

## A Study of Teaching Material related to Adolescent Health Education I

Jerrold Frank\* Yoshimi NAKADE\*\*

### Introduction :

In 2005, we reported in this journal on our trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota in October of 2004 to learn more about the Project Northland (Frank & Nakade, 2005). As reported, Project Northland is a community-wide research program developed by the Division of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota with the primary aim to prevent or delay the onset of alcohol use among young adolescents, as well as to reduce the use among those young people who are already drinkers. The Project Northland programs begin with pre-teens in the 6th grade because studies show that alcohol use often begins during early adolescence. According to Monitoring the Future (<http://monitoringthefuture.org/>), a U.S. government sponsored annual national survey, nearly 70 percent of the 8th grade students in the survey reported having used alcohol. The survey also pointed out the serious

problems associated with acute alcohol intoxication among teens. Nearly nine out of ten teenage motor vehicle crashes involve alcohol, and 51 percent of adolescent motor vehicle fatalities involve youth with measurable blood alcohol levels. Besides auto injuries, acts that are often connected to episodes of acute alcohol intoxication include homicide and suicide, which are the leading causes of death among adolescents.

The less obvious, but equally dangerous effects of alcohol include a delay in normal development, increased school and family problems, and a greater likelihood of early sexual activity that can lead to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV/AIDS. Primary prevention programs like Project Northland attempt to combat these problems before they have a chance to develop.

Project Northland was designed using a community-wide model that addressed

---

\*浅井学園大学人間福祉学部福祉心理学科

\*\*浅井学園大学人間福祉学部福祉心理学科

キーワード : Adolescent health education, Teaching material

both supply and demand issues, rather than a single limited school based model. Intervention strategies were chosen that could address community level as well as individual level behavioral changes. In the initial research (Perry et. al, 1996), outcomes from the first three year intervention showed that students who never drank at the beginning of sixth grade (baseline non-users) showed a 28% reduction in monthly drinking and a 46% reduction in weekly drinking by the end of the eighth grade. In addition, there was also a 37% lower rate of cigarette smoking and 50% lower rate of marijuana usage by the end of the eighth grade.

Relative to the control group, students in the intervention group showed reduced levels of alcohol use by 30% in regard to weekly drinking and 20% by monthly drinking. Also, students in the intervention group reported feeling less peer pressure to use alcohol, understood the importance of reasons for not using alcohol and showed more realistic expectations about how many young people drink (Perry et. al, 1996).

Based on these encouraging results, we wanted to explore the possibility of adapting this program in schools and communities in Japan. Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services ([www.hazelden.org/bookplace](http://www.hazelden.org/bookplace)) has packaged a set of instructional materials covering the

components of Project Northland that are modeled after the materials used in the first interventions in Northern Minnesota. In order to gauge the appeal and adaptability of these materials in a Japanese environment, the authors purchased a complete set of the materials from Hazelden. The report that follows outlines the materials and our reactions to them.

### **Project Northland Curriculum :**

The Project Northland Curriculum is based on an understanding of the factors which influence alcohol and other drug use among young people. The program incorporates material and activities that address environmental, intrapersonal and behavioral factors. The social environment provides the necessary conditions for adolescent alcohol use. Environmental influences include behaviors of respected role models, social support from family and friends, and home, school, and community-level policies and practices. These influences create opportunities or barriers to use alcohol or other substances.

Though experimentation with alcohol and other drugs generally occurs within social situations, not all young people in high-risk environments choose to use alcohol. Intrapersonal and behavioral factors contribute to an adolescent's response to the social environment. The program tries to foster a sense in young

people that one has the ability to refuse offers of alcohol. The program does this by fostering values of conventional goals such as doing well in school (versus drinking), through encouraging participation in alcohol-free activities and by providing the adolescent a repertoire of skills to refuse offers to drink.

To accomplish these goals, the Project Northland curriculum uses a variety of educational strategies that include, group discussions, role plays, peer-led activities, class games, problem solving, videotapes, audiotapes, and small group projects. The curriculum package for each session includes session objectives and outline, activities, student handouts, and instruction sheets for peer leaders.

Each session contains detailed descriptions of procedures for presenting the activities, with direct questions and/or statements for the teacher to ask students. Materials needed for each session as well as peer leader instruction sheets are included in each manual. Original copies of all posters and student materials needed are also included in the manual. Overall, for a native speaker of English, it is felt that the materials included in the set we purchased from Hazelden are very user-friendly.

The role of the teacher is very important in this curriculum. The materials are designed to permit student- and peer leader directed activities where

possible, but the teacher must guide the process to ensure that the lesson plans are followed as presented. While teachers are effective sources of factual information for students, same-age peers are among the most credible sources of social information concerning alcohol use. Therefore, many of the small group activities within the curriculum are led by students who have been selected by their peers. These peer leaders facilitate small group discussions, report students' views to the class, lead role play activities, and organize and lead small group community projects.

### **Project Northland in Japan :**

In order for the authors to gain more familiarity with the materials and to judge whether the curriculum is transferable cross-culturally, the first component of Project Northland, the Slick Tracy Home Team Program, was used in a seminar class in the department of Welfare Psychology at Asaigakuen University in Ebetsu, Japan. The Slick Tracy Home Program is intended to bring 6th grade students together with their families to complete fun and educational activities at home. Using activity books, this four-week program provides a forum for 6th graders and their families to discuss alcohol related issues. A central story presented through comic strips, activities, tips for parents,

and a scorecard of participation, along with prizes awarded for participation, make this curriculum an easy and fun way for families to discuss the serious issue of alcohol. The program is designed to culminate in a poster fair in which the 6th graders who participated in the project present their own alcohol-related research projects to the community.

Naturally the students in this seminar class were not 6th graders. The class was comprised of four females and three males, all of who had recently reached legal drinking age, an interesting audience for an alcohol awareness program designed for American twelve year-olds. In addition to regular classes, third and fourth year students in the department of Welfare Psychology are required to take at least one seminar class from a faculty member in their department. Students have a great deal of flexibility in choosing which teacher they would like to study with and "shop around" before enrolling in a class in an effort to get a feel for what each teacher will be covering over the course of the semester. In the fall semester of the 2005/2006 school year, the "Frank" half of this co-authored paper told perspective students that he would like to use materials from an American alcohol awareness program aimed at 6th graders in an effort to get a better understanding of the material and to gauge how well the material

transferred cross-culturally. Prospective participants were given a brief background of the program and materials and were told that we would be looking at and reading materials in English but that subsequent discussions and reactions to the materials could and would be conducted in Japanese. Naturally many prospective students were intimidated by the English component of the seminar but six students decided to sign on for a try.

In the first class session, the students were given an introduction to the background and intent of Project Northland. They were then instructed that over the course of the following weeks that they were to imagine that they were twelve years old again as they participated in classroom activities involving Project Northland materials. The goal of the Slick Tracy Home Team Program is to draw 6th graders and their families together in meaningful conversations about alcohol related issues through the use of comic books and other engaging activities. In the process, students learn about alternatives to alcohol, the influence of alcohol advertising, and the skills needed to resist peer pressure. The program consists of nine learning sessions and culminates in a poster exhibition that is intended to involve parents and community leaders.

The topics and themes of the Slick Tracy Home Team Program are as follow :

- Week One: Myths and facts about alcohol.
- Week Two: Evaluating alcohol advertising messages.
- Week Three: Peer pressure and alcohol use.
- Week Four: Consequences of drinking and alternatives to drinking.
- Week Five: Program summation and completion of a time capsule.
- Week Six - Eight : Creating project posters and exhibits.
- Parent Evening: Poster exhibit and discussion with parents and community.

In the course of regularly scheduled classes in the fall of 2005, we tried to follow the Program as outlined above as faithfully as possible. In the week one comic book, we met Slick Tracy, "the slickest quickest private eye in the USA" and his partner, "the best in the North, South, East and West, Breathtest Mahoney (1998, Hazelden Foundation)." Slick Tracy and Breathtest Mahoney are young detectives who seek out bad guys that try to influence children to use alcohol. The humor in the comics is meant to help young people feel more comfortable when talking about the serious subject of kids' alcohol use. The

goal of week one was to help children identify what is really true about alcohol and what isn't. In episode one, Slick and Breathtest do battle with the evil Niagara False, who is trying to tell children that alcohol use will make you smart, cool and give you lots of energy. As you can see from the character names, you really have to be proficient in English to understand the puns and the underlying humor. The jokes in the comics went right over the heads of the students in this seminar class. With a lot of scaffolding and translation on the part of their native-English speaking teacher, the students were able to get the gist of the comic and the message it was attempting to portray. Much more transferable were the activities at the end of the comic. Activity one involved a set of seven true and false questions designed to assess student's knowledge of the harmful effects of alcohol. I'm sorry to report that none of the six students in this seminar got all of the questions right, revealing gaping holes in the knowledge of these twenty year old students in regard to the dangers of alcohol. Activity two asked students to share with a parent, or some other significant adult things from their lives, that were important to them as twelve year-olds. Students were to ask adults questions like, what was your favorite TV show when they were twelve, or what did you do for fun at

that age. Eventually questions led to what the adult being questioned views and attitudes were in regard to alcohol when they were the same age as the child doing the asking. While the students here didn't take these items home to ask their parents, we did think back to when they were twelve to explore their thoughts and impressions in regard to these questions. The items yielded a good discussion and all the students agreed that the activities were an effective way to raise young people's awareness of the myths and facts regarding alcohol and to involve parents or a significant adult into the discussion.

An important component of the Project Northland Curriculum is peer led instruction. Each week we assigned one or two students in this seminar to be responsible for the peer led activities associated with each unit and to explain what was happening in the comic book. The week one activity was designed to help students to think of ways to have "fun" that didn't involve alcohol. The students thought that this was great and even had applications to them personally at this stage in their life.

### **Conclusion :**

The weeks that followed proceeded with similar results and reactions. We witnessed Slick and Breathtest face other villains (the Buy-Buy Boys and Mad

Magnet) who tried to corrupt children into drinking through advertising and peer pressure and we also saw illustrated in week four the reasons why some children might want to choose to drink (to have fun, to overcome shyness, to look older, to be more popular, to solve personal problems, etc.), and the consequences of these decisions. As with week one, the content of the comics and the humor they were meant to portray (e.g. Let's go say hello to the Buy-Buy Boys), was lost on the non-native English speaking students in this class. There was however, positive response to all the activities at the end of each comic and the peer-led activities designed to support the theme for each week. The Japanese students in this seminar felt that young people in Japan would benefit from learning the distinction between myth and fact in regard to alcohol and its dangers and they also felt that Japanese children are being bombarded by false images relating to alcohol. The students felt that the activities in this program designed to help students be more aware of these falsities would be very beneficial.

The students in this seminar also reported that Japanese children feel peer pressure much in the same way as the children who are portrayed in the week three comic book do and that Japanese young people may choose to drink for

many of the same reason as the children in the week four comic did. Overall, it was felt by all participants that the basic message and framework of the Slick Tracy Home Team Program are culturally transferable and have real value in deterring alcohol use among young people but that the comics would have to be redesigned and written to be more culturally specific.

We followed the program to its conclusion by summarizing our thoughts and impressions and by making a time capsule that we will look at next year. Each student created a poster relating to issues and problems concerning alcohol use based on their own research that they presented on the final day of class. Overall, the students felt that the program could be very beneficial to Japanese young people with a certain amount of modification. A couple of the students from this seminar are considering using an adaptation of this model for an intervention in a local public school as part of their graduation thesis.

The authors of this paper have been able to continue this research thanks to a special study grant from Asai Gakuen University. We continue to explore options for applications of this material including plans to introduce the program to the local international school in the fall of 2006.

## References :

- Frank, J. J., Nakade, Y. (2005). In consideration of an effective adolescent health program I & II. *Journal of Human Welfare Studies*. No. 8, 213-221. Ebetsu, Japan : Hokkaido Asaigakuen University.
- Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services ([www.hazelden.org/bookplace](http://www.hazelden.org/bookplace))
- Perry, C. L., Williams, C. L., Veblen-Mortenson, S., Toomey, T., Komro, K. A., Anstine, P. S., McGovern, P. G., Finnegan, J. R., Forster, J. L., Wagenar, A. C, & Wolfson, M. (1996). Project Northland : Outcomes of a community-wide alcohol use prevention program during early adolescence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 86 (7) : 956-965.
- Monitoring the Future  
(<http://monitoringthefuture.org/>)

## 思春期健康教育教材研究に関する一考察 I

ジェラルド・フランク 中 出 佳 操

## 抄 録

2004年10月、「ノースランドプロジェクト」について研修・調査する為アメリカ、ミネソタ州ミネアポリスを訪問した。「ノースランドプロジェクト」とは、ミネソタ州立大学公共衛生学部流行病学科 (Division of Epidemiology) により開発された、青少年の飲酒を防ぐ、または飲酒を開始する時期を遅らせる事を基本の目的としたリサーチプロジェクトである。このプロジェクトでは、青少年の飲酒を防止するのに有効と思われる、環境、人間関係、行動に関連した様々な活動プログラムを作り上げてきた。

小論では、このプロジェクトで開発されたプログラムについて考察し、そのカリキュラムが日本社会の中でも有効か否かについて検証した。プログラムの第一ステップ「Slick Tracy Home Team Program」(STHTP) を浅井学園大学、心理福祉学科三年生のゼミ受講生を対象に試みた。本来、STHTPはアメリカ人の小学6年生を対象にデザインされたものだが、この研究は、プログラムのテーマが日本の地域性を考慮した場合、有効かつ有益であるかを調査するものである。調査に参加した学生は、日本人の青少年に合わせて修正すべき点はいくつかあると感じたもの、基本的なゴールとプログラムの構成は日本社会にも対応し日本人の青少年の飲酒問題を改善するのに有効であると実感した。

なおこの研究は平成16年度浅井学園大学特別研究費の交付を受けて行ったことを付記する。

キーワード：思春期健康教育，教材