

Improvement of Educational Practice and Environment for Students with Intellectual Disabilities --for active participation in society through employment

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Abstract: The report discusses the question on “improvement of educational practice and environment for students with intellectual disabilities --for active participation in society through employment” in China during latest years from the four aspects of background, compulsory education stage and vocational education stage, discussion.

In China, about 0.40 million children with intellectual disabilities are of the school age and more than 0.32 million among them are at school. There are unambiguous laws and the systems to guarantee the educational right of the crowd with intellectual disabilities. The disabled children can receive education in the special school, special class attached to the ordinary school, or by the ways of learning in regular class, education in welfare hospital, sending to teach in family and so on. The educational system for students with intellectual disabilities is divided into infant education stage, compulsory education stage and vocational education stage. Vocational and prevocational education program are set up for the occupational career development in the national course plan.

During compulsory education stage, it requires the prevocational and vocational education in the curriculum plan consequently. The students with intellectual disabilities are between 6 and 16 years old, who are moderate or severe. And various kinds of disabilities are included. The goal of the education is to enhance their skill to accommodate to society and be included in society. Ecotype course is adopted, emphasizing that the students study in the natural and social condition, and the learning contents come close to the student's “proximate development area”. The functional course and the vocational career education are provided for the mental retarded students. To improve the educational practice and environment, the schools explore the curriculum pattern based on integrative topic, strengthen the environment with the support relations, and establish the learning environment livingly.

During the vocational education, the age of the mental retarded students is beyond 16 years old, and this school life span is 3 years. Schools choose and design different contents and aims on vocational training. The general aim of training is to master corresponding professional knowledge, to promote mental retarded students' vocational skills, ability and vocational moral quality. To improve the education practice environment, some measures have been taken, such as establishing the vocational education pattern of market-oriented, making use of proper educational training methods, going through the supportive vocational education and providing the trailing service, striving for social support of other sections.

Although great efforts have been made for the retarded students' occupational education, too many problems are till existing. we need insist on our faith to make further progress.

Key words: students with intellectual disabilities, educational practice and environment, participation, employment

In our society today, the equal and free rights of the crowd with intellectual disabilities are valued highly along with the human rights attached importance to. Under the acceleration of the trend of thought about educate for all, lifelong education,

inclusive education, we are pursuing raising the quality of life of the students with intellectual disabilities perseveringly. This report will discuss the question on “*improvement of educational practice and environment for students with*

intellectual disabilities --for active participation in society through employment” in China during latest years from the aspects of *background, experience, result and suggestion.*

I. Background

According to the sampling statistic data from the census of Chinese national scope in 1987, 13 hundred million people exist in China now and 51.64 million are with disabilities by reckoning. And there are 10.17 million people with intellectual disabilities, 19.7 percent of the whole disabilities. The data investigated by China Disabled Persons' Federation shows that about 0.40 million children with intellectual disabilities are of school-age currently and more than 0.32 million among them are at school. Some children of school-age above accept the education or trainings in other organizations.

There are unambiguous laws and the systems to guarantee the educational right of the retarded crowd in China. The laws such as “*Constitution*”, “*Compulsory Education Law*”, “*Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities*”, “*Protection Law of Disabled Persons*” have the specialized items to elaborate the educational right of the disabilities. State Council establishes Disabilities' Work Coordination Committee, which consists of 34 departments, commissions or social groups like National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Civil Affairs, China Disabled Persons' Federation and so on. They draw up “five-years development program for the disabilities” every five years, hold the meeting annually, research the deployment of the disabilities' work. The Ministry of Education also makes up of the leadership group for the disabilities' educational business to moderate the educational work of each section.

In China, except special school, there are other educational placements for students with intellectual disabilities such as the special class attached to the ordinary school, learning in regular class, education

in welfare hospital, sending to teach in family. Generally, the severe ones enter the special schools, the mild ones enter the ordinary schools, some orphans study in the welfare hospital, and a few ones that can't take care of themselves completely are sent to teach in family (in some regions). The students with intellectual disabilities who live in the villages or in the remote regions, however, can enroll in the nearest ordinary school regardless of the degree of the intellectual disabilities by considering the condition of running a school or transportation there and child's behaviors and parents' wills.

The educational system for students with intellectual disabilities is divided into 3 stages, namely infant education stage (below 6 years old), compulsory education stage (6 to 16 years old) and vocational education stage (above 16 years old). The education on occupational career development for the retarded students is strengthened in the field of special education based on the knowledge tutoring and rehabilitation training. For this, the course construction has been changed from the subject curriculum (focusing on knowledge and information) to functional curriculum (to adapt to society and form the abilities). Currently, ecotypes curriculum has been advanced. Program on vocational and prevocational education are set up for the students' occupational career development in the national course plan.

Recently, China has improved the educational system of the students with intellectual disabilities by developing compulsory education, expanding to interfere in early days and infant education, developing the vocational education strongly; and they have promoted the way of learning in regular class, universalized the education for the retarded students, guaranteed each student to possess the educational right; provided the tracking service for the students who have already take up an occupation after graduation, strengthened the adaptation ability by giving them the education opportunity continuously.

Based on the background above, we conclude

that we face several problems to be solved such as how to establish the target, contents or methods of the occupational career education, how to set up the goal of labor technology and the method of employment to satisfy with each student's demand, and how to create the educational environment which is propitious to learn labor technique, and with high-quality, durative and zero-reject according to the students' various characteristics in physiology, mental development in the different stage.

II. Improving the practice and environment of the occupational career education for students

Presently, special education schools in some big or moderate cities try to change the environment of learning and practice during compulsory education stage or being graduated, and carry on the occupational career education, seeking the methods and the assuring systems to enhance these students' ability to participate in social activity (the students with intellectual disabilities who study in ordinary schools are included in the liberal education system. the report will not provide unnecessary details)

1. The practical experience on the prevocational career education during compulsory education stage.

1.1 Object

At present, the students with intellectual disabilities of 6 to 16 years old are considered as the students who will be offered to the compulsory education in the special schools. And they will keep 9 years at school. These schools will mainly accept the moderate or severe children, including Down's syndrome, phenylketonuria, autism, cerebral palsy, X-brittleness syndrome and so on.

Final goal of the compulsory education is to enhance the skill of the students with intellectual disabilities to accommodate to society and be included by society.

1.2 Curriculum framework

1.2.1 The curriculum for mental retardation in compulsory education goes through three stages.

First stage (before the middle of 1990s, more mildly retarded students) - subject course. The special schools mostly adopt the subject course, which emphasizes that the students must possess the practical knowledge and technical abilities through the language, mathematics and so on.

Second stage (the middle of 1990s to early in 21 century, more moderately or severely retarded students) - functional course. The special schools mainly depend on the functional course - it is divided into 6 realms, stressing that developing and culturing the student's ability in 6 realms. All the learning contents and learning methods are served to form ability and become a habit.

Third stage (early in 21 century, more moderately or severely retarded students) - ecotype course. The school emphasizes that the students study in the natural and social condition, and the learning contents come close to the student's "proximate development area" (the ability point of departure). The new course standard is drawing up now, which puts forward the purpose of improving the students' quality of life.

1.2.2 The content of functional course and the vocational career education

The functional course is divided into 6 realms, namely social skill, cognition, communication, laboring, sport, leisure and amusement.

(a) Social skill (mainly pointing to adapt to the society): Include the contents such as social interaction (skill of family life, human interaction), environmental accommodation (house, school, community) and safety (individual, home, transportation) and so on;

(b) Cognition: Involve the contents such as thinking training, mastery of the number, and practical knowledge (comprehending the time, paper currency, length, weight, unit, calculator) and so on.

(c) Communication: Include the contents such as non-language (pre-language, non-language communication), basic sentence (comprehending,

expressing, reading, writing), social intercourse and conversation (contact, comity and communication skills) in order to rectify the language barrier and express their personal thought and needs;

(d) Laboring: Consist of the contents such as the self-service (eating and drinking, going to toilet, dressing), housework (shopping, cooking, cleaning, using home appliances), pre-training (service working, art designing and handicraft, occupational labor, working attitude and habit, the understanding of the job and other) for the purpose of enhancing the student's ability on self-management or self-service;

(e) Sport: Include the contents such as basic movement and skills for the sake of forming a habit, strengthening the constitution, and improving the ability of body coordination and flexible degrees;

(f) Leisure and amusement: Include the contents such as music and rhyme, art designing as well as leisured life for the sake of training the students to dominate leisured time, fostering the good personality. These realms are carried on independently, but integrated according to instance and extent of mastery at any time.

According to implement principle of the course plan mentioned above –livingly, actively, and synthetically, these courses are full of the contents of the prevocational education and training on accommodation in society.

1.3 Improvement of educational practice and environment

1.3.1 Exploring curriculum pattern based on integrative topic

For helping the retarded students to possess the abilities of 6 realms in the course above, the special schools concentrate on exploring the curriculum pattern based on integrative topic, which involves a kind of living problems that the students likely face to in future. These topics which contain all the correlative knowledge and skills that they would contact with possibly are integrated and shown to the students in the form of activity. For example, the teachers divide all courses to more than ten big topics related with the students' living directly

based on 6 realms, such as knowing myself, our school, clothes, food, transportation and safety, lovely animals, festival and so on.

1.3.2 Establishing the learning environment livingly

In order to insure the valid implement of the curriculum based on integrative topic, the teachers attempt to select the learning resources from the life, daily activity, medium (information and technique), book, community and so on and adopt the ways of grouping and layering, teaching with cooperation, individual training to investigate the living learning environment. Concrete methods are as follows:

(a) Establishing learning environment livingly means all the environment of the learning and living ultimately served for the retarded students. For example: opening the topic classrooms (designing the learning environment by the learning topic), building the functional classrooms (such as family room, rehabilitation room, recreation room, individual training room) and establishing the functional or individual learning area in some classrooms.

(b) Creating the learning environment to develop the students' emotion, attitude and human interaction, which are beneficial to help the students to communicate or develop their self-confidence.

(c) Setting up the learning environment which fits to the society, contacting with the restaurants, supermarkets, cinemas, and service organizations around as well as providing the actual surroundings to train the ability of existence.

1.3.3 Strengthening environment with the support relations

(a) Reinforcing guidance and training – Adding the personnel of teaching, education or rehabilitation, who will make the IEP for the retarded students together. The contents of teaching are various because of combining with the learning, training and rehabilitation.

(b) Using the cooperative teaching – Increasing one or more teachers in each class, who should complete different task of guidance and training respectively according to the goal of learning.

(c) Adopting the method of learning by

grouping or layering - Teachers make certain the learning goal or method by grouping or layering according to the students' abilities. In the same of contents, each student will learn those contents they can. The important or deep contents are separated, which is easy to give different students different guide respectively.

1.4 Achievement and problem

Through the endeavor from the various organizations and people, the following aims come true: The equal right of education is carried out and the education with high quality is acquired; The potential abilities of the students with intellectual disabilities have been enhanced; The degree of social approbation is raised, and the students' self-confidence to exist independently is strengthened; The burden of the retarded students' parents is lightened; The teachers' self-consciousness and creative ability is advanced.

However, we still face to more difficult situations. The related policies everywhere are different, and it is greatly different among the regions. So the compulsory education of the retarded students develops without balance. Some are still in the stage of adopting "the subject course", but some have already followed "the ecotype course". Because of the restriction of the budget, research ability of the teacher as well as time, there are not enough support tools to be applied in learning or tutoring which is studied for lightening learning difficulty.

2 Vocational education practice

2.1 Object

At present, the age of the mental retarded students who have finished their compulsory education and enrolled in vocational education is beyond 16 years old, and this school life span is 3 years. Because of the obvious difference in the degree of intellectual disability and the students' development level, school must choose and design different contents and aims on vocational training .

The general aim of training for the vocational education are to master corresponding professional

knowledge, to promote mental retarded students' vocational skills, ability and vocational moral quality. The concrete training goals are as follows: Living in the community independently or half independently; Experiencing or mastering one or more vocational skills, being qualified for the vocation in personality and ability; Obtaining employment in the form of refugee pattern and supportive pattern based on the vocational education of preparing and supportive pattern, he or she can; Owning the ability of lifelong learning, adapting to the continually changing environment, and owning some sense and ability to run an enterprise.

2.2 The curriculum setup of vocational education

For the moment, the curriculum of vocational education for the mental retarded is classified into 3 kinds, namely the basic, professional or comprehensive practice curriculum. The basic curriculum contains 6 courses: Chinese language in daily life, mathematics in daily life, social adaptation, music and leisure, sports and health, and computer; The professional curriculum consists of housekeeping, cooking popularized, cooking advanced, handcraft, machine weaving, sewing, mental working and carpentry, comprehensive service; The comprehensive practice curriculum is made up of following courses: community service and social practice (including practical training), class pioneer activities, social activities, activities concerning students interest and hobbies, and activities of mental health.

The curriculum of vocational education is made up of subject curriculum and comprehensive practice curriculum. And 80 percent of whole teaching hours is for course of laboring skills and practice, while 20 percent is for the curriculum of knowledge and rehabilitation, which is just opposite to the stage of compulsory education.

2.3 To improve the educational practice environment

2.3.1 Establishing the vocational education pattern of market-oriented

(a) School for Mental Retarded in Xuanwu District in Beijing makes great efforts to probe a new vocational education pattern, *multi-level, wide*

foundation, flexible module, multi-ability, to proceed to obtain employment through vocational education.

“Multi-level” reflects the education thoughts of individualization; “wide foundation” and “flexible module” are mainly reflected in the setting up of the disciplinary and curriculum, and they are the contents of the whole pattern; “multi-ability” refers to students’ abilities. Only achieving the standard of being “wide” and “flexible”, can it be described as an “individualized” vocational education to cultivate students with “multi-ability” and to realize the target of “multi-level”.

(b) Yuanping Special Educational School in Shenzhen comes up with the idea that “*the integrated pattern of education, rehabilitation, and employment*”. Because the vocational education contacts the market economy closely and immediately, the qualified graduates can obtain more job opportunities. These patterns, as mature experience, are beneficial for the mental retarded school to cultivate qualified graduates systematically.

2.3.2 Making use of proper methods for educational training

The common ways of vocational education are stratified tutorship and individual tutorship.

Stratified tutorship- It emphasizes that the aims of vocational education must account in students’ individual difference, and put prominence on the stratification. Except the basic teaching methods, it begins to pay more attention on teaching practice and social practice. For instance, the vocational education section in Xuanwu School for Mental Retarded advocates explicitly that schools should decide different levels of vocational training aims according to the students’ difference; Self-support School in Dongli District in Tianjin takes diverse training measures for the mild, moderate and severe students when they carry out the cooking, or sewing training. Some schools open their own enterprises, which provide a convenient training place for their students.

Individual tutorship- Teachers must tutor the vocational skills individually for each student. The

individual career program is designed firstly, and a pretest on professional ability is given then so as to make a decision about the learning content for the student. The forms and ways of tutorship are various. One is to carry out the program in group or class. That is to say that when one vocational training task is completed in the group, the teacher must teach students one by one according to the students’ different task requirements. For example, when making wooden dolls, each student can master one or two courses, so teachers have to tutor them respectively so that they can complete the task at the same time. Another way is one-to-one teaching. According to the students’ learning need, individual teaching is given. For instance, in the house holding class, the teacher trains the student to tidy up the wardrobe, from classifying the clothes and shoes, folding them, and placing them, until completing the whole contents of the teaching unit.

2.3.3 Implementing the supportive vocational education and providing the tracking service.

According to the present situation, because some mental retarded students can not adapt themselves to the job after graduating from school, they are refused in the intern period. For this, some schools develop supportive education, not only training various vocational skills but also cultivating them to enhance social communicating ability, spirit of group, responsibility and so on. Through the tracing service for the students who have obtained employment, we can solve the problems they will confront at work in time so as to ensure them to keep their job. Student X’ situation is to the point. He is competent for the job by training, but he lacks the ability to take care of himself, like being not capable to go to toilet, and making the toilet dirty and smelly. The other workers don’t accept him and the factory prepared to resign him. After knowing the information, the school suggests that the school and the parent cooperate to carry on retraining for the child, making sure the child stay in the factory.

2.3.4 Striving for social support of other sections

To unfold the occupational education of the retarded crowd, the support of the government

is needed. Therefore, the government is strongly requested to promote the working with the administrative power, and cause the schools to cooperate with Disabled Persons' Federation, Personnel Bureau, Labor Bureau as well as the factories and enterprises in order to support the vocational education of the retarded crowd.

2.4 Achievement

Through the improvement of the educational practice and environment, the following aims come true: The formed training environment mentioned above lays the foundation for the employment of the retarded student; The training pattern mentioned above exploits the foreground of the employment widely; The occupational skill and the quality are exalted, the student's attitude on living and quality of life get improved, and the students' feeling in social achievement is built up.

III. Discussion

According to incomplete statistics, although great efforts have been made for the retarded students' occupational education, 81.34 percent of them are still brought up by family, 0.94 percent of them depend on almsgiving by the nation and collectivity, and only 17.72 percent live by their own income from personal labor. Except the multi-disabilities, the employment rate of the retarded crowd is the lowest. The prevalence of the retarded crowd is high and they earn little by themselves, which become heavy burden for the nation, society and family, as the problem without neglect. Seeing to the actual experience, there are many problems to be changed in the retarded students' vocational

and pre-vocational education. For example, the conception of the occupational education is more conservative. The career developmental programming for the moderate and severe students is lacking. The pattern of running a school of occupational education is not open or diverse enough. The adaptability of the retarded students in transition from the compulsory education to employment is neglected. The occupational training is not scientific enough, and not aimed at. There are just a few institutions for professional training. And the tracking service does not go on well. To solve these problems, we need not only renew our idea in time, but also fight for the strong support in manpower, material resources, and financial power. It is a continuous but urgent work, which needs the understanding and support from each social section.

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Improvement of Educational Practice and Environment for children with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract: In institutes for special education there are special schools, special and inclusive classes in the general schools, hospital classes in the hospitals, and itinerant classes for the disabilities in the homes, facilities, hospitals, and general schools who are in need of itinerary. The compulsory education is for children with disabilities in elementary and middle school. The courses in kindergarten and high school are free of charge. The vocational courses of the basic curriculum for intellectual disabilities allot 340 hours of a yearly total of 1,088~1,156 hours (29.41~31.25%) to middle schools, and 408 hours of a yearly total of 1,156~1,224 hours (33.33~35.29%) to high schools. The courses of high school graduates from special education for intellectual disabilities are employment and continuance of their studies at a higher level. The percent of employment is 22.5% (a ratio of 309 to 1,211) in 2005. The percent of continuing their studies at a higher level is 35.5% (a ratio of 431 to 1,211) in 2005. Special schools can establish prevocational courses of 1~3 years in a school of their choice after finishing high school. They will intensively make a transition into adult life after graduation. Children with intellectual disabilities should be provided various programs to inspire vocational interest and to enable them into being familiar with living techniques which make them able to act his or her own role completely through practical work experience so that they might be inclusive as members of a future changing community to adapt themselves to practical life

Key words: special education, intellectual disabilities, employment.

I. Introduction

The modern special education in Korea began in 1894 when Mrs. Hall, a Methodist Church medical missionary, founded the first school for the visual impairment in Pyeongyang and began to teach Braille to a woman. The special class was first established in the protective institution for invalid children of Dongdaemun public school in 1937. The teacher's class was first established for physical disabilities in 1963.

Later, in December, 1977, the promotion ordinance for special education was enacted and proclaimed as a measure for promotion of special education. In December, 1990, it was partly revised and complemented through the second amendment. In January, 1994, it was completely revised for the compulsory education system for disabilities, the extension and propulsion of inclusive education and intensification of the plans for the individualized education, the introduction of parents' opinions

about them, the guarantee of the petition right of objection, and penal regulations against partiality.

In the year 2005, there was a revision in the law. Its purpose is to inquire about the realities of special education every five years. It established disabilities from health. Now, The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development aims at the maximized educational results through sharing obligation of special education by enacting 'All-Out Plans for the Development of Special Education('03 ~ '07)'. First it carries out policies, to expand the special education opportunity to more students throughout each local community-schools (Classes). Second, it builds the foundation for inclusion and higher-quality administration, and then improves the quality of special education through the diversification of the Teaching & Learning methods. Third, improve the teacher's accountability and specificity for special education. Forth, strengthens supporting systems for special education.

II. An out line of the school system

1. General Framework of the Curriculum

The present school system of Korea's education is a single-line style fixed in the reformation of the basic educational law in 1951 comprising two semesters of 6-3--3-4 system of elementary school(3 years), middle school(3 years), high school(3 years), and university(4 years).

As its complementary special school systems, there are civil educational centers as a elementary school level, higher citizenships training schools at a middle school level, higher technology schools and air-correspondence schools as a high school level, and industry colleges, open university, and technology colleges as a university level. And in kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school, university levels, there are many kinds of special schools.

Citizenship training schools aim at teaching primary, secondary, and vocational education to the general adults and the overdue uneducated adults of the elementary and middle school.

2. The Present Condition of Special Education

At institutions for special education there are special schools, special and inclusive classes in the general schools, hospital classes in the hospitals, and itinerant classes for the disabilities in the homes, facilities, hospitals, and general schools who are in need of itinerancy

The compulsory education for the children with disabilities is for the courses of the primary and middle school. And the courses of the kindergartens and high schools are free of charge.

Special schools consist of 142 schools for the children with intellectual disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, and emotional disturbance which are made up of 5 national, 48 public and 89 private schools, of which private schools are 62.7% of all the special schools.

Special classes are classes which are established in the schools from the primary schools to the high schools to carry out inclusive education

for those who are in need of special education, which are operated by a full-time system, part-time system, special teaching, itinerant education according to their abilities.

Inclusive classes are classes which are established in the schools from the primary schools to the high schools to carry out inclusive education for those who are in need of special education, in which one or two children with disabilities are included, and supported by the special teachers according to their abilities.

Itinerant education is what is carried out by the visit of the special teacher to the home, medical center, school, or other facilities.

Special schools, special classes, inclusive classes, hospital classes have an enrollment of 58,362 of whom 33,618(57.6%) have intellectual disability, 8,447(14.5%) learning disability, 5,924(10.1%) physical disabilities, 5,870(10.0%) emotional disturbance, 2,549(4.4%) hearing impairment, 1,754 (3.0%) visual impairment , and 209(0.4%) health impairment.

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According to the arrangement of the students of special education, 23,449(40%) are learning in special schools, 29,803(51%) in special classes, and 5,110(9%) in inclusive classes. Of them 40% are in special schools and 60% in general schools.

1) The Present Condition of Special Schools

<Table 1> in the below shows the present condition of special schools according to the disability criteria. The numbers are 80 in 2003, 85 in 2004, and 87 in 2005, which have a tendency to increase. The students are 15,508 in 2003, 15,460 in 2004, and 15,205 in 2005, which have a tendency to decrease.

<Table 1> numbers of special schools and students according to the disability criteria

Section		visual impairment	hearing impairment	Intellectual disability	physical disabilities	emotional disturbance	health impairments	total
schools	2003	12	18	80	20	7		137
	2004	12	18	85	20	6		141
	2005	12	18	87	18	7	-	142
students	2003	1,455	2,099	15,508	3,298	1,832	-	24,192
	2004	1,546	1,951	15,460	3,155	1,650	-	23,762
	2005	1,462	1,670	15,205	3,200	1,893	19	23,449

<Table 2> numbers of teachers and students according to the courses (for all the students with disability)

Section		kindergartens	elementary schools	middle schools	high schools	total
students	2003	1,450	9,676	6,055	7,011(including 800 in the prevocational courses)	24,192
	2004	1,278	9,222	6,000	7,262(including 835 in the prevocational courses)	23,762
	2005	1,188	8,699	6,160	7,402(including 992 in the prevocational courses)	23,449
teachers (2005)		kindergarten teachers : 278 elementary teachers: 1,667 middle school teachers:2,707 therapeutic teachers:360, vocational teachers:133 acupuncture teachers :47 nursing teachers:139 total : 5,331				

<Table 2> shows the present condition of special schools according to the course. Kindergartens have had enrollments of 1,450 in 2003, 1,278 in 2004, and 1,188 in 2005. Elementary schools have had enrollments of 9,676 in 2003, 9,222 in 2004, and 8,699 in 2005. The numbers of the students have decreased in the case of kindergartens and middle schools. Middle schools have had enrollments of 6,055 in 2003, 6,000 in 2004, 6,160 in 2005, which shows little change in numbers. High schools have had enrollments of 7,011 in 2003, 7,262 in 2004, and 7,402 in 2005, which have had a tendency for the entrance upon the special subjects to increase.

2) The Present Condition of Special Classes

<Table 3> shows the present condition of special schools according to the special classes. The students with the intellectual disabilities are 12,655 in 2003, 14,337 in 2004, and 15,723 in 2005, which have a tendency to increase gradually. It shows that though children with intellectual disabilities

in the special schools are decreasing, children with intellectual disabilities in the special classes for inclusive education are increasing.

<Table 4> shows the present condition of special classes according to the course. The numbers of the students are 26,868 in 2003, 28,002 in 2004, and 29,803 in 2005, which is increasing. Accordingly, the numbers of the schools with special classes are 3,217 in 2003, 3,448 in 2004, and 3,724 in 2005, which are increasing continuously unrelated to the courses. And the numbers of the special classes are 4,102 in 2003, 4,366 in 2004, and 4,697 in 2005, which are increasing.

3) The Present Condition of Inclusive Classes

<Table 5> shows the present condition of inclusive classes according to the disability criteria. The children with the intellectual disabilities are 1,217 in 2003, 1,645 in 2004, and 2,690 in 2005, which have a tendency to increase. It shows that inclusive education has been activated.

<Table 3> numbers of students according to the disability criteria

Section		visual impairment	hearing impairment	Intellectual disability	Physical disabilities	emotional disturbance	health impairments	learning disability	Total
students	2003	142	384	12,655	1,222	3,034	-	9,431	26,868
	2004	143	417	14,337	1,268	3,063	-	8,516	27,744
	2005	222	494	15,723	1,895	3,549	162	7,758	29,803

<Table 4> numbers of schools with special classes, special classes, students, and teachers according to the courses (for all the children with disability)

Section		kindergartens	elementary schools	middle schools	high schools	Total
schools with special classes	2003	72	2,430	601	114	3,217
	2004	87	2,548	652	161	3,448
	2005	102	2,698	715	209	3,724
Classes	2003	84	3,119	712	187	4,102
	2004	99	3,248	768	251	4,366
	2005	124	3,393	852	328	4,697
Students	2003	339	20,288	4,630	1,611	26,868
	2004	400	20,162	5,037	2,403	28,002
	2005	475	20,698	5,685	2,945	29,803
Teachers	2003	85	3,217	723	187	4,212
	2004	100	3,248	777	277	4,402
	2005	123	3,413	909	380	4,825

<Table 5> numbers of students according to the disability criteria

section		visual impairment	hearing impairment	Intellectual disability	Physical disabilities	Emotional disturbance	Health impairments	Learning disability	total
students	2003	57	123	1,217	332	231	-	384	2,344
	2004	55	354	1,645	736	356	-	472	
	2005	61	385	2,690	829	428	28	689	5,110

<Table 6> shows the present condition of inclusive classes according to the course. The numbers of the students are 26,602 in 2003, 31,171 in 2004, and 34,581 in 2005, which are increasing. Accordingly, the numbers of the schools with inclusive classes are 4,067 in 2003, 4,567 in 2004, and 5,654 in 2005, which is increasing continuously unrelated to the courses. And the numbers of the inclusive classes are 19,399 in 2003, 20,735 in 2004, and 23,529 in 2005, which are increasing.

4) The Present Condition of Itinerant Classes

<Table 7> shows the present condition of itinerant education. The students who have the itinerant

education are 2,599 in 2003, 2,999 in 2004, and 3,175 in 2005, which have increased. And the classes are 328 in 2003, 440 in 2004, and 517 in 2005. It shows that itinerant education has been activated.

5) The Present Condition of Hospital Classes

<Table 8> shows the present condition of hospital classes. The students who have the hospital education are 51 in 2004 and 67 in 2005. And the classes have increased 2 in 2004 and 5 in 2005. From now on, the subjects of hospital education will be extended so that more students with health impairments may have the opportunity for

<Table 6> numbers of students according to the courses (for all the students with disability)

Section		kindergartens	elementary schools	middle schools	high schools	total
schools with inclusive classes	2003	190	2,739	752	386	4,067
	2004	236	2,901	805	626	4,567
	2005	613	3,360	935	746	5,654
Classes	2003	262	14,019	3,314	1,804	19,399
	2004	311	14,589	3,502	2,333	20,735
	2005	781	16,092	4,200	2,456	23,529
Students	2003	355	19,123	4,521	2,603	26,602
	2004	1,586	20,477	5,323	3,785	31,171
	2005	1,739	22,255	6,306	4,281	34,581

<Table 7> numbers of students, classes, and teachers in relation to itinerant education

section	Students					Classes	Teachers
	home	facilities	Hospitals	schools	total		
2003	862	1,239	29	469	2,599	328	490
2004	918	1,388	12	681	2,999	440	703
2005	903	1,465	22	785	3,175	517	713

<Table 8> numbers of students, classes, and teachers in relation to hospital education

Section	students	classes	teachers
2004	51	2	2
2005	67	5	5

education.

III. Educational activities carried out at schools to prepare such children for employment

The 7th curriculum currently practiced comprises the basic curriculum and the national common basic curriculum. The basic curriculum is mainly used by the schools for intellectual disabilities, and the national common basic curriculum which is like that of general school is used by the schools for hearing impairment, visual impairment, and physical disabilities.

Accordingly, the children with intellectual disabilities are educated mainly by basic curriculum, but they can be educated by the national common basic curriculum according to their ability when

they need it.

Therefore though most of the children with intellectual disabilities have vocational education as the basic curriculum, they have vocational education by the high school elective-centered curriculum for grades 10, 11.

The national common basic curriculum consists of industry, packing, assembling, transportation, confectionery-bakery, industry design, and acupuncture (for visual impairment).

But this research deals mainly with the vocational courses of the basic curriculum for the children with intellectual disability.

The vocational courses of the basic curriculum allot 340 hours of a yearly total of 1,088~1,156 hours (29.41~31.25%) to middle schools, and 408 hours of a yearly total of 1,156~1,224 hours (33.33~35.29%) to high schools. They will

intensively make a transition into adult life after graduation.

Special schools can establish prevocational courses of 1~3 years in a school of their choice after finishing high school. 29 schools (about 33%) of the 87 schools for intellectual disabilities establish and operate the prevocational course. They operate the prevocational course according to the high school curriculum, and put emphasis on making productive workers by acquiring knowledge or techniques as to the occupation. Therefore after their graduation from high school, they can enter into the prevocational course if they want.

1. vocational course of the curriculum

1) educational contents of the vocational course

The textbooks of the vocational course consist of Vol. 1 Job Life, Vol. 2 Vocational Preparation, and Vol. 3 Function of Occupation. Job Life deals intensively with the fields of individual life, and social life. Job Life deals intensively with the fields of individual and social life. Vocational Preparation deals intensively with the fields of school life and regional social life. The Function of the Occupation deals intensively with economical life and leisure. They decide subordinate fields in the life field of each volume, choose the tasks in the subordinate fields, and arrange them according to the degree of difficulty.

2) the definite contents of the vocational course

(1) Occupational Life

The Occupational Life aims at enabling students to be accustomed to the function of basic life need for the occupational and social life and to maintain desirable mutual life. It consists of decent attire, maintenance of mutual relationships, acquiring telephone etiquette, monetary management, and participating in leisure life.

(2) Vocational Preparation

Vocational Preparation aims at equipping children with the basic function and attitude related with occupation, and with the function of vocational preparation necessary to the occupational life. It

consists of being accustomed to rules and attitude of occupational life, applying information given by sense, being used to basic learning function, dealing with basic tool, and searching for occupations.

(3) Function of Occupation

The Occupational Life aims at enabling students to participate in the work which needs simple work through work function and performance. It consists of sweeping, simple cooking, gardening-growing greens, simple assembling, aiding sale, and aiding office work.

2. Real Main Working Guidance of Each School

(1) Meal Training

- Elementary School : class teacher, in person, instruct about having a meal with children in each class.
- Middle School : teacher guides children to be issued a meal ticket, hand to the clerk, and to be provided a meal service.
- High School (Grades 10, 11) : teacher guides children to have a proper quantity of a meal, and to make their own feed.
- High School (12, prevocational course) : teacher guides children to have a meal with a group, and to do the dishes.

(2) Training of Emotion and Strengthening a Sense of Duty

the teacher guides children on how to grow a flower or crops with his or her name on it flower.

(3) Training by Various Contests

- monthly beauty contest (cleanliness)
- monthly dancing contest (sociability)
- yearly exhibition (work of art)
- speech contest and self-introduction contest (confidence and relationship)

(4) Physical Training

- elementary school (grades 1~3) : in-line skating
- elementary grade 4~high school : cycling
- daily running and gymnastics(aerobics)
- the whole school climbing according to his or her ability and all-day climbing on Saturday
- teacher guides children to have one-child

1. Selection of children for the practical training - diagnostic evaluation - consultation with parent - distribution of instruction teacher	⇒	2. Selection of industries for the practical training - Official investigation - Selection of potential industries for practical training with Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled	⇒	3. Preliminary guidance (attendance & leaving, and regulations of the company, dining etiquette, saluting, manners, and etc.) - Orientation	⇒
4. Practical Training - distribution of instruction teacher - Official Instruction for practical training and evaluation	⇒	5. Evaluation of practical training - distribution of teacher - Official Instruction for practical training and evaluation	⇒	6. Employment and association guide	

one-class one-exercise one-hobby and to enjoy them regularly with their parents (table-tennis, badminton, hula hoop, swimming, basketball, in-line skating, and etc.)

(5) Attending School Training

The teacher guides children to go to or from school by public transportation. The teacher selects potential children and guides them intensively to go to school with their parents or his or her teacher using public transportation from period of two weeks every semester. In the beginning the companion accompanies the children the bus or in the metro, and in the adaptation stage, the child travels by himself.

(6) Field Learning

Operate the whole school field learning by visiting museums, old palaces, public offices, industries, and etc and by going to movies or theaters, eating out, and etc.

(7) Adapting Training for Workplace

It is training practiced one time per semester in high school. It organizes classes in office department: department of cooking support, department of car washing, and etc according to children's ability and preference, and guides them for two weeks intensively by the detailed programs.

(8) Practical Training

Have high school students in grade 12 to have a practical training in the industries for the adaptation to the work environment, acquisition of work attitude and vocational technique, extension of opportunity to be employed, and maintenance of

vocational life.

(9) In-service Training for Teachers

- practice a class-study(open class) for a year
- each teacher's case-presentation of vocational guides a year
- practice in-service training on the vocational education through inviting outside specialists

(10) Education for Parents

Practice Parent Education every two weeks for the interest in their children, for comprehension of the vocational education, and for inspiring them with education activities

(11) Vocational Education Centered on the Practical Training at Industries

- Select industries employing the graduates and industries for practical training, and distribute teachers with exclusive responsibility
- Practice for the students of high school and prevocational course, or for the graduates
- Select the industries for practical training with the aide of Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled
- Guide and operate in liaison with Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled, Industries for practical training, and families.
- Procedure and Method of the Practical Training

<Table 9> the present condition of employment in relation to children with intellectual disabilities.

Section	The proportion of employment	The proportion of continuing their studies at a higher level
2003	28.8%(365 among 1,264)	28.4% (360 among 1,264)
2004	22.5% (288 among 1,276)	33.9% (433 among 1,276)
2005	22.5% (309 among 1,211)	35.5% (431 among 1,211)
The percent of average	25.6%	35.4%

<Table 10> Specific types of their occupation

Section	industrial art	packing, assembling, transportation	agriculture	electronic assembling	confectionery-bakery	simple labor
2004	6	83	7	22	2	168
2005	4	63	9	1	12	220

IV. State of employment in relation to children with intellectual disabilities

The courses for high school graduates from special education are employment and continuance of their studies at a higher level.

<Table 9> shows the present condition of employment in relation to children with intellectual disabilities. 25.6% of all the high school graduates from special education for the intellectually disabled have chosen vocations. The percent of employment is 28.8% (a ratio of 365 to 1,264) in 2003, 22.5% (a ratio of 288 to 1,276) in 2004, and 22.5% (a ratio of 309 to 1,211) in 2005. 35.4% of all the high school graduates from special education for intellectually disabled have continued their studies at a higher level. The percent of students continuing their studies at a higher level is 28.4% (360) in 2003, 33.9% (433) in 2004, 35.5% (431) in 2005.

As for continuance of their studies at a higher level, because they choose their special studies, their employment has not been solved yet. <Table 10> shows Specific types of their occupation. Specific types of their occupation were acupuncture (1), shoemaking (1), dressmaking (4), woodworking (2), gardening (7), floriculture (7), printing (2), and others (348) in 2003. And in 2004, Specific types of their occupation were industrial art (6), packing, assembling, transportation (83), agriculture (7), electronic assembling (22), confectionery-bakery

(12), and others (220). The occupation classification was reorganized since 2004 according to the 7th curriculum system amendment.

According to the Research on the Actual Condition 2000 of the Employees with Disability carried out by Korea Health Institute in 2001, the unemployment rate of persons with intellectual disabilities at home is 41.7%, the lengths of their service are below 1 year (44.4%), over 1 year and less than 2 years (42.3%), over 2 years and less than 3 years (4.0%), over 3 years and less than 4 years (3.1%), over 4 years and less than 5 years (2.0%), and more than 5 years (4.2%). Accordingly, as for the persons with intellectual disabilities, though being engaged is important, they are supported to maintain their jobs and have a continuous association guide by systematic backing.

At present, certain instructional hours are allotted for the homeroom teachers in charge of grade 12 and teachers in charge of special studies to serve association guides for undergraduates or interns. But because there is no system to serve association guides for the graduates, substitute measures for that should be arranged.

The Research on the Actual Condition 2004 carried out by Jeong, In-suk on 176 of 1,406 graduates from 5 schools for the intellectually disabled who answered the inquiries shows that their types of occupations are simple laborers (73.5%), artisans and allied employees (17.7%),

employees in service and receptionists (6.2%), and engineers (2.7%).

These results tell us that types of occupations fit the vocational aptitude more than simple labor should be developed, Individualized tailored-education should be carried out so that the quality of vocational life may be enhanced.

The needs for jobs are so as to lead a regular life (36.1%), so as to make money (29.3%), not lose their acquired ability (22.6%), to escape from monotonous life at home. The results show that 70% of subjects needed jobs for a happy life more than for money. For those with intellectual disabilities, jobs are not just means of economy but meaning of everyday life.

V. Conclusion

Children with intellectual disabilities should be provided various programs to inspire vocational interest and to enable them into being familiar with living techniques which make them able to act his or her role completely through practical work experience so that they might be inclusive as members of future changing communities to adapt themselves to the practical life. And various functional education centered on the practical life should be carried out side by side so they can foster basic knowledge, techniques, attitude which they should equipped as workers.

Through this education, each of them should acquire from the functions of everyday life to the functions of relationship and sociability, vocational preparation, vocational techniques and etc, and should be fostered as an independent individual who can apply these functions to various kinds of occupations.

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Trends and Perspective of the Use of International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) on Special Needs Education in Japan

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Abstract: This paper overviews the use of International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) on special support needs education in Japan, as well as its perspective.

Ever since ICF was approved by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2001, the use of ICF has been attempted in the field of education in Japan, especially for the assessment and guidance student enrolled in special schools. Additionally, the system of education in Japan for children with disabilities is in a period of transition, including revision of the public laws, from "special education" that has focused on education for student with disabilities and which has provided education and guidance in specific institutions such as special schools, to "special needs education" which is provided in meeting with the educational needs of individual student who include those with learning disabilities for instance who are enrolled in regular schools and classes. Given such a situation, the use of ICF is being promoted, with examples including preparation of individualized educational support plan implemented through cooperation by those specializing in different fields by utilizing the characteristic of ICF of being a "common language" so to speak, use in special schools based on ICF's characteristic of emphasizing participation, and understanding of the actual situation and conditions of and the support provided to student with special educational needs who are enrolled in regular classes. However, there are still issues and problems that must be dealt with, such as a tendency to overemphasize environmental factors, insufficiency of measures for student and those in early stages of development, and insufficiency of consideration for student's emotional aspects. There are also those who doubt the effects of ICF even if it is introduced.

Given such a situation, and the approval of ICF version for Children and Youth (ICF-CY), National Institute of Special Education (NISE) has launched and is promoting researches to examine the utilization ICF-CY for the educational policies. It hopes to make contributions both domestically and internationally.

Keywords: ICF, ICF-CY, Special Needs Education, Japan

Preface

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was approved in the 54th WHO Assembly held in May 2001. In Japan, its official translation was published in August 2002. The Japanese Cabinet adopted a *Basic Program for Persons with Disabilities* in December 2002. In its section titled "3. Implementation of Measures by Taking Into Account Characteristics of Disabilities", the Basic Program stipulated "To utilize ICF adopted in WHO, in light of better understanding of disabilities and promoting appropriate measures,

should be considered." (Note 1). In fact, ICF is being utilized in a wide range of areas relating to persons with disabilities, with examples being medical, health and welfare services, and labour, educational and nursing care services. In the field of education which is the main topic of this paper, the use of ICF has been attempted mainly in the area of understanding of and support for student enrolled in special schools (Notes 2, 3, 4 and 5).

At present, the Japanese systems of education for students with disabilities are in a period of change. They are being changed including law revisions from a) to b) below.

a) What has been called “special education” that has provided education and guidance in specific educational institutions (i.e., schools for the blind, deaf and other student with disabilities, and special classes and “resource rooms” set up in elementary and junior high schools) which has covered student with visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, health impairments, speech and language disorder and emotional disturbances.

b) What is now called “special needs education” to cope with the educational needs of individual student who may have learning disabilities (LD), ADHD, and high-functioning autism (HFA) and who are enrolled in regular class.

This paper overviews the state of use of ICF in the special needs education provided in Japan, and examines its perspective.

1. ICF – What it is

(1) ICF's basic characteristics and its use in special needs education in Japan

ICF is a subsystem of WHO's Family of International Classifications (FIC). Other subsystems include ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) and ICHI (International Classification of Health Interventions). In addition, the WHO division in charge of ICF and the division in charge of ICF of Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare are in charge of all matters relating to FIC including ICF. ICF is basically a classification. The ICF Book/CD-ROM is mostly composed of 1,424 classifications relating to body functions, body structures, activities and participation, and environmental factors (it does not have classifications relating to health conditions and personal factors). However, the trend in Japan is to discuss ICF by emphasizing the concepts instead, with an example being “Interaction between the Components of ICF” (Note 6), and the use based on such concepts (Note 2).

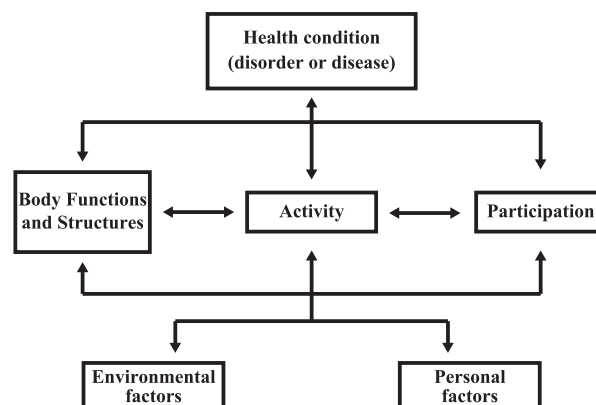


Figure 1. Diagram of ICF Conceptual Model

ICF must be examined in relation to the whole of the FIC system, as well as what is now called “special needs education” must be examined in relation to the educational system as a whole. Additionally, when examining the use of ICF in relation to “special needs education”, it is necessary to distinguish between the ICF classifications per se and the several aims of ICF mentioned below (Note 7).

- To provide a scientific basis for understanding and studying Health and Health-related states, outcome and determinants.
- To establish a common languages to describe Health and Health-related states in order to improve communication between different users, such as care workers, researchers, policy-makers, and public , including people with disabilities.
- To permit comparison data across of countries, health care disciplines, service and time.
- To provide systematic coding scheme for health information system provision of a list of categories for the use for the systems.

It goes without saying that the categories and items relating to human functioning and the contents or curricula of school education do not coincide. It is a fact that special schools that have started to use ICF are increasing. However, it is also a fact that many of them feel that ICF is difficult to use. Perhaps what is important is to use ICF

by ascertaining and understanding which aspects of ICF to use, and how to use such aspects, in solving what kind of issues arising in the operations conducted by special schools, etc.

(2) ICF as seen in relation to education

The section below examines the characteristics of ICF in relation to education, through comparison with its predecessor ICIDH (International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps).

1) From ICIDH to ICF

ICIDH is the predecessor of ICF (see Figure 2). It made major achievements which included setting forth of approaches for the understanding of disabilities multilaterally and structurally, and implementation of measures and policies based on such approaches. However, it was subject to criticisms, which included the fact that it did not include environmental factors for which it ended on the level of personal factors. Another criticism concerned the interaction between its components. For these reasons, countries promoted its revision (Note 8). In comparison, the ICF model (Figure 1) that followed is called “biopsychosocial model” in contrast to the ICIDH model which was criticized as “medical model”. It seeks to understand the decline of the functioning of humans from a broad viewpoint including environmental factors. In this aspect, it is compatible with the policies relating to school education in Japan which seeks to support holistic growth of student.

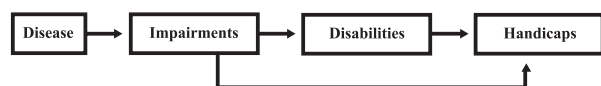


Figure 2. Diagram of ICIDH Conceptual Model

2) Characteristics of ICF – interaction between components

This section describes the characteristics of ICF by focusing on its components and their interaction. Firstly, the factors used in ICIDH and

ICF are defined as follows.

ICIDH:

“Impairment”:

Any loss of abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function.

“Disability”:

Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

“Handicap”:

A disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that, limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, social and cultural factors, for that individual.”

ICF:

“Body functions” are the physiological functions of body system (including psychological functions).

“Body structures” are anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs and components.

“Activity” is execution of a task or action by an individuals.

“Participation” is involvement in a life situation.

“Environmental factors” make up the physical, social and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives.

“Personal factors” are the particular background of an individual’s life and living, and comprise features of the individual that are not part of a health condition or health states.

The above comparison of ICIDH and ICF concepts shows the following three differences.

The first is the terms used. ICIDH used terms that gave negative images such as impairment, disability and handicap, while ICF uses neutral terms that correspond to or replace the ICIDH terms, namely body functions, body structures, activity and participation. These reflect a neutral approach

to life and living rather than only emphasizing the negative aspects. In relation to the field and site of education, this suggests the importance of understanding and guidance student from neutral or positive viewpoints such as daily living, social participation and independence, and on this basis, the importance of examining the interaction between some components, rather than the negative aspects such as impairments and disabilities and only emphasizing measures to ameliorate them.

The second difference is that ICF has added new components contextual factors -environmental and personal factors-. This enables attribution of the causes of the difficulties experienced by individuals to their external environmental factors and personal characteristics that are not related with disabilities per se, rather than attributing them only to their internal factors such as impairments and disabilities. In relation to education, this suggests the importance of getting involved with student from a broader viewpoint including improvement of their environment, rather than only emphasizing their personal growth and development.

The third difference is the direction of the arrows that connect the components. The ICIDH model proposed a unidirectional causal relationship starting from disease, etc. and leading to impairments, disabilities and handicaps. In comparison, the ICF model uses bi-directional arrows to indicate that the components are interrelated. This suggests that student's daily living comes into being with diverse factors influencing each other, including environmental factors such as their relationships with teachers, or how teachers get involved with them.

2. Trends of use of ICF

As special needs education is being promoted, schools, departments and individuals that use ICF are increasing drastically. The following section overviews how ICF is actually being used.

(1) Use in preparing individualized educational

support plan

ICF is most often used in connection with individualized educational support plan which is an important means for the promotion of special needs education. Many special schools are using ICF quite creatively (Notes 4, 9, 10, 11 and 12). Many of these schools use the *ICF Checklist* (Note 13) for the understanding of the actual situation of student from the broad perspective that marks ICF. In addition, by utilizing ICF's character of being a "common language", they are making efforts to achieved common understanding and collaboration by the student with disabilities, their parents, and those engaged in different fields of work.

The project mentioned below is being conducted by a group including this author in collaboration with a special school. As mentioned, ICF uses neutral terms to as much as possible emphasize the positive aspects than negative. However, in reality, the assessment using ICF items quantifies the degree of difficulty that a person with disabilities has, with the result that it actually highlights its negative or weak aspects (this excludes environmental factors). By taking this problem into account, this school basically uses ICF as assessment standards to understand the actual condition, but based on the knowledge thus gained, it sets hopeful goals of "participation", and prepares a chart that shows the interaction between ICF components (hereinafter referred to as "ICF-Model-Figure"). It is based on such charts that this school prepares the individualized support plan. Figure 3 below is a diagram of goals prepared tentatively by this author in making a proposition. It was prepared based on information obtained prior to visiting the school. At present, this project is still underway. The author however feels that issues and outcomes are coming into view though gradually.

The efforts such as these are for teachers, from their standpoint, to examine individualized educational support plan. There are also efforts made by the parents from their standpoint (Note 14). The latter programs are being prepared through with parents and classroom teachers meeting

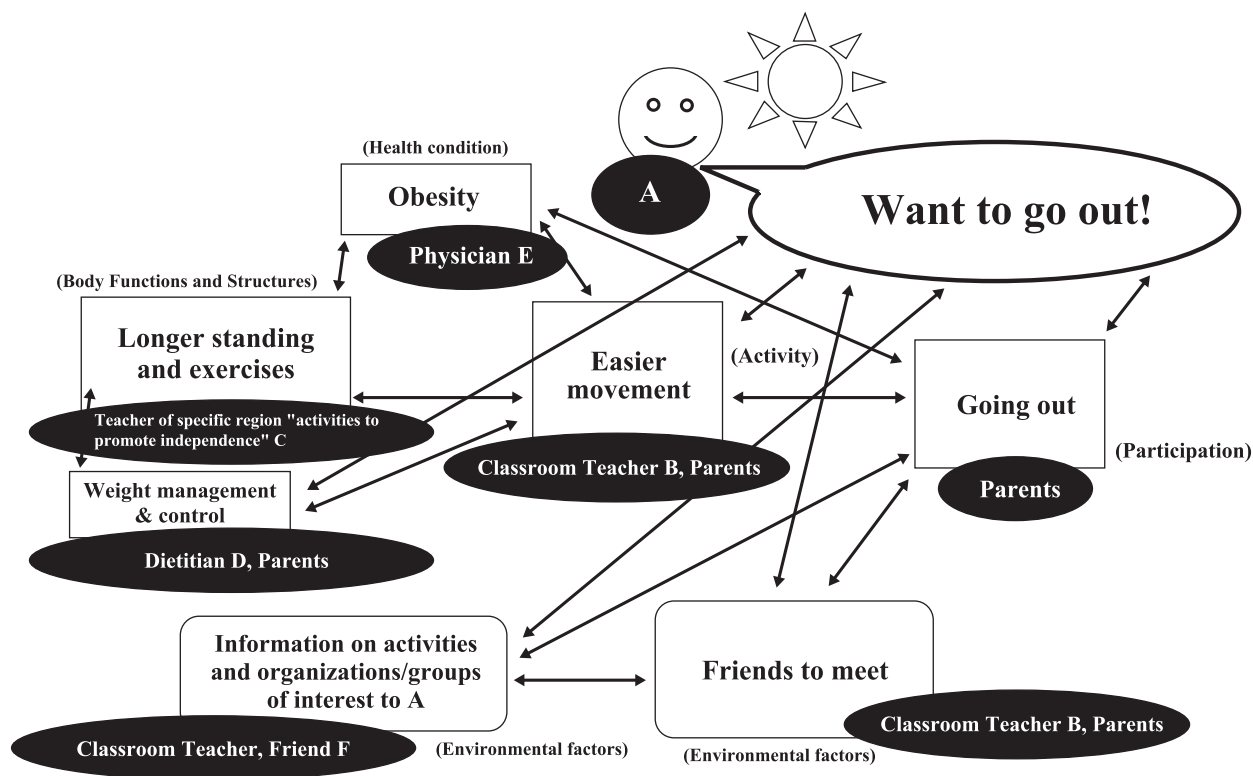


Figure 3. Student A's Goals and Support Plan

and working together, by using tools prepared based on ICF-CY. Measures to make the valuable opportunities for dialog between parents and teachers into something more effective and fruitful are also being examined and proposed by parents.

(2) Use in improving lessons

In addition to the use in preparing individualized educational support plan, ICF is also being utilized in preparing individualized teaching plans and in improving the lessons based on such plan. One special school is utilizing ICF's character of being a "common language" to collaborate with the rehabilitation staff for the enrichment and improvement of the individualized teaching plans. It is also making efforts to improve the lessons by setting goals by preparing ICF-Model-Figure (Note 15). Another special school is identifying issues through the use of individualized educational support plan prepared using ICF and making efforts to solve such issues by setting goals for each type of lesson.

Elsewhere, Sato and Nigi (2006; Note 3)

have reported efforts made to improve lessons through the approach of 1) emphasizing the viewpoint of "participation" in relation to lessons, 2) treating "participation" as the central goal of the individualized educational support plan and 3) making "activity", "body functions" and "body structures" the goals of individualized teaching plans. They also point out the necessity of production of more reports on cases of practical lessons provided using ICF. This author fully agrees with them, and will be actively reporting on such efforts in the future.

(3) Use in understanding and supporting student with disabilities enrolled in regular class

Concerning understanding of and support for the student with disabilities enrolled in regular class, Tokunaga (2005; Note 16) has reported on the possibility of understanding and guiding such student using ICF by pointing out an example of lessons on mathematics attended by student diagnosed as having learning disabilities (LD). Takayama (2005; Note 17) and Shinagawa et al.

ICF-Model-Figure Support Sheet for (name)

Date Prepared: May, 2006

Prepared by:

Health Condition

Autism

1. ICF-Model-Figure Support Sheet (Assessment)

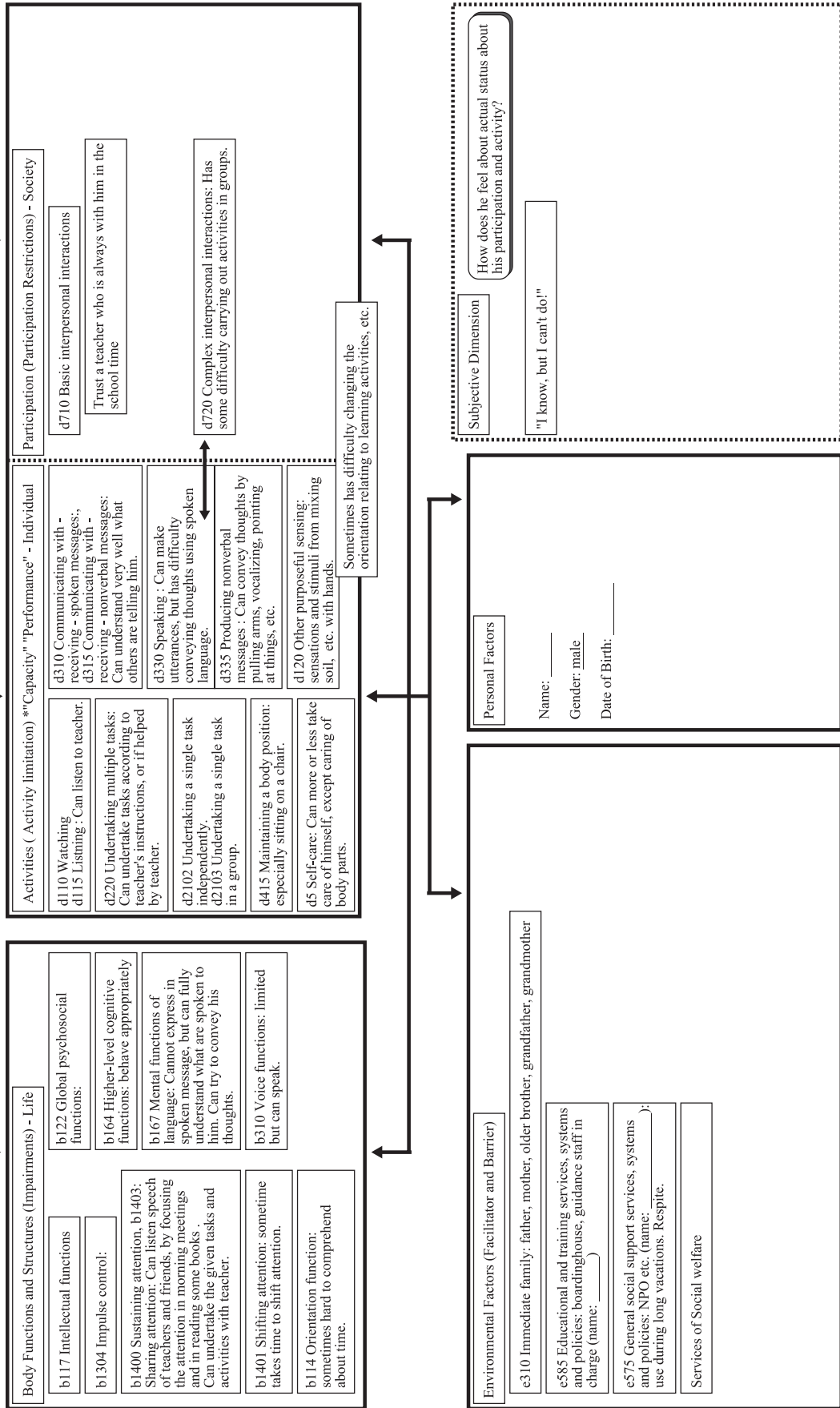


Figure 4. ICF-Model-Figure Support Sheet (Assessment)

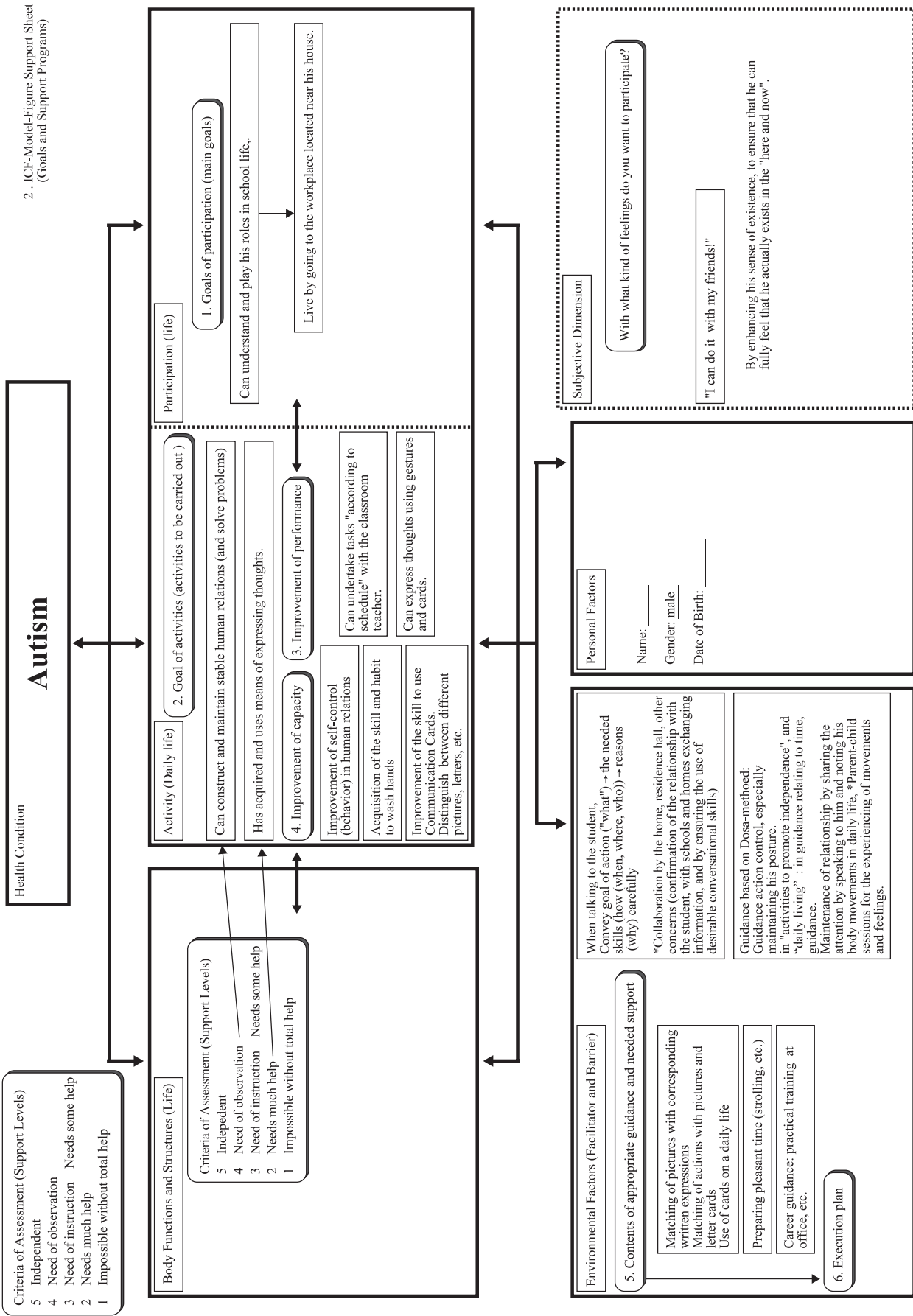


Figure 5. ICF-Model-Figure Support Sheet (Goals and Support Programs)

(2006; Note 18) have pointed out efforts made to actively use ICF not only for the benefit of those having ADHD but also for the understanding and support by their parents. As for the use of ICF in relation to the understanding of and guidance for student enrolled in regular class, cases of guidance based on diagnostic results are lacking. To that extent, the ICF approach that focuses on the difficulties experienced in school life is believed to become useful in the future. For this reason, the project below and mentioned later in detail toward the end of this paper is conducting researches by taking this point into view: NISE Research Studies in Specific Areas “Developmental Research on the use of ICF version Children and Youth (ICF-CY) for Educational Policy” (2006-2007, head researcher: this author).

Concerning support for student enrolled in regular class, there are some special schools that have introduced ICF on new function as center of special needs education in each community, which is one of the major pillars of special needs education (Note 19; Saito 2005). Several special schools are utilizing ICF in the understanding and support in relation to requests for educational consultation received from their areas’ elementary and junior high schools. The following two ICF-Model-Figure Support Sheets are used by Saito who teaches at Yamagata Prefectural Shinjo Special School. He is actually using these sheets in providing educational consultation. He is also attempting their use for the preparation of the individualized educational support plan for the student enrolled in that school.

Both of these sheets consist of two parts as can be seen. In the bottom part, they have set up the item “Subjective Dimension”, which is not included in the present ICF, to represent the emotional aspect of student. Specifically, Saito prepares the first ICF -Model-Figure Support Sheet (titled “Assessment”) based on information obtained from phone calls by teachers of elementary school, etc. at the time of request for consultation. He improves that sheet through meetings with teachers, etc. and by visiting the classroom. And by further consulting with the

teachers etc., he prepares the other ICF -Model-Figure Support Sheet titled “Goals and Support Programs”. Through this process, the parties concerned examine specific solutions.

Lastly in this section, we would like to mention some reports on the use of ICF for the understanding of and support for student who have refused or could not come to school. Ito (2005; Note 20) reports on the use of ICF in the guidance provided, in a special school, to student who had the experience of not being able to make it to the regular school they were enrolled in. After writing this paper, Ito has noted: “Using ICF to get to know the actual situation, I felt it easy to know what issues were involved. I was emphasizing the psychological aspect too much. I came to know that many issues were actually involved, such as environment.” Miyazaki (2004; Note 21) also reports on the use of ICF for the understanding of and support for similar student from the standpoint of a psychology expert.

(4) Other uses of ICF

In March 2006, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) set forth a guideline concerning self- and external evaluation of schools covering compulsory education schools (MEXT 2006; Note 22). Accordingly, it is believed to have become necessary to more properly evaluate the outcomes of guidance relating to special needs education also and to ensure better accountability. Munakata and Kawatani (2005; Note 23) report on the use of ICF scores in evaluating the effects of guidance provided to preschoolers, as an example of use of ICF for evaluation purposes. As for the use of ICF for evaluation of outcomes, similar efforts were being made at a special school in Zurich, Switzerland, that this author visited in 2005. “Evaluation” is also often discussed by the members of the WHO ICF-CY Work Group. Evaluation is thus believed to become an important issue in Japan in the future. We would like to promote researches on the use of ICF for evaluation purposes.

While this is not an example of use of ICF,

we would like to touch on the relationship between ICF and the national curriculum by MEXT in relation to the roles to be played by ICF in school education in the future. The commentary and explanation attached to the said guidelines for national curriculum for special school (1989 version) (MEXT 1992; Note 24) mention the relationship between ICIDH (which preceded ICF) and specific region on curriculum of special school at that time. However, the latest national curriculum for special schools or their commentary and explanation do not clearly refer to “ICF” though they do contain parts that can be construed as revisions in response to the change from ICIDH to ICF. A part of the reason might be overlapping of the period of examination of the national curriculum and that of ICF. In relation to this point, Sakai et al. (2006; Note 25) have reported on the compatibility between the ICF components and the contents of specific region “activities to promote independence” prescribed by the present national curriculum for special schools. The School Education Law was partially revised (promulgation: June 2006) to institutionalize “special needs education”, and a special committee on special needs education was established in the Committee on Curricula, Division for Elementary and Secondary Education, Central Education Council to revise the national curriculum (Note 26). In May 2006, this committee picked up ICF as a topic for discussion, and carried out discussions by referring to the materials provided by NISE (Note 27). The background was as follows. Several members of the committee pointed out the importance of ICF in the meetings prior to May. On this basis, the committee requested NISE, which had been conducting researches on the use of ICF, to supply materials. The mentioned report by Sakai et al. (2006; Note 25) points out the necessity to examine the compatibility of ICF with the national curriculum for regular kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools instead of limiting its application to the guidelines for special schools and “activities to promote independence”. This was based on that “There is widely held misunderstanding that ICF

is only about people with disabilities ; in fact, it is about all people. (2002; Note 28)

3. Issues in using ICF

As mentioned, the number of schools that use ICF has been increasing. This increase however has unveiled problems and issues in addition to achievements. This section deals with four questions which are often asked in relation to the use of ICF, and attempts to deal with the issues in the form of answering these questions.

(1) Is ICF only designed to improve the environment, and not to provide guidance?

This question is very often asked. Some people outrightly criticize that the use of ICF provides no guidance. In such cases, this author answers as follows. The environment is very important for student. However, what is important in education is to provide an environment that would promote student's growth, and not to provide an environment that would allow them to achieve anything without making efforts. In this respect, it will be necessary to carefully examine the environmental factors of each and every child, which include guidance, teaching materials and methods, curricula and ourselves (Tokunaga 2005; Note 29).

In this respect, the teachers' performance to guide and the type of relationship that they have established with the student may become important environmental factors in understanding the actual condition of student with disabilities. Strictly speaking, the present ICF items only deal with the presence or not or the attitude of the professionals who provide support. However, in reality, they could become important factors that directly affect the student's conditions. Saito (2006; Note 30) has pointed out that if the use of ICF ends at this stage, it will become a mere tool to find the criminal so to speak. The teachers vary in the amount of experience. They also have their strengths and weaknesses. There is also the issue of compatibility between the student and the teachers who are

providing education, etc. through Team Teaching. It is for this reason that some have pointed out that ICF covers all people not restricted to persons with disabilities (Note 28). In this respect, it might be necessary to examine if teachers are “participating” fully in providing guidance, and devise measures to improve the situation. Perhaps some teachers are short of “personal factors” such as educational and occupational experiences but are not given enough in-service training opportunities. Or perhaps they have to attend so many meetings and the like and do not have enough time to conduct studies on how to give lessons. Another reason might be that they are surrounded by colleagues who have longer careers and cannot be active themselves. If these are the case, improving these “environmental factors” (i.e., securing of in-service training opportunities, making of improvements in the type of meetings to hold and how to proceed with them, or the number of hours of lesson, or just warm encouragement) could improve “participation” by the teachers in the form of giving guidance. This could lead to more achievements in the area of student guidance.

At any rate, perhaps what is important is to examine the situation from diverse angles including environmental, to enable better or more “participation” from similarly diverse angles. This author believes that there can be no appropriate educational activities without increase or improvement of the “participation” by teachers who are also the main entities of lessons and classes in addition to the student and the sense of achievement that such participation could give them.

(2) Isn't ICF difficult to use for student and persons in early developmental stages?

Tokunaga(2004) has pointed out this possibility.

Firstly, the insufficiency of ICF when it is applied to children and youth has been pointed out internationally. It is for this reason that ICF version for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) as the first derived classification of ICF has been proposed officially (Tokunaga 2006; Note 32). From April to December

2005, this author worked as a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the United States where Professor Rune J. Simeonsson (Ph.D., MSPH.) worked who is the leader of the WHO ICF-CY work group. During that period, we engaged in research activities on ICF-CY itself and its uses. In 2005, this author has submitted, to the said working group, reports, etc. concerning the results of field trials on ICF-CY conducted by covering Japanese concerns as well as a proposal on the use of ICF-CY in the form of a report of the outcomes of the overseas researches. Partly for this reason, the final ICF-CY will be prepared by reflecting the opinions submitted from Japan. The records and achievements in the area of use of ICF by covering Japanese children have been presented in the WHO-FIC Network Meeting held in October 2005 (Note 33). The world's concerns including WHO are focusing their attention on the possibility of utilization ICF-CY.

Many also point out the difficulty of use of ICF in the case of persons in their early developmental stages and those having severe disabilities. However, ICF's original aim is to describe a person's conditions related to Health. For that purpose, ICF can fully be used. Perhaps what these questions actually mean is that, if the ICF classifications are simply applied as criteria of assessment, there will be too many items related with the ICF components (“Body Functions”, “Body Structures”, “Activity” and “Participation”), and it will be difficult to prepare guidance plans in compliance with result of assessment such items. This author can understand this feeling very much in view of his experiences with student that he has dealt with as an teacher of special school. At present, this author is carrying out researches with many persons on the effective use of ICF (2005; Note 34). At the present stage however, we are not able to present clear methodologies. However, this author feels that the researches will lead to the production of specific programs, provision of practical guidance and support, and other forms of achievements, such as by identifying the external

environmental factors that make a person's life and living difficult, or by setting up opportunities and occasions for “participation” believed appropriate for the person in view of his interests, chronological age, etc.

(3) Perhaps ICF lacks something important?

This question concerns the fact that ICF does not cover the subjective dimension of student. However, the fact of the matter is that this question has been decreasing in Japan. The reason might be that this author, who is a head of network to promote utilization ICF and ICF-CY for educational research and practice in Japan, have emphasized by utilizing every opportunity that what is most important in examining the use of ICF is to value the person's feelings, and this is not restricted to school education. In this paper, the person or student's feeling are emphasized in the balloon (“I want to go out!”) in Figure 3, “A’s Goals and Support plan”, and in “Subjective Dimension” in Figures 4 and 5 (Saito 2005). Saito often emphasizes the need to listen to what student are saying almost silently. What he means is that if the student can express in words, rather than accepting what he is saying as is, to try to understand his real feelings, and if the student has difficulty expressing in words, to try to understand what he really wants to say, by closely watching his eye movements, etc. and taking into account his sensibility or sensitivity. This author believes that the support and guidance that emphasize such voices will be far more effective for the student.

WHO is also examining the treatment of the “subjective dimension”. The above-mentioned WHO-FIC Network Meeting held in October 2005 has confirmed preparation of a classification system in a near future, with an international study group and a Japanese study team which have been examining this matter and WHO cooperating (Note 35). This classification system is believed to become a derived classification like ICF-CY, and requires attention in the days to come.

(4) Too many items and difficult terms, hard to use.

This point is still raised. The ICF book is very thick and is not something that can be used by putting it in a pocket and referring to it every time. To cope with this problem, digitalization of the system is being examined for the more efficient and effective use of ICF in understanding and supporting student. This project is being promoted by one called “Designing and Development of a System for Automatic Generation of ICF Diagrams to Support the Preparation of Individualized Educational Support plan”, which is a scientific research subsidized project and headed by NISE's Watanabe (Watanabe 2006; Note 36). Another is being promoted by a digitalization team inside the ICF-CY Japan Network headed by this author. This Network is examining the use of ICF and ICF-CY for the understanding of and support for children .

4. Perspective on Use of ICF

With the increase and spread of use of ICF, from around 2005, questions have been asked about the outcomes achieved after introduction of ICF (see Note 37 for instance). To answer these questions, volunteers including this author who have been examining the use of ICF are now examining how to summarize the issues and outcome so far identified and achieved or solved, for the advancement to the next stage. As part of such efforts, in 2006, Sakai and this author (2006; Note 38) took the initiative in holding a voluntary symposium to discuss the outcomes after ICF introduction in the 44th Convention of the Japanese Association of Special Education. This examination will be continued in the future.

Given the state of use of ICF in Japan so far discussed, the fact that the *Basic Program for Persons with Disabilities* (Cabinet Office, December 2002) expressly states the need to examine measures to use ICF in understanding disabilities and promoting measures, and the fact that ICF-CY is about to be approved officially,

NISE which is the only national center in Japan relating to special needs education has launched an Research Studies in Specific Areas titled “Developmental Research on the use of ICF version Children and Youth (ICF-CY) for Educational Policy“. It is thus promoting examination on the use of ICF-CY in relation to the educational policy implemented by the Japanese Government which promotes special needs education. Specifically, it is carrying out examination based on the following viewpoints, in order to identify urgent measures to contribute toward educational policy as well as to accumulate basic knowledge for the examination of future educational policy. By making the results of such examination public, NISE hopes to make contributions both domestically and internationally.

(1) Use for the improvement and enrichment of the curricula based on concepts whose efficacy has been pointed out, such as the broadness of the viewpoint for the understanding of student.

(2) Use through cooperation by persons in different fields, including the use in preparing individualized educational support plan for which ICF-CY is already being used for being a “common language”.

(3) Use through combination of the past “special education” and regular education based on the idea of exploring solutions to the issues and problems that arise in daily life, by covering all people not restricted to persons with disabilities.

In special needs education, the use of ICF and ICF-CY is increasing for certain. This author, NISE and the ICF-CY Japan Network will closely examine what kind of contributions ICF, ICF-CY and their use can make for the student, their families, and the people near them who are supporting them. We sincerely hope that this would lead to the creation of a convivial society in which everyone would value other persons' personality and individuality irrespective of disabilities, which is also Japan's goal (Note 39) and to the making of contributions toward the international community.

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Effective Transitions from School to Employment for Young People with Intellectual Disabilities in New Zealand

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Abstract: In New Zealand students with intellectual disabilities are increasingly part of the educational mainstream and most have funding and support packages that follow them throughout their schooling. This trend is matched with the expectation that transition from school to employment is a goal that should be within the grasp of school leavers with intellectual disabilities. The New Zealand Disability Strategy clearly articulates the aspirations of both the Government and disabled people in terms of employment being a valued outcome. While actual employment participation rates are still low the past decade has seen a proliferation of initiatives, projects and pilot programmes aimed at developing effective policy and practice. This activity has led to a better understanding of key activities that are likely to enhance employment outcomes. These activities now need to be supported with coherent policy and funding mechanisms.

Keywords: Transition from school, intellectual disabilities, effective practice.

Introduction

This paper begins with an outline of the New Zealand school system and its provision for students with Intellectual disabilities. The current status of young people with intellectual disabilities in regards to their employment is then canvassed. An overview is provided of current educational activities which appear to enhance the likelihood of employment outcomes for this group. Issues and challenges that require further attention are highlighted in the context of transition from school for young people with Intellectual Disabilities.

The New Zealand School System

The population of New Zealand is around four million, twenty percent of whom are indigenous Maori who arrived about 1000 years ago. The Treaty of Waitangi is regarded as the current founding document of New Zealand which was signed by Maori chiefs and England in 1840. New Zealand became a fully independent member of the Commonwealth in 1947.

Government goals for education are to equip New Zealanders with 21st century skills and to

reduce systematic under-achievement. While average student achievement by age 15 is well above the OECD average, the spread of achievement between the highest and lowest achieving students is wider than for many other countries. “Raising achievement and reducing disparity” has therefore become the guiding mission of the Ministry of Education.

The New Zealand School system is largely comprised of state day schools at which attendance is free. There are a total of 2,300 schools (765,000 students) of which 28 are special schools for students with disabilities (2,145 students). All children are able to start school on their fifth birthday, although they do not have to enrol until the day they turn six. All students may leave school when they turn 16, but can stay until the end of the year in which they turn 18. Students with severe disabilities however, may remain at school until the end of the year in which they turn 21.

The last two decades have seen significant reviews and reforms of education involving governance, resourcing and curriculum. A major theme of these reforms has been the devolving of management responsibilities to school boards of trustees elected by parents of students attending

each school, although schools are still required to comply with national regulations and guidelines.

Students with special education needs have had the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools since 1989. Placement in a special school is through a statutory process and requires the agreement of the Secretary of Education. The majority of students with intellectual disabilities are supported through what is known as the Ongoing Reviewable Resourcing Scheme (ORRS). This scheme has been designed to provide a range of educational supports for approximately 1% of students nationally with the highest needs (approximately 7000 students). Access to this support is not via traditional diagnosis or psychometric test scores, but through descriptions of the extent to which learning tasks require adaptation and specialised assistance. The vast majority of students described as having “severe disabilities” are catered for in this way, including those students with intellectual disabilities.

Students in the ORRS scheme have ongoing access (throughout their school life) to teacher aide support, additional (specialist) teacher input and to a range of specialists including psychologists, speech-language therapists, physiotherapists and others. The resources that comprise the ORRS scheme are portable and follow the student wherever they may move in the school system. In addition, schools receiving new first time enrolments under ORRS are able to access resources for property and building modifications to accommodate the new student. Students in the ORRS scheme also attract higher ongoing levels of property funding for those schools at which they are enrolled.

Of the 7,000 students nationally in the Ongoing and Reviewable Resourcing Scheme approximately 73% are attending regular schools with the balance in special schools. Almost 60% of regular schools have students in the ORRS scheme (this includes regular classroom placement and units or special classes). The extent to which regular schools welcome the enrolment of students with special needs varies and it is clear that some parents still

have strong preferences for choosing a special school.

As with any targeted resourcing scheme there are a number of students who do not meet the criteria for the ORRS scheme, but who nevertheless can have quite complex needs. This group would include those students traditionally described as having “mild” and “moderate” levels of intellectual disability and those who have labels such as Aspergers. These students are supported by schools through a range of provisions: every school in New Zealand receives a Special Education Grant (SEG) based on total roll numbers; A Supplementary Learning Support scheme (SLS) provides additional teacher support to those students who are viewed as “just missing out” on eligibility for ORRS; and an Enhanced Programme Fund (EPF) is available to schools which have disproportionate numbers of students described as having “moderate special needs.”

Increasingly a non-categorical, inclusive approach to special education is taking hold in New Zealand implying that every school should develop in ways that enable it to respond appropriately to the full range of diversity in the community it serves. The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making a World of Difference (2001) has provided a major impetus for such an approach as the Government has required all Ministries and Departments to report annually on the progress being made to meet the objectives outlined in the strategy. The Disability Strategy has a specific objective for education:

“To provide the best education for disabled people” (objective 3). There are three associated actions that have particular relevance for special education:

- i) Ensure that no child is denied access to their local regular school because of their impairment (3.1)
- ii) Improve schools’ responsiveness to and accountability for the needs of disabled students (3.6)
- iii) Promote appropriate and inclusive

educational settings that will meet individual educational needs (3.7)

The Disability Strategy is explicitly aimed at achieving a more inclusive society and is informed by an understanding of disability as a socially constructed phenomenon rather than something that exists inside a disabled person. As a consequence disability is viewed not as something that people have, but as something that happens to people: a process that happens when one group of people create barriers for others in terms of access to places, activities and opportunities usually taken for granted.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy has begun to have a significant influence on how the Ministry of Education (through its Special Education division) defines the outcomes it is seeking to achieve for special education in New Zealand. Intermediate outcomes have been defined as presence, participation and quality learning which are seen as leading to achievement, community participation and, significantly, workforce participation for young people with special needs.

Employment and Young People with Intellectual Disabilities

Participation in the paid workforce by people with intellectual disability is at minimal levels, possibly below 20% of an estimated 13,000 adults with intellectual disability in New Zealand. This does not include the approximately 8,000 adults participating in sheltered employment and other community day support programmes. Accurately assessing workforce participation levels for this group is difficult because there is little available data which has a specific focus on intellectual disability and there are also inherent difficulties and wide variations in prevalence studies (Bray, 2003).

There are around 1500-2000 adults with intellectual disability in paid employment through supported employment programmes and other job placement activities. Most employment is part time. It is likely that a substantial number of

these individuals are younger adults because of a continuing focus on transition from school to work which has been gathering momentum for at least the past 5 years.

There are a range of Government assisted programmes that support disabled people into paid employment and other post-school options, including young people with intellectual disabilities. A range of vocational, employment and community services are purchased by Government. These include supported employment, job placement, sheltered work and community or “day” support programmes.

Currently sheltered workshops are exempt under legislation from having to pay the minimum wage. Also, in situations where it is perceived that a person’s productivity is below what is expected for the market wage an “under rate workers permit” can be secured by the employer which allows the person to be paid below the minimum wage. Both these situations are under review with calls for the legislation to be repealed. This would mean that all disabled people would have to be paid at least the minimum wage, including those currently employed by sheltered workshops. People with intellectual disabilities are a significant group of participants in sheltered workshops and in situations where under rate work permits apply.

Sheltered workshops and congregate community support or “day” programmes are the main post-school options currently utilised by young people with intellectual disabilities. However there is continuing growth of supported employment, job placement and more individualised approaches to supported community participation and community living.

An increasingly inclusive educational experience and a focus on transition activities by secondary schools that assume a more inclusive post-school experience are leading to a corresponding increase in demand for a wider range of more individualised and inclusive post school options – including paid employment. Evidence of these developments include a growing array of

collaborations between secondary schools and post school providers, and the decision by an increasing number of sheltered workshops and community day support services to “convert” programmes (in anticipation of legislative changes) to supported employment, job placement and more individualised approaches to supported community participation.

Some of these developments are being supported by Government through a significant number of transition pilot programmes as part of its “Pathways to Inclusion” strategy (Department of Labour, 2001). The focus of “Pathways to Inclusion” is to align the current array of vocational services so that outcomes being achieved are consistent with the objectives of the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

The intent of the transition pilot programmes is to gain a better understanding of what programmes and strategies are effective in this context. In the mean time there is a chronic shortage of post-school support services that respond to the increasing demand for more inclusive and individualised options, including paid employment. A coherent funding and purchasing strategy along with effective service coordination mechanisms are urgent requirements if emerging best practice is to be reinforced and sustained.

Supported employment is clearly emerging as the model most likely to achieve positive employment outcomes for young people with intellectual disabilities (Bennie, 1996; Bray 2003; Mirfin-Veitch, 2003). This is because the supported employment approach is highly individualised, inclusive and assumes the possibility of ongoing support being provided. Not surprisingly, secondary schools that have well developed partnerships with local supported employment providers are achieving the most promising employment outcomes.

The current environment holds some exciting possibilities for new service developments and also some very real challenges: young people with intellectual disabilities are not only making the transition from school to adulthood, but also the transition from one service system to another, and

at a time when the policies and services designed to provide support following school are themselves in transition.

Current Educational Activities that Enhance Effective Transition to Employment

There are a wide range of activities undertaken in educational settings in New Zealand that have been found to increase the possibility of young people with intellectual disabilities transitioning from school into paid employment. Transition from school has long been a recognised speciality within the broader context of service provision. As a result, what constitutes best practice has been described comprehensively in the literature for some time (Haugh, 1993; Wehman, 1993). Mirfin-Veitch (2003) has provided a more recent overview of developments in New Zealand and those directly involved in providing transition services in this country have developed resources that guide practitioners (Career Moves, 2005). Based on this collective work we are able to identify a number of key activities and practices that enhance the likelihood of successful transition from school to employment.

Transition planning that begins around the age of 14

This appears to establish a critical platform from which to develop goals and learning experiences that prepare the young person for the world of paid work. While more active transition planning may be a feature in the last two years of school it is this early start that provides the opportunity for genuine goals and aspirations to develop that include the possibility of employment. It is important to recognise that the values, attitudes and behaviours that lead us to the world of work evolve throughout childhood and young adulthood, not just in the year before we leave school. Young people with intellectual disabilities must also benefit from experiences that evolve over time as apposed

to having these compressed into a one or two year “transition programme.”

Parents as integral members of the “team.”

For parents the transition from school can be a daunting time when the normal anxieties around parenting teenagers are complicated by the vulnerabilities and barriers that young people with intellectual disabilities may experience. In addition there is a whole new world of post-school service providers, new funding systems to grapple with and the possibility that there may be multiple providers involved in different support roles – each wanting to ensure parent involvement. Many parents report that in such a context they often become the default (unpaid) service coordinator.

Including parents as active and contributing members of the transition planning team from the beginning is essential. Again, this can be problematic if transition planning is compressed into the last year or two of school. There may be anxieties and issues that need time to work through and options that need exploring. In addition the range of post-school options, including employment support, is constantly evolving and changing. The pattern of post-school support services that emerges as the point of transition approaches can also lead to significant lifestyle decisions for parents in terms of their support roles.

An inclusive school experience with access to a functional age appropriate curriculum

A school curriculum that potentially views the whole community as the classroom is critical to successful transition. Curriculum content that is focused on the skills, knowledge and supports that will be necessary in those settings the student will be in upon leaving school greatly enhance the possibilities of workforce participation. Age appropriate and functional curriculum content has long been cited as an important prerequisite to successful workforce and wider community participation (Brown et al, 1979). In this context access to and friendships with age group peers

are essential for the development of normative expectations and aspirations that include paid work along with personal networks that are essential for life in the community at large. Age group peers are also potential employers!

A functional curriculum assumes that educators are able to successfully adapt and modify content and context. There is considerable activity in New Zealand at present around developing approaches and resources that enable young people with intellectual disabilities to experience real achievement in their learning and arm them with the skills and knowledge that they will need in the workplace and in the community at large.

Incorporating a strong and varied work experience focus.

Such experiences need to begin from around age 15 and be in community settings. These opportunities need to be well supported by both the school and local employers. Some secondary schools have well established partnerships with local employers so that a range of work experience settings are available on an ongoing basis. In some communities local supported employment providers are also providing a link between schools and employers, making the possibility of after school jobs a real option. For the schools part it is also essential that students with disabilities are included in school wide career and work experience opportunities.

Work experience is an important element not only for the individual student to explore options and acquire skills, but also for educators and post school providers to learn about optimal support strategies, modifications and adaptations that will be needed by the young person in the workplace.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that become Individual Transition Plans or Career Plans

By developing such a focus a change in orientation is introduced that makes explicit the outcomes that are now being sought after many years at school. This ensures that learning goals,

planning activities and support strategies match the vision that paid work is indeed a desirable and attainable outcome. Transition or career plans enable us to listen carefully to the aspirations and preferences of the young person, be explicit about the supports that will be necessary in the workplace and to seek a “match” on this basis.

Planning processes that are individualised, empowering and future orientated.

This is essential if a shared vision that includes employment is to develop. The PATH process - Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (Pearpoint, O’Brien and Forrest, 1991) and its variations, has been adopted widely in New Zealand as a tool that appears to work well to achieve a positive view of the future and that propels those involved into action to achieve agreed goals.

PATH is a process that includes the whole team (student, family, friends, educators and providers) and requires skilled facilitation (a point often overlooked). Usually two facilitators are needed to ensure a positive process for participants and an accurate record of the planning session. This is because the PATH record involves words and pictures combined into a large poster or graphic. The process starts by identifying a vision of the future with identified outcomes, looks at where things are at now, who needs to be enrolled for support, what is needed to strengthen resolve as well as short and long term goals and how the team will support each other in attaining these. As well as a vehicle for developing a detailed transition plan the PATH process also has the effect of building and sustaining team work in pursuit of a common goal.

The development of collaborations and partnerships between schools and the providers of post-school support services.

In the context of achieving employment outcomes relationships between schools and supported employment providers are showing the most promise. In some cases protocols have been

developed that spell out roles and responsibilities for activities such as facilitating transition planning meetings, career planning, finding work experience placements, providing job coaches, employer liaison and communication with parents. In this context supported employment can actually begin at school. The result is a transition process that becomes a shared responsibility between the agencies involved.

The development of these relationships usually require that some work is done to arrive at a shared vision and values. Such collaborations evolve over time and rely on sustained leadership from the organisations involved. Currently there is a lack of clarity around funding mechanisms and responsibility for transition activities which makes the task of establishing partnerships between schools and post-school agencies problematic. Much current activity operates under the auspices of “pilot projects” which creates a level of uncertainty in which more permanent collaborations are difficult to develop.

A coherent funding and purchasing strategy is a critical next step to enable more widespread implementation of practices and programmes that are known to achieve employment outcomes – as well as more certainty for young people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Transition “expos” and information forums.

These events have usually grown out of the collaborations already mentioned and are aimed at ensuring that various stakeholders have all the information they need. Forums are provided in which post school providers share information about their services and programmes, schools provide information about transition activities and parent support groups provide information and parent perspectives. All participants, particularly parents, find these events very useful and contribute to much more informed decision making. They are also a useful way of highlighting service and information gaps in a particular community. Many of these forums have been the catalysts for further collaborations among schools and agencies. Service

directories have often been published as a result of these events.

Given the current uncertainty around service provision and funding these forums are proving to be an essential ingredient in helping people keep abreast of the constantly changing landscape of programmes provided by post-school agencies.

Ensuring that transition is more than just “transition to work,” but transition to adult life and broader participation in the community at large.

Securing and sustaining paid employment for young people with intellectual disabilities can be an extraordinarily challenging enterprise. In the absence of full time paid employment, options that include further education and training, leisure, recreation and voluntary work are essential components of a valued and well supported life in the community – and therefore need also to be a focus of transition planning. The tendency in New Zealand is to respond to these needs by way of congregate “day programme” type options rather than exploring more individualised and supported options that are consistent with the vision of an inclusive community.

Young people with intellectual disabilities are making it clear that they share the aspirations of their age group peers for access to the world of work on the same basis as everyone else. Access to “an ordinary life” also includes participation in the broader life of the community and in ways that people feel valued and included. Parents are also making it increasingly clear that there is a pronounced scarcity of post-school services that are able to effectively support their sons and daughters participation in a range of inclusive work, further education and leisure/recreation options (To Have an Ordinary life, 2003).

Promising practices and programmes are emerging, including supported participation of young people with intellectual disabilities in tertiary “life skills” and foundation education courses, membership in clubs and organisations

and the opportunity to contribute to the life of the community through volunteer work.

There is still some considerable movement required to reach a point where such options are the norm rather than the exception.

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