Trying to be Normal: The Effects of Special Education Identification.

BY

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History of Problem

- Children were taught in separate schools
- Early 70's students were allowed to attend public schools
- Full inclusion in classrooms
- Pull out into special education classes
- Causes of different standards for labeled students

Overarching questions

▶ What effect did being Identified as learning disabled have on the student's social and academic development as they matriculated through school?

▶ Did the students view of himself/herself change as they became older? Was it a positive or negative change?

Urgency

- Important for stake holders to know the effects of identification
- Possible ways to deflect the negative aspects identification has on students
- Understand what positive effects identification has so that it can be recreated

My Journey so far…

- Background in special education
  - As a student
  - As an educator
- Sat in 100's of IEP
- Most common fear is not being normal
- What is normal?

A Poignant Event

Problem

- Labeling students learning disabled:
- Pros
  - Understand child's difficulty
  - Develop effective plan
  - Teachers have an understanding of child's difficulty
- Cons
  - Social exclusion
  - Academic exclusion
  - Low self esteem

Abelism Theory

- Societies need to label
  - Discrimination and exclusion
- Creates a categorization of what is normal
- People must conform to partake in society
  - Creates power and cultural capital
  - Cultural capital helps social movement- education, the way one talks, and dresses
- In School
  - Seclusion and Ostracized
  - Impeeds access and engagement
  - Kids are categorized as not normal

Fouculdian concept of normalcy

- Societies create levels to provide power over others
- Rules of society are designed to oppress those with disabilities
- Dependence on IQ – gives schools power to determine who has access
  - Poor performance = outside the norm and less able
- Blame is placed on the child
  - To be released of blame a child must be remediated to become part of the norm

Teacher Efficacy Theory

- Outcome expectancy
  - Control of a classroom comes from how well a child can learn
  - IQ and school conditions predict student success
- Personal Teaching efficacy
  - Understanding teaching ability
  - Influences their instruction
  - Students unable to learn , curriculum is modified, rigor reduced
  - There is a normal development in learning; exclude those who don't conform

Medical model

- Science and medicine can cure a person of their disability
  - Allow those to partake in normal society
  - Current model for SPED identification
  - IQ and academic testing determine if a student is learning disabled.
  - Dependent on assessments to provide insight

Social model

- Views disability as a normal occurrence in human development
- At some point everyone will have a disability
- Disability is a social construct
- Part of society instead of cure
- Societies change, view disabilities different
  - Glasses
  - Wheelchairs
- Emphasizes compensation and not lack of ability
- Takes normal our of equation

What is Normal

- Social concept
  - Bureaucratic
  - Creates layers
  - Misnomer

A thought…

"If we all had exactly the same kind of mind and there was only one kind of intelligence, then we could teach everybody the same thing, in the same way and assess them in the same way; that would be fair. But once we realize that people have very different kinds of minds, different kinds of strengths… Then education that treats everyone the same way is actually the most unfair education, because it picks out one kind of mind…"

Howard Gardner