



The Think Inclusive Podcast

Season 6, Episode 10

Beckett Haight | Inclusion and Why CompSci Isn't for Everyone

Beckett Haight (00:00):

Hi, this is Beckett hate and you're listening to the pink inclusive podcast.

Tim Villegas (00:33):

recording from Beautiful Marietta, Georgia. You were listening to the think inclusive podcast, episode 25. I'm your host Tim Vas. Today we have Beckett hate on the podcast, but before we get into his interview out, have a few announcements. Number one, we want to make sure that we get your input about topics and guests for the podcast. So get on the twitter and tweet us at think underscore, inclusive and let us know who you'd like for us to interview and what topics you'd like for us to cover. Also, you can get onto the facebook page and give us a comment, check out the links, check out the resources, or you can also get onto think inclusive.us onto our contact us page. Let us know who you would like to hear us interview. Um, we have some great guests that are being booked as we record this podcast right now.

Tim Villegas (01:36):

They're top secret though, so I cannot tell you who they are, but you are going to be very excited. Um, and also, uh, the last announcement is really just a teaser because we will be offering inclusion coaching or educational consulting for whoever would like our services. We have not put that onto the website yet. So this is really a podcast exclusive that we are going to be sharing very soon. If you want more information about that and you are really interested, you can always email me@TimVegasatthinkinginclusive.us. Um, and to get more info if you want to contact us today on the podcast, we have beckon hate. We talk about his experience with differentiation and inclusion as a special education teacher working on three different continents. We talk about his recent Tedx talk, teaching every student, computer science or how to code is not the answer. And after the podcast, please visit Patron.com backslash think inclusive podcast where you can support our goal to bring you in depth interviews with inclusive education community advocacy thought leaders. Also, if you like the podcast, please help other people find us by giving us a five star review on apple podcasts or wherever you listen to the podcast. You can also tell your closest friends because we love word of mouth promotion. So without further ado, here is the interview.

Tim Villegas (03:29):

Hello everyone. I liked you think Beckett, hate for being on the podcast. I'm very excited about having a conversation with him. Uh, he is a nationally, uh, national board certified special educator, uh, who's been involved in special education as a nonstop nonstop as a student volunteer and aid or a teacher since 1994 when he got his first iep. He spent six years teaching in high need schools in California and has spent the last seven years as a learning support teacher on three different continents and the

Caribbean. He recently gave a Tedx talk titled Teaching Every Student Camp Site or how to code is not the answer. Welcome to the podcast, Beckett.

Beckett Haight (04:18):

Great, thanks.

Tim Villegas (04:20):

Um, so really excited to finally have a conversation with you. Uh, we have been in touch online for, I don't know, it seems like a couple years now. And, uh, you've written some guest posts for us a. and uh, I also want to highlight just before you know, we'll get into this a bit. You recently wrote a guest post that's on the, uh, on the website right now. So, um, as you're, as everyone's listening to this, make sure you visit the website and, and read Beckett's posts. It's fantastic. Um, so back at what is a, what is new in your world right now?

Beckett Haight (05:04):

I'm in Mexico and then teaching here for the last year and I'm just to an American school and the last few years I've been teaching all over the world and every two years you had the opportunity to look at a new job and you know, your contracted with be up. So I'm starting to think about when I'm off to next or if I'm going to stay in Mexico and I really like about here month today, but I'm the world's a big place so I'm putting together my cover letter and my resume and started thinking about jobs in South Africa and Thailand and Brazil. So that's Kinda where I'm at right now.

Tim Villegas (05:41):

That's fantastic. So where, where have you taught before, it says in your bio that you've taught in three different continents. So W, w what? Some examples

Beckett Haight (05:52):

before Mexico. So as an editor for two years and before I was in Kuwait and before that I was in the Dominican Republic and that was my first posting. I was trying to learn Spanish, so I took the job in the vr so I can try to get floor. It did get through, but then I lost it because I started learning Arabic in Kuwait. He kind of started learning. I'm going to pop up and I'm now I'm getting my Spanish back. So

Tim Villegas (06:21):

actually that was to be my question is if you were already fluent in Spanish before you, you taught in Mexico

Beckett Haight (06:30):

and uh, I have a lot of Dominican, Dominican and Mexican folks that understand, so I have to rely on my Spanish a little bit.

Tim Villegas (06:42):

So you said you're teaching it in an American school, is that through, is that through a particular organization or is it private or how does that work?

Beckett Haight (06:52):

That's a good question. It's a private school. So most of the schools I've worked at our nonprofit like private schools basically. And um, some schools in the international field could be like department of state schools or they can be linked to an empathy or some of them are just for profit, but um, most of the scores, the majority are just like a school that they built and it's like a private school in the states. So they pick a curriculum that might be it, it might be AP, common core. They have a board of directors had master, like a superintendent probably like working at a high school in the states.

Tim Villegas (07:31):

And uh, did you uh, did have you taught in the states at all?

Beckett Haight (07:37):

Yeah, so I started my career in California for six years out there. I'll go off phones with unified for four years and then I was up in the bay area for two and I'm thinking about getting back out there at some point I'm not, I like working in high needs schools and working at the private schools internationally are kind of the opposite.

Tim Villegas (07:59):

Yeah.

Beckett Haight (08:00):

I'm trying to get back to my roots because that's kind of why I got into special education. If I wanted to help these students that needed the most help and then I thought working with special needs students in high need schools would be like the best players. So I'm trying to think about getting back to that also.

Tim Villegas (08:19):

So why, I guess, why did you become an educator in the first place?

Beckett Haight (08:26):

Well, you mentioned in the Intro, I had an iep so I got diagnosed in um, sixth grade. I got kicked out of sixth grade and so they're trying to send me to the alternative school at that point they've been trying to diagnosis a few years since I mentioned it, but I never got a diagnosis and I never had an iep. But then what's the alternative school? My mom fought to get a diagnosis and getting some support for my later age Adhd, like behavior challenges. And so at that point I went to a non public school public schools and nps.

Tim Villegas (09:08):

There are a few in Georgia where, where, um, know from a or right now I'm actually originally from the La area. I'm not sure if we've talked about that yet, but um, uh, but, uh, yeah, so there are some nonpublic schools in Georgia. Yes,

Beckett Haight (09:28):

for two years. And I got to high school and after some problems I got through high school and I turned my life around. I've had a lot of issues and I'm impulsive behaviors, criminal activity, and I just wanted to get back at some point you have to turn my life around. I suppose we cannot help the most so liquid, you know, incarcerated youth should I work with kids with special needs and then um, I became a ta by

chance and I was like, oh, this is good. Steady education and next thing you know, I graduated and I've been teaching ever since.

Tim Villegas (10:00):

That's fantastic. I mean it sounds like you've had a lot of experience in different, in different environments. So that's, I'm sure that, that brings a lot to the. Brings a lot to your students. Yeah. Yeah. Um, so the, so let, let's talk a little bit about your Tedx talk. I'm teaching every student, um, computer science or how to code is not the answer. Um, so I guess where, where did this idea of have you, I'm preparing this talk come from.

Beckett Haight (10:40):

I started a master's in Ed Tech, educational technology back in 2011 and that was a whole experience. That was the night before I had the brick nokia phone. I didn't have any extra apps on my computer. I just use the school computer and I use the Internet and Microsoft word and then I started the tech program and I started learning how to code and I started learning about hardware and all these different apps. And the more I learn about like basically I started building an app I'm on, it's called x code. It's like a for itunes and ils and I definitely a couple of websites and html and the more I did that, the more I realize that there's tools out there that will do it for you and spend time alone and they're learning how to do the I, the ils, the iphone APP. So I took all these tutorials and I deal with all these mocks acts and.

Beckett Haight (11:43):

But then I started hearing that there's apps that will build the APP for you, so you just have to design it and you have to have the content. And for me that was the hardest part, figuring out what it needs to go in that because I've actually tried to bit you'd be interested in. I was trying to better APP for students transitioning into high school and into college. So all the transmission services I did on paper and get, you know, we talked to the kids, I was trying to build that into an app so they can have a GPA calculators and set goals. And we researched colleges all in one app and all of that was taking so much time developing that, learning how to code it didn't seem like the right idea. So I started, you know, just the digital revenue. Whenever the unit, I just see politicians and like every student should learn how to code and everybody lives to be proficient in Lakota language.

Beckett Haight (12:34):

But for me I felt like you didn't need to do that because you could use google sites or squarespace or apps to build an APP. And we have so many struggling students as special educators, we see it every day to add one more requirement, say, okay, you know, you have a loan with your partner and you've got the math and we have English manually to be proficient in each year. Now that's misguided a little bit. Some that's got Dan and I try to. I've been thinking about this idea of to a couple years doing it at the Tedx talk. It just seemed like the perfect place to just get out there. And this is, I think a lot of people might not at me next time.

Tim Villegas (13:16):

Yeah, yeah. You're, you're talk reminded me of, uh, of I was walking in a school, um, I don't remember exactly when it could've been. It could've been at the beginning of this year and there was a poster hanging up and it was a picture of Mark Zuckerberg and the quote next to him is that computer science or coding, I can't remember how it was phrased. Um, she should be another subject like math or ela. And it was like the perfect, the perfect parallel to what you're talking about because there's a lot of

people talking about that and that, that it really should be just another thing that everyone learns. Um, but something that you talked about in the, in the Tedx talk is that we were missing foundational skills, uh, especially in the critical thinking. Uh, and I, I really liked how you said this. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about, um, about your experience in it, in working with students and seeing that that's a piece that's missing and maybe a strategy or a way that, that you develop that or teach critical thinking skills to students with disabilities.

Beckett Haight (14:43):

I just asked you the question quickly that a lot of times students come to me and they have the learned helplessness. So as soon as they have to start, you know, getting critical thinking, they're like, I don't get it. I need help, you know? And I see that I'm kind of, again, all the countries I've been adage if it happens like that. Um, and so a big key for me is scaffolding the process towards critical thinking without making the kids freak out and shut down, you know, because the amount of time to teach you more expedient just to be like, okay, it's right here, this is how you would do it, this is the inquiry you need to do. But you knew I work with them and there's bpd and kind of guide them through. Okay. So what would you do in that situation? What options might you add to kind of help them guide them?

Beckett Haight (15:33):

That kind of one of the key things that do edit feature as part of my hidden curriculum, I would say, you know, just making sure that I don't just get the two dancers and that aspect. The bedroom. Um, oh yeah, I see it a lot. You know, I'm going to push a math class right now. And we were just talking in the talking to other day about how students are thinking critically about just basic math things, you know, like, like different shapes they might see. They might think they made a square, but it's a record label. And you did that, they'd be able to kind of think it through and be like, okay, this doesn't look exactly like a square, but I don't know what that is. I don't know if they're critical thinking mathematical. Um, so yeah, that's the goal then is to try to figure out how to get the students to not just put them around the paper and move on, you know, trying to take more ownership into what they're doing. I don't know if that answers your question.

Tim Villegas (16:33):

Yeah. That you used the phrase learned helplessness, which I think is, that is very interesting. I, I, I wonder if you have any opinions about why, um, why we see that so much because I definitely, you know, as a, as a consultant to teachers and working directly with students with disabilities. I definitely see that. Um, so I wonder if that, do you think that's a symptom of something or. Um, I mean, I don't know.

Beckett Haight (17:05):

I guess it's easier for teachers to kind of just get the students to answer and since then, like if they have a question, oh, um, I don't get it. Instead of kind of working them through your thought process or you know, kinda guide him more like a feeling kind of like a think aloud like Oh, okay, so what else might you want to search in putting your search terms in Google? What if you added as meditators Spanish call me as quotation marks now what did you add to part of your search and then did a minus this and you know, didn't want that. They just say what should that search in Google when they're doing research and then the third thing that pops up, they don't see what they're looking for. They kind of give up sometimes for example. So it's easier for the teacher to grab the keyboard and be like, search this, you okay read that. But I could step back and kind of guide students who are thinking of build that into your,

your rubrics and to, you know, if you had like a project based learning situation, kind of have it built into every stage will take more effort in the Kimbell like entity know everybody's happy and when they get a quick answer. But it's kind of like working out, you don't get the muscles if you don't feel that pain. Right.

Tim Villegas (18:23):

Yeah. No, I like that analogy a lot. Um, as a, as someone who works with teachers a lot, uh, I'm always interested at other, other people's perspectives on how I guess how to promote that sort of planning for teachers because, you know, I mean, you know, I mean, you taught and in La Usd, uh, there's, there's not enough time. There's, you know, there's a lot of paperwork. Uh, you're, you're overworked, overtired. I mean, how do you get to the point where you go through that whole process of, of knowing how to plan for the success of all your students. You know, I think some teachers, I'm not sure if it's, if they're just naturally gifted in that particular area or, you know, maybe it was modeled, I think for, I think for me, I had really good models. So, and that just really the best way that I learn is, uh, is I observe and then I was able to copy that and then build systems in to myself. Um, so I really don't know what the answer is. Do you have any thoughts about that?

Beckett Haight (19:53):

I definitely had some good models to come up with the kind of teachers over the year, over the years and pushed it into a lot of classes. So that's one area where I've seen a lot of different styles of teaching. But I think also like the ubd framework, what is the understanding by design and like backwards planning and developing the units. I'm like, I don't know, teachers in the United States, Atlas Rubicon. Have you heard of that?

Tim Villegas (20:19):

That doesn't sound familiar. No,

Beckett Haight (20:21):

a lot of schools are using. Probably could. There's a lot of teachers moving so often they just need like a place to put the curriculum. So it's basically a unit plan mapping he put in Ubd unit into this, you know, it's Kinda like a website, what is the website, but it's like your personal website and they start from your standards. What skills do the kids need to know, what content are you, are you teaching? And um, which is kind of where you break down the difference between knowing something and understanding that's Kinda where we're talking about critical thinking, you know, you can say, okay, I'm going to do the bloody activities for the kids can know that concept with the truly understand it. They need to be able to transfer the scales and apply it in a different context. So that's kind of where you start thinking about it as your unit planning and then you come up with the activities and your assessments.

Beckett Haight (21:16):

How are you going to assess this? How are you going to differentiate? That's kind of like I'm into things as a teacher. I work with the teachers on how to differentiate all the different objectives, focus on key understandings about that. But um, yeah, I guess, uh, that's what I would say ubd, like be the best way just sitting down and unit planning because a lot of teachers that are busy and it's hard to really sit down and plan out the scope and sequence and put it all together. But once you do that and you start to get more ideas and then the next year you can go back on the unit and make more modifications and you know, make sure you're hitting all the learners and helping them move and scaffold everything.

Tim Villegas (21:58):

Yeah, I love that. I love that. So ubd units by design, is that what you said?

Beckett Haight (22:04):

No, I think understanding.

Tim Villegas (22:06):

Oh, understanding. Okay. Understanding, understanding by design,

Beckett Haight (22:13):

what did it form is one of the assessments, what do we want to understanding essential questions. You plan everything. And so that's what you want the kids to come in with the skill of being able to critically analyze a media source. You've got to differentiate, you got to have resources to support that. And it's just like the unit plan.

Tim Villegas (22:37):

Yeah, I liked that. I like that. Um, and then you also said something about Atlas Rubicon. Is that something that people can look up?

Beckett Haight (22:46):

I don't know. I've only used it. I worked at, so I think even to have like in a school account, but either way you can find this kind of unit templates online. It just really helps to guide you through the process of developing a strong unit and Kathleen and spreading out a learners.

Tim Villegas (23:07):

Yeah. Yeah. I don't think it would. I guess when I'm reflecting on my, when, when I would lesson plan and um, the backwards planning is familiar to me kind of looking at where I want the student, what I want the students to know and then work from there. Like it's like that idea of keeping the end in mind, you know, with the, um, uh, you just all those that the leadership, the Stephen Covey thing. Uh, but anyways, um, no, that's, that's really good information. I like that you mentioned something about differentiation and in I wanted to, to talk about that because you mentioned something in your guest post and like I said, everyone should. Everyone that's listening should definitely check out the post that Becca did on thinking inclusive, but, um, it's, it was the wood when you're supporting students in the inclusive class and modifying as little as possible and not just passing the struggling students to the next grade.

Tim Villegas (24:19):

We will be doing a service to our students. And I, I want to pick your brain about this idea of modifying, maybe accommodating and differentiation is that there's a lot of different, there's a lot of different words that float around in education and I don't think people, teachers especially have a really good grasp of what differentiation is and how it is or is not modifying, modifying work. I know that's a really big question. So I don't expect you to, you know, I mean, we could, we could like have a whole podcast series about that. Right? But, um, but just, uh, the, the best you can maybe summarize because you talked about in, in, in the, in the posts, you talk about differentiation, content, process and product, right? So, um, so what is, I guess, con content, process and product? Let's start from, let's start there.

Beckett Haight (25:34):

There's a lot of confusion and sometimes the terminology gets confusing because modify me just a minute ago about atlas, I said I wouldn't modify my plan in the next year. And as I said that, I was like, Ooh, I shouldn't have been modified because then people might start talking about the standards and expectations. And um, you know, when I'm working with teachers with, okay, we're going to modify the test but we don't really modify it with me and we're just going to adjust it because we're going to differentiate the parents not modify because the modification is that the standard is being lowered. Right. So, um, in your questions for the content, the process and product, that's what I'm always thinking about differentiating as I'm working with pushing teachers and supporting the students that. Okay. So, so basically the content, the change depending on the student's readiness. So that's kind of the underlying part is you have to look at student readiness, the interest, and then just kind of like their learning profile. So for the, let's say you're trying to teach through a certain text, that text reading level is too high for the students in the eighth grade class. Then maybe have a special educator. I'll come in and are lower the reading level, but we'll still focus on the irony part of the thing. Right? The process you might have, every kid in the class is expected to read a certain passage, but we might find a different process for finding irony or whatever. Um, but in time.

Tim Villegas (27:14):

Yeah, absolutely. I think that teachers feel sometimes like their hands are tied when you gave a great example, you have, you have a grade level and on grade level assignment and you have students who are reading maybe two or three grades below, um, you know, with understanding the content of that, of that assignment, um, and to, to lower the, the instructional reading level of that passage and giving it to that student isn't modifying the curriculum, but it's giving access for that student to understand whatever it is, whatever the end goal of that assignment is, it's giving access to that student so that they can achieve what you want them to achieve. And like your example, if we're talking about irony, then the end goal is that student understands about irony. The end goal is not for that student to read on grade level for that particular assignment.

Tim Villegas (28:29):

Okay. Um, and so I think that's a huge piece that, that is, that's very confusing because I'm a. and then also when you're thinking about differentiation that teachers feel like I have to come up with, if I have 30 students in my class, I have to come up with 30 different plans, you know, it's really more about keeping those, those three things on top of my content process and product and making sure that for certain students I know that I may need to have the student produce a different product in order to get the desired result that I want. Like from that standard. So yes. So yeah, that's perfect. I think that, I think you summarized it very well and it's something that we as that, that one of my goals for the for think inclusive and our podcast is to like, that is one of our central messages that, that, um, to empower teachers and parents to advocate for when their IEP meetings to be like, you know, what I like, I understand my, you know, my kid reads at a second grade level and he's in fifth grade, but you know, let's give him, let's support him in his reading so that he can understand science and social studies or whatever.

Tim Villegas (29:57):

Because that, because what ends up happening is the school says, well, he, you know, he needs to go to small group for that because he, you know, he's not achieving at grade level. So yeah, that's what I want to avoid

Beckett Haight (30:18):

a class or pull out. But a lot of ways that folks can be differentiated. And I worked with kids in high school and a pusher in biology class. Some of the kids, I had a first grade reading level, first grade writing level and some of them cognitively in the, maybe the upper elementary range just in general. And you know, we had to find ways to make it happen, you know, sometimes instead of reading part of the textbook, we'd have like a kinesthetic activity where we model something. Other times you're putting stuff together, building models and stuff instead of just like watching a lecture. I mean, it takes work and it takes support from reading support a lot of time, but it's definitely doable.

Tim Villegas (31:04):

Yes, yes. You have to be committed to the committed to it, you know, you have to, you have to decide as a team that this is what we're doing. Um, so yeah, that's great. Um, so this has been a, I love our conversation. I had, I wish you know that I, I'm, I'm, I guess my hope is that this is, these are the kinds of conversations that teachers are having all around the world, right? And how to support students. Um, and hopefully making decisions that are saying, you know, what, we have students with a wide variety of needs, but let's figure this out. Let's, let's make sure that we build classrooms that are inclusive so that students aren't learning in separate environments. Um, so I really appreciate your, your thoughts on that. Um, so thinking about it,

Beckett Haight (32:10):

let's move forward.

Tim Villegas (32:12):

Fantastic. On that note, where can, where can people find, um, your thoughts about this?

Beckett Haight (32:22):

I have a blog where I talk about special education beans and um, it's called collections. Have a special educator and at um, I guess www.becketthate.com. So just my name.com. I had to buy that domain in a couple of years ago. I didn't want anybody else taking it.

Tim Villegas (32:42):

Good. Good.

Beckett Haight (32:44):

Yeah. And then um, I'm on twitter a lot at Beckett. Hate the C, k e t, t h e l g h t. So I'm only taking the twitter chats and trying to find interesting content.

Tim Villegas (32:58):

Alright. Alright. So everyone, please as you're listening to this checkout Beckett on twitter and on his blog, and then also read his guest post on thinking inclusive. Um, it was a fantastic and fascinating conversation with Vegan hate. Thank you for being on the podcast.

Beckett Haight (33:18):

I agree.

Tim Villegas (33:26):

That is our show. We would like to thank back, hate for being a guest on the think inclusive podcast. Make sure to follow him on twitter and his blog, Beckett hate.com. Follow think inclusive on the web@thinkinclusive.us as well as on twitter, facebook, Google plus, and instagram. You can also subscribe to the inconclusive podcasts via apple podcasts, Google play, stitcher, or anchor dot FM. The easiest way to start a podcast if you are using the anchor app to listen, please leave us a voice message. You may be featured on our next podcast. You can also favorite us and slash or use the applause button while listening to the show. We love to know that you were listening from Marietta, Georgia. Please join us again on the inconclusive podcast. Thanks for your time and attention.

Anchor Ad (34:27):

The podcast you just heard was made using anchor ever thought about making your own podcast. Anker makes it really easy for anyone to get started. It's a one stop shop for recording, hosting and distributing podcasts. Best of all, it's 100 percent free sign up now at anchor.fm/new. That's anchor.fm/new to get started.

Follow Think Inclusive on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) @think_inclusive.

Follow MCIE on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) @inclusionmd.