

Method of Fostering an Awareness of the Value of Social Justice Based on Humanitarianism

— Focused on Practical Morality Lessons in High Schools —

Yumiko SUZUKI, Atsuko MORIKAWA *, Tomoe MIYASATO **,
Masuyuki TANIDA *** and Yasutaka IMANAGA ****

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Abstract. There exist various conflicts over political, economical and religious positions in international society. A thoughtful attitude of peaceful coexistence is required for children so that they can resolve these conflicts in their own future. This attitude is based on humanitarianism and social justice. In this case, justice refers to offering a helping hand to persons who are beset by some problem or concern. The practice of social justice seems to contribute to the realization of a peaceful society in which everyone can coexist including social underdogs and minorities. In this paper, we propose a method of moral education that has been aimed at fostering an awareness of the value of social justice based on humanitarianism. Our focus is on high school students.

Introduction

There exist various conflicts over political, economical and religious positions in international society. A thoughtful attitude of peaceful coexistence is required for children so that they can resolve these conflicts in their own future. This attitude is based on humanitarianism and social justice. In this case, justice refers to offering a helping hand to persons who are beset by some problem or concern. The practice of social justice seems to contribute to the realization of a peaceful society in which everyone can coexist including the socially vulnerable and minorities. In this paper, we propose a method of moral education that is aimed at fostering an awareness of the value of social justice based on humanitarianism.

Senior high school is the period in when children establish their own personal value judgments (Piaget, 1972). In this regard, it is thought that the morals dilemma discussion by Kohlberg is one effective method (cf. Kohlberg & Power, 1979; Araki, 1988, 1997). A characteristic of morals dilemma discussion is to acquire a mode of thinking that is a rank one-step higher rank once the conflict is resolved (cf. Nagano, 1985). However, in this method, the problem is what is

acquired is only form and not content. Therefore the deepening of thinking about living better in actual life is only vaguely present (cf. Suzuki, et al., 2004; Suzuki, Miyasato, et al., 2005; Suzuki, Matsuda, et al., 2005; Suzuki, et al., 2009). The scenarios that are used for moral dilemma discussion are usually fictitious ones (cf. Araki, 1988, 1997). This is one of the reasons why thinking is not made more profound. This point demonstrates the insufficiency of moral dilemma discussion as a method of moral education.

The Hiroshima Municipal-Board-of-Education pointed out that children aged 11 and over tend to be affected by scenarios that are drawn from true life (Hiroshima Municipal-Board-of-Education, 2009). According to this research, it is thought effective to use a true story in moral education. However, the effect of the use of true story scenarios has hardly been examined.

Accordingly, in this research, the use of a true story was examined. In this article, we especially focus on the entire life of Chiune Sugihara, a diplomat who has been referred to as the “Japanese Schindler”. It is thought that a deep sense of values is included in the basis of conflict solution that actual human beings have

* NOBORICHO Elementary School in Hiroshima, ** Kurashiki Sakuyo University, *** Hyogo University of Teacher Education, **** Graduate Student of Hiroshima University

experienced. In this paper, I would like to suggest a method of moral education that fosters a more profound sense of values in students by considering the solution of conflict drawn from a true story.

Purpose

The effect of the method of the moral education that endows high school students with a profound sense of values is clarified by making students consider the basis of the conflict of the protagonist examined through the optic of the person's true story, judgment, and actions.

Methods

Subjects: 47 second-year students of Y high school (17 years old).

Study period: July 1st, 2009

Procedure: The experimental lesson was performed using the scenario about the whole life of Chiune Sugihara. First, the social historical situation of the protagonist in scenario was explained and the protagonist's conflict was clarified. The students considered what they would do in the same situation as the protagonist, and then they wrote the reasons why they thought that way. Next, the fact that the protagonist issued visas was revealed. A dramatization in which the protagonist is shown as a model was shown to the students. The students vicariously experienced the protagonist's conflict, judgment, and actions. Then, the students considered the reasons why he decided to issue visas and then wrote their reasons on the worksheet.

The book *Visas for 6,000 Persons' Lives* (Sugihara, 2005) was used for the scenario. The flow of the lesson outline was as follows.

The incident occurred in Lithuania in the 1930s. A Japanese diplomat, Chiune Sugihara, who was working for the Japanese Consulate, was pressed for a decision regarding whether he should issue visas for Jews. Many Jews had been asking for the issuance of a visa in front of Japanese Consulate. The Jews could be saved by merely obtaining a transit visa for Japan and then escape to a safe

country. However, the Japanese government did not permit Sugihara to issue visas. Sugihara agonized between his social duty as a diplomat and the decision that any human being would make.

(Up to here is the first half of the class.) The students wrote on the worksheets (question 1).

After agonizing, Sugihara made the decision to issue the visas and saved more than 6,000 Jews. (The students saw a video of the drama *The Japanese Schindler: Chiune Sugihara, Visas for 6,000 Persons' Lives* (Yomiuri, 2005). Viewing the video required about ten minutes. After that, the students wrote on the worksheets (question 2)

After the students finished writing their answers to question 2, the rest of Sugihara's life was briefly explained. Sugihara was dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when he returned to Japan. He was awarded the "International Person of Justice" commendation by the Israel government in 1986. Sugihara passed away in 1987. The Japanese government finally approved and honored Sugihara's distinguished services officially in 2000.

The questions on the worksheet were as follows.

Question 1: What would you do if you were Chiune Sugihara? What are your reasons for doing so?

Question 2: Why do you think Sugihara did what he did? Write your thoughts.

Analytic Framework: An analytic framework was created by Matsuda and Suzuki according to Selman's theory regarding the acquisition of social perspective (cf. Selman & Schultz, 1990; Araki, 1992; Watanabe, 2003).

Results and considerations

The students' opinions written on the worksheets were classified into four stages according to the analytic framework. Two or more researchers performed the classification independently. Inconsistent answers were adjusted through mutual discussions. The coincidence rate was 72.4%.

1. Result of question 1

The students' opinions were classified as follows:

Table 1 Analytic Framework

Social perspective theory	Characteristics of students' way of thinking
Stage1: Specialization and subjective role-taking	- Students realize that the ideas and feelings of others differ from their own. Students think from their own perspective. (Egocentric thinking)
Stage2: Self-reflective/second person, and role-taking between two persons	- Students take on the perspective of others and consider their own ideas and feelings from other persons' viewpoints. (Thinking from the perspective of other persons)
Stage3: Third-person/reciprocal role-taking	- Students objectively view their own ideas and those of others, and adjust their own ideas and those of others' from a third-person perspective. (Thinking from a third-person perspective)
Stage4: Wide range customary-symbolic role-taking	- Students connect their own perspective with a perspective that views a group or society as a whole. (Thinking with a societal perspective)

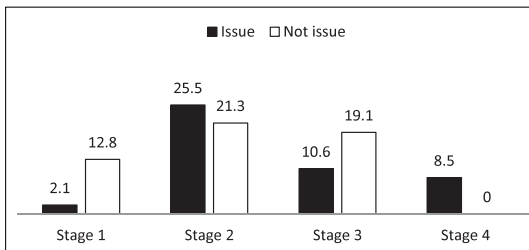


Fig.1 Selection rate of Question 1

stage1 having 14.9%, stage 2 having 46.8%, stage 3 having 29.7%, and stage 4 having 8.5%.

The opinions of the position that the visas should be issued were classified as follows: stage 1 having 2.1%, stage 2 having 25.5%, stage 3 having 10.6%, and stage 4 having 8.5%. The opinions of the position that visas should not be issued were classified as follows: Stage 1 having 12.8%, stage 2 having 21.3%, stage 3 having 19.1%, and stage 4 having 0%.

The main opinions of the position that visas should be issued are shown below.

Stage 1: It is better to do that which he wants to do, if there is no telling whether he is returned to Japan no matter which he does.

Stage 2: Many people who have done nothing wrong might be saved by issuing the visas.

Stage 3: Peoples' lives are more important than his punishment.

Stage 4: Although it is his responsibility to follow the instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if he thinks those instructions are wrong and does not act based on his true feelings, then he will regret it later on.

The main opinions of the position that visas should

not be issued are shown below.

Stage 1: My position is because it will become dangerous due to punishment from opposing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Stage 2: My position is because I would give priority to my family's safety although actually I would like to issue the visas.

Stage 3: My position is because it is not my problem but is a problem for the government.

There were no opinions for Stage 4.

2. Results of question 2

The students' opinions were classified as follows: 1 with 0% of a stage, stage 2 with 6.4%, stage 3 with 61.6%, and stage 4 with 31.9%. These were further divided into whether or not they would issue the visas as follows.

The opinions of the position to issue the visas were classified as follows. Stage 1 with 0%, stage 2 with 2.1%, stage 3 with 29.7%, and stage 4 with 14.9%. The opinions of the position to not issue the visas were classified as follows. Stage 1 with 0%, stage 2 with 4.3%, stage 3 with 31.9%, and stage 4 with 17.0%.

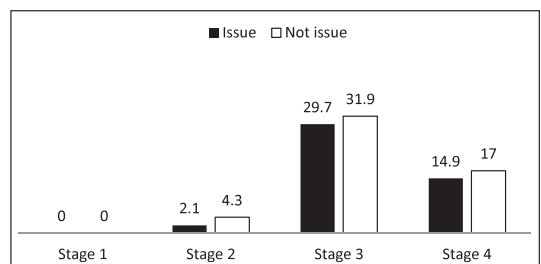


Fig. 2 Selection rate of Question 2

As mentioned above, almost all students had chosen the opinion of stage 3 or the stage 4. Thus, in order to examine the reasons influencing the students to change their opinion, we decided to examine the effects of having studied the protagonist’s decision.

3. Effects of studying the protagonist’s decision

First, we decided to see the changes in the views of student overall after having learned about the protagonist’s decision. Before learning about the protagonist’s decision, most thinking was that of stage 2 and, subsequently it became that of stage 3, stage 1, and stage 4. Thinking for stage 2 was that they would like to help people they are directly dealing with and their families. After learning about the protagonist’s decision, the thinking classified as stage 3 and stage 4 increased greatly. Table 2 shows the changes of opinions overall.

Next, we focused on the change to stage 3 and stage 4 that includes a mutual viewpoint through coordination with the opinions of oneself and others. What judgment criterion did a student choose when changing an opinion to stage 3 or stage 4? We decided to examine the opinions of students who changed their

views to that of stage 3 and stage 4, and to examine it in a qualitative manner.

3-1 Based on an opinion on acquired through the perspective of a third party

The opinions that changed into stage 3 were examined. The main opinions that changed from stage 1 and stage 2 into stage 3 are shown below.

- *I thought that there was nothing more precious than human life, and thought that he could decide that way due to his wife’s support. (Stage1 → Stage 3)*
- *I think that the feeling expressed by Sugihara himself, as “those who can’t save people can’t save the country” was strong. (Stage1 → Stage 3)*
- *I thought he thought that to save the lives of others was more important than to think of himself and the matters of the country. (Stage2 → Stage 3)*
- *I thought he wanted to help as many people as possible. (Stage2 → Stage 3)*
- *There is nothing more important than a human life. (Stage2 → Stage 3)*

As mentioned above, it was considered that the sense of values expressed as “respect for human life” was included in the opinions that changed into the mode thinking into stage 3. Before learning about his story, the opinions of the position to not issue visas was also included in the opinions of stage 3. There, the “social duty” as a diplomat was shown as a sense of values. It can be said that these are each a singular sense of values. However, it could be said that these two senses of values of stages 3 can conflict with each other within the same person. It was thought that thinking of stage 4

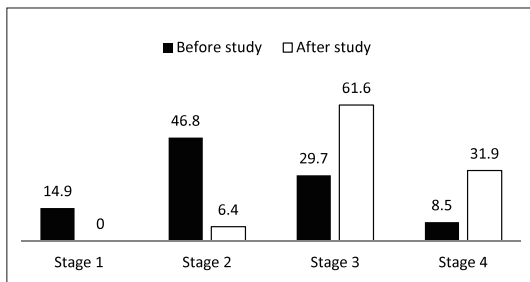


Fig.3 Changes before and after studying the protagonist’s decision

Table 2 Opinions before and after learning about protagonist’s actions

(%)

Stage improved			Stage did not improve		
	Issue	Not issue		Issue	Not issue
Stage 1 → Stage 2	1(2.1)	1(2.1)	Stage 1 → Stage 1	0(0)	0(0)
Stage 1 → Stage 3	0(0)	4(8.5)	Stage 2 → Stage 2	0(0)	1(2.1)
Stage 2 → Stage 3	7(14.9)	7(14.9)	Stage 3 → Stage 3	5(10.6)	4(8.5)
Stage 1 → Stage 4	0(0)	1(2.1)	Stage 4 → Stage 4	2(4.3)	0(0)
Stage 2 → Stage 4	5(10.6)	2(4.3)	Stage 4 → Stage 3	2(4.3)	0(0)
Stage 3 → Stage 4	0(0)	5(10.6)			

was seen as a view that resolves this conflict.

3-2 Basis is an opinion acquired from adopting a social perspective

Stage 4 can be referred to a mode of thinking in which universality is high. The main opinions are shown.

■ *Although there is the viewpoint that it was wrong to do, there was a desire to help other people. (Stage1 → Stage 4)*

■ *I thought that he had the strong belief that the life of other people was the most important. (Stage2 → Stage 4)*

■ *He wanted to give priority to human life over the matters of state, and to value acting in accordance to his conscience. (Stage2 → Stage 4)*

■ *Because he thought he was the only person who could save these people. (Stage3 → Stage 4)*

■ *Because he considered what it means to be a genuine "human being" and realized "the importance of life". (Stage3 → Stage 4)*

As mentioned above, it was characteristic that views of principles, such as a "belief", "conscience", a "sense of mission", and "the way one should be as a human", were shown by the opinions of stage 4. "Respect for life" and the viewpoint to solve conflict of "social duty" that were examined in the thinking of stage 3 had been included in the protagonist's decision. The protagonist himself called it "the spirit of humanitarianism". The protagonist made his decision according to his conscience and belief after taking all points into consideration. Viewed from the perspective of advantage/disadvantage, the results were disadvantageous for the protagonist. Accordingly, it is thought that as a result of studying the sense of value of the protagonist who made a decision that exceeded self-interest, the students' sense of value was improved.

4. Considerations

Many opinions that were acquired by vicariously experiencing the protagonist's life and by sympathizing with the protagonist's decision were looked at in the opinions that changed into stage 3. Before learning the

protagonist's decision, many students had an opinion that gave priority to themselves or their family. One cause changing such an opinion was getting to know the life of the protagonist who made a different decision from the students themselves. Therefore, this change was mainly seen in students who had the position not to issue the visas. The student who was held the position to issue the visas also seemed to have deepened their thought by understanding the agonizing the protagonist suffered in making his decision.

Autonomous thinking was included in the opinions that changed into stage 4. For example, "according to conscience (sense of conscience)" and "only I can do it (sense of mission)" were given. Here, it was shown that the students adopted the self-belief of a value through the protagonist's decision by vicariously experiencing the protagonist's life. The students were encouraged to adopt the "the spirit of humanitarianism" as a principle of life, something that they learned by vicariously experiencing the protagonist's life. This shows autonomous thinking. This shows how students adopted "the spirit of humanitarianism" learned by vicariously experiencing the protagonist's decision as a personal principle.

One would like to help those who are in trouble as an individual (life respect) but cannot do so because of one's duty as a diplomat (social duty). The result of this lesson could be said to be that the students have acquired the sense of values of the "the spirit of humanitarianism" of the protagonist as value capable of conquering just such a conflict.

The method of learning about protagonist's conflict shown through the true story, and learning the basis of the action based on value judgment exceeding that conflict, is considered to have been effective in the acquisition of a deeper sense of values.

Conclusion

The following points were considered relevant regarding the state of moral education for fostering a deeper sense of values in senior high school students.

Firstly, it was shown that the method of vicariously experiencing a conflict in throughout the life of a great person is effective for deepening a high school

student's sense of values.

Comparing with moral dilemma discussion, the method of vicariously experiencing a conflict in throughout the life of a great person makes students strongly consider how they should live as a human. The behavior of Sugihara was a behavior based on the value of "the spirit of humanitarianism" that is beyond "human love" and "social duty" in this scenario. By learning this, the students deeply considered what is truly a way of living imbued with values. In this regard, the method of vicariously experiencing the conflict of the protagonist in the true story used in this research was effective, in comparison with the method of a morals dilemma discussion. I would like to call such a lesson method "vicarious conflict resolution method."

Secondly, this "Vicarious conflict resolution method" seems to promote internalization of values, and to provide learning connected to self-belief and way of life. It was thought that the sympathy for a great person's way of life fosters the internalization of values in that one wants to experience in the similar manner as a great person. This is considered to be connected to the way of life that follows one's consciousness or self-belief. It means action. For that purpose, it is necessary that students understand the protagonist's conflict, sympathize with that way of life, and internalize the values of the basis for that way of life. Development of such a method is a future subject.

Thirdly, the weighting of values included in the scenario is important in this method. A scenario should include a weighting of values that asks how we should live as human beings. The quality of a scenario will need to be examined.

I would like to perform this lesson practice using the same teaching materials with elementary and junior high school students in the future, and to verify the differences of the effects according to age. I would also like to develop other scenarios in the future such as Mother Teresa (1910-1997), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-68) and similar personages.

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