

7. Basic Research on Violent Behavior in Elementary  
School Students—Underlying Causes and Response Measures  
Leader: TAKI Mitsuru, Senior Researcher, Guidance and Counseling  
Research Center

(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

This is an investigation into violent behavior in elementary schools, an issue which has recently been gaining more attention. In order to construct an argument based on scientific evidence, basic materials are gathered and used to determine underlying causes and response measures.

For this purpose, two surveys were carried out, one for teachers and one for schoolchildren. These surveys were conducted over a two-year period, and their results were integrated and analyzed. Investigation was also made into 1) violent situations that arise among elementary schools students and 2) the relationships with special, discrete causes of violence.

The survey for teachers was carried out three times: in March of fiscal 2006, and in September and March of fiscal 2007. The survey for students was carried out four times: in June and November of both fiscal 2007 and fiscal 2008.

(2) Outline of Research Results

- Few students were mentioned frequently (with whom teachers seldom discussed problematic behavior) throughout the three teacher surveys.
  
- There was a large discrepancy among teacher perceptions of what constituted “violent behavior.” Media reports seemingly played a large role in forming these perceptions (there was an increase in reports of incidents corresponding with times of increased media activity).
  
- Teachers’ perceptions did not necessarily reflect the student’s own stresses, but was exclusively based on the teachers’ attention or interest toward students’ problems.

- Usually class teachers have primary responsibility for addressing their students' problems, and the action taken is limited to observing students' behavior.
- It would be beneficial if issues could be organized objectively, so that teachers can share perceptions on what constitutes "violent behavior."