

Savant Syndrome; Benefits of Mainstream and Alternative Education

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Circuses, reality TV shows, and movies; the entertainment industry captivates the American viewer with characters with disabilities and abnormal characteristics. The different spectacles often enhance and over-emphasize the characteristics of individuals with disabilities. American society's interest in abnormal abilities isolates and labels individuals with abnormalities and disabilities as outcast. However, individuals with disabilities consist of a large percentage of American society whom possess the same desires to succeed, feel loved and add value to the world. Categorizing an individual as abnormal compared to peers influences his or her self-esteem, confidence and motivation to engage in society. The behaviors and abilities declared abnormal based on American society's standards are unique characteristics with the potential to benefit and add value to society. Individuals who possess specific, obsessive skills are often diagnosed with savant syndrome (SS); a primary and secondary developmental disorder. A variety of educational resources for individuals with SS influences successful integration into society post-secondary education. Individualized education based on specific characteristics an individual with SS possesses influences successful integration in society.

Savant syndrome, sometimes referred to as savantism, is a rare condition in which individuals with or without developmental disorders have one or more areas of expertise, ability, or brilliance that are in contrast with the individual's overall limitations (Straus, 2014). The specific ability an individual with savant syndrome possess is his or her savant skill. Typical savant skills include extraordinary musical and creative talents, mathematical skills. Diverse educational opportunities and environments help develop social, vocational, and academic skills vital for successful integration in society among individuals with SS.

### **Educational Options for Individuals with Disabilities**

Individuals with savant syndrome have the opportunity to attend public schools or private outplacement facilities based on specific needs and abilities. Mainstream education, also known as mainstreaming in the context of education, is the practice of placing students with special needs into classrooms with peers who have no disabilities (Hadar, et.al, 2018). In public schools, the children are provided with education services such as the individualized education program (IEP) (Hadar, et.al, 2018). A student with a disability that hinders academic success remains in the general education classroom during specific time periods based on academic abilities. During specific topics, the child with a disability may study in a resource room or “self-contained classroom.” In the contained environment, the student has access to more one-on-one time with special education teachers and aides (Hadar, et.al, 2018). For instance, if an individual has heightened mathematic skills compared to peers, he would learn advanced math skills in the resource room. On the other hand, an individual with delayed reading skills compared to peers may leave the general classroom during reading group to enhance his underdeveloped abilities. However, if his reading skills are similar to peers, he remains in the general classroom. Remaining in the general classroom may also enhance social skills which are vital to acquire in school settings for success among peers in society. On the other hand, an individual who seeks private school education after experiencing mainstream education is called a unilateral placement. The placement occurs when a child is placed by a parent in a private educational program and the parent seeks school district reimbursement by claiming the public-school district did not provide or offer the student with a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) (Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton & Taylor Ltd., 2017). Often times, the public-school system provides the funds for a student to attend a private school because the mainstream education did not provide enough resources for the child’s specific needs. Over the past few

years, educators and families have argued outplacing students with different disabilities is a wasting the valued public education taxpayers provide. In contrast, other individuals argue the value of mainstream education does not enhance or support all of the student's skills and needs and requires unilateral placement. Although educators and families will argue one form of education is more beneficial to form academic, social or vocational skills, each individual with SS possesses unique symptoms, therefore should be treated on an individual basis. Individuals with SS benefit from either mainstream or alternative private education based on diverse academic and social skills each individual possesses and the different resources the two educational environments provide. The paper will argue individuals with SS possess the right to attend mainstreamed public school or a private outplacement facility because each student in the U.S. has the right of a beneficial education experience.

### **Savant Syndrome Characteristics**

Savant syndrome (SS) is a secondary or primary disability in which individuals display extraordinary capacities or abilities. Because SS is categorized as a disability, students with savant skills obtain services based on an IEP in school to maintain or enhance specific abilities and needs. Savant abilities may be exhibited in the skill areas such as memory, art, music, calendar and mathematical calculations, computer abilities, and athletic performance (Australia, 2014). A specific skill individuals with savant syndrome may possess is hyperlexia which is the exceptional ability to read, spell and write (Australia, 2014). In addition, individuals with savant syndrome may display advanced mechanical or spatial skills in which an individual measures distances and constructs models precisely without benefit of instruments or directions (Daraold, 2009). In addition to advanced abilities, individuals with savant syndrome possess prodigious language, and unusual sensory discrimination, specifically synesthesia (Daraold, 2009). When an

individual is diagnosed with savant syndrome, he or she is placed into a specific category of savant syndrome. The most common form of savant syndrome is splinter skills which are “obsessive preoccupation with, and memorization of, music, music license plate numbers, maps, historical facts or obscure items.” (Daraold, 2009). Savant skills do not fade or disappear; rather a pattern of replication to improvisation to creation is often seen (Daraold, 2009). In fact, savant skills occur far more frequently in men than females at a ratio of 6:1 (Australia, 2014). Males specifically display dyslexia which is delayed speech and stuttering. The male predominance is evident in a manifestation of the left hemisphere growth during the prenatal period (Daraold, 2009). Although the cause of the gender and savant syndrome prevalence correlation is unknown, all individuals with savant syndrome develop the disorder through genetics or an acquired incident.

### **Savant Syndrome Prevalence and Incidence**

Most often, savant skills emerge in childhood or are superimposed with an underlying developmental disability such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Acquired savant skills also appear in neurotypical individuals following a brain injury or disease acquired later in childhood or adulthood. Once a healthy fronto-temporal lobe is developed and dormant, the savant skills are triggered, or released, by CNS injury (Haraold, 2009). Numerous case studies in 2014 revealed manifested musical skills in patients with fronto-temporal dementia (Treffert, 2014). In addition, a nine-year-old boy in whom superior mechanical skills appeared after a bullet wound to his left brain (Treffert, 2014). In his case, he was able to dismantle, reassemble and modify multi-gear bicycles and invented a punching bag that could simulate the bobbing and weaving of a live opponent (Straus, 2014). In addition, newfound artistic savant skills occur by turning off

inhibitory signals from the front of the brain. The releasing of the brakes allows the brain to process sight and sound in new ways which unleashes creative sensibilities (Treffert, 2014).

In addition, evidence has shown genetic components of savant syndrome. Individuals with savant syndrome's family members display similar interests, talents, and abilities. Savant skills are often developed in early childhood in the absence of teaching in structured classrooms. (Australia, 2014). Skills such as advanced computer skills require instruction, however individuals have an innate ability to fix computers, indicating a genetic component to savant syndrome. Physiological implications of accidental geniuses result from diminished activity in some brain areas that is combined with a counterbalancing intensification in others (Daraold, 2009). An inner savant may exist in most people if the proper brain circuits are activated or switched off through electrical stimulation technologies or even through focused practice of a particular skill (Daraold, 2009). Many individuals diagnosed with a specific savant syndrome display savant skills in simultaneously with another primary developmental disability.

### **Savant Syndrome and Neuropsychological and Neurodevelopmental Disorders**

Savant Syndrome (SS) occurs simultaneously among individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other cognitive or developmental disorders which is an additional disability considered in the IEP. Autistic savants are children and adults who have ASD and display remarkable abilities or skills in one or several domains (Australia, 2014) as well as social and behavioral difficulties. Thirty percent of individuals with ASD have savant syndrome through an outstanding skill either in terms of peak performance on intelligence subtests or parent-rated savant skills (Australia, 2014). Only 50% of individuals with savant syndrome have ASD, and the other half have another, disease or developmental disability, mental retardation, brain injury, or disease (Daraold, 2009). Individuals with SS also display similar characteristics as the

cognitive disorder Schizophrenia such as hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech and behavior which indicates savant abilities and synesthesia (Bouvet, L. et.al, 2017). In one case study, the individual's savant abilities were in astrophysics and colored-hearing synesthesia (Bouvet, L. et.al, 2017). Individuals are diagnosed with severe autism and developmental delays based on speech development, abnormal behavior, hyperactivity, destructiveness and poor concentration (Australia, 2014). Autistic savants are more likely to persevere and pursue the specific savant skill systematically and intensively based on specific ASD social and behavioral characteristics (Straus, 2014). Many individuals assume all individuals with savant syndrome are autistic, however savant syndrome is a unique disability that occurs primarily or secondarily with other disorders.

### **SS Academic Integration**

Based on autistic and savant skill, individuals with SS display multiple skills which enhance and hinder academic success in educational settings. Specific savant skills each individual possesses impacts the individual's ability to integrate into school settings successfully. Typical savant abilities include advanced memory, hyperlexia, calendar calculations, mathematic calculations, and abilities in computer software and music (Australia, 2014). In one case study, a student with SS could accurately calculate five and six-digit equations mentally in few seconds faster than the teacher or calculator (Australia, 2014). The advanced math ability would indicate the student is pulled out of the general classroom during math lessons for further enrichment. Overall, SS students possess the "ability and potential to learn" more about the specific skill he or she shows advanced skills, however may display weak abilities in areas savant skills are not evident. (Australia, 2014). Savant skills are always linked to a massive memory capacity which is crucial when obtaining and applying new information in school. Specifically, savant memory

is very deep, but exceedingly narrow within the confines of the accompanying special skill (Daraold, 2009). For instance, an individual with SS memorized over 600 encyclopedias and became an expert in geography, music, literature, history, sports, and nine other areas of expertise (Daraold, 2009) As a result, if a student remembers a lot of information about a savant skill, for instance history, he does have equivalent knowledge regarding math because the brain's memory capacity focuses on history. Over time, SS students develop a lexicon of well-organized, structurally rule- based knowledge (Australia, 2014). The rule-based knowledge is productive in academic settings, that requires discipline while studying and completing assignments. By individualizing education based on specific advanced and underdeveloped academic skills, an individual with SS develops a greater knowledge about a wide variety of material. Another skill that advances academic success among savant students is an ability read rapidly (Daraold, 2009). As students advance throughout high school, he or she will read longer, detailed literature and the savant skill will enhance his or her quality of work. Autistic savants, in particular, develop a tendency to be rigid, inflexible and context bound resulting in difficulty applying skills to new circumstances (Daraold, 2009). As a result, individuals with SS display refusal and difficulty learning new information and may require additional review with a resource teacher in areas savant skills are not present. Individuals with prodigious savant syndrome also succeed in school because of limitless mnemonic skills and eidetic or photographic memories (DuChare, 2018). An individual with SS possess unique skills that are advanced or underdeveloped which impacts his or her overall academic experience and success.

### **SS Social Integration**

While in school, individuals with savant syndrome must engage with his or her peers through social interaction. Social skills often limit an individual with savant syndrome's ability



to learn and obtain information among peers in structured classrooms during lessons. The limitation of learning in social settings is evident because individuals with SS display advanced abilities in concepts not taught in formal, social, educational training (Treffert, 2013). Social instruction and learning is difficult for individuals with cognitive disabilities because abnormal behaviors distracts the individual from retaining new information. Depending on the extend of behaviors influence on academic success, an individual with SS remains in public mainstream education or private alternative education settings. For instance, a case study discusses an individual talking about himself in the third person, pacing and spinning around, flicking his fingers, singing, humming, grunting, and making unusual facial gestures (Straus, 2014). The atypical behaviors discourage an individual from focusing on lessons in structured classrooms. In addition, autistic savants display anxiously excessive desire for the maintenance of sameness (Straus, 2014). An individual with SS will typically follow the same schedule in home and school every day. If a teacher changes the schedule, an SS student may tantrum or display socially inappropriate behavior to express his distress. Unfortunately, individuals with savant syndrome display behaviors that are of extreme risk to his or her overall health and wellbeing in classroom settings. One child in particular, would engage in tantrums, bite himself, or become destructive if not provided with the savant topic or favorite food during a change in his program or environment (Australia, 2014). The obsessive interests my result in life-threatening situations which indicates a need for private alternative education. For instance, individuals with savant syndrome may escape from home or school, run across busy roads, into shops or houses in search for reading material (Australia, 2014).

Because individuals with SS display difficulties with social interactions, individuals with SS have difficulty forming meaningful friendships and relationships in school settings. Most

individuals with SS exhibit socially unacceptable verbal and physical behaviors and do not understand social cues. In response, peers in school or the general public do not engage or privately judge the individual which limits relationships and a support system for individuals with savant syndrome. For example, in a case study one individual greets individuals with exact birth date and informs them of their telephone number (Australia, 2014) instead of saying “Hello.” Some individuals with SS are even nonverbal (Australia, 2014) which limits forming social relationships. In addition to nonverbal communication, extreme autistic savants display aloneness that, whenever possible, disregards, ignores, shuts out anything that comes to the child from the outside (Straus, 2014). The disengaging tendency is unapproachable towards peers, which limits an individual with SS’s ability to form relationships, engage, and mature in his or her environment. In addition, social cues and pragmatics are limited among individuals with SS which limits meaningful conversations. For instance, individuals fail to take turns or make appropriate eye contact in interactions (Australia, 2014). Also, facial expressions, which displays empathy towards peers are not evident (Australia, 2014). Individuals with SS also speak in third person, display rhythmical and automatic movements, and demonstrate lessened responsiveness to all endearments of friends (Haraold, 2009). An inability to show affection and a low frustration tolerance does not attract friends among individuals with SS (Finocchiaro, et al, 2015). While in school, individuals with SS and disabilities experience social isolation based on abnormal social behaviors. As a result, engaging with individuals with similar social disabilities in alternative education settings is beneficial for some students. When most individuals with SS enter elementary school, many have few friends and spent most of his or her time at home. In eighth grade, individuals with SS do not engage in romantic relationships based on normative behaviors. For instance, a researcher observed an individual following around his favorite female

classmate, “ambushing” her as she entered the classroom. (Nakamura, et.al., 1998). Because of a decline in romantic and social relationships, individuals experience depressive symptoms. The overall manner an individual with SS engages in daily actions is affect based on psychological, cognitive and behavioral deformities. A case study explained a student displayed difficulties orienting herself and often became confused by daily life situations (Nakamura, et.al., 1998). If an individual displays extensive social difficulties in mainstream settings that influences academic success, he or she could potentially engage in outplacement educational settings. Although the abnormal behaviors hinder academic success and relationship development, the savant skills in general may not have developed if not for the abnormal behaviors. For example, individuals with savant syndrome display weak central coherence and a predisposition to repetitive behavior patterns (Australia, 2014). The repetitiveness, intense concentration and practice enhances a savant skill which later enhances job opportunities in specific industries. Because individuals with SS are experts in particular fields, he or she may serve as a vital asset to a company with specific needs other employers may not provide.

### **Value of Public Mainstream Education**

American legislation guarantees the education experience in public education is a beneficial experience for individuals with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a four-part piece of American legislation that ensure students with a disability are provided with Free Appropriate Education (FAPE) that is tailored to his or her individual needs (American Psychological Association, 2018). In general, the goal of IDEA is to provide children with disabilities, including SS, the same opportunities for education as students who do not have a disability. In practice, IDEA is composed of six main elements that illuminate its main points. The main ideas are an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Free and

Appropriate Public Education, (FAPE), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Appropriate Evaluation, Appropriate Evaluation, and Procedural Safeguards (American Psychological Association, 2018). The IDEA law requires a less restrictive environment based on abilities and skills for individuals with SS to determine if mainstream education or private education is the most beneficial environment for the student. By implementing the IDEA law, the educational experience is a less restrictive environment for individuals with disabilities. Students can attend public schools or alternative private education to meet his or her specific needs.

### **Mainstream Education Benefits SS**

Mainstream education provides students with a holistic, real-world application which is beneficial for savants who require enrichment in social skills, a few savant skills, and possess intelligence similar to peers without disabilities. As stated in the IDEA act, mainstream education emphasizes “special education and related services designed to meet unique needs and prepare students for future education, employment, and independent living.” (American Psychological Association, 2018). The IDEA act also requires all public schools create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student who is found to be eligible under the federal and state eligibility and disability standards. An IEP meets the unique needs of each child with a disability and is the foundation of a student’s educational program. For instance, the IEP describes services provided, the student’s present levels of performance, how the disabilities effects academic performance, and specific accommodations and modifications required (American Psychological Association, 2018). To determine if an individual qualifies for an IEP, he or she experiences screening tests. During screening testing for individuals with SS, exceptional differences in one ability and a deficit in another ability is determined. An IEP for an individual with SS contains remediation in social skills to compensate for deviations from

baseline in certain processing skills which serve as the savant skill. IEPs also include transition plans for post-high which involve vocational skills, independent living skills (DuChare, 2018) which are vital for success in society. While in high school, vocational and social skills training is beneficial for individuals with savant syndrome skills and behaviors. For instance, a high school individual practiced for an interview at a restaurant position post-graduation. The psychologist at the school pointed out inappropriate responses regarding his attitude, behavior, and inability to speak politely (Nakamura et.al., 1998). He was trained in appropriate responses and basic manners for interviews such as knocking at the door, excusing himself before doing something and standing until the interviewer offered him a chair (Nakamura et.al., 1998). After repeated exercises of the social skills training, he was able to speak in the way the professional wanted him to (Nakamura et.al., 1998). An IEP must ultimately meet unique educational needs of the student in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the needs of the child.

Mainstream education exposes students to real-world experiences and application for success in society after school. A public-school education is a holistic approach to education, addressing academics and social skills. In fact, a specific curriculum for individuals with SS is incorporated in public schools to develop and strengthen savant skills called the “Savant Skill Curriculum.” The curriculum combining strategies currently employed in the education of gifted students through enrichment, acceleration and mentorship and autism education through visual supports and social stories (Australia, 2014). A savant skill curriculum uses a combination of successful strategies currently employed in the education of gifted children and autism education. The goal is to channel and apply the non-functional obsessive behaviors and savant skills among students with SS. (Daraold, 2009). Acceleration involves the promotion of a student to a level of activity beyond what is usual for his or her age (Australia, 2014). For instance, grade

acceleration is the advancement of student to higher grade than peers. In addition, enrichment curriculum provides experiences supplements to, or replacements of regular curriculum (Australia, 2014). Mentorship is another aspect to the curriculum that involves a one to one relationship with a wise experienced person guide younger inexperienced person, long term commitment made by both individuals. Many individuals involved in the curriculum attribute vocational success to the guidance of several mentors (Australia, 2014). The Autism Education aspect of the curriculum focuses on specific ASD strategies. For instance, visual supports for communication and behavior control, social stories, (IEP) which incorporates the application of savant skills with educational strategies, functional programming, and use obsessions (Australia, 2014).

Many parents and society in general believe individuals belong in alternative private education settings because of unique behaviors and abilities compared to peers. However, the mainstream education program results are overall beneficial based on the communication skills gained and focus on controlling savant skills in a beneficial manner. Case studies reveal mainstreaming resulted in gains in behavior, social skills, academic self-esteem, and communication skills (Australia, 2014). The program helps savants make productive use of his or her talents. For instance, an individual with SS may have stated in his or her IEP as special accommodations extra time during the school day to practice math skills or spend time with a mentor in a field of interest. The Savant Curriculum does not eliminate the abnormal heightened, rather re-directs and re-enforces the skill and talent. In the process, the defects in social behaviors subside. In certain case studies the special talent in savants serves as a tool towards normalization, using the unique savant skills to achieve better socialization, language acquisition and independence (Daraold, 2009). Mainstream education does not hinder the individual's

disability, rather works with the current skills to enhance the unique abilities. A student with a disability remains in a general mainstreamed classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services. If, however, an individual with SS displays unsafe behaviors or parents and educators believe the services provided at the school do not benefit the child academically, he or she qualifies for unilateral placement.

### **Private Alternative Education Benefits SS**

If mainstream education cannot support an individual with savant syndrome because he or she displays unsafe physical behaviors, social interactions, or the resources at the school do not enrich the savant skills, unilateral placement is beneficial. Beneficial education is ultimately determined by the range of symptoms and skills associated with each individual spectrum with savant syndrome. individualized. Educators will find the best placement option for the student based on specific needs stated in an IEP for behavioral or academic needs. For some students, he or she is placed in a more restrictive setting but is integrated to the maximum extent appropriate. If a student with a disability such as savant syndrome cannot receive proper services to achieve behavioral or academic success, he or she will qualify for private school outplacement education.

Private alternative education facilities consist of specialized schools, magnet schools and vocational training schools. Some students are residents and live at the school because he or she cannot care for themselves in a safe manner or the support system at home is not beneficial to his or her needs. In outplacement facilities, the education programs focus on enhancing the savant skills in a structured and personalized educational environment. For instance, an individual with SS attended an alternative private school for students with intellectual disabilities. Her calendar calculation skills were advanced by controlling the class calendar, operating the class' weekly shopping list and accounts, and keeping record class' daily roll (Stuart, 2014). The child was

responsible for typing school newsletter which allows the student to feel he or she is valued (Stuart, 2014). In a mainstream setting, students are not provided with as much responsibility because of the lack of one-to-one support.

A specific option for a magnet school is the Oliverian School founded in 2014. The Oliverian School is a college and life-preparatory high school for intellectual disabled individuals, offering academic, counseling, and social-skills support (Oliverian, 2018). Academic support is provided through an advisor system, accommodated learning, and small classes. Students ultimately feel very comfortable and accepted at a school where his or her peers have similar abilities. One student claimed “The Oliverian School is a great place of comfort provided with the amazing support I need to reach my goals.” (Oliverian, 2018). The student also feels connected and “at home” despite her exponentially (Oliverian, 2018). Also, with a nearly 1:1 staff to student ratio, the program customizes support in every area for each student (Oliverian, 2018). The program components focus on college-preparatory academics, counseling, and student life balanced with freedom and support for students to learn experientially, from success and mistakes. The school’s motto is love can accelerate learning and personal growth (Oliverian, 2018). In mainstream education, faculty and educators main goal is not to serve the needs and wellbeing of individuals with special needs and disparities. Unfortunately, mainstream education may not provide as much love and acknowledgement from teachers because of the large number of students he or she must maintain. As a result, individuals with unsafe behaviors and advanced skills would receive a more beneficial academic experience in a private alternative education setting.

NECC is another private outplacement facility for autistic students ages five to twenty-five in Massachusetts. The facility emphasizes independence, skill development, and safety (The



New England Center for Children, 2018). The NECC services including academic, speech and language therapy, social and life skills development, vocational training, and outreach services (The New England Center for Children, 2018). Each service is carefully developed to deliver superior care and heightened learning opportunities for each child (The New England Center for Children, 2018). What is unique about the facility is students can live at the facility. When in their residences, students are focused on independent living skills, leisure interests, recreation and community activities, as well as practicing those skills learned at school (The New England Center for Children, 2018). Teachers also further emphasize consistency and safety across academic and social environments (The New England Center for Children, 2018) which ultimately contributes to the success of each student. Autistic savants have the opportunity to attend NECC. Specifically, students who exhibit unsafe behaviors at home or school, display a need for advanced therapy, and health services would benefit the most from the environment.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, all children deserve the same education, focused on his or her unique skills and needs. No student with SS is alike. The diverse academic and social skills each student with SS possesses indicates if mainstreamed education or private alternative education is most beneficial. Students with SS may possess specific talents such as deep memory, desire for structure, and advanced skills in a specific topic which determines which education environment is most beneficial. In addition, a student with SS may possess certain social behavior tendencies associated with ASD such as hand flipping which limits abilities to build relationships and ultimately succeed in academic settings. The student may even possess unsafe behaviors such as biting or tantrums which ultimately determines the best educational environment for the student.

Mainstream education allows individuals with savant syndrome to socially engage among peers in academic settings while enriching savant skills in certain subjects. Academic modifications and social exposure influences individuals with SS to integration as a contributing member of society. However, if a student displays unsafe behaviors or a school does not provide resources for his or her skills and needs, the child has the right to attend a private outplacement facility. The overall goal of education based on the IDEA act is to provide children with disabilities, including SS, the same opportunities for education as students who do not have a disability. The IDEA act allows individuals with disabilities to experience education the least restrictive environment. As a result, individuals with SS feel valued and increase his or her abilities, which increases his or her wellbeing and quality of life.

#### **Future Direction and Research in SS Education**

Overall, parents of students with SS want to make sure their child receives the most enriching educational environment. In theory, a private education appears more advanced and beneficial for a student with a disability such as SS. However, parents should not overlook the value of most mainstreamed options because of the social enrichment that occurs. Exposure of disabilities in public schools increases acceptance and the negative stereotype associated with disabilities. Children are less likely to be labeled as abnormal and not a valued contributing member of society through integration. As a result, peers without disabilities would increase exposure to disabilities and develop understanding and acceptance.

Mainstream education should also not alienate the skills, instead highlight abilities that benefit others. Employers do not hire individuals with disabilities because of liability issues and the stereotype all individuals with a disability do not have required intelligence for the specific role. If employers understood the different characteristics of individuals with savant syndrome,

such as orderliness, focus and intense overall work habits, companies would improve due to the quality of work individuals with savant syndrome produce.

Also, the IDEA act ensures all individuals with disabilities receive the most beneficial education for his or her skills in the least restrictive setting. As a result, districts should not be reluctant on financial grounds to send students out for special services if the students would really benefit from them.

In addition, for all students with learning needs, there is more to be done to help transition for secondary education into the work force or post-secondary education succeed. Also, more vocational and life skills development is required to help students move from age eighteen and into adulthood in a productive, supportive way.

In the end, savant syndrome is a very unknown, and uncommon condition, therefore overall awareness of the different social and academic characteristics of SS is critical. When most individuals are exposed to a behavior or skill he or she does not understand, there is a tendency to place an individuals into a generalize category such as a “freak” or “stupid”. As a result, individuals with disabilities experience isolation among the general population. In fact, it would be helpful for the broader public and educators to be more aware of the nuances of savant syndrome to enhance the individual and general public’s quality of life and peers. Classmates, educators, and community members should not expect individuals with SS or any disability to behave similar to society’s standards. The classmates, known as typical peers, would benefit from an individual with SS because exposure to individuals with differences and disabilities leads to acceptance. Educators and peers should educate and expose themselves to the unique savant skills and characteristics to provide beneficial educational experiences. As a result,

educators and peers will develop a deeper understanding and acceptance of savant skills that benefit society.

In general, there is few academic literature and research conducted within the SS population which further indicates a need for awareness of SS through education. While investigating integration of savants in school settings, few psychology and educational literature is available comparing mainstream education and alternative education. Also, there is little evidence explaining the overall outcomes and success rates of mainstream and private education for individuals with disabilities in general. As a result, more research, investigating the benefits of mainstream and outplacement education in society regarding work placement and relationships is vital.

Overall, exposure and understanding of SS behaviors will normalize the abnormal tendencies among societal standards. Over time, the abnormal tendencies will not appear abnormal, but part of a spectrum of generalized behavior. In the end, all individuals with SS have similar desires of acceptance, love, confidence, self-esteem, and value as any other human being, therefore deserve the same educational opportunities.

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