Self-actualization and Social-actualization:
Fulfilling our potential as a person and as a member of society

Self-Actualizing: Recognition as a Way to Enable the Full Potential of Each Student
A pedagogy of recognition regarding self-actualization is a process where schools are set up to enable the full potential of each student. This approach recognizes the influence of the "one-size-fits-all" concept of normalcy and counters the hegemony of the myth of "average" with a Democratic Education (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlECircdLGs), a pedagogy based on finding and developing the uniqueness of each student.

"If such a thing as a psycho-analysis of today's prototypical culture were possible, such an investigation would show the sickness proper to the time to consist precisely in normality."
~ Theodore Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

One-Size-Fits-All or "Normalcy" as the Source of Problems in Society
At the 2006 (14th) International Democratic Education Conference in Sydney, Australia, (http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-14th-IDEC-Sydney-Australia-2006.pdf p.27), Mr. Yaacov Hecht of the Institute for Democratic Education located in Tel Aviv, Israel (https://www.democratic.co.il/en/ide/) argued that the source of problems in society is the one-size-fits-all "square" we all must fit into. This is reinforced by schools where we are told, if you want to learn, you have to come inside the square. We judge everyone by the square. We are asked, "Why are you outside of the square?" This, he said, is the danger of school.

The role of standardized tests Hecht says is keeping us in the square. He predicts an era of global testing would arise to promote world standards. He sees the creation of a culture of competition, power, and money: a "*Coca Cola*" culture turning individual cultures into one global culture.

In traditional approaches to standardized testing, learning disabilities are dismissed and every grade level has a fixed standard of achievement. In democratic self-managed learning approaches, testing is not standardized, thus unique learning abilities are recognized and each person has unique areas of strengths and development.

Using Democratic Education to Enable Self-Actualization

Using Maslow's pyramid of needs (https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html), Hecht noted that presently only around 20% of the population self-actualizes, yet everyone can be excellent, especially if we let a child in school choose the area they wish to develop. These are the questions we ask our children to encourage self-actualization:

• What is your uniqueness?
• What do you bring?

Thus, the goal of education for sustainability must involve:
• A democratic school culture fostering closer relationships between adults and children.
• Looking for the uniqueness of every child.
• Providing a place for it to develop.
• Bringing this to the attention of the community and celebrating.

"A democratic culture guards the equal right of every person for self-actualization."
~ Yaacov Hecht

To have a democratic culture we must:
• Recognize the fact of "the different"-- difference is beautiful.
• Accept the fact that we do not own the truth.
• Recognize that "the different" is also a part of the status quo.
• Recognize the importance of self-criticism as a constructive tool for growth.

• Disburse democratic education outside school borders--to businesses, government agencies, social/community, and civic organizations.

Social Actualization

According to Hecht, the current problem regarding sustainability is that we do not know how to deal with difference, but why? We are not socially actualized:

• We only see ourselves.
• We only see the world from our perspective.
• We want everyone to be like us.
• We want to expand ourselves, and our point of view everywhere.

This is an opportunity to move from a society based on democratic procedures to one fostering a democratic culture. This ethos of principles gives each person a right to know and express their uniqueness, and so a way each can become socially actualized:

• Recognizing the uniqueness of every other member of society.
• Understanding that difference and/or uniqueness do not pose a threat, but are rather an chance for the individual and the community as a whole.
• Understanding the importance of supporting others in their quest to find uniqueness.
• Recognizing that the integration of differences guarantees a world that chooses construction over destruction.

The challenge for urban public school districts is to bring about legislation that enables the creation of a fluid educational system where difference is a "taken for granted" attribute of every child who enters a public school classroom.

An Education City Enables Diversity, Excellence, and Self-Actualization

An "Education City" is a city where citizens choose to position education at the head of their priorities. In such a city, education is not what happens during certain hours and in certain places, it is the essence of the city itself. The vision of a "culture of learning" is driven by the belief that individual development and self-fulfillment through education improves the general quality of life for everyone: https://www.democratic.co.il/en/c2city/

Pluralistic Learning

Yaacov also suggests "pluralistic learning," a type of education which acknowledges uniqueness: each person is different with both weak and strong attributes, talents, and abilities.

"Democratic education is self-managed learning." ~ Yaacov Hecht

Excellence Centers in an Education City

An Education City would manifest through collaboration among community, government, and education organizations which would promote "Excellence Centers" outside of school representing a variety of intelligences, interests, occupations/careers, etc. Here, urban students could see what they are passionate about learning and doing. They could begin intense personal study and/or find adults who have the skills, interests, or careers they desire. The city could provide adults storefronts, places in strip malls or studios for individuals to pursue their passions. Here, adults could develop and/or share their own interests with the community and the world. This would be the first of many steps a community takes to support and develop the personal passion(s), uniqueness, and self-actualization of its citizens.

Self actualization and Social Actualization is from "They Say that We are Prone to Violence, but It's Home Sweet Home": The Praxis of Hip Hop, Self-Actualization, and Democratic Education for Addressing the Roots of Violence." By John Harris Loflin and Jose Manuel Evans, Black & Latino Policy Institute, Indianpolis, IN USA. http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-Praxis-of-Hip-Hop-Levels-of-Human-Power-Self-actualization-and-Democratic-Education-for-Addressing-the-Roots-of-Violence-1.pdf