

NISE Newsletter

for Special needs Education in the Asia-Pacific

No.30

December, 2010

Greetings from the President

Special needs education in Japan is now entering its 4th year since the School Education Law was revised officially. We have seen advances in education over this time, including the revision of national curriculum guidelines, with some elements of this effort already put into practice. And next year marks the commencement of the third mid-term plans period for our Institute.

As the only national research center for special needs education in Japan, international exchange activities are one of the core aspects of the activities of the institute, which include exchanges with other public institutions including the national centers and research institutions in overseas, and administrators and researchers in other countries.

Remarkably, this year marks the 30th consecutive year of the Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Education for Individuals with Special Needs that has been contributing to support the education of children with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region along with the publication of the Journal of Special Education in the Asia Pacific (JSEAP) in collaboration with other nations. The activities include the provision of in-service training to the teachers from Malaysia, under the Japan-Malaysia Economic Partnership Agreement, the acceptance of a student from Germany under the research collaboration agreement with the University of Cologne, the establishment of NISE international adviser system, the hosting of annual NISE-KNISE seminar under a research collaboration agreement with the Korea National Institute for Special

Education, as well as the acceptance of many other foreign visitors.

In Japan, the Council of Disability Policy Reform was established by cabinet approval on December 8th, 2009 to discuss intensively on the reform the fundamental policy for individuals with disabilities. The “Special Committee on Special Needs Education” was also established by the Elementary and Lower Secondary Education Working Group of the Central Council for Education, to investigate needed special needs education reforms, based on principles of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, such as an inclusive education system.

In the institute’s new mid-term plans, we will seek international cooperation activities including new international seminars regarding an inclusive education system, further exchange activities with foreign research institutions and researchers.

The National Institute of Special Needs Education will continue to play its role as the only national center of this kind in Japan, and will endeavor to further contribute to the goal of education which meets the needs of every child with disabilities.

Lastly but not least, I thank you all for your continued support and cooperation toward the common goals.

ODA Yutaka

President

National Institute of Special Needs Education

Research Activities Scheduled for Fiscal 2010

The institute has established and administering a research system to drive and conduct well defined and systematic research projects based on our mid and long term strategies.

(1) Research Activities based on mid and long term strategies

The “basic research strategic plan” was compiled in 2008 to provide a systematic summary of the research categories undertaken at the institute in order to fulfill our role strategically and dynamically as the national center for special needs education.

The plan covers research categories based on government policy and current issues arising at schools, as well as research categories with our mid and long term strategies, to provide comprehensive and practical research on special needs education. Research in fiscal 2010 will reflect this basic research strategic plan.

(2) Driving Systematic and well defined Research

Since fiscal 2008, research has been categorized into “research units” comprised of the researchers which are best suited to the purpose and category of the research, creating a highly flexible and dynamic

research system which drives systematic and methodical research. There are 13 research units in 5 research categories, arranged into multi-disciplinary themes according to individual specialties.

(3) Research category

Research activities at the institute are carried out across 9 categories in 5 groups, including Core Research (Specialized Research A, Specialized Research B, Specialized Research C, Specialized Research D), Externally Funded Research, Entrusted Research, and Collaborative Research. Core Research on Specialized Research A and Specialized Research B is carried out jointly by all research units. Specialized Research A deals with a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary theme which is common to all disabilities and which contributes to the promotion of special needs education. Conversely, Specialized Research B specializes by type of disability and contributes to a current issue faced by that type of disability. Within this framework, themes which are of particular importance to government policy or in education are given our greater focus as the Key Researches.

2010 Research Titles

A total of 17 themes have been undertaken as research projects in fiscal 2010, eight of which come under Specialized Research A and nine of which come under Specialized Research B. Among them, Four themes were classified as Key Researches. 14 themes were new for fiscal 2010 and 3 themes were continued from fiscal 2009.

Presented below are the research subjects and periods for the 17 themes under Specialized Research A and B.

A. Key Research

- 1) Practical study on Curriculum Development based on the New National Curriculum Guidelines at Schools for Special Needs Education (FY 2010-2011) (Specialized Research A)
- 2) Study on Curriculum for Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities Who Belong to an Upper Secondary Department of a Special Needs School (Intellectual Disabilities) (FY 2010-2011) (Specialized Research B)

- 3) Experimental Study on Curriculum Development based on “Curriculum Assessment” (Tentative Title) of Students with Autism in Classes for Special Needs Education (FY 2010-2011) (Specialized Research B)
- 4) Practical Study on Support in School Education for Children with Developmental Disabilities - Continuity of support from early childhood education through upper secondary school education (FY 2010-2011) (Specialized Research B)

B. Specialized Research A

- 1) Basic Research on the Future Education of Children with Disabilities - For the Practice of Inclusive Education in Conformity with Japanese Society (FY 2009-2010)
- 2) Study on the Use of ICF-CY in Special Needs Education - With a focus on demonstration and dissemination of proposed methods for the use of ICF-CY (FY 2010-2011)
- 3) Experimental study on effective school evaluation based on specific characteristics of schools for special needs education (FY 2010-2011)
- 4) Comprehensive Study for Improvement of Support Systems at Schools for Special Needs Education - Survey and research on use and improvement of systems in special needs education (FY 2010)
- 5) Practical study on Curriculum Development based on the New National Curriculum Guidelines at Schools for Special Needs Education (FY 2010-2011)
- 6) Study on an Integrated Support System for Children with Disabilities - Establishment and verification of support for children with developmental disabilities from an earlier stage to social participation (FY 2010)
- 7) Development of Support Programs for Career Guidance and Vocational Education Provided at Upper Secondary Departments of Special Needs Schools (Advanced Courses) (FY 2010-2011)
- 8) Implementation and Evaluation Study on the Use of Assistive Technology (AT) in the Classroom for Responding to Diverse Needs of Children with Disabilities (FY 2009-2010)

C. Specialized Research B

- 1) Study on Education to Meet the Individual Needs of Children with Multiple Disabilities in Schools for Special Needs Education - Investigating the current state and examining the educational framework for children with multiple disabilities (FY 2009-2010)
- 2) Study on Guidance and Support for Students with Visual Impairment Enrolled in Elementary and Lower Secondary Schools (FY 2010)
- 3) Study on Guidance and Support for Children with Mild or Moderate Hearing Impairment (FY 2010-2011)
- 4) Study on Development of the Contents and Methods of Guidance and Support in Regular Classes for Children with Speech and Language Disorders According to the Characteristics of the Disabilities - Through collaboration between regular classes and special needs services in resource rooms (FY 2010-2011)
- 5) Study on Subject Teaching for Students with Physical/motor Disabilities Considering the Characteristics of the Disabilities - To develop the ability to express (FY 2010-2011)
- 6) Study on Creating Support Networks for Sick Children and Information-Sharing Using the Functions of Schools or Special Needs Education (for Health Impairments) as a Resource Center (FY 2010-2011)
- 7) Study on Curriculum for Children with Mild Intellectual Disabilities Who Belong to an Upper Secondary Department of a Special Needs School (Intellectual Disabilities) (FY 2010-2011)
- 8) Experimental Study on Curriculum Development based on “Curriculum Assessment” (Tentative Title) of Students with Autism in Classes for Special Needs Education (FY 2010-2011)
- 9) Practical Study on Support in School Education

for Children with Developmental Disabilities
- Continuity of support from early childhood
education through upper secondary school
education (FY 2010-2011)

10) Study on Relationship between Developmental
Disabilities and Emotional Disturbance and
Educational Support - Focusing on measures to
prevent secondary disabilities (FY 2010-2011)

Report on National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminars I & II 2009

(1) National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar I



The institute held the National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar I at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center over 2 days on January 25th (Mon) and 26th (Tue), 2010. This year's theme was "Innovations in Curriculum Development for Improvement of Special Needs Education - Adapting to the New National Curriculum Guidelines".

New educational guidelines for kindergartens, national curriculum guidelines for elementary and lower secondary schools were announced in March 2008, in which importance of special needs education in regular schools also mentioned. This was followed in March 2009 by new national curriculum guidelines for upper secondary schools and special needs schools. Accordingly, the following program was drawn up to consider how to implement curriculum development in schools, under the meaning of these new national curriculum guidelines.

On the first day, after the official lecture of the Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology(MEXT) titled "The State of Special Needs Education Administration" presented by Mr. SAITO Naoki, Director of the Special Needs Education Division at the MEXT, the keynote lecture was presented by Prof. KUDO Bunzo (Head of the Department for Elementary and Secondary Education Research at the National Institute for Educational Policy Research), titled "Seeking Continuous Study in Schools - Implementing the New National Curriculum Guidelines." Prof. Kudo spoke on the character of the Japanese curriculum, its development and implementation whilst maintaining continuity in schools, and ways to evaluate and improve this. A symposium followed under the title "To Promote Special Needs Education – Where we are, and issues for each type of schools." Participants were Mr. TANAKA Makoto, Chairman of the Special Needs Education Committee at the Japan Federation of Primary School Principals Association, Mr. TAKISHIMA Jun'ichi, Head of the National Principals' Association of the Schools with Classes for Special Needs Education, and Mr. IWAI Yuuichi, Head of the National Special Needs School Principals Association, and all perspectives were expressed.

During the morning of the second day, a lecture was given by Mr. SHISHIDO Kazushige, a School Inspector from the MEXT, titled "How does special needs education fit in the new curriculum?," followed by a debate on the keynote address and symposium from the first day led by Dr. NISHIMAKI Kengo, a

Research Director at the institute. In the afternoon, a discussion was held on the future of special needs education, mixed with themes from sub-sessions.

The 3 sub-sessions dealt with the keywords: autism, career education, and multiple disabilities, and a vigorous discussion was held on the practicalities of the new curriculum in which all participants were able to engage in a wide range of issues.

Additionally, lunch on the second day was accompanied by a poster display on the research of the institute completed in fiscal 2008.

The seminar was attended by more than 700 participants.

(2) National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar II



The institute held the 2009 National Institute of Special Needs Education Seminar II at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center on February 26th (Fri), 2010. The purpose of the seminar was to disseminate details and results of research activities undertaken by the institute.

Under the theme "Practical methods of guidance and support for special needs education," reports were made on the following 4 research projects being worked on by the institute as Key Research and Specialized Research A. Key Research projects are specialized research projects at the institute which have a particularly important or current focus. Specialized Research A projects are not specific to a type of disability, but cover general research for the promotion of special needs education, or tackle issues

which are common to several types of disabilities.

After presenting an overview of the research system of the institute, a report was made to all attendees of the seminar on individualized education support plans and teaching plans which are based on a report on the adoption of ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) produced by "Study on the Use of ICF-CY in Special Needs Education" (Specialized Research A), and common practices to handle increased demand.

In the afternoon, sub-session 1 dealt with understandable lesson planning using support plans based on the project "Study on support for subject teaching for children with developmental disabilities in elementary and lower secondary schools" (Key Research), along with visual presentations of actual implementations in elementary and lower secondary schools. Sub-session 2 presented support tools based on nationwide survey on career guidance and vocational education, from the project "Study on improvement of career guidance and vocational education for children with disabilities" (Specialized Research A). Finally, sub-session 3 sought to convey research results by providing practical experience of assessment of vision and communication in children with severe and multiple disabilities, in a workshop format, based on the project "Research on assessment of children with multiple disabilities" (Specialized Research A).

Research results from fiscal 2008 were presented in the form of posters, allowing participants to exchange opinions.

The seminar was attended by 910 people, exceeding the capacity in the morning session and requiring a video feed to a second hall which was almost filled.

The themes attracted a great deal of interest from a broad range of participants involved in special needs education, as well as teachers from non-special needs schools, and guardians.

Report on the 10th KNISE and NISE Seminar on Special Education

This seminar, which is hosted alternately by NISE and the Korea National Institute for Special Education, or KNISE also reached a turning point this year, marking its 10th year.

The 10th KNISE and NISE Seminar on Special Education was held from February 8th (Mon) to 11th (Thu), 2010, at the Korea National Institute for Special Education.

The main theme for the event was "Textbook development processes and content for children with disabilities," which was split into 3 sub-themes, namely 1. "Overview of textbook systems for children with disabilities," 2. "Textbook systems for children with intellectual disabilities," and 3. "Textbook material development systems for children

with visual impairment." Presentations were made by 3 representatives from Japan and Korea respectively.

The Korea National Institute for Special Education utilized the opportunity to combine the event with in-service training for special education teachers, and approximately 50 participants listened enthusiastically to presentations. The participants consist of administrative staffs in special education, special education teachers, as well as faculty members of universities.

A question and answer session was held following the event, in which there was lively discussion particularly of the Japanese presentations, and a high level of interest.

World Autism Awareness Day

This is now the third World Autism Awareness Day and awareness activities are steadily expanding. The total membership at this year's symposium organized by the Japan Executive Committee of the United Nations University in Tokyo was 361 people, exceeding that of the previous year.

We are seeing more and more educational activities across the country, with 29 events last year vastly increasing to 92 events this year. We look forward to yet more activities to deepen the understanding of autism amongst the general public in all regions. However, it is disappointing that so few educational institutions have organized or supported events to raise awareness of autism both this year and last.

The event "World Autism Day 2010 in Yokosuka - Find out about Autism" was organized by the

Special Needs School for Children with Autism, University of Tsukuba and the National Institute of Special Needs Education, to promote awareness in the area, and attracted 193 participants. Many participants were families with children, and the aim of raising awareness of autism was fairly well accomplished. A video and questionnaire on this can be found on the institute's special website.

At the Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Education for Individuals with Special Needs which was organized by the National Institute of Special Needs Education in December 2009, participants from all nations added their message for World Autism Day. The messages represent 13 nations, so please take a look.

<http://www.nise.go.jp/waad/message.html>

Topics on International Exchange Activities in NISE

The institute hosts the Asia-Pacific International Seminar on Education for Individuals with Special Needs and welcomes researchers from foreign countries.

The institute continues to engage in information sharing and exchange, such as consulting with Dr. Gill Richards of the School of Education at Nottingham Trent University (UK) (formally received under the overseas researcher acceptance plan under Research Director NAKAZAWA Megue from May 18th to May 22nd 2009) based on the collaboration on new projects starting this year.

In addition, this year we received a visit from a delegation from Thailand. The party of six was led by Ms. Sudhasinee Vajrabul, Deputy Secretary General of the Education Council at the Thailand Ministry of Education, and arrived on July 6th (Tue). They engaged in a research exchange with members

of the institute on general topics in special needs education in Japan, education policy for children with disabilities, and teacher training programs. Additionally, on September 14th (Tue), administrative officials and researchers were received from Afghanistan, Thailand and Vietnam, to create research links on the subject of “Special Needs Education” in Asia, as organized by the Yokohama National University and JICA.



Recent Topics on Special Needs Education in Japan

The Council of Disability Policy Reform was established by cabinet approval on December 8th, 2009 in order to focus reform of the system for individuals with disabilities in Japan. Additionally, the “Special Committee on Special Needs Education” was established by the Elementary and Lower Secondary Education Working Group of the Central Council for Education to conduct an expert investigation into special needs education based on the principles of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the 1st committee was held on July 20th, 2010 (Tue).

The purpose of this is to conduct an expert investigation into special needs education based on

the principles of the Convention. Important matters for study are 1) required reforms to the system of school attendance and decisions on school entry, based on the principles of the Convention providing an inclusive education system, 2) provision of a system and environment appropriate for the above reformed system, 3) policies to ensure and raise the level of teaching staff providing education and support to meet the characteristics and needs of children with disabilities, and 4) other related issues.

Ms. NAKAZAWA Megue, a Research Director in the Department of Policy and Planning at NISE will also participate as a member of the special committee.



From the Editors

As mentioned in the President's foreword, the institute is entering a new mid-term plan period from next year. This change will probably mean some things will differ from recent years, such as the way the institute contributes to special needs education in the Asia-Pacific region. But even if the way that we work changes, we are strongly convinced that the Japan National Institute for Special Needs Education will continue to contribute to the development of education for children with special educational needs, as a member driving special needs education in the Asia-Pacific region in new era.

Please visit us at NISE's English Top Page

http://www.nise.go.jp/en/index_e.html

You will also find our International Exchange Page in English

<http://www.nise.go.jp/en/international.html>

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