes of the “subject side”, the development of the personality, without negating the dialectic of the two factors. Those three factors constitute didactics as development-logical, according to the connection of “subject ↔ activity ↔ object”. By these didactics, “General Education”, by the means of which *everyone can be taught everything in a way adequate to everyone*, becomes realizable in an educational-scientific context.

Referring to the theory of “categorizing education” by KLAFKI (1963), the fluctuations, that exist in the process of the “double-sided acquirement” between the object and the subject side, can be regarded as comprised in the terms of the “elemental” and the “fundamental”. They are not, as we can now see, anchored in the object per se, in the sense of facts that can be proved

scientific-empirically and of extractable natural laws, but are, as it were, the subject's hypotheses about the objective reality, made on the grounds of his (her) experiences, which have to be verified in a process of activity. Or: The "elemental" and the "fundamental" are, from the view of the subject's biography on every level of development, categorizing products of the constituting of meaning on the basis of personal sense.

The outlined nexus illustrate that the understanding of the objective reality - and with it the acquirement (or interest) *for* it - is constituted *by* the subjective formation of sense. The meanings that can be constituted in the process of understanding can be understood as traditionalized elements - created by activity as well as anchored in cultural history - of the subject's orientation at and in his (her) world - an orientation that is disposed to species-specific correspondance.

4. General Education Versus Inclusion-Pedagogy?

KLAFKIS conception of general education and an education for the handicapped, as have been briefly outlined here, can be understood as a joint centre of an establishing of a theory and of educational and teaching practices that today are described with the term "inclusion" (Feuser 1995). These can become a catalyst of the development of a General Education. The realization of such a General Education requires, for all children and pupils in the mirror of the actual "epochal-typical key problems" of humanity and its world, the consideration of all relevant social and educational questions in the shape of a complex, (school) subject-overcoming but transparent teaching in projects (project method). For the teaching and learning processes, the "**cooperative activity on a shared topic**" of teachers and learners becomes the didactic centre of pedagogic practice according to an "**internal differentiation by individualization**" of the topic. Here, the "elemental" can be defined as the factor in this process that constitutes meaning in the subject, and the "fundamental" as the factor that constitutes sense. These factors result solely from the mediatory activity between the subject and the object in the sense of the "double-sided acquirement". The outlined three-dimensionality of the "didactic field" and a didactic structure that can be illustrated with the tree-model (Feuser 1995, p. 178-182), keeps the objective basically variable in orientation at the "zone of the next development" (Vygotskij 1987), but sticks to the "shared topic" for all pupils, that is to be described by the categories of the "elemental" and the "fundamental" which now have to be understood as subject-sided categories which form understanding.

Although striving for objective-different teaching practices in the outlined sense but trying to reach this by individual curricula (in the sense of observing the curricula for individual pupils) which correspond with the type of school or type of special school the pupils would visit due to their "special educational need of remedial measures" - as it is formulated nowadays, inclusion-pedagogy selects and segregates by forms of external differentiation which consistently arise. This characterizes in a typical way a procedure that - if practiced beneath the roof of a regular school - can be called "cooperation". Cooperation is no inclusion! The future will show which roles the "remedial centres" will play in this context. As multi-professional advice centres without pupils they could be conducive to inclusion in the context of a General Education. But where teaching, in the sense of false equality of education, orients itself by reduced, narrowed and parcelled-divided offers of topics and stays organized in the unconnected, parallel teaching of single subjects, findings concerning learning at school that VYGOTSKIJ (1896-1934) put into words already half a century ago, stay negated. He stresses (1964), "that the child's mental development is not organized to fit the system of single subjects and does not run its course according to it either" (p.234) and "the abstract thinking develops during all lessons, and its development does not at all divide into the single subjects that school lessons are divided into"

(p.235). As a cardinal error he denounces the opinion, “that teaching has to orient itself by yesterday’s development, by the particularities of childlike thinking that are already ripe today”, and criticizes pedagogues thus oriented: “They judge the level of development like an ignorant gardener, namely by the ripe fruit. They do not take into consideration that teaching has to push forward the development”, and he concludes. “Learning is only good, when it is the pacemaker of development. Then a row of functions, that are in a phase of ripening and lie in the zone of the next development will be wakened and called into life.” (p. 242)

For inclusion, the development of a “General Education” and its practical realization represents a *conditio sine qua non*, in which inclusion itself - as an artifact of a selecting and segregating educational system - will have to be overcome imperatively.

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