



Research on Spread of Human Resources Development Program with SST —Spread of Workplace Communication Skills Improvement Seminar—

[Keywords]

Human Resources Development, SST Communication Skill Support Skill for Persons with Disabilities, Spread of Innovation

[Usage of this report]

It is expected that this research will be used as materials to consider development of human resources who will support the competitive employment of persons with disabilities, and methods to support employers by employment support organizations.

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2 Research Period

FY2013 to 2014

3 Composition of the research report

Chapter 1 Issues to Be Considered regarding Spread of the Program

Chapter 2 Outline of Workplace Communication Skills Improvement Seminar (Spread)

Chapter 3 Actual Situation of Workplace Communication Skills Improvement Seminar (Spread)

Chapter 4 Case Examples

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Future Issues

4 Background and Purpose of Research

From 2011 to 2012, National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation implemented the development of human resources development program - Workplace Communication Skills Improvement Seminar (draft) - aiming to support 2 human resources development, employees with disabilities and support employees, using SST which is one of the support methods to acquire and improve communication skills in order to take action on issues regarding human resources development in companies hiring persons with disabilities (see Chart 1). While the program is a draft and subject to be modified and improved in the future, the results of the implementation test implies that the basic structure and design of the program is effective to accomplish the research purpose, but leaves some issues regarding the spread of the program.

In terms of such issues regarding the spread of research results, some studies were conducted in the field of Diffusion of Innovations, providing many insightful outcomes. In Diffusion of Innovations, innovations are defined as “any idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (Rogers, 1962). Under the situation where globalization is promoting and competitions among countries as well as companies are intensified, the importance of innovations are more and more emphasized, and research activities are actively conducted. However, such studies mainly focus on development of new technologies and creating new ideas, namely development of innovations, and just a few of them deal with the spread of innovations. Consequently, great innovations are not adopted or not spread into the society and do not provide any benefits to people, frequently resulting in deterioration. It is not enough to develop innovations, and it is significant to spread them to the society. There is a perspective suggesting that developers should be responsible for spreading their innovations to the society. Also, Suzuki



Chart 1 Outline of the Program (2012 version)

(2013) argues that “while Japanese technologies are great, we have not focused on the activities to spread such technologies allowing users to find the values. If we strategically deal with the spread of innovations, their possibility can be expanded.”

Taking these situations into account, this research aims to consider the ways to spread the program by implementing the test cooperated with the related organizations based on increasing the level of completion of the program.

5 Method

- (1) Consideration of Contents and Practical Methods of the Program
- (2) Implementation of the Test of the Revised Program
- (3) Questionnaire and Interview Surveys for Partners Cooperated with the Test

6 Summarized Results of the Study

In terms of the spread of the program, we considered it based on the 2 directions: horizontal and vertical directions (see Chart 2).

With regard to the spread in the horizontal direction, we aimed at quantitative expansion including increasing the recognition and use of the program. For this, it is important to generate and design diverse communication. Thus, we conducted the activities based on cooperation with an employment support network which is a keyword for us.

In terms of the spread in the vertical direction, we aimed to promote independent and expansive operation of the program by employers. For this, we conducted the activities by considering technology support as a key point.

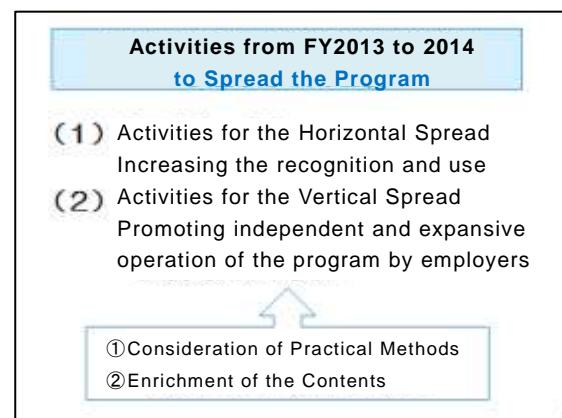


Chart 2 Activities to Spread the Program

(1) Activities for the Horizontal Spread - recognize, understand and use -

The first step of the horizontal spread is letting people to recognize the program, so it is important to generate more “awareness.” For the generation of such “awareness,” communication cooperated with an employment support network was effective. It was possible to provide information efficiently with the members of the employment support network by conducting advertising activities using the communication channel in the network. Moreover, as receivers tend to be cautious about the methods to receive and understand information due to the “innovativeness” of innovations, who sends the information, namely who is the sender of the information has a great impact on the receivers' understanding. However, we increased the receivers' confidence in the information by providing information through the central system and people of the network, and were able to promote transition to the next step of the horizontal spread of the program effectively, such as encouraging them to participate in the program and cultivate a better understanding of the program.

It was also very useful to implement the program based on the social system, namely employment support network, in order to increase the use of the program.

In this method, we offered training for the support employees held by several companies in the social system structured in the employment support network, and conducted SST training in a company among them (see Chart 3). With regard to the support employees of the companies not providing SST training, they are not able to get an opportunity to support training of skills that the employees with disabilities have learned in SST training on a daily basis, and experientially understand the effect of the training. However, it is possible for them to observe the effects of theories and skills used in SST training, which have been learned in lectures and exercises, and bring the acquired knowledge to their companies and implement it. For this sake, we allowed the support employees of the companies not providing SST training to look on the SST training along with gaining approval from employees with disabilities who participate in the SST training.

Regarding this practical method, it aimed not only to focus on many companies at the same time and provide the direct effect allowing them to use the program, but also to promote the vertical spread that is the independent and expansive operation of the program by employers through communication among the members in the social system. Also, we aimed to generate "awareness" of the new program through communication between the members of the network and other parties outside the network.

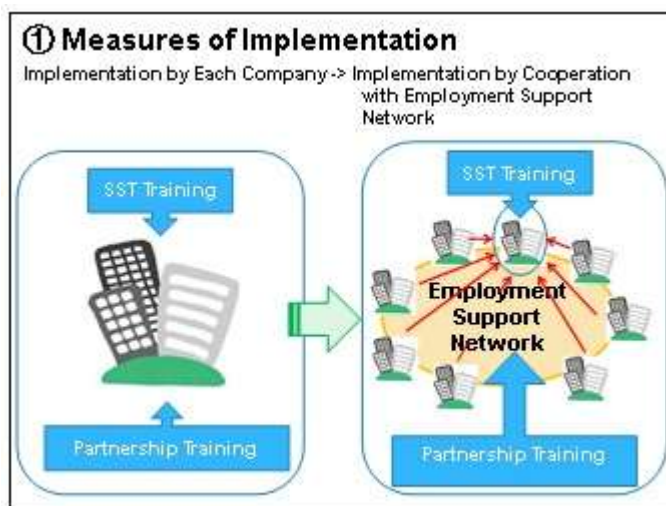


Chart 3 Practical Methods of the Program in the Employment Support Network

(2) Activities for the Vertical Spread - Use Efficiently -

The purpose of the vertical spread is, in short, to let the people use the program efficiently. As the purpose of the vertical spread, we conducted the activities to let the participants become the organizers of the program and conduct the program based on the independent operation, and use the background theories and support skills of SST for supporting persons with disabilities in a daily life outside the training. Moreover, while SST training is deliberately conducted as the program independently operated, it turned out that the similar activity as partnership training was also implemented. For, it is necessary for organizers to perform a variety of works such as preliminary preparation, implementation of training and follow-up sessions after training in every training. Then, people inevitably learn a lot of things in the process of this work. Also, daily assessment and information exchange based on such assessment become essential in order to effectively connect the things learned in SST training with skill training in a daily life, consequently leading to case meetings. Therefore, the similar activity as partnership training is conducted by independently operating SST training, and implementation of SST training based on the independent operation is equated with implementation of the program consisting of SST and partnership training.

In terms of the independent operation of this program, technical support is necessary for acquiring and improving the SST leadership skills of the support employees. Regarding this, we adopted the same structure as that of SST in terms of support for acquiring and improving the leadership skills, and developed the new training unit called “leaders partnership training” and implementation support based on the perspective that a leadership skill is one of the skills just like a communication skill (see Chart 4 and Table 1).



Chart 4 3 Training Units and Implementation

Table 1 3 Training Units

	SST Training	Partnership Training		Leaders Partnership Training
Purpose	Improvement of communication skills	Improvement of the skills for supporting persons with disabilities		Improvement of the skills for conducting SST training (leadership skills of SST)
Subject	Employees with disabilities	Support employees and persons at managerial posts		Support employees having experience of taking partnership training courses (communication training included)
Contents of Implementation	SST sessions (in a step-by-step way)	① Lectures regarding theories of cognitive behavioral therapy and characteristic of disabilities, experience of SST members (theory) ② Explanation of SST training provided on that day (explanation)		After looking on SST training conducted by external lecturer, explanation and practice of the SST training the participants looked on
Number of Times of Implementation	Once a month About 60 minutes x 7 times (orientation included)	Test from 2011 to 2012	Test from 2013 to 2014	
		Twice a month (① and ② are provided one at time) ① About 60 minutes x 8 times (orientation included) About 30-60 minutes x 7 times (provided immediately after looking on SST training)	Implement both SST and partnership training (draft version) Twice a month (① and ② are provided one at time) ① 120 minutes x 5 times ② About 30-60 minutes x 7 times (provided immediately after looking on SST training)	Implement 3 training courses (expansion version) Once a month ① 180 minutes x 3 times ② not implemented as partnership training
				Once a month 120-180 minutes x 7 times

※In 2011 and 2012, the program consisting of 2 parts (SST and partnership training) was conducted in each company.

Several companies cooperated to conduct partnership and leaders partnership training in 2013 and 2014, and SST training was provided in one office. Parties cooperated with the test were allowed to look on the SST training.

A Leaders Partnership Training - Move from Observation Learning to the Advanced Learning -

In SST training conducted in a step-by-step way (see Chart 5), the first step is to promote understanding of the meaning and purpose of learning, and motivation for it. After that, acquiring and improving communication skills are supported by observation learning of the model, role-play exercise and enhancing it with positive feedbacks, and promoting shaping with revised feedbacks. Then, communication skills are more improved and generalized by implementation based on both learning in SST training and skill training conducted on a daily basis in a workplace, and repeated learning and practice.

In the program, based on the partnership training (theory), steps 1 and 2 of the We conduct “understanding of the meaning and purpose of learning” and

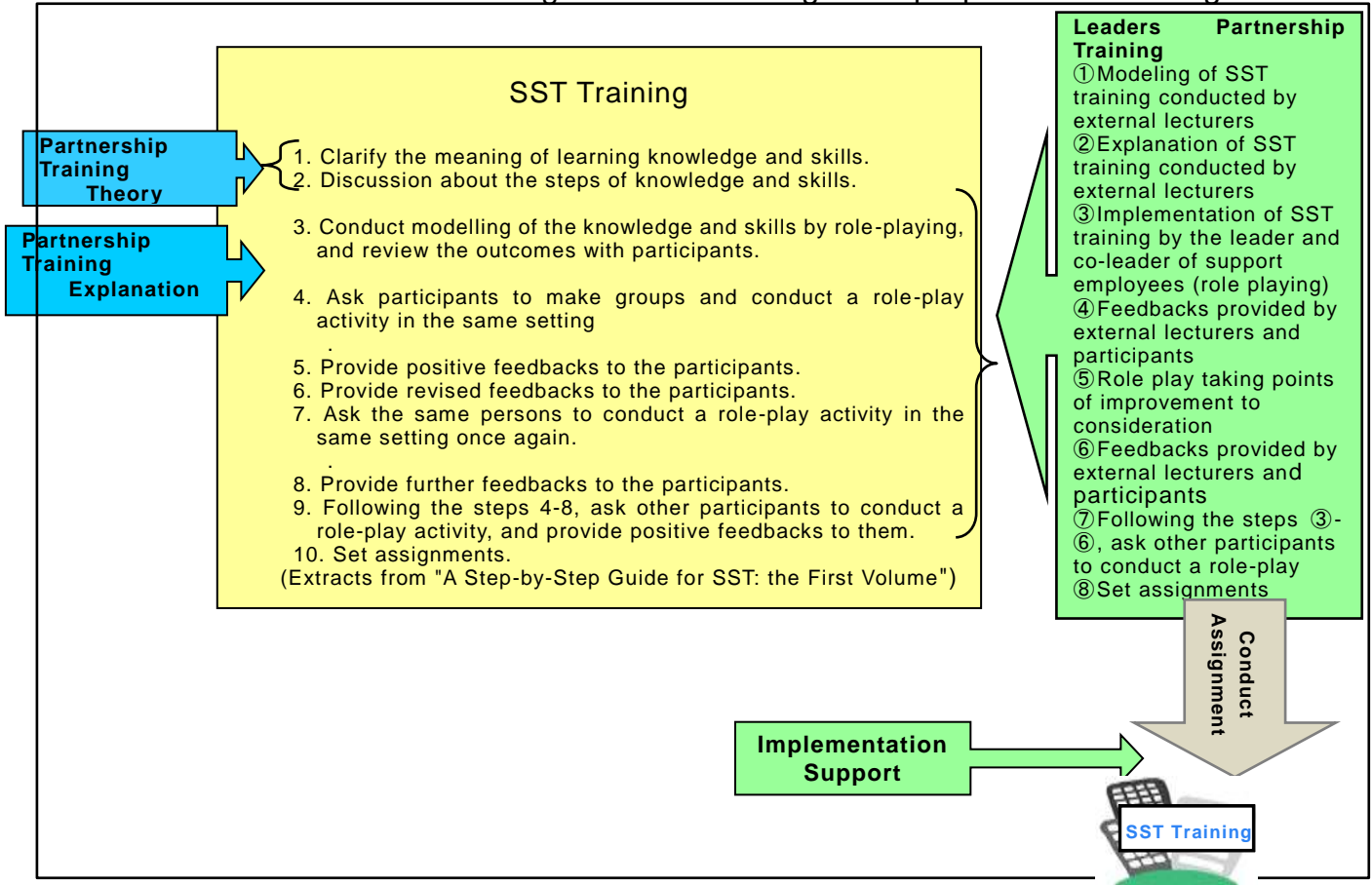


Chart 5 Process of the Step-by-step SST and Contents of the Program

“motivation.” In the step 3 “Explanation,” we try to promote understanding of learning with “observation learning” and explanation after that. Thus, we developed leaders partnership training in order to implement the steps after “exercise by role playing.”

In leaders partnership training, just like explanation of partnership training, leader, co-leader and other members of training conduct a role-play activity after looking on SST training conducted by external lecturers and receiving explanation from them, and take part in additional exercises where each of them is supervised about the role play. In SST training, after cultivating a better understanding of the meaning of the skills and steps, participants conduct an observation learning of the model and role play activity, and learn skills by receiving feedbacks about the role play. This structure was adopted to the exercise of leaders partnership training. By adding this exercise, we provided practical learning support for acquiring the skills to support persons with disabilities.

In leaders partnership training, a precondition that "understanding of the meaning and purpose of learning" and "motivation" are already implemented is necessary to start the training with

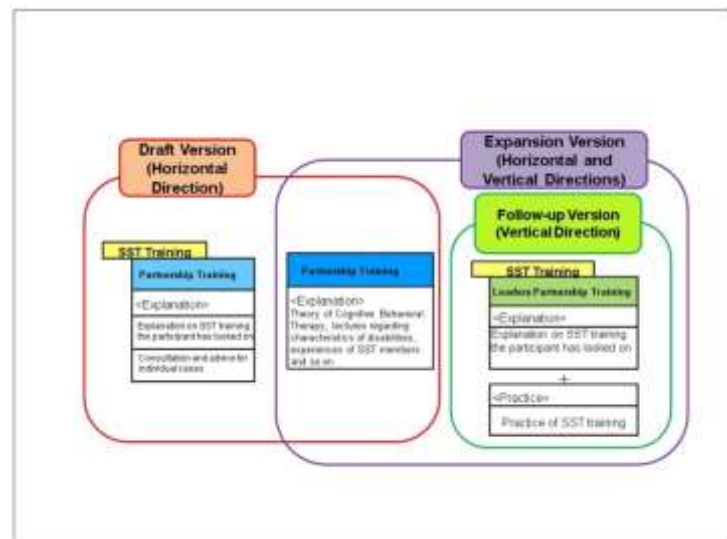


Chart 6 Structure of 3 Programs

observation learning of the model. Therefore, 2 programs were organized based on 2 practical methods according to knowledge and experience of the subjects. One program focuses only on leaders partnership training for companies with the certain knowledge of this program and SST, and aims at the vertical spread of the program including acquiring and improving the leadership skills for the independent operation of SST training (hereinafter referred to as the “follow-up version”). Another program focuses on beginners of SST, and consists of leaders partnership training where participants can learn leadership skills after cultivating a better understanding of SST in partnership training (theory of draft version) restructured from 60-minute lecture × 8 times to 180-minute × 3 times. This program aims at the spread of the program in both horizontal and vertical directions at the same time (hereinafter referred to as the “expansion version”) (see Chart 6).

B Implementation Support - Support for Conducting Assignment -

In SST training, training of the learned communication skills are provided as an assignment. SST training adopts a system where employees with disabilities try to improve and generalize the skills by connecting learning in SST training with practice based on the repeated training in a workplace with support from support employees. Support employees provide employees with disabilities with an opportunity to use their communication skills, and promote improving and generalizing their skills by enhancing such skills.

The assignment in this program is to use the skills in a daily life at the individual level, and to operate independently the program and conduct SST training in the office at the corporation level. If the assignment is provided at the corporation level, support employees' skills for supporting persons with disabilities are inevitably used. Thus, we conducted the implementation support to support and enhance the implementation of SST training based on the independent operation, which is the assignment at the corporation level.

As the implementation support for employers, we offered consultation and advices for creating the training plans according to the needs for SST training and conditions of the employees being subject to the training.

With regard to the implementation support for support employees, we supported leaders and co-leaders in the actual sites in terms of setting goals based on assessment interviews, creating the teaching plan for SST training and implementing SST training, and aimed to allow supporters to plan ultimately and operate the SST training by themselves by gradually reducing our support.

(3) Results of the Test

Increasing numbers of companies cooperated with our test and support employees are the indicators of the horizontal spread of the program, and imply the effects of the advertising activities and practical methods cooperated with the employment support network. Thus, it can be expected to provide more effects of the spread through information propagation in the employment support network. 2 tests except that of the draft version are implemented in the new field structured based on this program as a theme, and it can be expected that adopting the practical methods generates the effect on establishing the employment support network. Moreover, in 12 of 16 companies cooperated with the

Test Implementation Results

SST Training 12 Companies

	Draft Version			Follow-up version	Expansion Version FY2015	Implementation Support FY2013-14
	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014		
Company	6 branches of 3 companies	10 companies (2 companies are the same as the previous year)	10 companies and 1 organization (2 companies of FY2013 are included)	26 companies	17 companies (2 of them are included)	5 companies
	Total 7 companies (3 companies)			Total 51 companies (41 companies)		
Support Employees	19 people	18 people	58 people (12 of them are included)	48 people (12 of them are included)		30 people
	Total 37 people (34 companies)			Total 51 people (38 companies)		
Employees with Disabilities	76 people	26 people	6 people	5 people	6 people	65 people
	Total 102 people (92 companies)			Total 17 people (17 companies)		

*The total (actual) number of people, counting a person's terms, except a calculation due to leaving site to be presented

Chart 7 Results of the Test Conducted from 2011 to 2014

test of the follow-up version, SST training was operated independently in some way when the test was finished, implying that there is the effect of promoting the vertical spread of the program. Also, we believe that the fact that 51 companies cooperated with the test over the last 2 years implies the high needs for this program (see Chart 7).

From the practice in 5 companies to whom we offered implementation support, we gained a lot of insights regarding implementation in parallel with leaders partnership training, activities based on teamwork, contents of the preliminary preparation and practical methods, and vertical spread of the program.

Moreover, case reports provided by companies independently conducting SST training suggest that it is important to encourage employers to “re-innovate” the program in order to promote using the program effectively and expansive operation of the program. “Re-innovation” means the modification or amendment conducted by users on the process of adopting and implementing innovations. It is considered that increasing the level of such re-innovation promotes adoption of innovations and raises the level of the sustainability. We consider that the most important thing regarding the spread of the program is to spread the program as a perspective on the methods of support for companies hiring persons with disabilities instead of spreading it as a deliverable, and promote re-innovation. Moreover, in order to promote such “re-innovation,” it is significantly important to provide the opportunity of practice of SST training in a company and communication among companies conducting SST training. Therefore, we believe that it is very meaningful to conduct partnership and leaders partnership training in the social system (employment support network).

In our research activities over the last 2 years, the spread of innovations is promoted by qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion of the program and communication that are the messages we wanted to provide. In other words, it can be said that we identify the importance of qualitative and quantitative expansion of the messages and communication through them for the spread of innovations. As development of innovations is also progressed through communication, we consider that it is necessary to conduct further research activities based on the development and spread of innovations.