

In//Visible, Un//Able:
Japanese and American College
Students' Perceptions of
Individuals With Disabilities

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Outline

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- Research Questions
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Significance of the Study- Laura

- When studying abroad, counseling services for international students were hardly offered.
- It is important that people with disabilities can speak freely about their disabilities because I believe people with disabilities are discouraged from talking about their experiences with their disability.
- Through this research I want to see how Japanese and American college students perceive people with disabilities.

Significance of the Study - Hannah

- I want to find how students receive support and knowledge about resources available in Japan and America because
- I have several disabilities, with many family members with disabilities.
- I know that students on campus struggle with accessibility even in America.
- When I studied in Japan, the university there had no Student Disability Center.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of those with disabilities, by Japanese and American college students?

Research Question 2: To what extent do people understand current available accommodations for people with disabilities?

Research Background

- What is Considered a Disability?
 - America
 - Japan
- Visible vs Invisible Disability
- Definitions of Disabilities Mentioned in Survey
- Examples of University Offered Support
 - America
 - Japan
- Statistical Rates of Disabilities Mentioned in Survey
 - America
 - Japan

What is Considered a Disability?

- Disabilities in America are defined as
 - “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual”
- Disabilities in Japan are defined in three ways
 - Physical: “A condition in which some physical function is impaired, such as incapacity with hands/feet or limitations of seeing/hearing”
 - Intellectual: “A clear delay in intellectual ability. There is a delay in the ability to understand, memorize, and make decisions about things that are necessary when learning and living in society.”
 - Psychological: “Persons with schizophrenia, acute poisoning due to psychoactive substances or its addiction, intellectual disability, psychopathology and other mental disorders.”

(ADA AMENDMENTS ACT
OF 2008, 2008)

(障害者基本法障害者施策—内閣府, 2004)

(身体障害とは?, 2019)

(おしえて! 障害のこと 2020)

(精神障害とは, 2020)

Visible vs. Invisible Disability

- A visible disability:
 - “can be noticed to an individual with their naked eye and by just looking at the person”

(Invisible Vs. Visible Disabilities, 2018)

- An invisible disability:
 - “physical, mental or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person’s movements, senses, or activities”

(How do you define invisible disability?, 2017)

Definitions of Disabilities Mentioned in Survey

Dyslexia: A learning disorder that causes difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and how they relate to letters and words. Dyslexia affects areas of the brain that process language. (Dyslexia, 2017)

Diabetes: A disease that occurs when your blood glucose is too high. There are two types of Diabetes. **Type 1 diabetes** is when your body does not make insulin. People with this type need to take insulin every day to stay alive. **Type 2 diabetes** is when your body does not make or use insulin well. (What is Diabetes?, 2016)

Cerebral Palsy: A group of disorders that affect the ability to move and maintain balance and posture. It is the most common motor disability in childhood. It is caused by abnormal brain development or brain damage.

Down Syndrome: Occurs when a person has an extra copy of chromosome 21. This changes the development process of a child intellectually and physically. (What is Down Syndrome?, 2020)

Statistical Rates in Japan and America

	Japan	America
Dyslexia	5% of Total population (FAQ, 2020)	5~15% of Total population (Dyslexia: What Brain Research Reveals About Reading, 2004)
Diabetes	7.9% of Total population (IDF Western Pacific members, 2020)	10.5% of Total population (Statistics About Diabetes, 2018)
Cerebral Palsy	2.27 per 1000 children (Toyokawa, S., Maeda, E. and Kobayashi, Y, 2017)	3.1 per 1000 children (Christensen, D., Braun, K. V. N., Doernberg, N. S., Maenner, M. J., Arneson, C. L., Durkin, M. S., Yeargin-Allsopp, M, 2008)
Down Syndrome	1 per 455 births (ダウン症児出生数は横ばい傾向, 2019)	1 per 700 births (Down Syndrome Facts, 2020)

University Offered Support in America: Case study (CSUMB)

- Some examples of support offered by California State University Monterey Bay for disabled individuals
 - Disability Management Advising
 - Assistive Technology
 - Classroom Furniture Alternatives
 - Orientation to campus for students with disabilities
 - Notetakers (In-class peer notetakers)
 - Alternate Formats (e-text, mp3, books on tape, braille, etc.)
 - Alternative Testing Accommodations (Exams)

(CSUMB, 2020)

University Offered Support in Japan: Case Study

Tsukuba University

- Peer tutors
- Requesting testing accommodations
- Braille option for visually impaired (学修支援, 2020)
- Specific study rooms
- a “face to face reading” option is offered at their library in which a volunteer will read aloud to the person requesting their service (障害のある方へ, 2020)

Doshisha University

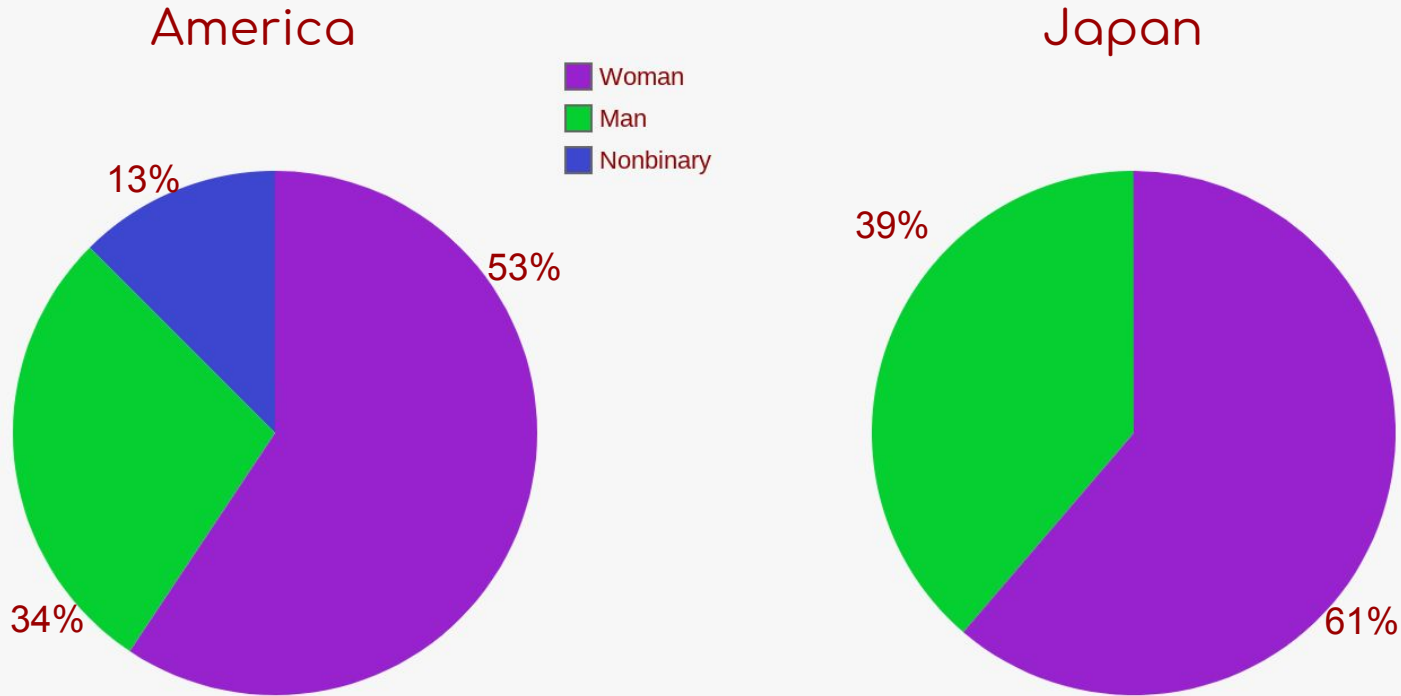
- Students of Doshisha are also offered opportunities to seek a mental health consultation with a psychiatrist

(健康相談・精神保健相談・禁煙支援, 2020)

Research Method

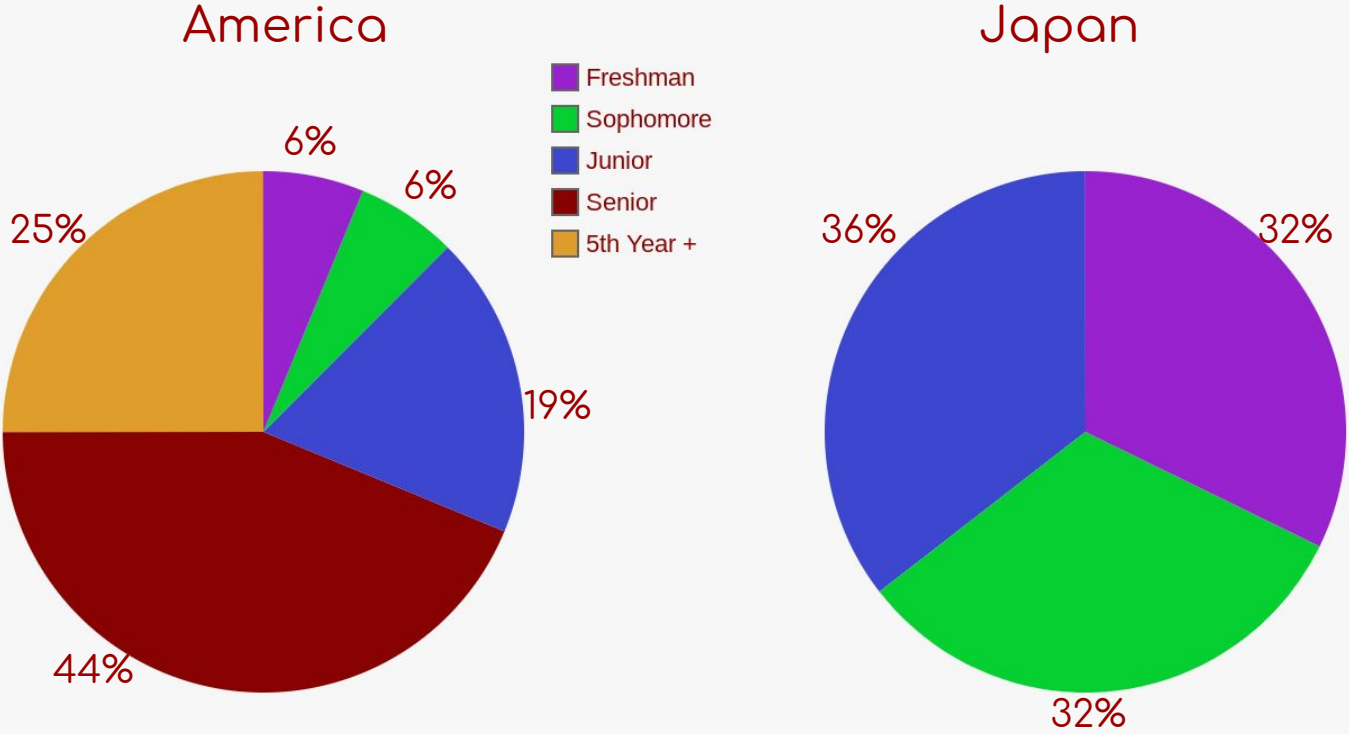
- ❖ Participants of the Study
 - 63 University Students
 - 31 Japanese University Students (12 men, 19 women)
 - 32 American University Students (11 men, 17 women, 4 nonbinary)
- ❖ Data Collection Instruments
 - Online survey (Google Forms)
 - English Survey
 - Japanese Survey

Demographics: Gender



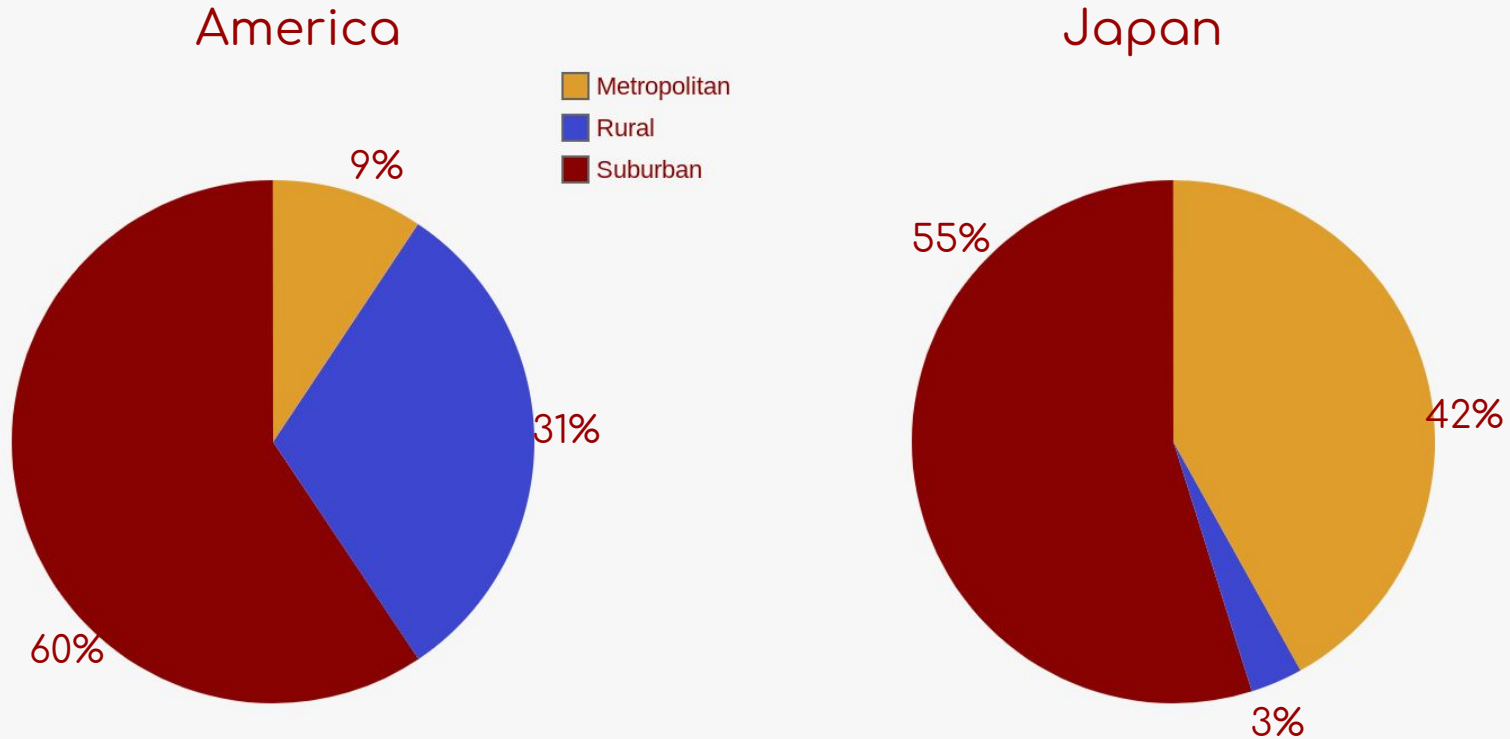
In both countries, more women responded than men.

Demographics: College level



Most Americans answered they were between their 3rd through 5th years, while most Japanese were in their 1st and 2nd.

Demographics: Hometown



Most respondents were from Suburban hometowns, with more Japanese living in Metropolitan cities.

Research Findings 1

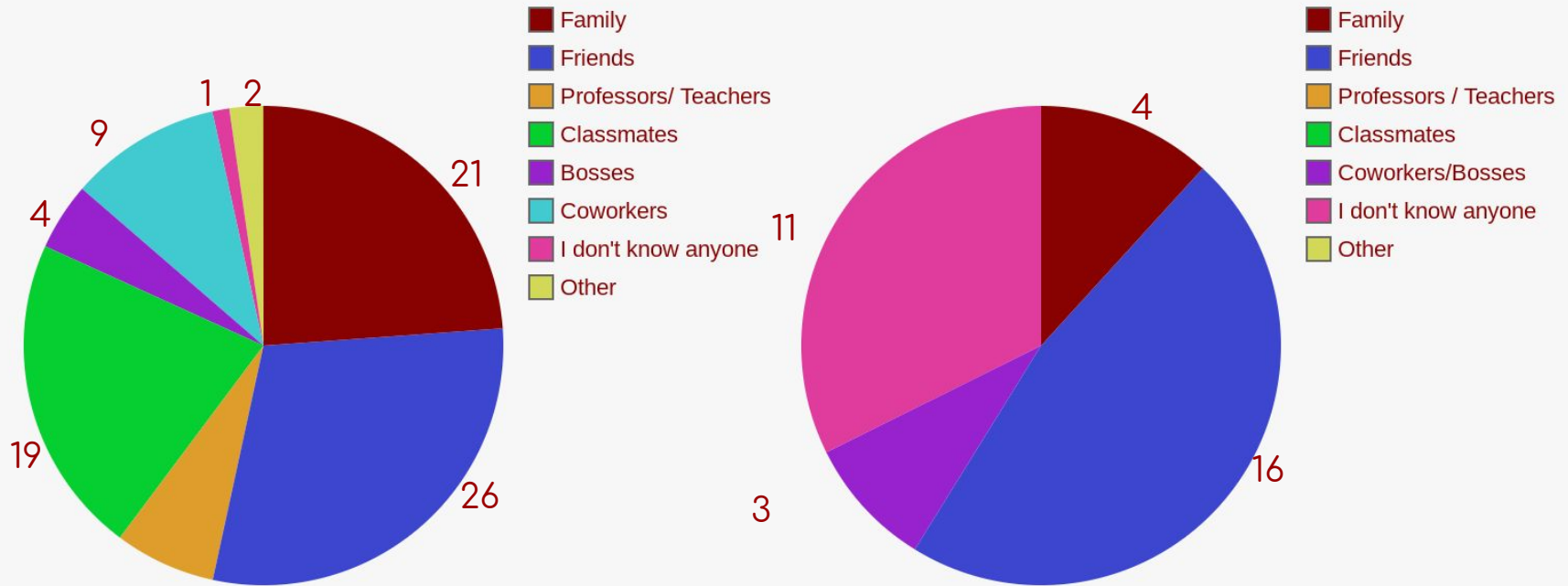
Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of those with disabilities, by Japanese and American college students?

Who do you know with disabilities? (Select All)

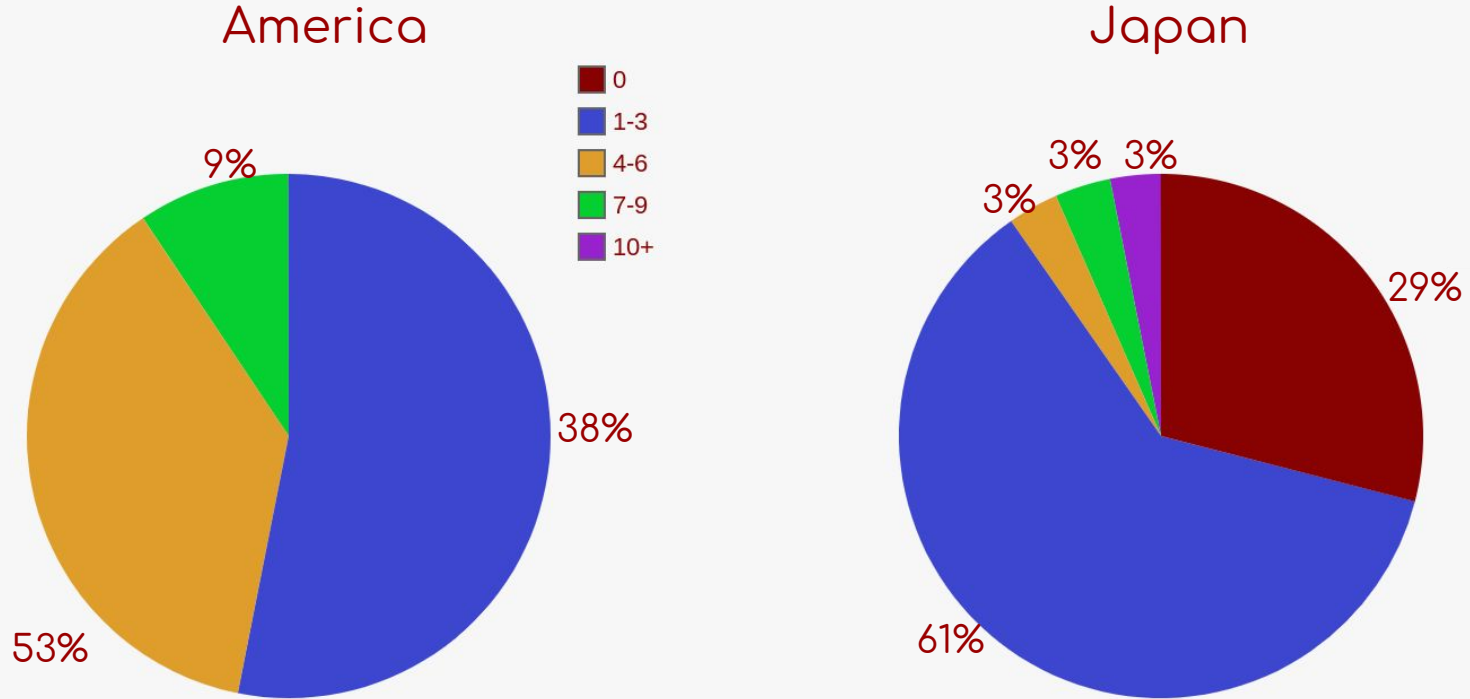
America

Japan



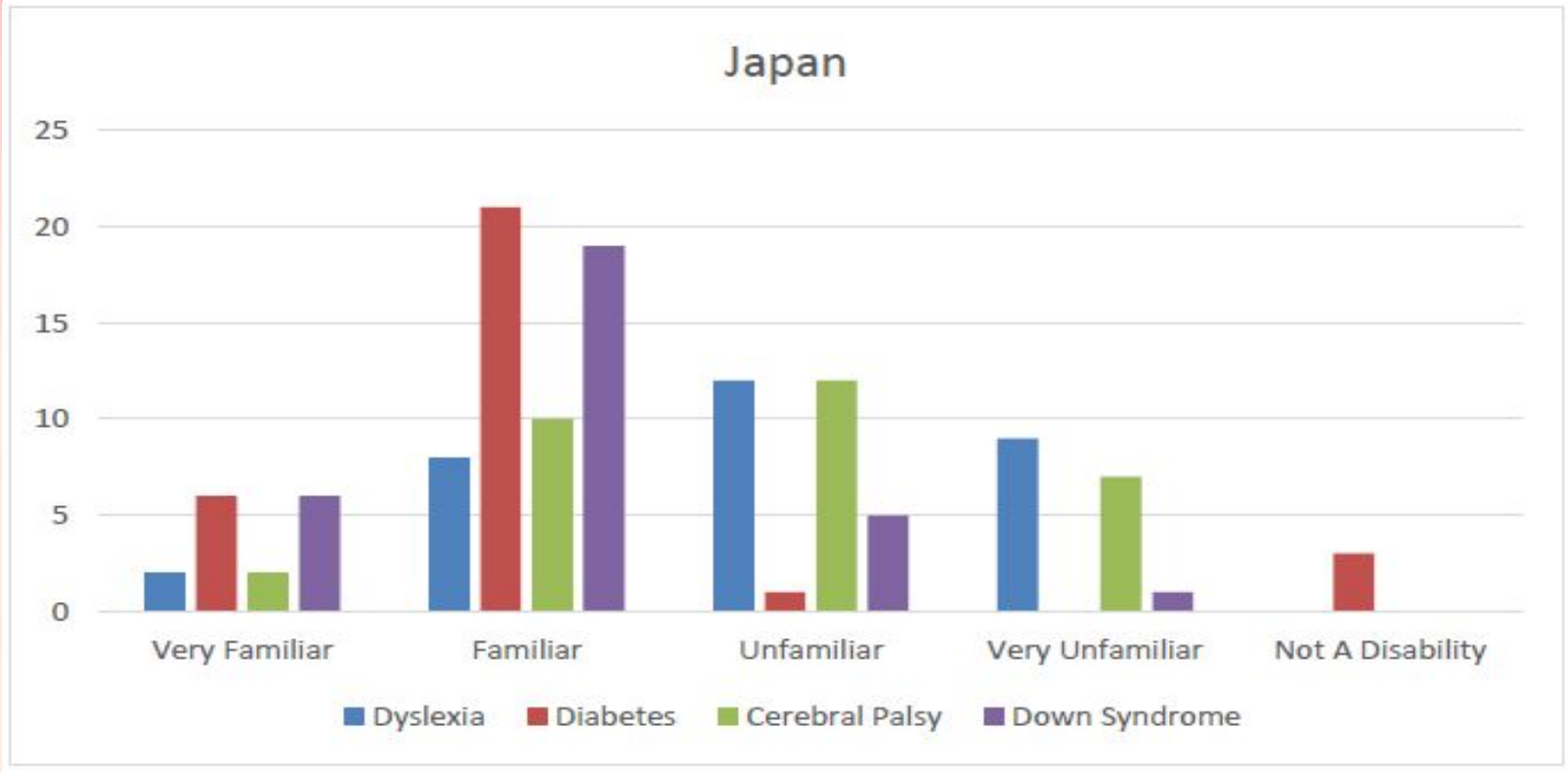
Americans knew more family, friends, and classmates with disabilities. Nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of Japanese knew friends, but $\frac{1}{3}$ of Japanese knew no one.

How many people do you know with disabilities in your everyday life?



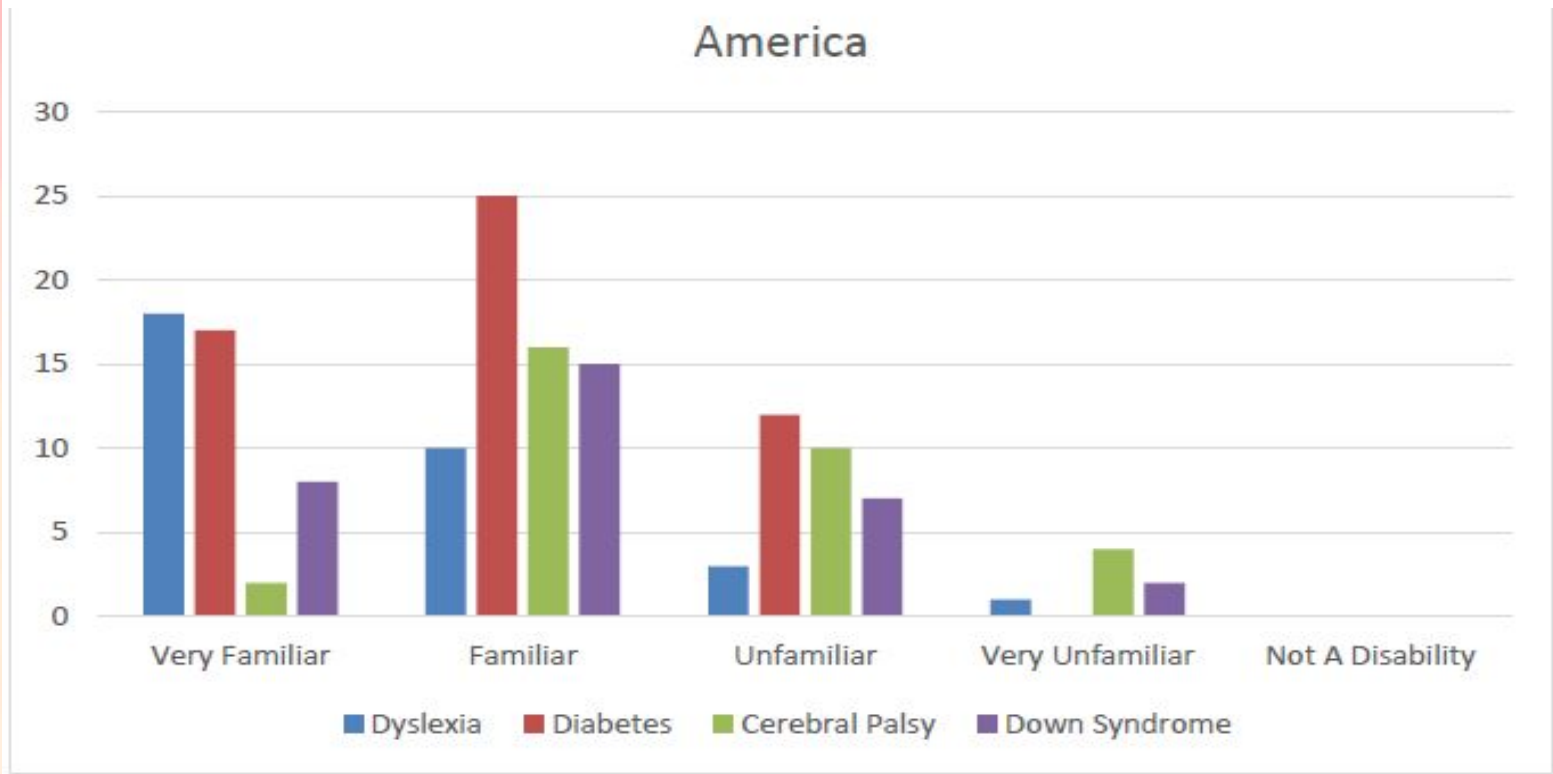
Japanese respondents know 0-3 people with disabilities, but Americans know 1-9 people.

Are you familiar with any of the following disabilities?



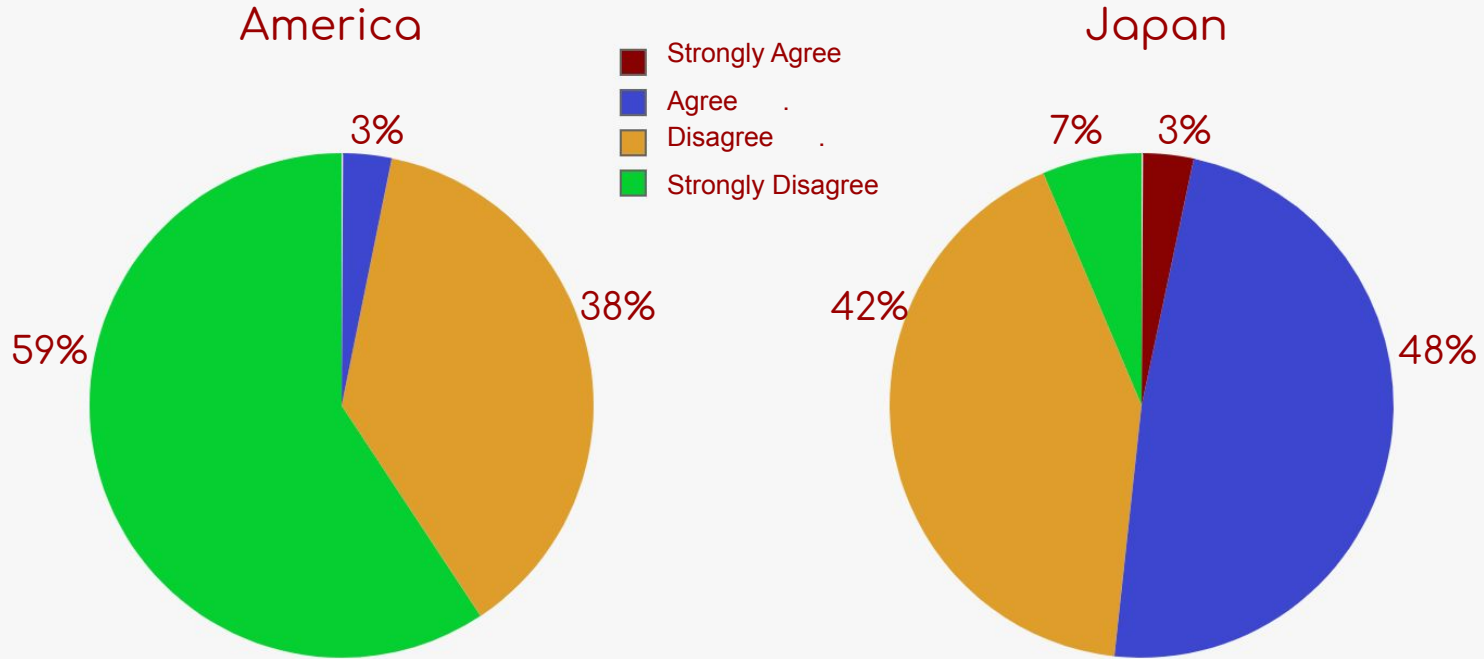
Japanese respondents were most familiar with Diabetes and least familiar with Dyslexia. Nearly 10% said Diabetes is not a disability.

Are you familiar with any of the following disabilities?



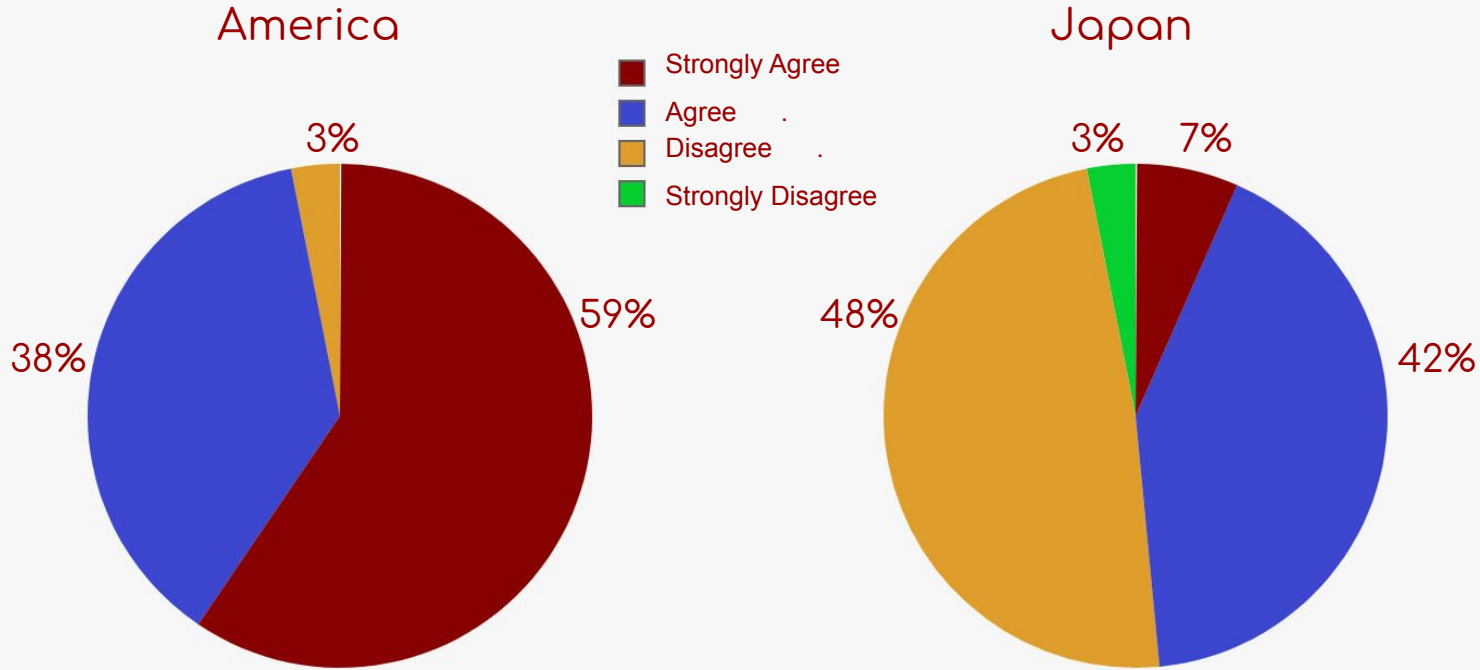
Americans were most familiar with **Dyslexia** and **Diabetes**, but least familiar with **Cerebral Palsy**. Americans were more familiar with the disabilities than Japanese.

Do you feel that people with invisible disabilities should not talk about their disabilities?



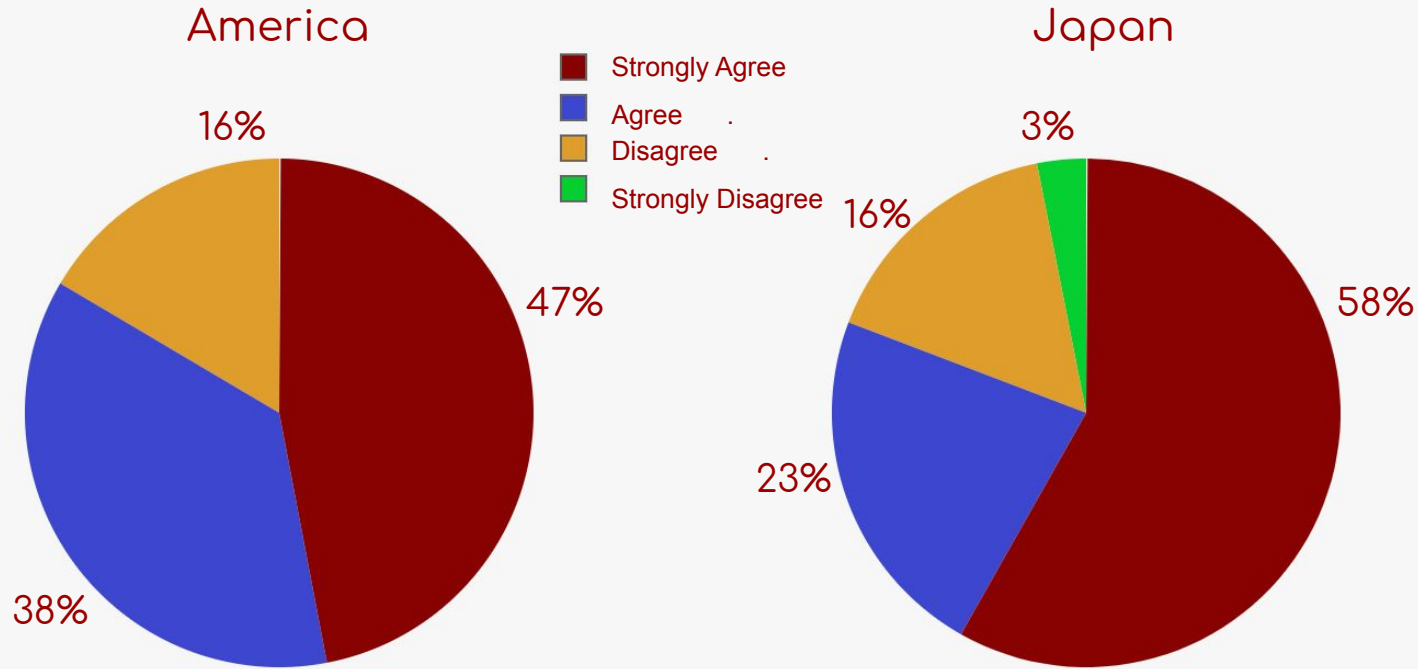
The responses were opposites between America and Japan. Japanese believe disabilities should not be discussed.

Mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, count as disabilities.



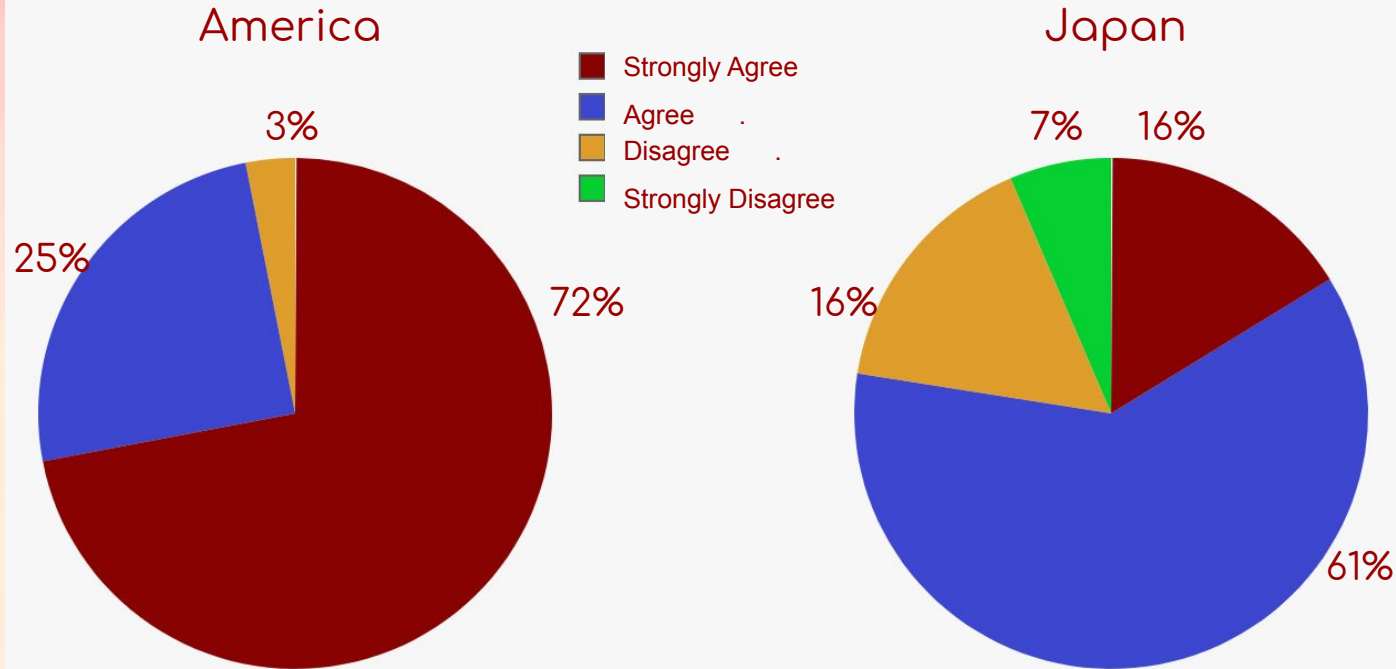
Almost all Americans believe that mental illnesses are disabilities.
Nearly 50% of Japanese disagree.

People with disabilities are just as capable as people without disabilities.



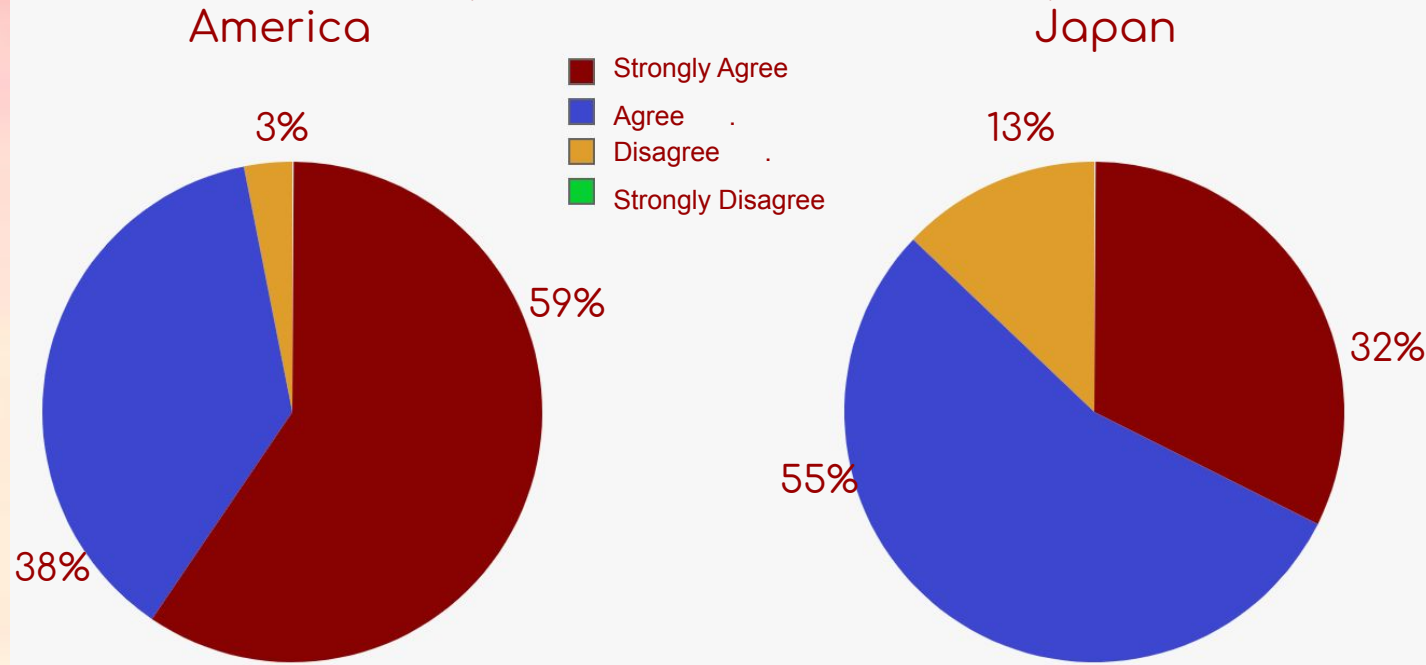
Most respondents said that people with disabilities are as capable as people without.

People with mild to moderate disabilities can live fulfilling lives.



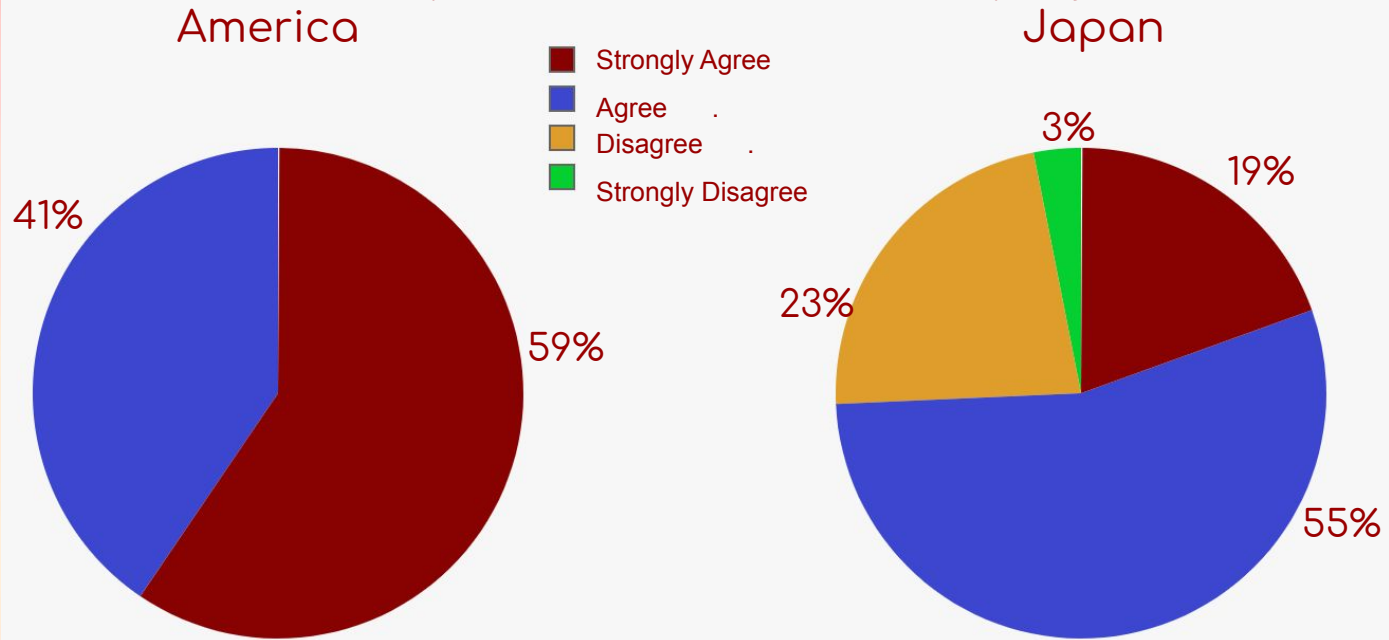
Most respondents strongly agree that people with disabilities can live fulfilling lives. Most negative responses were from Japanese students.

I feel comfortable being served by someone with Down Syndrome/Cerebral Palsy.



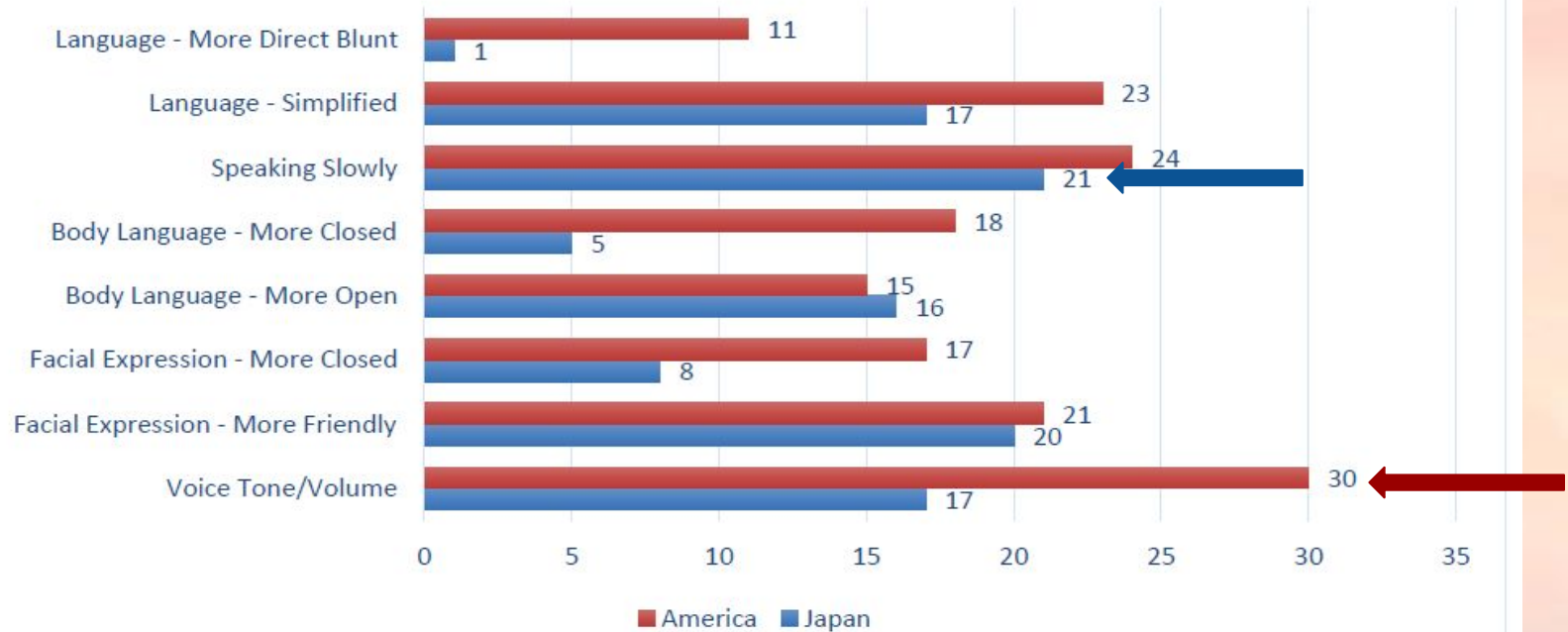
92% of respondents would feel comfortable being served by someone with Down Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy.

I would invite someone with a visible disability into my group for a school or work project.



All Americans would invite someone with a disability into their group.
26% of Japanese respondents would not.

Have you seen anyone change their behavior in any of the following ways when interacting with someone with a disability?



Everyone has seen someone change their behavior. The most seen in America is voice tone/volume, while in Japan it is speaking slowly.

If you had/have a disability, would you tell others and why?



Americans believe open communication and being honest is important.
Japanese believe safety and accommodations are most important.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 1

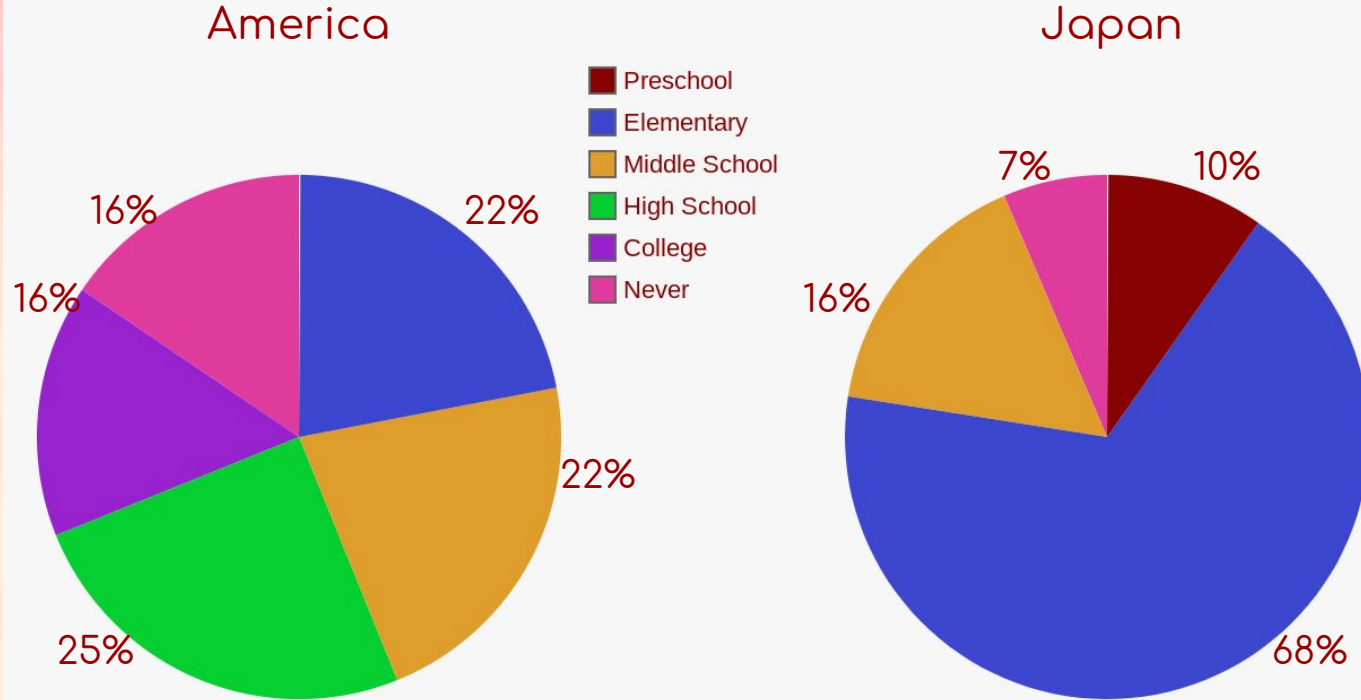
- Americans perceive people with disabilities to be as capable as those without. They have more experience with people with disabilities than Japanese do, and more knowledge of disabilities themselves. Americans believe that mental illnesses count as disabilities, while Japanese do not.
- Japanese think that people should not discuss their disabilities unless necessary, and agree that they would not discuss their own disabilities except for safety reasons.
- Japanese have less experience and knowledge about disabilities, which may be why they believe people with disabilities should keep to themselves and why they believe mental illness and diabetes are not disabilities.

Research Findings 2

Research Question 2:

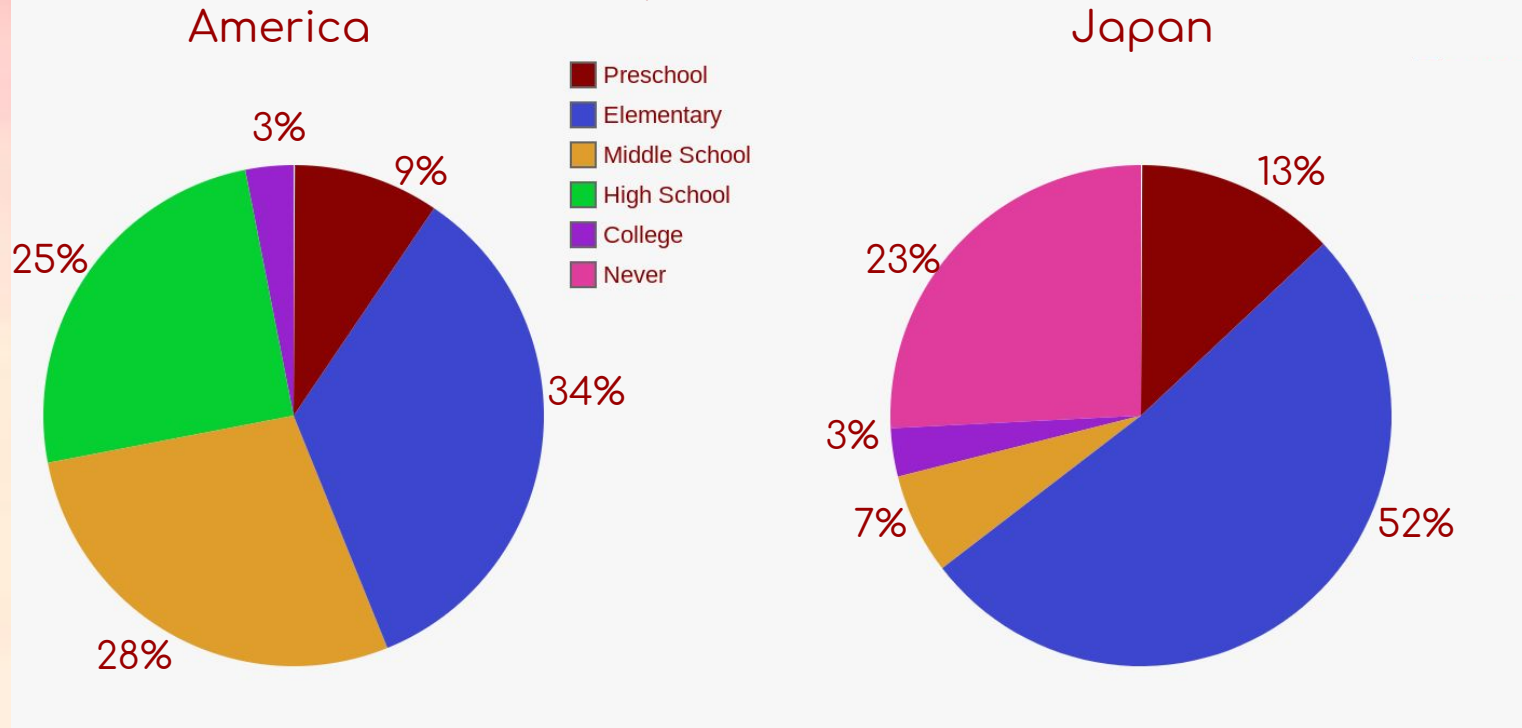
To what extent do people understand current available accommodations for people with disabilities?

When did you formally learn about disabilities/people with disabilities the most?



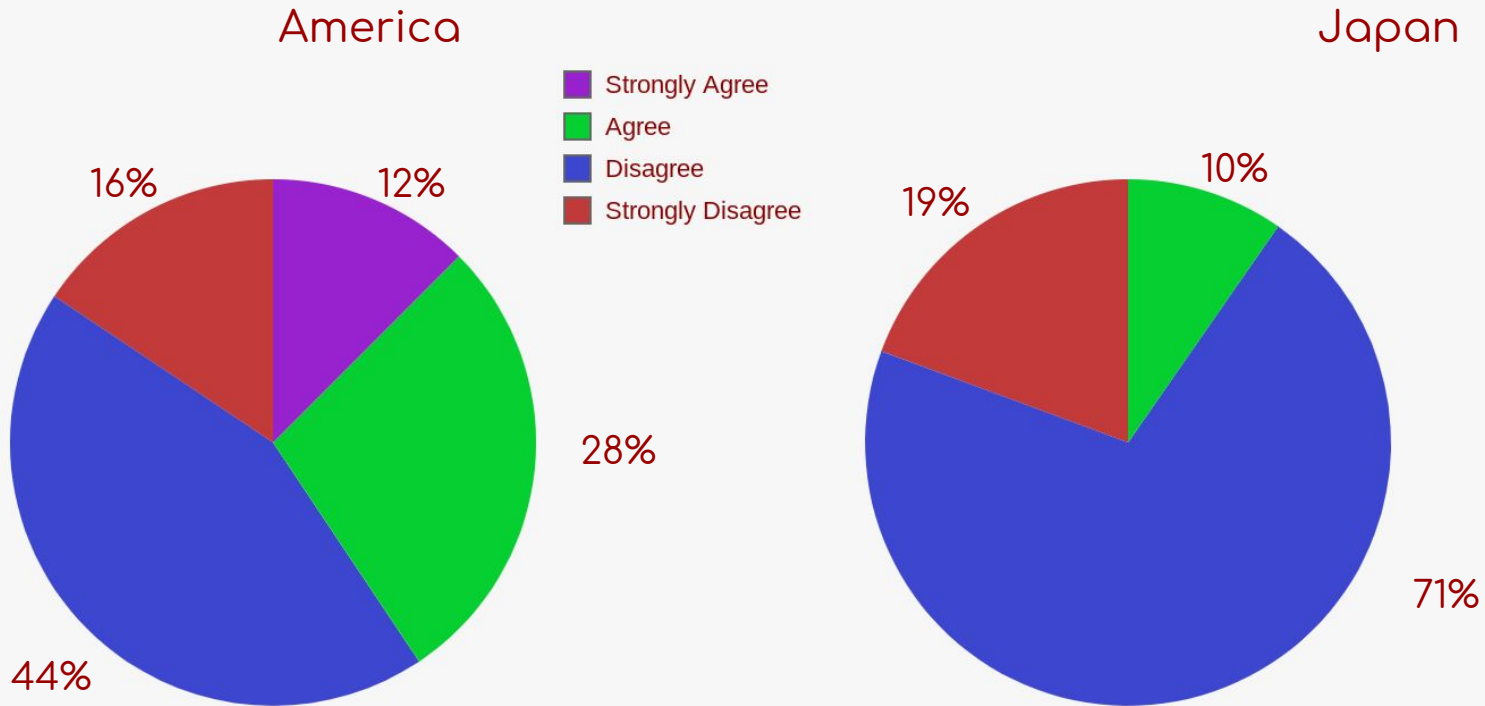
Japanese respondents were most formally educated during elementary school, while Americans were divided between all choices..

When did you first realize you had peers with disabilities in your classes?



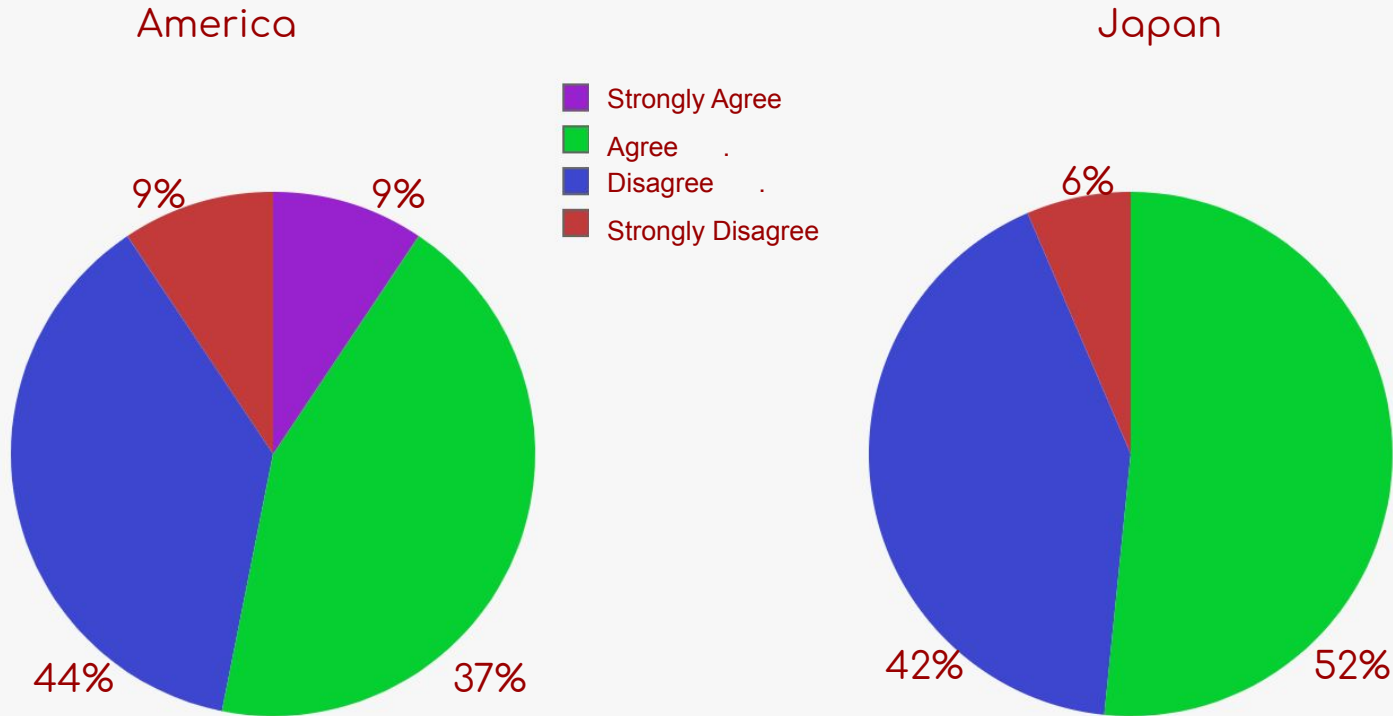
While Americans were divided among all choices, Japanese first realized during elementary school.

“I am well informed about legislation that benefits people with disabilities.”



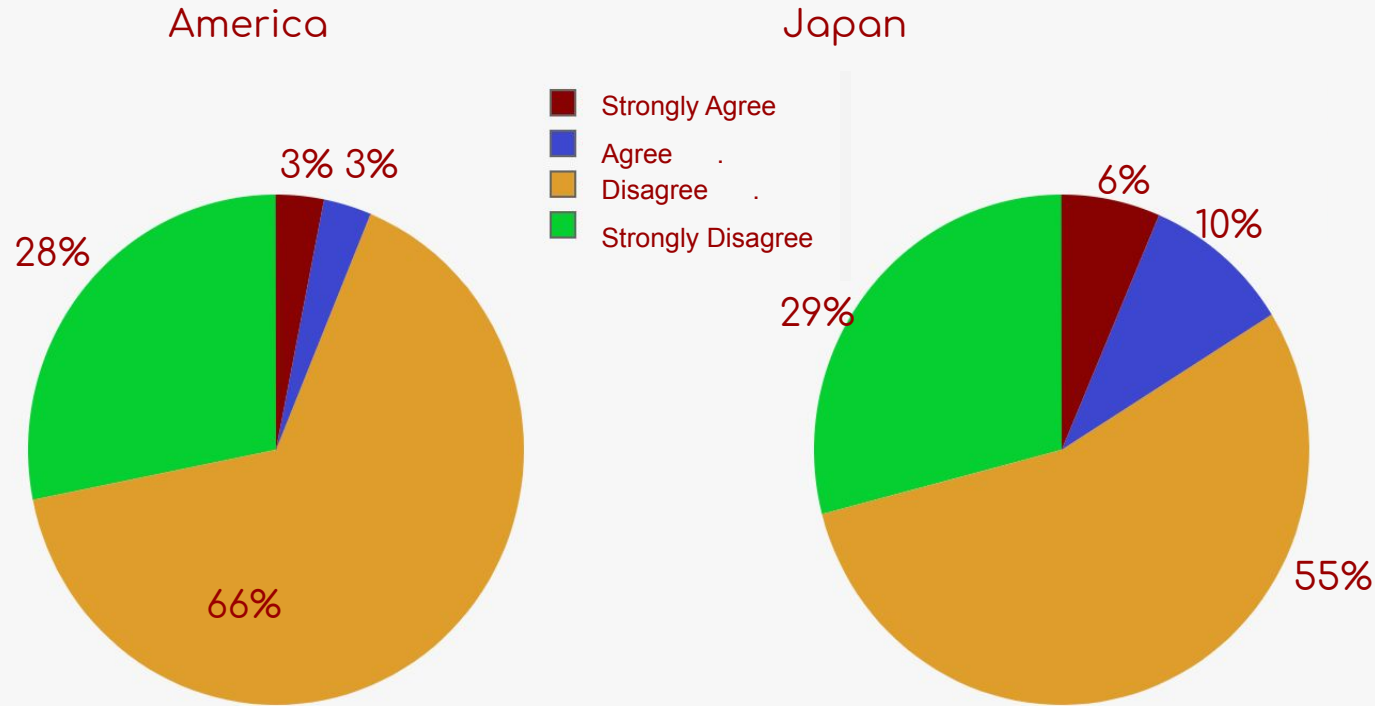
Both American and Japanese students feel insufficiently informed about disability legislation.

“I am aware of resources in my city that help people with disabilities.”



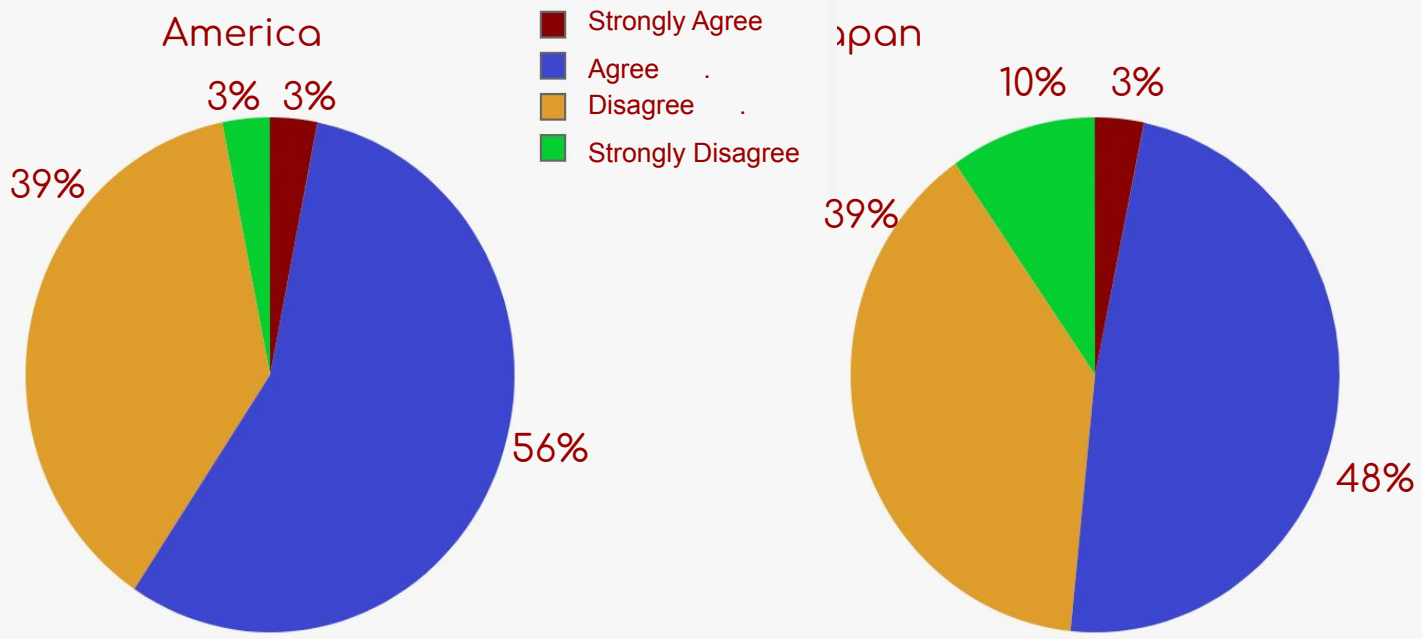
Both sets of respondents are split between knowing and not knowing what resources are available.

“The current public school curriculum about disabilities is sufficient.”



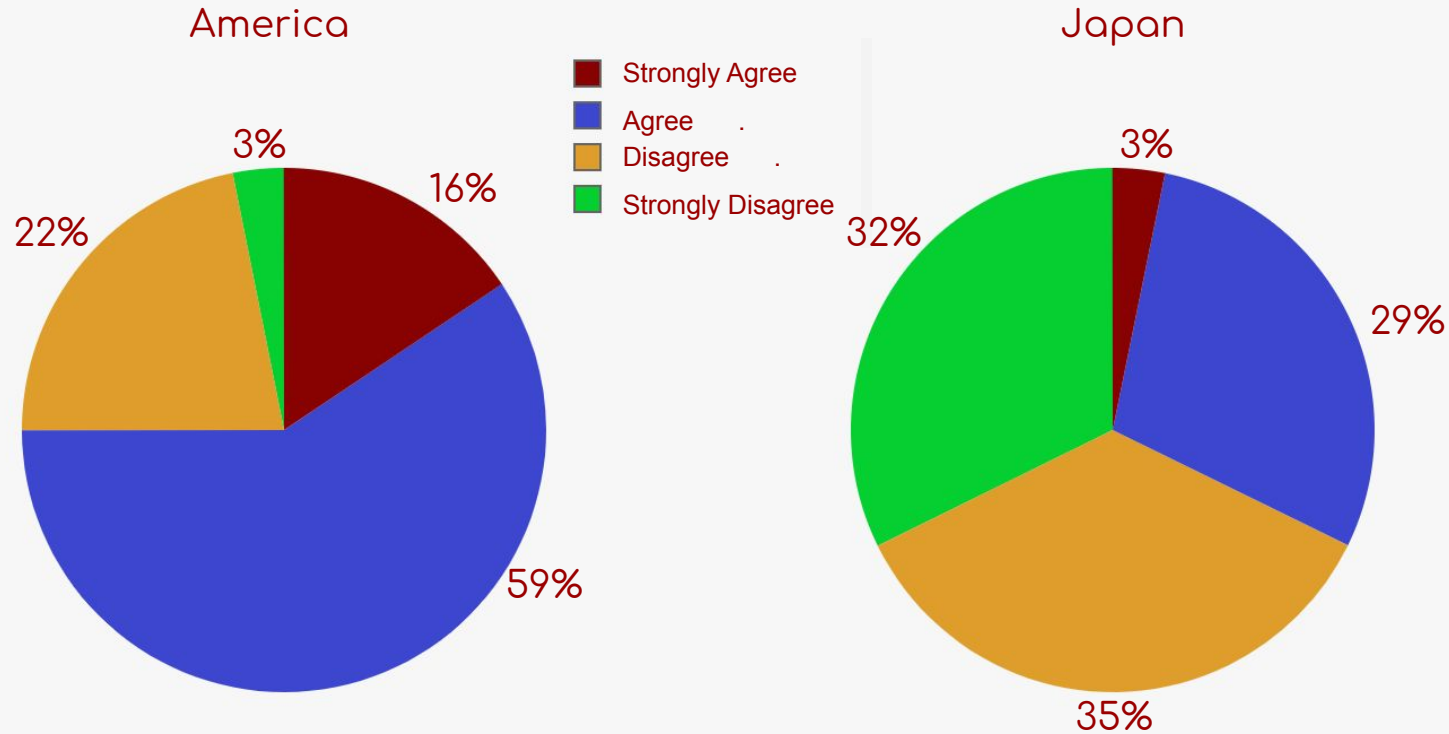
Although both respondents are fairly the same, slightly more Americans answered that it is insufficient.

“My university provides sufficient accommodations for people with disabilities.”



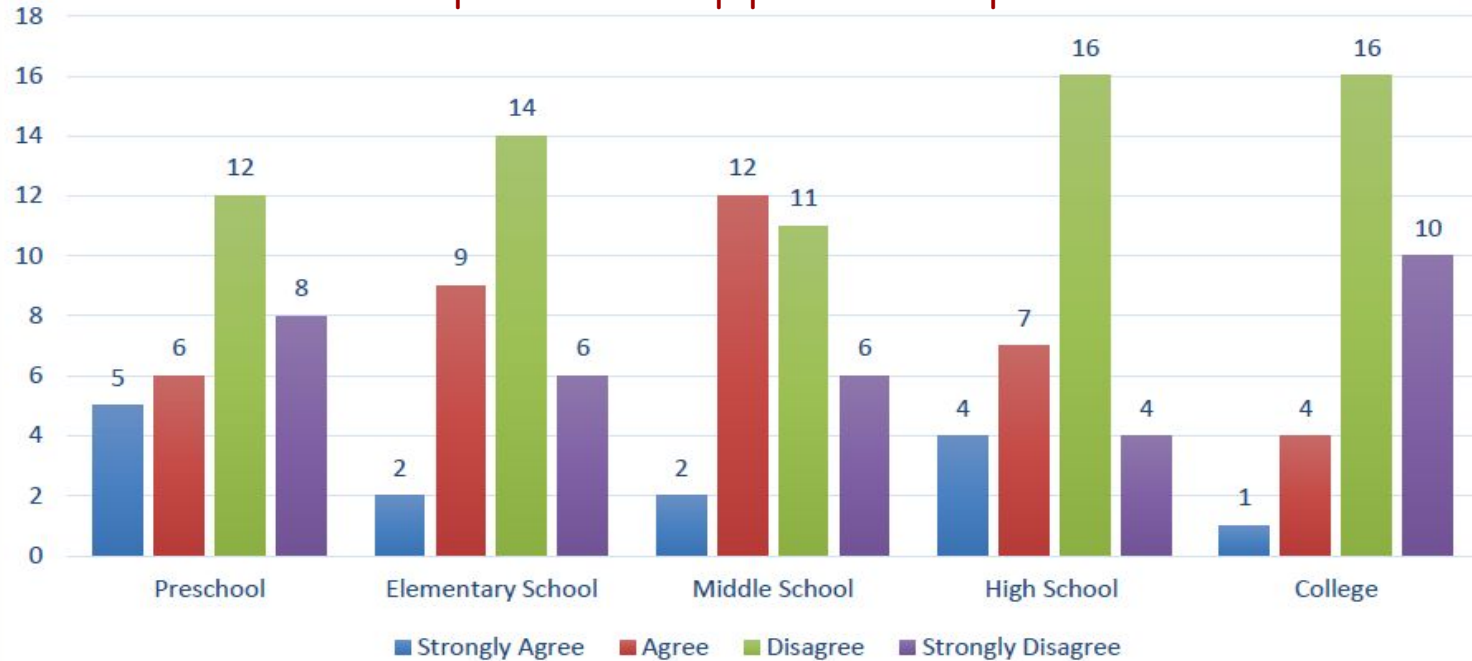
The opinions of respondents in both countries were divided between whether or not their university sufficiently provides accommodations.

“My university provides clear information on who to contact with regards to accommodations.”



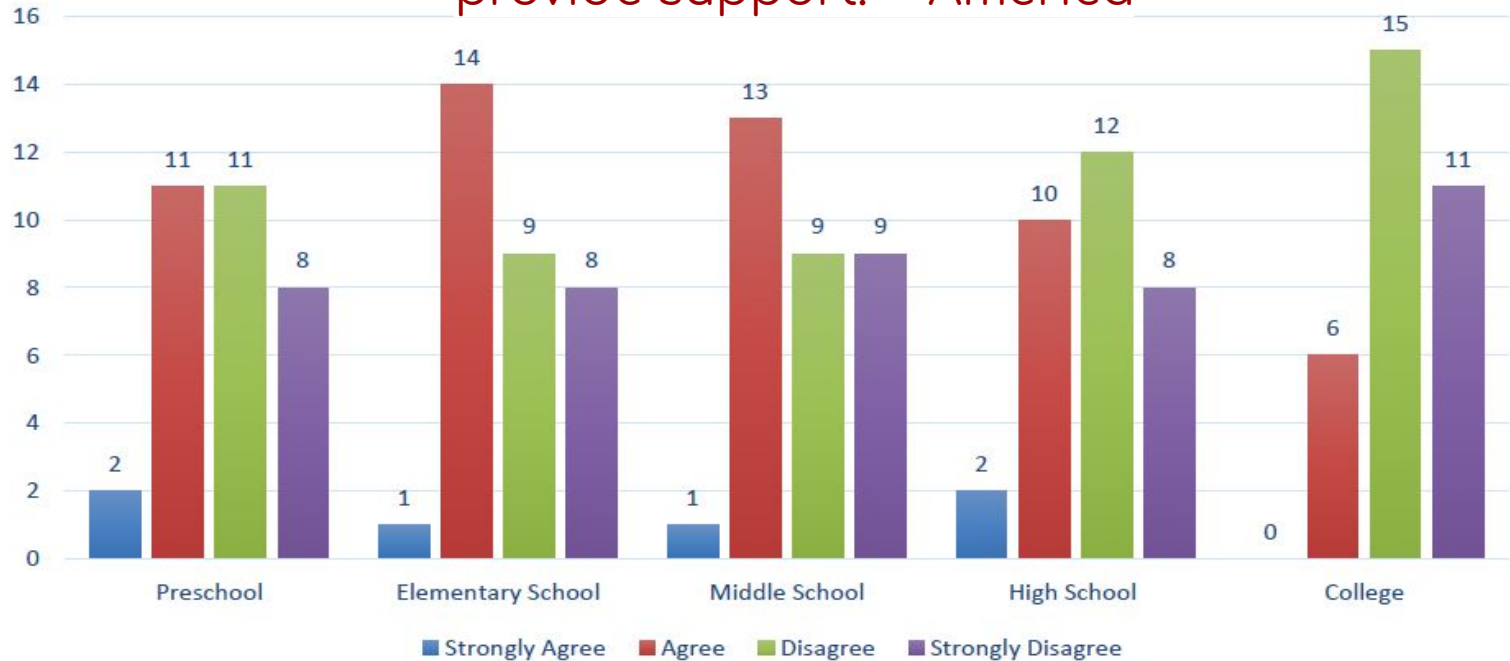
American students know whom to contact, while Japanese do not.

“Students with disabilities should be separated from students without disabilities in the classroom to better provide support.” - Japan



Japanese generally answered that students should not be separated.

“Students with disabilities should be separated from students without disabilities in the classroom to better provide support.” - America



Americans are more inclined to the idea of keeping students separated.

Summary of Findings: Research Question 2

- Americans are more aware of disabilities more than Japanese.
- Americans have been learning about disabilities throughout their education, Japanese started early in learning but ended earlier as well. But both feel that public education concerning disabilities is insufficient.
- Americans said students should be separated but Japanese in general said it should be inclusive.
- Americans and Japanese feel they are not informed enough about disability legislation.
- Americans are provided clear contact information but in Japan this is not the case. There are mixed opinions on the sufficiency of accommodations provided by universities.

Discussion and Conclusion

- There is a connection with Japanese not viewing mental illnesses as a disability and feeling that disabilities should not be discussed. → Mental Illness Stigma
- Japanese were more formally educated about disabilities at younger ages, but their degree of awareness concerning disabilities faltered once they stopped receiving education continuously.
- Americans are more willing to have students with disabilities segregated from students without disabilities, possibly due to more thorough special education implementation in the United States.
- Americans have more experience with people with disabilities on a daily basis. They also know more about specific disabilities.

Limitations of the Study

- Small sample size, only 63 total.
- Cannot generalize that it is representative of all college students in Japan and America.

Future Study

- Add more types of disabilities.
- Since there is a strong bias in America toward separating students with and without disabilities, we would like to further research the reasoning for separation.

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