

Understanding students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

and why they struggle at school



Objectives

- *Define*
- *Characteristics*
 - *Cognitive*
 - *Affective*
- *Interventions*

Presentation is inspired by Benoit Dumas's research, Danielle Dunberry and Georgette Goupil

What is intellectual disability?

- *Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving)*
- *and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills.*

Mild intellectual disability

- *An IQ between between 50-55 and 70*
- *Many of the characteristics of MID correspond to those of Learning Disabilities*
- *The intellectual development will be slow, however, MID students have the potential to learn within the regular classroom given appropriate accommodations and/or modifications.*
- *Some MID students will require greater support and/or withdrawal than others will. MID students, like all students demonstrate their own strengths and weaknesses.*

Mild intellectual disability

At-Risk Students, Students With Learning Difficulties and Students With Behavioural Disorders

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 2005-2010 teachers' collective agreement, ratified in 2006, includes new provisions concerning at-risk students and students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties.

This appendix examines what is meant by the term "at-risk student," and presents the definitions of the terms "students with learning difficulties" and "students with behavioural disorders," which can be found in Appendix XIX of the agreement.

The purpose of this appendix is to make all definitions regarding students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, as well as "at-risk students," available in one document.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "AT-RISK STUDENT"


The term "at-risk student" refers to students at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels who present certain vulnerability factors that may affect their learning or behaviour, and who may therefore be at risk, especially of falling behind either academically or socially, unless there is timely intervention.

Particular attention should be given to at-risk students to determine the appropriate corrective or preventive measures to be taken.

At-risk students are not included in the "students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties" category.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Students with learning difficulties:

- 
- a) at the elementary level:
are those for whom an analysis of their situation shows that the remedial measures implemented by the teacher or by others for a significant period of time have not helped the student progress sufficiently in his or her learning to meet the minimum requirements of the Québec Education Program for the successful completion of a cycle in language of instruction or in mathematics.
 - b) at the secondary level:
are those for whom an analysis of their situation shows that the remedial measures implemented by the teacher or by others for a significant period of time have not helped the student progress sufficiently in his or her learning to meet the minimum requirements of the Québec Education Program for the successful completion of a cycle in language of instruction or in mathematics.

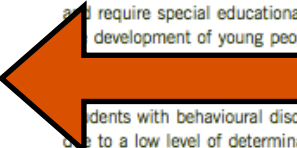
STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

Students with behavioural disorders have undergone psychosocial evaluations given by qualified personnel and by the persons concerned using observation techniques or systematic analysis, and these evaluations show that the students suffer from a major deficit in their ability to adapt, as manifested in significant difficulties interacting with one or more elements of their school, social or family environment.

These difficulties may include:

- Overreactions to environmental stimuli (unjustified words or acts involving aggression, intimidation and destruction, and persistent refusals of appropriate disciplinary measures)
- Underreactions to environmental stimuli (excessive fear of people and of new situations, abnormal passivity, dependency and reclusiveness)

Difficulties interacting with the environment are considered significant and require special educational services when they adversely affect the development of young people with disorders or that of those who require special support measures taken on their behalf.



Students with behavioural disorders often have learning difficulties due to a low level of determination in the completion of tasks or reduced levels of attentiveness and concentration.

Statistic

- *Ministry of Health and Social Services estimate that 3% of the population in Quebec have an intellectual disability.*
 - *Approximately 200,000 people in the province of Quebec.*

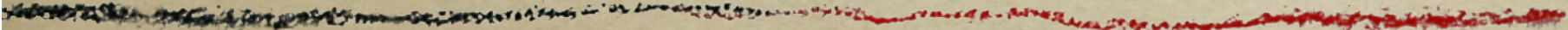
85% Mild intellectual disability

10% Moderate intellectual disability

5% Severe to profound intellectual disability

- *Taken from "Guide d'accès aux services spécialisés du CRDI Montérégie-Est (2010)"*

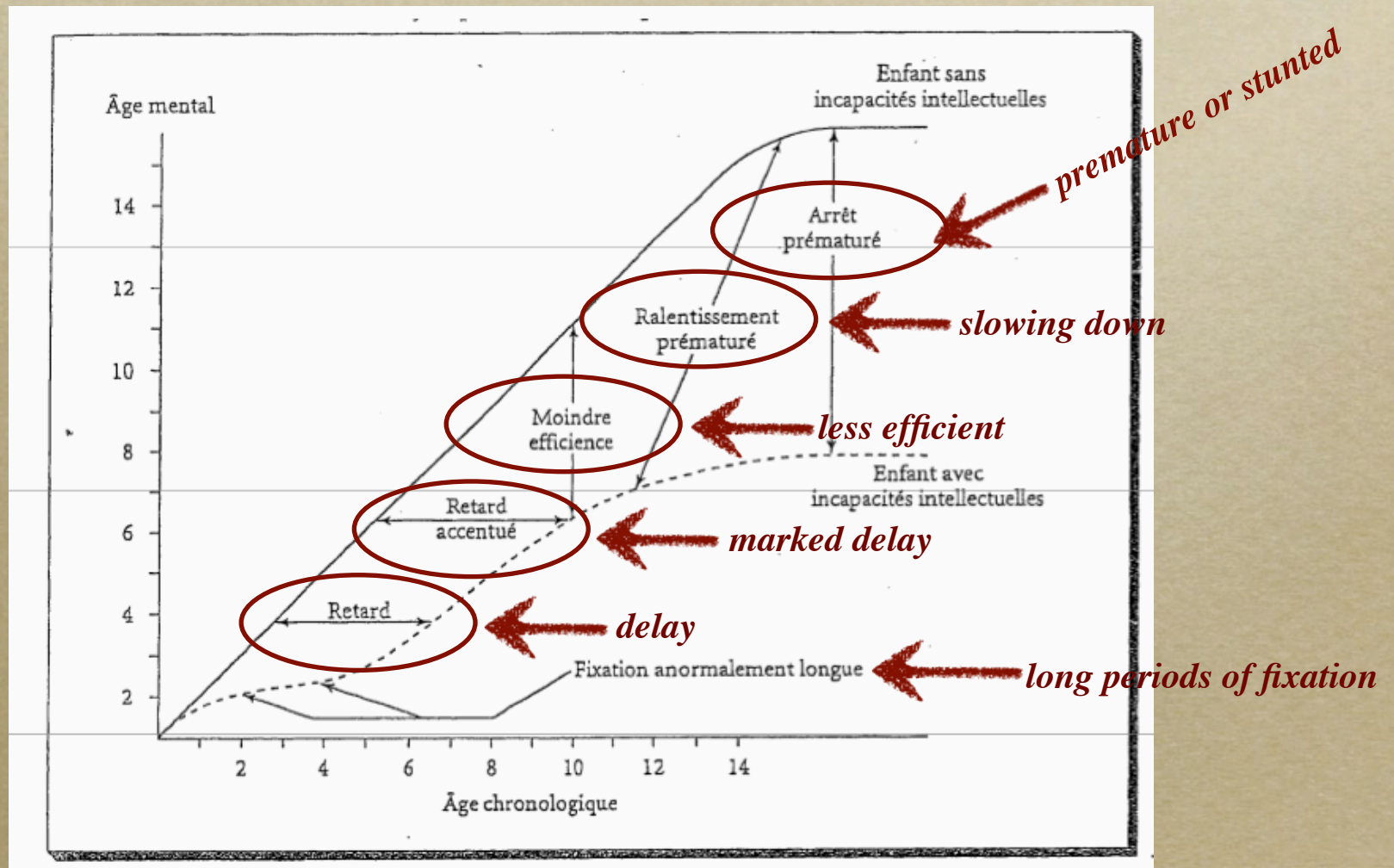
Cognitive and Affective Characteristics of Students with MID & Interventions



Cognitive Characteristics

- *Based on*
 - *mental age* - compared with individuals of same mental age without intellectual disabilities
 - *chronological age* - compared with individuals of same age without intellectual disabilities

Six Characteristics of Intellectual Development and Intellectual Functioning



Source: Dionne, Langevin, Paour et Rocque. Dans Habimana. 1999. *Psychopathologie de l'enfant et de l'adolescent: Approche intégratrice*. Boucherville: Éditions Gaëtan Morin, p. 329.

How these Deficits are Manifested

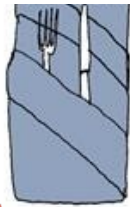
Selective Attention

- *Capable of attention, but difficulty paying attention to relevant information especially when information is presented in bulk;*

What we can do in class

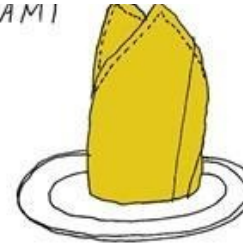
Selective Attention

- *Limit verbal information (stick to the essential)*
- *Limit illustrations and sequences on board*
- *Ask student to verbalize what is asked*

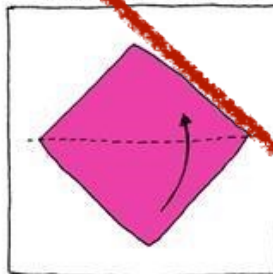


4 SUPER-EASY NAPKIN ORIGAMI TECHNIQUES FOR YOUR NEXT AMAZING DINNER PARTY

BY YUMI SAKUGAWA



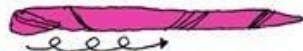
SUPER-EASY: THE ROSETTE FOLD



FOLD A SQUARE
NAPKIN DIAGONALLY
TO FORM A TRIANGLE



TIGHTLY ROLL THE BOTTOM
OF THE TRIANGLE ALL THE
WAY TO THE TOP.

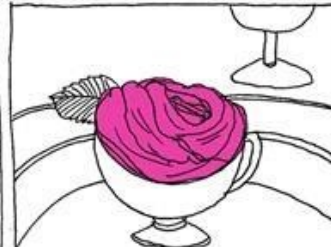


ONCE IT IS ROLLED UP,
ROLL INWARD SIDEWAYS
ALL THE WAY TO THE END.

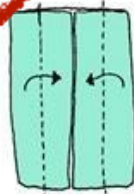
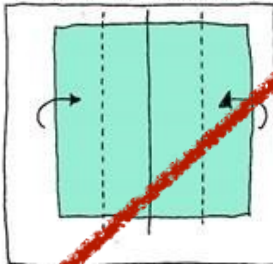


PLACE
INSIDE
A TEA
CUP.

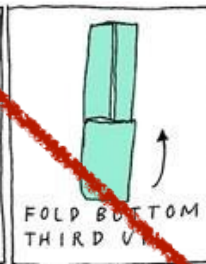
*OPTIONAL:
ADD REAL
ROSE LEAF



PRETTY EASY: THE BOWTIE FOLD



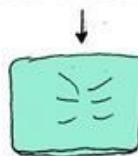
AFTER FOLDING
A SQUARE NAPKIN
INWARDS ON LEFT
AND RIGHT SIDE
TOWARDS CENTER,
REPEAT FOLDING
INWARD A SECOND
TIME.



FOLD BOTTOM
THIRD UP



FOLD TOP THIRD
DOWNWARD,



ROTATE 90°
AND PINCH TOP



USING DECORATIVE
RIBBON, TIE
TO FORM



FLIP TO OTHER
SIDE AND PLACE



French Napkin Fold

How these Deficits are Manifested

Working Memory

- *Normal working memory can actively maintain and process 5 to 9 elements of information. He is vulnerable to the pace and quantity of information presented.*

What we can do in class

Working Memory

- *Use concrete and specific language*
- *Give one instruction at a time*
- *Ask student to explain, verbalize instruction*
- *Give sufficient time for student to answer question*
- *Act out instruction (use a lot of body language)*
- *Use visuals to support explanation*

How these Deficits are Manifested

Lack of cognitive & metacognitive strategies

- *Less efficient way of treating information because of his inability of spontaneously using his strategies. Difficulty knowing when to use well known strategies.*

What we can do in class

Lack of cognitive & metacognitive strategies

- *Teach learning strategies (modeling, guided practice, individual practice)*
- *Task analysis (breaking down the task in smaller sections/steps making it easier to learn)*
- *Encourage students to use learned strategies (recall)*
- *Encourage students to use reference tools (posters, cheat sheets, planning tools)*

How these Deficits are Manifested

Poor basic knowledge and poorly organized

- *Difficulty linking newly acquired knowledge to past concepts or skills. Knowledge is poorly organized and making relationships between concepts, which reflects a pre-operational stage of thinking.*

What we can do in class

Poor basic knowledge and poorly organized

- *Concept charts that encourage students to enumerate what they already know -KWL Chart*
- *Use concrete and specific language*
- *Invite students to make links between new concepts and older ones, and make these links explicit if need be*
- *Present new concepts while making sure these are understood (give concrete examples, find materials to illustrate)*

How these Deficits are Manifested

Difficulty transferring and generalizing

- *Difficulty with problem solving and recalling learned strategies. Even when he/she recalls/remembers them, he/she will have difficulty applying them in different contexts.*

What we can do in class

Difficulty transferring and generalizing

- *Give examples where and when a strategy can be used other than the one you have given, or invite students to give suggestions of where else this strategy can be applied/used*
- *Use taught strategies throughout the day, week, and in different contexts*

Affective Characteristics



- *The following characteristics are not necessarily intrinsic to students with mild intellectual disabilities, but could be related to school and/or family environments/conditions of all students.*

What we can observe

Low motivation

- ***Seems to lack interest or motivation.** Left on his own, he will not take the initiative to participate in or do an activity/ task. At times, there seems to be strong interests in certain things, sometimes fixations on certain subjects or objects. (Motivation is the motor of learning).*

What we can do in class

Low motivation

- *Propose activities/tasks that respect students' capabilities (reasonable challenge)*
- *Activities should be relative to real life situations, concrete, and able to use in daily life situations*
- *Student centered activities (their interests)*

What we can observe

Low self-esteem

- *Repetitive failure plays a major role in his self-esteem and sense of competency. He will have a tendency to ask for adult approval before and after doing work.*

What we can do in class

- *Low self-esteem*
 - *Activities should be of reasonable challenge*
 - *Encourage students to use learned strategies*
 - *Remind students that they know how (“you did this before and you succeeded)*
 - *Encourage students to answer their own questions*
 - *Give frequent feedback to ensure student is on the right track*

What we can observe

Absolute certainty of failure

- *Difficulty believing he can do or learn something. Convinced he will fail, so what's the use of trying. He won't take any chances or even try.*

What we can do in class

- *Absolute certainty of failure*
 - *Propose activities/tasks that respect students' capabilities (reasonable challenge)*
 - *Remind them they can*
 - *Recall strategies already used to accomplish task*

What we can observe

Weak understanding of level/complexity of a task

- *Doesn't always understand what needs to be done, and underestimates what needs to be done to effectively accomplish a task. Planning becomes a problem.*

What we can do in class

Weak understanding of level/complexity of a task

- *Clearly explain each step and expectations*
- *Leave visuals, examples of each step*
- *Ask students to explain in their own words your expectations*

What we can observe

Poor investment in performance

- *Will invest less time in doing work; will have a tendency rush through his work.*

What we can do in class

Poor investment in performance

- *Clearly explain each step and expectations*
- *Break down activity in specific or simpler steps*
- *Give frequent feedback to ensure student is on the right track*
- *Review work with student before beginning next step*

What we can observe

Difficulty attributing cause of failure

- *Does not see his/her lack of investment in task or the complexity of the task as a cause of failure. He is convinced that he/she is incapable. “Can’t do it!”*

What we can do in class

Difficulty attributing cause of failure

- *Remind students that they know how (“you did this before and you succeeded)*
- *Encourage students to recall when they succeeded*
- *Review winning strategies with students*
- *Give frequent feedback to ensure student is on the right track*

What we can observe

Difficulty planning for the future

- *Difficulty with anticipating or foreseeing his future. Although he can talk about what he'd like to do or want in the future, he will not take into account his limitations or have realistic goals.*

What we can do in class

Difficulty planning for the of future

- *Begin a transition plan with students*
- *Promote self-determination by teaching*
 - *choice making skills*
 - *decision making skills*
 - *problem solving skills*
 - *goal setting and attainment skills*

References

- Dumas, Benoît. (2007, Janvier). *Stratégies favorisant l'apprentissage d'habiletés de résolution de problèmes représentatifs de la vie quotidienne chez des élèves ayant des incapacités intellectuelles légères et des troubles associés*. Mémoire, Université du Québec à Montréal.
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