One For All and All For … Some

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Introduction

The motto of Alexandre Dumas's classic novel *The Three Musketeers* is "One for all and all for one" (Dumas, 2006), which highlights the importance of being loyal. For the musketeers, it is the importance of their loyalty to each other, but this saying has often been interpreted as one's loyalty to all mankind. The reason I chose my title "one for all and all for … some" is to draw attention to the way society excludes many people from what it states all people should deserve. Many times we try to justify things as being for the "greater good," but greater does not pertain to all. Many times it only applies to those who are socially valued. People who are viewed as less competent, for example, are often cast aside into institutions or other segregated settings. Society tries to justify sticking to a "greater good" mentality by making exceptions, blindly trying to accommodate everyone the best they can. This may reflect an unconscious attempt by those in societally valued groups to try to keep their consciences clear, by creating institutions for negative outliers of society and making separate places for people outside the norm. For those who cannot live on their own, we create institutions. Stereotyping these people as incompetent and grouping them comes easy to us. It is human nature to unconsciously judge and group others.

For the good of society, we make public schools free to all students, regardless of societal status. This makes things good for all … that is, until we look deeper into school services. Again we can find in public schools the concept of "greater good," which can mean that some individuals get excluded. This pattern continues on and on within many service models. If needs are not addressed, things will not go smoothly and soon "greater good" looks like a pathetic excuse to ignore other important needs of individuals. Those needs that are neglected may be the

ones most important for individual growth and development; needs that all humans deserve to have met.

Model Coherency

WHEN A MODEL OF SERVICE works incorrectly it "could unnecessarily create new problems; in a worst case scenario, the recipient would suffer more harm than good, or even death" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 117). That is why it is so important that services should strive towards the best, most coherent model in order to satisfy the needs of recipients. The model must make sense and prevent wounds, which refers to the emotional scarring and other negative treatments which commonly occur when members of a society are devalued or looked at as subhuman, one of the common historical role perceptions. This issue is addressed within Social Role Valorization, a term developed by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger. Wolfensberger (1934-2011) lived through the terrors of the Holocaust growing up in Germany (Bersani, 2001). He moved away from home for much of the war, but the dehumanization of the different types of people must have affected him greatly. At age sixteen, he came to the United States and later became a citizen. As one of the first students to ever graduate with a psychology degree focused in mental retardation, Wolfensberger used this knowledge to change society's view of devalued people within humanity with his writings (Bersani, 2001).

'Model coherency' is a term coined by Wolf Wolfensberger to measure human service models and make sure they are coherent, meaning they do what they are meant to do. According to Wolfensberger, the most ideal social service "would be derived from the real, primary, and urgent needs of the people being served, and all of its process components would match harmoniously with each other and the content to facilitate effective address of those needs" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 116).

Models are examined for coherency, based on assumptions and a triangular continuum of 'who,' 'how' (the process), and 'what' (content). 'Who' describes the service recipients, asking if those being served are getting all the services they need, and if they require the service. 'How' is based on the process. It examines how those being served are grouped, who works for the service, whether those employed use the correct language and methods, if the setting is isolated (since that can cause others to believe segregating them is better), etc. 'What' is based on content (Cocks, 2001, 15). For a model to be coherent, it must make sense to members of a culture. A model would not be coherent, for example, if others in the culture were asked if they would live that way and they refused (Wolfensberger, 1998, 117).

Apparent Responses to Wounding Experiences

AS SEEN IN Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs,' one must have many components satisfied before focusing on something beyond physical needs. Maslow's hierarchy has five steps (Darity, 2008, 11). The first is the base of the pyramid, since one needs to fill these needs before moving up the pyramid. This stage contains physiological needs, which are all the basic needs such as for shelter and food. Some services tend to cover this stage fairly well. The next step of the pyramid, after those needs are met, is the need of safety. If one does not feel safe and secure, one will not be able to focus on the next need, which is for love. (Love and the following needs may not be addressed as often in human services, perhaps since the other needs can seem more urgent.) One need in this 'love' category is for belonging. Many people are wounded because they feel left out, yet numerous services may not focus on this step of Maslow's hierarchy. The next step after love is esteem. Lastly, when all of the steps are achieved, one can strive for self-actualization. Not many people have achieved this goal, and many with disabilities within services have even fewer opportunities to work toward this goal (Darity, 2008, 12).

In a service for all Americans, such as public school, many things may need to be adjusted to move toward better quality service. Two examples of this are the location of the school and the amount of money the school receives.

At a public city school which I observed as part of a university course, I realized that many children were bundled together in a corner one day because the heat was shut off. Because they could not afford to heat the school that day, a lot of the students' learning was hindered, among other problems. This is not good for many reasons, since city school children are already stereotyped as being behind in school; a day when they come to school and do not learn will only amplify that stereotype if viewed by an outsider.

If students are too hot or cold, and thus their physical needs are not being met, they may not be able to focus on anything besides meeting those physical needs, and thus may not be able to learn effectively. As pointed out by Wolfensberger, "there is no point in addressing certain needs or problems if more fundamental needs or problems are not addressed first (e.g., for shelter, security, sufficient nourishment)" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 111). This is just one of the many examples of things that could be fixed within a human service.

Based on Wolfensberger's statement above, pertaining to the nourishment aspect, we must make sure students are getting healthy foods to eat. The food served at the public school which I observed was mostly just warmed-up canned goods, which are low in nutritional value. Students thus did not get the energy they needed for their day. If they had energy and felt healthier, they would be more up for activities and learning. What students had to eat everyday was essentially "institution food," words which my local grocery store had labeled over the canned good items. Everything was made in bulk with a luke-warm feel, nothing especially made for any one student. It was for the whole group, which deindividualized these students even more, especially when giving them only two options to choose from. Maybe if they had some fresh fruit or veggies more often, it would help them focus and be happier, healthier students.

Since the students get free lunch and breakfast at school, this topic is relevant to all of them. The students also could not leave the school to get something else to eat. The budget from the government only funded so much, but I think that they should have been allowed more. Because it is good to be healthy, spending money on better food will save the government money down the road. If I were to try to fix this school, I would also give more options with healthier choices for meals.

Drawing on the SRV concept of relevancy, another problem within this public school that I saw was that of competency-related needs. Many students were trying so hard to be seen as competent in so many areas, especially the English language learners. I believe it would be beneficial and relevant for teachers to incorporate more Spanish into their lessons. Not only would it help those students become more competent in English, but it would help the students fluent in English become better at Spanish too.

I also think that if the teachers allowed the students to go to the bathrooms by themselves without an adult, it would spark a feeling of trust with the students and a feeling of competency when they come back, able to walk the hallway and return alone.

For the SRV concept of potency, Wolfensberger states that, "whatever processes are employed should be the most effective and efficient means for addressing a party's needs, so that one makes the best use of the time of the recipients, rather than addressing the need in a fashion which is not particularly pointed or effective, or outright wasting of their time" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 144).

One of the needs I saw in the school that was not addressed often was students' need to be loved. The children needed to be loved and given attention. Since I learned that these children often did not get this at home, they so often acted out in class. This wastes everyone's time. All children should be praised often, even for small progress. Children

like to know that they are improving and that someone cares. For this I feel it would be good, for example, for the teacher to work out lunch dates for each student to spend time with her during the week. Then the teacher could have a conference with them, get to know them, and give that child some meaningful attention for once. This would make students feel loved and wanted.

Another thing that might be helpful would be field trips that allow children to practice their newly learned competencies, such as a field trip to the bank to help them learn the importance of money. The students together can save spare change for something they can all enjoy, like a bean bag chair for the reading center, or glow in the dark stars for the ceiling. This way the children see the importance of learning about money.

Defined by Wolfensberger, model coherency is described as, "the right servers should be using the right materials, methods, and language, in the right settings, in order to do the right thing for the right recipients, who are grouped in the right way" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 116). The setting I observed had a few of these things, but not many.

When a person is stereotypically grouped with other people in a 'special' group, it can take away their identity and make them forget what they know; it also does not focus on their needs. In a child's school life, the general education classroom is their main place, their 'home,' at least for their time while in school. Taking children away from general education into special education pulls them from where they want to be and encourages other students to lump them into a 'stupid' category.

Making classrooms 'inclusive' will help all children, more than one could even imagine. It can help make all students be seen as valued among their peers, since they are all part of the group, and allows many opportunities for not only learning about school subjects, but learning about people. By breaking down the barriers and mysteries of those who are different than the norm, inclusive classrooms allow students to get to know those children, rather than taking them out for special needs instruction.

Trying to rate the program I observed in the public school on their model coherency was a difficult challenge for me. I feel the students would benefit from using more English/Spanish mixed books and lessons, as I stated earlier. This would help students feel included. I also feel students are not grouped appropriately by age level. Just because a student is in second grade does not mean they are developing the same as any other eight-year old. If we broke down grades based on ability, we might be able to teach all students better. If the school was a bit cleaner, with a steadier temperature, it would be a better environment for fostering learning. Teachers should also all have relevant training in how to better understand their students and how to make the entire general education classroom more suited for all students.

Conclusion

KNOWING THAT PEOPLE of all ages, races and abilities levels can be devalued by other groups of people has enlightened me and brought to light so many issues I had never truly thought about. To teach a child with disabilities in an inclusive classroom goes beyond just teaching a subject. It becomes about teaching all students, and about helping them to accept and create new values they can project on to society. This diminishes the idea of a "greater good" that unconsciously highlights only those valued individuals within a society, and instead accepts all individuals as humans who should have their needs met. As a future teacher, I have better realized: the importance of teaching acceptance, the value of all human beings, and the importance of emphasizing the rights that all people deserve. Everyone should be required to step back and look at the big picture and see all humans as valued. While all people and institutions are not perfect, it does not mean we should not strive for excellence. We should try to use more relevant and potent

strategies. It means we should also learn to see the faults that are shadowed in our own unconscious thoughts and actions, and try to counteract them with love and acceptance. ✌

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