# The Think Inclusive Podcast

## Season 9, Episode 10

## Best of Think Inclusive Volume 2

**Audio Transcript**

Tim Villegas (00:00):
Happy holidays, everyone. I hope you are taking some time to reflect on this year, the good and the not so good, and are making plans, goals, or dreams for a brighter 2022. My name is Tim Villegas and you are listening to the Think Inclusive podcast presented by MCIE. This podcast exists to build bridges between families, educators, and disability rights advocates to create a shared understanding of inclusive education and what inclusion looks like in the real world. To find out more about who we are and what we do check us out at thinkinclusive.us or on the socials: Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Today on this Best of Podcast, we are featuring four interviews. One that you haven't heard yet, Lou Brown, and three that you might have caught in our feed if you've been listening for a while: Katie Novak, Alfie Kohn, Cheryl Jorgensen. The first is a previously unpublished clip from my 2019 interview with the co-founder of TASH, the late Lou Brown. I always meant to revisit this interview and I'm so glad I did for this episode. Lou did not want to waste any time. Before the interview, he sent me a detailed outline of what he wanted to talk about, and in a signature Lou Brown move, the outline was in all caps.

Tim Villegas (01:33):
How's the, uh, how's the weather in Florida? <Laugh>

Lou Brown (01:37):
Oh, it's beautiful. Let's get going.

Tim Villegas (01:40):
We start off by talking about how it can be impossible for educators who believe in inclusive education to find a job that matches our values and our credentials. And we finish with the discussion about whether Lou thought special and general education would ever become one system. Thanks for listening. And like Lou says, let's get going.

Lou Brown (02:03):
When I started, there was no place to go.

Tim Villegas (02:06):
Right? Exactly.

Lou Brown (02:08):
You got a place here in school, you got it. Know the people who succeeded you got 'em in school, you know, uh, got 'em with this with tax support system and legal protections and safe environments and all of that. And <laugh>, so now you gotta take it to the next step. Other people have done it though, by the way. I mean, there are, there are just thousands and thousands of kids with significant disabilities in integrated settings. I mean, but you gotta do it. You gotta figure out a way to do it. The other problem that you brought up, that, that, that hit me early on. When we started training teachers is you, uh, you go, you gotta practice teacher good with a good cooperating teacher. She gets, she gets trained and you know, the best you can do in the time you have, and then she gets hired and she gets a job teaching.

Lou Brown (02:54):
Then you work with her there. And then she does these wonderful things for these kids. Then they go up to the next class or the next level, nothing.Aall the communication devices you develop the other teacher, new teacher won't use. The way you handle behavior problems effectively, she does the opposite. So if they don't know, this goes to that issue of ultimate functioning is what you wanna do year. You want, you wanna put people with quality service every year. You want people put people in the best possible environments and give 'em the best possible instruction every year. You can't, you know, one, one person is always important, but you gotta have a team. You gotta have a longitudinal team. You gotta, you, you built good horizontal teams, you know, collaborative teams. That's great. That's wonderful. That's necessary. Now you gotta build vertical teams.

Lou Brown (03:45):
Where am I? Who am I sending them to? We kids that we had kids that were fully included in elementary school, but the middle school was segregated. So now, okay. Then we came up with what we call elementary to middle, middle school transition plans. And so we activated the parents to say, no, don't put a kid in a special class. No, don't settle for it. You're integrated in the fifth grade, you go to sixth grade, you're integrated there too. We'll figure out the curriculum. So I, you know, I understand where you are if you're there. And, and again, I think you're, unfortunately, you're, you're, you're the majority of people in your situation. That's, what's the state special ed in the country for these kids.

Tim Villegas (04:24):
Let's say you have a student with an intellectual disability who is being included in, let's say a second or third grade class. And so some of the arguments are, well, this student would be learning so much more if they were in a homogenous setting with students like them, who could and they could work and learn at their pace.

Lou Brown (04:57):
That's baloney. We know that is so untrue. Julie Causton wrote a great and her group in Syracuse wrote a great paper. The promise of the special class. This is, and get all this individualization, learn at his own pace, et cetera, et cetera, be with his own kind. So, and you go and see what that happens in those classes. When we do a due process case, that's what we,

I used to do more. Well, we that's what we do. We go see where the school recommends.dead time, horrible models, isolated. I mean, no, no, no, no, no, no.I think our kids need functional skills we can teach to them in general ed and, and, and other ways. Our kids need social relationships with people with disabilities. You just can't teach 'em there. I want to build relationships at school that can be expressed.

Lou Brown (05:51):
And during non-school days and times you can't do that with the kids without disabilities. No, no, I, I don't buy that at all. And then you still got the same problem. What are you gonna do about generalization? Um, uh, and what is it that's important that you can learn in a special class that you can't learn in a, in an integrated setting or, or, yeah. Yeah. What is it specifically tell us. So we go see what they're doing in a special class. We can do that in a general ed class, but we're not giving up feeding relationships, travel relationships, tutorials, and you know, the best models available and the best teachers in the American public school system are in those general education classroom. We're not giving up them. Right. You see?

Tim Villegas (06:35):
Yeah. Yeah.

Lou Brown (06:36):
So I, I defy you. In fact, we've been, we've been well, that's what we used to do. When you go to a, they won't let us videotape cause we go videotape dead time. Kids doing nothing from minutes and minutes and minutes, then limited engagement. You got seven kids, eight kids for a few. If you are a teacher with kids with autism minutes, like in class. So you got two kids. No, you got, you got a teacher in a paraprofessional and six kids. Now, how many get individualized instruction. How many, what are the other kids doing while you're doing that? You see what are the role models they're exposed to? How much dead time, time with nothing good is going on. So I, I don't, I don't buy that. I, I, I, I think that's an argument that's, that's easy to refute. See, I think the best preparation is, and you're the inclusion guy is, is learning, not math. How to function in integrated society, how to function well without interfering with the achievement of other people and, and, and out outside the presence of people who are paid to be with you, that's what they need. That's preparation for that's outcome. See outcome again, remember is functioning in integrated society, live, work, and play an integrated society, right? With the least amount of support, the more support you need, the more you're gonna be kept home.

Tim Villegas (07:54):
I think that what you, because you said something interesting about learning without interfering with the achievement of others.

Lou Brown (08:08):
And cause you wanted your work without interfering with the achievement of others. The, if you're a person with a disability and, and you interfere with the productivity of other workers, you are gone. It's not fail to work workshop where you can hit your head all you want scream

and yell all you want. It's hard learning to function in integrated society, right. It's much more challenging.

Tim Villegas (08:29):
So let's, so I just wanna explore this for a little bit more. That is another reason, a, a big reason, or, um, argument that I hear when, when we're promoting inclusive practices, right? This student is so disruptive or has self injury, or has severe behavior challenges that nobody else can learn. Why are they in this particular setting? And I know that there's certain supports that need to be in place, but let's just for hypothetically saying this, this student is getting all the support that we can give them, that we're getting. You know, we have a behavior intervention plan, a functional behavior assessment's already been done. Um, for whatever reason, this student is not doing well and is interfering with the learning of others. Where do we go from there?

Lou Brown (09:25):
At what age you talking about, see, it's very, it's extremely rare that if the kids in elementary, in the elementary school, that we can't solve a problem with the resources, with the resources that are people, little kids, little problems. Now you get older, you got you, you run into some heavy stuff, some important stuff. We have a kid who wouldn't take a shower, wouldn't take a shower, wouldn't get clean. God was the big, strong, tough guy who smelled. It was terrible. So we got him a job at non school job at a dog kennel, fit right in. We had a guy was a flasher. He, he just in high school, he'd flash he, oh, whatcha are you gonna do? And we had all this therapy and all this psycho analyst talking about this and that, oh, we got him a job in a butcher shop.

Lou Brown (10:11):
You don't flash in. Coat's cold. There you no, if you, I go back to of increasing the environments. You, you, some kids school is a mismatch. You've gotta get 'em into other respected, integrated settings that, that countermand their disability, the problems they're manifesting. I'm sorry. You know, we know kid used to, used to punch others, walk down the hall, punch others. We've got 'em in a, in a garage, a truck maintenance garage, big, strong strapping people. They don't punch them. Not a problem, not a problem. You can solve more significant behavior problems with good matching job. I mean, environment matching. Then you can be all the on the behavior modification in the world. So I, you know, there too many case history, examples, how kids with significant behavior problems, dangerous problems for themselves and others have been solved by increasing the environments and that you, that you give opportunities for them to function in.

Tim Villegas (11:11):
Do you see a trend moving toward, um, general and special ed becoming one system?

Lou Brown (11:20):
Yes, go, go see Wayne Sailor, right?

Tim Villegas (11:23):

Exactly. SWIFT.

Lou Brown (11:27):
Let Wayne do a podcast. And there is no special ed and do away with it. Put the kids in the teachers have to be trained. Training a teacher for special classes, very different than training a teacher to be a, um, inclusion support person, dramatically different. You gotta know, just unbelievable number of things, more, you know, important things. And so, yes, I see clearly, uh, uh, uh, more to me, the people that I talk to, uh, uh, more and more people say let's do away with special ed as a, as a profession and make education a profession and, and expand it.

Tim Villegas (12:01):
How, how likely do you think, how likely do you think that it will become one system.

Lou Brown (12:11):
I'll be I'm 80 years old. And I, you know, before, when we started this, this, uh, interview, uh, everybody said, there'll always be institutions. Wrong. Or you can't serve all of these kids. Wrong. You know, or they can't do real work in the real world. Wrong. You know, at, and, and so I, I don't know. It's special ed reg general merge. I think pool, the resources people are doing it. People are doing it and doing it very effectively. I don't know. Maybe, maybe not. You know, we did a lot of things we used, we used to have, we don't have, now they have gone away, but it takes people, resources, effort. I, I, I don't think I'll see it at my age, but I, I, I never thought I'd see the end of institutions. Although I prayed, hoped for them and worked toward them. I never thought I'd see all kids going to school. I never thought I'd see kids going to general education classrooms, but I saw it, you know, it happened. I'm proud and happy to be a part of it, but it took a hell of a lot of people.

Tim Villegas (13:20):
So, Lou, what do you think, what do you think is the biggest barrier to inclusive practices?

Lou Brown (13:27):
Millions of people without disabilities don't know anything about us, have no direct experience with us. They weren't on a bus with us, the school bus, they weren't the, the bathroom. They didn't have lunch with us. They didn't, they didn't have no exposure. And that's one of the, to me, the, the blessings of, of inclusion, you, you never know who who's learning something who's being changed and who's being educated because they're around us. That's who I say. If we go to into greater settings and natural proportions with good support services, millions of millions of, of the future citizens of the country are gonna know about us. And, and, and we won't, they won't, they won't say, I don't want my daughter to go to school and somebody with autism or don't invite them over to the house. They have down syndrome. We won't have that. We will won't have that. And when they become lawyers and physicians and teachers they'll know about us, it'll be OK.

Tim Villegas (14:24):

Next up is my interview with universal design for learning expert, Katie Novak. In this clip, we talk about how ineffective traditional assessments are because they are not universally designed, even though the most recent education law says they should be. Take a listen.

Tim Villegas (14:44):
You know, one of the, one of the biggest barriers that we, that we're looking at as far as in the United States is standardized assessments and standardized testing, um, uh, and accountability measures that, that, you know, really tie the hands of educators. Um, is that something that you see, especially when you were assistant superintendent, um, you know, uh, educators saying, well, you know, I really would like to do this. It does sound great, but you know, I'm accountable, you know, because, uh, it is reflected in my evaluation or, you know, uh, my, uh, my school scores or the scores that are sent to the state. And I just, I'm not sure if I can teach this way, is that, is that a barrier that, that you've come across?

Katie Novak (15:35):
I've come across it. But I think that it's a barrier that is ripe for being challenged. What we're doing right now is incredibly ineffective. We have less than 40% of students in this country who are meeting grade level standards. When you're looking at these like national assessments of, you know, of, of education progress. So the traditional way is incredibly ineffective at increasing traditional outcomes. That is a fact. And so that's the first part. The second part is, is that these assessments should be universally designed. The, every student succeeds act is very clear that state standardized assessment should be universally designed. They are not there yet, but I am hopeful that we'll be making more changes in the future. So the, what we're measuring aligns much more to the same resources and supports that we would have in college and careers. And the last piece is, you know, as an educator, the tests in many ways are inaccesible.

Katie Novak (16:36):
I will not ever argue with that. I think that the tests are incredibly inaccesible for some learners. I think that they're also very focused, a lot of the time on, you know, literature that aligns to dominant culture. So not only are they, inaccesible, they're culturally not responsive in many ways, but that being said, I have have a choice as an educator, as a school, as an administrator, I can choose to continue to teach in a really inaccesible way to prepare students for an inaccesible test, or I can choose to make sure that I'm teaching in a really incredibly, you know, accessible and trauma informed and engaging and linguistic appropriate and culturally sustaining way. And I can make sure that the students have all of the knowledge and the skills that they need to have, and then I'm going to have them take an inaccessible test.

Katie Novak (17:26):
Um, certainly I would advocate for much more flexible means of measuring that information. I think that we are way too far into this universe and technology to not provide opportunities, to listen to text, to not provide the opportunities to voice to text, because everyone will always have that available. So it, it feels a little bit to me like a game of like, gotcha. And not necessarily what students need to be college and career ready. So long story short. I do not think that we are killing it so well on these tests that it gives us any reason to say I can't do something

different. You know, Beverly Daniel Tatum says the work is not about intent. The work is about impact. Our right now is heartbreaking considering how hard people are working. We have to do something differently.

Tim Villegas (18:15):
There's a, there's something I heard you, um, say, I forget it was in one of your videos that you said, uh, when we value impact over intentions, all of us have equal opportunity to succeed. Could you expound on that a little bit? I thought that was great.

Katie Novak (18:31):
Yeah. I just think that in many ways, um, in education we're focused more on our input as opposed to our output. So learning is alterable. All students can be successful given the right environment, given the right instruction, you know, given conditions of nurture. And we have, have to recognize that certainly there are things that we cannot alter, but there's a heck of a lot more that we can. And when we see that outcomes are not great, it's really easy to say, like the kid's not doing their part and saying like, well, I did this, I covered it. I offer extra help sessions. I did this. And if the student is still not learning, then we have to work together to design something differently. And John Dewey wrote an essay called on teaching in 1910. And he said to say that you have taught something when no one has learned it is like saying you sold something no one bought.

Katie Novak (19:31):
Like it's transactional. You know, you didn't teach it if students didn't learn it. But in many ways that hurts like my heart and my soul, because people go into this work because it's emotional work because they love teaching and they love kids. And it's heartbreaking to be doing the best you can with what you have and re that you don't have the impact that you wanna have, but that requires collaboration that requires, you know, unlearning, it requires learning. And most importantly, it requires being evidence informed enough where we're saying, when I do this, does it make a difference when I do this, does this make a difference? So it's much more iterative than like traditional education was like, we can't design the lesson and then be like, yeah, she's gonna follow it and see how it goes. Like, what are you gonna do if kids aren't learning?

Tim Villegas (20:21):
Right, right. And it's not enough to just say, well, you did the best you can. Yeah.

Katie Novak (20:26):
Moving on to chapter seven.

Tim Villegas (20:28):
Right. Right. But, uh, believe me, and I know that you've heard the, those conversations as well. Like that's what happens is, oh, well get 'em next time or we'll get 'em next year. <laugh>

Katie Novak (20:39):

Yeah. Right. And, and again, I think that I really honestly believe the intention is good. I think that people are breaking their backs trying to do this, but it's, we're not using strategies that are truly responsive to students because in many ways we're doing things in one way. And the problem is, is any strategy that you use will likely work for some students. And they provide like a false narrative that what you're doing is really effective. Because if you don't truly embrace variability, and I say, okay, I'm gonna provide you with this direct instruction. And then I'm gonna give you a quiz. And some kids do well. It's like, see, they're paying attention. And it's like, but they're not the same. You know, we have very different, you know, cognitive skills and, and, um, strength and weaknesses and funds of knowledge and background knowledge. But it also starts getting into things like, you know, your mood can very significantly impact your ability to learn.

Katie Novak (21:38):
And so, you know, even with, you know, the right background knowledge and the right ability to, you know, process auditory information, you know, if, if I'm in high school and I just went through a really bad breakup, my mind is not on your lecture. And so that is why we have to think about the barriers as not only being academic, but again, really thinking about how do we create opportunities for students to self-regulate, to find balance, to be able to understand and work through their emotions, because, you know, students will experience trauma. Many students will really struggle with, you know, being really angry or really sad. And for really good reason.

Tim Villegas (22:13):
My interview with Alfie Kohn, author of the book punished by rewards, was our most listened to episode of 2021. And the clip you were about to hear is probably one of the reasons why. Alfie, I mean, Mr. Kohn, lays out his argument for why educators should steer clear from using any extrinsic reward system in their classroom. Here's the clip.

Tim Villegas (22:39):
I've I feel like I've read in an, um, number of parts in your work where you talk about setting up the environment for learning. So isn't, is that not, you know, just antecedent strategies and another way of, of, uh, of describing it?

Aflie Kohn (22:59):
See? No, no, no, I, I understand the confusion, but of course the teacher has a, has a, a role to play in working again with kids, not doing things for or to kids to create a culture, a climate, a curriculum that will be most effective, but most effective at tapping and nourishing the intrinsic interest within the children. That is the starting point of every thing for everybody who's outgrown behaviorism. Um, and that old model that frankly, wasn't even all that accurate in reflecting human experience, you know, 80 years ago. And certainly now cognitive science, the science of human motivation has come way past that antecedent notion. Now we now understand that there are different kinds of motivation that people have. There is intrinsic motivation where you get a kick out of something and find it worthwhile meaningful joy in its

own, right? And extrinsic motivation where something extrinsic to or outside the task is sort of guiding you or inducing you to do it, namely getting a reward or avoiding a punishment.

Aflie Kohn (24:20):
Now, the research finds not only that, those two things are very different, helping another kid or sharing my dessert with her because I think that's a good thing to do. And she, uh, gets pleasure out of that dessert is completely qualitatively different from doing it because somebody's gonna give me a patronizing pat on the head, uh, and say good sharing, or gimme a sticker. But the research also finds that intrinsic motivation, the desire to help, to paint, to write, to do math, to clean my room, whatever it is, is adversely affected by any extrinsic inducement. So it's not just that those two are different. It's that, and the whole model that collapses the two and just talks about motivating kids and arranging the environment and so on. And the behaviorist model is overlooking the fact that those rewards, including verbal doggy biscuit for jumping through our hoops, actively undermines the intrinsic interest that we're hoping kids will have and take away and want to continue doing good stuff. Even when there's nobody around to give 'em a doggy biscuit for it. This means that exactly like punishments, even if we refer to them as consequences. Rewards are not just ineffective and for the long term and for the stuff that matters, they're counterproductive.

Tim Villegas (25:59):
So would you say then for educator, and we know a lot of educators who, who want to build strong relationships with their students, Uhhuh, who, who want to survey who, and who are serving their students about, you know, interest and passions and that they desperately want to build up that intrinsic motivation. Right. So what I'm hearing you say is that, um, for all of the as great practices that teachers are doing, um, if they overlay on top of that, this idea, uh, a behaviorist, uh, view. Yep. Even if it's just a little bit, even if it's just a portion of how, how they approach teaching that it could counteract or have a negative effect on what they're already doing. That is good.

Aflie Kohn (26:56):
Yes. I'm afraid. That's exactly right. So they don't do it, um, to be nasty. Uh, they don't do it because they're stupid. They do it because they've been marinated in behaviorism in, in our educational system, which manifests itself in various ways, not only with garbage, like PBIS and class dojo and red, yellow, green tags, and other ways of treating kids like pets, but also with standardized testing, with scope and sequence top down curriculum that breaks everything down into little bits and then offers, you know, reinforcement at each stage, um, like most versions of classroom management and all of this leads you to, to, to do this stuff and assume that it's either necessary or innocuous or even helpful. So teachers with the best of intentions are pulled into becoming Arians, but the reality is every time you do anything like PBIS any point system stickers, gold stars grade when rubrics extra privileges and so on, uh, um, you know, money, any, any kind of treat that's offered as, as an extremes, inducement makes your job a little bit harder in the long run, because that much more of kids' intrinsic motivation has evaporated.

Aflie Kohn (28:24):
And so, because this is really distressing to hear if you've been, you know, been socialized as an educator to do this stuff, to, to say good job a lot, you know, good job. Good job. Good. Yeah. I call it, uh, well, nevermind it's but something we do in a, in a sort of knee jerk fashion, and a little bit of harm is done every time we give that patronizing pat on the head because it's an extrinsic inducement. So we tell ourselves, well, I don't wanna do it forever. So we'll just give the kid a, a jump start. You know, we'll, we'll offer an extrinsic inducement at the beginning and then we'll fade it out as the intrinsic interest kicks in and takes over. Unfortunately, the research overwhelmingly demonstrates that this is a fools errand. That by virtue of offering the, the sticker, the star, the praise, the grade, you have set your goal back. Now there's more or damage to be overcome.

Aflie Kohn (29:28):
Now it becomes a little harder to restore, to revive, to resuscitate the intrinsic interest in helping, in reading, in doing whatever. And all of this is even tougher for teachers in the field of, of special education, where as the late Herb Lovett, whose books I highly recommend on this topic once put it the only two problems with special education and America is it's not special. And it sure as hell isn't education. We find we ourselves in a position where we think, you know, with kids who don't have special initials following their name, you know, neurotypical kids or whatever, we wouldn't treat them this way. But with those kids, you know, you gotta treat 'em like pets. And of course the research shows you're doing more damage as kids with special needs and challenges start out with the same curiosity about the world, the same connection to other people, but now it's much, much harder for them because of the sticker, the point systems, the praise and all of that, which has systematically undermined the desire to do the very things we want them to do.

Tim Villegas (30:51):
And finally, I wanted to share my interview with Cheryl Jorgensen, author of many books on the topic of inclusive education. This clip is from 2014 and it is important to me because it shows my growth in an area that I'm rather ashamed it took me so long to realize: the parallel between the civil rights and disability rights movement and how they are inseparable.

Tim Villegas (31:16):
What often gets tied together. When we talk about a advocacy for people with disabilities is, um, uh, kind of the parallels between the civil rights movement and the disability rights movement. Um, and so a lot of what, you know, uh, the people that I know that are in the disability rights movement, you know, um, use that, use that kind of language a lot. um, you know, I mean, we use segregation, right? I mean, that, that, that is a civil rights term.

Tim Villegas (31:48):
Um, but there are, you know, do you see, do you see them as the same thing, or do you see them differently? The reason why I'm asking is, um, I've always seen it, I guess, in principle, the same thing, because you have, you know, people with disabilities and, uh, people, you know, of different races being discriminated against simply because they have, you know, those

characteristics mm-hmm <affirmative>, um, but you know, a, a, uh, you know, a Mexican, you know, which I am Mexican American, um, you know, or a person with brown skin uh, being discriminated against, um, and a person with an intellectual disability being discriminated against, um, or at least not being, you know, um, allowed, you know, quote unquote to be in a general education room, they are inherently different because that person with, you know, brown skin, um, let's say if they're, if they're a typically developing person is no different than anybody else in that classroom, but a person with an intellectual disability is inherently different. Not less, of course, but different. And so what, what do you think about that in that conversation are, you know, um, and, and kind of comparing of the idea of disability rights and civil rights. Does that make sense?

Cheryl Jorgensen (33:22):
Yes. I think they're the same. I think the differences that you pointed out that it's sort of a different situation discrimination against a person with brown skin is a slightly different situation than a, than discrimination against a person with an intellectual disability. Is a matter of degree because I hate to say this, Tim, but if we surveyed everybody in the United States and said among the racial groups, how would you rank them in terms of intelligence?

Tim Villegas (33:53):
Yeah.

Cheryl Jorgensen (33:53):
I don't do, I don't need to, I don't need to finish that.

Tim Villegas (33:56):
No, you don't.

Cheryl Jorgensen (33:57):
No people it's, it's in the, you know, it's become more unpopular to, to admit that, right. And to say that, but you will still hear people who work in urban school districts say just about kids of color. They just can't learn as much as those white kids. So I think they're some of the same prejudices about competence, inability going on. Um, there are truly similarities in terms of prejudice against groups that historically haven't had much power. And, you know, white people have controlled people of color and, um, intellectually non labeled people has controlled the lives of people with disabilities, including children with disabilities and have, you know, have purported to say my professional opinion is that this is what your life should look like, you know? Yeah. And, and so I see them as very similar and as, as you know, I mean, we're still struggling with race in this country and we're still out there after 150 years. Right. Um, and only 60 years with brown versus the board of education. Correct. So when I say, I wish we were further than we are with inclusive education, I, I, I sort of say the same really trenched societal institutions that are perpetuating racism are, are, um, the societal institutions that perpetuate discrimination against children and adults with disabilities are just as ingrained.

Tim Villegas (35:37):

Yes. I can see that. I can see that be because it is really well, it's a false assumption. It is, you know, that, you know, given who, whatever characteristic that, that this person is more intelligent than the other. I mean, um, I remember going in my teacher training, um, learning about, uh, and I may be completely citing this wrong, so correct me if I'm wrong. Uh, but the, the idea that on IQ scores on IQ test that, that, um, you know, black people, you know, scored, you know, um, lower than white people. Right. And so that would, is used, you know, for so many years as like, well, they're, you know, they're not as intelligent as white people, you know. I mean, I've got scientific data here, you know, um, until we start to realize that, okay, those tests are, you know, biased because they were made by.

Cheryl Jorgensen (36:34):
I agree. I agree. Uh, you know, if you, have you ever read the book, the Mismeasure of man?

Tim Villegas (36:41):
Uh, I can't say that I have, who is it by?

Cheryl Jorgensen (36:44):
So that's your assignment, it's called the Mismeasure of man. And it's written by, um, a recent or a deceased Harvard professor named Steven Gould, G O U L D. And he actually goes back to the early development of IQ testing in the late 18 hundreds, early 19 hundreds, and shows how those tests, which are supposed to be, you know, scientifically based, not culturally biased were from the very get, go based on some preexisting or apriori assumptions about how different intellectual or different, um, racial groups would perform. And that the people who did some of those like tests on a hundred, you know, African American soldiers compared to a hundred white soldiers to see what their IQ was like, they fudged the data to support their already the conclusion that they'd already drawn. So IQ testing, I just think is worthless.

Tim Villegas (37:54):
So I have a question for you. Yeah, I am. I, and I don't think you know this, but I am a self-contained teacher.

Cheryl Jorgensen (38:03):
Oh, I didn't know that. OK. Nice talking to you, Tim.

Tim Villegas (38:04):
Yes. And it's surprising to most people cause Yeah, I know. Right, exactly. Exactly. Um, I, and I have been a self-contained teacher for 10 years and, uh, when I got into the fee, when I got into working in, uh, in schools and my te my training was so far different than what I experienced in schools. Yeah. And the, the, you know, the job I got was a, you know, a self contained teacher for students with autism, um, and now I'm in Georgia in the same, in the same sort of situation. Um, but, uh, but now I I've kind of come out of the closet and and, um, now I just want, I can't shut up about it. And I know people are probably tired of me hearing, you know, tired, especially at my school but, um, you know, I, I often have this kind of cognitive distance every

time I, I go to work mm-hmm <affirmative> um, so, and I I've, I've, I've asked, uh, I've asked a few different, you know, of my, the people I interview about this.

Tim Villegas (39:12):
Um, so should I quit my job as a self-contained teacher at my school and moved to another school or district, you know, because of my beliefs for inclusion or should I stay in my job and try and influence the system within, because here's only so much I can control, you know, I can't control who my principal is. I can't control who my superintendent is or my supervisors, but I can control what goes on in my classroom so what would your advice be? You know, because I'm not the only one. Oh, gosh, no. Yeah. There's plenty of people who think and feel the same way. And they're in the same situation.

Cheryl Jorgensen (40:02):
I think, I think I would need to know more about you and, and to know sort of like at the end of the day, at the end of the year, what do you feel like you need to have done in order to feel like you've made the difference you want to make Now, some people would say, if I feel like I change five little moments in my students lives to give them five little slices of joy during their day, you know, then I will feel as if I have made enough of a difference in their life that I've held true to my own beliefs. And that I think I've that that change has made enough of a difference in their life. Another question I would ask you, or any other teacher who's sort of pondering this dilemma is, um, what are the chances and have you tried to really develop a core group of allies in your school community so that you are not alone because you'll never do it alone all, I mean, and probably even convincing one, even if the other one other person you convinces the principal, that person has to convince a whole bunch of other people. Right. So I don't know what kind of effort and resources you've sort of brought there to try to systematically get a group of allies and that could, and how long can you work on that? Yeah. Yeah. And not throw the towel in.

Tim Villegas (41:42):
I don't really have an answer for the people who are in my position, uh, except just to keep going, keep believing, keep talking, you know, that's part of the reasons why I started this, this website was because, yeah, because I couldn't find anything out there that would support me, you know? Wow. Yeah. Um, I couldn't, I could not find any resources or any, any teacher that was trying to do the same thing I was oh, wow. And have some sort of, you know, encouragement or, you know, saying, Hey, I'm not the only one, you know. And so I that's what I'm, that's what I hope that think inclusive does that the, that these podcasts do is that, uh, the people and the teachers and the parents who listen, can say, okay, I'm not the only one I can do this. You know, I can create a professional learning network, work on Twitter on Facebook. I can have that support. And even if I don't, you know, get where I want to I have a roadmap, you know.

Cheryl Jorgensen (42:44):
You know, it, it, oh, I just want to sort of scream when I hear that when you were teaching, you couldn't find those resources. Cause they've been around since 1985, but those of us putting

them out there, haven't done a great job of it. I guess, you know, like if, if you being sort of the assertive and smart and creative person, you were couldn't find those resources. What a terrible job, those of us in the inclusive field have done I'm serious. And that's a problem. We, we have not learned how to take, you know, these little islands of ex inclusive excellence and, and spread them. And that's what, that's another thing the swift project is trying to do. It's not that we've not known how to do it. It's that we've not known how to spread it on a large scale and sustain it. Right? So swift is as much interested in those questions as it is on what kind of assistant technology will help this kid read better. You know,

Tim Villegas (43:45):
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