

**Дисциплина:** Язык профессионального общения

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**Название занятия:** Education: Equality or Elitism

**Цели:** совершенствование навыков монологической и диалогической речи по данной теме. Формирование коммуникативных иноязычных и профессионально-речевых умений.

**1. In the text that follows the arguments for an elitist approach in education are marked with an (F) and those against are marked with an (A). After reading the article be ready to sum up all the arguments for and against mixed-ability schools.**

### **Education: Equality or Elitism**

Children's intelligence, musical ability, physical endurance etc., vary enormously from individual to individual: some children are musical geniuses at the age of four or five, and others are what is generally called tone-deaf; there are mathematical geniuses, and children who are hopeless at maths; some girls become world swimming champions at 14, and others are always last in any race and so on.(F)

Some "experts" claim that most of these differences are born in the child; others say that they are the result of early experiences. The most sensible attitude is that they are partly the result of heredity, and partly that of environment: x per cent of nature plus y per cent nurture. In any case, attempts in the USA and Britain to diminish differences in ability between children from advantages and disadvantages backgrounds by giving the latter special intensive training between the ages of about 5 and 7 have been quite unsuccessful: the differences are already deeply rooted by then.

One therefore has to accept that there is a wide range of ability between different children in a large number of different skills and abilities, and one then has to decide what to do about it in the schools. Some governments believe in an egalitarian approach; others in giving special types of education to suit each different kind of ability, which especial encouragement to those who are outstanding in a particular thing. The latter is known as an elitist approach.

What is obviously right in any society which is interested in developing each child's abilities to the full for the good of the community is to give all children equal opportunities to develop their special gifts.(A). In a society in which some children are so underfed that their brains do not receive enough protein to develop fully; or in which some mothers are so busy earning a living that they are unable to spend time stimulating their children's brains during the vital first three years, equal opportunities for all do not exist.(A). Napoleon laid down the principle *la carrier ouverte au talent*, (which is roughly equivalent to *equal opportunities for all*).

The USA tried to provide equal education for all, regardless of ability, while the, USSR was encouraging talent by setting up special schools for children with particular gifts. The Americans thought that they had made a mistake in adopting the egalitarian system when the Russians were the first to put a man into space in the famous Sputnik. Even since then, they have been working furiously to follow the Russian system of education, in which there is certainly equal opportunity for all to show their particular abilities, but once these have been established, each group is given a different sort of education which suits it, so that we see wonderful Russian gymnasts, rowing crews, ballerinas, cellists, and scientists, and numbers of people with a near-perfect command of English, Hindi, Chinese or a whole list of other languages.(F)

This is done by selecting gifted children at a very early age, and then sending them to schools in which they are given intensive training for something like ten years. Obviously, selection cannot be perfect: some children who should be at a particular type of school will have slipped through the net; and others who do go to that type of school will drop out before the end of the course;(A) but enough people with a particular type of skill will be produced each year for the country's needs.(F)

An alternative, such as is practiced in Britain, is to send most children to a *comprehensive* school, which is designed to enable everyone to pursue the subjects that they are good at, and at the same time to encourage social cohesion.(A) But there are those who believe that the comprehensive system holds back the very bright children on whom the community will depend heavily in the years to come for the inventiveness, decision-making ability and intellectual endurance which enable a country to compete successfully in a world of advanced technology.(F) However, there has never been any conclusive evidence that the comprehensive system does hold back the very intelligent pupils.(A)

John Twiggs. *USA Today*. 2002. No 3

## **2. Language focus**

**1) Explain the meaning of each of the following phrases used in the text:**

- X per cent of nature, plus Y per cent of nurture;
- disadvantaged background;
- to be deeply rooted;
- to slip through the net;

- to encourage social cohesion.

**2) Match the adjectives with the nouns they collocate with.**

inborn	training
hereditary	home
egalitarian	society
inventive	arguments
comprehensive	musician
tone-deaf	abilities
disadvantaged	child
gifted	right
conclusive	person

**3. Speech activities**

**1) Sum up what the author says for and against egalitarian and elitist approaches to education. Add your own arguments.**

**2) Say if you agree with the following statements. Use evidence from the books and articles you have read (films you have seen) to back up your opinions.**

- ✓ A private education is incompatible with the ideals of democracy.
- ✓ Those parents who prefer to send their children to private institutions and can afford it are free to do so.
- ✓ The elite of the society is its major driving force.