



RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNDERCOVER - A DOCTOR FINDS VIOLENCE, ABUSE & COMPLIANCE IN A SPECIAL ED CLASSROOM - WITNESSING HSB, SYSTEMIC MISOGYNY AND BIASES RELATED TO GENDER, RACE, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND DISABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Despite the implementation of inclusion policies in US classrooms, HSB, violence and misogynistic treatment towards girls with special needs remain prevalent. This study aims to investigate the intersection of race, gender and socioeconomic status within inclusive educational settings, specifically examining how these factors contribute to heightened vulnerability to violence and discrimination for girls with special needs. Findings from this research will inform strategies to create truly inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students, regardless of gender, race, or disability status.

Key Words:

Inclusive Education, Gender-Bias in Education, Racial Disparities in Education, Violence in Schools, Harmful Sexual Behaviors (HSB), Disability Studies in Education, Special Education, Early Childhood Education, Alternative Wellness in Education. "As a medical doctor and Alternative healthcare Expert, I am interested in exploring and implementing alternative and holistic approaches to improve the well-being and academic performance of students in US classrooms." Dr. Isa-Allena N.D. O.M.D, PhD, B.S Education, Master Teacher

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education serves as the foundation for a child's lifelong learning and development. However, for children with special needs, the current system is falling short of providing holistic, equitable and enriching learning experiences. Some are not safe, others are not prioritized due to race, color, gender and socioeconomic status. This study explores the critical need for exposure and improvement within early childhood special education, particularly addressing the unique challenges faced by diverse learners, including those from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds. By examining the intersection of race, gender, and disability within inclusive classrooms, this narrative aims to shed light on the systemic barriers that hinder the success of young children, systems that harm those with special needs. I will advocate for transformative changes to create truly equitable and supportive learning environments for all.

BACKGROUND

For this scientific Investigation, Undercover I go, directly into the Special Ed Inclusive Classroom, "working" as a teacher, to observe and uncover what really goes on in Inclusive classrooms settings and find out how I can help - then to find better ways to improve the educational experience for the children in my community.

THE INVESTIGATION: The phone rings, it's 7:03 AM (July 12, 2023) and an unexpected call from a desperate Preschool Principal wakes me - he frantically offers me a Preschool teaching position

- unbeknownst to him, as a successful Doctor/Scientist, I accept this interview, and now my latest mission is laid out ahead of me; to observe the SPED educational environment thoroughly and uncover what issues are there. In a pre-k setting, learning what aids or obstructs the pursuit of educational success and wellness for students with special needs, is my goal, helping to uplift and improve these inclusive classrooms in the USA. As a Teacher, being ready to eradicate average problems and make a difference seems normal and almost average, but you see I'm not really just a teacher, I'm a Double-Board Certified Medical Doctor & PhD scientist with a Degree in Internal medicine concerned about wellness in the classroom. So, I didn't just end up here to teach, I am here to make a difference, both internally and externally for students in the system.

PREPARATION

To begin, I chose Special Education in Early Childhood education as a focus to see if holistically impacting the wellness of younger children will make an overall difference in the system. To complete this study, I have had to legally become a credentialed teacher, so, I added a Degree in Education and 5 Teaching credentials to my 3 Medical degrees! Once I did that, I was ready, I could officially teach while still observing from the eyes of a Doctor/Scientist, and find out what healing methods would be best to help improve the educational experience from the inside out. This preparation required a significant shift in perspective though, moving from the evidence-based clinical thinking to the dynamic and complex, inclusive and diverse world of education in the classroom is intense. My goal was to aid children and improve their classroom conditions in all ways possible that can empower education, regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic

status. My goal was to bring wellness, social-emotional [Blewitt, 2020] overall empowerment [Reiss, 2012] and positive reinforcement [Benoit, 2021] into the forefront, and show how this type of system is better in how it provides greater stability though & through as well as protection for the diverse and vulnerable.

Point of View

"I want to make improvements from the eyes of an educator... not as a scientist. But I want the data to show that these improvements make a difference with statistics that are statistically significant, to support improvement and success" Dr. Isa-Allena

"No more disconnect from what science says - and sees. As a teacher I get to explore what is truly good and what is truly going on within the realm of education." Dr. Isa-Allena

From this experience of being someone in the classroom, I can fundamentally impact each child in the most optimal way, this cannot be done with science only. Real healing comes through holistically interacting with the children as a teacher/caretaker, not from the position of a clinical scientist observing the children being educated.

"I know that this is the part of the system that needs support... Education needs methods that will improve the educational experience as well as support the Holistic wellness of each student in the classroom...I want to make direct changes for the better!" Dr. Isa-Allena

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing the author's personal experiences and observations as a primary data source. As a teacher, doctor and scientist within the inclusive classroom, I engaged in daily observations of student interactions, recorded anecdotal notes, and documented significant events using SPSS to calculate statistics. With this observation, my primary objective was to observe and understand the educational experiences of young children within an inclusive environment. I aimed to identify factors that support or hinder their learning and development. However, my initial enthusiasm quickly gave way to a profound sense of unease.

OBSERVATIONS: After beginning what I thought would be a routine experience of observation and taking data, I quickly realized it would involve a lot more than that. From my observation, one particularly disturbing incident occurred that involved a three-year-old little African-American girl with special needs who was repeatedly sexually, physically and emotionally abused by a White Cisgender male classmate in plain view - with their teacher and teacher's aide looking on unfazed. Despite complaining, and reporting this incident to the principal immediately in writing, I received harassment, bullying, persuasive tactics and a shocking full on Attack. This lack of support was so strong and coordinated and the response I received was so aggressive and verbally violent - I wasn't expecting it. I was traumatized by the searing tone during the reprimanding. Afterward, what followed up was an in-person "off the record" second verbal reprimanding and threatening, "We have to expect this in the classroom." the principal insisted with a searing tone...and he looked at me...I looked him deep in his eye as he stood 2 feet away from a little girl being abused! This dismissive threatening response deeply troubled me, as it implied that such violence was to be thought of as acceptable within a Public, inclusive educational setting. I was horrified and traumatized by this incident... and left the position immediately after!

RESULTS

The findings of this study were deeply concerning. Despite the intended goals of inclusion study, I witnessed disturbing instances of

violence and misogyny directed towards poor students, or girl students of color -in their class. These incidents included Harmful Sexual Behaviors (HSB), sexual violence, physical aggression, verbal abuse, discriminatory bias, neglect and compliance. All directed towards the abusive behaviors exhibited by specific White Cisgender Male students that were apparently protected from consequence as wealthy, upper-class students, their race and socioeconomic allowed a space for their behavior which was supported openly by the White Cisgender Male Teacher and Administrator.

DISCUSSION

"Through my observations, my idyllic visions of preschool were shattered, gone were visions of recess and circle time, replaced now with horrors of Harmful Sexual Behaviors (HSB,) Violence, and Misogyny in the classroom" Dr. Isa-Allena N.D., O.M.D, PhD, B.S Master Teacher

After that experience, I went on to realize that violent Behavior Problems [Benoit, 2021] and Violence in the classroom [Wenden, 2023; Duque, 2021; Pihl, 2018; 6, 7, 8] like this were not new issues, in fact, there are several experts who are currently working to eradicate this type of abuse from the Special Education classroom setting.

Known as Harmful Sexual Behaviors (HSB), in the context of Special Education, (HSB) can encompass a range of behaviors that are

- **Inappropriate for the child's age or developmental level:** This can include excessive masturbation in public, inappropriate touching of others, or engaging in sexually suggestive language or behaviors.
- **Coercive or abusive:** This may involve forcing sexual contact on others, displaying aggression or violence, or exhibiting sexually predatory behaviors.

HSB can lead to children being harmful to themselves: This can include behaviors that put the child at risk of exploitation or abuse, such as engaging in sexual activity or seeking out inappropriate content. Experts like Kenny Kor and Helen Simpson examined the barriers and enablers for teachers in effectively responding to harmful sexual behavior (HSB) exhibited by children and young people. Their findings revealed a complex interplay of factors, with "minimization of HSB" emerging as a significant barrier, as highlighted by (Simpson & Kor 2023). Furthermore, "harmful social norms" that condone or normalize abusive behaviors within the school environment presented a significant challenge for teachers in addressing (HSB) effectively, as I wanted to do! This is all compounded by "inadequate support from external agencies" which I discovered tend to be White Cisgender male dominant, which is hindering the teachers' ability to respond appropriately and help these children and effectively and get rid of (HSB) in the classroom. (Kor & Simpson 2023). Kor & Simpson emphasize the need for a Holistic whole-school approach, proactive partnerships with parents and external agencies, and the development of alternative pathways to provide the constant needed safety for victims of HSB, Violence or any type of Abuse or neglect in Special Ed Spaces. Being aware of (HSB) now, and fighting for change doesn't change the fact that on a day-to-day basis, certain children like this little girl, are being violently abused and traumatized, in horrific and demeaning ways in a public classroom, and it is dismissed and pushed forward as a "norm" in the Special Ed environment by the White-Cisgender Environment. (HSB) and similar violence can never become the "norm" in a classroom because it is inhumane. This sick form of acceptance and compliance of abuse in education is like a systemic virus, with the denial being rooted in the "Man vs. Women" conflict. It is an ancient battle that should not enter our classrooms. It really becomes personally "misogynistic", when these little girls have to endure this type of treatment repeatedly and see that the boys are not reprimanded at all for their violence or (HSB) which in time feeds into Domestic Violence trends and

codependency cycles. Meanwhile other girls and women have to see this and suffer, as powerless bystanders as the bigger Cisgender-White male Teachers and Cisgender-White Male Administrators support it - openly and dismiss ... This is horrific!

Instead of this, we all need to come together and reevaluate what is actually happening in inclusive Special Educational environments and contemplate if all children are safe there.

Impact and Aftermath: My attempts to address these concerns were met with strong resistance and retaliation. After reporting the incidents and advocating for the safety and well-being of the affected students, I was reprimanded, bullied, harassed, threatened and ultimately forced to resign from my position. I left the job immediately!

Violation of Human Rights - Right there in our Classrooms!

What I learned...(HSB), Misogynistic treatment of children and any violence in the classroom is illegal and morally unacceptable, being a part of a system that supports that is wrong. Do parents with children with special needs know what is happening to their children in school settings? Do Parents know what (HSB) is? Are Parents truly aware of how race, gender and socioeconomic status is impacting their child's educational experiences, and are parents willing to trade off safety for the experience of inclusivity, and being in a general classroom? These are questions we need to contemplate to make more effective change in the education system

CONCLUSION

This docu-narrative explores the experiences of an undercover scientist working as a preschool teacher within an inclusive classroom setting. Despite the promise of inclusion policies [9] rehabilitation unfortunately took a backseat to witnessing student-on-student violence, Sexual Violence, (HSB) and the extreme horrors of repetitive, impulsive behavior issues, misogyny and abuse. The numerous incidents, coupled with a lack of support and even retaliation from the school staff and its administrators for trying to correct the situation, clearly exposes the bias and preference for inhumane treatment ... This disparity highlights the significant challenges faced by marginalized, diverse students within biased inclusive educational environments, and also emphasizes the urgent need for systemic changes to ensure the safety, well-being, and equitable learning experiences for all students, regardless of their gender, race, or disability status.

The fact is, that the inclusive classroom, while intended to foster a supportive and equitable learning environment for children with special needs, is a place presented with significant challenges. Witnessing disturbing instances of violence [Almasri, 2023] and misogyny, [Sherr, 2017] and HSB being directed towards girls, particularly girls of color, I learned what is actually needed in the classroom most; because these incidents included physical aggression, verbal abuse, and discriminatory behaviors exhibited by White Cisgender male students, needs to be stopped. We need to develop safer educational norms, and more safe haven locations as Simpson & Kor suggest. This entire experience has been graphic and a stark reminder for the critical need for systemic changes within our education system.

Harmful Sexual Behaviors (HSB's), and violence need to be eliminated completely! True inclusion requires more than simply placing students with diverse needs in the same classroom. It necessitates a fundamental shift in attitudes, a commitment to zero tolerance for violence and discrimination, and policing to ensure safety for the vulnerable, and creation of a safer and more supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of their color, gender, socioeconomic status or disability status.

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