Nicole Day #6

Chapter 5: Inclusion May Not Be Easier, But It’s Better

 After reading this chapter, I feel more educated and prepared for educating a child with a disability than I have felt reading any of the previous chapters. Although every single chapter has been inspiring and a good lesson is always taught, I really enjoyed how in chapter 5 Schwarz broke down the entire chapter by subtitles all on ways to be a more successful, and integrated teacher! As I read, I thought about ways I could implement each of Schwarz’s subtitles into my own classroom. Some of the main things that really stood out to me was avoiding ALL instances of segregation learning how to properly plan, and doing away with unnecessary supervision, assistance, and learned helplessness.

To begin, I enjoyed reading the about the ways to avoid segregation. Segregation has a different meaning to everybody. Some people may think segregation is excluding a person, treating them unfairly or differently from everyone else, and drawing sometimes unwanted attention to a person. However, I didn’t realize how segregated the schools were by having the children with disabilities in a separate classroom. As a high schooler, I always thought that was what was best for them because they were able to get the attention and extra help they needed as a community of special learners, however, I never looked at it as the school segregating them by keeping them locked in special classroom all day. In my future classroom, I plan to keep as many special education learners in my class as I can with very minimal departures of the classroom. I liked how this subtitle gave examples of other ways to pull a student aside to help them. A student can be helped in my general education classroom! If more attention was needed, I could talk to or help them during a library or computer lab trip. Students with disabilities should not be refused P.E. time, or other specials. I think if a student is physically unable to participate, maybe there should be a reserved time so that the gym is open to the students with disabilities, and they can have their own specially thought out games.

Secondly, I liked the bullet point list Schwarz listed under his “Planning, Planning, Planning” subtitle. As a teacher, it is obviously very important to have a lesson plan, and to be well prepared for each day. But what if the day doesn’t go as planned? The students don’t catch on as quickly as you hoped? It is important to have a Plan B, and even a Plan C if all else fails. I plan on having multiple lessons with multiple ways of teaching and practicing a lesson. It is an essencial tool to be able to rearrange the instructions and reformate the lesson. I plan on making a copy of Schwarz list of ways to be properly prepared so that I will be able to be prepared for each day.

Lastly, I plan on not “baby-ing” my students, general education or special education. I find myself a lot talking “baby” to small children. When interacting or babysitting children, I usually try to do everything for the, because I think I am helping them this way. I know now that that is only impairing their own independence. I will remember this from now on that if a child is capable of doing something, then let them! Children are a lot smarter than we usually give them credit for. It is important that I let my students have a mind of their own and make decisions I know they are capable of.

While reading the subtitle “Seeing Behavior as a Form of Communication” I was reminded of a situation I was placed in last year. I was the head child care provider at my church every Sunday morning. I was in charge of teaching and watching over grade levels 4 and above. I had a student who was in fourth grade, however, had the mentality of a 4 year old. He had been physically and emotionally abused as a child by his biological parents, therefore, lacked respect of his elders. As he and I became closer, he would become very jealous of the attention I would show other kids. In order to get my attention, he would act out negatively causing him to get in trouble. Although it was frustrating for me at the time, because I did not know why he was acting the way he was, I know realize he was going to fight for my attention whether it was positive or negative attention. He already struggled with using his words, and like a toddler would do, he would often whine or moan to show he did not like something, or smile and clap if he was excited. His behavior was a way for him to communicate with me that he wanted me attention, just as the chapter 5 discusses.

Another incidence I was reminded of fell under the subtitle “Providing Access to After-School Clubs and Extracurricular Activities.” In my high school, there were a group of students who enjoyed anime cartoons and games. Most of these students would be considered “outsiders.” They did not play sports or any instruments; they were just considered “the gamers” of the school. Since the school did not offer any activities or clubs that sparked their interest, my physics teacher who was also a gaming fanatic created a club for gamers and anime lovers to join.

This chapter was very clear and obvious of what Schwarz was trying to get across. I learned a lot of ways to keep everyone involved and avoid segregation at all costs. No immediate questions came to mind while reading so I re-read it a couple of times and finally had a possible concern. While reading the last story about Jack and Chris, I wondered what other candidates thought of Jack’s win. Did Jack win fair and square because of his ideas and leadership, or could it have been partially skewed due to some students having sympathy for him, or just thinking his talking computer was cool? Other than that one question, this chapter was very well understood and enjoyable to read.