Progressive Education as Continuing Education for the Developmentally Disabled

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Abstract
The need for progressive education is prevalent in one of the most underserved portions of the population: the adult developmentally disabled. Though John Dewey wrote little on the education of the disabled, his philosophy, and that of Mahatma Gandhi's, lend themselves to the further education of this unique segment of society. In this paper, I will be looking at developmentally disabled adults, specifically autistic individuals, living in group homes. It is the goal of developmentally developed group homes to advance the education of its residents so that they may eventually leave the home as competent, independent members of society. However, the education they are usually given is not tailored to their individual needs, reinforced through everyday activities, or provided in a manner respecting the individuals as people and not as objects. I will be discussing Gandhi's concepts of Basic Education as it can relate to the developmentally disabled and Kiyo Kitahara's use of Daily Life Therapy in the education of the autistic. I will examine the current system of learning in one specific group home and how Gandhi's and Kitahara's concepts of education can be used to improve the learning abilities of these individuals -- to allow them to move from institutionalized life to a fuller, more productive role in society.

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Introduction

The ultimate objective of education of developmentally disabled adults is for them to acquire social independence (Kitahara, 1983), allowing them to grow into productive members of a community and enjoy the privileges of a Democratic society. However, there are many obstacles impeding the members of this unique population from reaching their full potential: prejudice, lack of a sense of moral obligation by society, economic disadvantage, and educators' own ignorance of their clients' conditions, to name just a few.

Society tends to reject anyone who is different, and the developmentally disabled individual's impairments are usually considered a disadvantage (Lekan, 2009). Rejection due to social status is not a new challenge to overcome; Gandhi tried to change the prejudices towards the caste system in his own country, hoping to eliminate the cycle of disadvantage of the "Untouchables" (Richards, 2001). Like the "Untouchables" in Gandhi's India, the developmentally disabled are relegated to the lowest jobs; live in fear of humiliation, and often have an unacknowledged presence when in a pubic place. A social environment's exclusion of individuals with impairments or with certain class standing is frequently a direct result of individual's personal definition of him or herself – how he or she describes his or herself in a mirror (Lekan, 2009). If an individual is told enough times that they are not worthy, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Gandhi believed that to have unity with our fellow men, we are presented with an inescapable moral obligation towards them, to strive to achieve democracy (equality) in every way of life, and that nothing was going to achieve this end better than "education in liberating the mind, setting people free of bondage, enriching character, increasing intelligence, and adding to the wealth of the nation" (Richards, 2001). Are not the developmentally disabled entitled to this same consideration?

To begin this pursuit of independence, I must first look at what is needed. Like all humans, the developmentally disabled have basic needs: food, clothing, and shelter — necessities that many people take for granted. If society is concerned that a person is lacking these fundamental needs, we tend to focus on the financial aspect of the deficit, not the educational aspect. In this respect, the basic needs become more complicated. It is no longer a case of "does one have food, clothing and shelter?" but rather "does one know how to acquire food, clothing and shelter?" Can an individual take care of his own clothing, carry out basic cooking, keep his living space tidy and clean, and use money to replenish consumables (Dial,et al, 1979)?

Dewey believed that the educative process needed to revolve around these organic parts of the process of life, and should be incorporated as an integral part of a school program (Ramanathan, 1962). He never discussed the integration of life skills into adult education, but these skills do fit well with the goals progressive educations are striving to meet. Gandhi stressed the imperative nature of education to promote self-knowledge and self-fulfillment, with vocational training serving a useful purpose, allowing people to learn how to earn a living, maintain a family (household), and make contributions to society (Richards, 2001). As Dewey noted,

> an individual is not original merely when he gives to the world some discovery that has never been made before. Every time he really makes a discovery, even if thousands of persons have made similar ones before, he is an original. The value of discovery in the mental life of an individual is the contribution it makes to a creatively active mind; it does not depend upon no one's ever having thought of the same idea before. (Lekan, 2009)

We improve an individual's self-esteem by allowing them to contribute to their own education, fulfilling their own basic needs, including, but not limited to, food, clothing and shelter (Kitahara, 1983), teaching the individual to think for themselves (Dewey, 1940) and allowing them to be productive (Ramanathan, 1962). But how specifically do we integrate the ideas of Gandhi, Kitahara, and Dewey into adult education of developmentally disabled adults and specifically those of an autistic adult?

When looking at adult education, the most important thing to remember is that autistic individuals, despite their level of ability, are adults and should be treated with the same level of respect and dignity as any other adult. Educators must realize that these individuals will have different ideas, cultural contexts, and opinions about life and their education. They are entitled to participate in the direction of their own education through open dialogue. Teachers must impart the reasons why a subject is being taught and why it is necessary -- not just transmit facts -- and encourage active and critical reflection from their students (Kumar, 2004). Evaluation then becomes an important starting point for the adult learner; to determine what there level of ability is, as well as, where their areas of interests lie.

Though many different forms of testing are available for the evaluation of ability, it was Dewey's observation that one test cannot conduct a universal scale of value that somehow applies to all life's contexts and goals. Many tests, in his observation, even demonstrate the superiority of one individual over another, reinforcing old prejudices (Danforth, 2008). The current forms of testing encourage us to judge and treat students not as individuals with different abilities, but as a qualitative class, thus de-emphasizing individual's traits (Dewey, 1940). Many educators are only interested in standard IQ testing scores and not those that represent distinct and unique qualities (Danforth, 2008). Many developmentally disabled people have strong abilities in other types of intelligence such as digital acuity and other non-verbal skills. However, standardized testing does not evaluate these abilities.

An inquiry into one group residence

I will now examine a local group home and its vocational adult education facility in which I work (for the purpose of this document, the individuals as well as their place of residence will remain anonymous using the pseudonym developmentally disabled residence - DDR).

Seven members of our community reside in the group home, DDR, and four attend day training at the local vocational adult education facility (VAEC) where they receive schooling and a small paycheck. To attend this education center, one must be an adult, out of traditional public or private schooling, and in need of adult education. When a family or guardian first decides to enroll a loved one in the program, testing and interviews with the client and family are conducted. Great emphasis is placed on the wishes of the individual with regards to what type of education he or she is interested. The VAEC uses two tests to determine the level at which a client's education will begin: the McCarron-Dial and a Street Survival Evaluation. The McCarron-Dial is used to determine the strengths and weaknesses in an individual's vocational competency by focusing on five facets:

- Verbal-spatial-cognitive (Language, learning ability, and achievement)
- Sensory (Perceiving and experiencing the environment)
- Motor (Muscle strength, speed and accuracy of movement, balance and coordination)
- Emotional (Response to interpersonal and environment stress)

- Integration-coping (Adaptive behaviors) (Dial, et al, 1979)

The Street Survival Skills Questionnaire (SSSQ), used to assess functional impairments, independent living skills, and appropriate vocational and residential placements, considers nine areas of behavior:

- Basic concepts
- Functional signs
- Use of tools
- Domestic abilities
- Health and Safely
- Public Service
- Telling time
- Monetary
- Measurement

Once the DDR has determined the skill levels of the client, he or she is placed into the education system, with the goal of improving the client's weak areas. Clients will conduct daily tasks: laundry, cooking, dusting and other home care, personal hygiene, and learn computer skills. They repeat these activities daily until they can complete these tasks without supervision. These skills are then to be continued in their home at DDR, acting as reinforcement for what they have learned. The improvement of these skills is re-evaluated every three months, and if the skills have improved to the satisfaction of the facilitator, the student will move on to a new set of skills; if not, the old lessons will continue to be taught. Once the student is able to complete the life skills to the satisfaction of the facilitator, they are then moved onto the factory floor. In the factory, the students begin to learn easy assembly line jobs; such as putting twenty-five washers in a bag and sealing it or shrink wrapping cans of dog food into packs of three. There is also an option for learning more complex crafting such as building wooden pallets. Students stay on the assembly line, continuing repetitive tasks and not practicing life skills they've learned.

In the world of educating the autistic individual, few have attempted to even begin to explore how to most effectively serve this under-attended population. Kitahara is the most well know for her Daily Life Therapy educational program, emphasizing developing harmony in all aspects of life for children with autism, including vocational training, physical education, life skills training, art and music education, social education, and computer training (Boston Higashi School, 2007). Kitahara believed that all education begins with cleaning and helping in the home as this gives the student a sense of responsibility. These skills are maintained throughout the autistic individual's educational career, as the basis of the educational process, their "craft" if you will. Then educators can build on these skills through learning from life, play and an individual's interests. Through play students become interested in the various things around them. They absorb all kinds of knowledge and learn to think and adapt to the circumstances around them. As educators, learning can be accomplished through physical education, music, drawing and the manual arts. Kitahara also encouraged the student's family to participate in the activities; thus, both the school and the family can bring elements to the learning for the individual (Boston Higashi School, 2007).

How does the education received by the male residents of DDR compare with the concepts of Gandhi's Basic Education and Kitahara's concepts of Daily Life Therapy? Gandhi's ideology of Basic Education is identified with healthy growth, with the individual is regarded not as a mind in isolation but as a living unit under the influence of its social milieu (Ramanathan, 1962). Gandhi believed that learning by doing, through experience, and through activities is the basis of life-centered education (Ramanathan, 1962). These individuals are indeed learning through doing, daily both at the school and inconsistently in

their home. Consistency of learning tasks at DDR is not maintained due to different abilities of the home care providers, discussed later.

The disconnect occurs when the facilitator feel the students are ready to move on to more difficult tasks, and are not re-enforcing what the students have already learned as a foundation for continued learning. Also, craft work does not come into their education until they have graduated to the factory floor and are asked to build wooden pallets, but these creative tasks are only for the most advanced students. The beliefs of Kitahara were similar, utilizing all aspects of a child's experiences as a vehicle for education; domestic chores, physical education, music, drawing and other manual arts. Both philosophies hinge on education occurring through life experiences, enhancing the quality of life and knowledge regardless of the student's age. However, if their previous experiences are not being revisited, their past experiences are of little relevance.

Craft work produces experience in which certain lessons can be correlated. Paper-cutting can be useful in geometry, soap-making in laundry and chemistry; these crafts are also important in the development of proper body mechanics, attention, listening skills and fine motor skills. Gandhi leaned towards the learning of one craft that can be exploited, forming the core around which the whole educational process should be organized (Ramanathan, 1962). Kitahara believed in a student learning many different abilities, crafts, as well as physical activities, music and art, to be exploited in many different ways.

Both Gandhi and Kitahara emphasize the importance of imitation for its power to help a student absorb as much knowledge as possible out of each experience. All educationists agree that people are endowed with a powerful instinct for imitation which directs the learning process. The beginning of creation is simply a reproduction of what already exists. Most children, whether developmentally disabled or not, (as well as adults) prefer to work in groups, enjoying the opportunities to engage in real life experiences, to seek expression, bring the spirit of cooperation and to be treated as a partner with a perceived expert (Ramanathan, 1962).

Taking this spirit of cooperation one step further, Kitahara integrates autistic children into classes with non-autistic children to encourage imitation between both groups. Through this action, autistic children learn social integration which broadens their life and interests, and helps them to gain an outlook on life similar to that of the non-autistic children (Kitahara, 1983). Non-autistic children learn to both be and offer acceptance, break down the exclusive strata of society, and reconsider the notion of normality (Ramanathan, 1962). By engaging the developmentally disabled in different experiences with non-developmentally disabled, a higher level of learning results. At VAEC, the student are isolated, normally working solo not engaging in group activities, coming into contact only with the facilitator. Though on occasion they are taken on field trips into the world, they are not allowed to participate in the surrounding splendor merely herded from place to place in mute stoicism.

To survive in the world, all humans must master certain basic tasks. Classroom learning is not always the best way to impart knowledge about life activities. Learning through doing, utilizing a broad range of activities and experiences, often leads individuals to their maximum development. Many autistic individuals are limited in their engagement with others and are therefore limited in the opportunities for new experience (Boston Higashi School, 2007). Activities according to Kitahara should be organized around others — the school members, family, friends, caregivers, and the other members of DDR —be they residents or employees. In many cases, the planning and executing of these experiences are denied to the autistic individual but instead carried out by caregivers or facilitators. Only if the autistic individuals are allowed to plan and execute activities from the beginning of the planning process do they get a fuller social experience and a sense of social responsibility

(Ramanathan, 1962). Dewey has defined education as the re-construction of experiences, namely that we deliberately make a prior experience reappear and use this appearance as an opportunity to educate (Ramanathan, 1962). If the men of DDR are not given the opportunity to revisit what they have learned and are not given the opportunity to engage in society when they are on an outing, how can they develop a sense of social responsibility and ever hope to be integrated into society?

Since the society we live in is becoming more diverse, the division of experiences must also be diverse. But even in a diverse world of experiences, not all experiences that would be useful to teaching necessary skills can be found within every individual's past. The use of "word pictures" -- the conjuring up of a story or a description -- can help to take the place of an educational experience that is lacking in an individual's past (Ramanathan, 1962). Dewey points out that it is not just the "conjoint doing and undergoing," of an activity that constitutes experience, but the perception of the meaning of the activity in the context of his/her life (Ramanathan, 1962). Factory workers, for example, many have no idea as to why they are doing their task, causing a disconnect between themselves and their work. Through awareness of the task's significance, the labor loses its drudgery and the worker becomes aware of his/her importance in on the job (Ramanathan, 1962).

However, it is not merely an individual's understanding of his/her significance in employment that is imperative in life, but rather the larger integration of all aspects of life, work, school, home and society that is key. Gandhi taught that work is the medium through which a person's whole personality seeks self-expression and fulfillment. Therefore, work must be related to life and must evoke as much interest as living itself (Ramanathan, 1962). If a school's curriculum is not organized around an environment for living -- those processes of life that are imperative to survival -- much of the time in school is wasted (Ramanathan, 1962). Adult occupations and training should be concerned with the production of our primary requirements -- food, clothing, and shelter -- and activities taught on the basis of this education process. Linking school activities with activities that constitute actual living will satisfy our primary needs and have more significance for the student (Ramanathan, 1962). At Kithara's school in Boston, they do not employee janitors to do most of the work. It is the responsibility of the students to maintain their environment. This sets up a direct connection between the domestic works assigned to each student and their classes.

In order for these activities to yield experience and be used for educational purposes, they must be activities of real life; and the student, teacher, parent or guardian, and home health care provider must be active participants in the education process with specific functions assigned to them. If the individual fails to perform the function assigned to him, the education process will be incomplete and inadequate (Ramanathan, 1962). Many programs fail because of the absence of education in the home. The notion that education should only be carried out between two fixed hours of the day and not taught in the home limits the understanding of the lessons taught, the importance of the lesson, and their application in the individual's home, life or society (Ramanathan, 1962). Often these assigned tasks are too difficult for the autistic individual setting up another scenario for failure; however, if their initial evaluation is accurate this can be avoided. Also, often the autistic individuals are not believed to be capable of a given task, and the individual will fail due to not being given the opportunity to try.

Kitahara's Daily Life Therapy model school, Boston Higashi School, is a good example of the integration of school, home and society. The school is a boarding school where life education services are provided on a full-time, in-context basis throughout the entire day so that learning is continuously reinforced and practiced. Education is not restricted to the school environment. Home visits and activities for siblings support family cohesion. Monthly family exercises are prepared for physical education, music, drawing and manual

arts. In this way, both the school environment and home cooperate in the development of the student (Boston Higashi School, 2007). The students also engage with the community. The older students hold community jobs, working alongside non-autistic peers, and access community facilities such as health clubs, stores, banks, and library services (Boston Higashi School, 2007). Kitahara observed that people who spend their lives in pursuit of only one idea, using only one corner of their mind, go through life with blinders on, not observing the problems of those around them. They often are not even interested in becoming active for their own needs. These individuals avoid experiences outside of their own limited understanding and are therefore not able to pass on knowledge to their own children.

Daily living skills are the basis for an individual to establish independence and dignity, and are essential to meet one's own self-care needs. Kitahara called this the "rhythm of life," referring to the basic biological rhythms for eating, sleeping, activity and work (Boston Higashi School, 2007). To discontinue this rhythm of life due, for example, to school vacations, undermines the education process. The autistic individuals have often lost this routine, which leads to great emotional upset and disorder. By maintaining this rhythm through daily activity, exercise, and routine, the autistic individuals are able to sleep more soundly, be more alert during waking hours, and are more open to absorbing stimuli from their surroundings, thereby enhancing the lessons of experience (Boston Higashi School, 2007).

At the DDR and VAEC, education is not always conducted by teachers or trained educators Classes and teachings as usually led by Certified Nursing Assistants or lay persons with little to no college education or training in teaching. These individuals may easily resent a student who treats him as an equal or friend; such can feel threatened and prefer to think of students in a generic or unemotional way. These individuals forget that every failure involves a human being in tears and resist the duty to wipe them off (Ramanathan, 1962). These individuals may not use the same decorum with their students as they do with their own children or grandchildren, causing a disconnect in the democratic society of the developmentally disabled classroom; they use their knowledge and power to hold themselves above and separate from the student. Without the partnership between the student, parent or guardian and the person doing the teaching, lessons do not hold continuity throughout the life of the student (Ramanathan, 1962). If a student is not motivated due to the undermining of this education process and the implied moral contract between student, teacher and parent or guardian, future efforts will not be as successful (Jencks, 1988). Often the person who is to be conducting the education is not even aware that this is part of the job description, so little effort is made to interact with the autistic individual.

No education can flourish in the absence of self-esteem. Kitahara's first priority was to develop the individual's self-esteem and make the individual secure in his/her emotions (Boston Higashi School, 2007). Kitahara believed that autistic individuals are often timid when alone, preferring the company of others with whom they can feel free to imitate, experience and learn. But a feeling of comfort with others does not necessarily imply dependence on others. As humans, we tend to do too much for others, be they developmentally disabled, elderly, children, or handicapped, this stunts their chance to learn and grow as independent agents. Many people believe that these populations have no ability, unable to act on their own behalf. Kitahara considered the abilities of the autistic individual dormant, believing that they are unable to express externally the ability that they naturally possess. By finding a student's interests and developing their ability, teachers can instill confidence in such students. People will learn in a school they enjoy, but must be given a space where they can realize their own potential (Kitahara, 1983).

The first of Gandhi's six principles of education deals with interest in the subjects we are asked to learn. All mental functions depend upon our interest in the subject or activity.

Interest catches our attention in the cognitive process and engages our emotions. In Gandhi's philosophy of education, he discusses using a "craft," a vocational skill, as the center of interest; in Daily Life Therapy (Kitahara's philosophy of education), it is the activities, music, exercise, and domestic skills; but in a traditional classroom, artificial devices (such as video, books and slides) are needed to evoke interest. In a traditional class, subjects change from hour to hour, changing these artificial devices and not utilizing the lessons from one subject into the next. In Basic Education, however, all classes are taught from the craft-core, permeating the entire school life of the student (Ramanathan, 1962). Daily Life therapy takes this integration one step further and re-institutes it out of the school into the home and society.

Kitahara felt that the basis of spontaneous study is self-knowledge, the ability to plan and execute the plan. When a student creates a plan him/herself, puts it into practice, and is successful, self-confidence and joy will help the student strive for greater accomplishments (Kitahara, 1983).

> True learning is not something that can be attained by filling one corner of the brain with all sorts of knowledge and information. Neither does it come from knowledge thrust down one's throat. Only those things which a child learns eagerly and spontaneously become learning that is retained (Kitahara, 1983).

Most people are motivated by their own life experiences, something personal to them, be it adult occupation, student activities, or a craft. The more useful the activity is to the student's life, the more inherently motivating power it will have to evoke interest. But the activity cannot survive in isolation; if the teacher and parent or guardian is not participating fully, the learning will again stop at the classroom door (Ramanathan, 1962).

Traditional schooling isolates the student from the outside world and the factors that make knowledge meaningful to their own life; since this type of schooling has no relation to their needs, it fails to impart any worthwhile knowledge (Ramanathan, 1962). Knowledge must be attractive to a student, causing an interest in growth and creative adaptation (Kitahara, 1983). The current education system only serves to maintain an artificial separation of the student from society, causing alienation, uneasy and low self-esteem. Gandhi stated, "it has made them strangers in their own land" (Ramanathan, 1962).

The VAEC that I work with uses many of the ideas of Kitahara's Daily Life Therapy, focusing on life skills as a basis of their education and the interests of the clients as the foundation of their learning. This environment focuses on a few crafts and home life skills, and appeals to the personal interests of each client to impart knowledge when the interest is one that can be grown in the environment of the VAEC limited educational abilities. Staff evaluates objectives every three months with the input of the client, and they celebrate success.

But this program is lacking in two areas: focus and follow-through. The program is set up in such a way as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each client and then use that information to create a personalized lesson plan. Unfortunately, the program focuses on the areas of deficit and not on the areas of achievement or interest. Since motivation stems from interest, often the clients prefer not to participate in activities and therefore do not improve. Since the students are adults, the facilitators do not have the same relationship with the clients as a teacher of children would -- that of an older, all-knowing superman (Ramanathan, 1962). Therefore, it is all the more important that the instructors have a partnership relationship with their clients, helping to guide and motivate, not belittle and condescend. By using cooperation between the instructor and the student in a democratic way -- as equals in the learning process -- students are more likely to actively participate in a

lesson (Ramanathan, 1962). Without the spontaneity of a student's interest in the subject matter, motivation deteriorates; the spirit of self-dependence is removed and poor self-esteem may result. By changing the focus from what students cannot do to what they can do, and using past experience as an education tool and success as a motivator, teachers can help drive the development of the student (Kitahara, 1983). Gandhi believed that the current education system uses competition -- not cooperation -- as a stimulus for interest (Ramanathan, 1962). Also, the facility is restricted in the number of different interests they can support, often not being able to supply an area of interest for a given client. This also can cause disinterest, lack of motivation and failure.

When clients are at VAEC, they are taught many life skills that they will need to secure their independence in society. However, when they return to DDR they revert to lives of dependency. The home is run by assistants who are to look after the welfare of the residents, making sure that the cooking, cleaning, and health of the residents is maintained. However, the assistants rarely have a background in education, being mostly Certified Nursing Assistants, with the chores done in part or in whole by themselves and not the residents. For the skills practiced at VAEC, continuity in the home must be maintained, with the assistants stepping into the role of parent or guardian. In a perfect world, teachers or teaching assistants with a background in education would be hired, at a higher wage, to continue the education throughout the evening. In the state of Illinois, where DDR is located, group homes are given the lead in the education of their charges, leaving the education decisions up to the assistants and not to any outside education facilities such as VAEC, giving them no control over education when the day is done.

Reflections and the way forward

So, where do we go from here? It is not likely that a society that views these individuals as expendable, unable to learn, and of no use to society is going to revise the system which keeps these people locked away and out of sight. In a time of economic struggle, it is also not likely that more tax dollars or private donations will be awarded to improve the quality of home education that these individuals are given. Gandhi believed that education should be self-supporting, with the craft work producing not only a product but the selling of that product for monetary gains (Ramanathan, 1962). VAEC does have some clients who have reached a certain level of expertise to work in the factory education division of the facility, for a small wage: about one third of the clients. Can this program be modified to produce enough money to help the school be self-sufficient, and can DDR become subsidized by this product to take the tax burden off the state? Justice for the developmentally disabled is primarily a matter of migrating or transforming these monetary difficulties of their environment so that their impairment is no longer disadvantageous (Lekan, 2009).

The purpose of using Certified Nursing Assistants is that they can administer medication to the residents, as well as monitor their home environment. Should they then not also receive additional education in domestic skills, the same as their charges? Most employment require initial training before work begins; could this not take place at VAEC so that the assistants have knowledge of what is required of the residents as well as themselves? As members of society, is it not our collective responsibility to form a proper social life (Dewey, 1940)? This is a difficult issue that cannot possibly be discussed in these few brief paragraphs.

As a non-developmentally disabled adult looking back on my own education, I believe that I would be more capable of imparting my own experiences if I had been educated in the style of Progressive Education. But our society is not based on the educational ideas of the founders of Progressive Education, leaving graduating students full of knowledge without knowing how this knowledge is to fit into life and society; further, employers expect

employees to seek and fund their own continuing education, leaving employees to neglect their adult education due to financial hardship and lack of motivation. Without personal experiences, how are assistants to pass on knowledge to their charges? Gandhi observed that many of the aristocracy in India did not have any life skills, depending on their servants to provide all of the domestic chores (Ramanathan, 1962). Without life skills, the aristocrats were unable to pass on any knowledge to their progeny and the servants were restricted from teaching these necessary skills due to decorum.

Despite these challenges I believe that with the great increase in awareness of autistic individuals, the other forms of developmentally disabled will benefit. Great strides are being made by this community itself; Temple Grandin is a notable example. She is showing our nation that individuals with developmental difficulties can be productive members of society, in her case despite the lack of an education that was geared towards her motivations, interests or needs. As awareness increases, more funds, research and interest will be directed at this unique demographic. For now, we move in baby steps, doing what we can to bring our society further towards true democracy.

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