

Lessons for Understanding Handicaps in Ordinary Classrooms

“Period of Integrated Study” by Collaboration of Teachers in *Tsukyu* and Teachers in Ordinary Classrooms

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Abstract: In this case study, the author reports the progress of gaining greater understanding of the feelings of people with handicaps to improve collaboration among ordinary classroom and *Tsukyu* teachers. The study was conducted during the "periods of integrated study" in ordinary classrooms of elementary schools and highlights the importance of the collaboration of teachers in *Tsukyu* and teachers in ordinary as in title classrooms in the education of children attached to *Tsukyu*.

This is because these children spend most of their school lives in ordinary classrooms. Researchers and teachers collaborated in giving the lessons.

In the study lesson entitled, “How do you think about gentleness?” it was found that students from the first to the sixth grades experience continual inconvenience and this experience is reported here. The principal aim of the study lessons is that every child gains an awareness of the feelings of people with handicaps and to motivate children without handicap to provide supporting activities to people with handicaps.

Key Words: Understanding handicaps, Period of integrated study, *Tsukyu* (resource rooms), Experience study, Collaborate

I. Preface

The *tsukyu* (“resource rooms”) educational system provides special guidance and education to children with mild handicaps. Children who attend *tsukyu* classes (hereinafter referred to as “*tsukyu* children”) are usually enrolled in ordinary classes, and thus, collaboration between *tsukyu* class teachers and teachers of relevant ordinary classes is important. In a survey concerning such collaboration conducted by the National Institute of Special Education (NISE) in fiscal 1996, many respondents favored¹⁾ “start-of-fiscal-year coordination meetings”, “telephone contacts”, “sending of guidance reports” and “school visits”. However, few studies have been conducted on specific, practical activities to improve the school life of *tsukyu* children in ordinary classes where they spend most of their time. The above survey (FY 1996) included an item “lessons for understanding handicaps” where *tsukyu* class teachers visit ordinary classes and provide lessons to promote the understanding of handicaps as one specific, practical activity. However, few respondents answered this item, and considered it only as a “special method” of collaboration. In recent years, WHO has been advocating a new classification scheme of disabilities⁵⁾ (i.e., ICF, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), and has been advocating social participation and investigation of environmental factors that predispose the development of

handicaps. Therefore it is important to gain understanding of the needs of people with handicaps to ensure their active social participation. In addition, the Nursery School Guidelines of Japan revised in FY 1999 added the following statement in Chapter 13: “provision of guidance to other children and their guardians to correctly understand handicaps”. Moreover, in the “period of integrated study” provided for in the new course of study, which has been implemented on a transitional basis since FY 2000, attempts are being made for children in ordinary classes to undergo simulated experiences of having handicaps.

In the field of education for children with hearing and speech handicaps, the teacher conference of special class for speech and hearing handicapped children (2001) pointed out that “collaboration with the school” is the key task of *tsukyu* classroom teachers, and expressly stated the need for them to “provide lessons for the understanding of handicaps by collaborating with the school”. (Note: In the aforementioned work, “collaboration” is defined in the conference as “to carry out activities for each person to attain independence, valuing each other, and developing cooperative relationships on a daily basis”. This means that each person must carry out activities related to children, while respecting each other’s viewpoint and clarifying each other’s responsibilities. This is a more wide-ranging concept than what is meant by “cooperation” or “joint work”. The

authors use this term when carrying out activities with persons working with children.)

Some examples of specific lessons for promoting the understanding of handicaps have been prepared by Tahara (2000a) who continually conducted lessons for understanding hearing handicaps in ordinary classes by aiding children who have difficulty in hearing, in which she prepared “A Supplementary Reading Material for Understanding Hearing Handicaps” (2000b). Hori (1999) has examined several practical materials such as videos presenting *tsukyu* classes and reports on learning experiences in such classes. He suggested that lessons presenting *tsukyu* classes or lessons on handicaps can be incorporated in the curricula of ordinary classes, and that there is an urgent need for such lessons in ordinary classrooms. Aside from this knowledge, there have been other reports on practical activities carried out as intramural research studies by local study groups.

Because the authors have considered collaboration with ordinary class teachers and children as indispensable to improve the school lives of *tsukyu* children, we have attempted to provide lessons on understanding handicaps in ordinary classes. From these lessons, progress in elementary school “A” is shown in Figure 1.

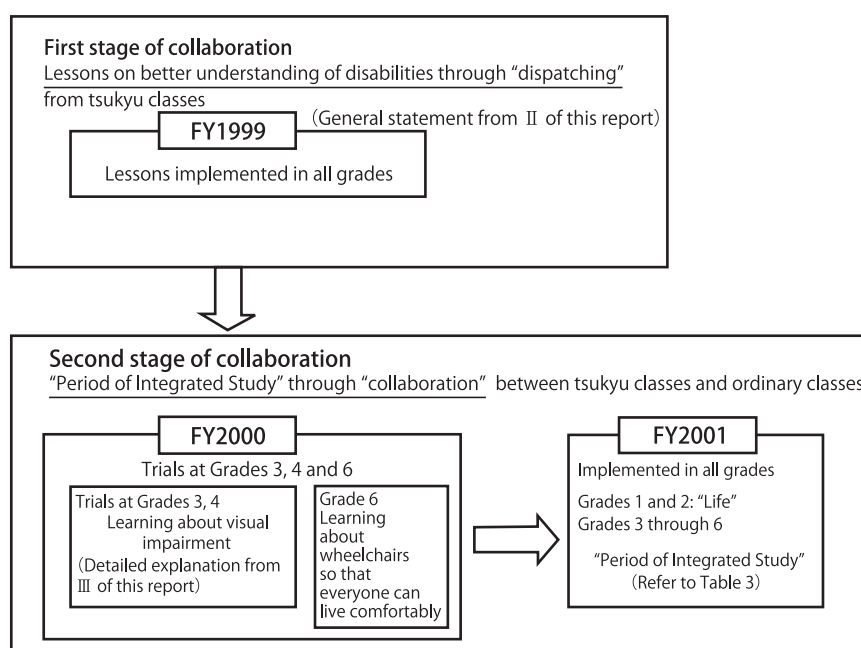
As shown in Figure 1, in the first stage of collaboration in FY 1999, the authors gave lessons on understanding handicaps in all grades at elementary school “A”. These lessons were “offered” to the whole school. *Tsukyu* classes were not only offered to the classes to which *tsukyu* children

attended, but also to the grades to which they belonged. Moreover, we consider that these lessons whole school would enormously help *tsukyu* children in their daily school life activities. Children and teachers in ordinary classrooms accepted this offer at this time, and collaboration then proceeded to the next stage.

In the second stage of collaboration in FY2000, by experiencing what it is like to have a handicap in three grades at elementary school “A”, lessons on understanding handicaps were given to children from ordinary classrooms so that they would feel the inconveniences of having a handicap and become more compassionate as part of their period of integrated study. This activity was not spearheaded by the authors alone, but was a collaboration with activity that involved the participation of ordinary classroom teachers.

In the second stage of development in FY2001, the trial lessons from the previous year were implemented to all grades at elementary school “A”.

In this report on the trial lessons made by the authors, we will first examine lessons on better understanding of handicaps, which is regarded as the first stage of collaboration. Next, we will discuss the “Period of integrated study: What is compassion?” and discuss lessons from the simulation of a visual handicap, and then examine the changes in children’s cognition of handicaps and the effect of collaboration with ordinary classroom teachers and children.



<Figure 1: Progress of practical activities conducted by authors at elementary for school “A”>

Table 1. Lessons on language

	Purpose	Simulated experiences
Lower grades	Word play (enjoy words)	Capping verses with conditions and silent videos
Middle grades	Speech conveyance (information processing)	Sound-transmission model and silent video using microphones or personal computers
Higher grades	Roles and functions of speech (manipulating thoughts)	Word replacing game and experiencing being old

Table 2. Lessons on Being Compassionate to Others

	Purpose	Discussion
Lower grades	To know that one cannot enjoy words if one cannot use words well	The feeling when one cannot say what he/she wants to say
Middle grades	To know how words affect various organs	The feeling when one wants to be heard to but is not
Higher grades	To know what it is like not to be able to do daily activities	What it is like to be elderly

II. First Stage of Collaboration: Lessons from *Tsukyu* Classes

1. Details of start of trial lessons at Elementary School “A”

In FY 1998, before the trial lessons were started at elementary school “A”, the authors first conducted lessons in other ordinary classrooms attended by *tsukyu* children in an other school. These lessons were implemented to directly promote better awareness of *tsukyu* children. For example, in a class where a child who stutters attended, stuttlring became the theme of class discussion; and in a class where a child with an articulation disorder was present, articulation disorders became the theme of class discussion. These lessons were given so that children in schools were *tsukyu* children also attended would have a better understanding of handicaps and be aware of the existence of *tsukyu* classes, and, consequently, with the hope that *tsukyu* children would in turn be able to present themselves without inhibition in ordinary classrooms and to enable them to spend most of their school life productive.

While these lessons were being conducted, the principal of the school and classroom teachers asked if we would provide such lessons not only for *tsukyu* classes, but also for all classes in the same grade and other grades. Consequently, we started providing such lessons and reviewed their contents even in classes with no *tsukyu* children. As a result, we concluded that we should provide not only lessons on simple classroom introduction or hearing and speech handicaps, but also lessons on how to recognize feeling of discomfort or inconvenience of another individual and take action—in other words—to think about compassion for handicapped children at the same time.

Therefore, from the third term of FY 1998, the authors tried a new lesson called a “2-hour set”. After it was first tried in other schools, in FY 1999, we provided “2-hour set” lessons in all classes at elementary school “A”. Hereinafter, these activities will be described.

2. Overview of Lessons on Understanding Handicaps at Elementary School “A”

(1) Aim of Lessons

The lessons focused on the following two points.

- (i) To be more aware of persons with various circumstances and conditions around you and to correctly grasp the difference between oneself and others (to be aware of inconvenient situations through simulations or discussion with persons with handicap or the elderly, and to think about what can be done for a person in need).
- (ii) To identify with other persons with handicap and to express compassion (to think and act sensitively from the viewpoint or condition of other individuals with handicap, and to contemplate on social relationships such as a “give and take” relationship).

(2) Procedures

Two *tsukyu* classroom teachers (one of which took charge of recording) and one researcher in special education gave lessons on understanding handicaps in ordinary classes (two classes in each grade; a total of twelve classes) at elementary school “A”. The lessons were 90 minutes (45 minutes x 2) each. In Grades 1 and 2, the lessons were given for two days; for the other grades, the lessons were given successively on the same day. For the lessons, the interest

of the children was enhanced through slide presentations using a personal computer and a slide projector, videos and simulated experiences. Before and after each lesson, the children were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their level of previous knowledge on handicaps or their impressions on the lessons. The opinions of the ordinary classroom teachers were also obtained after each lesson.

In addition, the trial lessons of FY 1999 were implemented as a research lesson of specialized teachers in elementary school "A", which became part of a joint research project among specialized teachers (teachers in charge of music, drawing and handicraft, and homemaking). Moreover, the lessons in the fifth grade were adopted as research lessons for the whole school.

(3) Guidance

Three types of lessons were given to the lower, middle and higher grades on the basis of the level of guidance in each grade. Each lesson included guidance (Table 1) on "language" and guidance on thinking about compassion to others. (Table 2)

1. Lessons for Lower Grades (1st and 2nd grades)

○First lesson: "Speech is fun, isn't it?"

- (i) Using words can be fun. Let us fully enjoy this a commonly used term in your field which is a play of speech.
- (ii) If we put limits on words, we cannot fully enjoy them. Let us try capping verses by limiting the use of words including specific sounds. Let us compare the results of activity (i) on capping of verses.
- (iii) Let us discuss why what? is not as much fun based on activity (ii).

○Second lesson: "Speech is wonderful, isn't it?"

- (iv) Do you know that some persons cannot speak using words? Let us listen to a recording of a child who has stammer and watch a drama about stammering.
- (v) How does the person who has stammer feel? How would you feel if that person is you?
- (vi) Let us discuss what we can do after thinking about other persons who have stammer based on (v).

2. Lessons for Middle Grades (3rd and 4th grades)

○First lesson: "How are words conveyed?"

- (i) How do we learn words? Let us watch a video of the linguistic development of a baby.
- (ii) How are words conveyed and understood? Let us learn the process of sound information processing

through simulation utilizing a microphone, a personal computer and a speaker.

- (iii) Let us experience the inconvenience of having difficulty in hearing: Let us discuss about a video on a simulated experience of difficulty in hearing.

○Second lesson: "Let us think about the inconveniences of having handicaps"

- (iv) Let us discuss the inconveniences of going about daily life if you are a person who has difficulty in hearing on the basis of your experiences from the previous lesson.
- (v) Let us discuss the feelings of a person who has difficulty in hearing after listening to a recording of a composition read aloud by a child who has difficulty in hearing.
- (vi) There are many types of people in the world. Let us discuss barrier-free vending machines.

3. Lessons for Higher Grades (5th and 6th grades)

○First lesson: "Let us discover the function of words"

- (i) How are we able to learn and use words? The same as middle grades.
- (ii) How do we learn words? The same as the detailed version of middle grades (ii).
- (iii) What role do words take in daily life? The symbolic function of language, communicative function, and language function as a thinking tool are summarized.
- (iv) If limitations are placed on the functions of words, it becomes inconvenient. Let us experience this through a word exchange game.

○Second lesson: "Let us take action while thinking about the position or feelings of another person"

- (v) Let us learn about stammering and the inconvenience of having it by listening to a recorded conversation or a composition of a child who has with stuttering.
- (vi) Let us learn about elderly persons and discuss the inconveniences they face by watching a video about them.
- (vii) Let us think about the feelings of persons with handicap and elderly persons and discuss their feelings based on (v) and (vi).
- (viii) There are many types of people in the world. Let us think about what you can do to help people with handicap.

4. Impression after Lessons

For the impressions of children after the lessons, their impressions conform with (i) and (ii) of the aim of the lessons. Some of their responses "I really understand that

there are people who cannot hear or convey very well what they want to say”, “If I am one of them, I will be so stressed” (lower grade), “I realized that there are many types of people; however, I do not show them any special consideration”, and “I should change my attitude, so let us be kind to people” (higher grade).

Furthermore, after the lessons, ordinary classroom children visited the *tsukyu* classroom of their school more frequently. In addition, the children told the authors, “Please come again” or “When are we going to study again?”

(4) Discussion (Toward collaboration)

The practical trial lessons taken by the authors in FY 1999 placed an emphasis on the understanding of the handicaps of *tsukyu* children. With respect to the process of acquiring accurate knowledge on handicaps and becoming more compassionate, the lessons involved mainly the outlines of the authors.

As a result, ordinary classroom children became more familiar with *tsukyu* classes and specialized teachers, and expressed their willingness to continue the lessons. We have the impression that these responses indicate that the children wanted to become more compassionate. Furthermore, ordinary classroom teachers also expressed their opinions on the lessons given by showing the children’s compositions or diaries about their impressions or discussing their own views toward people with handicaps, so that their relationship with the authors also deepened.

The trial lessons adopted from FY 1999 were considered was a one-way lesson from the authors. As a result, the ground for collaboration between the authors and ordinary classroom teachers was established.

III. Second Stage of Collaboration: “Period of Integrated Study” through Collaboration between Resource Rooms and Ordinary Classes

1. Details of start of “Period of Integrated Study”

In accordance with the new course of study published in FY 1999, the authors gave lessons on understanding handicaps. Probably because of the impact of the author’s “2-hour set”, several ordinary here and elsewhere at elementary school “A” started to have a better understanding of different handicaps through their teaching materials for the “period of integrated study” in the new course of study.

On the other hand, through the “2-hour set,” which the authors developed for ordinary classroom children and in the pursuit of becoming more compassionate, the authors felt that not only should lessons on understanding of hearing and speech handicaps be given, but also lessons on understanding other types of handicap.

Accordingly, both the ordinary classroom teachers and the authors agreed, and a trial study has been conducted with the theme, “Period of Integrated Study – How about a little compassion?” for the perpole of understanding handicaps better in several grades at elementary school “A” since FY 2000. Lessons on the simulation of visual handicaps were given to Grades 3 and 4 and lessons on wheel chairs were given to Grade 6.

Moreover, in due consideration of the trial lessons, this activity has been implemented in all grades since FY 2001. By utilizing Life Environment Studies in Grades 1 and 2 and ensuring continuity in the “Period of Integrated Study” in Grade 3 and higher grades, the timing for giving the lesson on “How about a little compassion?” for all children is planned from Grades 1 to 6 (Table 3).

From these details, we will describe the lessons given on visual handicap implemented in FY 2000.

2. Lesson Overview

(1) Aims of Lessons

The following two areas represent the aims of the “Period of Integrated Study – How about a little compassion?” over the six year elementary period:

- (i) To be aware of various consequences or conditions around oneself and to correctly grasp one’s difference from others (to understand feelings of inconvenience through simulated experiences or discussion about persons with handicaps and the elderly; in addition, to think about what one can do for a person with handicap);
- (ii) To recognize the needs of other persons and to be compassionate (to think about the feelings or behavior of another person from that person’s viewpoint position or state; in addition, to remember that the world is a “give and take” society).

From the above-mentioned points, for the of lessons under the theme understanding visual handicaps, the lessons are aimed to “enhance awareness of inconveniences resulting from having handicaps and to improve sensitivity to those inconveniences by acquiring knowledge and being

Table 3. General Plan: "How about a little compassion?"

	1 st grade 2 to 4 hours 3 rd term	2 nd grade 2 to 4 hours Latter half of 2 nd term	3 rd grade 1.5 hours First half of 1 st term	4 th grade 1.5 hours First half of 2 nd term	5 th grade 1.5 hours Latter half of 1 st term	6 th grade 1.5 hours 3 rd term
Implementing period						
Theme	Word play	Word play	Experience of having visual handicap	Experience of having hearing and speech handicaps	Experience of using wheelchair	Experience of being elderly
Study aim	*To know the enjoyment of listening, talking and expressing feelings and to experience uneasiness during inconvenience that cannot be conveyed or understood (communication and information conveyance difficulties)		*To realize the existence of people with handicaps by learning about visual handicap through simulated experiences. To experience the inconveniences of visual impairment and to know how to handle such inconveniences	*To realize the existence of people with handicaps by learning about hearing handicap through simulated experiences. To understand that communication cannot be freely made if one has a hearing impairment	*Through observations of the uses of wheelchairs; the intramural simulated experience of using wheelchairs; when one uses a wheelchair; to think about the inconveniences and types of everyday necessities	*Based on simulations over three years, to create and implement a simulated experience of the elderly. *To make a presentation on "compassion" by organizing one's own thoughts
Major activities	1. Capping verses 2. Limited capping verses (to experience speech difficulties) 3. Inconvenient life due to difficulty in speaking	1. Experience having a hearing handicap by listening to a silent video 2. Experience uneasiness or frustration due to difficulty in hearing 3. What to do when in trouble 4. To search for and think about conveniences in a town through pictures 5. Preliminary announcement of lessons on being compassionate to be conducted for 4 years between Grades 3 and 6	1. To discuss about visual handicap 2. Simulated experiences such as folding a paper, catching a ball, walking, putting on and removing clothing and doing research (everyday conveniences) 3. Conclusion: To ask blind persons about questionable points simulated experiences and research 4. To know more about blind persons and to think about what be done to help them can	1. To listen to the voice of a person with simulation of difficulty in hearing on video. To notice the difference in pronunciation. To learn why the pronunciation is so. 2. To know the mechanism of hearing or talking 3. Video presentation: "Do you know what a hearing aid is?" 4. To conduct simulations through the use of silent videos 5. Let us think about people with difficulty in hearing, their inconveniences and their feelings. What I can do to help them? 6. Ask a person with difficulty in hearing some questions	1. What types of people use wheelchairs? 2. Let us imagine a wheelchair 3. To observe a wheelchair and to actually use it 4. To do an intramural search using a wheelchair. 5. To think about helping a person using a wheelchair 6. What are the inconveniences of using wheelchair? 7. What conveniences are there in the school or town? 8. What we can do? 9. To listen to a person who actually uses a wheelchair	1. To learn basic knowledge on the elderly 2. To compose and implement a simulation experience of being an elderly based on previous experiences. (By utilizing a simulated experience set) 3. To conduct research study on issues about the elderly through experience 4. Based on learning and the present state, to discuss what can be done in the future to help the elderly 5. To convey our own views about compassion to everybody during the elementary grade
Remarks	*To obtain the basic skills of communication (basic attitudes of listening, talking and discussing) through lessons *To learn (emphasis on the process of obtaining knowledge) → to experience → to think → to conclude → to convey → to discuss through lessons					

in contact with people who are visually handicapped”.

We felt that simulated experiences should be conducted fully to accomplish this aim, and we thought that it was important for each child to record and present his or her own ideas after the simulated experience, and discuss his/her experience with a person with handicap.

(2) Procedures

Altogether, the lessons were carried out in four classes, two in the 3rd grade and two in the 4th grade at elementary school “A”. Of those classes, we will examine class “B” in the 4th grade as a model case for this report where the authors were frequently involved. In addition, children in the 4th grade, including those in class “B”, have already received a middle grade version of the “2-hour set” when they were in the 3rd grade (FY 1999).

(3) Collaboration in Lessons

(i) Collaboration in Preparing a Guidance Draft

Initially, the authors prepared a guidance draft and discussed it with four ordinary classroom teachers. In the first discussion, ordinary classroom teachers asked us “to clarify the aims of the lessons”, “to explain the content of a simulated experience and the presentation methods to be used by the children”, “to describe in detail the wording of questions” and “to demonstrate the methods of evaluation”. These requests were made because the teachers were well aware of the specific characteristics of their ordinary classes and daily lessons. Therefore, their requests were an indication of their need of a guidance draft to enable them to carry out their collaboration responsibilities.

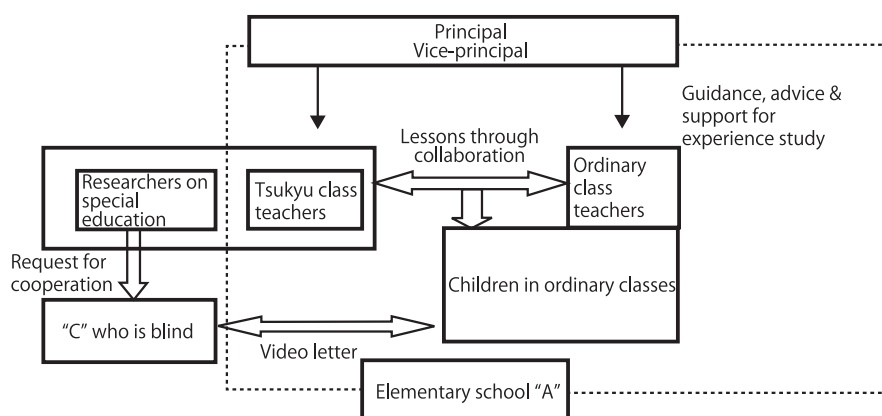
Upon the teacher's request, the authors tried to explain the content of a simulated experience by examining

anticipatory practice. Discussions with ordinary class teachers were conducted six times, over approximately one month and a half to repeatedly evaluate the guidance draft. In each discussion, the teachers examined the content of a simulated experience presented by the authors and compared the content features of the simulated experience with the specific features of their school children under their responsibility. With respect to the evaluation of lessons, which was a problem until the last stage of planning, the authors suggested that the evaluation should be extended throughout the entire lessons instead of evaluating each unit lesson at a time, and the authors were able to obtain the teacher's consent.

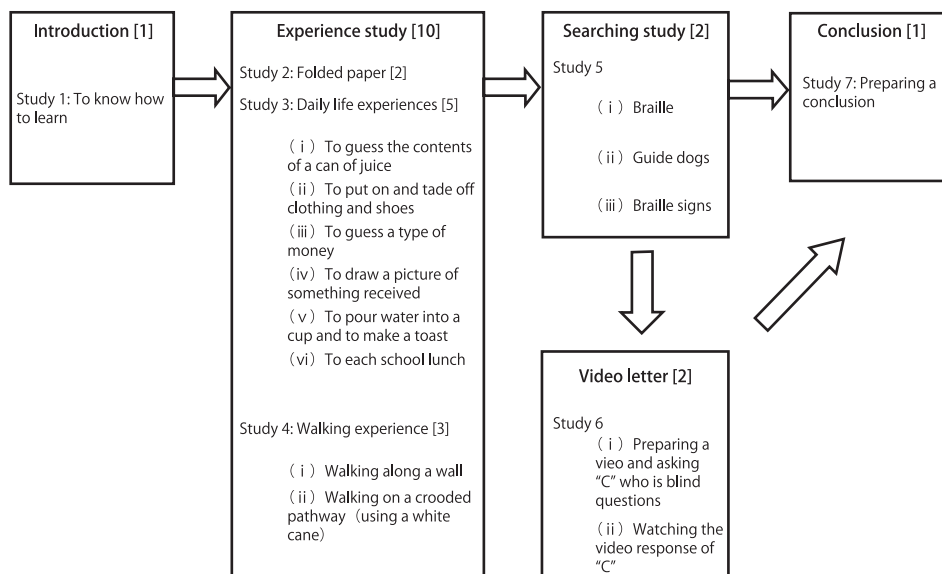
During the one month and a half-long evaluation process, despite the initiatives of the authors, in the second half of the evaluation process, the teachers started expressing their opinions openly. For example, some teachers commented that there may be better methods of accomplishing a goal, or other methods to enable the ordinary classroom children to perform better, and they started taking the initiative in our discussions. Eventually, the teachers started saying, “They can probably do this” or “Let's try this” and the expressed enthusiasm toward the lessons to be given in collaboration with the authors.

(ii) Collaboration in Giving Lessons

The participants in the lessons are shown in Figure 2. The lecturers were composed of one ordinary class teacher and the authors or one *tsukyu* class teacher and one researcher on special education. During the lessons, the lecturers performed their corresponding roles and cooperated by effectively utilizing the special features of each class. For example, ordinary classroom teachers who were very familiar with the characteristics of each child, became the main lecturers of a simulated experience during discussions and research studies. Furthermore, the authors who had



<Figure 2: Participants in for consistency lessons>



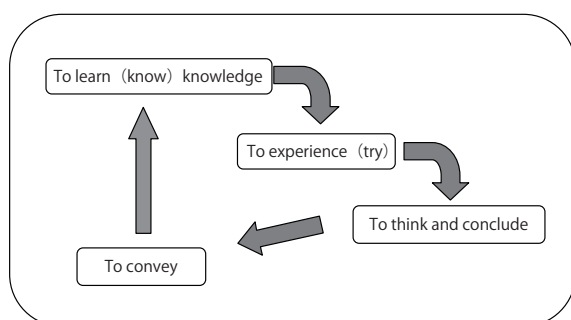
<Figure 3: Lesson structure (The figures in [] are the number of unit lessons.)>

knowledge of and experience with handicaps became the main lecturers of the introductory lessons or the explanation of a simulated experience. Other ordinary classroom teachers, the principal and the vice principal also provided learning support through their experiences and ensured safety of the children.

(4) Lesson Structure

Since FY 2000, the new course of study has entered a transitional period, and 35 unit lessons for the “period of integrated study” for selected grades at Elementary school “A” were planned. In the planned lessons, approximately 15 unit lessons (more or less depending on the class) were utilized. The outline of each unit lesson and the lesson structure are shown in Figure 3.

The lessons placed emphasis on the simulated experiences shown in Figure 3. To avoid repeating the simulated experiences from the beginning to end of each activity, a child’s way of learning was established, as shown



<Figure 4: Way of learning>

in Figure 4.

For each simulated experience, the lessons were given for the purpose of (i) learning from experience, (ii) experiencing the actual lesson, (iii) thinking and formulating a conclusion from the experience, and (iv) sharing presenting one’s experience and thought. Through these lessons, the children acquired new knowledge, asked questions [return to (i) again] and moved on to the next simulated experience, and then the whole process was repeated. This process of learning emphasized not only learning from experience, but also the development of communication skills such as listening to an explanation or the opinion of another person, or the ability to understand and participate in discussions by being able to organize one’s own thoughts.

Furthermore, we had each of the children prepare worksheets (refer to Figure 5) regarding all their simulated experiences. These worksheets were kept until graduation (in class “B” worksheets from the 4th grade to the 6th grade were saved as a single file) and these worksheet data were used as reference data of the development of this program or the process of learning.

3. Contents of Lessons

(1) Study 1 (Introduction, one unit lesson) [The authors served as lecturers]

Aim: to increase awareness of problems faced by people who are visually handicapped, and to explain ways of learning and making future plans

Today Date: yy/mm/dd

Daily Life Experience Worksheet 6 (Eating)

Class Name

Please eat as much as you can!

1. What was inconvenient when you wore blind-mask?

2. How did you feel? Please discuss it!

3. What was inconvenient? And why were you inconvenienced?

Inconveniences:

Reasons for the inconvenience:

4. What did you have to do prevent spilling food?

5. Eat lunch with a mask! How was it?

6. Try it at dinner time! (If possible, please write about it on the back of this page.)

7. If you have visually handicap, what innovation do you think would make it easier to eat? Also, is there something you hope will never be done?

Innovation:

Something that you hope will never be done:

8. How do you feel about this “eating experience”

Figure 5: Worksheet Example (Lesson 3: Part of daily life experiences. Original size is, A4)



Photo 1 : Searching for one's own shoes wearing a blind mask



Photo 2-1 : School lunch (A child extending his hand to receive milk from another child)



Photo 2-2 : School lunch (A child did not notice that the child next to him has not opened his bottle of milk; he took the bottle and tried to drink from it. His milk is in the bottom center of the photo.)

(2) Study 2 (Experience study 1: Folded paper, two unit lessons) [Ordinary class teachers mainly took charge]

Aim: to experience folding a paper as if one is blind, the students were asked to fold a paper and make a “purse” with and without a blind mask. The time it took for each student to make a purse was measured and compared. Difficulties and opinions while wearing a blind mask were recorded on a worksheet, which were discussed after the activity.

(3) Study 3 (Experience study 2: Daily life experience, 5 unit lessons) [The authors and ordinary class teachers served as coordinators of the simulated experiences and presentations, respectively]

To experience various daily activities without using their eyes, the children were divided into six groups, with each group selecting one of the following daily activities:

- (i) Guessing the contents of a can of juice
- (ii) Putting on and taking off clothing or shoes (Photo 1)
- (iii) Guessing a particular type of money
- (iv) Drawing a picture of something received
- (v) Pouring water into a cup and making a toast
- (vi) Eating school lunch (Photos 2-1 and 2-2)

Each group was divided into children doing a selected daily activity using a blind mask and children attempting to assist; all the children took turns in doing the activities. The opinions of the children regarding their experiences and the results of the observations were recorded on a worksheet. Each group discussed the inconvenience that they actually felt, their means of adjusting to it, and then made a conclusion. Each group gave a presentation of their experience and then presented the results of their discussions.

Note: The time of group presentation in classroom “B” was used as a parameter for intramural research, and teachers from the whole school evaluated the lessons by incorporating outside lecturers.

(4) Study 4 (Experience study 3: Walking experience, 3 unit lessons) [The authors coordinated the activity]

To experience walking in a wide space as if blind and with no assistance, the children were asked to walk along a wall once in a big study room (approximately double the size of an ordinary classroom) with and without a blind mask. Next, they walked on a crooked course of approximately 1.5 m wide and approximately 20 m long with a blindfold and with and without a white cane (Photo 3). In either case, the children were divided into three groups, those who walked on the crooked course, those who tried to assist, and those who just observed, all of whom took



Photo 3 : Walking experience (left boy : without a cane, right boy : with a cane)

turns in doing the walking activity. The opinions and results of the observations were recorded on a work here and elsewhere sheet and presented afterwards.

(5) Study 5 (Research study, 2 unit lessons) [Ordinary class teachers coordinated the activity]

By dividing into groups, the children searched for documents or videos about Braille and guide dogs, or searched for Braille signs while actually walking in a town.

(6) Study 6 (Video letter, 2 unit lessons) [The authors coordinated the activity]

On the basis of the above-mentioned lessons, the children listed questions they wanted to ask from blind persons, and a letter-type video was prepared. The authors asked some blind persons for their cooperation, and after listening to the questions of the children from the video, they responded to the questions, which was videotaped. The children then watched the video of the blind persons who responded to their questions.

(7) Conclusion (Preparing composition, 1 unit lesson) [Ordinary class teachers coordinated the activity]

By reviewing all the activities, the opinions and questions of the children were written as one composition.

4. Results and Discussion (Based on Learning State of Children and Their Opinions)

(1) Inconveniences due to visual handicap

Here, we will quote the opinions of children in study 2 regarding their first visual handicap experience.

“When I wore a blind mask, I felt as if I was in a dark

place, and so I was very frightened. When I tried to fold a paper wearing a mask, it took a long time to complete the folding because I could not see any lines in the paper for folding. This made me wonder how blind persons could “see” lines or corners of a paper.”

When the children wore a blind mask for the first time, we received comments such as “I was frightened” or “I was nervous”. In addition to the above-mentioned lines and corners for folding a paper, there were comments such as “I could not see the center of the paper” and “I could not see where the paper is”.

From this experience, the children started to realize the importance of vision, which they have always taken for granted, and the inconvenience of being blind.

Next, the opinions from carrying out daily activities while wearing a blind mask in study 3 are as follows:

“I feel sorry for blind persons who try to pour juice into a cup or water flowers without actually seeing them.”

“People who are visually handicapped need to be aware of the differences between various types of canned juice when they go shopping, so I thought this situation was very hard for them.”

From their experiences that are directly associated with daily life activities, more and more children began to realize the difficulty in carrying out normal activities once a person becomes blind. In addition, we noticed that many opinions focused only on the inconvenience of having a handicap, such as “I feel sorry for them” or “It looks hard”.

(2) Importance of our senses and substitutes for sense of sight

In the course of repeating the simulated experiences in studies 3 and 4, the children started feeling the inconvenience of having a handicap. They noticed that the inconvenience resulting from a handicap could be relieved by utilizing other senses such as the sense of touch in place of the sense of sight or tools such as a white stick. The opinions of these children are as follows:

“At first, I was able to pour water into a plastic cup easily. I could feel the coldness of the cup, so I did very well. However, when I used a glass cup, I could not feel the temperature change. So I tried pouring water very carefully, but it was very low. (Omission of interior parts) When I checked it with my finger, it went well. [(v) from Study 3]

This student was able to confirm the water level by

Table 4 Questions for Ms. “C”

Question 1: Regarding “walking”

- How do you walk without bumping into things or people?
- What do you watch for when going up and down steps?
- What do you do when you turn in a hallway or a corner in a town?
- How do you walk when there are no walls or Braille signs?
- What do you do when your cane cannot reach the end of a wide street or when it is crowded or when you cannot use your cane because there are so many people?
- What do you do if you drop your cane?
- Do you walk with a cane even in your house?
- What do you do when crossing a pedestrian lane?
- How do you know when it says “stop” in a pedestrian lane and when there is no sound?
- What do you do when you lose your way?

Question 2: Regarding shopping

- How do you check your change when you buy something?
- How do you decide what you want to buy when you go shopping?
- How do you know products from their wrappers?
- How do you discriminate between colored pencils?
- How do you buy a ticket at a station?

Question 3: Regarding meals and living

- What problems do you have when making meals?
- How do you eat?
- How do you use chopsticks?
- Do you have difficulty drinking?
- How do you select your clothing from the closet when dressing?
- Do you make your own bed?
- How do you hang your laundry?
- How do you read the newspaper?
- Do you often watch TV? How about radio? Which do you prefer?
- How do you write letters? Can you also write hiragana or Chinese characters?
- How do you draw pictures?

Question 4: Others

- When do you use your cane?
- What trouble do encounter when using your cane?
- How difficult is it to memorize Braille?
- How do you know what time it is?
- How do you play ball?
- Have you ever folded a paper?
- How do you play cards?
- You were dealing with a “carrier service” person. But what would you do if it was somebody else?
- How do you know when there is danger?
- If you are used to life without sight, have you lost any feeling of uneasiness?
- What is the most convenient thing for you to do?

inserting her finger inside the cup. However, when she was preparing for her presentation, she commented that she will not like it if other people put their finger in her cup. During her presentation, she was asked “What if it is hot water?” So she realized that her method of checking the water level was not such a good idea. When pouring water into a cup, there is really only one method, that is, to pour water carefully, so she thought this activity was very difficult. However, when a blind person answered that she could tell the amount of water in a cup from the weight of the cup or from the sound of the pouring of water, the children were surprised, but were soon convinced.

Next, here are some opinions on the walking experience while blindfolded.

“When I did not have a white cane, I could not follow the course correctly. Many students tried to give me directions by saying “go right” or “go left”, but I became more confused. When I used a white cane, I did better and I did not stray of the course.” (study 4)

By experiencing not being able to walk in the right course when walking without a white cane, some children started realizing the usefulness of such tools. In addition, the children began to realize important considerations when assisting people who are visually handicapped. For example, one child realized that people who are visually handicapped may become more confused if many people give them directions simultaneously.

(3) Assisting people who are visually handicapped

The children were divided into groups and they carried out research studies on Braille, guide dogs and Braille signs (they studied the use of paving blocks to aid people who are visually handicapped) and presented their results to each other. This is the opinion of one child who did a research study on Braille.

“I went to the library and borrowed a book on Braille so that I could try to learn it; nobody could memorize any of the Braille signs. However, when we watched a video of a blind person using Braille, we were amazed at how smoothly the blind person could read the Braille signs.”

From this, the children carried out their own research on Braille signs unfamiliar to them but which exists around them. Afterwards, they openly expressed their feelings about their findings.

The children simulated their experience of being visually handicapped from studies 2 to 4, which perhaps explains why they carried out their investigations with so much enthusiasm. At the same time, they began to realize the

importance of Braille, guide dogs and Braille signs.

(4) Video message from a blind person (Ms. C)

Table 4 shows that questions listed by the children in all 4 classes, which were arranged and organized into a manuscript. When watching the video of blind person “C” responding to the questions, the children wrote the following impressions:

“I was amazed when I watched the video. She was blind and yet she could fold a paper so easily”.

“When Ms. “C” was going about her daily chores, it was marvelous to see that she could walk without using her white cane.”

“She has a Braille newspaper and she was reading it for us. She was reading the Braille newspaper as fast as we would normally read an ordinary newspaper.”

When we analyzed the children’s opinions and reactions when they were watching the video, most of them appeared to be interested in the following three points; the fact that she could walk without a cane, that she could fold a paper and that she could read Braille or printed letters as fast as, or even faster than the children could. All the children agreed that she was amazing. The children realized that she could do many activities even though she is blind.

(5) General impression

Twenty-nine children among 31 in classroom “B”, excluding those who were absent, prepared a composition. From all the compositions, we could observe that each child had become more aware of the inconveniences and conveniences of daily life, and had learned more about visual impairment and experienced being visually handicapped, which are the aims of the lessons.

Furthermore, considering the aims for the whole six years of elementary education, we were able to observe two things from the children: their enhanced expression of compassion toward people who are visually handicapped and their expression of their willingness to help handicapped.

Eighteen children said that they would like to express their feelings openly. Of those children, 16 said “it was marvelous to see that “MS. C” could accomplish so much”. One child said that “he felt sorry” for people who are visually handicapped, and one child said that he enjoyed the simulation experience, but was concerned about “how people who are visually handicapped felt about it”.

The opinion that “it was amazing that people with visual handicap could do ○○ even though they could not

see” came forth because children actually realized through their simulation experience that inconvenience is enhanced if they cannot see. The things that people who are visually handicapped do are not very different from the things that normal people do. However, during the simulation experience, the children also appeared to be thinking about the effort exerted by people who are visually handicapped in the performance of their daily activities.

Moreover, four children told us what they would do if they met a person with handicap. Of those four children, the last part of the composition of one child was written as follows:

“Ms. C could fold a paper very well but I could not. I thought that she was so fantastic. She could also play table tennis even though she could not see. I was surprised that she could do things even though she could not see. I thought that she would be able to do things do you mean “with some handicap”. If I am brave enough, I think I would like to help someone who is visually handicapped.”

Although this student said she wanted to help people with handicap, she realized that they could also do things that she can do, so she expressed her desire to help people who are visually handicapped. Thus, even though there were only a few children in this study, some of these children could already fulfill the general aims of this program throughout their six year elementary education.

IV. Summary

This report represents a trial study of the authors mainly for the “Period of integrated study – How about a little compassion?” through the collaboration of the authors and ordinary classroom teachers. Hereinafter is the summary of this trial study.

First, if we look back on the collaboration between the authors and the ordinary classroom teachers, the FY 1999 trial study was a one-sided lesson from the authors. However, through this lessons, children began to show an interest in *tsukyu* classes and teachers, and the relationship between children from ordinary classes and children from a *tsukyu* class was deepened. Thus, we were able to establish the grounds for collaboration in the following fiscal year. It seems that the lessons a necessary process promote collaboration.

Furthermore, in the FY 2000 collaboration, note that it took “one and a half months” here and elsewhere of discussions before the lessons could be started. Ordinary classroom teachers meticulously planned each lesson and

carefully observed the presentation of teaching materials or the methods of presentation of the lessons to the children; this process took much time. Despite the long period of discussions, when the contents of the lessons were finally established, the ordinary classroom teachers became more and more enthusiastic and even took the initiative in discussions. From then on, we were able to collaborate with the teachers in presenting the lessons enthusiastically.

Through this experience, the authors once again recognized the importance of carefully planning lessons in detail, particularly for large groups such as ordinary classes. Such careful and meticulous preparations were finally accomplished and ordinary classroom teachers and the authors carried out their roles in accordance with the special features of each class. As a result, the lessons were developed smoothly. If the authors took the initiative to plan and give the lessons one-sidedly without fully discussing them with the ordinary classroom teachers, such lesson development might not have been possible.

Next, we observed the reactions of children during the “period of integrated study”. The children initially had negative ideas about people who are visually handicapped. For example, some children said “they cannot do anything”. However, when the children exchanged video letters with a blind person, and received answers to their questions, their negative opinions changed. Accordingly, we felt that the children learned a lot about handicaps and people with handicaps.

The framework for evaluating the lessons is being further examined. A child’s understanding of handicaps and people with handicaps cannot be accomplished in just one lesson. Each child will think more about handicaps and become more aware of them through various experiences. We are confident that the lessons learned at this time have enhanced the children’s awareness of people who are visually handicapped and provided an opportunity for them to think of ways on how to help them. With respect to the question “What can I do if meet a person with handicap?”, because the lessons were a good opportunity for the children to realize the needs of a person with handicap, we look forward to and support the ideas of each child through his/her accumulated experience until graduation.

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