

# Children and Youth with Special Needs – Introduction - Lecture 1



Dr Paul O'Callaghan BSc, HDipEd, Bacc (Phil), DECAP  
Educational Psychologist & Honorary Lecturer  
Educational Psychology Service, Education Authority  
Queen's University, Belfast

## Housekeeping



☞ Participation



☞ Exam



☞ Health Warning



☞ Break

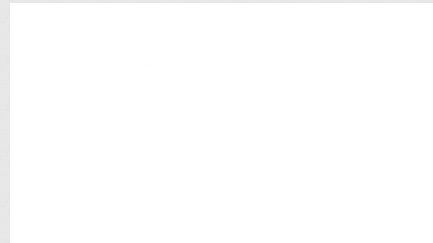


## Opening Task: Class Discussion



- ☞ 1) Make a list of all the possible special educational needs you think that children have
- ☞ 2) Make a list of all the people that help to identify these special needs
- ☞ 3) Make a list of all the interventions/assistance that are provided to help children with special needs

## DVD - Clip



## Outline of Introduction to Special Needs



- ☞ Definitions of Special Needs
- ☞ Categories of Special Needs
- ☞ Historical Perspective
- ☞ Theoretical Approaches
- ☞ Debates and Controversies

## Definitions of Special Needs



- ☞ "Children have a special need/ special educational need if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children their age or if they have a disability which prevents them from making use of facilities (in school) generally provided for children of their age" - SN versus SEN
- ☞ Debate 1: circular definition (Goacher et al., 1988)
- ☞ Debate 2: whose needs? (Tomlinson, 1982)
- ☞ Debate 3: what if provision is not available?

## 12 Categories of Special Needs

- ☞ **Cognition & Learning:** 1) Moderate Learning Difficulties 2) Severe Learning Difficulties 3) Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties 4) Specific Learning Difficulties
- ☞ **Behaviour, Emotional & Social Development:** 5) Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
- ☞ **Communication & Interaction:** 6) Speech, Language & Communication Needs 7) Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- ☞ **Sensory and/or Physical Needs:** 8) Visual Impairment 9) Hearing Impairment 10) Multi-Sensory Impairment 11) Physical Disability
- ☞ 12) Other

## Group-work: Categories of Special Needs

- ☞ Work with a partner. Discuss the challenges each child below with a Special Educational Need faces in school.



Name: Lucy  
Age: 10 years  
SN: Blindness



Name: John  
Age: 15 years  
SN: Autism



Name: Paul  
Age: 6 years  
SN: Moderate Learning Difficulties

## Historical Perspective

- ☞ Middle Ages: children = parts of parents' possessions
- ☞ Enlightenment: C 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> universal human rights
- ☞ First Special Schools- set up in UK in the late C 18<sup>th</sup>
- ☞ Education Act (1870): universal education, 5-12 y.o.
- ☞ Shift: end of 1890s: 3 R's, pay linked to performance
- ☞ Expansion Special Schools '**handicap**': early 1900s
- ☞ 1960s: rights movement, equal access, rights of all children with special needs to a mainstream education
- ☞ Education Act (1972): removed concept of 'ineducable' child. For the first time ever, all children had the right to be educated regardless of how severe their SN was

## Recap: Historical Perspective



Children = Property of their Parents  
Middle Ages: 5<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Century



Children = Learners + Future Citizens  
Enlightenment: 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> Century



Children = Future Workers  
Industrial Era: 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> Century



Children = Holders of Rights  
Human Rights Era: 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## Theoretical Perspectives

- ☞ Within-child problem: medical model, focus on difference. Need: segregation & specialist provision
- ☞ System/Environmental problem: sociology model, focus on how 'the system discriminates'. Need: remove societal barriers to integration
- ☞ Integrated conceptualisation: SN is both within child and linked to systemic factors. Need: to tailor education to individual need & remove barriers to learning

## Debates & Controversies: Inclusion of Children with SN

Advantages of Inclusion	Disadvantages of Inclusion
Access to a mainstream curriculum	A mainstream curriculum is too difficult for some children
Higher expectations and academic competition in mainstream setting	Some children cannot cope with competitive academic settings
More cost effective to educate children in the same setting	Cost can never be a defining factor in providing support in schools
Children have the right to be educated with their peers	Other children's education may suffer if special needs are great
Other children learn to understand & help children that are different	Inclusion can lead to teasing and bullying and lower self-esteem

## Recap: Two Main Approaches to Special Needs



Inclusion in a Mainstream School



Education in a Special School or Learning Support Centre

## Closing Task: Class Debate

- ☞ Arguments for and against Inclusion
- ☞ Child: John
- ☞ Age: 16 years old
- ☞ School: Secondary School
- ☞ SN: Behavioural, Emotional & Social Needs
- ☞ Concerns: poor concentration, interrupts class, little homework done, aggression towards younger pupils
- ☞ Challenge: Debate reasons for and against John being included and taught in a mainstream school



## Special Needs – Assessment - Lecture 2

Dr Paul O'Callaghan BSc, HDipEd, Bacc (Phil), DECAP  
Educational Psychologist & Honorary Research Fellow  
Southern Education & Library Board, EPS  
Queen's University, Belfast

## Opening Task: Group-work

- ☞ Discuss the following questions in groups:
- ☞ 1) How are special needs identified in Kenya?
- ☞ 2) Who identifies special needs?
- ☞ 3) What approaches/theories are used to understand special needs in Kenya?

## Outline of Assessment of Special Needs

- ☞ Steps in Identifying Learning Difficulties
- ☞ Typical developmental abilities of a 4-year-old
- ☞ Tests & Measures used to Identify Special Needs
- ☞ Who Identifies Special Needs
- ☞ Three Different Approaches to Assessing Special Needs
- ☞ Debates and Controversies

## Steps in Identifying Learning Difficulties

- ☞ Step 1: study 'normal development', by observation
- ☞ Step 2: observe common milestones at certain ages
- ☞ Step 3: rank tasks in order of difficulty
- ☞ Step 4: Pilot the test with a group of children to refine the questions and instructions
- ☞ Step 5: Generate norms by administering the test items to a very large sample of children
- ☞ Step 6: use cut-off points to determine SN concerns
- ☞ Step 7: Publish test and test norms for others to use

## Thinking Task: Class-work

Name: Ben  
Age: 4 years old  
SN: None, typically developing

Cognitive Skills:  
Play Skills:  
Motor & Locomotor Skills:  
Language Skills:  
Social Skills:  
Emotional Skills:



## Typical development abilities of a 4-year-old

Dimensions	Examples of Typical Achievements in this dimension
Cognitive	Builds tower of 10+ blocks and builds bridges with blocks.
Play	Dramatic make-believe play is sustained for a long period.
Motor and Locomotor	Climbs stairs & descends confidently, one foot per step. Can dress & undress except laces, ties and back buttons.
Language	Speech is intelligible and essentially grammatically correct. May have difficulty with 'w', 'l', 'th'. Constant questions.
Social	Can share and take turns but may cheat in games. Shows sympathy when friends are hurt.
Emotional	More independent and self-willed which can lead to conflict but shows sensitivity to other children and adults.

## Tests & Measures used to Identify Special Needs

- ☞ Recap: Special Needs Categories
- ☞ Cognition & Learning: thinking and reasoning skills, literacy, numeracy & language attainments
- ☞ Social, Emotional and Behavioural Development: primarily through observation and checklists
- ☞ Communication & Interaction: receptive, expressive language tests, speech errors, Autism Diagnostic and Observation Schedule, Autism checklists
- ☞ Sensory/Physical Need: eye test, hearing test, medical diagnostic of physical disability

## Who Identifies Special Needs

- ☞ Educational or Child Psychologist
- ☞ Doctor, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist
- ☞ Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist
- ☞ Speech & Language Therapist
- ☞ Youth Worker
- ☞ Teachers
- ☞ Parents
- ☞ Child



## Three Approaches to Assessing Special Needs

- ☞ Focus on Learner: traditional view, involved detailed examination of child with difficulties, medical model
- ☞ Focus on Teaching Programme: 1980s onward, arose as reaction to medical model of 'within-child' factors
- ☞ Focus on Learning Environment: the environmental factors that help or hinder learning difficulties

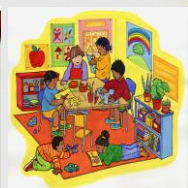
## Recap: Three Approaches to Assessing Special Needs



Focus on the Individual Learner



Focus on the Teaching Programme



Focus on the Learning Environment

## Debates and Controversies in Assessing Special Needs

- ☞ Age and SEN
- ☞ Why?
- ☞ Race and SEN
- ☞ Why?
- ☞ Poverty and SEN
- ☞ Why?
- ☞ Discussion: what factors need to be considered when designing an intelligence test for Kenyan youth?

## Poverty as a Special Need

- ☞ Another problem is that they come very early in the morning, they don't eat. Thus, they come and haven't yet eaten food. Even others have not got money to buy something, and you meet them, with headaches. Some, she feels like her head hurts. Others are sick, when you only give her tea, she returns, she recovers and goes back to class. First things we do, we start, we have a big thermos there, we give her tea first, you find she gains/recovers, then she returns to class (Teacher, Zanachi School, Tanzania)

## Closing Task: Designing an IQ Test for Tanzania

- ☞ Group work: In groups compose one multiple choice question (with one correct answer) that would assess the verbal intelligence of a Tanzanian youth.
- ☞ Tip: this question could involve defining a term (e.g. what is mitumba?), comparing two terms (e.g. in what way are 'nyama choma' and 'githeri' alike?) or using general knowledge (e.g. why should you check inside a matatu before boarding it?)

## Special Needs – Intervention - Lecture 3

Dr Paul O'Callaghan BSc, HDipEd, Bacc (Phil), DECAP  
Educational Psychologist & Honorary Research Fellow  
Southern Education & Library Board, EPS  
Queen's University, Belfast

## Opening Task: Quiz

- ☞ In groups, complete the following multiple choice questions:
- ☞ Which of the following interventions targets the individual learner (a) classroom assistance, withdrawal support or special placements (b) differentiation (c) improving the lighting and noise level
- ☞ What is another name for Assessment for Learning: (a) Summative Assessment (b) Advanced Assessment (c) Formative Assessment
- ☞ What intervention involves dividing the class into smaller groups according to ability and providing resources to assist these different levels of ability: (a) The Traffic Light System (b) Differentiation (c) Classroom Assistance

## Outline of Interventions to Assist Children with SN

- ☞ Recap on 3 Approaches to Assessing Special Needs
- ☞ Interventions that target the Individual Learner
- ☞ Interventions that target the Teaching Programme
- ☞ Interventions that target the Learning Environment
- ☞ Debates and Controversies

## Recap on Three Approaches to Assessing Special Needs

- Recap on 3 approaches to assessing Special Needs

## Interventions that target the Individual Learner

- Withdrawal support from a special needs teacher or key worker
- Within-class Assistance: adults in schools that assist children with particular difficulties
- Special Placements: placement in a special school or learning support centre for children with similar difficulties



## Interventions that target the Teaching Programme

- Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment): personalised, individualised programme that answers the following: What do they know now? What do they need to know? How best can they learn it? Example: traffic light set on a child's desk



- Differentiation: divide the class into 3 or 4 ability groups, each of a different ability & give each group a different, graded worksheet that challenges them



## Interventions that target the Learning Environment

- Physical Setting of the Room e.g. classroom design, furniture, desks, seating arrangement, noise, light
- Room Organisation & Management e.g. management skills, rules, school procedures, teacher interaction, support
- Quantity and Quality of Instruction e.g. time spent on task, corrected homework, independent work, regular reviews



## Research on Effective Schools

- Effective Schools (Wang, '94, Wahlberg, '95) have:
  - A higher quantity and quality of teacher-pupil academic interactions
  - Set more individual work for students and rely less on whole class teaching

## Case Study: 60 Years of Special Needs Education in Tanzania

- 60 Years of SNE in Tanzania: Celebrating Audacity, Commitment and Resilience (Tungaraza, 2012)
- Aim of indigenous African education: maintain & preserve tribe's cultural heritage & transmit codes of good behaviour, inherited knowledge, skills & values
- 1950: Wilson Carlile School for Blind Boys (Dodoma)
- 2010: 3 primary schools & 34 Special Ed units for blind
- Special educational provision today: visually impaired, hearing impaired, deaf-blind and children who have learning difficulties, autism or are physically disabled

## Challenges & Successes in supporting SNE in Tanzania

- ☞ Under diagnosis of SEN: e.g. in 2010, 557 children were registered with autism/45 million (population)
- ☞ Exclusion: 99% of children with disabilities & other learning problems in Tanzania are excluded from the educational system (Karakoski and Strom, 2005)
- ☞ Attitudes: hidden at home, even murdered (albinism)
- ☞ Inclusion: number of mainstream schools including children with SN has risen from 4 (1998) to 196 (2010)
- ☞ Increase in SN provision (e.g. schools for intellectual disabilities) & training (e.g. diploma, Masters) in SEN

## Any Questions?