

## Peer Support Training at Fukuyama University: The Ways of Incorporating Peer Support in Daily Activity: A note for a Speech

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Key words: Peer support, Training, Elementary school, Junior high school

### Introduction

My talk is about the peer support program which Fukuyama University has implemented since 2005. Peer support in Japan began in the 90s and is now spreading all over Japan. One key outcome just recently reported is that children in class became friendlier in their everyday interactions with others and rates of bullying decrease (Cowie & Kurihara, 2009). The Japanese Peer Support Association (JPSA) defines peer support as a learning activity for increasing students' empathy, mutual aid and supportive interpersonal relationships under the instruction of a teacher (Nakano, Morikawa, Takano, Kurihara, Hishida, & Kasugai, 2008). Because a wide variety of peer support programs have evolved, it is hard to define peer support. However, we have a common assumption that a student who participates in a peer support program will make good human relationships in the future.

One very influential approach to peer support in Japan has focused on the whole-school community by training all students in life skills and by implementing interventions in ecological settings, such as in the classroom, the school, peer groups, families and the community (Cowie & Kurihara, 2009). Fukuyama University also has taught peer support to both elementary school and junior high school students. What I'm about to show you is a video of undergraduates implementing a training in the peer support program for both elementary school and junior high school students in 2009 (e.g., Kotegawa, Okazaki, & Matsuda, 2009; Kotegawa & Matsuda, 2008; Matsuda, 2007; Matsuda & Miyake, 2006; Miyake, 2007; Miyake, Yamasaki, & Matsuda, 2006; Miyake, Yoshikawa, & Takada, 2009; Takada, Yoshikawa, & Miyake, 2009; Yamasaki, Miyake, Hashimoto, Hira, & Matsuda, 2005; Yoshikawa, Kitamura, & Miyake, 2008; Yoshikawa, Takada, & Miyake, 2009). The training program was developed by Fukuyama university students under the supervision of Fukuyama University teachers and based on a background of extensive reading. The underpinning theory is based on a number of existing programs (e.g., Cole, 2002; Hishida & Morikawa, 2002; Nakano, Hino, & Morikawa, 2004; Taki, 2004).

The training program was organized into ten sections and implemented in an integrated learning period once a week. The integrated learning period is 45 minutes in elementary school and 50 minutes in junior high school.

The video which I present shows the seventh session of ten sessions. The recorded seventh session was edited in order to show main points to you. The video includes two themes: (1) the case of elementary school students; (2) the case of junior high school students.

### Elementary school

Initially, I briefly introduce peer support trainings in elementary school before showing you the video. The

training was carried out with fourth grade students. Fukuyama University students have carried out the program since this April. The content of the seventh session is brain storming (see Table 1). Brain storming is a process for developing creative solutions to problems. It's particularly helpful when a peer needs to break out of worries, so that you can help with peer's problems with friends.

Each training session which Fukuyama University made has been constructed into five stages: (1) review a previous lecture, (2) warming up, (3) main activity, (4) summarization, and (5) filling out a review sheet.

In reviewing a previous lecture, undergraduates ask students to answer questions about the previous session's contents. We think that reviewing a previous lecture by using questions might be necessary in order to think about peer support as a normal usual activity.

The warming up session is an easy activity designed to foster a friendly atmosphere. In warming up, first, undergraduates explain brain storming as easily as possible. Second, undergraduates do a role play about brain storming and pupils watch it. Role-play has two patterns. One is good discussion pattern and the other is bad. After pupil watched two patterns, they identify bad points. Then, they discuss how to do good brain storming. Before the discussion was done, we established and modeled the following three rules. (a) Listening to the end, (b) not denying quickly someone's ideas and (c) understanding that everyone has their own ideas.

In the main activity, pupils do a good brain storming in a group. Discussion theme is lacking items in this elementary school. Then, pupils discuss about a wish equipment list.

In summary, the undergraduate explains the importance of mutual cooperation through brain storming. Finally, all pupils fill out a review sheet. Pupils were asked to write their feelings in the review sheets.

Table 1 Contents of Peer Support Training for a Elementary School

Title	Main Content
1 Circle of Birthday	Self-introduction in a circle around
2 Who are you?	Make more friends: speak to a lot of people
3 Present from your friend	Find and tell friend's good points
4 Good communication	Notice importance of two-way communication
5 Attitude when you listen	How to good listening: role play and practice
6 Let's talking	How to good talking: role play and practice
7 Brain storming	Bounce ideas off each other
8 Figure out solution	Thinking many solutions for a problem
9 How to take a criticism	Assertion
10 Review	Summarize the peer support

### Junior high school

You've just seen the peer support training for elementary school pupils. Next, I will introduce the junior high school version of the peer support training. The training is for seventh grade. In this video, they were learning in this session how to decline a request in order to not to hurt the other party's feeling. This is also seventh activity (Table 2).

The goal in this session is the learning to refuse without hurting the other party's feelings. The design of this training is the same as the younger pupil version. Namely, the training was also constructed into five stages: (1)

review a previous lecture, (2) warming up, (3) main activity, (4) summarization, and (5) filling out a review sheet.

In the warming up, undergraduates do two role-plays and pupils watch them. One demonstrates an aggressive pattern. Another is a one-sided conversation pattern. I will give concrete examples:

Aggressive type:

A: Let's go see a new movie.

B: Why? I'm very busy now!! Don't bother me!

One-side conversation type:

A: Let's go see a new movie.

B: Umm... I'm...

A: When do you have free time?

B: I..., I have homework...

A: Don't worry. I help you with your homework. So, let's go see the movie!

In the main activity, they discussed good ways of refusing an invitation in each group. After the discussion, they expressed a sense of good refusing ways in a class.

In the summary, the undergraduate explained the importance of having the skill of making a refusal in a polite way. It is important not only to protect the other party's feeling but also one's own feelings.

In filling out the review sheets, junior high school students were asked to write about their feelings.

Table 2 Contents of Peer Support Training for a Junior High School

Title	Main Content
1 Let's Peer Support	Guidance
2 What is Peer Support	Blind work & Trust work
3 Way of listening	How to good listening: role play and practice
4 Let's talking	How to good talking: role play and practice
5 Let's introduce oneself	Find and tell peer's good points each other
6 Knowing oneself	Accept yourself-image from peer
7 How to decline a request	Not hurt the other party's feeling
8 Figure out solution	Thinking many solutions for a problem
9 Review	Summarize the peer support

### Comments By audiences

We had an animated discussion about the peer support which Fukuyama University had implemented after the video was shown. Dr. Shinji Kurihara and Toshiro Mori identified a convergence of many comments from audiences and summarized them as follows.

We think that Fukuyama University peer support program is a very advanced approach. We congratulate you on your psychological approach.

Peer support program began in Canada. Many peer support models have been made in USA, UK, and HK. We mainly support and embrace the Canadian model. At the present day, peer support programs have been disseminated in Japan. Although we use "peer support" as common word, the contents of peer support

programs have differed from each other in Japan. Fukuyama University program also is included in them. We would like to describe differences between overseas peer support program and Fukuyama University peer support program.

First, we feel that Fukuyama University's activity is similar to peer-education in a peer support program which JPSA defines. JPSA asserts a circular peer support program model which consists of four components: training, personal planning, support, and supervision. We think that Fukuyama University's activity, strictly speaking, focuses on peer support training because undergraduates instructed elementary and junior high school students. If elementary and junior high school students are going to support another after they learned the peer support training, we think that Fukuyama University's activity is equal to peer support program. Then we consider the about motivation on the part of elementary and junior high school students.

Second, we think that the relationships between trainings and support activities are important. Trainings which are incorporated into one's life are equal to social skills training. Trainings in peer support program aren't social skills training. Social skills training is designed to acquire the skills of a human relationship. On the other hand, Trainings in peer support program are designed to acquire the methods of support. Undergraduates in Fukuyama University who were trained as peer supporters would learn training in peer support program. However, we don't know whether or not elementary and junior high school students assume a real situation in which they support a peer. If doing so, Fukuyama University's activity is closer to social skills training than peer support.

In a broad sense, peer support program defines an educational activity that develops empathy. In that sense, Fukuyama University's activity is the peer support program which develops empathy because there is a relationship between undergraduates and, elementary and junior high school students. In conclusion, we advocate a much greater integration between educational and counseling approaches to peer support training. Furthermore, in our view, it is essential that students be given opportunities to put the skills that they learn into practice in real-life situations. Such integration of theory and practice lies at the heart of a whole-school approach.

However, it isn't important whether or not a peer support program matches a definition. We feel that the importance of peer support activity meet an educational need. Of course, we aren't arguing whether or not peer support program is superior to social skills training. We believe that educational activities, including peer support programs, should be widely and independently flexible for each school depending on its particular needs. We look forward to expanding Fukuyama University's peer support.

## **Acknowledgment**

This discussion was implemented in Drs. Cowie and Kurihara's seminar at 2009. I would appreciate it very much to Drs. Cowie and Dr. Kurihara who gave me the chance to introduce Fukuyama University's peer support. The seminar was supported through the cooperation of the Fuchu City Board of Education. Especially, we appreciate Mr. Saeki who lent the video to us.

The present study was carried out as a part of Project 3 in the research project of Research Promotion Center for Community Cooperation, Fukuyama University.

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### Summary

This report was a note where Fukuyama University's peer support was introduced in Dr.Cowie's seminar. Fukuyama University has implemented peer support in many elementary schools and junior high schools since 2005. Hiroshima University also has implemented peer support. A video which Fukuyama University did peer support in schools was shown in a class in Hiroshima University. The video included two contents: (1) the case of elementary school students; (2) the case of junior high school students. The case of elementary school, a brain storming was implemented in which pupils bounced ideas off each other. The case of junior high school, students learned a how to decline a request in order to not to hurt the other party's feeling. We discussed a wide variety of peer support programs and a desirable direction of peer support after we watched the video.

(Tutor: Matsuda Fumiko)