

SPECIAL NEEDS

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OUR SITUATIONS

- Sam's special needs experience
- Colby's special needs experience
- Who knows they are teaching at special schools. Who knows they are teaching special needs classes
- Who has worked with students with disabilities

DISCLAIMER

- Do not go outside your scope (remember that we are not expected to handle disciplinary problem)
- This is not an intensive training course
- Ask teachers beforehand what role, if any, they want you to play with certain students
- Approach with caution. Suggested that a new ALT wait and see how other teachers or assistants interact with a suspected student with a learning disability before trying to support that student.
- Caution: Don't force the issue. Recognize that you can make a situation worse if you don't know how a student responds to different people and situations

SPECIAL NEEDS IN JAPAN CONTEXT

- “Inclusive education” – Up until 2006 students were isolated and taught in special schools
- Important aim of Japanese education to foster students abilities to fit into Japanese society. This goal assumes all students have features of an ‘ideal student’ such as:
 - “(i) a good command of the Japanese language,
 - (ii) a stable family environment
 - (iii) good health condition,
 - (iv) sustained attention capacity,
 - (v) full control over one’s body and gestures,
 - (vi) “average” physical ability, and
 - (vii) “normal” social skills.“
- Increased :
 - Number of children receiving special education support
 - Percentage of students diagnosed with learning disabilities
 - Recognition of attention deficit, hyperactivity and other learning disorders.

Total number of children enrolled in school has slightly decreased from 2005.

WHAT SHOULD GUIDE OUR APPROACH?

- Wolf Wolfensberger – “Normalization” theory
 - society treats select groups differently.
 - The more different they seem, the less access to ‘normal’ society.
 - The more different they become. Self fulfilling prophecy
- Self determination theory
 - External v.s. internal locus of control
 - Learned Helplessness. Teachers should aim to prevent this.

ADAPTATION

- Two way street
- Good adaptations:
 - Promote socialization/interaction
 - Increase confidence/self esteem
 - Don't hinder others learning. Fair/safe for everyone in the class
- Can adapt:
 - Environment
 - Equipment
 - Instruction
 - Rules

WHERE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES LEARN

- I. Regular school – Regular classes
- II. Regular school – Special Classes
 - Majority of students here
- III. Special needs schools

REGULAR CLASSES

- Class size:
 - Average: 26/30 (elementary/Junior highschool)
 - Maximum by law: 40
- Usually team teaching in English classes, some students have access to educational assistants and support staff
- Resource room access where they will have support and weekly lessons

REGULAR SCHOOL SPECIAL CLASSES

- Children with mild disabilities
- Class size:
 - Average: 3
 - Maximum by law: 8

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- For children with the most severe disabilities
- Class size:
- Average:3
- Maximum by law: 6 w/ 1 recognized disability. 3 with multiple recognized disabilities
- Curriculum the same as regular schools but with adaptations/activities to promote independence

EXAMPLE OF A SPECIAL SCHOOL

Nagahama Highschool and Nagahama school for special education

Share the same:

- Campus
- Principal
- School song
- Uniform
- Classes, activities and school events (partly)

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

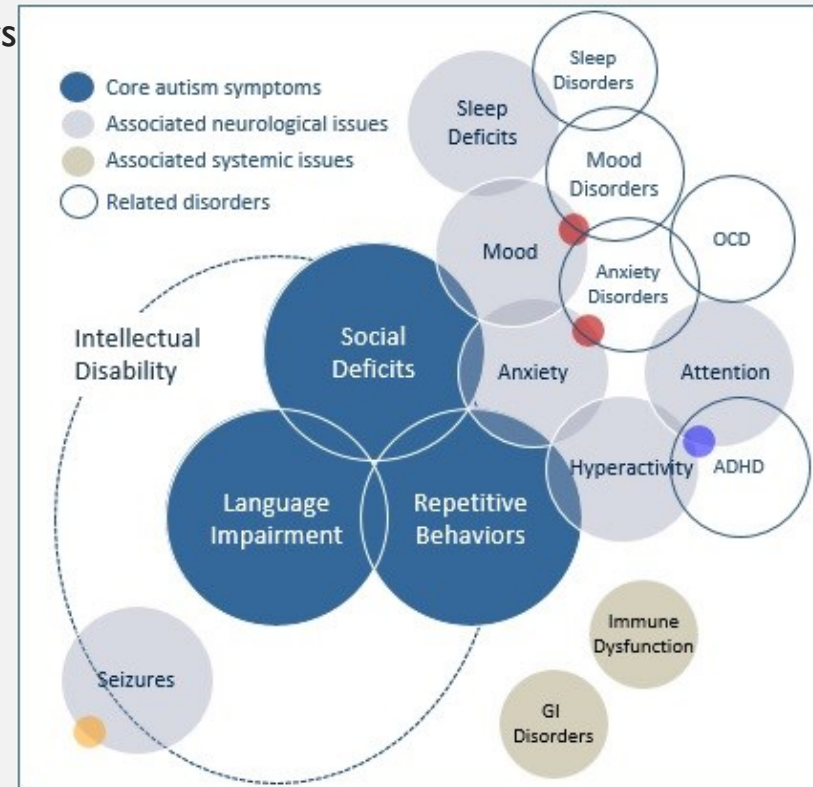
- MDID (moderate intellectual disability) or MIID (mild intellectual disability)
- Takes into account IQ scores, adaptive skills like communicating with others
- Usually perform 2-3 grade levels behind their peers

Strategies

- Establish rapport with student
- Offer encouragement/praise, no matter how small the achievement
- Encourage active participation and collaboration with their peers.
- Repeat instructions slowly and simplify if possible
- Repetition is key

AUTISM

- Difficulties with communication and social interactions
- Tendency to engage in repetitive behaviours
- What used to be 3 different categories has been changed to the 'autism spectrum' because autism has many behaviours/characteristics and every person presents differently.



AUTISM STRATEGIES

- Visual learners and good at visual search tasks (the details v.s. the big picture)
- Rule based thinking. Often good at working with a set of rules. Make rules clear about things like grammar and spelling
- Rote memorizations skills
- Establish a routine
- Special interests – USE THEM!!

EMOTIONAL DISORDERS/INVISIBLE DISORDER

Associated behaviours include

- Aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Distractibility/impulsiveness
- Attention seeking behaviours
- Problems with social interaction
- Difficulties following routine/rules
- Frequently off task and sometimes negatively affect the learning of their peers

A student with emotional disorder may look like this:

- A quiet student who missed class regularly. When they are in class they don't seem to pay attention or put in much effort. They seem confused about the task and don't want help from the ALT. They have a hard time staying focused and are often doing something unrelated to the subject. When you ask them 3 times to "ganbatte" they let out a deep sigh of frustration and pretend to work for 3 seconds until you are walk away.

EMOTIONAL DISORDERS - STRATEGIES

- Establish a good relationship based on empathy
- IGNORE secondary behaviour
- Any statements about behaviour (good or bad) should be short and to the point
- Rules and consequences carefully selected and followed through on (i.e. if you keep drawing on your partners desk I will take away your pen/pencil case – follow through
- Create opportunities for the student to exhibit positive behaviour
- REDIRECT, REDIRECT, REDIRECT ...
- Do not deal with students in a confrontational manner. Avoid at all costs.
- Recognize and praise positive behavior.

CASE STUDY

- You are playing a grammar game that allows students to come up in front of the class and lead
- Usually you choose a student who answered correctly to come to the front
- One student who may have a disability is enthusiastic but does not answer correctly after multiple tries
- He begins to get more and more agitated
- Soon his face turns red and he begins to shout in Japanese and is now standing and pushes his desk over
- All of the students are looking at you and the JTE to determine how serious this is.

What do you do?

PHYSICAL/MOTOR IMPAIRMENTS

- Including but not limited to:
- Congenital deformities
- Cerebral palsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputated limbs
- May need physical adaptations to environment but usually language/learning abilities unaffected.
- Include them, talk with them. Isolation from peers may an issue in school.
- Try not to talk **DOWN** to students
- **ASK** if they want help. Don't make assumptions
- Challenge them academically

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- “Uncorrectable vision loss that interferes with daily activities”
- Use of glasses/contacts does not qualify as low vision
- Low vision means under a certain standard (i.e. under 20/70 acuity)
- Low number of those with visual impairment are actually completely blind or have 'no light perception' (15%)

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT STRATEGIES

- Don't lower expectations
- Encourage them to use any visual aids they have.
- Reduce glare of whiteboard and provide light behind or beside them (seating arrangements)
- Be very clear with your instructions and tone. Facial expression/gestures may be difficult to interpret
- Be vigilant with printed material (use big font, lots of contrast, lower case letters, avoid clutter)
- Provide breaks to prevent mental fatigue
- These students especially benefit from more oral practice since copying notes and reading can be tiring.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

- Mild Hearing Loss
 - Can hear most sounds but may be distorted by background noise
- Moderate Hearing Loss
 - Difficulty hearing speech of those nearby
 - May be using strategies like lip reading

Majority of students in the above group
- Severe Hearing Loss
 - Hearing device
 - Uses lip reading and body language to understand
 - Speech affected
- Profound Hearing Loss
 - Relies on visual information

HEARING IMPAIRMENT STRATEGIES

- Seat/stand where students can effectively lip read. Light behind you will distract and light in front will cause shadows on face.
- Place noisy equipment away from students
- May have to stop moving around the room when explaining
- Whiteboard use; Important but more so for those with hearing impairment.
 - Don't explain when writing on board
 - White board material should have a plan and progression. Avoid clutter and too much info
- Use visual media like computer programs and projectors (shogakko?)
- Use big gestures
- Speak clearly at a natural pace
- May have to give prep notes to student BEFORE class
- Similar to students w/ low vision, breaks are very important. Learning with a hearing impairment require more focus and attention than their peers.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE DISORDERS

- Expressive language disorder
 - Problems in speaking and writing language. Understanding usually stronger skill.
 - Trouble making full sentences
 - Limited vocab
- Receptive language disorder
 - Difficulty understanding language
 - Difficulty taking turns in conversation
 - Poor use of tone, facial expressions and body language
 - Retaining information and following instructions may be challenging
- Global language disorder
 - Difficulties in both understanding and expressing language

SPEECH/LANGUAGE DISORDER STRATEGIES

- Ensure you have their attention before conversation starts
- Finding a good rate of speech key - slow enough to facilitate understanding but not slow to the point of forgetting the contents of the message
- Use of exaggerated gestures to help convey the meaning of a word
- Using role play to help students better understand the dynamics of a conversation (being both the designated speaker and the listener)
- Don't confuse their misunderstanding with behaviour misconduct
- Use alternate activities to practice conversation like joke telling, telephone conversations, interviews, presentations, open discussions, turn taking, having objects that signal the speaker (talking stick)

DEVELOPMENTAL, LEARNING OR INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

- ADHD/ADD
 - Persistent hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention that impairs learning (ADHD clinical review)
 - ADHD/I – ADHD inattentive type or ‘ADD’
 - Trouble staying focused, difficulty remembering directions, careless mistakes
 - ADHD/HI – ADHD hyper-active/impulsive
 - ADHD/C - combined

Table 1: Criteria for the diagnosis of ADHD (derived from DSM-IV-R)^[6]

<i>Behavior domains</i>	
<i>Inattention (nine criteria)</i>	<i>Hyperactivity-impulsivity (nine criteria)</i>
1. Careless with details 2. Fails to sustain attention in tasks 3. Appears not to listen 4. Does not finish instructed tasks 5. Poor in organizing tasks 6. Avoids tasks that require sustained mental effort 7. Loses things 8. Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli 9. Forgetful in daily activities	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hyperactivity (six criteria)</i></p> 1. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat 2. Leaves seat in classroom or when should be seated 3. Runs about or climbs excessively and inappropriately 4. Cannot play or engage in leisure activities quietly 5. Always “on the go” or “driven by a motor” 6. Talks excessively
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Impulsivity (three criteria)</i></p> 1. Blurts out answer before questions are completed 2. Has difficulty awaiting turn 3. Interrupts or intrudes others’ conversations or games

Criteria for subtypes is 6/9 on either list, or, for combined subtype, 6/9 on each of both lists — together with certain guidelines (see text)

LEARNING DISABILITY STRATEGIES

- Distinct transitions (bell, clap, phrase)
- Provide consistent feedback
- Try to suggest better behaviour instead of punishing bad behaviour
- More effective to reward good behaviour than punish bad behaviour.
- Ignore attention seeking or minor behaviour problems ***Learn to let go and not micromanage. Some of the best teachers do the same.
- Set realistic production goals e.g. "Let's answer 3 questions then have a break"
- Chunking – Reduces info over load by breaking down reading into smaller, manageable pieces
 - Break down page/paragraph/sentence into smaller paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words and discuss/summarize/check for understanding
 - Effective strategy for all students to both encode new info into short term memory and transfer into long term memory

LEARNING DISABILITY STRATEGIES

- Check lists, monitor and appreciate progress
- Clean, uncluttered work area
- Prevent distractions (being next to certain students, having an ALT standing next to them can give opportunities to become distracted. Sometimes we are the distraction)
- Have a routine
- One task at a time
- Physically breaking down tasks

GENERAL TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Foster independence and autonomy
- Inclusion. Talk to them and include them the same way you would other students
- create a positive, encouraging atmosphere which fosters self-esteem
- speak slowly, repeat instructions and check for understanding
- Include students that seem eager to participate. (This can be helpful for managing behaviour when a student is flipping desks over)
- Scaffolding
- Make time for breaks and change up the pace of a lesson

CASE STUDIES

- Behavior disruptions
 - ... certain students in the class show no interest in learning, what's more, they are consistently disrupting the other students and breaking the flow of the class. There are students who seem to be interested in learning English but with the constant disruptions you are losing their attention.
- Emotional disruptions
 - ... a student begins to cry in class, you're not sure why.
- Men with female special needs students
 - ... your female special needs students, since becoming more accustomed to you in class, have begun to hug you and cross lines which make you feel uncomfortable.
- Females with male special needs students
 - ... your male special needs students, since becoming more accustomed to you in class, have begun to hug you and cross lines which make you feel uncomfortable.
- Teachers being over bearing
 - ... you are doing your best to teach the class, but the special education home room teacher who is always present is consistently jumping in to interact with students. Some times its useful in terms of minor disciplinary action, other times it seems frivolous and breaks up the flow of the lesson.

CASE STUDIES

- Teachers being too relaxed
 - ... the students are proving difficult to keep on track. The home room teacher is present but is making no effort to help keep the students focused.
- Teachers in the room with no English ability expecting integration
 - ... the homeroom teacher has no English ability, even less than many students. Even so, they stand at the front and expect to be integrated into the lesson.
- Teaching solo
 - ... there is no homeroom teacher present. At first you thought it would be a one off solo lesson but now it seems to be standard. Whatever authority you seemed to have initially is wearing off and the students over time are becoming more and more unruly.
- Boredom
 - ... Some students take part in the class and seem to enjoy it, some take part in the class despite not being thrilled to study English however some students are visibly very bored. No matter what activity you devise they seem to have no interest in studying English and refuse to participate.
- Staggered ability within the class
 - ...there is a noticeable stratification of English ability in the class. Some students are able to hold a fairly decent conversation with you, other students cannot muster a hello or recount their ABCs.

CASE STUDIES

- Babysitting classes/no real oversight by teaching staff
- ... you have noticed the number of special education classes you teach have been steadily increasing, and what was a once a month English exposure lesson has become multiple times a week. You are unsure where to take the curriculum as you are limited with what you can teach because your Japanese ability is not high enough to explain the finer details of grammar. When you talk to your JTEs about it, they are dismissive and not too fussed about what you teach the students. You get the impression this may be a way to give the ALT the requisite number of classes and give the special education classroom a “free lesson.”