

NISE Newsletter

for Special needs Education in the Asia-Pacific

No.29

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1. Foreword - Building a National Center for Special Needs Education

We are pleased to present the publication of NISE Newsletter No. 29.

Since the enactment of the law on special needs education in fiscal 2007 the National Institute of Special Needs Education has focused on research activities to deal with government policy and needs arising in the educational interface, as the sole national center for special needs education. We aim to make real progress in training of teaching staff in a leadership position across all regions of Japan, educational counseling in the field of clinical research, dissemination of information including research results, and international exchanges such as secondment of researchers to various nations and international services, with participation of all members. We are also working to contribute to the provision of education which meets the needs of every child with developmental disabilities.

In fiscal 2008, a basic research plan was decided on and steady progress was made towards achieving our medium term objectives and projects, including the launch of a website for the Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and establishment of a teacher's conference of education for children with developmental disabilities.

The Japanese government also have plans

to promote a range of substantial policies for the implementation of special needs education concepts in Japan, including the signing of conventions relating to the rights of people with disabilities and providing bulletins on new national curriculum guidelines, as well as the publication of medium term settlements in conference of survey research collaborators deliberations relating to the promotion of special needs education.

Fiscal 2009 will be devoted to the active execution of all special needs education policies whilst founded on national policies, such as active expansion of research activities under the basic research plan, execution of short training courses for license renewal, acting on opportunities to receive educational counseling from Japanese schools abroad, and providing information via the Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities website.

We hope that via this newsletter and our website, we offer a range of information which highlights special needs education, including information on the Institute's research activities and information on national special needs education policies.

Thank you for reading.

ODA Yutaka, President

National Institute of Special Needs Education

2. Research Activities Scheduled for Fiscal 2009

Research at the institute is progressing via the setting of a “basic research plan” to ensure execution of research with a mid- to long-term perspective, the introduction of a research team system to drive systematic and methodical research, and focusing on these activities.

◆ Basic Research Plan and Research Activities

The “basic research plan” was decided on in 2008 and provides a systematic summary of the research themes undertaken at the institute in order to fulfill our role as a strategic and dynamic national center for special needs education.

The plan covers research themes to deal with government policy and current needs arising in the education interface as well as research themes with a mid- to long-term perspective, to provide comprehensive and practical research on special needs education.

Research in fiscal 2009 will make progress based on this basic research plan.

◆ Introduction of Research Teams

Research has been categorized into “research teams” comprised of the researchers which are best suited to the purpose and field of the research, creating a highly flexible and dynamic research system (conditions) which enables scrutiny of strategies and policies to drive forward the basic research plan, as well as systematic and methodical research.

There are 13 research teams in 5 research fields which have been arranged in consideration of multi-disciplinary themes and specialties.

◆ Research Categories

Research activities at the institute are carried out across 9 fields in 5 categories: core research (specialized research A, specialized research B, specialized research C, specialized research D), externally funded research, entrusted research, and collaborative research.

Institute-wide core research is carried out by research teams on specialized research A and specialized research B. 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 the educational interface are given greater focus as key research.

◆ Research Themes for Fiscal 2009

With the expansion of the research system since fiscal 2008 using research teams, a total of 18 themes have been undertaken over fiscal 2009 including 8 general research themes under specialized research A and 10 themes under specialized research B. Of these, 4 were classed as key research. 5 themes were new for fiscal 2009 and 13 themes were continued from fiscal 2008.

3. 2009 Research Titles

Key Research

(1) Study on curricula in schools for special needs education -Teaching children with multiple disabilities and an integrated course of study covering primary through upper secondary

departments- 2008-2009

(2) Study on an integrated support system for children with disabilities -Highlighting support for developmental disorders in the upper secondary education- 2008-2009

- (3) Practical study on the content of instruction and teaching methods for autistic children -Focusing on special support classes in primary and lower secondary schools- 2008-2009
- (4) Study on curricular education and other support for children with developmental disabilities in primary and lower secondary schools 2008-2009

Specialized Research A

- (1) Practical study on the use of ICF-CY in special needs education 2008-2009
- (2) Study on brain science applicable to education for children with disabilities 2007-2009
- (3) Basic Research on the Future Education of Children with Disabilities -For the Practice of Inclusive Education in Conformity with Japanese Society- 2009-2010
- (4) Substantive study on effective school evaluation based on specific characteristics of schools for special needs education 2009-2010
- (5) Study on the improvement of the career guidance and the vocational education 2008-2009
- (6) Implementation and evaluation study on the use of assistive technology (AT) in the classroom for responding to diverse needs of children with disabilities 2009-2010

Specialized Research B

- (1) Study on Education to Best Meet the Individual Needs of Children with Multiple Disabilities in Schools for Special Needs Education 2009-2010
- (2) Study on qualitative improvement of course instruction for children with visual impairments enrolled in schools for special needs education and regular schools 2008-2009
- (3) Study on teaching and evaluation in school for the deaf -Aiming at improvement of teaching methods including the use of sign language and upgrading of language skills and literary ability- 2008-2009
- (4) Study on the content, method and evaluation of instruction in education for children with speech and language disabilities-Aiming at developing a

practical guidebook for education for children with speech and language disabilities- 2008-2009

- (5) Study on improving teacher's expertise in education for children with physical/motor disabilities-Propose a model for upgrading schools for special needs education (physical disabilities) expertise- 2008-2009
- (6) Study on special needs education for long-time absentees due to illness who are enrolled in primary and lower secondary schools 2008-2009
- (7) Study on career education in education for children with intellectual disabilities -Aiming to build a practical model based on a“table of Stage and Contents of Career Development(draft)” 2008-2009
- (8) Research Concerning the Current Increase in Students Enrolled in Schools for Special Needs Education Educating Children with Intellectual Disabilities and the Corresponding Educational Response to This Situation 2009

Collaborative Research

- (1) Study on development of non-invasive imaging techniques of the brain function for children with disabilities -Focusing on non-invasion measurement of brain function- 2007-2009 Collaborative Organization: Notional Hospital Organization Kurihama Alcoholism Center
- (2) A practical study on building social support system for children with disabilities and its evaluation 2008-2009 Collaborative Organization: Yokosuka City
- (3) Practical study on the objective evaluation of figure tracing by totally blind children 2009-2010 Collaborative Organization: Tokyo Polytechnic University
- (4) Development of digital content to help guardians and children address speech and language disabilities 2009 Collaborative Organization: RIKEN

4. Report on National Institute for Special Needs Education Seminars I & II 2008

The institute held Seminar I of the National Institute for Special Needs Education at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center over 2 days on January 21st and 22nd, 2009. This year saw a report published on kindergarten education and elementary and lower secondary national curriculum guidelines on March 28th, 2008. As the promotion of special needs education in normal schools was included in the topic for the first time, the theme was set as “Development of special needs education in elementary and lower secondary schools - Incorporating revised national curriculum guidelines.”

On the first day, after an administrative explanation titled "Special needs education in the national curriculum for elementary and lower secondary schools" from the Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the keynote lecture was presented by teacher Prof. OHMINAMI Hideaki, titled "Special needs education in normal schools - The aims of revisions to national curriculum guidelines." Prof. OHMINAMI Hideaki talked in clear terms about what is required to establish special needs education in normal schools and the road to the revised national curriculum guidelines and their significance. Later, a symposium was held on the topic of "The development of special needs education in normal schools, and supporting development." Elementary school principals, special needs schools principals and administrators met to present cases from all perspectives.

During the morning of the second day, key phrases relating to special needs education in normal schools were noted as “individualized teaching plan,” “activities to promote independence,” and “special needs schools functioning as a resource center,” and each of these 3 key phrases was linked to a sub-committee meeting in the afternoon. Seminars were planned to center on the topic of “From frameworks to results,” producing lively discussion in all sub-committee meetings where all participants were able



to contribute on a range of topics.

A poster display on the research outcomes for fiscal 2007 was also exhibited during the lunch break.

The seminar was attended by 714 people (of which 94 attended only for the first day). It was characterized by an increase in participants which were teachers in elementary and lower secondary schools as suggested by the theme. It is hoped that the seminar has further highlighted special needs education in normal schools.

Seminar II of the National Institute for Special Needs Education was held at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center on February 13th, 2009. The purpose of the seminar was to disseminate details and results of research activities undertaken by the institute. The institute established the “Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities” in April 2008, which provided the theme for the seminar: “Support for children with developmental disabilities in the past and the future.” It focused on introducing the work of the “Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities” and its research on education for persons with developmental disabilities.

A morning symposium saw motions from a range of perspectives from guardians, educators and medical and welfare workers, aiming to establish comprehensive support through organizational cooperation and information sharing. There was also a talk on the expectations for the “Information Center of Education for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.” The work of the Center was later presented on its website.

In the afternoon, the focus moved to 2 sub-

committee meetings, the first of which was themed “A coherent support system - Focusing on secondary education.” The meeting saw reports on efforts and issues at upper secondary schools for the handicapped, and upper secondary schools using the full and part time day systems, discussions between commentators and participants, and heard a range of opinions on promoting special needs education at the upper secondary school stage. The second sub-committee meeting was themed “Stimulating brain function in developmental disabilities - A brain science approach,” and invited 2 researchers from this field to share their opinions on the application

of brain science in the educational interface.

Research results from fiscal 2007, including those on education for children with developmental disabilities, were presented in the form of posters, allowing opinions to be exchanged between participants directly.

The seminar was attended by 710 people, exceeding the capacity in the morning session and requiring a video feed to a second hall. Interest was shown by participants not only from fields related to special needs schools, but also teachers from normal schools, and a broad range of guardians. It is hoped that this seminar has further highlighted special needs education.

5. Report on the 9th NISE and KNISE Seminar on Special Needs Education

The 9th Seminar on Special Needs Education was held on March 18th, 2009. The seminar has been jointly sponsored by National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) and Korea National Institute for Special Education (KNISE) annually since fiscal 2000 to promote cooperation and exchange in the development of special needs education by both organizations, under a research collaboration agreement entered into in November 1995.

Invited speakers were Ms. Kim Eun Joo (Government School Inspector, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), Mr. Shin Hyun Ki (Professor, the head of special education research institute in Dankook University), and Ms. Kum Mi Sug (Educational Researcher, KNISE). The event was held at the institute under the main theme of “Suitable Support Systems for Life Cycles - Support in Early Childhood, Elementary, Lower and upper secondary School Years, and Adulthood.” The seminar included a range of presentations and research discussions on all sub-themes from the Japanese and Korean participants, followed by a summary discussion. Approximately 50 people attended the seminar including staff members of the institute and outside participants.

Sub-Theme 1 comprised presentations on “Early Childhood” from Ms. Kum Mi Sug (Educational



Researcher, KNISE) and Mr. KUBOYAMA Shigeki (Chief Researcher at NISE).

Sub-Theme 2 comprised presentations on “Lower and upper secondary School Years” from Ms. Kim Eun Joo (Government School Inspector, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) and Mr. TAKIGAWA Kuniyoshi (Senior Chief Researcher at NISE).

Sub-Theme 3 comprised presentations on “Adulthood” from Mr. Shin Hyun Ki (Professor, the head of special education research institute at Dankook University), Mr. TANIKAWA Atsushi (Chief of Special Assistance Division, Student

Services Department, Japan Student Services Organization), and Mr. HARADA Kimihito (Senior Chief Researcher at NISE).

In the summary discussion, Chairman TANAKA

Yoshihiro (Senior Chief Researcher at NISE) sought opinions on issues faced by both Japan and Korea from the presenters of each theme, and finally Mr. GOKAMI Tetsuo (Research Director, Department of Counseling and Consultation for Persons with Special Needs, NISE) gave his thoughts on the seminar overall. A lively discussion was generated by all participants including those welcomed from outside the institute.

○ **Main Theme**

Suitable Support Systems for Life Cycles
- Support in Early Childhood, Lower and upper secondary School Years, and Adulthood

○ **Sub Themes**

(1) Early Childhood, (2) Lower and upper secondary School Years, (3) Adulthood

○ **Schedule**

March 18th, 2009

09:50 to 10:10 Opening Ceremony

10:10 to 11:50 Theme 1 Presentations

13:00 to 14:40 Theme 2 Presentations

15:00 to 16:40 Theme 3 Presentations

16:40 to 17:20 Summary Discussion

17:20 to 17:40 Closing Ceremony

○ **Venue**

National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE)

○ **Presenters**

Korea

Ms. Kim Eun Joo (Government School Inspector, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)

Mr. Shin Hyun Ki (Professor, the head of special education research institute at Dankook University)

Ms. Kum Mi Sug (Educational Researcher, KNISE)

Japan

Mr. TANIKAWA Atsushi (Chief of Special Assistance Division, Student Services Department, Japan Student Services Organization)

Mr. HARADA Kimihito (Senior Chief Researcher at NISE)

Mr. TAKIGAWA Kuniyoshi (Senior Chief Researcher at NISE)

Mr. KUBOYAMA Shigeki (Chief Researcher at NISE)

6. World Autism Awareness Day

A resolution was passed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2007 stating that each April 2nd shall be “World Autism Awareness Day.”

The resolution means that all member nations will now make active efforts to promote understanding of autism in society.

The Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology are currently promoting adjustments to the support system for schools and communities, so it is essential that people coming into contact with guardians and children with

disabilities have a correct understanding of autism and developmental disabilities.

The opportunity of World Autism Awareness Day will foster a better understanding of autism and provide guidance and support to schools.

○ **World Autism Awareness Day, Japan Executive Committee Official Site**

<http://www.worldautismawarenessday.jp/>

○ **World Autism Awareness Day, Official Site**

http://www.autismspeaks.org/sponsoredevents/world_autism_awareness_day.php

7. Changes to National Curriculum Guidelines for Schools for Special Needs Education

On March 9th, 2009, the Ministry for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

Technology announced new educational guidelines for kindergarten departments of special needs schools,

national curriculum guidelines for elementary and lower secondary departments of Schools for Special Needs Education, national curriculum guidelines for upper secondary departments of special needs schools, and transitional measures.

The main issues in the new national curriculum guidelines for special needs schools are as follows.

◆ Outline of Changes

The changes to the educational guidelines for kindergarten departments of Schools for Special Needs Education and national curriculum guidelines for elementary, lower and upper secondary departments of special need schools are made based on the following policies.

(1) Improvements corresponding to improved curricula standards in kindergartens, elementary, lower and upper secondary schools

- a) To foster a "zest for living" based on educational concepts defined in amendments to the Fundamental Law of Education
- b) To consider the balance between learning knowledge and skills and learning ability to think, judgment and power of expression
- c) To cultivate a strong spirit and healthy body through ethical and physical education

(2) Improvements relating to social change and severe, double or multiple disabilities in young children and elementary school pupils

- a) Dealing with severe, double or multiple disabilities
- b) Providing better individual guidance
- c) Providing occupational training on independence and social involvement
- d) Promoting joint activities and learning

◆ Main Improvements and Dates of Execution

- The main improved matters, which primarily relate to (2), are as follows.
 - a) Regulations for “matters relating to forging

relationships with others” as guidance for “activities to promote independence,” to enable provision of guidance for a broad range of disabilities including severe and multiple disabilities and developmental disabilities

- b) Regulations for matters to consider when drawing up guidance plans for persons with severe disabilities and home or hospital-bound education
- c) Regulations for production of “individualized teaching plans” for all young children and elementary school pupils, to provide guidance to suit each individual
- d) Regulations for cooperation between educational, medical and welfare organizations, and the production of "individualized education support plans" for all young children and elementary school pupils, to support the needs of each individual
- e) Establishment of specialist training in “welfare” in upper secondary departments of special needs schools, to provide occupational training in special needs schools (intellectual disabilities)
- f) Regulations for cooperation with communities and industry, and provision of occupational training and guidance counseling
- g) Regulations for organization of "joint activities and learning" for children with and without disabilities
- Educational guidelines for kindergarten departments of Schools for Special Needs Education shall apply to pupils entering from April 1st, 2009, national curriculum guidelines for elementary and lower secondary departments of Schools for Special Needs Education shall apply to pupils entering elementary departments of special needs schools from April 1st, 2011 and to pupils entering lower secondary departments of schools from April 1st, 2012, and national curriculum guidelines for upper secondary departments of Schools for Special Needs Education shall apply in principle to pupils entering from April 1st, 2013.



Editorial postscript

A basic agreement for Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was made at the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee of August 2006. Japan is a signatory to that convention and preparations including changes to current national law are underway to ratify it. The ratification of this convention will mean an end to discrimination against persons with disabilities across society and the assurance of various rights to suit the individual. In education in particular, we hope that there will be greater access to local, community schools regardless of disability, and that Japan will enjoy an inclusive education system.

This newsletter will continue to provide information on education for children with disabilities and on the research and work of the institute. We hope that this and future newsletters will have many readers, and we would be delighted to receive your comments and suggestions.

TANAKA Yoshihiro, editor

NISE's English Top Page

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

NISE's International Exchange Page in English

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

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