

Unpacking Educational Equity: Special Education & Valued Social Roles at School

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Leslie K. Lipson, JD

Lipson Advocacy: Educational, Legal and Strategy Specialist

Lipson.advocacy@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/LipsonAdvocacy/>

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Definition of a Social Role:

A social role may be defined as a socially expected pattern of behaviors, responsibilities, expectations, and privileges.

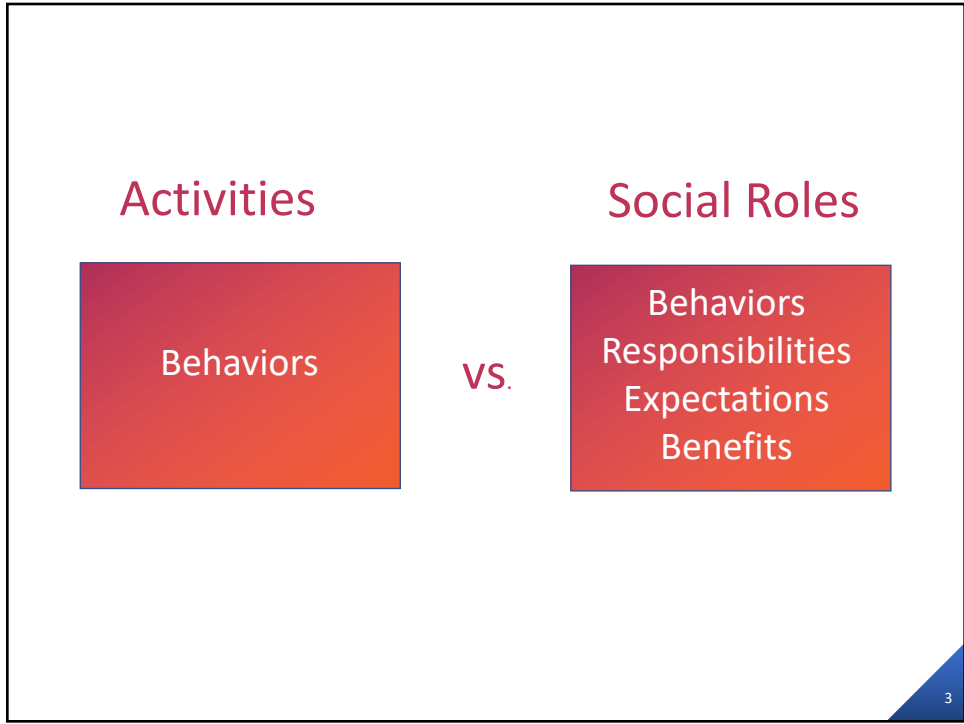
- *Talcott Parsons*

"...identify the different ways that people *relate* to one another, *belong* to one another, *count on* one another, and are *responsible* to each other."

- *John O'Brien*

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My Valued Social Roles:


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Our Society Today Places High Value on...




- Wealth, material goods
- Health, beauty of body
- Youth, newness
- Competence, independence, intelligence
- Productivity, achievement
- Adult individualism, unrestrained choice
- Pleasure and happiness as a way of life




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Our Society Today Places High Value on...



- Poverty, lack of goods
- Sickness, not beautiful bodies
- Old, things that are old
- Being dependent, incompetent
- Being unproductive, wasteful
- Lack of choices
- Life has pain, hardships, trial



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Impact \neq Intent

What NOT Why

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A Person Becomes Devalued:

- By being different from others...
- In one or more dimensions...
- Which are perceived as significant by a majority or ruling segment of society...
- Who value this difference negatively

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Common wounding life experiences for students with disabilities:

- Becoming known as one's impairment
- Profound Rejection
- Being Segregated and Congregated
- Lifewasting

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Profound REJECTION:

- By School Staff
- By Families
- By the Community

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Wounding Life Experience of Segregation:

The US Supreme Court has said segregation of people with disabilities violates their civil rights and causes harm by:

1. "Perpetuating **unwarranted assumptions** that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life"
2. "**Severely diminishing the everyday life activities of individuals,**" including participating in school, working, being part of a family and developing social contacts

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Wounding Life Experience of Segregation:

Research on effects of segregation and isolation:

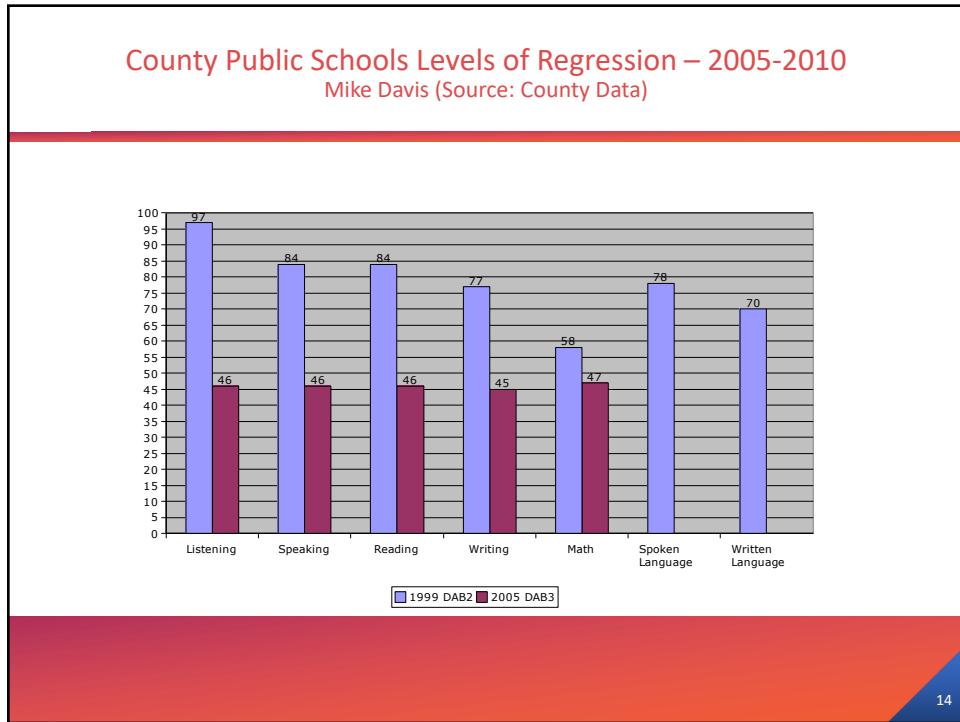
- Makes people feel angry, resentful, frustrated, hurt, different, inferior, worthless, unwanted, unaccepted, and ashamed
- Excluded students are relegated to a devalued social status and taught dependence, compliance, and subordination

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Time	Segregated Classroom/ Ms. Smith	Time	General Classroom/ Ms. Jones
7:25 – 7:50	Morning Routines		
7:50 – 8:25	Breakfast/Social Skills	8:00 – 8:55	Language Arts/Circle Time
8:25 – 8:30	Transition/Restroom		
8:30 – 8:50	Morning Routines		
8:55 – 9:50	Specials	8:55 – 9:50	Specials †
9:50 – 10:00	Bathroom/Snack	9:50 – 10:00	Restroom Break
10:00 – 10:25	Reading	10:00 – 11:00	Math †
10:25 – 10:50	IEP Box		
10:50 – 11:05	Organized movement		
11:05 – 11:25	Interactive read aloud	11:00 – 11:25	Science/Social Studies
11:25 – 11:40	Movement outdoors	11:25 – 11:50	Lunch
11:40 – 12:10	Lunch/Social Skills	11:50 – 12:20	Language Arts
12:10 – 12:30	Computer	12:20 – 12:30	Movement
12:30 – 1:30	Rest/Quiet Time	12:30 – 2:25	Language Arts
1:30 – 1:45	Packing up for dismissal		
1:45 – 2:30	Closing Circle Time		

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Common Negative Roles Students in Special Education Get Cast Into:

- Non-human/"Other," alien
- Menace, evil, or object of dread
- Waste material
- Trivial or object of ridicule/Object of pity
- Client
- Sick/diseased

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"What is the impact of
not being valued?"

How do you measure the
loss of what a human
being does not receive?"

—Patrisse Khan-Cullors

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"Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach... What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing."

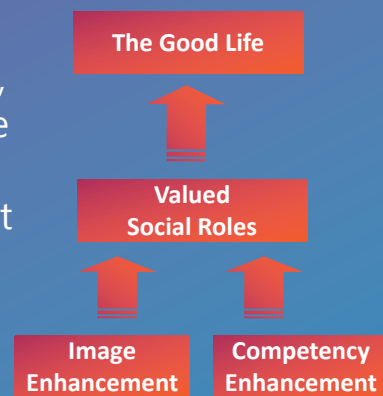
– Clarissa Pinkola Estes

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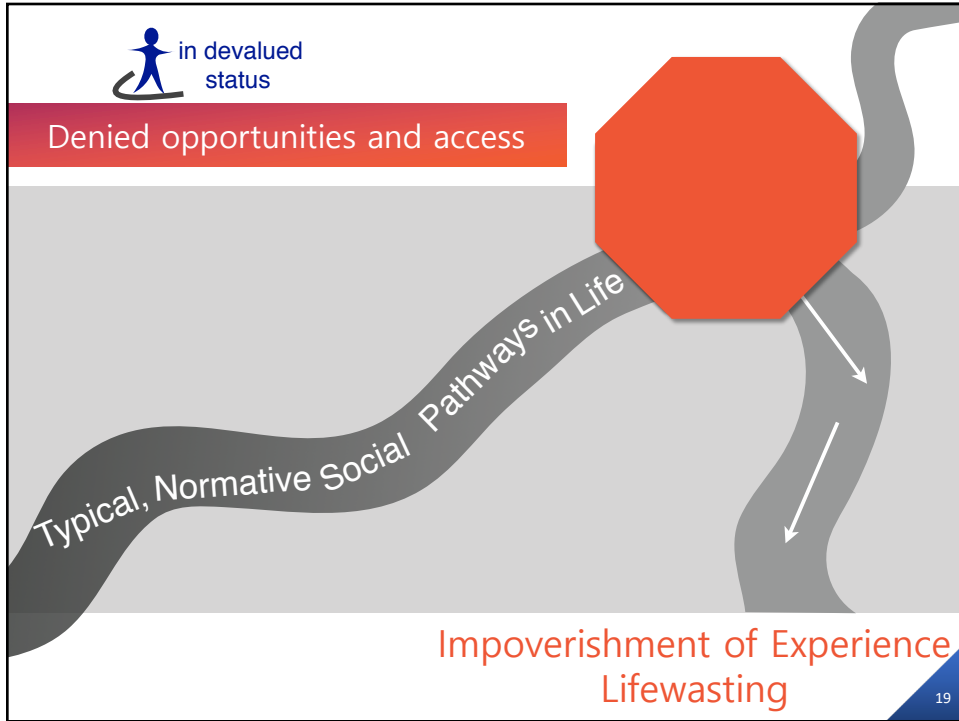
Social Role Valorization (SRV)

The enablement, establishment, enhancement, maintenance, and/or defense of valued social roles for people – particularly those at value-risk by using, as much as possible, culturally valued means.

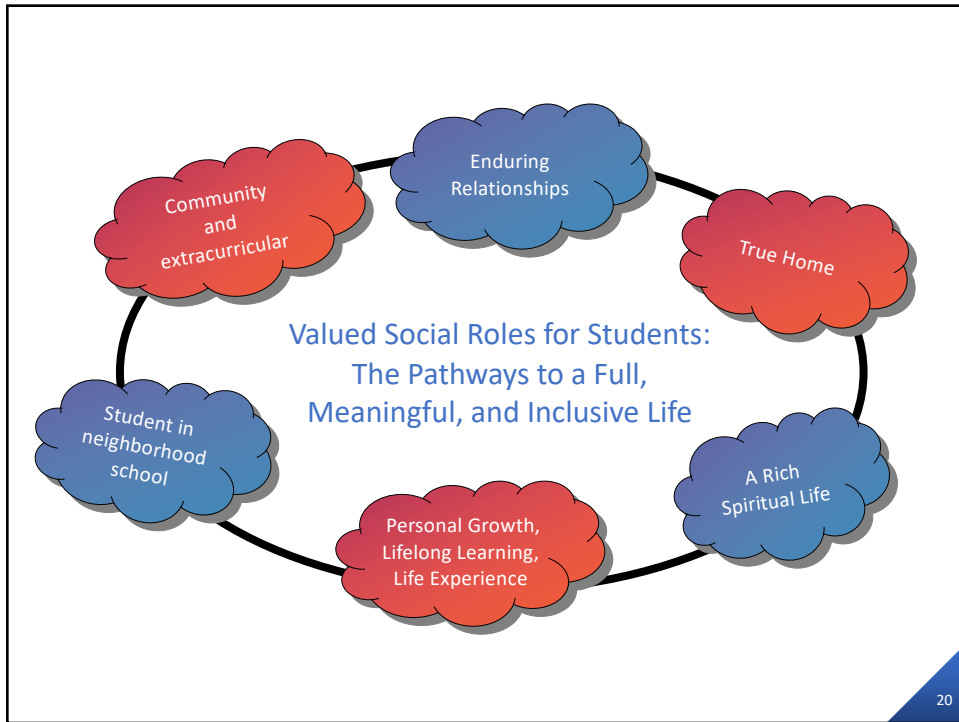


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Assumptions that are Helpful in Advocacy:

- All students have meaningful gifts and contributions.
- Every student is an important and valuable member of the school community.
- Ordinary citizens are the most powerful advocates.
- Valued Social Roles are the best mechanism for social integration.

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Assumptions that are Helpful in Advocacy:

The **local school** is the place where all students...

- will be safe.
- will have the opportunity for a full, rich, meaningful school experience, where they are truly members.
- More services do not equate to a better education or a higher quality of life.
- Enhancing the competency of both advocates and students lessens the likelihood of devaluation.

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Advocacy is for **counteracting** and trying to prevent more wounding experiences that occur as a result of devaluation of people with disabilities. Our job as advocates is to bring people into the **center of community** where they can experience a full life with **valued social roles**.

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Bringing the Good Life to Life  Community Resource Unit Ltd.
Expanding Ideas: Creating Change

<http://thegoodlife.cru.org.au/>

Our idea was to create a website that explored what makes a Good Life and some of the things that can be done to create and sustain this for a person with disability. We have gathered some great content that already exists on this topic and created some new resources that highlight key ideas and share the wisdom of others. By following the links you can see where the resources have come from and continue your own research.

Choosing What Matters
Heather Simmons
PDF available online

Supporting Social Roles
John O'Brien
PDF available online

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Contact information:

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