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English 1102

“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Black and yellow, red and white, they're all precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.” As a small child this song was very prevalent in my family’s home. Even though everyone stereotypes I believe that my parents tried to start teaching me at an early age that no matter what race, gender or ethnicity everyone was important. If young children are taught this concept why must teachers treat students differently in the classroom?

Growing up in a small town, I, more than anyone should know about how easily people are stereotyped and labeled, even by those who claim to be your friend. In high school I was labeled on a daily basis. I was always known as one of the smart, preppy girls at our small 2A high school. I believe that the smart, preppy category is one of the better categories to be grouped into compared to the ones others were labeled as such as the nerds or the punk group. Not only did students categorize others but the teachers also did. When teachers stereotype I do not believe that they focus solely on what the students look like but it’s more of how the act and perform in the classroom on a daily basis. A perfect example of this was when Mike Rose’s test scores became confused with someone else who had the last name Rose and he was then placed in the vocational track at his school. Rose continued to flow this track for approximately two years with the mix up going unnoticed (Rose 2). I believe that things like this happen all the time in school systems around the nation.

One test allowed Mike Rose to be placed into a lower category than what he deserved all because of a mix up (Rose 2). There is no doubt in my mind that teachers not only categorize students based on grades but also on the kind of student they are. Is this fair to students? Does this allow teachers to have favorites? Maybe the fact that teachers stereotype there students and coworkers is the reason that students classify teachers as good, bad, nice or mean, this could go for good or bad students as well though. I believe a good teacher is someone who chooses to help the students when help is needed; they thoroughly communicate the goals and objectives, as well as contributing a positive attitude towards everyone. But a teacher who positions students into classification groups would not fit my expectations as a “good teacher” even though schools, districts and different countries do this continuously with standardized testing. The way in which schools and teachers classify their students can affect their whole life including the college in which they are accepted, the one that they choose to attend, and the career field they choose to enter. I do not personally believe that college is right for everyone under the sun. Sometimes thirteen years in school is plenty for people and they can go on to find a job in the work field. I think that if someone is looking for a job in a specific area that is more complicated and requires a deeper knowledge and understanding college is the perfect place for that person. In the article wrote by an unknown college professor, Professor X, he states, “Sending everyone under the sun to college is a noble initiative”(3.) When talking about the students he teaches he says, “They are not ready for high school, some of them, much less for college”(1) I agree with Professor X in the aspect that it is an awesome idea to send everyone to college but it is also not possible. I believe that the stereotyping that students receive during grade school is partially to blame for this but other aspects factor in. If someone is told they are not good enough they will quickly begin to believe that and will not be good enough to enter college and they will settle for the quick and easy way out. Professor X later goes on to say, “We are not comfortable in limiting anyone’s options”(3). This is quite contraire to what I have seen in the high school setting.

Teachers belittle the students that they do not think are performing as well as they could or lower than others in their class. In John Gatto’s article, “Against School,” he questions whether or not we even need school. I think that Gatto has a valid point in all of this. Education is a very important aspect in the lives of most Americans but the way teachers go about teaching the students the material does not make it as enjoyable as it could be. I think that teachers cater their lesson plans and the way they teach to one type of student. Of course not everyone can learn the same way and this again all goes back to stereotyping the students.

I think that stereotyping has always been a part of life and there is no way to avoid it. We have all grown up in a world full of categories and judging, what would life be like if we did not do this? I think that students would be happier to learn knowing that they would not be put into different categorizes based on their grades and how they performed in the class room. If schools enforced school uniforms the amount of stereotyping based on looks would decrease drastically and it would be an easy place to begin.

Works Cited

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Rose, Mike. “I just wanna be average.” *Lives on the Boundary*. New York: Free Press, 1989. Print.