**Reforming Special Education Policy in China: Prospects and Possibilities**

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ABSTRACT

The benefits to society of inclusion are well documented for students with disabilities and those who do not have a learning difference. Strong friendships, an appreciation and acceptance of those who are different, and learning to help others succeed are among the reasons inclusion is required by law in most western countries. While there are many studies on the benefits of special education, we know little on how China could move to such a system. Research examining how a policy shift would be implemented at the “street-level” within Chinese schools and what barriers this process would face is needed.

Evaluating the degree inclusion would be accepted and identifying the stumbling blocks to implementation of such an effort is needed. To this end, the researchers surveyed 478 teachers in six different cities across China in May and June of 2014 about their views on ten categories of learning disabilities, which they felt should be recognized and accommodated in the classroom, and the resources and training that would be needed. Teachers were chosen since they the group that should be most supportive of educating those with special needs and in the best position to identify roadblocks to such an effort. Additionally any proposed reform would benefit from the strong support of the street-level bureaucrats tasked with implementing it.

A clear understanding of the types of learning disabilities and differences teachers accept and the resources and training they need to accommodate various types of students is the first step in creating a proposed policy that would allow more students access to a quality education in China. Implications go beyond a single policy though. By examining how far ahead in thinking current teachers are with the existing policies, a better grasp of China’s growth in education policy can be gleaned. Knowledge of how Chinese teachers in different regions of the country view education reform adds to our understanding of the projected trajectory of education reform in the Middle Kingdom. Many reforms occur in a single city and knowing how teachers in different parts of China view special education gives predictive power to where education reforms are most likely to occur first.

This paper is concerned primarily with assessing the feasibility of increasing access to education for primary and secondary students in China with special needs. China’s special education system has made tremendous strides since 1949 but still lags behind the west in terms of access to education for students with disabilities. It is naive to imagine that the system used in the west can (or should) be appropriated wholesale to China. The development of China, the goals of China’s education system, and the limited resources of a still developing country make it both unrealistic and undesirable to impose a foreign system on China. There are however improvements that can be made to all education systems and China is no exception to this rule. In the case of China, there are opportunities to improve access to education for different subsets of students with special needs not currently being served by the system. This paper identifies areas where there is broad support for increasing access to education for students with special needs and provides a roadmap for implementation of reform to the laws relating to providing educational opportunities to students with disabilities,.

Special education in the United States has guaranteed free and appropriate education for students with special needs since passage of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142).[[1]](#endnote-1) Additionally, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required any organization that provides programs and activities to children, whether they be public or private to not discriminate based on disabilities if they receive federal funds. This law applies to all public school districts. Those two laws provide a type of double assurance that people with a disability will be accommodated.

Currently, treatment of students with disabilities in the U.S. is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA of 1997, reauthorized in 2004.[[2]](#endnote-2) The law encourages “a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information including information provided by a parent, that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child’s individualized education program, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum.”[[3]](#endnote-3) IDEA offers a definition for a child with a disability, and the law lists 13 different categories of disabilities under which children can be eligible to receive special education and related services.

While there has been a movement to include students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms since the 1980s, the picture is more complex than it appears at first glance. There are two issues: numbers and definition. In 2010, China enrolled 60.1% of students who are officially recognized as having a disability or special educational need in a mainstream classroom (255,662 out of 425,613)[[4]](#endnote-4). However, according to official 2006 Chinese statistics, China recognized almost 2.5 million children as having disabilities. This might be due to some of these children being registered as regular students and/or some not going to school at all. Relatedly, the numbers of children with learning disabilities in China is small by international comparison. “In 2011 the World Health Organization (WHO. 2011, p. 30) estimated that the global prevalence of moderate and severe disabilities is 15.3% across all ages, and 5.1% among the 0-14-year-old population. The corresponding Chinese percentages, calculated from the *Second China National Sample Survey on Disability* (CDPF, 2007) and the *China Statistical Yearbook 2007* (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2007) are almost three times smaller (6.3% and 1.8%).”[[5]](#endnote-5)

Part of the reason for the discrepancy is due to the assessment criteria. In China, the Central People’s Government uses six criteria: visual, hearing, language, intellectual, physical, and mental which are defined using medical criteria. This is a much smaller set of disabilities than is recognized in the west. Given the more recent development of the Chinese education system, this is understandable but problematic. In China, students with disabilities are often ignored in the classroom and may not receive appropriate instruction, because the teachers have neither the time nor knowledge to help them (Deng & Harris, 2008; Pang & Richey, 2006). Of the ten categories of learning disabilities recognized in the United States, only three are fully recognized in China and one category is partially recognized. A more inclusive educational system would recognize and accommodate more students who have learning disabilities not currently recognized in China. It is however unrealistic to suggest that China can currently accommodate every learning disability currently recognized and accommodated in the United States. The question is , This paper seeks to gain an understanding of which learning disabilities would be most likely to be recognized by the government.

When assessing the feasibility of making changes, it is essential to begin with a clear understanding that the development of China’s education system over the past 35 years has been dramatic in many respects and tremendous strides have been made. China is however in dire need of developing a more inclusive special education model to fully meet the needs of all children. While the government does provide all children with a guarantee of nine years of free public education and has built a number of schools for children with visual, hearing, and some developmental impairments, many important measures have yet to be implemented nationwide. There is currently no national effort to provide special education training for teachers or space for students in a non-segregated fashion or to meet the needs of students who have learning differences that do not necessarily fit the few categories currently recognized by the Chinese government.

In short, China lacks a national effort to provide special education training for teachers or space for students who have learning differences that do not fit the few categories currently recognized by the government. Evaluating the degree inclusion would be accepted and identifying the stumbling blocks to implementation is needed. We surveyed 478 teachers in six different cities across China about their views on ten categories of learning disabilities, which they felt should be recognized and accommodated in the classroom, and the resources and training needed. Teachers were chosen since they should be high demanders of education and in a good position to identify roadblocks. Also, reforms benefit from the strong support of street-level bureaucrats tasked with implementation. Understanding the types of learning disabilities and which teachers readily accept and the resources and training needed to accommodate students is a precondition in education policy reform in China. By examining how far ahead in thinking teachers are with the existing policies, a better grasp of China’s growth in education policy can be gleaned. Knowledge of how Chinese teachers in different regions of the country view education reform adds to our understanding of the projected trajectory of education reform in China. Many reforms occur in a single city and knowing how teachers in different parts of China view special education gives predictive power to where education reforms are most likely to occur. This effort sheds light on which types of disabilities that are currently not recognized might me most likely to be acknowledged and accommodated in Chinese schools in the future.

METHODS

Given the need to determine areas where providing educational opportunities to all students with different types of learning disabilities are likely to most supported, the authors conducted a survey of current and future teachers. Teacher support is a necessary, albeit insufficient precondition for any lasting and meaningful change to existing education policy. Teachers interact with students of different abilities each day and parents are skeptical to changes in education policy not supported by teachers and supportive of policies teachers embrace.

The survey was designed and pretested in the spring of 2014. It was translated into Chinese and the meaning and intent of each question was cross-checked. It was then administered to current teachers in four Chinese cities during the months of May and June of 2014. In July, approximately 200 students currently studying to become K-12 teachers in China studying at a Chinese university were given the same questionnaire. In this way, the researchers were able to get not only a sense of how current teachers who have years of experience view teaching students with learning disabilities, but were able to also get the views of the upcoming generation of teachers.

Questions were designed to determine which established learning disabilities Chinese teachers (K – 12) were able to recognize, which they saw as needing to be accommodated, what resources they believed were needed to accommodate each type of learning disability, whether they believed students with different types of disabilities had the ability to succeed academically, and a series of questions to gauge teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming students with learning disabilities. Additionally, demographic questions were asked so that the data can be stratified according to gender, years on the job, grade taught, and the like. A copy of the survey in English can be found in Appendix A and a copy of the survey in Chinese can be found in Appendix B

The first non-demographic question asked was “How familiar are you with the following types of disabilities (followed by the list of learning disabilities recognized in the west).[[6]](#endnote-6) Of the list given, only four (Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing; Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision; Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss; and Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities) would be fully recognized under China’s current definition of “learning disability”. The purpose of this question is to determine which disabilities teachers are currently aware of. A lack of support for providing accommodations for a disability can be explained by a host of factors and a lack of knowledge of what it is should be accounted for. To help ensure that a lack of familiarity is not merely unfamiliarity with the term, a short definition of each was provided in the survey.

The second question, “Which of the following disabilities do you feel all K-12 schools in China should have to accommodate so a student will be able to fully participate in class” (followed by a list of the ten categories), is intended to determine teacher attitudes toward inclusion. The third question: “How much additional training do you feel would be needed for you to accommodate a student with each of following learning disabilities?” is included to allow the researchers to provide some sense of the expected ease of any change to existing policy. The fourth question, “Assuming an accommodation is made and the student has been given the necessary support, how do you feel each type of learning disabilities impacts a student’s ability to succeed academically?” is intended to determine teacher attitudes toward student success. The Chinese education system is geared toward putting resources toward those most likely to succeed. This is a not-unreasonable use of scarce resources for a still-developing country. If teachers believe that students who have a particular learning disability lack the ability to succeed, any attempt to accommodate these students without addressing the underlying attitude will face significant problems at the implementation stage.

Finally, teachers were asked a series of questions about their attitudes toward accommodation in general and inclusion specifically along with questions about how confident they were that they had adequate training to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The purpose of these questions is to give policy makers necessary information as to the types of resources they would likely need to provide prior to considering any substantive change to existing education policy as it refers to students with learning disabilities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF TEACHER SURVEYS

318 teachers in four cities in China were surveyed over the course of six weeks. We were able to get a broad sample that appears reasonably representative of teachers in urban settings. Surveys were given at multiple schools in four different cities (public and private) that covered different grades (K – 12). However, no effort was made to include schools in rural areas. The funding for rural schools, the resource challenges they face, and the different rules they are administered under caused the authors to choose to focus on urban schools across China. It should however be noted that the results should not be interpreted as valid for non-urban schools which were not part of our sample. Almost 2/3 (63.2%) of teachers surveyed were female and the average class size was over 45 with an approximately normal distribution (mean 49, median 48, mode, 50). The average number of years of experience of teachers was 11.56 and the curve was slightly skewed (median 10, mode 10) and while ages ranged from 20 – 72, the average reported was in the 30s (mean 36.6, median 36, mode 30).

When asked about familiarity with learning disabilities, the following results were found:

Table 01: Familiarity with Learning Disabilities (in percentages)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Very Familiar | Somewhat Familiar | Not Very Familiar |
| Learning disability: difficulties in reading, writing, and computing. | 35.2 | 64.8 |  |
| Communication: difficulties in accurately producing the sounds of language or using language to communicate. | 34.6 | 65.4 |  |
| Emotional disturbance: significant problems in the social-emotional area | 34.6 | 64.5 | 0.9 |
| Autism: extraordinary difficulty in social responsiveness. | 34.0 | 66.0 |  |
| Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing. | 34.9 | 63.8 | 1.3 |
| Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision. | 34.6 | 65.1 | 0.3 |
| Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss. | 38.4 | 61.6 |  |
| Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities. | 37.7 | 61.9 | 0.3 |
| Traumatic brain injury: a medical condition denoting a serious brain injury affecting learning, behavior, social skills, and language. | 33.0 | 67.0 |  |
| Other health impairment: disease so significant that it affects learning; examples include cancer, sickle-cell anemia, and diabetes. | 33.0 | 66.0 | 0.9 |

The results are somewhat surprising to the authors since they are similar across all types of disabilities which seems odd given China does not currently recognize all of these types of disabilities and intellectual and psychiatric disabilities are not currently recognized:

In China, a person with a disability is defined as “a person who has lost all or part of his/her ability to perform normal activities due to loss or impairment of psychological or physiological functions.”

Disability is categorized according to type and level of disability, as follows:

1. Visual Impairment: Depending on the level of the disability, further divided into blindness or low vision.

A. Blindness: There are 2 levels of blindness. Level 1 means corrected eyesight is less than 0.02, and the inability to sense light, or the peripheral vision is less than 5 degrees. Level 2 indicates the corrected eyesight is from 0.02 to 0.05, and the peripheral vision is less than 10 degrees.

B. Low vision: There are 2 levels of low vision. Eyesight measuring 0.05 to 0.1 is level 1, and 0.3 to 0.1 for level 2.

2. Hearing and speaking impairment: Further categorized into deafness and hard-of-hearing, depending on listening ability.

A. Deafness: There are 2 levels of deafness. Level 1 audibility points to more than 91 decibels, with level 2 from 71 to 90 decibels.

B. Hard-of-hearing: There are 2 levels of hard-of-hearing. The audibility of 56 to 70 decibels is categorized as level 1, and level 2 for audibility of 41 to 55 decibels.

3. Physical disability: Categorized into 4 levels depending on the degree of amputation, paralysis, or functional disorder. [[7]](#endnote-7)

The results from the second set of questions shed some light on the subject however:

Table 02: When Should Schools Accommodate Learning Disabilities (in percentages)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Always Accommodate | Accommodate if not too expensive | Each school should decide  | Never accommodate |
| Learning disability: difficulties in reading, writing, and computing. | 28.9 | 44.1 | 27.0 |  |
| Communication: difficulties in accurately producing the sounds of language or using language to communicate. | 17.8 | 47.3 | 34.9 |  |
| Emotional disturbance: significant problems in the social-emotional area | 20.0 | 39.7 | 40.3 |  |
| Autism: extraordinary difficulty in social responsiveness. | 12.7 | 39.0 | 47.9 | 0.3 |
| Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing. | 16.8 | 37.8 | 45.4 |  |
| Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision. | 15.9 | 38.1 | 45.7 | 0.3 |
| Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss. | 17.5 | 42.0 | 39.8 | 0.6 |
| Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities. | 21.3 | 37.5 | 40.6 | 0.6 |
| Traumatic brain injury: a medical condition denoting a serious brain injury affecting learning, behavior, social skills, and language. | 13.3 | 34.0 | 52.1 | 0.6 |
| Other health impairment: disease so significant that it affects learning; examples include cancer, sickle-cell anemia, and diabetes. | 12.4 | 32.1 | 54.9 | 0.6 |

The results from the first question raised the possibility that respondents were not answering truthfully since they were providing consistent answers to the amount of knowledge they felt they possessed on subjects where different levels of knowledge would be predicted. The results from the second question are suggestive that the results of the first question are due to something other than respondents providing information they do not believe to be accurate. Respondents provided (as predicted) differing levels of support for different types of learning disabilities. This suggests that accommodations for different types of disabilities will be more or less likely to be supported by teachers. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any correlation to how much knowledge teachers have about a disability and their willingness (or lack thereof) to desire to provide an accommodation for it.

The third set of questions deals with training. If the government is to provide an accommodation, it would be necessary to ensure adequate training for those expected to ensure it is being properly provided.

Table 03: How much additional training is needed to accommodate a student with a learning disability (in percentages)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | No additional training needed | Some additional training needed | A great deal of additional training needed |
| Learning disability: difficulties in reading, writing, and computing. | 2.3 | 69.6 | 28.2 |
| Communication: difficulties in accurately producing the sounds of language or using language to communicate. | 0.3 | 62.7 | 36.9 |
| Emotional disturbance: significant problems in the social-emotional area | 0.6 | 61.8 | 37.6 |
| Autism: extraordinary difficulty in social responsiveness. | 0.3 | 54.1 | 45.5 |
| Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing. | 0.3 | 57.6 | 42.0 |
| Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision. |  | 57.3 | 42.7 |
| Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss. | 0.6 | 59.9 | 39.5 |
| Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities. | 0.3 | 61.1 | 38.5 |
| Traumatic brain injury: a medical condition denoting a serious brain injury affecting learning, behavior, social skills, and language. |  | 58.7 | 41.3 |
| Other health impairment: disease so significant that it affects learning; examples include cancer, sickle-cell anemia, and diabetes. | 1.0 | 51.7 | 47.3 |

Additional training teachers feel they need is more consistent than was first hypothesized by the authors. While the results appear genuine, the results may seem puzzling at first glance. There is no significant correlation between knowledge of a learning disability, desire to accommodate, and belief in the need for training. However, results make more sense when placed in context of the schools. Teachers appear to have knowledge of different learning disabilities such as autism, generally believe that in principle it may make sense to accommodate students with a learning disability (at least in some limited context) but lack the expertise to actually provide the needed accommodation. This reflects a genuine desire to accommodate coupled with a honest appraisal of the current state of education of how best to accommodate students with different learning disabilities.

The fourth set of questions focused on whether students with different learning disabilities could in fact succeed in the teachers’ view. This is an important measure. Areas where teachers do not feel students can succeed are less likely to be ripe for reform until this opinion is altered.

Table 04: Can students with learning disabilities succeed (in percentages)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Can easily succeed if accommodation is given | Can succeed if accommodation is given but will take a good deal of extra effort | Unlikely to ever succeed even if accommodation is given |
| Learning disability: difficulties in reading, writing, and computing. | 48.2 | 51.4 | 0.3 |
| Communication: difficulties in accurately producing the sounds of language or using language to communicate. | 34.7 | 65.0 | 0.3 |
| Emotional disturbance: significant problems in the social-emotional area | 40.5 | 58.8 | 0.6 |
| Autism: extraordinary difficulty in social responsiveness. | 28.9 | 70.7 | 0.3 |
| Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing. | 31.5 | 68.2 | 0.3 |
| Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision. | 27.0 | 73.0 |  |
| Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss. | 39.8 | 60.2 |  |
| Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities. | 31.8 | 67.8 | 0.3 |
| Traumatic brain injury: a medical condition denoting a serious brain injury affecting learning, behavior, social skills, and language. | 32.2 | 67.5 | 0.3 |
| Other health impairment: disease so significant that it affects learning; examples include cancer, sickle-cell anemia, and diabetes. | 28.8 | 69.9 | 1.3 |

The results of are quite encouraging. While there are some differences, it does appear that virtually all teachers surveyed believe that students with virtually any learning disability can in fact succeed with adequate resources. It does obviously remain to be seen whether the proper resources and training would be forthcoming but obstacles of teacher resistance appear unfounded. The results also suggest that a significant minority (over 25%) believe that minimal accommodations would be sufficient in many cases suggesting a degree of ready-made support among a subset of teachers to expand the list of learning disabilities to be more inclusive. The final set of questions dealt with more general issues relating to teaching students with learning disabilities:

Table 04: General statements on teaching students with learning disabilities (in percentages)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| I understand learning disabilities | 22.4 | 46.6 | 20.4 | 10.5 |  |
| I have adequate training in effective instructional strategies for students with disabilities | 10.5 | 37.6 | 38.2 | 13.7 |  |
| I have enough time in the classroom to spend with individual students with disabilities | 8.6 | 30.3 | 34.7 | 26.4 |  |
| I believe students with disabilities should be educated in the same classroom as non-disabled children | 18.2 | 32.5 | 27.1 | 21.7 | 0.6 |

Results suggest that teachers need more knowledge of, training in, and time for students with learning disabilities. Not surprisingly, limited resources (a problem in virtually all school systems across the world) frustrate many otherwise good ideas. None of this is surprising. However, a final question “do you see benefits in accommodating students with learning disabilities?” was asked at the end of the survey. Over half (52.1%) of respondents said “no” and only 47.9% said “Yes”. Additionally, this question had the largest number of non-responses with 16.0% choosing to leave the question blank. This gets to an important but often overlooked point about students with learning disabilities in China. There is an oft-reported bias in the Chinese education system for focusing scare resources almost exclusively on the most gifted at the expense of those who may have the most need. This bias seems to be shared and potentially reinforced by the teachers. While a dispassionate accounting would allow for the knowledge of different learning disabilities and a realistic appraisal of the resources needed can be identified, there is not a clear majority of teachers who believe the effort is worth the expenditure of already scarce resources. This suggests that the limits of China’s drive to expand educational opportunities for those with learning disabilities may have less to do with providing information on the need than engaging in a philosophical discussion as to the merits of the proposal in the first place.

The idea that all students “deserve” an education is a relatively new phenomenon in the western world. It is not uncommon for western educators to attempt to impose their system on the world thinking that if only they understood they would comply. The truth is that in many ways, the western system of education is most appropriate to the west given our history and current stage of development. Less than full support for the western model of special education does not seem borne from a lack of knowledge of what it is or the costs associated with implementing it. Rather it seems based on a rational desire to make the most of scarce resources in a reasonable and rational fashion. This is not to say that the western model is inherently good or bad. Rather, it is to suggest that what works in one country may not always be appropriately transferred around the world at any given period of time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE TWO GROUPS

We surveyed 160 students studying to become teachers and 318 individuals who were currently teachers. Some of the differences between the groups are easily explainable. For example, 63.2% of teachers were female and whereas only 51.9% of students training to be teachers were female. While teachers in China are slightly more likely to be female than the general population, the PRC controls admission to university degree programs and gender equity is more likely in most majors than in the workplace. Age of students ranged from 19 – 25 and age of teachers ranged from 20 – 72. Teachers reported being somewhat more familiar with each type of learning disability than students did and were slightly more likely to want to accommodate any specific type of learning disability than students were. Students were, in general, more likely to feel there was a need for increased training than teachers were which likely reflects the differences reported in knowledge of the different types of learning disabilities. The two exceptions to this were views on the amount of additional training needed to accommodate a student with deaf-blindness and orthopedic impairment where the two groups were virtually the same. Students were also generally more pessimistic than teachers when it came to whether they felt a student with a learning disability (both in general and for specific disabilities) would be able to succeed. Exceptions were hearing impairment, visual impairment, and other health impairment where results were virtually identical. It should also be noted that differences in this last set of questions was less dramatic with differences averaging less than 15%. Finally, there was a striking difference in responses to the statement “I understand learning disabilities.” For teachers, approximately 31% either disagreed (10.5%) or were neutral (20.4%) with 69% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. For students, more than half (59.3%) either disagreed (11.6%) or were neutral (47.7%) with only 40.7% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

The difference in responses between practicing teachers and students gives some bright spots for hope. The bright spot is that those who are in the profession seem to gain an understanding of and appreciation for students of different abilities. While not definitive, the results do suggest that those who enter the classroom continue their education and become more empathic over time and develop the skills to teach those who come to the classroom with different abilities and limitations. This is an encouraging piece of news and is suggestive that the increased funds being spent on primary and secondary education since 1979 are yielding positive returns on investment as teachers work to help all students, irrespective of ability or special need.[[8]](#endnote-8) Overall, the comparison between the two groups suggests that those who become teachers continue to learn on the job and develop skills during their career to better assist students with different learning disabilities.

1. Kritzer, p. 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Worrell and Taber, p. 133. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (20 U.S.C. 1414 (a) (2) (A)). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Malinen, p. 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. p. 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. The list is: Learning disability: difficulties in reading, writing, and computing; Communication: difficulties in accurately producing the sounds of language or using language to communicate; Emotional disturbance: significant problems in the social-emotional area; Autism: extraordinary difficulty in social responsiveness; Hearing impairment: partial or complete loss of hearing; Visual impairment: partial or complete loss of vision; Deaf-blindness: simultaneous hearing loss and vision loss; Orthopedic impairment: physical limitation that impairs the ability to move or complete motor activities; Traumatic brain injury: a medical condition denoting a serious brain injury affecting learning, behavior, social skills, and language; and Other health impairment: disease so significant that it affects learning; examples include cancer, sickle-cell anemia, and diabetes [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. From this “Country Profile on Disability, PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA” [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The results also bring forth a question that is admittedly beyond the scope of this paper. The relatively high lack of understanding of these issues for those being trained as teachers is surprising. While it is understandable (and predicted by the researchers) that students’ knowledge of learning disabilities not currently recognized in China would be lower than that of those teaching in the field, it was surprising to find that students reported lower awareness of those learning disabilities currently recognized in China. This brings forth questions (beyond the scope of this effort) as to the training teachers in China are receiving and what areas are being stressed and which are not. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)