

The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Panel on Education -Subcommittee on Integrated Education

Paper submissions for "Difficulties in implementing IE with respect to SEN students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders"

How to successfully integrate students with ASD to mainstream school

- ✧ Some students with ASD can be integrated successfully into mainstream school with systematic assistance. Based on the successful experiences in America and some of the international schools in Hong Kong, it is found that using treatment with empirical support is important in the inclusion process.
- ✧ A lot of governments in different countries, such as America and Singapore, have adopted ABA as the main and official approach to help students with ASD. However, in Hong Kong, that is not the case. We adopt the eclectic approach which combines various techniques in treating Autism. Some of those techniques are not well supported by research.
- ✧ Students with ASD usually cannot learn effectively in a big group. They lack the skills to learn a group setting. In order to help them to be successful in school without assistance, ABA practitioners emphasize systematic planning and teaching in the inclusion process.
- ✧ It is usually easier for students with ASD to learn skills in one-on-one setting. Once students have learned the required skills at one-on-one setting, SYSTEMATICAL transition can be planned in order for them to go back to the big group in school --
 - Individual training
 - ◆ Target skills which are important for students to learn independently in the big group should be identified.
 - ◆ Those target skills should be taught in one-on-one training at the beginning. And the one-on-one training should be conducted by teaching assistant
 - ◆ It is important that the teaching assistant should be qualified to teach students with ASD, which is not the current case now.
 - Transition
 - ◆ After the students have learned the core skills in one-on-one training, teacher and teaching assistant should work together to help transition.
 - ◆ Transition should be done systematically and accommodations may be needed. For example, instead of going back to the big group immediately, the students may need to start learning in smaller group with assistance, then in small group without assistance, then gradually increase the size of the group back to normal class size.
 - ◆ Other accommodations include slower pace of delivering information, breaking

down tasks into smaller steps, step by step instructions, more attention and feedbacks to students, more frequent reinforcement, etc

- ◆ When students are able to learn independently with all the accommodations, teachers can start to reduce the accommodations gradually.
- Fully integrated into big group
 - ◆ Once the students can learn independently with minimal accommodations, he is ready to learn in a mainstream classroom. However, the students should still be closely monitored and evaluated regularly.
- ✧ In order to successfully integrate the students into mainstream settings, it is important to have well trained parties to be involved in the process. The teaching assistants need to be trained on how to teach the students with ASD effectively and the teachers involved also need to be trained on how to integrate the students successfully into the big class. A professional who is experienced in teaching this group of students is also needed in guiding and overseeing the whole process. However, at the moment, teaching assistants or teachers are not trained to teach students with ASD. They may not have any idea on identifying learning needs, deficits and strengths of the ASD students. As a result, students with ASD always struggle in mainstream settings; teachers always find it difficult to deal with those students in their classes. Both parties are suffering under the current inclusion policy!!!

In conclusion, if the government truly supports inclusion, more resources should be allocated on training all the involved parties using the approach with most empirical support to help this group of students.

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