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## APPLICATION OF HELISSON'S RESPONSIBILITY MODEL IN SOUTH KOREA: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF 'AT-RISK' MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

APLICACION DEL MODELO DE ENSEÑANZA DE LA RESPONSABILIDAD DE HELLISON EN COREA DEL SUR: UN ESTUDIO DE CASOS MÚLTIPLE CON ALUMNOS "EN RIESGO" EN LAS CLASES DE EF DE ENSEÑANZA MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Hellison's Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model was developed in the United States but has been applied in many different countries. However, its application in East Asian cultural contexts has not been sufficiently examined. The current study describes and interprets the cultural translation of this value-based instructional model in the physical education program of a South Korean middle school. A multiple case study design was used to examine the relevance and impact of TPSR through the experiences and perceptions of six purposefully selected students who had been identified as at risk of school failure. Multiple data sources indicate that a 20-lesson TPSR unit was well-received by the students and contributed to numerous positive behavior changes. The core goals and life skills associated with TPSR appeared relevant and acceptable to case study participants, however, the concept of self-direction emerged as more challenging for them to understand and enact. This may relate to differences in cultural schemas and educational norms. Such issues, as well as implications for research and practice, are discussed. The current study expands the TPSR literature by being one of the first to examine and make a case for the implementation of TPSR in an East Asian country.

### RESUMEN

El modelo de Enseñanza de la Responsabilidad Personal y Social (TPSR) de Hellison fue desarrollado en los Estados Unidos de América pero se ha aplicado en muchos otros países. Sin embargo, su aplicación en contextos culturales de Asia oriental no ha sido suficientemente examinada. El presente estudio describe e interpreta la traducción cultural de dicho modelo de instrucción basado en valores dentro de un programa de EF en un centro de enseñanza media de Corea del Sur. Se escogió un diseño de estudio

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de casos multiple para examinar la relevancia y el impacto del TPSR a través de las experiencias y percepciones de seis alumnos, escogidos a propósito, que habían sido identificados como 'en riesgo de fracaso académico'. Múltiples fuentes de datos indican que el programa TPSR de 20 lecciones fue bien recibido por los alumnos y que contribuyó a numerosos cambios positivos de su comportamiento. Los participantes consideraron relevantes los objetivos centrales y las habilidades para la vida social asociadas al TPSR; sin embargo, el concepto de auto-dirección emergió como el más difícil de entender y llevar a cabo. Esto puede deberse a las diferencias relativas a los esquemas culturales y a las normas educativas. Se discuten aquí estas cuestiones, así como sus implicaciones para la investigación y la práctica. Este estudio, al ser el primero que examina y propone la aplicación de TPSR en un país de Asia oriental, amplía la literatura sobre dicho modelo.

**KEYWORDS.** Personal and social responsibility; Confucian tradition; moral philosophy; culture; cultural translation.

**PALABRAS CLAVE.** Responsabilidad personal y social; tradición confuciana; filosofía moral; cultura; traducción cultural.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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*During soccer practice in a PE class, Jang intercepts the ball Lee is dribbling. When Lee gets intercepted, he angrily says, "Hey, Jang! Come on! Why did you steal my ball?" He punches Jang's stomach hard and dribbles the ball away from Jang curling up on the ground in pain.*

(Field note from a physical education class in a South Korean middle school)

This vignette could have taken place during a physical education (PE) class in any corner of the world. Childhood and adolescence are crucial stages in development when human beings are forming their identity and learning lessons about how they should conduct themselves and treat others (Hamilton, Hamilton, & Pittman, 2004). To be sure, cultural schemas, values, and norms differ across the globe and greatly influence student moral learning in multiple ways (Hsueh et al., 2005). However, it is recognized almost universally that sport and physical activity programs provide a potent and authentic context for teaching students about moral and ethical behavior and developing dispositions that will help them reach their own potential in life and contribute to the well-being of others (Hsu, 2004; Jones, 2005; Sheilds & Bredemeier 1995; Wright, Burroughs, & Tollefsen, in press). Accordingly, the notion of using sport and physical activity to foster personal and social responsibility is aligned with the position statements of numerous international organizations such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and the International Olympic Committee. One of the most well-established and widely applied instructional models with this intent is Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model. While TPSR is currently applied in many countries around the world, it was developed in the United States (US) and its application in East Asian cultural contexts has not been sufficiently examined in the literature. The current study describes and interprets the cultural translation of this

value-based model in the PE program of a South Korean middle school and considers its relevance for at risk students.

### ***Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility***

TPSR was developed by Hellison primarily through his work with troubled youth who had been identified as at risk of dropping out of school and engaging in a host of risky behaviors such as drug abuse and criminal activity (Hellison, 2011). The model was shaped by a democratic and student-centered approach, Hellison's personal values, and his sense of his students' developmental needs (Hellison, 1995, 2003, 2011). The model uses sport and physical activity as a vehicle to promote human decency, empower youth, and teach life skills that can be applied or transferred to other contexts (Hellison, 2011). The goals for students are organized into five levels. The first four of these levels can be practiced in the physical activity program and fall under two different constructs, personal and social responsibility (Li, Wright, Rukavina, & Pickering, 2008). Social responsibility goals include respecting the rights and feelings of others (Level 1) and caring (Level 4). Life skills and behaviors associated with these social responsibilities include controlling one's temper, including others, resolving conflicts peacefully, helping others, and teaching others. Personal responsibility goals include self-motivation (Level 2) and self-direction (Level 3). Life skills and behaviors associated with these personal responsibilities include giving good effort, persisting with difficult tasks, setting goals, and working independently. Level 5 in the TPSR model is transfer, i.e. the application of the responsibility goals and life skills practiced in the program to other contexts such as home or other classes.

The widespread popularity of TPSR among teachers in the US indicates that Hellison was successful in integrating a comprehensive yet straight-forward set of secular values with specific pedagogical strategies and structures. Moreover, the TPSR teaching philosophy resonates with ideals often espoused by American educational theorists, e.g. it is democratic, student-centered, and constructivist in nature. In addition to the model's intuitive appeal to teachers who subscribe to such philosophies, its popularity has likely been bolstered because it appears to be effective in engaging and bringing about positive change in students. An increasing number of studies conducted in the US have demonstrated the model is effective in creating a positive learning environment (Lee & Martinek, 2009; Schilling, Martinek, & Carson, 2007; Wright & Burton, 2008), increasing responsible behavior among students (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; DeBusk & Hellison, 1989; Hellison & Wright, 2003; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010), and encouraging students to explore the application of TPSR goals and life skills such as effort and self-control in other classes (Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010). Similar findings have been reported in several Western countries where TPSR has been applied. Researchers in Brazil have successfully implemented the model in adapted physical activity programs (Monteiro, Pick, & Valentini, 2008). Beaudoin (2010) in Canada and Gordon (2010) in New Zealand both report the model has proven relevant and effective in PE programs in their respective contexts. The group outside the US that has published most extensively on TPSR is based in Valencia, Spain. This group has reported the effective implementation of TPSR in programs for underserved youth and in the

broader PE curriculum (Escartí, Pascual & Gutiérrez, 2005; Escartí, Gutiérrez, Pascual, Marín, Martínez-Taboada & Chacón 2006; Escartí, Gutiérrez, Pascual & Llopis, 2010a; Escartí, Gutiérrez, Pascual & Marín, 2010b).

### ***Cultural Differences and the South Korean Educational Context***

While the application of TPSR in the Western countries noted above has required varying degrees of cultural and linguistic translation, many of their dominant cultural values have similar roots, e.g. Christianity and the moral philosophies of ancient Greece and the European Renaissance. The deep roots of East Asian culture, however, have distinct and fundamentally different origins. For example, throughout much of East Asia, Confucianism still represents the dominant framework for moral philosophy and provides explicit definitions of concepts such as respect, honor, and filial piety (Hsueh, Zhou, Cohen, Hundley & Deptula, 2005; Yang & Rosenblatt, 2008). Proper and appropriate behavior in the Confucian tradition is determined in large part by one's role in hierarchical relationships, i.e. parent-child or teacher-student. Confucianism and long-held beliefs about the value of obedience, learning through repetition, and rote-memorization can still be seen in the educational practices of many East Asian countries including South Korea. According to Shin and Koh (2007), "The core of Confucianism is characterized by its hierarchical human relationships. Thus, educational thoughts and philosophies have naturally reflected in this hierarchical or patriarchal Korean society. Accordingly, teachers' authority is viewed as an undeniable premise by most Korean students" (p. 305). Other recent studies have indicated that despite attempts at educational reform, both teachers and students in South Korea struggle to break from the habits of content-centered teaching and passive learning (Campbell, Oh, Shin, & Zhang, 2010; McGuire, 2007).

PE in South Korea is guided by the Korean National Curriculum in Physical Education. The latest revision of this curriculum was in 1997 and a major thrust of that revision was to move in the direction of other educational reform efforts, that is, to move away from an entirely top down approach (Yoo & Kim, 2005). However, several reports suggest this change is largely unrealized in practice (Kim & Taggart, 2004; Yoo & Kim, 2005; Yu & Kim, 2010). This seems especially true in urban schools. In a study of the culture of PE in an urban elementary school, Kim and Taggart (2004) noted high levels of student disengagement and reported that many teachers even seemed disengaged with the subject matter and lacked pedagogical knowledge. Yu and Kim (2010) investigated PE programs in elementary, middle, and high schools in Seoul and reported similar findings. Regarding the very traditional role of PE teachers, they stated, "Moreover, teachers were typically viewed as authority figures in Korean physical education classes. The role of the teachers was to command, and the student's role was to obey respectfully, with corporal punishment frequently used as an effective means of discipline. This traditional value is deeply rooted in Korea's Confucian culture" (p.31).

Given these cultural differences, the application of TPSR in the South Korean PE curriculum presents interesting opportunities. Various sources note that problems with student behavior, classroom management, and teacher burn-out are increasing in South Korean schools, especially in urban centers like Seoul (Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2009; Shin

& Koh, 2007, 2008). As explained earlier, these problems appear heightened in PE. Although issues related to student disengagement and problematic behavior are noted in the literature, there is a gap regarding attempts to meet the needs of “at risk” students in South Korean PE programs. For all these reasons, an instructional model offering a positive, student-centered approach to behavior management appears relevant and worth exploration in this context. However, the stark contrast between the teaching philosophy and practices of TPSR with the traditional and deeply entrenched approach may make it difficult to apply this alternative curriculum model effectively in South Korean PE. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to describe and interpret the cultural translation of TPSR in the PE program of a South Korean middle school and consider its relevance for at risk students.

## 2. METHODS

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This study represents a new analysis of data from an action-research project conducted by the first author, Jin, several years ago. The project involved the implementation of a 20-lesson TPSR-based PE unit delivered in a public middle school in Seoul, South Korea, where Jin was a teacher at the time. A qualitative case study design was employed (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research methods are well-suited for examining cultural issues and also for providing thick descriptions of programs. Case study designs, in particular, are recommended when the intent of a program evaluation is to understand the relevance and potential benefits of a program for individual participants (Patton, 2002). Such methods have proven useful in previous TPSR studies (Martinek, Schilling & Hellison, 2006; Wright, White & Gaebler-Spira, 2004).

### **Setting**

According to the US Department of State (2011):

Korea's population is one of the most ethnically and linguistically homogenous in the world. Except for a small Chinese community (about 20,000), virtually all Koreans share a common cultural and linguistic heritage. With 48.7 million people inhabiting an area roughly the size of Indiana, South Korea has one of the world's highest population densities.

The same source reports that Seoul, South Korea's capital, has a population of approximately 10.5 million. While the country's public education system has extremely high retention rates overall (99% for middle school and 95% for high school) and contributes to an impressive literacy rate (98%) nationally, schools in many neighborhoods of Seoul increasingly have problems associated with high population density, high concentrations of poverty, and increases in juvenile delinquency (Shin & Koh, 2007, 2008). The middle school where this TPSR program was delivered is a mid-size school in Seoul with 900 students in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades. All students in the school were native South Koreans. The residents of the neighborhood served by this school were predominantly from a low socio-economic background.

## Participants

The participants of the study were six 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (3 males; 3 females). The participants were all 14 years old at the time of the study. They were purposefully sampled because of frequent problematic behaviors that placed them at risk of academic failure. All six students had frequent conflicts with their peers and were considered by multiple teachers to be problematic. For example, all six participants had engaged in the following behaviors: a) swearing and insulting others, b) using violence, c) bullying, and d) exploitation. **Table 1** displays additional information about the individual participants in terms of specific problematic behaviors and their level of interest in PE prior to the study.

**Table 1.** Individual Participant Information

Participant	Jang	Lee	Seo	Han	Park	Choi
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Behavior Problems	Runaway, smoking, drinking, violence	Runaway, smoking, drinking, violence	Runaway, drinking, violence	Smoking, drinking, violence	Runaway, violence, truancy	Stealing, drinking, violence
Interest in PE class	Highly interested, good at soccer	Highly interested, good at track & field	Interested only when playing sports	Not interested	Highly interested, good at running	Not interested

## Implementation of the TPSR

Lesson plans for 20 class periods (50 minutes for each class) were developed based on the TPSR model but also aligned to the Korean National Curriculum in Physical Education. Major subject matter content included basketball, handball, gymnastics, fitness, vaulting, and free game play. Preliminary lesson plans were developed by the first author, Jin, who was a PE teacher and graduate student at the time, and modified through consultation with three faculty members at a South Korean university who were knowledgeable about the TPSR model. The content of the 20 lesson plans are summarized in the **Appendix**. These 20 lessons were implemented by Jin for a semester to four 8<sup>th</sup> grade regular PE classes. The four classes consisted of 160 students, about 40 per class, including the six case study participants. Each of the four classes was represented in this study by at least one of the case study participants. All 160 were made aware that Jin was implementing a curricular innovation as part of an action research project and that this was the reason for many of the new instructional strategies. Organizational structures such as awareness talks, group-meetings, and self-reflection time were utilized on a daily basis throughout the unit as recommended by Hellison (2011). The first four responsibility levels were the primary focus of implementation in this unit with the fifth level, transfer, addressed only indirectly. A number of pedagogical strategies recommended by Hellison (2011) such as student

leadership, student choice in the curriculum, were integrated at strategic points throughout the unit and used to emphasize certain responsibility goals and life skills.

In the years since Jin conducted his original action research project, there has been an increased focus on the need to address fidelity in TPSR studies (Pascual, Escartí, Llopis, Gutiérrez, Marín, & Wright, 2011; Wright, 2009; Wright & Craig, 2011). Jin did interpret and adapt the TPSR model to fit his own teaching style, his students' needs and interests, as well as his cultural context and the external expectations placed on him by the national curriculum. However, Hellison (2003, 2011) encourages teachers to do this, i.e. to make the model "their own". For example, although Hellison does not present the responsibility levels in a step-by-step progression, he does acknowledge that for teachers who are fairly new to the model, this is one acceptable approach (Hellison, 2003). Moreover, this step-by-step progression has been used in other adaptations of the model with relative success (Pascual et al., 2011). Based on our secondary analysis of the data from the project the case for fidelity rests partly with Jin's understanding of the model and partly with the specific structures and strategies he employed.

As noted above, Jin was advised in this project by three faculty members who were all familiar with TPSR. Prior to conducting his action research project, Jin read all available materials on the model and even translated the 2003 version of Hellison's text into Korean. At the same time was studying and reflecting on the TPSR approach, he was exploring its application in his teaching, experimenting with new structures such as peer leadership and goal setting activities one at a time. Hence, by the time Jin designed and implemented the unit described here, he had developed a solid understanding of the underlying assumptions and key themes of the model. As noted earlier, Jin built his unit around the core responsibility levels, used lesson format strategies such as awareness talks and reflection time, and employed a number of empowerment based teaching strategies such as goal-setting and peer teaching. The lack of focus on Level 5: Transfer, represents the largest limitation in terms of fidelity. Nonetheless, the application of so many fundamental TPSR components, delivered by a reflective practitioner committed to sharing responsibility with his students, make a solid case for fidelity to the original model even if the program itself was adapted in some ways.

It should be remembered that the TPSR unit described here was delivered by Jin to all his students at the time. Data collection was focused on the case study participants and their experience in this unit, but the implementation of the model, participation in discussions of responsibility, etc., was not restricted to them.

### **Data Collection**

The main data sources included individual interviews, participant observations, and documents such as lesson plans, student assessments, and written reflections. Each of the six students was informally interviewed either during or right after each lesson to explore their reactions to the lesson using questions such as, "How do you feel about today's class?" Each interview lasted five to 10 minutes and the average number of the interviews for each student was 18. Jin documented participant responses immediately afterward in a field note journal. In addition to the informal interviews, all six participants

were individually interviewed in depth using semi-structured interview questions three times after school, at the beginning, mid-point, and the end of the semester. Those in-depth interviews lasted 30 minutes on average and probed more deeply on specific examples and topics of interest emerging from Jin's ongoing observations as well as the individual participants' responses to previous interviews. Therefore, the content and focus of these interviews varied. Jin was careful throughout the study to be discrete about his focus on the individual case study participants and to make sure the additional attention they received did not distract him from his teaching in general or create divisions between case study participants and their peers. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Field notes for all 20 lessons were recorded by Jin from the perspective of a participant-observer. His objective was to document and understand what was going on in the setting with a particular focus on the six case study participants (Merriam, 1998). Jin wrote these observational field notes in detail in a laptop computer immediately following each observation/lesson. Documents such as the Jin's unit and lesson plans were retained as well as student self-assessment sheets, reflection papers, contracts, and work sheets collected from the six case study participants.

It should be noted that all original data sources and transcriptions were in Korean and later translated into English. Due to fundamental differences in the structure of these languages, some nuances are lost in the translation process. Because Jin is fluent in Korean and English and also served as the teacher-researcher in the study, we are confident in the integrity of the translated data in terms of meaning and substance. However, we are cognizant that some level of authenticity is lost when quotes from participants, especially youth, are translated culturally and linguistically.

### **Data Analysis**

Given the purpose of the study, the first four levels of Hellison's (2011) model were used as analytic framework that guided initial coding, categorizations, and thematizing. The interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were read multiple times and individual units of meaning were coded based on their correspondence to the four levels. More specifically, for each level, all data that had a meaningful connection to the level were organized over time and then open-coded (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) focusing on the six students' experience with and response to the TPSR lessons. The codes were then grouped into categories by constantly comparing properties across codes within a level and across the levels. Next, all emerging categories were described in terms of properties and dimensions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and those categories were contrasted and compared to identify emerging themes.

Several strategies were used to bolster the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For instance, at the time the TPSR unit was developed and delivered, Jin engaged in peer-debriefing with his faculty advisors. Also, he used the informal and formal interviews with case study participants as opportunities for member checking. The multiple data sources outlined earlier were triangulated during the analysis phase. Finally, we employed what Denzin (1978) has called investigator triangulation. Jin was a



teacher-researcher in this study and his tacit knowledge of the program was crucial to the analysis. On the contrary, Paul, the second author, was not present when the TPSR unit was implemented so his more removed perspective added a layer of objectivity to the analysis. Jin, who now resides in the US is a native South Korean and was therefore a cultural insider. Paul is a cultural outsider to the South Korean context. However, as an American and protégé of Don Hellison, Paul was able to contribute a deep understanding of the TPSR model and its roots. Together, the two of us were able to bring complimentary experiences and cultural perspectives to the analysis which was essential for a balanced study of this cultural translation of TPSR to the South Korean context.

### 3. RESULTS

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As the TPSR model was implemented, all six case study participants showed positive changes relative to the core personal and social responsibility levels, even though the degree of change was different for individual students. Also, these changes occurred over time and were not dramatic but gradual. What follows is a detailed description of the ways the students responded to and changed with respect to the various levels.

#### **Level One: Respecting the rights and feelings of others**

As documented in unit and lesson plans, the first five lessons of the TPSR unit focused on respect (Level One). During those lessons, all his students were provided opportunities to understand and experience the value of respecting the rights and feelings of others through awareness talks, all-touch basketball games, and self-reflection. The instructor, Jin, introduced Level One to students in awareness talks using specific examples. He also reinforced the value of respect during the physical activities and related it to the students' experiences that day when guiding students through self-reflection time at the end of the lessons. When Level One was first introduced, "Students seemed to be confused because the content and structure of the class was different from typical PE classes they used to have" (Jin's Field Notes). However, as students in all his classes had learning experiences focusing on Level One with the instructor's facilitation and reinforcement, they became more familiar with the language and expected behaviors. With time, the case study participants demonstrated significant development in understanding the concept of respect as it was framed in the TPSR lessons. One participant captured this in his written reflections after a lesson:

*When we played basketball, Misook missed the ball all the time. Her catching looked weird. I really felt like teasing her, but held it back. We just learned respect and I remembered what the teacher said about it. Making fun of others' bad performance is bad because we all are different. (Han's Reflection Journal)*

In addition, they seemed to get better at controlling their behavior as their understanding of Level One increased. In a written reflection, Jang wrote, "When the teacher was explaining rules of the soccer game, I got bored and wanted to throw

pebbles at the kids in front of me. But then Level One came to my mind and I didn't do it". Another example was recorded in Jin's field notes. Jin observed that Park often teased a particular boy in her class, calling him "Gorilla" at the beginning of the semester. However, as the concept of respect was repeatedly emphasized through various Level One teaching strategies, she came to stop teasing the boy. In his field notes, Jin described an informal conversation with Park in which they discussed this change. She had told Jin, "I realized making fun of someone's appearance is not alright to do because my appearance could be different from others' and if someone teased me about the way I look, it would hurt my feelings so bad" (Jin's Field Notes).

By the end of the TPSR unit, Jin stated in his field notes that all six case study participants were misbehaving less frequently than they did prior to implementation of the model. He noted, "They became more patient, self-controlled, and accepting and more likely to look for a peaceful resolution to a conflict". For example, at the beginning of the semester, when Jang was practicing soccer with other students, he used to insult students whose skills were not as good as his. However, as the semester proceeded, he showed more respect for others. When interviewed after a soccer game, he said:

*When I got hit by the ball Zaehee kicked, I wanted to hit him, but I fought the urge. He looked scared when he told me "sorry." and I said, "It's okay." Zaehee isn't good at soccer but he is good at piano. Now I know everybody is different and everybody can be talented in different things. I am glad I didn't hit him.*

Although the participants exhibited positive changes in terms of respect and self-control, a concern was voiced regarding the way this approach reduced some of the traditional focus on psychomotor development. For example, after participating in the all-touch basketball game, Seo reported that the game did not help him to develop his shooting skills. He said:

*The teacher said I had to pass to all kids before I shoot, so I didn't shoot as much as I could. At the end, I was just standing around waiting for pass. I feel like my basketball skills even got worse. Also, our class time was used for the explanation of the levels. I wish we just played sports.*

Unit and lesson plans, as well as Jin's field notes, indicate that a portion of each lesson was allotted for teaching the TPSR levels that previously probably would have been spent working on sport skills and drills or fitness activities. In this regard, the relative amount of time devoted to affective development was greater during this PE unit than what most of the students were used to.

### **Level 2: Self-motivation**

Regarding Level Two, the students in all Jin's classes were engaged in activities designed to help them positively experience effort and participation. As reflected in the **Appendix**, lessons that focused on Level Two centered on the topics of rhythm and handball. According to lesson plans and his field notes, Jin utilized awareness talks, self-

reflection time, group meetings, and the use of different stations to promote student participation and effort. As the implementation of Level Two proceeded, it became evident to Jin that all his students, including the case study participants, came to be more aware of the value of “effort” and “hard work.” This was confirmed by some of the case study participants’ own words. For example, Seo wrote in his reflection journal, “Today was too hot so I didn’t want to move at all. But I remembered the goal of Level Two, effort, and I tried to do my best.” Han also said in an interview after a class on handball, “I think, today, I worked on the stuff as hard as I could. I don’t like physical activities much so I didn’t want to participate. But I tried to practice skills as much as I could, thinking about what you [Jin] said about effort at the beginning of the class”. The participants’ increased awareness of effort was often reflected in their active participation in class activities and voluntary practice outside of the classroom. For instance, over the course of the unit, Lee came to more actively participate in tasks and physical activities in class and even to look for additional challenges. This is explained in the following excerpt from a reflection paper he wrote:

*At the beginning, I always gave up in the middle of everything. But now I found myself doing my best in everything. Whenever my friends say, “You worked so hard,” I feel really proud. I never put in this much effort before and I feel good about myself. I don’t care about my grade because I tried my best up to the end. I feel good about myself for completing all the hard work and being patient.*

This statement suggests that his understanding of the value of effort not only inspired him to do best but also contributed to a positive self-image.

Besides the participants’ increased awareness of effort and participation, some associated improvement in psychomotor skills with participating in the TPSR model. In particular, they commonly attributed their skill improvement to their increased effort and patience. Lee said:

*I was not good at the pommel horse but our team decided to include it in our creative gymnastics. I didn’t like it but I thought I should follow because most of my team mates liked the idea. I practiced a lot by myself for the sake of our team and I think my skill improved a lot.*

The participant, Seo, who complained about his decreased involvement in physical activities due to the implementation of the model at Level One, came to more actively participate in class activities based on his heightened awareness of respect and effort. When interviewed about a creative sport project, he said:

*We changed a regular soccer game to include all kids. At the beginning, I thought it wouldn’t be that fun because I wouldn’t get the ball as much time as I used to when I played soccer. I’m good at soccer. But once we practiced the new game, it was really fun. We had to run more and faster*

*than the regular kind of game. After the game, I got all sweaty but it felt good.*

This quote also highlights the gradual nature of the improvements observed in this unit.

Interestingly, the positive impact on psychomotor skills observed in the other participants was not evident in Choi. She possessed a passive personality and repeatedly said that she was not interested in physical activities. She appeared to develop negative attitudes toward PE classes when presented with tasks that required everybody's participation, mainly in the lessons focused on Level Two. Also during team projects that highlighted Levels Three and Four, she minimally participated and tried to minimize her responsibility. This tendency is in contrast to the behaviors of Jang and Lee. Both Jang and Lee were highly interested in PE and competitive at physical activities which motivated them to actively participate in the given tasks. Their participation, in turn, facilitated their psychomotor skill development. This was one of several examples suggesting that individual students need different amount of time to move from one level to the next according to their different characteristics, needs, and interests. However, due to the large class sizes, pressures to adhere to the national curriculum, and Jin's level of experience with the model at the time, students did not receive greatly differentiated instruction.

### **Level 3: Self-Direction**

During Level Three time, students in all Jin's classes were given opportunities to set up their own learning goals, make personal plans including their own fitness routines, and carry out their planned learning activities independently without the teacher's direct supervision. Level Three lessons centered on the topics of gymnastics and free games. Specific strategies utilized to help students develop responsible and self-directed behaviors included teacher-student contract, self-assessment, self-reflection, and giving choice for independent work.

Unlike the experience with Level One and Level Two, the case study participants often had difficulty understanding self-direction. Jin wrote in his field notes, "They sometimes limited the concept of self-responsibility to role responsibility". In other words, they perceived responsibility mostly as playing roles expected by others in given classroom settings. They rarely conceptualized responsibility as self-directed responsibility. In an interview, Jang said, "My friends voted to make me team leader and they expect me to do my best. I don't want to disappoint them so I'm very concerned about if I am capable to fulfill my responsibility". Jin reflected in his field notes that the concept of self-directed responsibility seemed "abstract" and more difficult for the participants to understand.

Despite their limited understanding of self-direction, the participants exhibited more responsible and self-directed behaviors in learning. During Level Three lessons, students were given tasks that required them to exercise their autonomy such as developing their own fitness plan, creating a sequence of various dance moves, and modifying sport games. Through participating in those tasks, the case study participants came to realize their increased self-responsibility and ownership for learning which Jin perceived

as contributing to the development of positive self-image (Jin's Field Notes). The following excerpt from the interview with Han captures this:

*I wasn't that responsible of a person. When I had to create dance moves by myself, I was nervous and stressed and I didn't want to do it. However, as I worked on it, I started to enjoy the process. It was fun to create dance moves only for myself; not for anybody else. Since it's for me, I need to take responsibility. I know myself most so nobody can do it for me. I'm very proud of myself because I didn't think I could do this good of a job.*

However, one student, Choi, expressed her discomfort for being self-directed, saying:

*I don't like this dance project because I've got to decide everything by myself and I'm responsible for everything. Even though the teacher said we could help each other, everything is my responsibility - I have to make a plan, create moves and practice them. I want the teacher tell me what to do, like other teachers.*

A similar sentiment came through in Park's reflection, she stated, "I don't understand why the teacher wants us not to practice, but to create a dance. I didn't know what to do, so I just chatted with my friend, pretending we were talking about our dance moves". Again, Jin observed that the participants often had difficulty understanding the value of responsibility associated with self-directed learning as it was a different learning mode than they generally experienced. He noted there seemed to be more cultural barriers involved in translating the concept of self-direction as compared to respect, effort, or participation.

#### **Level Four: Caring**

Level Four lessons were designed to provide opportunities for all the students in Jin's classes to cooperate, support, and care about each other to extend their understanding of responsibility beyond themselves. The physical activity topics of Level Four lessons were fitness and free games. The instructor had students participate in group projects more than individual work during this stage.

As the semester was approaching the end when Level 4 was implemented, Jin noted that the case study participants had already started exhibiting caring behaviors. For instance, they cooperated and participated in group work more actively than they had at the beginning of the semester. This change is reflected in one of Choi's interviews:

*I used to hate PE, but lately the teacher asked us to do some group projects and I thought working together and helping each other is pretty fun, which I never thought it would be. I feel good about cooperating with each other and respecting each other's opinions more. Now I'm looking forward to PE and I get excited about it.*

Jin also noted, "Their participation in group work seemed better due to their increased respect for others and awareness of the importance of cooperation". For example, earlier in the semester, Park tried to avoid making contributions to group projects. Jin observed that Park used to passively do the part assigned to her with minimum effort. Accordingly, her classmates did not like having her in their group. However, through class activities emphasizing cooperation, she came to realize the value of cooperation and respect other students. When interviewed after her group presentation of a warm-up program, she said:

*I think our presentation went very well because all of us worked hard. When we created this warm-up program, I suggested a few ideas and I felt like they listened to me and took my ideas seriously. I was really happy because they seemed to respect me. This was kind of new for me and I thought I should listen to others too. I practiced hard even though sometimes I didn't want to, because I knew the others also practiced hard for our group presentation. I didn't want to ruin our presentation. If we didn't cooperate, we couldn't have done the presentation this good.*

The students also came to consider the needs and feelings of others and contributed to the class on their own initiative in many ways. For example, Jin had noted that after a class using hula hoops, Seo came to him and asked if he could get a roll of duct tape. Seo had seen some hula hoops' connecting parts were loose and he wanted to secure them with duct tape. In his journal, Seo reflected on this event as follows:

*I wrapped loose parts of the hula hoops with duct tape. It was hard but I feel really great about doing it because the other students could use better hula hoops for gymnastics. I never thought working for others would make me this feel this good.*

Jin reflected in his field notes that comments like this from some students seemed to suggest they were taking the concept of caring from a personal level, such as cooperation, to a social level, such as group welfare or service to community.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

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This study examined the cultural translation and implementation of the TPSR model in the PE program of an urban middle school in South Korea and its effectiveness relative to six at risk students. Prior to this study there was limited awareness of the TPSR model in East Asia. Although the first edition of Hellison's (1995) book on TPSR was translated into Japanese and the second edition (Hellison, 2003) was translated into Korean, this study documents the first attempt we know of to integrate TPSR into the regular PE curriculum of an East Asian country. The findings demonstrate that despite its roots in Western culture and American educational philosophy, TPSR can be successfully integrated into PE programs in East Asian countries such as South Korea. Moreover, TPSR appeared relevant and effective in terms of teaching students who were previously identified as

at risk. In fact, the increases in case study participants' self-control, respect, effort, and caring are consistent with those reported in previous TPSR studies conducted in the US (DeBusk & Hellison, 1989; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010; Wright & Burton, 2008) and Spain (Escarti et al., 2006, 2010a, 2010b). In the following paragraphs, we interpret the current findings and discuss their implications for applying TPSR with students, teachers, and PE programs in South Korea and possibly other East Asian countries.

**Students.** Although Hsueh et al. (2005) have noted subtle differences in the way East Asian and American students interpret respect, the way it was framed and applied in this TPSR program did not appear to pose any cultural conflict or confusion. The same can be said for the TPSR goals of effort and caring. The concept of self-direction, however, did appear more challenging for some of Jin's at risk students to understand and embrace. He did attribute this in part to how different this concept was from their typical educational experience. It may also link to fundamental cultural differences between East Asian countries where collectivism and filial piety are valued as part of the Confucian tradition as opposed to the US where individualism and autonomy are highly prized (Hsueh et al., 2005).

The increases in student responsibility reported here did take time and some resistance was observed to this alternative approach, especially in the beginning. This may relate in part to the fact that TPSR was so different from what the participants were accustomed to, e.g. self-directed activities and self-reflection time. However, other educational research has shown that South Korean students are able to adapt to alternative and more student-centered teaching styles and structures. For instance, House (2009) reported that among South Korean secondary students more authentic and independent learning experiences in science were related to higher levels of interest. Dong et al. (2008) noted that South Korean students in language arts responded positively to collaborative reasoning, a more student-centered structure than they typically experienced. Shin and Crookes (2005) made similar observations relating to the use of critical dialogue strategies for teaching English to South Korean students. It should also be considered that even in TPSR studies conducted in the US, the pedagogical approach may vary greatly from the content-centered focus and top-down approach to authority that characterize the culture of many urban schools (Lee & Martinek, 2009; Wright & Burton, 2008). In a number of these studies, observed and self-reported increases in student responsibility have taken nearly as long to see, i.e. 20 lessons or more.

**Teachers.** On the surface, it may appear the student-centered orientation of TPSR is at odds with traditional methods of instruction in South Korea. However, research indicates that many South Korean teachers are strongly committed to instilling values and promoting positive self-concept in their students, just as Jin was. Shin and Koh (2007) conducted a study of urban teachers in the US and South Korea and made the following observation, "Korean teachers were more concerned about student self-concept, that is, student internal aspects of self-motivation, self-determination, self-discipline, moral values, and positive attitudes toward their learning and conduct" (p. 304). The same authors also reported, "Korean teachers were more likely [than their

American counterparts] to intervene directly in disciplinary procedures, such as student-teacher conferences and verbal and non-verbal warnings. As the power controllers, the Korean teachers appeared to intervene or control student problem behaviors in person without having a third party's assistance" (Shin & Koh, 2008, p. 24). These observations may reflect deeper cultural beliefs in the Confucian tradition of East Asia about the role of the teacher. Hsueh et al. (2005) point out in a study comparing Chinese and American students' understanding of respect that "The teacher as an authoritative figure, but not a moral model or leader, has a unique history in the United States, a country which mandates the separation of church and state" (p. 250). They point out that in East Asian culture, instilling such lessons is an essential role for teachers. Therefore, although TPSR is quite different from current educational practices, it may provide structures that would allow teachers in East Asian cultures like South Korea to enact some of their deep commitments related to their role as educators, especially when working with at risk students.

**PE Programs.** While the alternative structures such as awareness talks and self-reflection time, along with the increased focus on the affective domain were quite different from typical PE lessons in South Korea, the findings reported here indicate that given sufficient time, these aspects of the TPSR model had a positive impact on the learning environment for at risk students. It should be noted that while this approach is not traditional, it is not necessarily in conflict with the Korean National Curriculum in Physical Education. For instance, although in practice there is a much stronger emphasis placed on the psychomotor learning domain, the objectives of the national curriculum do address the cognitive and affective learning domains (Yoo & Kim, 2005). Regarding affective development, the curriculum states students should "learn socially desirable attitudes and culturally valuable norms through physical activity" and that teachers should "promote cooperative team work, self-satisfaction, integrity, and responsibility when teaching physical education" (Yoo & Kim, 2005, p. 21). Given this alignment with the stated curricular objectives and the apparent need to improve the learning environment in many South Korean PE programs, we recommend that TPSR be considered as one viable option for program improvement.

As noted earlier, the literature indicates South Korean teachers increasingly need to deal with problematic student behavior as well as their own disengagement and burn out (Kim, Lee & Kim, 2009; Shin & Koh, 2007, 2008). These problems are especially acute in PE programs (Kim & Taggart, 2004; Yu & Kim, 2010). Not only could TPSR potentially address these issues and revitalize PE programs, it may capitalize on many teachers' beliefs about the importance of moral education and increase their level of professional engagement. While TPSR can be aligned with the national PE curriculum and broader educational reforms in South Korea, the current emphasis on psychomotor development may present an obstacle. In PE programs that are deeply entrenched in this tradition, it may be necessary for individual teachers and other stakeholders to campaign for such an alternative approach.

**Limitations and Conclusion.** The current study does have limitations. The number of participants involved was small and the current findings are based on a secondary



analysis of data gathered in a project that was conducted several years ago. Although a case can be made for the fidelity of the TPSR unit to the original model, Jin's implementation did represent his own interpretation and had to conform to external curriculum guidelines. Also, by not addressing transfer directly, a key aspect of the TPSR model was lacking. With these limitations noted, it appears the findings presented here are sufficient to make a case for the cultural relevance and practical application of TPSR in South Korea and possibly other East Asian countries. We recommend this instructional model be further explored in terms of research and practice as it applies to the East Asian cultural context.

Future studies may first establish whether the positive outcomes reported here can be replicated by other teachers, at various grade levels, and on a larger scale. Also, future researchers may delve more deeply into the cultural schemas around self-direction that appeared to pose obstacles for Jin's students. Alternative ways to present these concepts and/or adapt the model may be called for to reduce the challenges some students had with understanding and enacting self-direction. Finally, as Jin did not deal directly with TPSR Level Five, Transfer, future research in the East Asian cultural context should examine the cultural translation and application of this concept. In terms of practice, while there is growing awareness of TPSR in East Asia, most teachers have not received any formal training on the model. Therefore, implementation program- or district-wide, in the short term, would require professional development and in-service training for faculty. More long-term change would come from increased exposure during pre-service training in university-based physical education teacher education programs. For implementation of TPSR to become more widely supported and embraced in South Korean schools, it would need to be discussed from multiple perspectives. Ideally, such conversations would include various stakeholders such as policy makers, teacher educators, administrators, curriculum developers, parents, teachers, and students.

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(Appendix: Content and Organization of the 20-Lesson TPSR Unit, next page)

## APPENDIX: CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE 20-LESSON TPSR UNIT

No.	Subject Matter	TPSR Level	TPSR Objectives	Sample Activities	Equipment/Materials
1	Basketball	1	Self-control	Pass, dribble, awareness talks	Basketball
2	Basketball		Respect	All-touched game	Basketball
3	Vaulting		Respect	Floor exercise, Self-reflection time	Vaulting
4	Vaulting		Respect	Floor exercise, Self-reflection time	Vaulting
5	Evaluation		Self-control & Respect	Evaluation	Teacher-student evaluation sheet
6	Handball	2	Participation	Shooting, Awareness talks	Handball
7	Handball		Participation	Running shoot, Self-reflection time	Handball
8	Rhythm		Effort	Hula hoop, Group meetings	Checklists
9	Rhythm		Effort	Hula hoop, Self-reflection time	Checklists
10	Evaluation		Participation & Effort	Self-assessment	Self-assessment sheet
11	Gymnastics	3	Self-direction	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
12	Gymnastics		Self-direction	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
13	Free game		Responsibility	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
14	Free game		Responsibility	Select activities by themselves	Contracts, Reflection paper
15	Evaluation		Responsibility	Evaluation	Teacher-student evaluation sheet
16	Fitness	4	Caring	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
17	Fitness		Caring	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
18	Free game		Helping	Select activities by themselves	Contracts
19	Free game		Helping	Select activities by themselves	Contracts, Reflection paper
20	Evaluation		Caring & Helping	Self-assessment	Self-assessment sheet