

Scholar of Change – Benjamin Isaac Program Transcript

BENJAMIN ISAAC: My name is Benjamin Isaac and I'm currently a Walden University student pursuing a doctorate degree in the field of special education. Research shows that students with special learning needs who feel good about themselves perform better academically than those with low self-concept. A Google search for the definition of the word special reveals an adjective that means better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual. But far too often, students deemed special are made to feel like they are inadequate, subpar, and unintelligent. That's why I am attempting to effect social change with the help of a few very special friends of mine. I'd like to introduce you to Skeeter Buzz, and Gigi.

SKEETER: Hi.

BUZZ: Hi.

GIGI: Hello.

BENJAMIN ISAAC: These three characters were initially created for an educational children's cartoon that features live child actors mixed with 3D animation. As the characters began to develop, however, I had an epiphany. I wondered what would happen if I gave all three characters special needs. And what if these special needs were depicted as merely mental and physical conditions and not definitive characteristics of who these characters were. As a result, Skeeter was developed as a character with autism. Buzz, the rapping fly, was further developed as a character with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. And Gigi was modeled after my own daughter, who has cerebral palsy.

To add authenticity to each character, I decided to have each character voiced by a child that had that same condition. As a result, Skeeter, the DJ, was voiced by Ian and Connor, two children with autism. Buzz was voiced by my son Truth, and Gigi was voiced by my daughter, Kennedy.

The purpose of the show was not to elicit sympathy from the masses, but to show children with special needs in a very normal light. As a result, the special needs will more than likely only be mentioned in the opening credits. After that the children will merely be who they are.

The education I am receiving from Walden University will serve to provide research-based teaching strategies and information about students with special learning needs that will be incorporated into the show's production and shared with the viewers. Through this show, I intend to leverage the power of teaching in technology and effect positive social change through education. It is my hope that the characters will serve to inspire, influence, and impact all children with special needs. But beyond that it is my goal to show the world that students with

special needs are just that, special, blessed with differences that force them to interact with the world differently because they view it from a different perspective.

Walden University has helped me develop this show into an entertaining piece of media with the potential to educate the world about the true nature of children with special needs. We thank you for your time and consideration.

ALL: Goodbye.