Second report: The Effects of Cross-Training for Child Care Providers in Japan

Masako YOSHIZU (Kumamoto Gakuen University) Kazushige MIzobe (Hyogo University of Teacher Education)
Hirotugu TAZUME (Kyoto University of Education) Makoto YANO (Kyoto Women’s University)

Introduction
The cross-training program follows up on content that was presented at the 17th conference. We conducted “Cross-Training” from 2011 to 2014 for 4-year students in a Training Course for Child Care Providers. Students in a Training Course for Child Care Providers mainly study children, so a cross-training program was instituted in the opportunity for these students to gain further understanding of the elderly and to learn about how to actually conduct intergenerational exchanges. First, we will describe what the students learned through these activities. “Sosu Asahi-No-Oka,” the setting for this training program, is a combined facility for children and the elderly that was set up in a former elementary school. The facility consists of a daycare center serving remote areas, an assisted living house for senior citizens, and a day services center. Students studied at this facility and underwent the program over 65 days.

<Study 1: Changes in views on the elderly>
Before and after the program, students were surveyed regarding their views on the elderly. “The result is an improved view of the elderly, i.e. that "senior citizens are easy to get along with" and "senior citizens live independent lifestyles."

The cross-training program provides many opportunities for interaction with the elderly, and this is presumably responsible for the positive view that students had of the elderly, as indicated by the survey results.

<Study 2: Changes in the efficacy of child care providers>
The program has been around 5 years. The effectiveness of student training in 2013 and 2014 was compared in order to determine the effectiveness of those measures. Efficacy of personnel (child care providers, providers of assistance to the elderly, and facilitators of intergenerational exchanges) was focused on as an indicator of student learning.

Overview of the survey
Survey target: 10 students who participated in the cross-training program at Asahi-No-Oka in 2013 (originally 13, but data for 1 student was missing) and 10 students who participated in that training in 2014, for a total of 22 subjects.

Program overview: The cross-training program was conducted in 2013. Based on a study by Yoshizu et al. (2014), the program was conducted in 2014 to provide prior learning. The modified program also aimed to focus on intergenerational activities involving children, the elderly, and intergenerational exchanges in order to facilitate interaction with the elderly. Such interactions are the key elements of the program with a clear schedule emphasis on the intergenerational interactions.

Survey questionnaire: A Child Care Provider Efficacy Scale was devised. An Efficacy Scale for Providers of Assistance to the Elderly was devised for facilitating intergenerational exchanges, and similar contents were also devised. Each scale featured 10 questions with responses on a 5-point Likert scale, and the questions measured a single factor. The average score was determined for each factor, and the total score of these scales was evaluated.

Results and Discussion
Scale scores were subjected to analysis of variance in terms of 2 years (2013 & 2014), efficacy of 3 types of personnel (child care providers, providers of assistance to the elderly, and facilitators of intergenerational exchanges), and 2 time points (before the program and after the program). Results indicated significant interaction among the 3 factors (the year, personnel, and interactions) (F(2,11)=13.3, p<.01). Multiple comparison examined changes in efficacy before and after the program in both years was conducted (Fig. 1, Table 1). In 2013, Child Care Providers of Assistance to the Elderly had greater efficacy than Child Providers of Assistance to the Elderly and Facilitators of Intergenerational Exchanges. In addition, the efficacy of Child Care Providers decreased after the program, while significant changes in the efficacy of Facilitators of Intergenerational Exchanges were not noted after the program. In 2014, Child Care Providers had greater efficacy before the program than did Providers of Assistance to the Elderly and Facilitators of Intergenerational Exchanges. However, significant differences in the efficacy of different personnel were not noted after the program. In addition, the efficacy of all personnel improved after the program.

These findings indicate that the pattern of changes in efficacy due to program participation and one’s profession differed in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, facilitators of intergenerational exchanges and providers of assistance to the elderly had lower efficacy than child care providers before and after the program, but in 2014, the same was true before and after the program. Child Care Providers of Assistance to the Elderly among personnel after the program. In other words, participation in the program in 2014 resulted in improved efficacy for providers of assistance to the elderly and facilitators of intergenerational exchanges, and this level of efficacy was on par with that of child care providers. Compared to the program in 2013, the program in 2014 encouraged improved efficacy at assisting the elderly and efficacy at facilitating intergenerational exchanges.

To provide prior learning, the modified program added a program with a fixed schedule to further understand the elderly. This program was found to be effective to some extent. In addition, allocating time for separate activities involving children, the elderly, and intergenerational exchanges loosened the psychological burden on students and it lessened the work of the involved. Students may have become more confident at interacting with children, the elderly, and multiple generations.

Table: Changes (by year) in efficacy scores for efficacy of different personnel before and after the program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Before the program</th>
<th>After the program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child care providers</td>
<td>0.35 (0.39)</td>
<td>0.32 (0.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers of assistance to the elderly</td>
<td>0.35 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.35 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitators of intergenerational exchanges</td>
<td>0.35 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.35 (0.35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<Study 3: Analysis of program records>
Program records for 50 participants from the last 4 years were analyzed. Issues were identified based on those records, leading to the following 3 points:
1. Programs to facilitate interaction with and the development of relationships with the elderly need to be studied.
2. The presence of an intermediate support system needs to be encouraged.
3. Programs for (nursing care and child care) professionals need to be enhanced and coordinated with the facility conducting the program needs to be enhanced.

Support in accordance with circumstances is needed so that child care providers can step in between children and the elderly and facilitate exchanges between the two. Students often reflected on the necessity of this involvement from a distance. This aspect is particularly crucial to the working personnel who can facilitate intergenerational exchanges.

Conclusion
In the future, care providers will be expected to act as facilitators of intergenerational exchanges. Thus, students in a training course for child care providers need to learn about children as well as about seniors and the community. We want to offer this cross-training program to provide that learning.

REFERENCE