

Encouragement in Classroom Activities

Yamamoto, Takuya / Nakajima, Hironori (Okayama, Japan)

Abstract: In this presentation, we will introduce an approach to student encouragement based on the theory and philosophy of Individual Psychology. Specifically, we will examine the impact of this approach when applied to “classroom activities”.

We assume that affective notions of self-affirmation as well as cognitive development of group consciousness of the students will increase if we integrate non-judgmental “encouragement”, based on Adler’s Individual Psychology, into the “classroom activities”. We think that if the students’ self-affirmations and group consciousness increase, then they will feel that they are capable and that their classmates are their “cooperators”.

Our purpose of this research is to determine how best to educate students to feel “I am capable” and “My classmates are my cooperators” through using “classroom activities”. This aim is based on the Japanese parent education course called “Passage”. The psychological purpose of which is to encourage children to feel empowered and have a positive reciprocal partnership with others.

Yamamoto is working as a teacher in a public junior high school in Japan. Our research consisted of twelve (N=12) assessments made by both Yamamoto and Nakajima in addition to monthly activities that Yamamoto ran in class. Over the course of the study, change was observed in the students. We will report the progress of this change. Furthermore, we will report and discuss the results gleaned via our research utilizing our original socio-metric test, the projective ego-gram, as well as a questionnaire devised to examine the effectiveness of the measure in this research.

Key words: Adlerian psychology, Individual psychology, classroom activity, encouragement,

Summary of our studies

(1) Subjects

2nd year Junior High School Students (The presenter is their class teacher)

(2) Term

April 2010~March 2011

(3) Frequency

12 times during the year (once per month)

Objectives of the approach

(with an emphasis on the objective of raising children)

Objectives of the behavioral phase

- (1) Independence
- (2) Cooperate with society

Psychological objectives

- (1) I have ability
- (2) Other people are my friends
(Here we mean "classmates")

I. What we hope students will gain

- (1) Noticing the emotions (positive and negative) one is using regularly
- (2) Being able to listen to other classmates' conversations in depth.
- (3) Being able to locate other classmates' efforts and strengths.

II. Regarding the testing methods

- (1) Sociometric testing

I installed commercial software and drafted the questions together with Mr. Nakajima.

- (2) Survey

After listening to the opinions of students of Mr. Nakajima from Okayama University of Science, who answered a trial survey, we narrowed the questions down to 15.

- (3) Projective EGGRAM (Commonly called 'P-EG')

Made by Nobue Nakamura and Youichi Matsuoka.

Sociometric Testing Questions

1. Which of your classmates are you friendly with?
2. Which of your classmates seem like they would get involved with a school event?
3. Which of your classmates are you interested in talking to?
4. Which of your classmates do you want to be of assistance to?
5. Which of your classmates can you rely on?

Survey questions

1. I am able to listen to others well.
2. I try to understand my classmates.
3. I can accept my classmates.
4. I can cooperate with classmates I don't especially like when necessary.
5. I can accept my classmates having a different opinion to my own.
6. I trust my classmates.
7. I have the ability to overcome all obstacles in my life on my own.
8. My classmates often listen to me.
9. My classmates try to understand me.
10. My classmates accept me.

11. My classmates trust me.
12. Even if the teacher scolds me, my classmates regard me leniently.
13. When I don't know what to do, my classmates help me out.
14. I can talk to my classmates about some things that I can't talk to my parents about.
15. I am at ease when I am with my classmates.

Actual procedure

Schedule

1st time: May 7th 2010

Sociometric test, Survey, P-EG

2nd~5th time: Jun. 29th, Jul. 6th, Jul. 14th, Sep. 22nd

- Filling in an "Episode sheet"
- Group activity, "Courage card"

6th time: Sep. 30th

- Sociometric test, Survey, P-EG

7th~11th time: Oct. 6th, Nov. 10th, Dec 15th, Jan. 13th 2011, Feb. 16th

- Filling in an "Episode sheet"
- Group activity, "Courage card"

12th time: Mar. 10th 2011

- Sociometric test, Survey, P-EG

Home Room Study

1. Write an "Episode sheet" .
2. Present in groups.
3. Choose the topic contributors.
4. Read the episodes again.
5. In groups, look for the contributor's strengths, good ideas and pertinent points.
6. Fill in the "Courage card" (1 each) and present it to the contributor.

Effects of each episode

*After improvements to the results on the episode sheet, one can see the following results (example from student B):

1. "Even though I wrote what I needed to bring in the message book, I forgot it"
2. "Yesterday it was my turn to help serving lunch, but I forgot my mask. In order not to forget, I wrote it in big letters in my school diary, but I ended up forgetting it, so I was really disappointed. I was so surprised at myself. I wondered what the point of writing it in the first place was. However, I couldn't go home and get it, so I borrowed a mask from my teacher. I will definitely not forget it next time.

Episode sheet

(Something written on an episode sheet)

When I stay up late at night studying and doing homework, my mother says to me "How long are you going to study? !" If I say "I'll decide", I'm told, "You're stupid,

so it's not going to do you any good to study that much!" I felt really angry at my mother.

(Student A)

Worksheet

(In groups, look for student A's strengths or good points)

- He was studying hard with all his might.
- Even though he was really angry, he was calm about it.

Courage card

- Even though he was told "How long are you going to study!?" by his mother, the fact that he still has the will to study is amazing.
- I think that the mother said that because she was worried.
- I think that the fact that he was studying so late at night showed how much he was concentrating on his studies. I think that concentrating like that is a good thing.
- I think that trying so hard is a good thing.

Students' impressions

- Many people got to know about my episode, so it was very good. I was so happy that others took an interest in my story.
- It is difficult to think of positive points and negative points.
- Even for a failure or a negative episode, it was good that we were able to find the good points together.
- I will try to find many good points next time.
- I think doing this is good, because I am able to talk about my feelings.
- I thought that the courage card was like the Yu-Gi-Oh! card game (Konami game), which was good.
- I still find it hard to write about my episodes, but hearing about other people's episodes was good.
- When I wrote about my negative feelings, the courage card helped me to be more courageous.

Results of the sociometric tests

1. Which of your classmates are you friendly with?
Mutual choice: set 47→51 choice: set 30→42
2. Which of your classmates seem likely to get involved with a school event?
Mutual choice: set 22→30 choice: set 60→67
3. Which of your classmates are you interested in talking to?
Mutual choice: set 14→15 choice: set 50→63
4. Which of your classmates do you want to be of assistance to?
Mutual choice: set 14→16 choice: set 35→62
5. Which of your classmates can you rely on?
Mutual choice: set 24→37 choice: set 49→58

Survey Results (1st time~3rd time)

1. I am able to listen to others well.
Yes: 15 people → 24 people (+9)
No: 18 people → 9 people (-9)
2. I try to understand my classmates.
Yes: 25 people → 30 people (+5)
No: 8 people → 3 people (-5)
3. I can accept my classmates.
Yes: 26 people → 29 people (+3)
No: 7 people → 4 people (-3)
4. I can cooperate with classmates I don't especially like when necessary.
Yes: 27 people → 29 people (+2)
No: 6 people → 4 people (-2)
5. I can accept my classmates having a different opinion to my own.
Yes: 27 people → 29 people (+2)
No: 6 people → 4 people (-2)
6. I trust my classmates.
Yes: 25 people → 28 people (+3)
No: 8 people → 5 people (-3)
7. I have the ability to overcome all obstacles in my life on my own.
Yes: 12 people → 15 people (+3)
No: 21 people → 18 people (-3)
8. My classmates often listen to me.
Yes: 27 people → 29 people (+2)
No: 6 people → 4 people (-2)
9. My classmates try to understand me.

Yes: 25 people → 28 people (+3)
No: 8 people → 5 people (-3)
10. My classmates accept me.
Yes: 29 people → 31 people (+2)
No: 4 people → 2 people (-2)
11. My classmates trust me.
Yes: 24 people → 27 people (+3)
No: 9 people → 6 people (-3)
12. Even if the teacher scolds me, my classmates regard me leniently.
Yes: 29 people → 31 people (+2)
No: 4 people → 2 people (-2)
13. When I don't know what to do, my classmates help me out.
Yes: 24 people → 26 people (+2)
No: 9 people → 7 people (-2)
14. I can talk to my classmates about some things that I can't talk to my parents about.
Yes: 19 people → 22 people (+3)

No: 14 people → 11 people (-3)
15. I am at ease when I am with my classmates.
Yes: 26 people → 28 people (+2)
No: 7 people → 5 people (-2)

Conclusion: Results from P-EG

1. Type Henoji ... 0 people
2. Type Oka ... 1 person
3. Type N ... 8 people
4. Reverse Type N ... 3 people
5. Type M ... 3 people
6. Type W ... 6 people
7. Type "Bottom of ravine" ... 1 person
8. Type V ... 2 people
9. Type right up ... 1 person
10. Type right down ... 2 people
11. Unable to judge ... 4 people

Conclusions

Even if only slightly, in the sociometric test, both the mutual choice and the actual choice rose. In the survey, those answering "yes" increased, and those answering "no" decreased. We can assume that this is because, with this approach, students with a concern for their classmates rose. In particular, through looking for the effort and strengths of the contributor in groups, concern for classmates rose. Also, through filling in and passing on the "Courage cards", the person passing it on gets a feeling that they have contributed to the others, and the person receiving it gets the feeling that they are accepted by those around them, so both gain confidence and the feeling that "classmates are friends" is cultivated. Furthermore, through effective use of the worksheet and other materials, we can see that comments like "I was able to write about my episodes", "I was able to find someone else's strengths", or "I was able to help someone else find courage" demonstrate that the students were able to feel that "I have ability". Also, the fact that there were hardly any changes in the Projective EGOGRAM shows that in order to feel that "I have ability", or "people are my friends", we can see that it is not necessary for big changes of character.

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