



Special ITF Taekwon-Do Developments ©



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I would like to say I am a very proud instructor who is still learning. I decided to write this article for lots and lots of reasons. I am here today with the feeling I have achieved something really good. I was the first to set up Special Needs Taekwon-Do. In this article you will start to understand me, see what other improvements have risen from where everything first left off, the different disabilities & descriptions which belong to my students, the past successful events, the first for integration into mainstream competition individual and team events, expansion of the Taekwon-Do programme into schools, the media exposure we have had, the goals achieved and ahead, the support and how you can set Special Needs Taekwon-Do up in your country.

I think you would have guessed by now, but I would still like to introduce myself to those who might have heard of me, but not know a lot about me. My name is Benjamin. I am 19 coming up to 20 in August. I am an ITF 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt. I absolutely love spreading the original TRUE Taekwon-Do. Since 2006, I began to work with Special Needs teaching Taekwon-Do. It has now been going for more than 4 years. On top of working with Special Needs, in addition, I run my own school (called Hawke's Bay ITF Taekwon-Do School) during the day and evenings throughout the week at Havelock North High School, Hastings Aspyre Fitness, Clive Primary School, Flaxmere Primary & Intermediate, Havelock North Primary, Taradale High School & soon other schools who are very interested to sign me up, these are the areas in Hawke's Bay Region in New Zealand I teach. I feel it has really developed me as a person.

I have learnt so much from working with all types of abilities, male or female, young or old. Working with young people is a challenge, but ever so rewarding when you teach them the smallest things. I have helped others understand that people with a certain disability are friendly, warm and great members of society, as I feel that many people out there don't have as great knowledge as I do, public might feel 'freaked out' or unable to go and interact, thinking that they will look odd and most likely think people will judge them.

I am at the stage in my Taekwon-Do career of 2<sup>nd</sup> DAN, training really hard for the next ITF World Championships in DPR KOREA 2011. With having to do quite a bit of training throughout the week for students, I still manage to keep a balance. That is one of the hardest things in life, keeping balance. I hope to go for my 3<sup>rd</sup> DAN end of 2011. At present, with the support of my students parents who are also my student, my Mum, wonderful girl friend Rachel and her family, I am able to do what I need to do during the week; achieving as many goals and needs as possible.

I would like to take the time to say Thank You everyone who is really supportive, who show the same amount of patience I do with them, the ones who are loyal practitioners to me in my club and those who follow ITF President & I.O.C Member, Professor Dr. Chang Ung. Thank You ITF for your support. Thank You Hawke's Bay ITF Taekwon-Do Practitioners who have helped me do demonstrations to spread the TRUE Original Martial Art of Taekwon-Do to Schools and events in Hawke's Bay.

I'd actually like to thank the universe; I know you might be reading this right now, thinking, what??? But, my mother has always told me that if you keep thinking about something, keep working towards a goal, it will happen. It might not happen now, but in due course, at the right time, it will happen and you will be given an opportunity. I can remember General Choi Hong Hi speaking about if there is opportunity; one must make the most of this which is good fortune. But if one takes advantage of this fortune with bad intentions, it becomes misfortune.

## **The New Improvements**

### **Increased Confidence**

I can first remember coming to Taradale High School Learning Support Centre. Even before that, there was a few who came from that school to attend a trial lesson at Havelock North High School. The students from that school were quite nervous. I think that the time I have now spent, teaching them, has helped them increase their confidence. Even to the point of some students who had autism and Asperges were able to stand up in front of a HUGE crowd at the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Needs Championship, and perform against another person an optional and designated pattern by the officials in front. There must be something in the teaching that helped them be able to achieve this goal, which really amazed both their parents and teachers who knew them. The crowd was certainly impressed.

### **Increased Energy**

I have one of many loyal students; he is my first student, who has stuck with me since the beginning. He has Downsyndrome. Right at the start, he was certainly not as toned as he is now. He has been going through the ranks slowly, stage by stage, and progressing tremendously. He manages to be able to keep focus for 2 or more hours easily. Again, this is quite unheard of in many people's eyes. I am for one very proud of him. He manages to attend 5 training sessions a week no problem and give it his best each time. That is roughly 6 hours a week of training. He must be training really hard that his energy levels expand.

### **Increased Spirit**

Many witnessed my students competing at the championship. People saw that these students had something in them. That was determination. When my first student, who has Downsyndrome, led his team to victory in team patterns and team self defense, it was an awesome experience for me to see. The sparring situation also with Special Needs against mainstream students was very good to see. They had the strong Indomitable Spirit to keep going no matter how they got hit. I can remember when in Russia 2009, the female final of DPR Korea and Bulgaria, when she broke or fractured her elbow. She kept getting hit. She kept getting knocked down. But she kept going. This can be of similar example to the sparring matches with the mainstream and Special Needs.

### **Increased Awareness**

I think that before I started working with the students, people might have thought that they could not achieve at something like a martial art. Taekwon-Do is a very hard, mind challenging activity. It involves mind, body and spirit. After 4 years, I have made it

possible and have always knew, that my students, regardless of what intellectual disability they may have they can achieve. Recently, on TVNZ – Close Up, it was well promoted that the students are integrated into mainstream classes and competition. They are given equal opportunity. They also have their own divisions to determine the champion in their culture. The public, after many media newspaper articles to the build up of 1<sup>st</sup> Special Needs Championships, have become really aware of what their full capabilities are since training in my club, being treated like a mainstream student. The students usually rise to that expected level if you expect them to. If you take that approach to thinking they are somewhat 'Too Special Needs', then there is no hope for you as a potential instructor to succeed with any goals you may have. You must hope and expect they live up to the full expectations. This is one of the KEYS to unlocking the full potential of any special students, regardless of age, sex or ability. You must possess a supportive and always an 'I know you can do it' approach.

### Increased Knowledge

The Taekwon-Do theory and patterns are the basis of increased knowledge and memory expansion of the not so developed brain. For the students it has helped them all increase their brain mass and learning skills. It has helped them become more disciplined allowing them to be able to focus on small tasks no problem. My most senior student at present, with Downsyndrome, he has learnt up to Green Stripe, the techniques, no problem. His theory can always improve, but he is very clear on loyalty to General Choi's Last Words and who he was, who Professor Dr. Chang Ung is when Taekwon-Do was created, when General Choi passed away, the motherland of Taekwon-Do and he knows certain pattern meanings. He is able to lead his own team with patterns no problem. It is just repetition which really helps them all learn just as fast, maybe even better than mainstream sometimes.

### Increased Flexibility

The Taekwon-Do training has enabled special needs students to be able to raise their leg to their full potential. The stretching at the start has made their technique a lot more graceful. The flexibility has helped them become less tight in the muscles. The increased flexibility has definitely been a good routine.

These are all extras to what was first spoken about in the previous essay. This can be downloaded from [www.specialneedsiffkd.com](http://www.specialneedsiffkd.com)

## **The Students Disabilities & Descriptions**

### Downsyndrome

Chromosomes are structures that carry genetic information in cells. They carry the instructions that tell cells what functions they are to perform. They determine the way a person's body looks and the way it functions. Cells normally carry two matched sets of twenty-three chromosomes for a total of forty-six chromosomes. One set of twenty-three chromosomes comes from each parent. Down's syndrome occurs when one chromosome pair is damaged. That pair is designated as chromosome #21. Down's syndrome is the most common cause of mental retardation (see mental retardation entry) and malformation in newborns. It occurs because of the presence of an extra chromosome.

### Cerebral Palsy

A general cerebral palsy definition for the disorders is that the permanent brain injuries happening to an infant during the pregnancy or at the time of birth will affect the child severely and cause for the loss of many abilities for leading a normal life. The cerebral palsy affected child will not be having the correct functions of gross motor skills as well as the fine motor skills, which is most essential for the human activities. The cerebral palsy definition can be based on the variety of congenital injuries or damages to the brain or reduction in the growth of the brain results the communication problems between the brain and body. A severe bleeding in the brain may result the cerebral palsy. The premature birth of a child or the child born with less weight will also can be the reason for the developmental problem to the brain and cause for the cerebral palsy.

### Autism

Autism causes kids to experience the world differently from the way most other kids do. It's hard for kids with autism to talk with other people and express themselves using words. Kids who have autism usually keep to themselves and many can't communicate without special help. They also may react to what's going on around them in unusual ways. Normal sounds may really bother someone with autism - so much so that the person covers his or her ears. Being touched, even in a gentle way, may feel uncomfortable. Autism causes kids to act in unusual ways. They might flap their hands, say certain words over and over, have temper tantrums, or play only with one particular toy. Most kids with autism don't like changes in routines. They like to stay on a schedule that is always the same. They also may insist that their toys or other objects be arranged a certain way and get upset if these items are moved or disturbed. Students with mild autism sometimes can go to regular school. But most kids with autism need calmer, more orderly surroundings. They also need teachers trained to understand the problems they have with communicating and learning. They may learn at home or in special classes at public or private schools.

### Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a seizure disorder. A seizure is an event that involves loss of consciousness and motor (muscular) control. A person with a seizure disorder often experiences repetitive muscle jerking called convulsions. The condition is caused by a sudden change in electrical activity in the brain. The medical profession now recognizes about twenty different kinds of epilepsy. These forms of the disorder vary on the basis of severity and the parts of the body affected by the seizure. Most patients have only one form of epilepsy. About 30 percent have two or more forms of the disorder. When this happens, messages traveling through the brain are wildly disrupted. The brain begins to send out irregular and unpredictable messages to the rest of the body. Muscles throughout the body begin to contract and relax in random patterns. These changes bring about the symptoms

of epilepsy. Epilepsy is usually classified as symptomatic or idiopathic (pronounced ih-dee-uh-PA-thik). Symptomatic epilepsy is a form of the condition for which a cause is known. For example, a person may receive a blow to the head. The injury may cause damage that leads to the development of epilepsy. Some conditions that can cause symptomatic epilepsy include:

- Serious infections of the central nervous system
- Heat stroke (see heat disorders entry)
- An abscess (open sore) in the brain
- Rabies, tetanus, and malaria (see entries)
- Toxic (poisonous) materials, such as lead or alcohol
- Damage to the brain or skull (see head injury entry)
- Drug allergy
- Stroke (see stroke entry)

### Dyspraxia

The word 'dyspraxia' comes from the Greek dys- meaning 'difficulty' and -praxis meaning 'control of movement'. The word 'dyspraxia' comes from the Greek dys- meaning 'difficulty' and -praxis meaning 'control of movement'. Oral dyspraxia means a reduced ability to voluntarily control single or sequenced silent movements of the lips, tongue or soft palate. Verbal dyspraxia affects the purposeful control of the movements necessary for speech. The term verbal dyspraxia is also known as developmental articulatory dyspraxia. In the UK the term apraxia of speech usually refers to children who have a severe disorder and are not talking at all (from the Greek a- meaning 'without'). Both of these conditions occur in the absence of any muscle weakness. The child can be of normal intelligence and have an age-appropriate ability to understand spoken language. The child knows what he/she wants to say but persistently makes speech errors which are not usually made at his/her age. In dyspraxia, speech is limited and may be difficult for people to understand. A dyspraxic child may have difficulty saying single speech sounds, imitating strings of different sounds and sequencing sounds together to form words. Poor intelligibility is often due to a child's limited range of speech sounds and omission or substitution of sounds. These difficulties may also mean that the child may not be able to use the correct grammatical endings for words.

### Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning disability (see learning disorders entry) characterized by problems with reading, spelling, writing, speaking, or listening. In many cases, dyslexia appears to be hereditary. Dyslexia is not a disease. It is a condition in which a person's brain learns in a different way from that of other people. Many people with dyslexia are very intelligent and successful. The condition has nothing to do with a person's intelligence. Dyslexics are often highly talented in many areas, including art, athletics, drama, music, and engineering. These talents often require the ability to bring together sight, spatial skills (the ability to locate objects in three-dimensional space using sight and/or touch), and coordination.

### Asperges

The essential features of Autistic Disorder are the presence of markedly abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a markedly restricted repertoire of activity and interests. Manifestations of the disorder vary greatly depending on the developmental level and chronological age of the individual. Autistic Disorder is sometimes referred to as *early infantile autism*, *childhood autism*, or *Kanner's autism*. The impairment is reciprocal social interaction is gross and sustained. There may be marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviours (e.g., eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body postures and gestures) to regulate social interaction and communication (Criterion A1a). There may be failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level (Criterion A1b) that may take different forms at different ages. Younger individuals may have little or no interest in establishing friendships. Older individuals may have an interest in friendship but lack understanding of the conventions of social interaction. There may be a lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, or achievements with other people (e.g., not showing, bringing, or pointing out objects they find interesting) (Criterion A1c). Lack of social or emotional reciprocity may be present (e.g., not actively participating in simple social or emotional reciprocity may be present (e.g., not actively participating in simple social play or games, preferring solitary activities, or involving others in activities only as tools or "mechanical" aids) (Criterion A1d). Often an individual's awareness of others is markedly impaired. Individuals with this disorder may be oblivious to other children (including siblings), may have no concept of the needs of others, or may not notice another person's distress.

## **My Thoughts – Working With Special Needs Integrated Into Mainstream**

When dealing with these conditions in a class with mainstream or no mainstream, you must treat them like everyone else. You must be firm, but gentle. One of the skills I have learnt with teaching special needs is, they all like to be treated as if I never knew what intellectual disability they never had. When dealing with a mistake they have made regarding a stance, maybe they are meant to have their other leg in front, it usually pays to whisper to them, not making a big deal out of things, asking them to change what is required. Sometimes, there is a point where you have to really motivate students to do certain tasks in the training hall. I find it often useful to talk about their next grading and keep saying, 'Cmon guys, do it for that next belt or stripe.' This works really well with any problem. It makes them really excited. In the past I have found asking the highest ranked, or a friend of the special needs student, to encourage them to do training. This helps because it makes them feel as if they might feel the odd one out not doing it when their friends are. I always congratulate students on excellent or small achievements which I know are really hard for the student to learn. This makes them feel so good, knowing that they have achieved really high in their instructors eyes. This also makes them keep trying and boosts their energy. It makes them enthusiastic when they see that their instructor is proud of them. When first starting training with the students, right from the beginning, you must start to teach a small amount of techniques. Once you see that students have learnt just one technique and can do it competently, you must make a big deal out of it so that this knowledge stays with them as a happy thought, like a message in the brain, making them feel as they have done something amazing, they would always remember. You have to be really patient with the

students. I was told it takes an average of 9 seconds to process instructions. So, if a student does not understand, just explain it slowly, use visual techniques and explanations. Try not to make a big deal out of it, the last thing you need is for the student to say I can't do it, and refuse. Sometimes it is easier to let few white mistakes go and to keep drilling the same routine or pattern into the training. They can only get better by visually seeing and doing. Sometimes, speaking is not as good as visual and practical. It might take a small amount of time to come through, but it is well worth it when it does.

### **Past Successful Events**

- March 19<sup>th</sup> HB ITF Established
- April 2009 – Sport Hawke's Bay Expo – Taekwon-Do Demonstration
- August 2009 – First grading for Eskavan McCartney Downsyndrome
- August 2009 – Rudolf Steiner Talent Quest – Taekwon-Do Demonstration
- September 2009 - Blossom Festival – Taekwon-Do Demonstration
- October 2009 – ITF Senior World Champs – Essay signed by Professor Dr. Chang Ung, GM Rhee Ki Ha, GM Leong Wai Meng and more supporters
- February 2010 – International Cultures Day Festival – Taekwon-Do Demonstration
- March 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 – The 1<sup>st</sup> Special Needs, 2<sup>nd</sup> HB ITF Taekwon-Do Championships
- June 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 – Grading Eskavan McCartney, Jonty Glazebrooke, Aaron Garnham, Ashleigh Godfrey, Cameron Peacock, Francesca Morgan, Johann Landkroon and William Askew – going for either first time, second or 4<sup>th</sup> grading. Eskavan goes for green belt.

All of these events have had special needs participation. They have always been integrated into HB ITF Taekwon-Do School events. More demonstrations with integrated special needs students the better. It makes them feel proud. They also love to perform. To receive applause for their efforts really satisfies them. To receive awards representing what they have achieved will really boost their week. I was recently told, after giving out a certificate for the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Needs Championship, to a girl student with special needs, she was thrilled. She felt proud. She had achieved something which was recognised.

### **Integration Into Mainstream Competition**

The start of this integration began at the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Needs, 2<sup>nd</sup> HB ITF Taekwon-Do Championships, in New Zealand.



Special Needs students who won medals in mainstream and special divisions



The Best Special Needs Team Pattern Team – Gold Winners



Master William Chan, Eskavan McCartney and Mr. Benjamin Evans



Master William Chan, Emily Hills – the first girl to grade out of Special Needs, and Mr. Benjamin Evans



Havelock North High School Special Needs Taekwon-Do – The heart of Special Needs ITF Taekwon-Do in New Zealand.

### **The Expansion To Other Schools**

The Special Needs Taekwon-Do has already spread to 2 other special schools in Hawke's Bay. There are more and more getting on board and becoming more and more interested. This is the start of the development getting bigger every year. For further information about this, please visit, [www.specialneedsitftkd.com](http://www.specialneedsitftkd.com)

## **The Supporters**

Without the help and support this would have never been possible. I would like to thank Havelock North High School – the first school who took the programme on; Mrs. Hocquard always supported the work I was doing and often spoke highly of the programme to other schools and teachers, ITF President Professor Dr. Chang Ung, who I believe, is one of my biggest supporters, who sent my first essay around and published a news story on ITF website about the event, First GM Rhee Ki Ha who exchanged a copy of his latest UKTA Today magazine with me for my copy of my first essay, Mr. RI Yong Son who has shown his support, Mr. Phap Lu who has shown his support who published my essay on his website when received from ITF President, Master William Chan who accepted my students for their ability; giving them opportunity at gradings; who has supported my ideas, has been a good mentor, Lin Kaiou who has always encouraged me working with the Special Needs; has supported and helped me with my club at beginning stages, my club members who have stayed loyal and accepted the special needs integration and the rest of supporters are those who follow and have always believed in me. THANK YOU, TAEKWON

## **How To Start This Programme**

Firstly, I would like it if you speak to your NGB President, before contacting me. Please follow the right protocol, once you have their approval, please do send me an email: [itfhawkesbay@hotmail.com](mailto:itfhawkesbay@hotmail.com) I will then talk directly with you.

Notes:

Descriptions and theories have been extracted from the internet from various sources about special needs disorders. The rest of the work is in my own words. Pictures are from Hawke's Bay.

Links:

[www.hawkesbayitftkd.co.nz](http://www.hawkesbayitftkd.co.nz)

[www.hbitf.org.nz](http://www.hbitf.org.nz)

[www.hbitf.co.nz](http://www.hbitf.co.nz)

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