SHAPING MODIFYING ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH INCLUSION

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Abstract: The conceptual and practical foundations for integration of students with special needs in normalized educational environments. A discussion of the role of the environment in promoting human modifiability, the necessity for preparation and support of students who are integrated. Presentation of several examples from earlier work structuring the conditions for successful inclusion.

Keywords: modifiability, preparation, mediated learning experience

Cognitive Modifiability:
A Necessary Prelude to Inclusion

In our work in cognitive modifiability, we are referring to a movement which is meant to create conditions of life for human beings to make possible their adaptability, which today is an issue of quality of life and essential survival. Adaptation is not a luxury, it is a life issue. We live under conditions which the inadapted are in many ways condemned, doomed to a life which is pervasively limiting. Cognitive modifiability, as a theory and active movement, tries to address those elements in the human being which enable adaptability to the great changes which occur in the world and which require the individual to become cognitively more plastic and more flexible. There is an opposing point of view, as it is described in The Bell Curve (by Herrnstein and Murray), wherein large masses of populations are considered as being unable to become integrated into the great stream of modern technology and development. From this perspective, such individuals are doomed to stay as simple users of whatever is produced by the intelligent, flexible, and adaptable people of society, but not to be a part of this production and generation of the necessary technology.

The alternative is to develop human beings’ capacity to adapt—in their life, their contributions, to be part of a development which does not leave any per-

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