

Why is Max struggling at school?

Understanding students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities



Objectives

- *Definition*
- *Characteristics*
 - *Cognitive*
 - *Affective*
- *Interventions*

Closer look at students with an intellectual disability



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.*

Three elements must be present

First, a diagnosis by qualified personnel. The diagnosis defines the disability or the nature of the disorder.

1. Next, the disabilities and limitations hinder or prevent the student from learning the content of the Québec Education Program or developing autonomy and achieving social integration.

2. Finally, support measures must be taken to reduce the disadvantages created by a disability or a serious disorder, in order to enable the student to function at school despite his or her disability or difficulties.

Statistic

- *3% of the population in Quebec have an intellectual disability.*
- *This means 228,000 people in the province of Quebec.*

How does MELS categorize intellectual disabilities

◦ *Profound intellectual impairments*

Code 23

◦ *Moderate to severe intellectual impairments*

Code 24

◦ *Students with Learning Difficulties*

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:

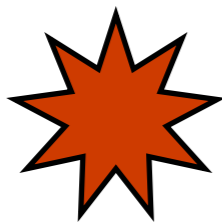
- Overreactions to environmental stimuli (unjustified words or acts involving aggression, intimidation and destruction, and persistent refusals of appropriate disciplinary measures)

remedial measures have not helped the student progress in his or her learning to meet the minimum requirements of the Québec Education Program

(excessive fear of people, dependency and

are considered significant when they adversely affect others or that of those measures taken on their

have learning difficulties completion of tasks or ration.



Mild intellectual disability

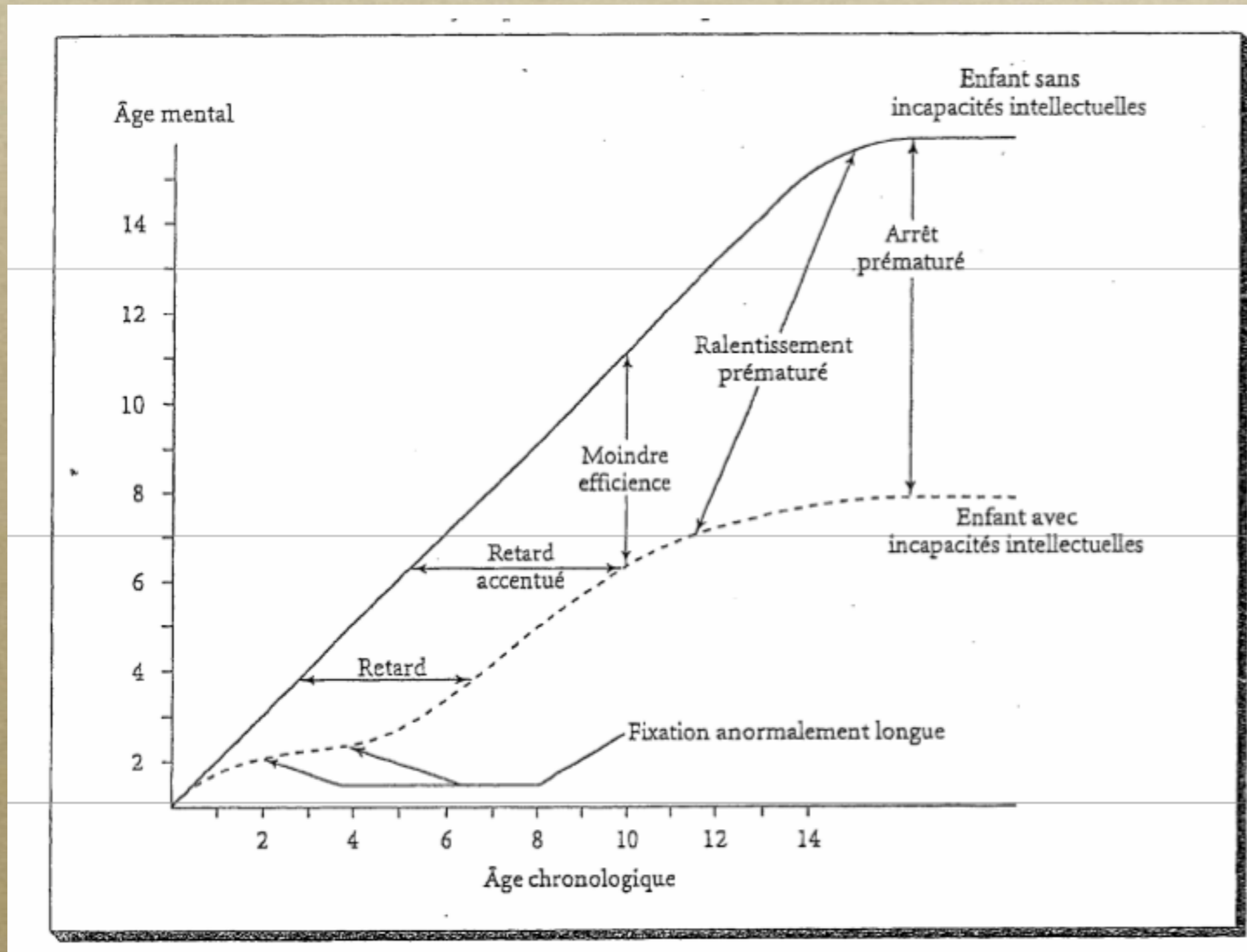
- *An IQ between between 50-55 and 70 or 2-4 years behind.*
 - *Borderline Intellectual Functioning IQ 71-84*
- *Many of the characteristics of MID correspond to those of Learning Disabilities.*
- *The intellectual development will be slow, however, MID students have the potential to learn within the 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.*

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



Short Film





Cognitive Characteristics

- *Slow or delayed intellectual development*
 - *Same developmental stages as normal children, but will be longer for certain stages*
 - *Delay in development can be explained by long periods of fixation*

Cognitive Characteristics

- *Slowing down or premature stunted development*
 - *Contrary to a normal child whose development is continuous between the ages of 7 and 14; his will progressively slow down during that same period*
 - *Usually stops at the beginning of the concrete operational stage (difficulty with abstract thinking)*

Cognitive Characteristics

- *Less efficient intellectual functioning*
 - *Important deficits in the way he/she processes information*
(coding, short term memory, long term memory)

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*

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 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*
 - *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)*
 - *Concept charts that encourage students to enumerate what they already know -KWL Chart*

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 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*