The World of **TOKKATSU**
The Japanese Approach to Whole Child Education

*(A Guidebook for Teachers)*

Edited by Ryoko Tsuneyoshi (University of Tokyo)

With the cooperation of:

Tokyo Metropolitan Elementary School Research Group for Classroom Management
（東京都小学校学級経営研究会）

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2012. March
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Taken from the guidebook for elementary school teachers on classroom activities prepared by the Machida City Elementary School Education Research Group, *Tokubetsu Katsudo* Unit, 2009

（『早わかり 学級活動 2009年度ハンドブック』
町田市公立小学校教育研究会 特別活動部）

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Taken from the guidebook for elementary school teachers on grade-level, classroom management prepared by the Tokyo Metropolitan Elementary School Research Group on Classroom Management, 2009 revised version

（『学年・学級経営ハンドブック』 東京都小学校学級経営研究会）
Introduction to the Report

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This report was prepared so that non-Japanese readers can gain access to the ideas that guide what are called special activities (tokubetsu katsudo, tokkatsu for short) in the Japanese curriculum*. The activities are seen as providing one of the major foundations for whole child education in contemporary Japanese school education.

Though collaborative teacher learning in the form of Japanese style "lesson study" has attracted international attention in recent years, the Japanese model of whole child education, which is seen as the basis for not only academic development, but social, emotional, and physical development as well, has not been readily available to international readers. This report hopes to change this situation by providing information on a major pillar of whole child education in Japan—tokkatsu.

The balanced development of the social, emotional, and academic aspects of the child, and the cultivation of cooperative and interpersonal skills, etc., targeted by tokkatsu, are concerns shared by many countries. Therefore, it is hoped that providing information on tokkatsu to non-Japanese readers will open the way for comparisons of Japanese practices with corresponding practices in other countries, which might help us in our pursuit of how we can better address such universal concerns.

* This report was funded by the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (kakenhi) C (21530873, head, Ryoko Tsuneyoshi), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. I would also like to thank the teachers’ groups that provided the guidebooks for their cooperation.
This report focuses on what is called special activities (tokubetsu katsudo, tokkatsu for short) in Japan. Special activities are not subjects, but are situated within the elementary school and secondary school curriculum; schools engage in special activities as part of the official school curriculum. In Japan, these activities contribute to the formation of individual character and to the social development of each child.

Japanese schools are constructed as communities based on whole child education, and the development of the whole child through special activities, is seen to provide a necessary basis for scholastic achievement. Special activities characterize the cooperative style of Japanese education, and it is not too much to say that special activities are the pillars of the Japanese model of schooling.

This report introduces how special activities can be conducted. Classroom management methods are also introduced. I hope that this will provide an opportunity for readers to become accustomed to the many aspects of Japanese style special activities.
The World of TOKKATSU: An Introduction

Ryoko Tsuneyoshi

The Development of the Whole Child in Schooling

This introduction is meant to familiarize the non-Japanese reader with some of the major characteristics of Japanese collaborative whole child education, tokkatsu, before moving on to the translations from the guidebooks on tokkatsu.

Classroom Discussions: A Major Component of Classroom Activities

Holding classroom discussions, with the students serving as coordinators, is an important part of classroom activities, and thus a major component of tokkatsu. Classroom discussions promote communication among classroom members and builds classroom community, while at the same time gives each student the opportunity to coordinate discussions, work in cooperative groups together, and to act relatively independently from the teacher while cooperating with his/her peers.

Especially for the younger children who have had relatively little experience coordinating and working with others, items such as the “communication” (hanashiai) card (see sections 1 and 2), which has in it the major components of what the classroom discussion coordinators should cover, helps students feel confident in front of the class.

One characteristic of the tokkatsu as it is practiced in Japan, is that it is part of whole person education and building a cooperative classroom community. For the teacher, it is both a means for developing character, and a means for effective classroom management.

Every child is expected to participate. Because of this, the activities are set up in a way that even the shyest child can effectively operate as the classroom discussion monitor/coordinator, which is different from choosing only “reliable” children for leadership roles. The goal is that every child, especially those that may not be good at communication, cooperation, and leadership, may learn, through the assistance of his/her peers, essential traits that will help him/her become active members of society in later life.

However, because of this egalitarian inclusion of all children, some teachers tend to overly standardize classroom discussion steps, so that any child can cope with the process; this may interfere with student autonomy. When the discussions become standardized, it starts to look like a play rehearsal. A more productive way is to encourage the students to support each other. This fits the goal of cooperative autonomy, the encouragement of peer support allowing the teacher to step back so that children can learn to work in a cooperative situation. The extensive use of small groups reflects this goal. Many of the tokkatsu activities are routines, so that children can conduct the activities even when the teacher is not present. However, in cases that not only the procedures but the contents become so routine that there is no room for spontaneity, or in cases that the teacher has decided all the contents and the children are simply carrying out the steps, even when the teacher is not present and the children look like they are moving on their own, the autonomy remains superficial. For the tokkatsu to operate as a means of student-learning in cooperation and independence, there must be room for student spontaneity.

Classroom Responsibilities

In the Japanese classroom, pupils and students are expected to participate in a range of responsibilities that are essential for building the classroom and school communities.

There are those types of activities that are routine chores, such as cleaning the classroom and designated spaces of the school and carrying and serving lunch. These chores (toban) are essential for the welfare of the classroom and school, so everyone takes part at some point. The chores are set up as a cooperative project; therefore, small groups are used. There are also pupil(s) who act as the one-
day classroom coordinator (*nichoku*) for that day. The chores are rotated, so everyone experiences the classroom chores, and everyone contributes to the basic management of the classroom.

There are also those types of small group activities (*kakari*) which students can choose and there is more student autonomy. Examples in elementary school would include taking care of the classroom books and looking after the classroom pet.

In addition to classroom activities, there are also, for example, school events, student councils, and school clubs—all part of building a classroom/school community, and developing the whole child. The curriculum also includes a period of moral education as part of values education.

**Classroom Management**

Section 2 shows, how from a teacher’s view, *tokkatsu* is linked to classroom management. Everything from encouraging students to acquire certain behavioral patterns and attitudes (e.g., neatness, the willingness to overcome one’s dislike of certain food, p. 12), to helping the overly shy or overly aggressive child is dealt with in this category.

The common thread, however, that runs through the otherwise very diverse activities is the emphasis on interpersonal relationships and encouraging self-motivated cooperation.

Schools are managed spaces. Therefore, students are not totally “autonomous” under this model even though autonomy is explicitly emphasized. This can be seen clearly in section 1, which gives examples of when the direction of the discussion should not be left to the children (when the children start collectively criticizing a classmate).

**Concluding Remarks**

This section provided a brief introduction to *tokkatsu* in Japan.

Now, it should be added that the *tokkatsu* activities can be promoted democratically or otherwise, depending on the ideals that guide them. An emphasis on cooperation and the whole child do not automatically ensure that the goals will be democratic. It is clear that the activities need to be guided by other ideals such as a respect for others different from oneself, and a sense of fairness. It is needless to mention also that in any example, not just that of *tokkatsu*, individual practices of specific teachers do not always reflect ideals.

However, the tools used to advance *tokkatsu*, like classroom discussion and small group activities, are flexible, and can take on many different meanings as they adjust to different classroom and school contexts. Thus, the following translations should not be seen as definitive manuals, but an ongoing collaborative discussion of Japanese teachers, as they try to better realize the goals of whole child education.

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**Note**

**Guiding Principles:** whole person education, cooperative learning, autonomous group cooperation, classroom and school as community

**Target:** balanced development of mind, body, and soul, communication skills, cooperative skills (helping others, ability to work and lead in a group)

**Activities utilized for whole person education:** (lunch, cleaning, school events, classes, etc.)

There is no textbooks for this period

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(Note: A picture of children brushing their teeth after lunch as part of acquiring basic habits at one elementary school.)
SECTION I

Classroom Activities

Taken from the guidebook for elementary school teachers on classroom activities prepared by the Machida City Elementary School Education Research Group, Tokubetsu Katsudo Unit, 2009

（『早わかり 学級活動 2009年度ハンドブック』 町田市公立小学校教育研究会 特別活動部, pp. 2-23.）
What is Tokubetsu Katsudo (TOKKATSU)?

1 The Goals of TOKKATSU

(Below is the official definition of tokkatsu from the Ministry of Education, Course of Study)

Elementary School (from the Course of Study)

Effective group activities aim at the well-balanced development of mind and body and the encouragement of individuality. Participation in the group helps build an active, positive attitude toward improving school life and personal relations. At the same time, it should deepen each child's attitude toward life and the ability to do his/her very best. (1)

Middle School (from the Course of Study)

Effective group activities aim at well-balanced development of mind and body and more individuality. Participation in the group and society helps build an active, positive attitude toward cooperating with others to improve everyday life. At the same time, it should deepen each student's consciousness of being a human being and the capacity to bring out his/her best. (2)

Note: Both the Course of Study for the elementary school and junior high school have been revised. (1) stands for parts that are revised from the former Course of Study, (2) stands for sections that are important for comparisons between elementary and junior high school.

Guidelines for Effective Group Activities

- a. All members of the group should help decide on the purpose of the activity. Everyone should have a common understanding of the purpose.
- b. Everyone should think about, talk over methods and steps of carrying out this purpose and then cooperate.
- c. Everyone should share responsibilities; there should be a common understanding of each person's role. Keeping the purpose of the activity in mind helps each member carry out his/her responsibility smoothly.
- d. Each person's self-initiated ideas and hopes should be respected. That will strengthen their bond between pupils.
- e. A feeling of belonging; a consciousness of solidarity.
- f. As the group members grow to appreciate each other's good points, a free exchange of ideas and mutual respect will result.

Effective instruction is just as important in tokubetsu katsudo as in academic subjects and moral education. A balance should be maintained between academic classes, morals, and tokubetsu katsudo, each of which has different functions. Special consideration should be given to morals and tokkatsu which have no textbooks.

2 Tokubetsu Katsudo's Function

We might define tokkatsu's purpose as fostering an attitude in each child to do his/her part in making the group/school life better. In middle school this consciousness is extended to the community and society. In other words, tokkatsu's essence is: developing a feeling of social responsibility. In today's world we face many problems forming the groups, but generally speaking, they have the following conditions.

The teacher is the key to successful classroom activities: you can see the difference in how the class (gakkyu) comes together!
such as shallow personal relations among pupils/students and lack of social consciousness and morals. For this reason, in the new educational guidelines the present tokkatsu goals of developing the ability to build stronger personal relations and the motivation and ability to participate in society are emphasized.

3 Instruction of Classroom Activities (gakkyu katsudo)

School should be an enjoyable place where everyone can feel relaxed. Each child has different abilities/aptitudes, interests/preferences. The classroom is the focal point for discovering a child's good points and developing them. First of all, it's important for the teacher to become aware of each child's good points, way of thinking and putting ideas together and at the same time to develop a feeling of trust. Through various activities the children learn to think from their friends' point of view, and to accept different ways of expression and opinions. As a result, classroom activities become refined. It's these effective activities that we mean by gakkyu-katsudo (classroom activities).

4 The Make-up of Classroom Activities

The content of classroom activities is defined as below in the Course of Study (from the Ministry of Education).

(1) The Goal of Classroom Activities

Classroom activities help build desirable personal relations. Each group member takes part in making school life better. These activities foster a healthy life style and an active, positive attitude toward problem solving.

(2) Contents of Classroom Activities: Overall (all grades)

A. Classroom/school life
   -a- Solving problems in the classroom or school
   -b- Structuring the classroom jobs; taking turns
   -c- Improving all kinds of classroom group activities

B. Adapting to school routine and studies; safety and health
   -a- Forming an attitude toward life with high aspirations and definite aims
   -b- Forming good basic daily habits
   -c- Forming desirable personal relations
   -d- Understanding the meaning of taking turns in cleaning and other classroom duties
   -e- Utilizing the school library
   -f- Fostering healthy, safe daily habits, both mental and physical
   -g- Nutritious school lunches; forming good eating habits

(3) Contents of Classroom Activities: by grade level

Lower grades (1 and 2):
With the class as the basic unit, make activities fun by encouraging pupils to willingly help each other. At the same time, have activities that contribute to forming a positive attitude toward school life and studies.

Middle grades (3 and 4)
With the class as the basic unit, make classroom life enjoyable by encouraging cooperation. At the same time, have activities that contribute to a motivated attitude toward school life and studies.

Upper grades (5 and 6)
With the class as the basic unit, create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and full school life based on mutual trust. At the same time, have activities that enhance an assertive attitude toward school life and studies.

(4) Adjust instruction to the stage of development

Lower grades

Make classroom and school life rich and fun by enabling students to trust and support each other

Discussion:
In the beginning, the teacher takes charge but then, little by little, turns over the responsibility to the children. The children become able to make group decisions by listening to each other's ideas and expressing their own.

Classroom responsibilities (kakari):
Start off by taking turns in assigned chores (toban).
Gradually encourage them to find ways of making the *kakari* activities more innovative. Make classroom life more fun by helping each other in smaller units.

- **Assembly (shukai) activities:**
  At first the teacher takes the lead in making assembly activities more enjoyable. The children choose the contents of the activities and divide the simpler chores and preparation so everyone can have fun with any of their classmates.

*Note: For an explanation of *toban* and *kakari*, see the Introduction.*

**Middle grades**

**Make classroom life fun by cooperating**

- **Discussion:**
  The children make plans under the teacher’s supervision. They rotate the different roles. See that more and more people have a chance to be coordinator.

  After listening carefully to different ways of thinking, they express their own, making the reasons clear. Help them learn to make group decisions by give and take.

- **Classroom responsibilities (kakari):**
  Encourage the pupils to divide, combine various responsibilities into the types of classroom responsibilities (*kakari*) that require student initiative. Using their own ideas, they cooperate to make classroom life more fun.

- **Assembly (shukai) activities:**
  See that they plan various meaningful activities, making use of past experience and their own ingenuity (*soikufu*). Be sure that as many pupils as possible are included in the planning, management, and preparation so that they can cooperate with each other and make the assembly activities enjoyable.

**Upper grades**

**Make classroom activities fun by getting to know and helping each other**

- **Discussion:**
  The children themselves do the planning, with the teacher making suggestions. Encourage them to take turns assuming various roles such as coordination. Encourage the child’s initiative (*kufu*) in pooling ideas and coordinating the discussion. Pupils broaden their interest to include school activities, learn to exchange constructive opinions. Help them make classroom/school life more enjoyable by utilizing group decisions reflecting various opinions.

- **Classroom responsibilities:**
  Enable pupils to assume and continue to assume responsibilities where they can make the most of their strengths. Put an emphasis on those activities that encourage student originality, ingenuity as appropriate for upper grades. See that they make classroom/school life fuller and more fun by mutual trust.

- **Assembly activities:**
  Make classroom life fuller by using experience gained from the student council and clubs. Make assembly activities more innovative by mutual trust—talking things over, bringing out everyone’s good points, reflecting (*hansei*) on the activities.

**1 Purpose of Classroom Activities**

Through classroom activities create desirable personal relations: take part in planning ways to improve classroom and school life; develop an active, positive attitude toward problem solving and a healthy lifestyle.

**2 Contents of Classroom Activities**

With the class as the basic unit, plan activities that contribute to making classroom/school life more fulfilling and which can solve various problems that students face.

**A Classroom/school life**

- a - Solving problems related to classroom/school life
- b - Organizing classroom work groups, deciding on roles
- c - Improving various school group activities

**B Adaptation, maturing, health and safety**

- a - Dealing with the concerns of adolescence
- b - Understanding and respecting personality differences
- c - Having a sense of the importance of being a member of society
- d - Building mutual understanding and cooperation between boys and girls
- e - Developing good personal relationships
Understanding the importance of volunteer activities and taking part

- Developing healthy and safe habits for both body and mind
- Adjusting to changes due to sexual maturity
- Developing good eating habits

C Studies / higher education
- Understanding the value of studies and work
- Developing positive study habits; making use of the school library
- Thinking carefully about appropriate further education; making use of information
- Developing a desirable view of employment and career
- Thinking about choice of high school; planning for the future

(3) What are Middle School Classroom Activities?
Activities conducted positively and actively by the students, under the teacher’s appropriate supervision

Instruction Guidelines for Teachers
- Value the students’ ideas and suggestions.
- Whenever possible have the students plan and carry out the activities.
- Encourage effective group and individual decisions based on student-teacher trust and mutual respect among group members. As a result the activities will go smoothly.

Contents: Classroom and School Life

Topics to take up:
Students’ common problems (classroom problems that can be solved with everyone’s cooperation) individual opinions, building up into group decisions

Ability to develop:
A self-initiated (jishuteki), action-based (jissenteki) attitude in improving the state of the group of which one is a member

Characteristics of the activities:
Students’ own spontaneous, independent activity

*Students are expected to refine the discussion process by making full use of their experience in elementary school (choosing topics, discussion methods, taking turns). They are also expected to iron out differences of opinion to reach a group decision.

Discussion topic examples
“Let’s think about what 2-1 can do in the athletic meet.”
“How can we improve the classroom committees?”

--Assessment Aims--
Assess 1st term activities and set realistic goals for 2nd term
Work together to improve activities and build better personal relations

Contents: Adaptation, Maturing

Topics to take up:
Problems many students share (personal problems solved individually), problems acknowledged by the group, but solved individually

Ability to develop:
An active, positive attitude in improving your own lifestyle

Characteristics of activity: teacher’s careful, planned instruction

*Especially in middle school, it’s important for the teacher to guide the students in deepening their consciousness of humanity and developing their ability to do their best as members of society.

Topic examples
“Know yourself; know your friends.”
An awareness of your own personality and mutual understanding affect classroom activities.

-Aim-.
Build mutual understanding and respect among classmates.
Try to think of how to bring out each other’s good points.

Contents: For Middle School Only (further education)

Topics to take up:
Problems many students share but are solved individually
Ability to develop:
An active, positive attitude in choosing your future life style and career.

Characteristics of activity:
Teacher’s careful, planned instruction “It’s important for the teacher to guide the students in having a fulfilling academic life and choosing their future schooling, life style, and career.

Topic examples
“Let’s visit high schools”
classroom activities to increase incentive to visit high schools

-Aims-
Develop a practical attitude toward how to visit appropriate schools.
Taking another look at yourself, heighten incentive to try to choose a better future course.
Making the Most of **TOKKATSU** in the Classroom

Let’s look at running a class from the point of view of developing **good personal relations and motivation**. Each class is a group of pupils / students with various personalities and abilities. It is important for the teacher to “become close to” the pupils/students, try to imagine their thoughts and feelings, and deepen understanding. This effort for rapport should be central to his/her teaching plans.

1 **The Tone of Language and Mutual Respect**

If the teacher is warm and friendly, the children feel at ease. It’s important to always show sympathy and understanding toward the pupils/students. Also, let’s be careful that the tone of language used by the teacher and students shows mutual respect, doesn’t insult or hurt others. Help each child feel that in various activities his/her help is needed. Then (s)he will realize (s)he is an important part of the class. This will enhance a sense of belonging and personal relations based on respect for each other’s differences.

**Hint #1:** The teacher is a member of the class too! Why not enjoy classroom activities with the children? The teacher’s enthusiasm motivates the children.

2 **Developing Motivation in the Children**

Just seeing the teacher smile, the children will liven up. The key is to go back to your childhood, remember how you felt. “That’s a great idea! Let me do it with you.” If the teacher joins, the children enjoy the activity much more.

**Hint #2:** Let’s take a positive attitude when the children act spontaneously

Don’t ever scold anyone for making a mistake. The teacher can show how to learn from a mistake.

**Hint #3:** Make instructive comments before the children start planning an activity. Once they start talking it over, just listen.

There are certain exceptions. For example, remind the children that when you have an opinion, raise your hand and wait for the chairperson to call on you. The teacher should follow the rules too!

**Hint #4:** Let’s give the children many chances to experience fun activities together.

Instead of explaining ‘cooperation’ it’s better to let them do it. After more and more activities that give the children a feeling of success and satisfaction, the class atmosphere changes. When a child thinks, “That was really fun!” the child’s face shows it.
What is Classroom Activities \( (gakkyu-katsudo) \)?

**Gakkyu-katsudo** (class activities), scheduled for one hour a week, form the core of tokkatsu. This is a very important hour in making classroom and school life go smoothly. Classroom activities are divided into two categories.

(1) Cooperatively building \( (gakkyu zukuri) \) Classroom and School Life (source: new Course of Study)

These are activities based on the children's own ideas and hopes for making classroom life better and fuller. There are three types:

- **Discussion Activities**
- **Classroom Activities**
- **Group Activities**

It's important for the teacher to make sure that all three are carried out in an effective spontaneous and autonomous manner by the students under appropriate teacher guidance. Discussion Activities of (1) above are what are called the classroom assemblies \( (gakkyukai) \).

(2) Getting Used to School Life and Studies: Safety and Health

It's necessary to have an overall teaching plan (contents, schedule) for each grade so that each classroom teacher can make his/her detailed plans.

The contents are:

- Building an attitude toward life with high hopes and definite aims
- Developing good daily habits
- Developing desirable personal relationships
- Understanding the meaning of taking turns in cleaning and other classroom duties \( (toban \ activities) \) etc.
- Using the school library
- Developing a good attitude toward a healthy body and mind
- School lunch, developing good eating habits
Keep in mind that (1) and (2), both classroom activities, are not separate but interconnected. Be flexible in your instruction methods.

(3) Discussion Activities is Fun! (Machida city, classroom activity handbook 2009)

For those of you who are trying to start discussion activities
Even if you decide, “Now I’m going to start discussion activities!” you might be at a loss as to where to start… In that case, it is important not to try to do everything at once, but to start from the very first step. Here we will describe the “Classroom Activities Starters.”

Let’s start!

When to Start TOKATSU

When there is something that the class can discuss, that is the time to start classroom discussion activities! If it is when you are starting off with your class (in the beginning of the school year), discussing “class goals” or “names for the classroom committees” would be nice. If it is the end of the semester, “having fun parties” (otanoshimi kai) is a possibility. “Exhibitions/presentations for your elementary school festival” is another good theme.

STEP 1. Let’s make rotation (toban) charts for the coordinators

Divide the classroom into about 5 person groups, and prepare charts which can be posted in the classroom. The first goal is to rotate the coordinating role of the classroom meetings so that all the groups can experience it.

STEP 2. Let’s announce the topic of discussion

Try making a plan and announcing that, “First, we will talk about so-and-so on a certain date, and group A will be the coordinators!”

The teacher may be the organizer but it is important to value the discussion process between children. It is important for them to be able to feel the joy of solving problems on their own.
STEP 3 Let’s prepare the classroom meeting basic goods set

**Tools You Need for TOKKATSU**

All you need for starters is:
1. The “communication” (hanashiai) card, the card that serves as a guide for the children so that they know what to do next.
2. The classroom record-keeping notebook.

This can be a regular notebook. But, it might be put up somewhere in the classroom so that everyone can look at it.

STEP 4 Let’s discuss things with the coordinating group

Use the discussion card (hanashiai card) to discuss with the children. Discuss and record:

# The topic of discussion
# The person who proposes the topic of discussion
# The reason for the proposal
# Allocating roles
# Identifying the pillars

When finished, copy this for the whole class, and you are set to go! Arrange it in a way that the children can think of the discussion topic before classroom discussions begin.

STEP 5 Let’s start, classroom meetings, handbook in hand!

Try bringing the coordinating group up in front of the blackboard, and arrange the desks of the children in a U shape so that it is easier for them to talk with each other. Now, let’s begin classroom meetings.

**POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND**

Try to make the atmosphere cheerful and inviting.

Words such as “silence,” “that is incorrect,” “say it properly,” are works that intimidate children and their faces will become gloomier and gloomier.
☆ Give constructive advice to the coordinators in front of everyone.
Inexperienced chairpersons feel nervous. Give them lots of advice to keep things going smoothly. Don’t take the leaders aside but talk to them in front of everyone. Then the whole group will learn how to run a meeting. After all, their turn at coordinator is coming up. That way the whole class will benefit.

☆ End your advice with praise
Criticize once, praise five times - that’s the right balance.

Step 6 To Continue
Did you get through the first classroom meeting all right? The hardest part is getting started. Let’s try to make each meeting a little better than the last. If you compile a list of discussion topics, you won’t have to worry for a while.

Leading Up to the Discussion

GETTING IDEAS

Gather ideas from the “Idea Box” and “Idea Corner.” You might have the small groups in charge or classroom committees do this.

How about:
1. Something you want to do together
2. Something you want to do for a friend
3. Something the classroom committees want advise on
4. Something you want to consider together
5. A problem handed down from the Student Council

SORTING THROUGH THE TOPICS

In the beginning, have everyone help with the sorting. Later, leave the responsibility to the planning committee (one of the *kakari*).

Not all topics are good for discussion.
Similar topics can be combined.

DECIDING ON A TOPIC

The classroom meeting is for everyone, so every member of the class should help choose the topic.

Listen to everyone’s opinion. Let’s make use of morning meetings and end-of-the-school day meetings.
DISCUSSION (classroom meeting)

If Friday is the day for classroom activities...

It is best to plan well in advance.
For example, if Friday is the day for classroom activities...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>morning</td>
<td># decide on the topic proposal (planning committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>after school</td>
<td># refine the topic proposal (planning committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>morning meetings (asa no kai)</td>
<td># decide on the topic (everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>lunch break</td>
<td># plan for the discussion (planning committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs</td>
<td>morning meetings</td>
<td># inform the schedule for the discussion (planning committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>third period</td>
<td># classroom meetings/discussion (everyone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHILD**

“Let’s prepare well using the time we have in the morning, recess, morning and afternoon meetings, during preparation for lunch, and after school!”

**CHILD**

“The planning committee is an important job, isn’t it?”

**TEACHER**

“It would be useful to have a classroom discussion so that everyone knows the schedule...”
Let’s gather ideas for activities

Conditions for topics

Lower grades
The teacher is in charge of deciding but should encourage the children to come to him/her with ideas.

Middle grades
Is it something everyone can do together? Is it something everyone can enjoy? Is it a common problem?

Upper grades
Can the pupils handle the activity they’ve decided on? Is it something everyone can relate to? Is it something that can make classroom life more fun? Is it something everyone can decide if they cooperate?

Problems that can’t be left to the students

1. Safety and hygiene
   “I think jumping down from the gymnasium gallery would be exciting.”
   “I think it would be fun to make real fried octopus at the school festival.”

2. Placing blame; punishments
   “It was A’s fault that we were all late for the morning meeting.”
   “If B hits someone again, we should make him sit in the corner during recess.”

3. Collecting money
   “We want to collect ¥50 from everyone to buy juice for a toast.”
   “I think we should collect ¥100 from each person to buy a bouquet for C.”

4. Changing the class schedule
   “If we plan it during gym period, we can use the athletic field freely.”
   “If we make use of the Integrated Studies period, we can have the activity during the 5th and 6th periods.”

5. Using school facilities
   “If we use the art room and meeting room as points, we can have a fun rally.”
   “I think we should make a haunted house by darkening the music room and science lab.”
(4) Let’s Refine the Discussion Proposal

Since it is difficult to find books in the library, I wish that the books should be displayed in a better way.

I am going to ask the library committee.

This is nice. Let’s discuss it at once in the next classroom discussion.

I want to make a classroom song that everyone can sing together.

There are people doing soccer during the break and it is dangerous, so it should be stopped.

We can propose to the representative committee.
(5) From Deciding on the Discussion Topic to Discussing

1. Let’s introduce the discussion topic to everyone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Activity Corner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let’s think of the plan for the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s make a flag for the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s do a mini-festival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Everyone, we will decide on the discussion topic in tomorrow’s afternoon meeting. Please think about it. Anyone who wants to propose a topic, please do so giving the reason for the proposal.

I guess what might be the discussion topic is about these three. Everyone can decide which one in tomorrow’s classroom meeting.

2. Let’s divide the roles within the group that is going to chair the discussions

I want to chair because I have never done it before!

Then, I will be the sub-chair.

I will be the record-taker and write on the blackboard.

teacher
(6) Giving Advice

★ During the discussion

When the discussion may not be moving along…
“Are you off the subject?”
“Better think about what you’re trying to decide.”
“Isn’t one person monopolizing the discussion?”
“Hasn’t this turned into a personal attack / become too emotional?”
“How about this way of thinking?”
“Why not talk things over with your neighbor?”

Encouraging active participation
“You’re a member of the class. How about taking part in the discussion?”
“Try to listen carefully to your classmates’ opinions.”

Praise the children (Think about the best time. Now? At the end?)
“That’s a good idea!”
“You’re making progress!”
“That’s right to the point!”
(To a quiet child: “Good! You gave your opinion. Keep it up!”)

Stop there!
“I will decide anything related to money!”
“We can’t do that. It’s too dangerous.”
“Please get my permission before making changes in the schedule.”
“I can’t allow you to punish your classmates.”

★ After the Discussion (types of things you can say)

When something has been decided…
“You’ve decided to… It sounds like fun!”

After a constructive comment…
“Oh, that’s a great idea no one’s mentioned before.”

After an opinion that shows concern for his/her classmates
“Your opinion shows you are thinking about everyone.”

To the coordinators…
“The leader did a good job. The minutes’ taker really worked hard.

To someone who kept the discussion going…
“You helped the leader by moving the discussion along.”

To someone who changed his / her opinion…
“I can see you were listening carefully to what your friends were saying.”

To someone who doesn’t speak out often
“So and so gave his/her opinion for the first time!”

After-discussion Comments and Important Points

During the discussion let’s try to view the children from the following standpoints.

1. Is (s)he making persuasive comments to get as many supporters as possible?
For example:
• Using gestures for emphasis
• Acknowledging helpful comments, but at the same time pointing out problems
• Expressing him/herself in line with the purpose of the class, group
• Speaking sincerely and honestly

Highly praise anyone for the above
Give him/her confidence
Hold him/her up as a role model

2. Support for the child who has finally gotten enough courage to speak out

Remember! The nervous child who lacks confidence needs your encouragement the most

The teacher’s comments at the end have a big impact on future discussions. They are very important in making discussions more lively and giving the children a feeling of satisfaction and achievement.
Let’s Make a Year-long Plan

Be sure to keep the following in mind.
It’s important to make a realistic plan, based on the children’s capabilities.
As you work it out, imagine the children a year from now.
What skills do you want them to learn?

The aims of gakkyu-katsudo (classroom activities)
Build desirable personal relations.
Take part in making classroom and school life better.
Develop an active, positive attitude toward solving various problems and leading a healthy daily life.

Contents of the activities and making teaching plans
-1- Developing classroom and school life
• Of course you want to improve classroom and school life through activities the pupils themselves devise, but the teacher should decide on the basic framework-- with good topics and schedule.
• The actual activities should be left to the pupils’ planning committee (coordinating group). They will make and carry out concrete, yet versatile, flexible plans.

-2- Adapting to daily routine and studies: health and safety
• The children have common problems, but they should be solved in view of individual differences. With this in mind, each classroom teacher should carefully, consciously adjust his / her instruction methods.
• Announce the lesson plans (subjects and schedule) for the whole grade and the class.
Get the children into the habit of noticing problems around them and thinking of them as their own concern.
In discussions (classroom meetings) plan your instruction to conform to school policy
Of course, your instruction will differ for each grade. You also have to consider your own class (daily problems and extent of children’s positive attitude) and also the school’s guidelines.

-3- Classroom activities  1st grade: 34 hrs per year  2-6 grades: 35 hrs per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
<th>6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>activity1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activity2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-4- Gear instruction to the grade level but also consider:
• conditions in the classroom
• topics suitable to the level of group consciousness
• topics suitable to the maturity level

1st term: Build up class rapport  (personal relations, cooperation)
2nd term: Develop each person’s sense of belonging  (roles, group consciousness)
3rd term: Enhance feeling of mutual respect  (respect, self confidence)
### Aims of School Education
Children who think before acting
Motivated children
Happy, energetic children

### Tokubetsu Katsudo’s Aims:
- Through effective group activities, aim for well-rounded development and more individuality. At the same time, develop an awareness of belonging to the group, build an active, positive attitude toward cooperating to make daily life better.

### This School’s Tokkatsu Aims:
- Through classroom activities, develop a personal concern in each pupil about various problems. Encourage a positive attitude in trying to make school life better.
- Through Student Council activities, heighten an awareness of group membership. Build an attitude of freely joining in and following through to the end.
- Through club activities, develop a stronger, more positive personality and more independence.
- Through various school activities, experience a fulfilling school life and high aims.
- Through combined-class activities, aim at enthusiasm to associate with other grades.

### Abilities to be Developed through Tokkatsu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower grades</th>
<th>Middle grades</th>
<th>Upper grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop the children’s ability to have friendly interaction with classmates and make school life more enjoyable.</td>
<td>Develop the children’s ability to cooperate with each other to make classroom life more enjoyable.</td>
<td>Develop the ability to take part in many activities to make school life better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Class Activities
- Talk things over freely, openly. Develop an active, positive attitude toward making school life and activities full and enjoyable.

### Student Council
- Develop the ability for children with the same interests to act freely and spontaneously. Develop the ability to find their own interests and cooperate with other club members.

### Club Activities
-badminton, ‘pot’ basketball, dodge, kick base, track and field, table tennis, soft volleyball, soccer, illustration, cooking, scientific experiments, computer, Japanese drums
- Each club meets 15-20 times during the school year.

### School Events
- Aim at bringing change and order to school life, strengthening a feeling of belonging to the group, developing a healthy body and mind. Also letting them experience first hand, a full, meaningful school life.

- Formal events
- Academic events
- Health, safety related events
- Field trips/overnight trips

- Have the children take part in planning and coordinating school events
- Have a joint 1st and 2nd grade outing
- Have the children tell about their aims and achievements at the Opening Ceremony and the Closing Ceremony
## First Grade: **Gakkyu-katsudo** Plans for the Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th># of hours</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apr</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Let’s greet each other cheerfully</td>
<td>How a warm “Good morning” can brighten the day.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s get to know the school rules</td>
<td>High expectations of school life.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s learn study skills</td>
<td>An understanding of daily routine and basic rules.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emergency drill? What’s that?</td>
<td>A strong interest in learning new things.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enjoying school lunch</td>
<td>An understanding of basic study skills.</td>
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<td>Learn how to leave the building safely, without accidents or injury.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Enjoy lunch together. Learn about taking turns, how to carry utensils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Looking for your classmates’ good points (prevent bullying)</td>
<td>An awareness of each other’s good points will lead to a friendly class atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s decide on classroom committees</td>
<td>Think about what you can do to make classroom life better. Decide on roles. Put into practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s follow the library rules</td>
<td>Learn how to use the library.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Jun.</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Let’s chew our food well</td>
<td>Chewing your food well not only helps digestion but also stimulates the brain.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s enjoy the school festival</td>
<td>Enjoy school life by interacting with other grades.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Early to bed, early to rise, eating breakfast</td>
<td>Do your daily habits need improving? A good night’s sleep and breakfast every morning are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jul.</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cleanliness; proper clothing</td>
<td>Think about how you can get through the hot summer comfortably (light clothing, etc.).</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An enjoyable class</td>
<td>Experience the pleasure of cooperating to build good personal relations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy summer vacation</td>
<td>Spend a safe, enjoyable summer vacation, your first in elementary school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep.</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Let’s think about our goals for 2nd term</td>
<td>Think about your own aims. Try to enjoy school life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom committees</td>
<td>Think about the best job for each person. Decide on the roles, put them into practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How to keep the classroom clean</td>
<td>Keep the classroom fresh and clean.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyable sports day</td>
<td>Feel grateful to the sixth graders for keeping it clean until now.</td>
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<td>Think about the slogan, cheerleading gear, mascot.</td>
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<td>Take part as a member of the school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experience a feeling of togetherness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td># of hours</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>What you want the pupils to learn, gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outing with second graders</td>
<td>Enjoy nature during the fall season.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have fun with the 2nd graders.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys and girls</td>
<td>Be aware of your own body. Take care of yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
<td>Be sure of your role.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Take part in the rehearsals willingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Class party</td>
<td>Experience the pleasure of cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Build desirable personal relations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making the class presentation successful</td>
<td>Gain confidence in expressing yourself in front of others.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Take part cheerfully. Watch other grades’ performances with interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping your belongings in order</td>
<td>Be aware of the importance of orderliness in order to study effectively.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Put into practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Class party</td>
<td>Plan your own party. How can you make it enjoyable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoying winter break</td>
<td>Experience traditional events.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do your part as a member of the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Let’s set aims for the 3rd term</td>
<td>Take up your studies enthusiastically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Try to enjoy school life more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s decide on classroom committees</td>
<td>Think about how to divide the different jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Put into practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thank you 6th graders!</td>
<td>Express gratitude to the 6th graders, who have done so much for you all year. Get ready for a farewell party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s welcome the new 1st graders</td>
<td>Until now, older pupils have looked after you.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be aware that now it’s your turn to help others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get to know your friends better</td>
<td>What can you do?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell your friends about yourself. Ask them questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get to know each other better; strengthen group ties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Soon we’ll be 2nd graders! Welcome, new 1st graders!</td>
<td>Look back over your development during the past year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have confidence to move up to 2nd grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Let’s have a wrap-up party</td>
<td>Give a warm welcome to the 1st graders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You’ve been together for a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How to spend spring vacation</td>
<td>Appreciate each other’s good points;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be aware of your own development.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feel happy to be moving up a grade.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoy a safe spring vacation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION II

Building a Classroom Community Together

Taken from the guidebook for elementary school teachers on grade-level, classroom management prepared by the Tokyo Metropolitan Elementary School Research Group on Classroom Management, 2009 revised version

(『学年・学級経営ハンドブック』東京都小学校学級経営研究会)
Making the School Together: Teachers and Children

Toward a Well-Rounded Education; A Relaxed School Atmosphere…

On the Way to School

It’s a long walk to school so I always think up stories. Unless I meet someone, I think all the way to school. But if I meet someone, I’ll have to say “Good morning.” Then I think to myself… about the weather, the frost, how bare the rice fields are now.

So I hope I don’t meet anyone, And can walk through the school gate before my story ends.

---a poem by Misuzu Kaneko---

Until five or six years ago a well-rounded, relaxed education was emphasized. But, how about now?

I remember back to a day in May when a new 3rd grade teacher came to me for advice. “Today one of my pupils kicked me.” He had scolded one of the roughnecks and then the boy had kicked him and run away. “How should I handle it?” he asked. I didn’t know what to say. But the next day the teacher reported to me cheerfully, “The boy came to me this morning and apologized.” I couldn’t help feeling happy too as I imagined teacher and pupil over the last month both groping for ways to build a rapport.

Visible academic improvement—raising your test score by a few points—is important, but I think there is something that takes priority. It’s to live to the fullest, to do your very best: this leads to true learning.

We teachers have to make sure children have time to be children; to make each day’s classes help them think for themselves but act kindly and warmly to others and have high hopes for the future; to understand each child and help him/ her relate to the other children and the surroundings to make a harmonious class. These are the aims I’m doing my very best to achieve.
Part I. Creating a Good Class Atmosphere with the Children

1. Basic Essentials of Classroom Foundation for Classroom Teachers

1. Morning

[Before the children come]

Before the children get to school, open all the windows and air the room, clean the blackboard, pick up trash—make the atmosphere conducive to studying.

[Cheerful greetings]
Welcome the children with a cheerful “Good morning!” and a smile. Get the day off to a good start.

[Morning meeting]
An Example of Morning Meetings

- Taking roles and checking health
  “Is anyone absent?” “So and so is absent for such and such a reason.”
  “Any health problems? How about you, so and so?” “I’m fine.”
  The teacher makes sure of everyone’s health.
  The children themselves check their own and each other’s health conditions.

- Program to get the day off to a good start
  . Speech: What Happened Yesterday…My Aims for the Day…Local news
  . Quiz The theme for today
  . Poem (reading, recitation)
  . Song: making, singing class song or this week’s/ month’s song

- Announcements from the children in classroom roles (kakari)

- Teacher’s comments, announcements

Explanation about handouts, about student life, seasonal events, news, etc

The children take turns at chairperson. (With the 1st graders in the beginning the teacher is chairperson, then calls for volunteers, gradually everyone takes turns.)
Change the contents of the meeting depending on the day and circumstances.
Make the meeting more fun by incorporating the children’s ideas.
2 Learning

1 Starting and ending classes: how to get the pupils to quiet down

- Get them into the habit of promptly sitting at their desks (returning to the classroom) when the bell rings.
- When they don’t sit down or stop talking, have some set phrase: “I’ll give you minutes to take your seat.” or “1..2..3..4 Stop talking!” or “Countdown: 3..2..1.” Praise them when they follow directions.
- Start and end each class with: “Now we’ll begin ---period, ---class.” “---period, ---class is now over.”

2 Concerns during class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Expert speaker]</th>
<th>[Expert listener]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convey what you want to say to the listeners</td>
<td>Listen carefully, taking care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a feeling of confidence</td>
<td>not to miss anything important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that you can speak well in front of everyone</td>
<td>Look for your friends’ good ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel happy that you got through to the listeners</td>
<td>Become motivated to speak yourself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Aim at becoming a skilled speaker]</th>
<th>[Aim at becoming a skilled listener]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Be well-organized</td>
<td>1. Have eye contact with the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Don’t leave out important points</td>
<td>2. Nod, clap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Speak loudly and clearly</td>
<td>3. Don’t interrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Look at the listeners</td>
<td>4. Try to grasp the speaker’s point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have good posture; speak clearly</td>
<td>5. Ask questions; make comments afterwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Manner of Speech]

- Get the children into the habit of speaking well
- Change their speaking style depending on maturity level
- Even in the same grade, make adjustments depending on the pupils’ capabilities and instruction level

(pages 9—10 abbreviated)
3 Daily Routine

(1) What should the teacher do during recess?

How about playing together with the children?

The children look forward to recess. The teacher should take care that the classes don’t run overtime and cut into recess. Recess is mainly for playing. At first, the teacher should act like the leader of a group of kids. Then gradually the children will take the lead themselves.

Let’s help the children build good personal relations

There may be some children who are shy or not athletic, but recess is an invaluable time to strengthen communication among the children and make social rules. As much as possible, see that they interact. It is also important to notice changes in personal relations. Is there someone who’s always alone? Are there changes in groups of friends? This way you can catch problems early.

● Once every week or two, plan an activity that everyone in the class can participate in, like dodge ball or tag.

● Get together with friends: start an activity with a special friend/ friends.

● Make a class club (soccer, high bar, unicycle, etc)

Trouble comes with playing. When something happens, don’t just say, “Let’s make up,” but try to find some way to instruct in a way that leads to a stronger friendship.

Keep an eye on the children from a distance.

You may notice some different behavior than when they are right in front of you.

Make a special effort to talk to certain children

You try to be fair, but sometimes you don’t have enough contact with certain children. Go out of your way to talk to them.

Talk with your colleagues as well

(2) Lunch Hour

Deciding on lunch-duty groups (toban)

● Groups of 5 or 6, taking one week shifts
(Alternatively, to avoid interference with seating changes, keep the same groups half a term, one term, one year).

● Prepare a toban chart with each person’s role clearly marked so the students can understand and become aware of their role.

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There may be some children who are shy or not athletic, but recess is an invaluable time to strengthen communication among the children and make social rules. As much as possible, see that they interact. It is also important to notice changes in personal relations. Is there someone who’s always alone? Are there changes in groups of friends? This way you can catch problems early.

● Once every week or two, plan an activity that everyone in the class can participate in, like dodge ball or tag.

● Get together with friends: start an activity with a special friend/ friends.

● Make a class club (soccer, high bar, unicycle, etc)

Trouble comes with playing. When something happens, don’t just say, “Let’s make up,” but try to find some way to instruct in a way that leads to a stronger friendship.

Keep an eye on the children from a distance.

You may notice some different behavior than when they are right in front of you.

Make a special effort to talk to certain children

You try to be fair, but sometimes you don’t have enough contact with certain children. Go out of your way to talk to them.

Talk with your colleagues as well

Handling the food and utensils

● Guide the children from the lower grades on how to cooperate in carrying food and utensils smoothly and efficiently.

● The daily-duty (nichoku) and lunch-duty groups (toban) spread the napkins, call groups that are at their seats first, serve the food.

● A word of warning: when there’s a long line, talking and fooling around increase.

● Encourage children with small appetites to ask for smaller portions. Then they can finish everything.
[Instructing manners]
- Before eating, "Itadakimasu" (Let's begin); after finishing "Gochisousama" (That was good.)
- Proper use of chopsticks, posture
- Enjoyable atmosphere
- When you finish eating, sit quietly.
- How to clean up anything spilled

Try to create a pleasant atmosphere where everyone can enjoy eating together.

[Trying food you don’t really like]
- Encourage someone to try eating least favorites with “Just one more bite!” or “I’ll give you five more minutes.”
- To motivate eating least favorites have an “I Ate Everything” card or a “Special Effort” prize.

[Cleaning up]
- Each group cooperates in cleaning up
- Gather the garbage efficiently
- The teacher should make sure the children do a thorough job.

(3) Cleaning

[To clean quickly and efficiently]
- Divide the work and cooperate
- Regularly (once a week so) change the area each group is responsible for cleaning.
- Make a rotation chart: make sure each person knows his/her job for the day.
- Deciding on the cleaning-duty group (toban): keep the same classroom-duty groups for one term or change the groups after all duties have been experienced.
- Teach proper cleaning methods (how to use a broom, cleaning cloths, etc) from the lower grades.

[Cleaning order…. An example]
It might be a good idea to make and show a video.
1. Move the desks and chairs to the back, cooperating with each other.
2. Sweep the area
3. Wipe the floor
4. Wipe the lockers and shelves
5. Move the desks and chairs to the front.
6. Sweep and pick up trash
7. Wipe the floor
8. Put the desks back in place
9. Go over the job

[Encouraging the children to clean with enthusiasm]
1. Make plans by talking things over
   “If we all cooperate, we can clean quickly and thoroughly.”
   “Today/ this week let’s try to make ----- especially clean!”
2. Make full use of reflection time

   + Using evaluation cards, have each group grade themselves -- for example ◎◎ or A B C
   Have an aim for the week (example: Get the job done within the set time.)
   Is everything clean? Did you cooperate? Did you put things away properly?
   Today’s “Spotless-clean Prize (for someone who worked especially hard)
   + The teacher might describe how one group worked especially hard.
   + Give the cleaning group leader a summary of cleaning reviews. (lower grades)
(4) Classroom Responsibilities *(kakari)*

[Deciding on the groups]

It’s a good idea to consider the children’s preferences and also keep a balance between boys and girls. If the membership in one committee is lopsided, the teacher should suggest some people move to another group.

[Four points in getting the committees organized]

1. Set time for the committees
   - Make use of morning free time
     - Set aside some time during the morning meeting and/or end-of-the-day meeting
     - Make good use of recess and lunch hour
   - Think of good names for the groups. Make full use of the children’s ideas.
     - For example, class newspaper---- The Times activities committee----- Fun for All!; animal and plant care----Such and Such Aquarium
   - Exchange information with other committees
     - Give time at the end-of-the-day meeting for committee announcements and information.
   - Personal/ mutual evaluation
     - It’s important for the children themselves to assess their group.
       - Does it contribute to classroom life?
       - Is everyone satisfied?
       - Is it improving?
       - Does each member have a feeling of accomplishment?
         (bold by Tsuneyoshi)

Note: The classroom seating arrangements serve as the basis for classroom small groups *(han)* that then serve as the basis for the small group chore activities.

(5) Seating Arrangement, Rotating Duty Groups

1. This is the 1st step toward developing good personal relations among the children

   The children have much interest in the seating arrangement. Instead of deciding randomly by lots, etc., it’s better for the teacher to decide carefully. Through classroom duty groups *(toban)* the children experience cooperating in work and play; they are linked to classroom rapport.

2. Things to keep in mind for seating.
   - eyesight
   - hearing
   - height
   - body structure
   - academic motivation
   - interest
   - understanding
   - personal relations

(4) Classroom Responsibilities *(kakari)*

[Deciding on the groups]

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4  After School

[End-of-the-day meeting] *(kaeri no kai)*

End-of-the-day meeting…… an example

Looking back over the day *(Star of the Day, Today’s MVP)*
- Have the pupils think back and tell everyone about his/ her or others' special efforts of the day. The teacher should make sure no one is left out. If someone’s name hasn’t come up, find his/ her good point and mention it.
- It might be a good idea to keep a record of what everyone did in "Our Class History".

To and from classroom committees
- “Are there any requests to the classroom committees?”
- “Any announcements from the classroom committees?”

A word from the teacher
- *After saying good-bye, leave the classroom with a sayonara-janken (paper-scissors-stone) or a sayonara handshake.*

[After the children go home]

1 Think back over the day, visualizing each child’s face.
   Take notes of the children’s good points you noticed, what you taught, etc.
2 Put your desk in order.
3 Straighten the children’s desks; pick up any trash.
4 Make sure the blackboard and erasers are clean.
5 Close the windows.
5 Creating a good classroom atmosphere

The classroom is where the children spend more than half their time. We want to make it a place where each child feels comfortable, a second home.

[To keep in mind]

A neat, bright classroom

- Place as few things as possible near the windows. Let in the sunlight.
- Keep the windows sparkling clean.
- Use bright colors for display items.
- Keep the areas that get the most use the cleanest (especially the wastepaper basket, the closet for cleaning supplies, the lunch stand)
- Don’t leave cardboard boxes, etc. in the corner of the room

A classroom that’s easy to use

- Make sure the storage area for personal belongings is convenient (lockers, storage bins, hooks, etc.)
- Keep items for common use handy (pencil sharpener, Scotch tape, thumb tacks, dictionaries, etc.)
- If you use a cart with casters, the children will enjoy moving it around.
- Label things clearly

*If everything is in its place, it gives a feeling of security, makes everyone feel at home.
Permanent display items related to studies and daily life

Front of the Room

Useful Items
- Calendar
- Schedule for events
- Grade/class news
- Classroom committee jobs
- Rotating duties chart
- Class mailbox, etc.

Everyday Essentials
- Written out goals
- List of items to bring for classes
- Instructions on how to handle lunch utensils
- Lunch aprons (to be taken home)
- Waste paper basket and other trash containers

Permanent Display Items Related to Studies and Daily Life
- The school’s educational aims
- The grade, classroom aims
- Daily life aims
- Time schedule, etc.

If you have space, have a large-sized desk for the classroom committees use.

Near the Window
- Aquariums with fish, turtles and potted plants will help create a warm, soothing atmosphere.
- Don’t put cleaning rags on the fence that prevents students from falling.

Near the Corridor
- If you use clear files, it will be easy to display the students’ art work.
- You can use the corridor wall to display children’s art, newspaper clippings, poem-of-the-month, etc.
- Hooks would be useful for hanging bags with gym clothes.

Back of the Room

- Lockers
- Children’s works
- Classroom committee display
- Student council announcements
- Calligraphy display
- Map
- Academic progress

Door

- Items for common use
  - Pencil sharpener
  - Thumb tacks
  - Scotch tape
  - Felt pen
  - Balls
  - Jump ropes
  - Lost and found items
  - Various papers

Small round seals on the floor will make it easy to put the desks back in the same place after cleaning, etc.

Everyday Essentials
- Written out goals
- List of items to bring for classes
- Instructions on how to handle lunch utensils
- Lunch aprons (to be taken home)
- Waste paper basket and other trash containers
II. Strengthening Bonds

Classroom committees (kakari) work for the class

1. Two kinds of division of responsibilities — toban and kakari

The usual group toban can be defined as below.

**Toban**: Duty groups (rotate roles): essential, responsible jobs carried out by cooperating with classmates (cleaning-duty, lunch-duty, daily duty)

In Ms. Kikuchi’s class, there are also one person toban. One person, on duty toban, is, as the name suggests, a duty performed by one person, throughout the school day. If possible, have the same number of jobs as class members. It might be a good idea to add new jobs anytime, getting ideas from the children.

Examples of one person - one duty

*Book-man*: “I’ll organize the classroom library.”
*Miss/Mr. energy-saving*: “I’ll see that the lights are turned off when not needed.”
*Miss/Mr. improve-your-skills*: “I’ll set up the morning drill activities.”
*Magnet-person*: “I’ll keep the blackboard magnets in order.”
*Recycle-person*: “I’ll see that reusable paper goes into the recycle bin.”
*Check-person*: “I’ll check work that has been handed in.”
*Erase 1 and 2*: “We’ll keep the blackboard clean!” (divide the job between left and right sides)
*Postperson*: “I’ll deliver the messages from the office.”
*Contact person*: “I’ll get in touch with anyone absent.”

2. Renaming classroom committees (kakari) in the form of ‘companies’

In Ms. Kikuchi’s class, this was done to make a clear distinction between duty-groups (toban) and classroom committees (kakari).

‘Companies’ should be fun, appreciated, and enjoyed by the entire class. The children themselves create the ‘companies’ using their imagination.

Rules in forming a company

- It should be enjoyable but also benefit everyone in the class.
- A new company can be formed anytime.
- Even one person can start one.
- Anyone is welcome to join.
- Each class member can join two companies.
- If a company doesn’t do any work for two weeks, it goes out of business etc.
Examples of companies

Happy Birthday Company / Crafts & Experiments Company
Special Events Company / Emcee Company / Plant Company
Newspaper Company / Sports Newspaper Company / Insect Company

[The Children’s Reaction]

By making the difference between duties and ‘companies’ clear everyone knows exactly what his/her job is. One person-one duty gives each person a sense of pride and responsibility—“Leave it to me!” By keeping the cleaning and lunch duty groups the same throughout the year, some children have noticed, “There’s no arguing when we divide up the work; everything goes smoothly.” They finish the cleaning in 10 minutes and have 5 minutes of free time before the 5th period.

Various ‘companies’ have been formed, including some unique ones.

*Ant Company…raise ants, observe them carefully, do research to answer everyone’s questions, put out an Ant Newspaper
*Happy Birthday Company…find out everyone’s birthday, favorite color and shape, make original birthday cards

Observing the children during the first semester, I could see that the ‘companies’ were a place to make friends. I couldn’t help smiling when I heard, “Everyone, get together. I have something to discuss.” Of course, there were disagreements, but both boys and girls took the activities seriously but also enjoyed them. I plan to continue these activities, making improvements as we go along. The ‘companies’ make us, the children and me, think about the meaning of “working for the class.”

Ms. Kikuchi
We want to make a special event an enjoyable, memorable experience, completely separate from everyday life. When the children are wrapped up in something, the class becomes one.

The planning *kakari* is very popular; everyone wants to join. It’s appealing to the children to plan and carry out something on their own. Recreation Day preparation is done by the planning *kakari*. The detailed planning is left to the children, but the teacher has to check about safety. During the activity the teacher should become one with the children in a special world.

Recreation Day popular events

‘Dress-up Restaurant’
. Each group decides on what dish to make
. Everyone dresses up and sets up the restaurant
. The planning committee makes and distributes money
. Each group decides on the prices

*Café*
. Make a counter. Turn the classroom into a café
. Waiters/waitresses should think up fun uniforms.
. Make a drink menu. Prepare paper cups. Bring drinks (plain water is fine.)

*Movie Show*
. Use the classroom screen and projector and have a movie show.
. If you combine the movie and *café* it’s even more fun.

Let’s make each one a fascinating, exciting experience—a special world that everyone in the class can share.

Think of events suitable for your own class. Have an exciting experience!
[Group Games]

If you all play hard together, you become one.

At least once a month the recreation kakari plans an event, Let’s All Play Together Day or Play Time. When everyone in the class plays hard, the children relax and become warmer to each other; the class atmosphere changes. Even during the end-of-the-day meeting there’s time for a fun game. If the children leave school in a good mood, this will give them energy for the next day. It’s important to help make the children cheerful and lively.

Examples of Games

#1 Favorite: “S-ken”

The most popular game is S-ken. It’s a simple game, but by adding your own changes it becomes more interesting. The children become wrapped up in the game; the class becomes one.

The class is divided into two teams. The team that gets the other team’s “treasure” (a stone, etc) first is the winner. The rules are simple but become more complicated depending on the grade and development level.

Each team thinks up strategies for stealing the stone within a certain time limit. Basically each team is divided into offence and defense and talks over effective ways of stealing the “treasure.” Psychological tactics make the battle interesting.

- You attack by hopping on one foot. If both feet touch the ground, you’re out.
- If you go outside the designated area, you’re out.
- Attacking can get rough. If you knock someone down, you’re out. No matter how much fun the game gets, safety comes first.

King Game

When everyone yells in unison, “Whooooooos the king?” the class becomes one. You can feel the atmosphere changing. This game is also very popular. It doesn’t take long, so it’s suitable for end-of-the-day meeting. One person becomes “king” and everyone else copies his/ her movements. The object is to find out who the real “king” is. No preparation is necessary, so you can do it anytime. It’s ideal in pulling the class together.

There are no end to games that are fun to play. Play liberates the heart.
This April I became a new 4th grade teacher. The class was the same group from 3rd grade, but the teacher was transferred and I took over.

One of the other 4th grade teachers, a young enthusiastic teacher who had the same class as last year, said, “I want to start ‘Challenge Notes’ this year. Let’s do it together.” Wondering if I could continue the whole year, I agreed. ‘Challenge Notes’ is choosing some new, challenging project for independent study and keeping notes of your progress.

One of the 24 students in my class is a girl, S. She has a problem speaking out. It seems that in 1st and 2nd grade she hardly spoke at all. In 3rd grade she finally could say softly, “I’m fine.” when her name was called in the morning.

In April when I met S I tried to communicate with her. “If you can’t answer in words, gestures will be fine.” I was hopeful but got no reaction. Next I tried written conversation. Again nothing.

I have heard about children who don’t talk, but this was the first time to actually meet someone like that. I really didn’t know what to do.

A few days later during lunch hour S, with tears in her eyes, seemed to be trying to say something. Several children tried to talk to her, but couldn’t find out what the matter was. I remembered that one child had written in her ‘Challenge Notes,’ “I had fun playing with S.” I asked her what the trouble was. She immediately answered, “She has a headache.” ‘Challenge Notes’ had come to my rescue!

As it turned out, S has very neat handwriting and is good at anything involving note-taking, writing things down. After that, she wrote many of her thoughts in her ‘Challenge Notes.’ She often shows a strong will; for instance, one day she wrote, “I want to speak out like everyone else; soon I’m going to give a morning speech.”

Now I am able to have normal conversations with S. Every day is very busy, but ‘Challenge Notes’ are an important part of my teaching life.
Part II  Creating a Good Class Atmosphere with Everyone in the School

I  Building a Good Class Atmosphere Through School Events

1. The aim of school events
   The aim of school events is to give the children an awareness of being a member of the school as well as the class and to encourage them to think about their role in the group and take responsible action.

2. Creating groups that make school life fuller
   To accomplish this, the following classroom atmosphere is necessary:
   -1- Exchange ideas and wishes in an open environment and set a goal.
   -2- Cooperate with each other to carry out the goal of the group activity.
   -3- Aim for creative activities through careful planning.
   -4- Ensure a lively, constructive exchange of ideas.

3. Creating a class that brings out individuality
   Personal values are something each pupil develops on his/ her own, but acceptance from the class/ grade plays an important part. In order to develop personal values the following conditions are necessary:
   -1- The class has effective group activities.
   -2- Each child is aware of his/ her personal values.
   -3- The group (class, grade) accepts each child’s way of thinking and role in the group
   -4- Each child is given confidence (by the teacher, classmates, other children in the grade.)
   -5- The assignments given are high level and help develop each child’s personal values.
II Interacting with Other Children -- Activities Composed of Different Grades

Age-Combined Group Activities

1- Aim

- Carry out the idea: the entire faculty should educate all the students
- By long-continuing groups of different grades:
  (a) Taking leader-like roles, older children feel aware of being in the upper grades and learn how to lead.
  (b) Through interacting with older students, the younger pupils have upper classpersons to look up to and learn from.
- By forming groups of different aged children, everyone can take part in more dynamic, enjoyable activities which will make them more enthusiastic.

2- Forming the groups

- 'Brother-sister' classes: 1st and 6th grade, 2nd and 5th grade, 3rd and 4th grade. Groups are formed within one class and then combined with a group from another grade. This simplifies the process.
- Form one group with all 6 grades. If the school is large, this becomes more complicated.

3- Activities with older/ younger groups

- All-school group activities: recreational activities, children's carnival, sports tournament, cleaning
- Special events: Sports Day, lunch, farewell party for 6th graders, study groups

4- Miscellaneous

- If you give the group a name or have a mascot, group feeling increases.
- Avoid putting brothers and sisters together.

Academic Interaction with Other Grades

1- Aims:

Combined academic group activities are 'tokkatsu' but mainly academic related. By guiding and being guided, teaching and being taught, motivation increases; the level of the learners is set, so academic guidelines are clear.
## Examples of Interaction of Combined Academic Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>3rd and 2nd</td>
<td>The 3rd graders write compositions, ‘What I Want to Teach You’ and have the 2nd graders read them. In return, the 2nd graders write thank you letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper grades / Lower grades</td>
<td>To increase an interest in reading, the older children read to the younger ones or introduce interesting books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6th and 5th</td>
<td>6th graders tell about field trips.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6th and middle school</td>
<td>They have a discussion about ‘Our Future.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>1st and 2nd</td>
<td>The two age groups play with different materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6th and 1st</td>
<td>The 6th graders make moveable toys, have the 1st graders play with them and get their comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Environmental Studies</td>
<td>1st and 2nd</td>
<td>The 2nd graders show the 1st graders around the school, show them how to take care of plants and animals, teach them traditional games. They hold a festival together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd and 3rd</td>
<td>‘Jump into the Future!’ The 2nd graders get information from the 3rd graders to increase their interest in moving up a grade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Integrated Studies | 4th and 3rd         | The 4th graders report to the 3rd graders on their research on ‘Water.’  

### Bringing the Benefits of Combined Classes Back to the Homeroom

It’s important for different teachers to exchange information. Another teacher might notice a side of the pupils’ personality that you haven’t noticed or isn’t evident in the homeroom. It’s important to bring out these good points in every day homeroom life. It’s hard for all upper grade pupils to display leadership traits, but in these combined class activities they come out naturally. The homeroom teacher should try to bring out these qualities in the homeroom too.
One teacher doesn’t run the classroom alone; everyone in the grade and school helps build it up. This attitude will probably become more and more widespread. In setting up a cooperative system there are 3 basic points.

**POINT 1  Be careful not to overextend**
No matter how good the plans for a cooperative system are, if you are unrealistic you won’t succeed. It’s important to stay within your limits.

**POINT 2  Make the most of each teacher’s abilities.**
When cooperating, if you can utilize your best subjects and areas, you’ll be able to work actively and energetically. The teachers should take another look at their good points and talk things over.

**POINT 3  Positive exchange of information**
Exchange of information is invaluable in a cooperative system. If you concentrate on each child’s good points, their improvements and hard efforts, the cooperative system works smoothly.
2 Concrete examples of the cooperative system

There are various ways for teachers in the same grade level to cooperate: preparation of teaching material, exchanging ideas, switching classes. When working cooperation into the school system, it’s a good idea to find ways to involve teachers depending on their specialties.

Making use of everyone’s special abilities on the grade level

If a grade has more than two classes it’s possible to utilize each teacher’s special abilities. The teachers should tell each other their strong points, “I think I can handle home economics.” “Leave PE to me.” “I used to take calligraphy lessons, so I can make the example papers.” Even if you don’t actually switch classes, you can share teaching material and ideas for teaching methods. The classes become more stimulating. It’s important to respect each other’s skills and cooperate.

Teachers of specialized subjects joining the children for lunch

Usually teachers of one specialized subject only see the students during art or music or PE class. If they join the children for lunch, they can see a different side of their personalities. The pupils and teachers become closer; the atmosphere in class will change. Also they can come in contact with pupils they haven’t taught yet. This will help make a smooth transition when the children take his/her class.

Academic presentations

When there’s an Integrated Studies or Life Environment Studies presentation, the teachers of specialized subjects should be involved. This will enliven the presentation. Contact with various teachers will help the children develop.

Note: The Period of Integrated Studies and Life Environment Studies are period in the Japanese curriculum. See explanation of terms in the end of the report.
Important points in running the grade

[1. Show respect for other homeroom teachers: trust within the entire grade]
   ~The children are watching how you act with other teachers~

. Don't compare your class with other classes.
. Don't go along with children who criticize another teacher.
. Don't criticize another homeroom teacher in front of the children.
. An experienced teacher finds young teachers' good points and praises them in front of the children.

[Help develop all the children in the grade.]
   ~Do everything as one unit~

. Learn the names of children in other classes.
. Help deal with the problems in the entire grade.
. Have set rules for the entire grade (homework, personal belongings, class events.)
. Make sure the rules are based on actual conditions in the classes.

[Have an understanding of the children in the grade group; have uniform instruction in all classes.]

. Give all the teachers a chance to teach all the children in the grade.
. Exchange important information about the children in each other's classes.
. Build the kind of relationship where you can warn, scold any child in the grade.

Concrete Examples

-1- Exchange classes, joint classes
Through these classes we can deepen understanding of all the children in the grade. Also the children get to know the teachers.

-2- Mutual support among the different classes
Divide support into two types, academic and life style related. Show respect for all the homeroom teachers in the grade.

-3- Discussions in writing (Pausing and looking back is important.)
Decide on a theme. Have the children (anonymously) write down thoughts they may have trouble voicing. Organize these comments and read them out loud.
Hints for getting help when there's trouble in the classroom

**Hint #1 Don’t hesitate to ask for help**

It's not easy to call for help. The more serious the problem becomes the harder it gets to tell someone about it. Here's the dilemma: the more you need help, the harder it is to call for it.

One reason is you think, “I want to handle this myself,” or “I think I can do it,” or you don’t want to show others your shortcomings. In other cases, you put off asking for help, wondering what kind of support to expect. It’s hard to get rid of these concerns, but you need to talk to someone. Often looking at a problem from another point of view will help you find a solution. Just getting the problem off your chest will make you feel better.

**Hint #2 Helping another teacher who comes to you with a problem**

If another teacher in the same grade asks for help, how should you react? “I did such and such and it worked well” sounds like good advice, but actually it isn’t. Telling your successful experience to a person without problems may be meaningful, but it might have the opposite effect on someone asking for help.

Most people calling for help are in dire straits. Hearing someone else’s success story might depress him/her. It’s better to sympathize with the person and try to think of a solution together. Don’t try to get to the root of the problem. When you are in a difficult situation, it’s easy to look back and find all the mistakes you made. The teacher may be partly responsible, but it’s much more complicated. If you show willingness to help solve the problem, the other teacher will be glad (s)he asked for help. Even if the problem isn’t resolved immediately, (s)he will be relieved to know there’s someone who understands the situation and get incentive to face the problem.
Hints for getting help when there's trouble in the classroom

Hint #3 A school-wide cooperative system

At both the grade level and school-wide level, it's important not to dwell on why a problem started but concentrate on ideas for solving the problem. What ideas are most likely to work? Everyone should talk things over and then choose a solution that everyone thinks is realistic. If either the person asking for advice or those giving it feel the idea is not feasible, it's likely to fail.

After starting a cooperative system it's important to keep an eye on the children and continue support. When discussing progress, rather than dwelling on things that are not working, it's better to look for positive changes, even if they are small. When many teachers are assisting, pooling all the positive changes is important. When one single teacher goes in to assist (s)he sees only one aspect of the class and wonders, “I'm taking time out of my busy schedule to help out, but is it doing any good?” or might even get discouraged, “I don't see any change at all!”

This is why it's important to meet regularly to talk over the situation in the class, even if it's once a month for 30 minutes. Even small changes should be discussed in detail. Teachers getting assistance might evaluate the situation in the classroom on a graph, with ‘the classroom conditions we're aiming for’ getting the top grade, 10 points. It's a simple marking system, but the teachers giving assistance will find it meaningful.

Hint #4 Helping out as an assisting teacher in a class that has gone out of control

When acting as the assisting teacher, you should stay in the background and help the children apply themselves to their studies.

Try to keep from advising the teacher about class contents or teaching methods.

Make sure the children feel that the homeroom teacher is in charge, the assisting teacher just helping.

The homeroom teacher is often aware of the problems, but just after the assistance has started, unable to deal with them. Keep your advice to a minimum; wait for the right moment to advise.

It's important to think and talk together with the homeroom teacher in finding ways to solve problem.
IV  TO NEW TEACHERS

1. From the advisory group to new teachers

New teachers have a long, hard road of teaching ahead. We hope the following pointers will be of some help.

-1- Believe in yourself

. Believe in yourself and your decision to go into teaching. You need your own philosophy of teaching to deal with changes in society, in parents, in the community, and in the children.
. It’s important not to let yourself get burned out. A teacher, after all, is a human being. Sometimes you will get discouraged and reach an impasse. Don’t forget to take a break and relax.

-2- Believe in the children

. The most important thing for a homeroom teacher is to believe in the children’s potential and build a relationship of mutual trust.
. However, you can’t leave everything to the children. It’s the teacher’s job to create a good classroom atmosphere. In order to teach effectively, sometimes it’s necessary to be firm and scold. Other times they need your encouragement, “I know you people can do it!”

-3- To become an effective teacher

. Do you know the saying ‘A teacher shows his/ her potential in three years’?
. The difference between teaching and other professions is that a new teacher is in charge of a class and does the same job as an experienced teacher. The detailed instruction of academic subjects and social skills is left up to the teacher. This has its dangers.
. Some teachers might think, “I really can’t do any better” and give up; others might use intimidation as a means of getting the children to listen. A teacher’s capability is molded in the first three years so early training is vital.
. It’s very sad for a teacher to lose sight of the children and realize his/ her teaching skills are inadequate. Let’s make an effort to improve and build up the following three areas.

[Teaching skills]  --making your class stimulating and fun---
* Observe many good classes…take part in study groups, observe experienced teachers’ classes
* Have other people observe your classes and give you comments
* Keep a record of teaching ideas and classes taught

[Running the class]  --understanding the children, sharpening ability to analyze, decide, plan, carry out
* Learn how to run a class…from experienced teachers, books, study groups
* Set up your own style of class management…trying new ideas, keeping a record of what you do

[Personality development] ….broad point of view, ability to appeal to the children…
* As a person…good common sense, broad knowledge, conversational skills meaningful reading (newspapers and books)
* Attitude toward the children….warmth, looking at things from their point of view, giving them hope for the future
2. Efficiency in classroom paperwork

Not only is a teacher’s workload immense, but high-quality contents, effectiveness and wide range are expected. You must be efficient.

-1- Use materials effectively
  - Use materials from the previous year kept at school (class news, handouts, etc)
  - Save the material you make, using a computer or files
  Example 1 When using a computer, if you put the date at the top of the document, it will be easy to use it the following year.
    170412 Class List 17/4/12
  Example. 2 Make a catalogue of teaching material (adding photos of information on the blackboard might be useful.)
  Example. 3 Organize portfolios by semesters.
  Example. 4 Have see-through covers on files.
  - Utilize booklets that have ideas for each month.
  - Take special care with any display material that be used again the following year.

-2- Learn from experienced teachers.
  - Teachers who work quickly, don’t waste time or effort. Copy their style.

-3- Have a good communication with other new teachers.
  - Make friends with other new teachers and exchange information.

-4- Whenever possible, divide work among teachers in the grade.
  - There should be some clerical jobs that can be divided.

-5- Always make copies of report cards
  - Having copies of report cards will make filling in year-end records easier.

* The most important thing of all is interaction with the children. Instruction too takes top priority. Use your time wisely; run the class smoothly.
Ryoko Tsuneyoshi

Ryoko Tsuneyoshi is the professor of Comparative Education at the Graduate School of Education, the University of Tokyo. One of her interests is the cross-cultural comparison of Japanese schooling. Books include: *The Japanese Model of Schooling: Comparisons with the United States* (RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), *Minorities and Education in Multicultural Japan: An Interactive Perspective* (co-edited with K. Okano, S. Boocock, Routledge, 2010)

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Contributing Organizations

The Metropolitan Elementary Research Group for Classroom Management
（東京都小学校学級経営研究会）

Machida City Elementary Education Research Group, Tokubetsu Katsudo Unit
（町田市公立小学校教育研究会 特別活動部）

The Japanese School Event Research Group for Elementary School
（全国小学校学校行事研究会）

http://zenshougyouken2009.jp/
Central Terms (from the Course of Study)

*tokubetsu katsudo=tokkatsu for short 特別活動（特活）... special activities (see definition in the report)

*sogoteki gakushu no jikan 総合的学習の時間 ... the period of integrated studies, integrated studies period

This is a period designed for self-initiated, problem-solving, and creative student learning, and schools can integrate across subjects and incorporate content that does not easily fall inside one particular subject.

retrieved August, 2011.

*seikatsu 医 生活科 ... Life Environment Studies

A hands-on subject for first and second graders in primary school which replaced social studies and science.

retrieved August, 2011.

Related Terms

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<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>nichoku 日直</td>
<td>daily monitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toban 当番</td>
<td>rotated chores (in small groups)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>kakari 係</td>
<td>roles (in small groups)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>gakkyu katsudo 学級活動</td>
<td>classroom activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>gakkyu kai 学級会</td>
<td>classroom meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>gakkyu keiei 学級経営</td>
<td>classroom management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>gakkyu zukuri 学級づくり</td>
<td>building the classroom community</td>
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<td>gakkyu tannin 学級担任</td>
<td>classroom teacher</td>
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<td>gakkou gyoji 学校行事</td>
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<td>han 班</td>
<td>classroom small groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>hansei 反省</td>
<td>reflection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Hansei is a method used in Japanese schools for self-improvement, often collaborating self-improvement

*kodomo ni yorisou 子どもに寄り添う building rapport with the children

*kodomo o mitoru 子どもをお見取る understanding the children