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Essay 2 Draft 3

Sponsoring Literacy and Life

Modern parents find themselves inundated with check marks and comparisons to ensure their precious jewel is developing at a proper pace. It’s expected for a child to be speaking and reading by a certain age. Otherwise, he’ll never graduate and be unable to provide for himself. Now, as garish and self serving as many of these statistic benchmarks are, their purpose has merit; the majority of children learn at similar speeds, and public education is designed to best match that common rate. Thus, if a child doesn’t match the trend, the education system makes an allowance to help adjust the pace. Special education classrooms allow students who are unable to participate in a common classroom for a variety of reasons to still pursue an education and receive a classroom environment. Being placed in special education exposed me to an alternate learning environment and set of expectations for developing core literacy skills.

I didn’t speak or think much as a child. Between failing eyesight, comprehension, speech, and hearing tests, I found myself placed in special education for much of my elementary school experience. I was also labeled as a trouble child. Anecdotally I used to steal chalk from my kindergarten teacher; in third grade I brought my grandfather’s WWII pocketknife to show and tell, and then spent several months attending hearings with my mother to appeal being expelled. I didn’t like reading or multiplication tables, and would dread every encounter with tests of any sort. At home I was horribly behaved, quietly wrecking the living room of our house while throwing an abnormally high frequency of tantrums. Both external and inward speculation can suggest that this described behavior was , in part, due to a prolonged absence of a theory of mind, or the perception of cognitive people around oneself (Goldman, 1).

Among other things, the common mental development of a theory of mind in children is responsible for the onset of questions. When children question an adult or each other, they acknowledge the possibility that someone else contains information they themselves do not. This is also described as an awareness of individuality. The most prevalent external proof of this underdevelopment was my strict lack of conversation and speech. This sign that I was not perceiving the availability of new information occasionally led my teachers to the conclusion that I was not processing classroom activities correctly.

I had a split schedule, between time in regular class and instruction with a special-ed aid. This was set in the hopes that I could catch up and be able to return full time to a standard classroom with peers whom I already knew. Having time in both classrooms was important to me because it allowed me to see two sets of expectations. In the special education class I was expected to complete basic tests in conversation and comprehension, and then I was allowed freedom to choose what books I wanted and read them. Conversely, the standard classroom had a more defined schedule and coursework.

At a point during my second or third grade year, a conversation with my special education instructor instigated the mental change that had been so long delayed. For another year I stayed, deliberately controlling my test scores to maintain the special education class. I did so because of the better freedoms to learn than in my standard class. I could spend hours choosing and reading books without being bothered by the other antics of an elementary classroom. Thus, my literacy became an affect of inspiration and curiosity, which I could only tame by reading everything in sight and asking every question available to me.

By the time I was merged with my original class and out of the special education program, I had developed an intense need to understand everything around me, and would interrupt class to ask teachers why televisions needed two wires or how the ceiling lights were connected to the switches. What they could not or were not willing to answer, my imagination did, and I conceived fantastic notions of electricity and robots and history. In time I found the answers to these questions, and in turn developed a strong ability with robotics and computers, which has been invaluable to me in my college and job experiences. School was still immensely difficult to me, and my grades struggled even on into middle and high school, due in part to my dismissal of their importance.

It is clear to me that I would not be nearly the same person I am today had I not been given the time I had in special education. I attribute my understanding of the importance of literacy in all things to the freedom given to me to read and discover on my own.

Works Cited

Goldman, Alvin I. “Theory of Mind” *Rutgers.* Rutgers, n.d. Web. 24 Feb 2013.

<http://fas-philosophy.rutgers.edu/goldman/Theory%20of%20Mind%20\_Oxford%20Handbook\_.pdf.pdf>