

**COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT AS A TOOL
FOR EXCLUSION OR INCLUSION?
EDITORIAL**

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Inclusive education is a worldwide movement, based on a human rights issue: every child, whatever its level of difficulties, should have the right to individually tailored high quality education together with more able peers and not be excluded from the mainstream because of a certain learning difficulty or disability. In 1994, there was an important world conference in Salamanca (Spain), under the auspices of the UNESCO, where Ministers of Education of 180 countries declared that “Mainstream schools are the best places to develop social and cognitive competencies for all, provided a welcoming attitude for differences is created” (UNESCO Salamanca Conference 1994). They made a pact to make substantial efforts to realize inclusive education. Inclusive education has become official policy promoted by the United Nations as well as by the European Union (non-discrimination clauses in the treaty of Maastricht, Amsterdam & Madrid).

However, 10 years after “Salamanca”, inclusive education certainly is not realized in every European country. In many countries, it is still in an embryonic phase, or even worse, meets opposition from many sides, special education and mainstream education. Realizing inclusion is a grass-roots process of creating culture. This involves painstaking work on many levels: families, schools, counselors, teachers, and policy and decision makers. It necessarily takes time.

There is a fundamental paradox in the European Union’s educational policies. On the one hand it wants to become more competitive on the world market and become a “knowledge economy”. The education system is not well adapted for this objective. How can one do this without “selection” of the “talented”? Our modern society calls for the development of basic cognitive skills for all people, to adapt to social and technological changes. Without a minimum of cognitive skills, one

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