

Dwelling In Possibility: The Power of Inclusive Schools

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Book- "You're gonna love this kid!"

TASH- go to to learn about inclusive schools, families, communities www.tash.org

National Conference in Seattle Dec 5-8, 2007

1900- The Black Stork- let baby die

Christmas in Purgatory- Institution living is not living. Willowbrook closed thanks to Geraldo's expose.

70's- learned that people could be educated.

1975- Free & Appropriate Education- new law, built bunch of segregated schools

Allowed to work, but not w/the rest of us.

Today- Once kids w/disabilities got into schools, they were shocked. Learned what they didn't think they could, played together.

What is possible?- Every single decade we're shocked at what we permitted in the past.

Why Should We Support Inclusive Schools?

- *Mirrors our communities (practice communication skills, can't do that in a vacuum) Special Ed Dennys does not exist!*
- *Myth of the average learner- kids are intellectually messy. Teachers need to love the chaos, the diversity of a crazy classroom.*
- *It's the Law*
- *Test scores go up w/mix of typical kids and kids w/disabilities*

Research in the last 30 years has shown that the INTENSITY of services does not require pulling children into separate classrooms and schools.

When teacher says "he can't read"- it's because you kept making him leave every time you taught reading! It's not because he has a disability. Learning in isolation is the hardest way to learn reading!

You increase a child's comprehension by giving them more exercises in content/context (science, social studies). When pulled out, comprehension decreases.

Need to be educated all day long- surrounded by stories. Teach comprehension and prediction. Ie. while reading, "what happens next?"

Paula can tell if you're included by where you live- placement decisions, recommendations come from group of professionals. It's all based on what they decide to do. Kids should always start in General Ed. Inclusion happens when people decide it should happen.

IQ

Eugenicists created it- Hitler, survival of the fittest

The Mis-measure of Man by Steven Gould- there never was or will be a digit to measure intelligence

Prior to IQ, measured head!

Example- cannot perform, cannot talk, doesn't like strangers and is asked- "what do you do when it rains?"- no answer...does it count that he runs in when it rains?!

Just because you measure something, doesn't make it real.

There is no agreement on intelligence and no test they can take- don't take one!

IEP

Don't just look at IEP to see if it accomplishes objectives, KEEP GOING. Always ask- what is possible?

Norm Kunc- "Sometimes being realistic isn't being realistic."

If they tell you "be realistic"- say "no thanks!"

Can't accomplish anything by looking at what we have now.

Question the "Cooking Curriculum"- Focus on Functional Skills

- *Functional skills should be practiced alongside academic ones ie learn to make change at school store*
- *Always ask "at what cost?"*
- *Build into course of the day*

What could you lose?...our passions, vocational inspiration

Question the "Color Curriculum"- Focus on Developmental Milestones

- *Beware of 12 years of color identification, 5 years of shoe tying, 10 years of shapes!*
- *What beliefs are at the heart of this curriculum?
"you have to do one thing before you begin another" IS FALSE
ie girl w/ds went from counting coins for years to Algebra
ie girl w/ds can't come into reading class until says alphabet perfectly- now in college and still messes up A-Z*

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING! Kids develop all over the place!

Reese- a young boy w/ds.

5 stations of Geology (fossils, pbj sandwich w/macaroni noodle, etc)- Reese at desk w/aid by teacher's desk working on clowns, #'s, shapes. Teacher said he was working on sequencing. IEP- all could have been don, goals met, at the 5 stations ie computer, categorize fossils, etc. OLD ideas of development.

Don't need to teach sequencing if include in General Ed...

Forget bunny cards, read a book.

If you must teach sequencing, skip clowns and teach about Rosa Park.

If you must teach color ID, teach the color of the planet Pluto is blue.

Advocate for Academics

All learners need an academic education.

Academics are functional.

Bring advocate and tape recorder! ie Mom wanted her girl in French class, all that was available was French II. She said she'd be happy if she learned 10 words over the year. School finally agreed- learned 8 in first few classes

Book- "Access to Academics"

The most dangerous words: "She won't get anything out of it."

Our reply: "How dare you!"

If we don't give WIDE range of experiences- we choose their passions for them!