



Inclusive Education in Japan:
A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract

The Japanese education system is held in high regards for the quality of public education and the types of careers Japanese students secure once graduating. Unfortunately, students with disabilities in Japan are not able to access the same high-quality education as their peers without disabilities due to a lack of inclusive education practices. Many surveys were gathered from Japanese parents with children with disabilities, mainstream Japanese teachers, Japanese principals, and Japanese students with disabilities regarding the perception of people with disabilities. This meta-synthesis of literature on inclusive education in Japan investigates public education for students with disabilities in Japan and the impact of cultural norms with people who are different.



1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The United States Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for the first time in 1975. This law provided many valuable protections for students with disabilities and their public education. Three major protections this law provides to students with disabilities are: access to the least restrictive environment, free appropriate education, and parental rights to participate in their student's education plan meetings (Lee, 2014). These protections are unique to the US educational system compared to Japan.

In 1947, Japan passed the first law for people under the age of 18 years old with disabilities in response to the health conditions after World War II (Nakayama, 2005). This law was the beginning of the disability movement for Japan. Unfortunately, it focused on institutionalization for individuals with mental retardation. Fast forward to 1979 when the Japanese compulsory special education system began (Nagano and Weinberg, 2012). This signifies progress towards integration of students with disabilities into general education settings, right? In 2003, Furukawa answers this question,

Japan has placed emphasis on creating productive people to strengthen the nation in order to compete in the international society. He also stated that as a result, the government decided to ignore the philosophies of inclusion of children with disabilities and reinforce separate education. (pp. 129)

The Japanese government believes in separate education so now it's time to discuss what types of disabilities qualify for special education and how many students are identified with having a disability in Japan.



The five disability categories to receive special education in Japan listed in the Enforcement Order for School Education Act, Article 22.2 are: visual impairment, hearing impairment, cognitive disorders (not including ADHD or LD), physical disabilities and health-related conditions. According to the 2009 Report of the Japan Ministry of Education... there are 1,026 special needs school in Japan. The schools are separated into the five disability categories: 84 schools for visual impairment, 116 schools for hearing impairment, 619 schools for cognitive disorder, 282 schools for physical disabilities, 124 schools for health-related children (Nagano and Weinberg, 2012). The number of schools for students with cognitive disorders is over half the total number of special needs schools in Japan. Further examination of how the Japanese government educates students with cognitive disorders is needed.

The largest number of special needs schools in Japan is for students with cognitive disorders. Cognitive disorders, also known as mental disorders, describe the condition as a need for frequent assistance in daily life, difficulty with communication, and a delay in mental development (Enforcement Center for School Education Act, Article 22.2). Some of the categories listed from IDEA in the US that could qualify as a cognitive disorder are: emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, or significant speech or language impairment. The IDEA categories that would not be included in the Japanese cognitive disorders are ADHD/OHI, LD, and high functioning autism. This information makes me question where students with those disabilities receive an education.

In the new system of Tokubetsushienkyouiku started in 2007, students with LD, ADHD, and high functioning autism who are placed in regular classrooms should receive special needs education. According to the survey conducted in 2004 by the Ministry of



Education... the estimated number of those students amounted to 680,00 nationwide, reaching 6.3% of K-12 students. However, they are not included in the categories of disabilities listed in the School Education Reinforcement Act, and the identification and assessment procedure of students with those disabilities remains unestablished. (Nagano and Weinberg, 2012, pp.132-133).

This implies that few students in Japan who have educational needs due to a disability in the US categories of LD, ADHD, or high functioning autism are being assessed, identified or given individualized instruction in Japan. This is a major area of need for the Japanese Ministry of Education to review and establish policies, especially for LD and ADHD.

In looking back to the established five disability categories, the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology conducted a survey in 2008. The survey was conducted using the total compulsory education system of 1st - 9th graders. It reported 234,153 students received special education out of the total students of 10,785,303. The percent of students receiving special education in Japan in 2008 was 2.2%. The total 234,153 students who received special education services in the five disability categories received that instruction outside of the general education classroom 78.8% of the time. So the 2.2% of students with disabilities in Japan are being educated outside of general education classroom settings 78.8% of the time (Nagano and Weinberg, 2012). The types of disability categories and the number of students receiving special education services in Japan is different compared to the US. The US laws that require schools to provide the least restrictive environment, free appropriate education, and parental rights to participate in their student's education plan meetings are different to Japanese laws. The following research can inform educators of the benefits of both systems.



1.2. Author's beliefs and experiences

My first job out of college was teaching English in five public junior high schools in Northern Japan. It was August, 1998 and I was about to embark on a new adventure in a foreign country where I was unable to read a menu and had only memorized a few conversational phrases. The job began with an orientation in Tokyo, Japan for the 2,000 new teachers employed through the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) program. After workshops on teaching techniques and survival information from second year teachers, it was time to gather with the other 35 teachers who were placed in Aomori Prefecture, about 450 miles north of Tokyo.

As a foreigner teaching English in Japan, I was treated with respect, curiosity, and celebrity status. Students would applaud when I walked into their classrooms and at the end of class they asked me for my autograph. Groups of female students would gather around me, giggling and covering their mouths while they tried speaking English phrases with me. Communicating in English was exciting for both the students and myself since there were few native English speakers in their town of Goshogawara, population around 60,000.

The Board of Education in Goshogawara hired me to be the English teacher for their five public junior high schools. The size of the schools varied so sometimes I spent a week rotating through all the English classes. Other schools had fewer students so I spent one day a month



teaching their English classes. Since I had multiple schools, each junior high school had a Japanese teacher of English. We would team teach when I was assigned to their school. Some teachers would ask to plan our lessons together, while others wanted me to help with pronunciation and reading aloud to the class.

Junior high schools in Japan educate 7th - 9th graders or 12-14 year olds. 9th grade ends the Japanese compulsory education system. Next, students apply to attend a high school in their academic or vocational area of strength for three years. Higher education is common for high school graduates and continues with the application process. Another comparison of the Japanese junior high school structure to US is that teachers move from room to room while the students stay in a homeroom class all day, except for physical education. This structure reinforces the Japanese values of teamwork, group accomplishments being more important than the individual, and nurturing each other's classmates. Teachers also have a group approach by their personal desks being gathered in a large common room. When they aren't in class, teachers prepare together, discuss concerns, and invite students to their desks to discipline.

Three more comparisons of Japanese junior highs to US: Japanese students serve a prepared hot lunch in their homeroom class and won't begin eating until all students have been served; there aren't custodians so everyday students clean their classrooms, restrooms, and common areas during the last thirty minutes of school; and all students have schools specific



uniforms, including gym clothes. The uniforms students wear everyday demonstrates the culture of sameness. This is an important value in and out of school. Employees at supermarkets, gas stations, and banks all wear uniforms. Again, the importance of being in a group rather than being an individual was the focus.

That group focus and the lack of differences made me analyze the lack of identified students with disabilities in the classes I taught. When I didn't see individuals with disabilities in the junior high schools, I began to wonder where they were educated? Were they in separate schools? Or in separate classes were they weren't included in general education classes, such as English class? I was introduced to one student with a significant cognitive disability during my two years of teaching in Goshogawara. Were they more students that I taught in the general education classrooms that need individualize instruction? Yes, I believe there were students who needed accommodations and modifications to learn English as a second language. From what I observe in the English classes, teachers taught all students the same way and it was expected they would all learn the same too. Does the Japanese education system of separate schools or the US approach of inclusion for students with disabilities work? I believe that both systems have benefits and fit the culture of its country.

In this meta-synthesis paper, I will report on research for the following questions:



1. How does the Japanese culture view special education services for people with disabilities?
2. What does research imply when comparing special education services in Japan and the United State?
3. After a student with a disability qualifies for services, what accommodations are most common in secondary and institutes of higher education?
4. What types of professional development trainings are offered to Japanese teachers to support teaching students with disabilities?

1.3. The purpose of this meta-synthesis

The purpose of this meta-synthesis is to compare how inclusive education is designed for students with disabilities in Japan and the US. One purpose of is comparison is to review research articles on how Japanese define special education for students with disabilities. A second purpose is to research articles on the implications of special education in Japan and the United States. My final purpose is to research articles on the types of professional development trainings are offered to support teachers when teaching students with disabilities.



2. Methods

2.1. Selection criteria

The 30 journal articles included in this meta-synthesis met the following selection criteria.

1. The articles explored issues related to inclusion in Japan and the US and professional development for teaching students with disabilities in the general education setting.
2. The articles explored issues related to Japanese definition of disability categories and special education services in Japanese classrooms or separate schools.
3. The articles were published in peer reviewed journal related to the field of education.
4. The articles were published between 2000 and 2016.

2.2. Search procedures

Database searches and ancestral searches were conducted to locate articles for this meta-synthesis.

2.2.1. Database searches

I conducted Boolean searches within the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC, Ebscohost) using these specific search terms:

1. (“Inclusive Education”) and Japan.
2. (“Students with Disabilities in Japan”) and Inclusion.
3. (“Students with Disabilities in Japan”) and (“Access to Education in Japan”)



4. Japan and Disabilities and schools



5. Japan and Education and (“Learning Disability”)

These database searches yielded a total of 26 articles (Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015; Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Gordon, 2005; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000; Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012; Kayama, 2010; Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Kondo, Takahashi, & Shirasawa, 2015; Lei & Myers, 2011; Majid & Razzak, 2015; Murayama, 2016; Nagano & Wenberg, 2012; Nakayama, 2004; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Sato, 2005/2008; Schneider & Kaufman, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004; Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004; Trumper, 2010; Tsuda, 2006; Woodward & Ono, 2004).

2.2.2. Ancestral searches

An ancestral search involves reviewing the reference lists of previously published works to locate literature relevant to one’s topic of interest (Welch, Browenell, & Sheridan, 1999). I conducted ancestral searches using the reference lists of the previously retrieved articles. These ancestral searches yielded four additional articles that met the selection criteria (Fujisawa,

Yamagata, Ozaki & Ando, 2012; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato & Sasaki, 2000)

2.3. *Coding procedures*

I used a coding form to categorize the information presented in each of the 30 articles. This coding form was based on: (a) publication type; (b) research design; (c) participants; (d) data sources; and (e) findings of the studies.

2.3.1. *Publication types*

Each journal article was evaluated and classified according to publication type (e.g., research study, theoretical work, descriptive work, opinion piece/position paper, guide, annotated bibliography, review of the literature). *Research studies* use a formal research design to gather and/or analyze quantitative and/or qualitative data. *Theoretical works* use existing literature to analyze, expand, or further define a specific philosophical and/or theoretical assumption.

Descriptive works describe phenomena and experiences, but do not disclose particular methods for obtaining data. *Opinion pieces/position papers* explain, justify, or recommend a particular course of action based on the author's opinions and/or beliefs. *Guides* give instructions or advice explaining how practitioners might implement a particular agenda. An *annotated bibliography* is a list of cited works on a particular topic, followed by a descriptive paragraph describing,



evaluating, or critiquing the source. *Reviews of the literature* critically analyze the published literature on a topic through summary, classification, and comparison.

2.3.2. *Research design*

Each empirical study was further classified by research design (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods research). *Quantitative* research utilizes numbers to convey information. Instead of numbers, *qualitative* research uses language to explore issues and phenomenon. *Mixed methods* research involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to present information within a single study.

2.3.3. *participants, data sources, and findings*

I identified the participants in each study (e.g. Japanese teachers, US teachers, Japanese students with disabilities, Japanese university students, and Japanese parents). I also identified the data sources used in each study (e.g. surveys, interviews, observations, attitude surveys, and focus groups). Lastly, I summarized the findings of each study (Table 2).

2.4. *Data analysis*

I used a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method previously employed by Duke (2011) and Duke and Ward (2009) to analyze the 30 articles included in this meta-synthesis. Significant statements were first identified within each article. For the purpose of this meta-synthesis. Significant statements were identified as statements that addressed issues



related to: (a) lack of knowledge for teaching students with disabilities; (b) lack of education during Japanese university course work; (c) motivational factors for Japanese teachers supporting inclusion; (d) Japanese teacher's situation; and/or (e) Japanese society's perception towards people with a disability. I then generated a list of non-repetitive, verbatim significant statements with paraphrased formulated meanings. These paraphrased formulated meanings represented my interpretation of each significant statement. Lastly, the formulated meanings from all 30 articles were grouped into theme clusters, represented as emergent themes. These emergent themes represented the fundamental elements of the entire body of literature.

3. Results

3.1. Publication type

I located 30 articles that met my selection criteria. The publication type of each article is located in Table 1. Seventeen of the 30 articles (57%) included in this meta synthesis were research studies (Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015; Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Gordon, 2005; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000; Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012;



Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Trumper, 2010). Four of the articles (13%) were guides (Kayama, 2010; Kondo, Takahashi, & Shirasawa, 2015; Majid & Razzak, 2015; Woodward & Ono, 2004). Five of the articles (17%) were theoretical works (Nagano & Wenberg, 2012; Sato, 2005/2008; Schneider & Kaufman, 2016; Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004; Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004). Three of the articles (10%) were position papers (Murayama, 2016; Nakayama, 2004; Tsuda, 2006). One of the articles (4.0%) were review of literature (Lei & Myers, 2011).



Table 1

<u>Author(s) & Year of Publication</u>	<u>Publication Type</u>
Forlin, Kawai, & Higuchi, 2015	Research Study
Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012	Research Study
Gordon, 2005	Research Study
Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008	Research Study
Hayashi & Tobin, 2015	Research Study
Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000	Research Study
Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera, & Sato, 2009	Research Study
Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama, & Kozub, 2013	Research Study
Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa, & Mason, 2000	Research Study
Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015	Research Study
Kataoka, Kraayenoord, & Elkins, 2004	Research Study
Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012	Research Study
Kayama, 2010	Guide
Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016	Research Study
Kondo, Takahashi, & Shirasawa, 2015	Guide
Lei & Myers, 2011	Review of Literature
Majid & Razzak, 2015	Guide
Murayama, 2016	Position Paper
Nagano & Wenberg, 2012	Theoretical Works
Nakayama, 2004	Positional Paper



Sanagi, 2016	Research Study
Sanagi, 2016	Research Study
Sato, 2005/2008	Theoretical Works
Schneider & Kaufman, 2016	Theoretical Works
Tachibana, 2006	Research Study
Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004	Theoretical Works
Tachibana & Watanabe, 2004	Theoretical Works
Trumper, 2010	Research Study
Tsuda, 2006	Position Paper
Woodward & Ono, 2004	Guide

3.2. Research design, participants, data sources and findings of the studies

As stated previously, I located 17 research studies that met my selection criteria ((Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015; Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Gordon, 2005; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000; Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012; Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Trumper, 2010). The research design, participants, data sources, and findings of each of these studies are identified in Table 2.



Table 2

Author(s)	Research Design	Participants	Data Sources	Findings
Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015	Quantitative	One Japanese university, 611 Japanese pre-service teachers (studying to be teachers at university), under the age of 25 years.	Survey	Are Japanese teachers are being trained for successful inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms? Their research found that Japan is not implementing inclusion effectively. Better training to prepare teachers for teaching students with disabilities is needed. Also, an understanding of inclusion since pre-service teachers lack the skills, knowledge, experience or training for teaching students with disabilities in the general education classrooms with an inclusive approach.
Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki & Ando, 2012	Quantitative	1, 677 pairs of twins and their main caregivers (mothers 93.56%; fathers 6.08%; others. The mean age of twins was 6.72 years old.	Survey	The authors hypothesized by using a twin design that negative parenting on children with conduct problems would be stronger in children with higher levels of hyperactivity/inattention problems than children with lower levels of hyperactivity/inattention



				<p>problems. They examined the association between negative parenting and conduct problems having considered hyperactivity/inattention problems as a moderator. They also considered the child’s genetic effect with the parent’s environmental effect on the association between negative parenting and conduct problems, or both. More research needed to answer questions.</p>
<p>Gordon, 2005</p>	<p>Mix Method</p>	<p>69 teachers (31 women and 38 men) and 44 parents (90% women) in 10 cities over five years</p>	<p>113 formal interviews</p>	<p>This article examines the shift in Japan’s image of teachers. There is a change in Japan’s society with teachers and parents not being aligned. Parents blame teachers and teachers blame parents for the problems in school. There is a lack of respect for teachers by Japanese society, students, and parents. Furthermore, 82% of teachers interviewed wouldn’t recommend the teaching profession to their students or children.</p>



<p>Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008</p>	<p>Qualitative</p>	<p>35 people: 21 men & 10 woman. 26 were disabled and 5 were non-disabled.</p>	<p>31 in- depth interviews and a focus group</p>	<p>Japanese Independent Living centers offer seminars on: peer counselling, history of the disability movement, human rights topics, Japanese welfare system, managing budgets, utilizing personal attendants, and concept of independent living for Japanese disabled persons, their families and trainees from Asian countries. The hope for Japan’s successful Independent Living movement was linked to the nation's wealth and cultural receptivity. Unfortunately, Japanese people with disabilities have faced discrimination and prejudice similar to other people with disabilities in other Asian countries.</p>
<p>Hayashi & Tobin, 2015</p>	<p>Qualitative</p>	<p>Sapporo School for the Deaf (1 of 110 public schools for the deaf in Japan)</p>	<p>Focus-group interviews with teachers and directors and panel transcript from the 5th Bilingual Deaf Education Symposium</p>	<p>Authors analyzed three positions on deaf education beliefs and practices held at Sapporo School for the Deaf. The three positions are called <i>Deaf Culture</i>, <i>Language and Self-Determination (Deaf Culture</i>, for short), <i>JSL as the Most Effective Instructional Language for</i></p>



				<p><i>Deaf People (JSL), and Japanese Cultures as Harmonious and Inclusive (Japaneseness)</i>. All three positions had a cultural argument thus tensions were discovered. The separation of deaf students from others goes against the ethos of Japanese education and society. Ultimately, deaf students are dealing with the hyphenated identity of Deaf and Japanese.</p>
<p>Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato & Sasaki, 2000</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>118 U.S. participants, 106 female and 12 male; 292 Japanese Teachers, 219 female and 73 male. Teachers from Grades 1 through 6 employed by school systems in Yokohama (near Tokyo) and Worcester (near Boston),</p>	<p>Main survey of 47 items in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, mathematics, study, and social skills.</p>	<p>The study compared U.S. and Japanese grade school teachers' perceptions of students with learning disabilities. They compared the areas of listening skills, speaking skills reading/writing skills. U.S. teachers rated 4% of students with a specific learning disability. Japanese teachers rated 1.5% of their students with a specific learning disability. From the survey, both countries rated 70% or more, in 13 out of 58 items, of their students with specific learning disabilities as 'weak' in three broad categories: attention,</p>



				rote/working memory, and high level language and thinking skills. These finding support that teachers in the U.S and Japan have different perceptions on identification, referral and teaching methods of students with learning disabilities.
Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009	Quantitative	29 physical education teachers from: 4 Ghana teachers, 5 Japanese teachers, 15 US teachers, and 5 Puerto Rican teachers	Interviews and attitude surveys	Physical education teachers in all four counties believed that the severity of the disability, large class sizes, and the lack of professional training were the major difficulties in providing education to students with disabilities in the general education setting. Japanese physical education teachers were the only ones to be more motivated to teach students with disabilities in gym due to extrinsic factors. Those extrinsic factors that motivated Japanese teachers to comply with integrating students with disabilities into gym class are: government policies, influence of administrators, professional colleagues, and parent opinions.



<p>Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>531 Japanese undergraduate students majoring in physical education: 361 male and 170 female Mean age: 19.8 years old</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>Physical education majors in Japan were surveyed to determine their perceived readiness and willingness, or lack of, to teach students with disabilities. None of the participants had received course work in adaptive physical education for students with disabilities and 92% had no such experience in teaching individuals with disabilities. Overall, physical education majors thought that teaching students with disabilities was socially acceptable yet struggled with their teaching behaviors when teaching students with severe disabilities.</p>
<p>Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>Japanese students who are visually impaired: 4,537 students in special schools for the visually impaired and 233 students in visual impairment units in mainstream schools.</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>The data surveyed from Japanese students with visual impairments was then compared to similar figures for Great Britain. The article reviews the changes to laws in Great Britain to reduce special schools. There are few changes to Japan's laws to reduce special schools. The findings discovered in Japan show that there is a decrease in visual</p>



				<p>impairments.</p> <p>Discussion of criteria definition for visually impaired and types of schools for students with additional disabilities to one with a visual impairment differ from the two countries so more research is necessary.</p>
<p>Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickle, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>Cohort 1: 1851 children (942 boys) at 18 months and again at age 3 during a health check-up at local health center (April 2004- March 2007).</p> <p>Cohort 2: 665 children (342 boys) at 18 months and at age 2 during a health check-up at local health center (November 2008- October 2009).</p>	<p>Longitudinal cohort data with the Japanese version of the 23-item modified checklist for autism in toddlers.</p>	<p>Children at age 18 months are eligible for a free health check-up where general developmental screening is conducted for motor, cognitive, or language developmental problems.</p> <p>This study examined adding an autism-specific screening tool to the routine check-up at 18 months. They selected six highly discriminative items from the 23-item full survey and demonstrated its reliability and validity with the two cohort groups. It is suggested that during the health check-up at 18 months of age, a short form autism-specific screening tool is given and combined with follow-up interviews for early identification of autism spectrum disorders.</p>



<p>Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>128 Japanese principals and 123 teachers, all in Nara Prefecture, Japan</p>	<p>Survey- 56 questions with a four point rating scale: 1= strongly agree and 4= disagree</p>	<p>Understanding why a student has a learning disability is complex. This study surveyed the Japanese perceptions of teachers and principals by indicating five factors that contribute to learning disabilities. The five factors are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. changes in the family and social situation, 2. insufficient knowledge of and support for learning disabilities, 3. teachers' abilities and professional development, 4. teachers' situation and 5. government issues. <p>Principals indicated that it is the family and social issues were a cause to the students' learning disability. Teachers indicated in this survey that the teachers' situation were a cause to the students' learning disability. Some of those teacher situations are: pressures associated with teaching profession, business in lives, and limitations in effectiveness of classroom teaching.</p>



<p>Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>80 Japanese students who stutter (63 males and 17 females) between the ages of: 5 - 12 year olds And 80 Japanese students who do not stutter (63 males and 17 females) between the ages of: 5 - 12 year olds</p>	<p>Test consisting of 32 questions translated into Japanese.</p>	<p>Study finds that negative attitude towards children who stutter increases as the severity of their stutter increases. These negative attitudes develop by first grade or earlier. Authors found that the 29 children receiving fluency shaping therapy did not produce a significant negative attitude change in nine months. The children receiving stuttering modification therapy demonstrated a positive attitude outlook. Difficulty in measuring negative attitudes for Japanese was discussed. They value privacy and avoid self-disclosure and embarrassment, sensitivity for shame, and avoid appropriate boastfulness. Further research is needed to confirm that Japanese children who stutter have a more negative attitude as they age.</p>
<p>Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>648 Parents of children with intellectual disabilities</p>	<p>questionnaire responses</p>	<p>Japanese society places a great amount of responsibility for parents to correct their child's misbehavior. With this pressure, parents use different ways to gain a</p>



				<p>sense of coherence. This study is the first to address Japanese parents using physical punishment towards children with intellectual disabilities. Japanese parents of children with autism, down syndrome, and other intellectual disabilities self-reported that they used physical punishment 69.7% of the time either frequently or occasionally. Children who were the oldest with an intellectual disability were more likely to experience harsh discipline due to parents being more anxious, less knowledge in child development and behavior management strategies in raising their child. The study found that 46.7% of the parents survived are considered to have some form of mental health problems (depression, anxious, physical exhaustion/lack of sleep deprivation, and history of physical abuse when parents were growing up). This study's limitations are a low response rate of 40% due to avoidance of</p>
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				<p>sensitive terms, parents who deny their own mental health conditions, and parents who don't want to admit to the use of physical punishment.</p>
<p>Sanagi, 2016</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>138 Japanese mainstream and special teachers</p>	<p>34 item survey defining normalization and 11 item survey defining inclusive education</p>	<p>A consensus to the concept of inclusive education in Japan is difficult. This study gathers the Japanese teacher's definition between normalization and inclusive education. Normalization was evaluated with a 34 item survey and five factors: balanced accordance, familiarity, sensitivity, showiness and sincerity. Inclusive education was evaluated with a 11 item survey and four factors: inclusivity image, group organization, group size, and diversity image. Then the 138 mainstream and special education teachers were divided into three groups using the cluster analysis of the surveys. The results showed that the most important factor to inclusive education is on group organization. 78 mainstream and special education teachers defined</p>



				<p>inclusive education as a resource room system with a large, small and individual size groups. 60 mainstream and special education teachers defined the group organization as strongly denying separated learning opportunity type. Further study is needed on classifying teacher’s attitudes into sub-types.</p>
Sanagi, 2016	Quantitative	<p>182 Japanese teachers from both mainstream schools and special schools. Teachers surveyed from primary, junior high schools, and high schools.</p>	Survey	<p>This survey gathered opinions about the concept of inclusive education for students with disabilities from the perception of Japanese teachers. The discussion of integration or separation of students with disabilities is still taking place in Japanese schools. The lack of understanding of inclusive education for students with disabilities begins with the lack of knowledge about disabilities, restrictions of resources, images of conventional educational systems and practices, and the narrowly understood definition of “special support education”.</p>



<p>Tachibana, 2006</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>2,381 Japanese parents of pupils attending elementary schools in a medium size city, Kasugai, Japan. Population 290,000 people</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<p>Studying how Japanese perceptions affect attitudes towards people with intellectual disability has been lacking. This study found that changing a person's perception towards a person with an intellectual disability, such as volunteering with a person with a disability, has a more favorable outcome in changing their attitude. The incorrect perceptions Japanese people had of people with intellectual disability were based on incorrect information. Teaching may change misperceptions and lead to better understanding of intellectual disabilities.</p>
<p>Trumper, 2010</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>36, 728 students, most of them 15 years old, from 34 different counties</p>	<p>Survey- 250 items</p>	<p>Japan ranked in the high human development and 11th out of 34 countries analyzed for the Human Development Index. The index measures three areas of human development: health, education and standard of living. Health is measured by life expectancy, education is measured by years of schooling (1/3 weight) and adult literacy (2/3 weight),</p>



				<p>and standard of living is measured by purchasing power. Japanese students on average ranked environmental protection with interest as neutral. The Japanese students were also neutral about linking their future job with environmental protection. The educational implications to teach environmental science is placed-based on the cultural, ecological, and political economics of a country. Curriculum can focus on connecting the global development to local levels.</p>
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3.2.1. Research Design

Fourteen of the 17 studies (82%) used a quantitative research design (Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015; Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000; Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012; Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Trumper, 2010). One of the studies (6%) used a mixed methods research design (Gordon, 2005). Two of the studies (12%) used a qualitative research design (Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015).

3.2.2. Participants and data sources

The 17 research studies included in this meta-synthesis analyzed data from Japanese teachers, Japanese students with disabilities, Japanese children without disabilities, Japanese parents with children with disabilities, Japanese principals, U.S teachers, and international adults and children with and without disabilities. Nine of the studies (53%) analyzed data collected from Japanese principals, Japanese teachers in training, Japanese mainstream and special education teachers, and physical education teachers from other countries (Forlin, Kawai, & Higuchi, 2015; Gordon, 2005; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016). The other majority of participants gathered for this research study included Japanese students with disabilities, Japanese parents of children with and without



disabilities, and international adults and teenagers with and without disabilities. Eight of the studies (47%) analyzed data from Japanese families with children with and without disabilities and adults and students from other countries with and without disabilities (Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa, & Mason, 2000; Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012; Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Trumper, 2010).

Surveys and interviews were researched as the main data sources in this meta-synthesis. Thirteen of the studies (76%) used surveys to support their findings from participants (Forlin, Kawai & Higuchi, 2015; Fujisawa, Yamagata, Ozaki, & Ando, 2012; Haynes, Hook, Macaruso, Muta, Hayashi, Kato, & Sasaki, 2000; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Herman, Samalot-Rivera & Sato, 2009; Hodge, Sato, Mukoyama & Kozub, 2013; Kakizawa, Douglas, Kagawa & Mason, 2000; Kataoka, Kraayenoord & Elkins, 2004; Kawai, Healey, Nagasawa, & Vanryckeghem, 2012; Kimura & Yamazaki, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Sanagi, 2016; Tachibana, 2006; Trumper, 2010). Three of the articles (18%) used interviews to support their research (Gordon, 2005; Hayashi & Okuhira, 2008; Hayashi & Tobin, 2015). One other data source used was a longitudinal cohort study in screening 18 month to three year old Japanese children for autism (Kamio, Haraguchi, Stickley, Ogino, Ishitobi, & Takahashi, 2015).

3.2.3 Findings of the studies

The findings of the 17 research studies included in this meta-synthesis can be summarized as follows.

1. Japanese society places great importance on defining self in relation with others. The Japanese way is on interdependence in relationships rather than striving for independence from



people. A popular Japanese motto is, ‘the nail that sticks-out, gets pounded down.’ This approach will have different outcomes to the Japanese disability movement that will fit their cultural norms.

2. The definition of inclusive education between Japanese teachers and principals differ. There is a lack of consensus among educational professionals. The majority of Japanese teachers believe that special education services should be located in resource rooms with small groups. Japanese teacher training programs lack the rigor of classes and experiences with teaching students with disabilities. Many new Japanese teachers reported that they had never seen a person with a disability. Veteran teachers are requesting professional development to support diverse learning styles and new strategies for teaching students with special education needs.

3. Due to a few core beliefs within the Japanese culture, limitations to the types of research are available or published. There were few research interviews articles that recorded honest and challenging topics. Discussion regarding disabilities and separation from the group is against the ethos of the Japanese culture. Conversations that produce feelings of shame, embarrassment, and public self-disclosure are avoided at all costs.

3.3. Emergent themes

Five themes emerged from my analysis of the 30 articles included in this meta-synthesis. These emergent themes or theme clusters, include: (a) Japanese parental pressures; (b) self-advocacy: independence and interdependence; (c) Japanese teachers and service delivery models for students with disabilities; (d) training and professional development with Japanese educators about special education topics; (e) quantitative research dynamics with Japanese culture. These five theme clusters and their formulated meanings are represented in Table 3.



Table 3

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
<p>Japanese parental pressures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japanese teachers and principals report changes in the family and social situation that impact student learning at school. ● Parents have access to free healthy check-ups where early screening tools combined with follow-up interviews can help identification of autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities. ● Negative parenting techniques with children with conduct problems. The higher level of hyperactivity/inattention problems with children, the higher likelihood of negative parenting techniques. ● Privacy of challenges and pressure to fix challenging behaviors. ● Japanese parents of children with autism, down syndrome, and other intellectual disabilities self-reported that they used physical punishment. ● A study found that parents who use physical punishment have some form of mental health problem(s): depression, anxious, physical exhaustion/lack of sleep deprivation, and history of physical abuse when they were growing up. ● Individuals with disabilities are at risk of being perceived as a burden to their families.
<p>Self-advocacy movement: independence and interdependence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japanese people with disabilities have faced discrimination and prejudice similar to other people with disabilities in other Asian countries. ● Deaf students are dealing with the hyphenated identity of Deaf and Japanese ● Japanese value a deep mutual relationship with family, friends and community. Interdependence on each other. ● Married couples live with parents (more than 25%) ● Independent living movement struggles to take-off in Japan due to the cultural importance of relationships with others. ● A person’s self in Japan exists in mutual relation with others.



<p>Japanese teachers & service delivery models for students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japan’s image of teachers as being respected by parents and community is changing. ● Many teachers interviewed wouldn’t recommend the teaching profession to their students or children. ● Japanese teachers rated a small number of their students with a specific learning disability. ● Japanese teachers find the major difficulties in providing education to students with disabilities are: severity of the disability, large class sizes, and lack of professional training ● Teachers who have had experience teaching students with severe disabilities have struggled with behavior management skills. ● Japanese mainstream and special education teachers defined inclusive education as a resource room system with a large, small and individual size groups. ● Japanese mainstream and special education teachers defined inclusive education as strongly denying separated learning opportunities for the grouping of students. ● Japanese teachers have a narrowly understood definition of ‘special support education’ as the same meaning as ‘education for students with disabilities’ ● Professional development may educate misperceptions and lead to better understanding of intellectual disabilities. ● Ministry of Education in Japan establishes continuity of curriculum throughout the country for all compulsory schools and education for 1st through 9th grade. ● Second only to North Korea, Japan can be measured as the most ethnic homogeneity. Thus testing high quality, state-of-the-art, cross-battery, assessments is available in any part of Japan.
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<p>Training and professional development with Japanese educators about special education topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japanese teachers request professional development for special education topics. ● Greater understanding of inclusion since Japanese pre-service teachers lack the skills, knowledge, experience or training for teaching students with disabilities. ● Japanese teachers have a perceived readiness and willingness to teach students with disabilities. None of the Japanese pre-service teachers had received courses at university. ● Behavior management strategies when teaching students with severe disabilities. ● Additional information on teaching techniques for students with disabilities that are increasing in frequency in Japan. ● Greater knowledge and support for teaching students with learning disabilities. ● Information on inclusive education for students with disabilities, availability of resources, conventional educational systems, and researched-based teaching strategies ● Volunteering with a person with a disability have a favorable outcome in changing the perceived attitude.
<p>Quantitative research dynamics with Japanese culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficulty in gathering personal information on embarrassing topics ● Japanese value privacy and avoid self-disclosure and embarrassment, sensitivity for shame, and avoid boastfulness. ● Only 3 interviews out of 17 research articles ● 57% research articles were quantitative ● Study's limitations of a low response rate of 40% due to avoidance of sensitive terms, parents who deny their own mental health conditions, and parents who don't want to admit to the use of physical punishment.



4. Discussion

In this section I summarized the theme clusters from the 30 articles included in this meta-synthesis. Next, I connect the clusters to my own teaching experiences as a special education teacher in the United States and an English language teacher in Japan.

4.1. *Japanese parental pressures*

The social pressure Japanese parents experience when raising children is immense. Japanese parents are expected to be perfect parents and raise perfect children. Humans aren't perfect so this is an unrealistic social expectation. Parenting children with a disability have added stressors with medical needs, challenging behaviors, and social stigmas. Japanese families take the responsibility of raising children with disabilities as their burden. This can result in negative parenting skills such as physical punishment. Often parents who resort to physical punishment have experienced violence when they were young. It is important that children with disabilities have additional supports outside the immediate family to meet their needs.

The Japanese believe that a child's actions are a direct reflection of their parents. Parenting and educating a child with a disability, in either country, takes a community. I suggest parents explore support groups and individual counseling to cope with the social stigma. Also, parenting classes to build positive responses to challenging behaviors and direct service providers to give daycare relief to parents. Japanese parents aren't the only individuals that use physical punishment. I observed some Japanese teachers hit a few male middle school students due to the student's attitudes and behaviors. Even though I could understand about half of the Japanese spoken to me, I witnessed teacher's verbally harassing students too. In my classroom, I use positive behavior supports for addressing challenging behaviors. It's vital that Japanese



teachers are provided the supports for behavior management skills and remove all physical and verbal punishment towards students.

4.2. Independence and interdependence

Japanese society is dependent on relations with others. One way this is observed in Japan is through multi-generational families living together in the same house generation after generation. Married couples will also live with their parents and raise their children together. The cultural difference between Japan's focus of interdependence and the United States' independence results in a different outcome for individuals with disabilities.

With the Japanese value of interdependence, individuals with disabilities will be able to depend socially and financially on family throughout their life. Individuals with disabilities will have continued supportive living since it's common for multi-generation Japanese families to live under one roof. The supports Japanese families can provide for family members with disabilities could be similar to wraparound services in the United States. After I get to know the families and students with disabilities, I discuss additional services and resources in our community that could be helpful to their unique needs. The more collaboration the better in my opinion so that individuals are supported for healthy development throughout their life.

4.3. Japanese teachers and service delivery models for students with disabilities

A few mainstream Japanese teachers report having experience with teaching students with disabilities. The findings reported that they had difficulty with challenging behaviors in the general education setting. This shines light on a few complex factors that Japanese teachers are confronting with the Japanese education system. Japanese middle school teachers have upwards of 40 to 45 students in one classroom. These high number of students per class combined with



little experience teaching students with disabilities equals a lack of consensus of defining and implementing inclusive education in Japanese public schools. The Japanese education model groups students by their disabilities into separate schools. There are Japanese schools for the blind and deaf that believe the similarity and belonging to a group is important. Other students with autism, learning disabilities, or physical impairment attend general education programs with resource room support for addressing their disability. The inclusive model of teaching students with disabilities in the U.S is not the same in Japan.

When I taught English as a second language in Japan, I co-taught with a Japanese teacher who spoke English. This co-teaching model is a valuable model, and I'm happy that I experienced this early in my teaching career. The use of two trained teachers in a classroom to address the different academic and behavioral needs of the group is something that I use in my teaching practices today. I have learned for co-teaching to be successful in both countries is trust between the teachers, planning time, and an openness to examine teaching practices that are effective and ineffective. This co-teaching provides students with disabilities to be supported in the general education classroom with them benefiting from learning with their same age peers and grade level curriculum.

4.4. Training and professional development with Japanese educators about special education topics

Japanese teachers lack the experience and pre-teacher training classes to address the complex needs of teaching students with disabilities. Ongoing trainings are needed to discuss new approaches to educating students with disabilities. Japanese teachers reported that the major difficulties in providing education to students with disabilities are severity of the disability, large



class sizes, and lack of professional training. Training to address those three areas can reduce misperceptions and lead to better understanding of education for students with disabilities.

Four times during the school year the special education director conducts half-day professional development trainings with special education teachers and related service staff. These trainings are a successful way to address information on inclusive education for students with disabilities, availability of resources, modifications of educational curriculum, and researched-based teaching strategies. Another practice that has been successful for special education teachers and para-educator teams is weekly meetings to discuss successes with certain students, overall challenges, and reviewing behavior intervention plans. Structured trainings and team meetings allow for teachers to plan, discuss ideas, and implement quality instruction for all students in their classes.

4.5. Quantitative research dynamics with Japanese culture

17 research articles gathered for this meta-synthesis focused on surveys and numbers to quantify emotions and difficult topics. Only three of the 17 were qualitative studies with interviews. The lack of diverse research shows the cultural norm that Japanese people are private. The Japanese value privacy, sensitivity for shame, and avoidance of self-disclosure, embarrassment, and boastfulness. These traits limit the amount of information researchers can gather regarding people with disabilities.

One example that I found interesting about the Japanese valuing privacy is that they don't invite nonfamily members over to their house for dinner. The home is private and not used for entertaining. So restaurants are the place to socialize with coworkers and friends. Another cultural norm different from mine is that some Japanese families use community bathhouses



rather than have a shower or tub at home. The amount of water and heat to have individual showers or tubs at home is not sustainable for the amount of people living in Japan. The bathhouses are segregated by gender and are extremely clean. The Japanese are very proud of their cleanliness around the country. As private as the Japanese are about sharing information about their personal lives, they find it common to clean one's body in a public bathhouse. In my opinion, the comparison of Japanese and United States' privacy of self are completely opposite. With that, I believe both countries can learn from each other and find a balance between public self and private self. In the United States, we hide our bodies and are ashamed if we don't look like people in magazines or on TV. Whereas, our personal life can be shared and boasted about in public without an ounce of doubt. Cultural foundational blocks, in both countries, impact the education of people with disabilities.

5. Conclusion

This meta-synthesis uncovered complex topics when examining inclusive education for students with disabilities in Japan. The need for professional development for Japanese teachers on educating people with disabilities was discussed in many articles. It is evident that Japanese teachers have a desire to teach students with disabilities and need skills to implement systems for positive behavior supports for successful classroom management. The research supports that students with disabilities in Japan are being identified as needing specialized instruction and some are receiving education in separate schools. The debate on where and who will provide the specialized instruction continues to be discussed without a clear plan. Unfortunately, there are Japanese students with undiagnosed disabilities that continue to struggle in their general education setting without accommodations, modifications or direct instruction in the academic area of need.



A Japanese societal norm that is important to this research is their ability to accept inclusion and reject dealing with differences. With Japan's large population, 127 million people, living on a 1,500 mile archipelago, the importance of getting along is critical. Not offending a coworker, peer, or neighbor allows for this society to live in peace. In certain ways, special education's foundation is addressing how a student learns differently. This discussion confronts a fundamental norm for the Japanese. Since the inclusion of all Japanese people is important to their society, teachers need support from their principals and the Ministry of Education to include all types of learners in their large classes.

The research on inclusive education in Japan is broad and lacks a cohesive plan for including all students with disabilities in the general education setting. It is hopeful that educational inclusive practices will improve overtime as teachers are given more training on disability topics. Successful inclusive models for teaching students with disabilities are evolving both in Japan and the United States. A plan focused on incorporating educational best practices for all learners will inevitably help individuals with disabilities learn in Japan and beyond.



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