

The ideal of equality of educational opportunity should not be interpreted as uniformity of facilities, instructional techniques, and education aims for all children. Diversity rather than uniformity of approaches and aims would seem to be the key to making education rewarding for children of different patterns of ability. The reality of individual differences thus need not mean educational rewards for some children and frustration and defeat for others.

It seems clear to all who can see that our present educational policies are failing most comprehensively to engage the interest and the co-operation of that large group of children we call 'deprived' or 'underprivileged'. It would not be possible to guarantee that the use of associative methods of teaching would engage the active participation of these children, but it would seem worth a try. What may have soured their enthusiasm may have been their continuous failure to reach any satisfactory level of achievement through the use of current conceptual methods of teaching. Once they could be brought to see that success and achievement are possible for them, through the use of methods of teaching more closely geared to their particular patterns of abilities, this success and this achievement might be powerful incentives for increasing their interest and co-operation. Nothing succeeds like success; children who opt out of school have had a continued record of failure, and it would be difficult to blame the children themselves for voting with their feet and playing truant as much as possible. This failure is not necessary; it is imposed on the children by inappropriate methods of teaching which do not take into account the innate patterns of abilities of these children. A return to sanity is long overdue; we must pay close attention to the genetic basis of our children's abilities.

One reason why many people seem nowadays to despise associative learning seems to link up with the emphasis on 'creativity' already referred to in an earlier chapter, that is with the erroneous notion that tests of divergent ability define a different and superior aptitude to tests of convergent ability.