

# Effect of a Moral Education Program that Cultivates the Concept of Values for Respect for Life

— Developing a Questionnaire for Insight on the Developmental Stages during Elementary and Junior High School —

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to develop an evaluation index and a questionnaire for measuring the effect of a moral education program that has been designed to cultivate the concept of values for respect for life. To achieve this purpose, the authors conducted a survey of 241 students from 2nd grade in elementary school to 8th grade in junior high school, asking them what it means to cherish life. The survey revealed that opinions change with age. Next, the authors compared these changes in opinion with the content of the items indicated in the guidelines for elementary school curriculum, to create an index of opinions regarding respect for life. Finally, the authors added these 12 indicators to the 20 items on a psychometric scale created during a previous research project to measure the cultivation of a “view of life”. They then developed a questionnaire for measuring the cultivation of the concept of values regarding respect for life. Currently, this questionnaire is being used to conduct surveys. In the future, the authors would like to develop a more effective moral education program based on the results of these surveys.

**Keywords:** moral education program, concept of values for respect for life, measurement of effects, development of questionnaire

## 1. Defining the Problem

Moral education is a form of emotional education for learning the value of living, respecting one another, and enabling peaceful and affluent lifestyles. In moral education, it can be said that a common understanding of what values should be taught is an important aspect of the concept of values for living.

In order to achieve peace on Earth, which is home to a wide variety of different people, we believe that establishing “common values” that all people share and cherish regardless of culture, age, and gender will make it possible to reach common understandings, in spite of our differences, to form the foundation of a peaceful society. Based on these “common values”, wouldn't it be possible to acknowledge a wide variety of ideas and ways of life? From this perspective, Suzuki, et. al. (Suzuki, et. al., 2017) conducted a survey of young students and adults in Japan. The results showed that respect for

life, compassion, and peace were selected as the most important values, throughout all age groups. From among these, we have developed a moral education program that focuses on respect for life (Suzuki/Matsuda, 2017, Suzuki/Obara, 2018).

In this paper, we aim to design a questionnaire to verify the effects of the moral education program that was developed for cultivating the concept of values for respect for life.

## 2. Method

We analyzed the worksheets filled out by students in moral education classes to clarify how the concept of values for respect for life changes with age. The subjects were young students from the 2nd grade of elementary school to the 8th grade of junior high school. Moral education classes were conducted using “Until the Battery Runs Out” as the teaching material for the 7 academic years from the

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2nd grade of elementary school to the 8th grade of junior high school. The opinions written by the students on their worksheets were then categorized. Although the same moral curriculum plan was used for all 7 academic years, explanations were tailored as necessary for each grade for easy understanding. Classes were conducted by the homeroom teachers.

### Outline of Moral Education Classes

“Until the Battery Runs Out” is based on a true story, from a poem written by Yukina Miyakoshi while she was battling illness. These classes were designed to encourage students to think about “what does it mean to cherish of life?” by learning about Yukina. She wanted to keep living until her battery ran out, but died as a 4th grade student in elementary school. The curriculum plan is shown below.

### Moral Curriculum Plan

- 1 Subject: Respect for Life
- 2 Teaching material: “Until the Battery Runs Out” (Sources: “Kagayake Mirai Doutoku 4nen”, Gakko Tosho Co., Ltd.; “Minnade Kangaeru Doutoku 3nen”, Nippon Hyojun Co., Ltd.)
- 3 Goal:  
To help students realize that life is precious, and to cultivate attitudes to cherish life and live one’s life to the utmost, by thinking about how Yukina Miyakoshi felt when writing the poem “Life”.
- 4 Materials: Enlarged copy of the poem “Life”, photographs, worksheets, etc.
- 5 Expansion beyond main goal:

	Main learning activities	Support (◎) and Evaluation (★)
Introduction (5 minutes)	<p>1 Think about “cherishing life”</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>○ What do you think it means to “cherish life”? Do you cherish life yourself?</p> </div> <p>- Do not attempt to harm yourself or commit suicide. Look after your health. - Do not bully others or resort to violence. etc.</p>	<p>◎ Have all students look back on and a few students tell the class about how they feel about “life” on a daily basis.</p> <p>◎ Write their remarks on the blackboard, to compare opinions during the second half of the class.</p>
Expansion (35 minutes)	<p>2 Read and discuss the poem “Life”. (1) Have the students tell the class about what they thought and felt while listening to the poem. (10 minutes)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>Listen to Yukina’s poem “Life” and talk about what it makes you think and feel.</p> <p>- It is sad that she died when she was a 4th grader. - I think Yukina wanted to live longer. - I think it is bad to take your own life.</p> </div> <p>(2) Have the students tell the class what they thought about Yukina’s feelings and wishes as expressed in the poem “Life”. (10 minutes)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>What do you think Yukina Miyakoshi wanted to say to us when she wrote this poem?</p> </div> <p>- She wanted to live longer and do many things. How disappointing. - To live our lives to the fullest while we still can. - It is absolutely wrong to attempt suicide. - She wanted us to cherish others’ lives as much as our own. - To live our lives to the fullest is to cherish the life that God gave us.</p>	<p>◎ Before reading the poem, provide a supplementary explanation about the life of Yukina’s main character and the conditions at the time. - Nagano Children’s Hospital - Classes in the hospital - Side effect of anti-cancer drugs - Neuroblastomas, etc.</p> <p>◎ Put “Life” on the blackboard so that the students can easily understand the content of the poem.</p> <p>◎ Use worksheets to help the students organize their thoughts. ★ Do they sympathize with the main character and think about respect for life? (Observation of behavior) In particular, anger about someone taking their own life and the importance of working hard to do everything you can.</p>

	Main learning activities	Support (☉) and Evaluation (★)
Expansion (35 minutes)	<p>3 Think about the meaning of “cherishing life” (15 minutes)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;">                     Yukina lived a short life of only 11 years. Does this mean that she didn’t cherish life? Think about what it means to “cherish life”.                 </div>	<p>☉ In order to encourage the students to think deeply about respect for life, first ask them if they think that Yukina, who died at the age of 11, did not cherish life. Then, use the worksheet to encourage them to think deeply about “cherishing life”.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yukina, who couldn’t continue to live even though she wanted to, of course cherished life.</li> <li>- I think that Yukina, who did her best to live while fighting her illness, cherished life.</li> <li>- Cherishing life means to live in health for a long time without attempting suicide or hurting yourself.</li> <li>- Cherishing life means to live like a brightly shining star with the life that you have been given.</li> <li>- I believe that cherishing life means to do one’s best for other people and the world. etc.</li> </ul>	<p>☉ Use the worksheet to encourage students to think on their own. Then, it might be a good idea to divide the students into pairs or groups, as necessary according to the number of students, to exchange their overall opinions.</p> <p>★ Are you making every effort yourself to realize the importance of living life to the fullest? ·</p>
Closing (5 minutes)	<p>4 Explanation by the instructor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use the pages for “respect for life” in the heart notebook to introduce poems related to “Life”, and encourage the students to write in the notebooks.</li> </ul>	<p>☉ Compare the students’ thoughts about “cherishing life” from the time the subject was introduced to after the class was finished. Provide a positive assessment of the deepening of their thoughts.</p>

**Procedure**

Research classes were conducted from October to November 2011. The subjects were 27 2nd grade students from School A, 34 3rd grade students from School B, 34 4th grade students from School C, 35 5th grade students from School C, 34 6th grade students from School B, and 40 7th grade students and 37 8th grade students from School D, all in H Prefecture, for a total of 241 students. Moral education classes were conducted during the time provided in the curriculum. Schools that had approved the implementation of research classes, for reasons related to the curriculum, were used, and therefore the schools were different.

Worksheets were filled in during the classes, and collected after the classes. The question was “What do you think it means to ‘cherish life’? Please write your own thoughts.” Blackboard explanations and terminology were tailored as necessary to the age of the students for easy understanding.

Responses on the worksheet were classified into two major categories. Opinions expressing things that “should be done” were regarded as “Positive views of life” and opinions expressing things that “should not be done” were regarded as “Negative views of life”. Things that “should be done” refer to statements that indicate some action should be taken, such as to “take care of oneself”.

Things that “should not be done” refer to statements that indicate some action should not be taken, such as to “not waste one’s life”. The content of things that “should be done” and the content of things that “should not be done” were grouped and categorized according to their meaning, to clarify the changes that occurred at each grade level. The categories for things that “should be done” were “Self”, “Rules”, “Others”, “Trials”, “One time only”, “Thankfulness”, and “Life”. The categories for things that “should not be done” were “Rules”, “Others”, “Trials”, and “One time only”.

**3. Results and Discussion**

The results of categorizing and organizing the opinions of the students according to the procedure described above are shown below.

**(1) Total number of opinions and overall trend**

As a result of organizing multiple answers, a total of 569 opinions were received. There were also 5 other opinions that did not fit into any of the established categories. Table 1 shows the total number of opinions organized by category and by age.

Table 1: List of Total Number of Opinions

		2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	Total
Things that "should be done"	Self	8	21	21	34	35	33	34	186
	Rules	7	13	9	9	1	4	3	46
	Others	0	2	2	5	9	2	9	29
	Trials	0	0	7	2	14	4	11	38
	One time only	0	0	1	1	12	11	21	46
	Thankfulness	0	0	0	2	0	2	16	20
Things that "should not be done"	Life	0	0	0	3	2	2	15	22
	Rules	27	29	13	25	13	22	0	129
	Others	2	2	2	3	5	2	17	33
	Trials	0	0	0	1	3	1	4	9
	One time only	0	0	0	1	4	3	3	11
	Total number of opinions	44	67	55	86	98	86	133	569

For opinions regarding things that "should be done", opinions related to oneself such as "Self" and "Rules" were seen overall from 2nd grade to 8th grade. Opinions regarding external views such as "Others" and "Trials" were seen more often in 4th grade and later. Opinions regarding theoretical ideas such as "One time only", "Thankfulness", and "Life" were seen most often from around 6th grade and throughout junior high school. For opinions regarding things that "should not be done", opinions regarding "Rules" were seen from 2nd grade to 7th grade.

## (2) Characteristics based on age

The results of classifying the total number of opinions as things that "should be done" and "should not be done" and categorizing them from the perspective of age are shown below.

### (2)-1 Opinions about things that "should be done"

Most 2nd graders had opinions regarding "Self" and "Rules". Specifically, these included responses such as "Cherish oneself" and "Live a full life" for "Self", and "Enjoy playing outside" and "Be sure to wash hands and gargle" for "Rules". It is believed that children look after their own feelings and observe the rules in order to protect themselves during the lower grade levels. "Others" was added starting with 3rd graders. Specific responses included "Walk home from school with friends" and "Get along well with friends". "Trials" then appeared starting with 4th graders. Specific responses included "Spirit to live strong without giving up" and "Battle illness". It is believed that children

begin to expand their thoughts about life to others and the future during the junior high grades. In addition to "Self", "Rules", "Others", and "Trials", 5th graders began to show theoretical opinions regarding "One time only", "Thankfulness", and "Life". One opinion regarding "One time only" was "Cherish life because it was given to us by God." One opinion regarding "Thankfulness" was "Live with thankfulness for the life given to us by God". Opinions regarding "Life" included "Make every effort throughout life" and "Live one's own life". It is believed that during the 5th grade, each individual child begins developing their own thoughts about life based on what they have experienced and learned themselves up to that point. Most 6th graders had opinions regarding "Others", "Trials", and "One time only". Specific responses included "Cherish not only our own lives, but also the lives of others" ("Others"), "Make every effort to live without giving up" ("Trials"), and "Live life to the fullest until the end" ("One time only"). It is believed that during the 6th grade, children begin to reconstruct the thoughts about life that they had formed from their own experiences and lessons, from the perspective of relationships with friends and what they have learned in school.

Responses from 7th graders were dispersed into "Self", "Rules", "Others", "Trials", "One time only", "Thankfulness", and "Life". Responses in each of these categories included "Take care of yourself" ("Self"), "Protect yourself" ("Rules"), "Consider the feelings of those who want to live" ("Others"), "Do not give up part way through life" ("Trials"), "Live life to the fullest during our limited time and lives" ("One time only"), "Live with thankfulness that we are here" ("Thankfulness"), and "Live life while thinking about the different lifespans of each person" ("Life"). It is believed that the thoughts that they began to reconstruct during elementary school become diffuse, and that they begin to reconsider which ideas are correct. Most responses from 8th graders were in the categories "One time only", "Thankfulness", and "Life". Responses in each of these categories included "Live your life to the fullest to the end" ("One time only"), "Feel thankfulness for your own life" ("Thankfulness"), and "Live your life to the fullest" ("Life"). It is believed

that during the 8th grade, children begin to converge their thoughts about life that they were reconsidering into more universal and theoretical ideas.

Another characteristic is that overall the total number of opinions increased with age.

Table 2: Categories of Opinions About Things That “Should Be Done”

	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	Total
Self	8	21	21	34	35	33	34	186
Rules	7	13	9	9	1	4	3	46
Others	0	2	2	5	9	2	9	29
Trials	0	0	7	2	14	4	11	38
One time only	0	0	1	1	12	11	21	46
Thankfulness	0	0	0	2	0	2	16	20
Life	0	0	0	3	2	2	15	22
Total number of opinions	15	36	40	56	73	58	109	387

(2)-2 Opinions about things that “should not be done”

From 2nd grade to 7th grade, there were many opinions about “Rules” and few differences based on age. Opinions regarding “Rules” included “Do not waste one’s life” and “Do not do dangerous things”. Opinions regarding “Others” included “Do not do harm to others” and “Do not kill living things unnecessarily”. For the 8th grade, there were no opinions about “Rules”, but many opinions about “Others”. Overall, there was not much change in total number of opinions according to age.

Table 3: Categories of Opinions About Things That “Should Not Be Done”

	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	Total
Rules	27	29	13	25	13	22	0	129
Others	2	2	2	3	5	2	17	33
Trials	0	0	0	1	3	1	4	9
One time only	0	0	0	1	4	3	3	11
Total number of opinions	29	31	15	30	25	28	24	182

The results of classifying responses into the categories of things that “should be done” and “should not be done” indicate a characteristic in which the concept of values for respect for life diversifies as things that “should be done” increase.

## 4. Suggestions for teaching “respect for life” according to grade level

A characteristic of the students’ responses above is that cherishing life was also indicated as an item not directly related to life. Based on this, the following points were suggested as ways of teaching how to cherish life, for different stages of development (cf. Suzuki, HP).

### Lower grade levels in elementary school

It is important to thoroughly teach the students to cherish their own minds and bodies. Examples include A (3) Temperance and B (8) Courtesy in the “Curriculum Guidelines for Elementary (Junior High) School (announced in 2017), Special Curriculum: Morality” (July 2017) (hereinafter referred to as “Curriculum Guidelines”).

### Middle grade levels in elementary school

It is important to teach the students to cherish the minds and bodies of others, and to not give up even in difficult situations. Examples include A (5) Hope and Courage, Effort and Strong Will, B (6) Kindness, Compassion, and B (9) Friendship, Trust in the Curriculum Guidelines.

### Higher grade levels in elementary school

It is important to take different approaches for 5th and 6th graders.

For 5th graders, it is important to support the students in creating their own ideas. Examples include A (1) (2) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility, A (5) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will, B (7) (8) Compassion, Thankfulness, B (10) Friendship, Trust, and B (11) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance in the Curriculum Guidelines. In each class, experience, and activity, it is important to provide an atmosphere that encourages and accepts a variety of opinions.

For 6th graders, it is important to teach the students to adjust their own ideas in relationship with their surroundings. Examples from the Curriculum Guidelines include A (1) (2) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility, A (5) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will, B (7) (8) Compassion, Thankfulness, B (10) Friendship, Trust, and B (11) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance, which are used for 5th graders, as well as D (19) Respect

for Life and D (21) Emotion, Reverence. It is important to apply a methodology for examining which opinions are better and why, within an atmosphere that encourages and accepts a variety of opinions as with the 5th graders.

**7th grade**

Generally, 7th grade is made up of students who come from a number of different elementary schools. So, it can be expected that diffusion similar to that for 5th graders will occur again. It is important to support the students to have their own ideas in junior high school. At that time, it is important to provide an atmosphere in which the ideas of each individual are accepted and respected. Examples from the Curriculum Guidelines include A (1) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility, A (4) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will, B (6) Compassion, Thankfulness, B (9) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance, and D (19) Respect for Life.

**8th grade**

It is important to teach the students to compare their own ideas with those from a wider perspective, such as from within a group or society, to confirm the validity and to develop theoretical ideas. Examples from the Curriculum Guidelines include A (1) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility, A (4) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will, B (6) Compassion, Thankfulness, B (9) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance, and D (19) Respect for Life, which are used for 7th graders, and B (3) Ambition, Respect for Individuality, B (5) Search for Truth, and D (22) Pleasure of Better Living.

The above results are summarized as follows:

**Lower grade levels in elementary school**

(1) Cherish one's own mind and body

A (3) Temperance

B (8) Courtesy

**Middle grade levels in elementary school**

(2) Cherish the minds and bodies of others,

(3) Do not give up even in difficult situations

A (5) Hope and Courage, Effort and Strong Will,

B (6) Kindness, Compassion

B (9) Friendship, Trust

**Higher grade levels in elementary school**

(4) Create your own ideas, and adjust them in relationship to your surroundings

(5) Examine which opinions are better and why

A (1) (2) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility

A (5) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will

B (7) (8) Compassion, Thankfulness

B (10) Friendship, Trust

B (11) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance

D (19) Respect for Life

D (21) Emotion, Reverence

**Junior high school**

(6) Encourage and accept a variety of opinions

A (1) Autonomy, Independence, Freedom, Responsibility

A (4) Hope and Courage, Self-Control and Strong Will

B (6) Compassion, Thankfulness

B (9) Mutual Understanding, Tolerance

D (19) Respect for Life

B (3) Ambition, Respect for Individuality

B (5) Search for Truth

D (22) Pleasure of Better Living

While giving due consideration to overlap and stages of development, the 3 researchers categorized and organized this data, and selected the following 12 items to use as indicators for examining the concept of values for respect for life. The items above do not include "C Items related mainly to groups and society". Therefore, upon consultation among the researchers, it was decided to add "Observe rules" and "Work for everyone's benefit" as items related to the concept of values for respect for life.

- Go to bed early, wake up early A

- See something through to the end without giving up A

- Live honestly with a bright spirit A

- Cherish and expand your good qualities A

- Greet others B

- Be kind to others B

- Forgive others with an open mind B

- Be thankful for the support of others B

- Observe rules C
- Work for everyone's benefit C
- Cherish irreplaceable life D
- Allow yourself to feel moved by beautiful things D

## 5. Development of a Questionnaire to Measure the Concept of Values for Respect for Life

The research of Suzuki, et. al. (Suzuki/Nakano, 2013), points out that there is a relationship between balancing “self-esteem”, “self-efficacy”, “empathy”, and “prosocial behavior”, and developing the concept of values for “respect for life”. Therefore, it was decided to use these questions as criteria for judging if one has achieved balance with others.

A total of 20 survey items were selected: 5 items (1 - 5) related to “self-esteem” (self-esteem scale) (Hori, 2001a), 5 items (6 - 10) related to “self-efficacy” (characteristic self-efficacy scale) (Hori, 2001a), 5 items (11 - 15) related to “empathy” (emotional empathy scale, emotional warmth scale) (Hori, 2001b), and 5 items (16 - 20) related to “prosocial behavior” (social responsibility goals scale, prosocial goals) (Hori, 2007). After these items were selected, they were modified to be more easily understood by the students. The questionnaire was prepared based on a 4-point scale. The specific items are listed below.

1. I think I am an important person.
2. I think I have good qualities.
3. I think I can do many things well.
4. I like myself.
5. I think I am fine just the way I am.
6. I can do something well once I set my mind to it.
7. If I want to meet someone, I go to them.
8. I follow through to the end, even for things that are not interesting.
9. If I want to do something, I start at once.
10. I am good at seeking out and making friends.
11. I become completely absorbed when watching television.
12. I have fun singing and listening to songs.
13. I do not like to see animals suffering.
14. I get mad when I see someone treated unkindly.
15. I like to make people happy by giving them

presents.

16. If I see someone who is disappointed, I want to comfort them and cheer them up.
17. If a friend is having trouble, I want to help them.
18. If someone forgets their pencil or eraser, I will let them use mine.
19. If someone does not understand their schoolwork, I want to help them.
20. If a friend asks me to do something, I want to do it for them.

In order to confirm that the concept of values for respect for life were learned in moral education classes and the moral education program, in addition to these 20 questionnaire items for examining changes in the way of thinking about respect for life as discussed in this paper, it was also decided to measure the effect of the moral education program. In order to clarify the change in ideas by grade level, the students were asked to select 5 items from a list of 12. The specific items are listed below.

From the following list, place a checkmark in the space ( ) next to the 5 that you think are most important.

- ( ) Go to bed early, wake up early
- ( ) Greet others
- ( ) See something through to the end without giving up
- ( ) Be kind to others
- ( ) Live honestly with a bright spirit
- ( ) Forgive others with an open mind
- ( ) Cherish irreplaceable life
- ( ) Allow yourself to feel moved by beautiful things
- ( ) Cherish and expand your good qualities
- ( ) Be thankful for the support of others
- ( ) Observe rules
- ( ) Work for everyone's benefit

This questionnaire was used for a survey that was conducted both before and after the moral education program for cultivating the concept of values for respect for life was implemented at elementary and junior high schools from October to November 2018. The authors will analyze the results in order to clarify the effect of the moral education program.

## 6. Future Challenges

In this paper, the authors developed a questionnaire to measure how the concept of values for respect for life is cultivated through the moral education program. As a result, a questionnaire was developed that, in addition to 20 items on a psychometric scale, also includes 12 new items that are based on previous research regarding developmental changes related to the concept of values for respect for life.

In the future, the authors plan to conduct surveys and research using this questionnaire in order to verify the results of the moral education program for cultivating the concept of values for respect for life. In addition, they plan to analyze developmental changes related to the concept of values for respect for life in greater detail, in order to develop effective programs.

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(Last access, 28 November, 2018)

\*This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers JP22531024 and JP16K04766.