

Co-occurring Special Needs of Students with ASD in Hong Kong Mainstream Schools

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Background and Aim

- The JC A-Connect School Support Programme was launched in the 2015/16 academic year to support students with ASD studying in mainstream primary and secondary schools.
- Students with ASD have diverse adjustment difficulties, and often have other co-occurring special educational needs (SEN).
- Tailor-made training programmes that address their specific needs are crucial to facilitate their learning.
- Understanding their co-occurring special needs would assist trainers in tailor-making training programmes.

Aim:

- Review the co-occurring special needs of students with ASD who participated in the JC A-Connect School Support Programme from 2015 to 2017.

Methods

- 5,264 P.1 to S.6 students studying in mainstream schools in Hong Kong participated in the JC A-Connect School Support Programme from 2015 to 2017.
- Participants' adaptive skills in school were evaluated by their teachers using the Learning, Social and Emotional Adaptation Questionnaire developed by the Education Bureau prior to joining our programme.
- SEN conditions of participants were reviewed, including:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 - Specific Language Impairment (SLI)
 - Academically Low Achievers (ALA) - lag behind at least two grades in educational attainment
 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 - Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD)
 - Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Hearing Impairment
 - Emotional and behavioral difficulties (e.g. School Refusal)
 - Psychiatric conditions (e.g. Anxiety Disorder, Depression)

Co-occurring SEN Conditions

- 3,862 (74%) out of 5,264 participants have a confirmed diagnosis of ASD.

Number of co-occurring SEN conditions

- For those with a confirmed diagnosis of ASD:
 - The majority (82%) have other co-occurring SEN conditions,** among them:
 - 52% were diagnosed with one additional SEN condition;
 - 38% were diagnosed with two additional SEN conditions;
 - 10% were diagnosed with three or more additional SEN conditions.

Number of Co-occurring conditions	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17
	P1-P3		P4-P6		S1-S3		S4-S6	
	N=1371	N=1527	N=830	N=1107	N=463	N=535	N=84	N=188
0	17%	13%	24%	22%	18%	19%	11%	12%
1	45%	51%	38%	39%	41%	37%	42%	37%
2	32%	30%	30%	31%	31%	32%	33%	36%
3 or above	6%	6%	9%	8%	11%	12%	14%	15%

- Participants in later school stages tend to have more co-occurring conditions, this may suggest:
 - Some co-occurring conditions were diagnosed later;
 - Participants with more co-occurring conditions in later school stages were more likely to join our programme than their less challenging ASD peers.

Types of co-occurring SEN conditions

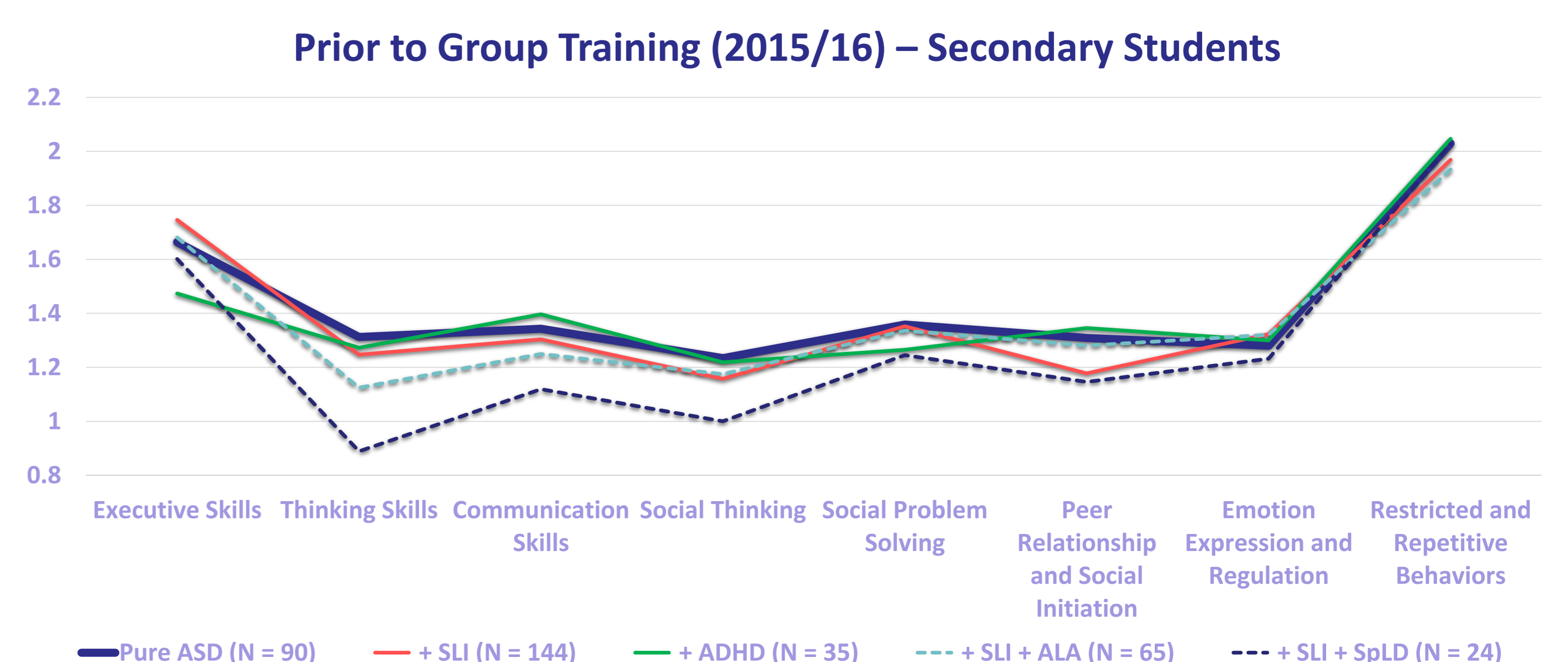
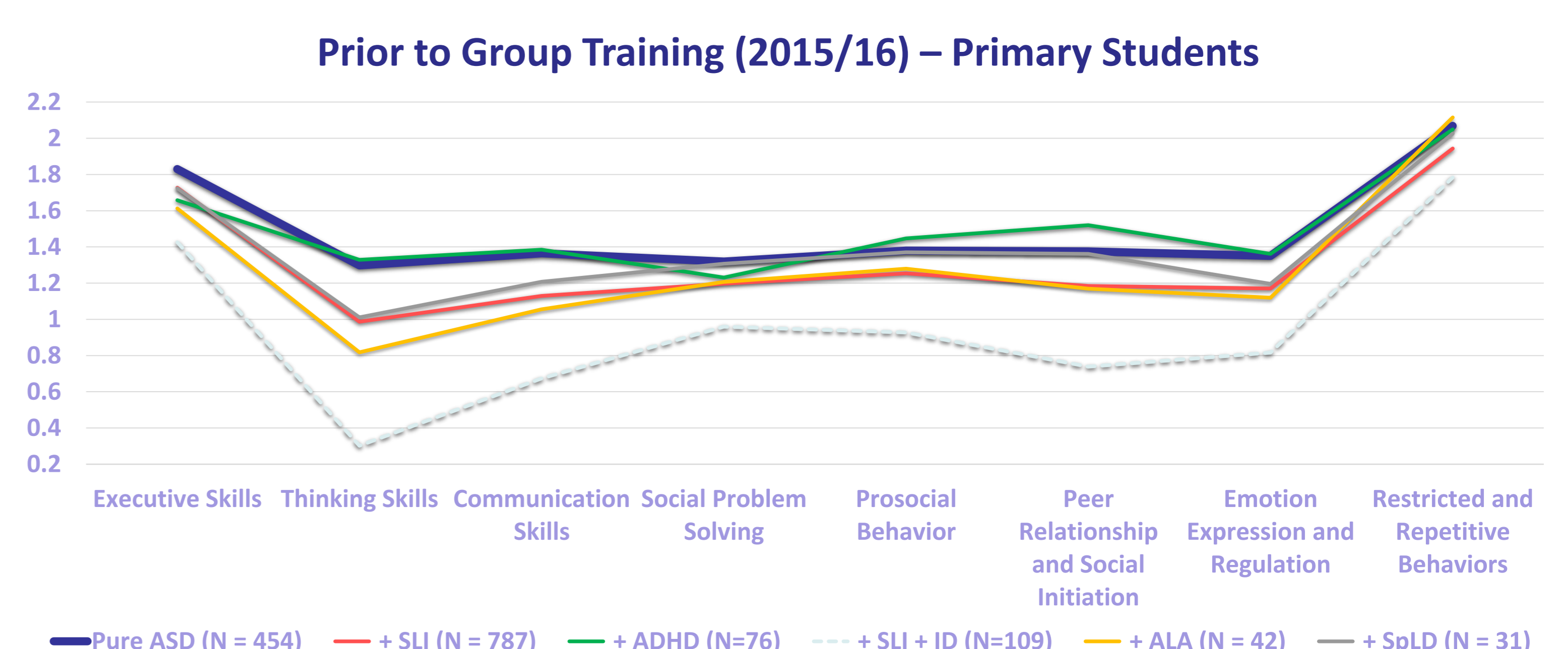
- For those with a confirmed diagnosis of ASD:
 - 70% were diagnosed with Specific Language Impairment (SLI);
 - 21% were classified as Academically Low Achievers (ALA);
 - 17% were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
 - 9% were diagnosed with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD);
 - 6% were diagnosed with Intellectual Disability (ID);
 - 2% had emotional and behavioral difficulties;
 - 1% were hearing impaired;
 - 0.5% had various psychiatric conditions.

Types of co-occurring SEN conditions by different school stages

Types of Co-occurring conditions	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17	15/16	16/17
	P1-P3		P4-P6		S1-S3		S4-S6	
	N=1371	N=1527	N=830	N=1107	N=463	N=535	N=84	N=188
SLI	75%	81%	64%	66%	64%	60%	63%	70%
ALA	20%	20%	22%	21%	21%	22%	33%	30%
ADHD	15%	13%	17%	18%	20%	22%	17%	21%
SpLD	7%	5%	10%	10%	14%	17%	15%	14%
ID	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	7%	5%

- The most prevalent co-occurring condition is SLI.

Teachers' evaluation on adaptive skills by co-occurring SEN conditions



* Not enough secondary school students for meaningful analysis on ID, and ALA/SpLD without SLI.

- In general, primary school students with SLI or ID have poorer adaptive skills in most areas, and secondary school students with more than one co-occurring condition have lower skill level.

Implications

- Programme planning and implementation for students with ASD should take into account their varied special needs on top of their ASD condition.

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