

# **Demystifying the Diagnosis: An Inclusive School's Approach in Improving the Socio-Emotional Skills of Children with Disabilities**



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# Content Flow

**Demystifying the  
Diagnosis: An Inclusive  
School's Approach in  
Improving the Socio-  
Emotional Skills of  
Children with Disabilities**

**Context/  
Relevance  
of the study**

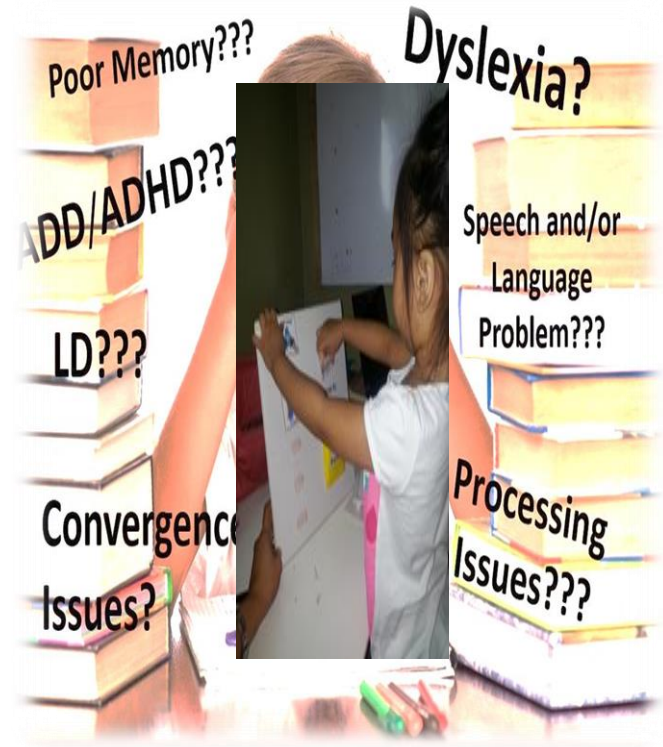
**Theoretical  
Framework**  
(5 steps of the  
Demystification Process)

**Areas  
Evaluated for  
Outcome**

**Findings /  
Themes**

**Conclusion**

# INTRODUCTION



**“It is a sad cliché that having a handicapped child too often results in a handicapped family. (Cordoni, 1990 p. 39).”**

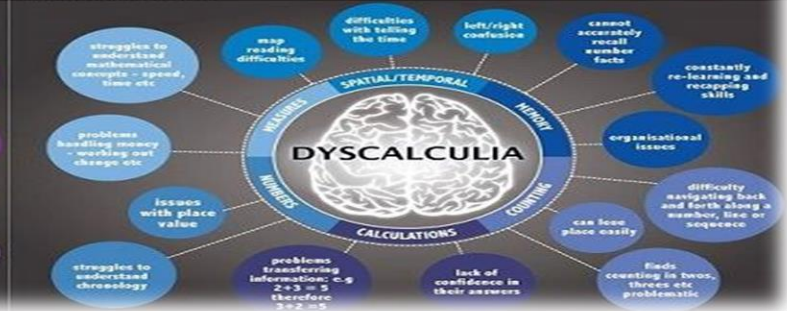
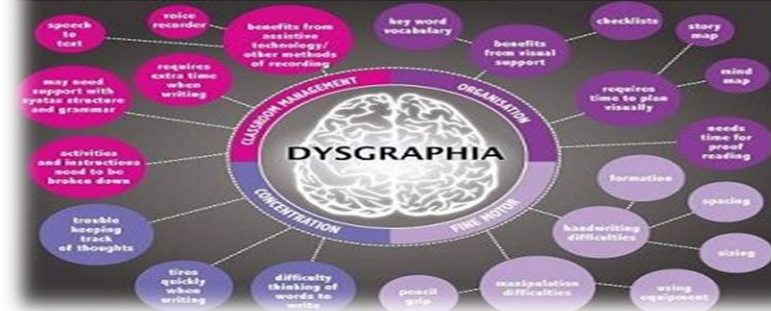


# BACKGROUND



No parent wants to have a child with disability.

No parent would actively seek the pain that goes with being different.



Few parents would forget the moment their child was first diagnosed with a disability, no matter how mild the condition is.



# SETTING

MindHaven School's Inclusive program applies this Demystification process.



History

1997 – inclusion program

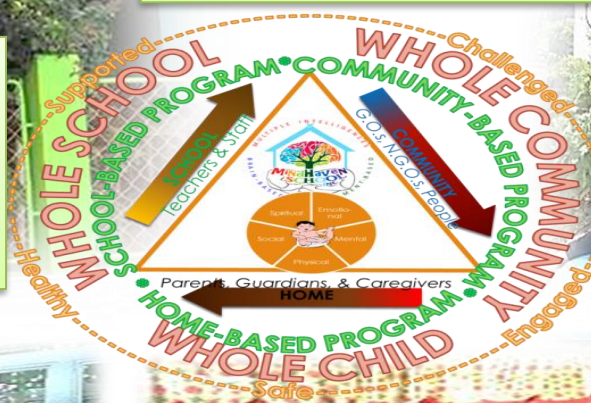
2003 – National recognition from the DepEd



Today

S.Y. 2016-2017

- 19 teachers
- 137 students (64 kids 1½ -7 y.o, & 73 kids 8-13 y.o.)



Parent Education Program (PEP)



Paraprofessionals'/Caregivers' Empowerment Training



# WHAT DEMYSTIFICATION IS AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Demystification is one of the phases of “Management by Profile” by Dr. Mel Levine (2002, p. 278).

Demystification is essential since it:

**A. Is a process that allows children to know what to work on. It emphasizes the importance of children understanding themselves so as not to suffer a serious loss of motivation.**

(<http://inclusiveclassrooms.org/inquiries/demystification-and-culturally-responsive-teaching>)

**B. Can be employed at any age that the child can already understand their cognitive and socio-emotional difficulties.**

**C. Open discussions with adults.**

**D. Is soothing and empowering for children and parents to know the findings of the assessment.**



- *small group of children*
- *one-on-one between clinician/ teacher and parents.*

# THE GAP OF DEVELOPMENT



Poverty, poor health, poor nutrition, and deficient care



more nurturing environment with adequate stimulation and nutrition



200 million children under 5 years (conservative estimate)

\*P.L.O.P.: Present Level of Performance



# WHAT SHOULD BE?

## Child's Development

Sensory-Motor



*Interdependent Domains*



Social-Emotional



Cognitive

competent

maternal  
care

care

knowledge

skills

attitude



# COMPLICATIONS

## (ALSO IN THE PHILIPPINES)



**2010 data: 20,171,800 children aged 5-14 years old with special needs in the Philippines (National Statistics Office, 2013)**

**Young children exposed to multiple risks and barriers to holistic development**

**Interventions focus more on the academic and cognitive gap,**

**downplaying the development of socio-emotional skills.**



- Educational institutions more aware of strategies and methods
- Improve parental education, particularly of mothers.
- Failure of children to maximize their developmental potential and achieve satisfactory educational level



# Theoretical Framework and Research Problem of MindHaven School's Ethnographic Case Study

**FOCUS:** How MindHaven School adapted the Demystification process (Levine, 2002) that was extensively discussed in the book "A Mind at a Time"

**MODIFIED STEPS:** For parents of children aged 3-7 years old and with special needs

**WHY:** The key to the children understanding themselves is to have the children's disabilities demystified to their parents.

**THEN:** Empower parents to employ the Demystification process on their children.





# Five Steps of Demystification, from Dr. Mel Levine

**1. Introduction:**  
Understanding one's self

**2. Strengths**  
(Competence)

**3. Weaknesses**  
(Dysfunction/  
breakdown)

**5. Alliance formation:**  
Professional assures help to the child

**4. Introduction of optimism:**

- Improvement is possible
- Weaknesses can be worked on
- Strengths can be enhanced

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# DATA COLLECTION

IEP meetings

Focus group discussions



Journal and portfolio explorations



On-site observations

Document and archival explorations



- **Ethnography** (*Yin, 2003*)
- **Case Study** (*Opie, 2004*)

## METHODOLOGY



Written Record

Data Analysis Approach

Data Collection Technique

Research Method

Philosophical Assumptions





## Key participants

**6 parents (fathers and/or mothers)  
of students 3-7 years old and diagnosed  
to have special needs**

**Secondary participants: 10 teachers (all  
female, 4 preschool and 6 elementary  
level), 11 paraprofessionals/caregivers  
(all female)**

**TOTAL OF 27 ADULT  
PARTICIPANTS**

# CASES



## Case # 1

### Parents:

- **Virgie, 35 y.o., full-time mother**
- **Luis, 43 y.o., teacher**

### Child:

- **Max, 5 y.o.**
- **has Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- **with language and cognitive delays**
- **receives one-on-one pull-out sessions**

## Case # 2

### Parents:

- **Lauren, 42 y.o., pediatrician**
- **Paul, 45 y.o., politician**

### Child:

- **Mat, 4 y.o.**
- **has Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- **in the inclusion program with pull-out sessions**

## Case # 3

### Parents:

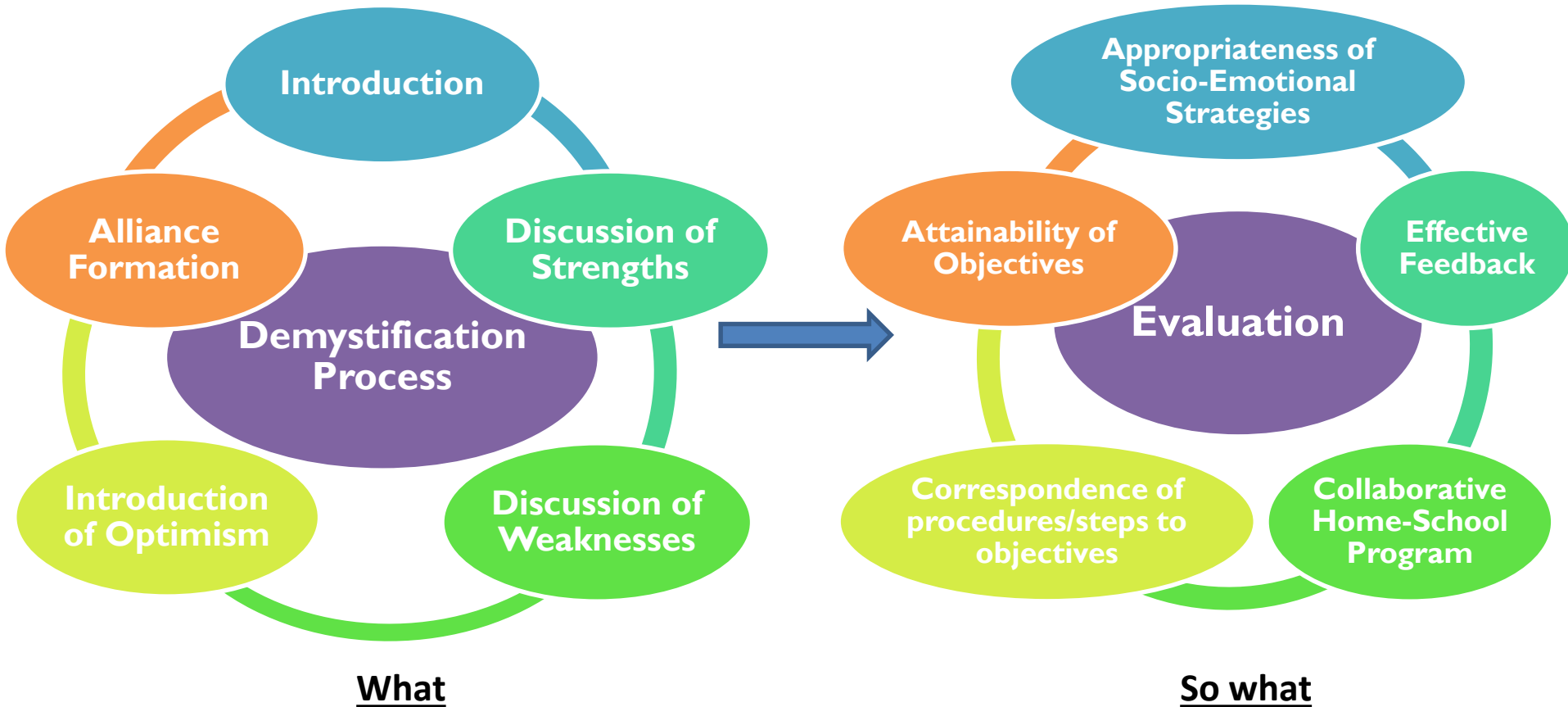
- **Sheila, 32 y.o., teacher**
- **Nelson, 38 y.o., merchant marine**

### Child:

- **Nel, 3 yrs 11 mos,**
- **has Language Disorder**
- **in the inclusive program with pull-out sessions to address his language/communication needs**



# The process of Demystification and its outcomes are evaluated as to the following:



## 1. Appropriateness of the Socio-Emotional Strategies Employed

*Understanding leads to acceptance.*

*“My love for my child has to be translated into actions which I need to do daily with him to help him attain specific skills we’ve identified.”*  
- Parent



*Parents gained understanding of their children’s brain condition (cognitive and social skills).*

## 2. Providing of Effective Feedback

*Feedback sessions are avenues:*

- *For consistent formulation of the program*
- *For communication of the team during collaborative activities*
- *For on-going assessment (objectives attained and standard skills yet to be learned)*



*The feedback process provides the “blueprint” that guides the implementation of the school’s three foundational programs.*



# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## 3. Collaborative Home-School Program



### *Foundation of an effective and efficient behavior management program*

*The parents' awareness of the importance of developing the Executive Function of the brain made them open to the establishment of the Home-School Program.*

## 4. Correspondence of the Procedures/Steps to the objectives



### *Documentation of the child's performance as a basis to enhance standards for academic concerns and overcoming barriers to socialization skills*

*"The PEP and Caregiver's sessions made us aware of the details we needed to monitor with my child, from his routine activities to coaching and supporting him in school learning opportunities and to identifying strategies to help him in his academic difficulties." - Parent*

# FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION



## 5. Attainability of the Objectives

*Individualized Education Program (IEP) as a guide to the attainment of the objectives of the child's personalized learning program*

*"The process helped us understand our child's condition and ourselves as parents. We were encouraged to learn more about our child's condition and identify ways to support and motivate my child. ...now I research consistently and the knowledge I gain I share with other parents... The PEP Sessions strengthened our support group as parents." - Parent*





# CONCLUSION

**What?**

Before

**So what?**

Then

**Now what?**

After

Tool

1. Disabilities generate emotions.

1. Emotions to Transformation



2. Feeling of grief about their child's disability (Rejection)

2. Rejection to Connection



3. Impact of isolation

3. Isolation to Collaboration



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Collaboration

Early Intervention

# What?

Before

# So what?

Then

Tool

# Now what?

After

4. Focus on cognitive development only (Separation)

4. Separation to Inclusion (cognitive AND social skills)

5. Parents wishing for the child they didn't have (Imagination)

5. Imagination to Determination and Action

DEMYSTIFICATION

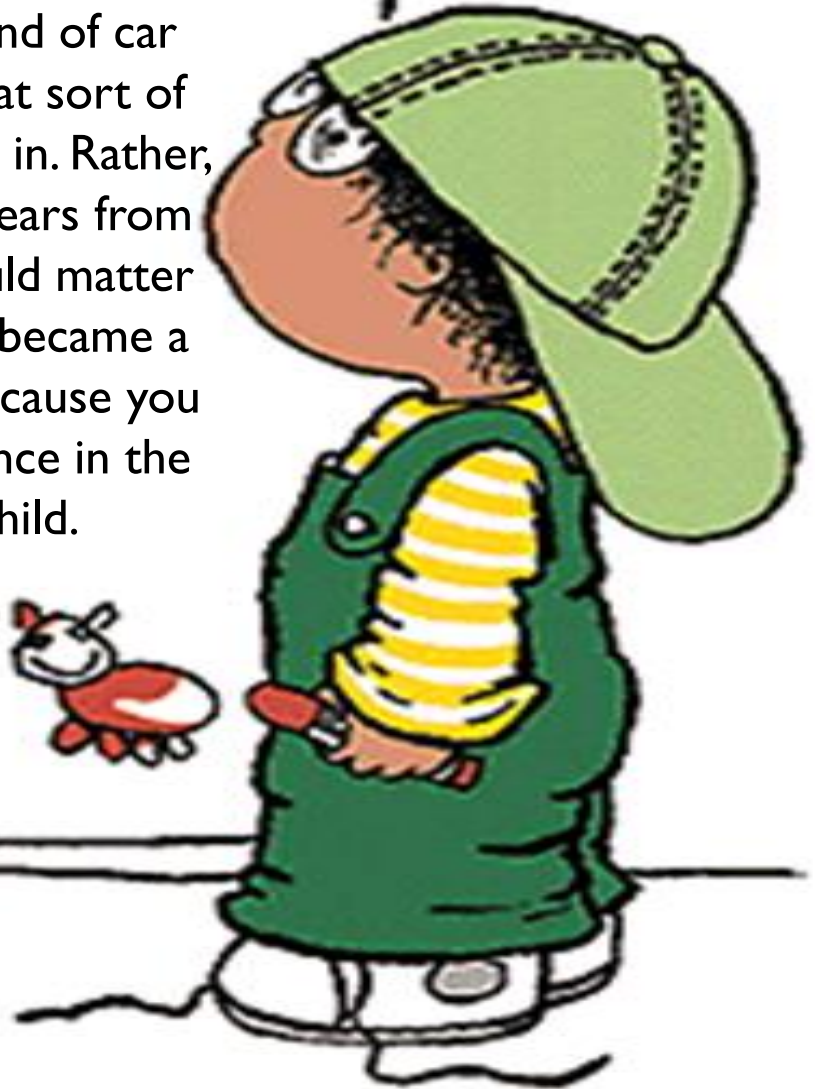
Collaboration

Early Intervention





One hundred years from now, it will not matter how much money you made, what kind of car you drove, what sort of house you lived in. Rather, one hundred years from now, what would matter is if the world became a better place because you made a difference in the life of a child.



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