

Study Notes

Furthering of Research on “Human Environment Design for Interpersonal Assistance” -Human Service Research through the Academic Frontier Project¹⁾-

NAKAMURA Tadashi

(College of Social Sciences, Ritsumeikan University)

I. Issues and purpose of this project

Rapid changes in the social environment surrounding us are having a serious impact on the manner in which people live, as well as on their mental state. As further learning in various fields related to character building and interpersonal assistance such as welfare, psychology and education advances, there are growing expectations that a shift will be made to an affluent global welfare society in which people can lead a human and cultural life and a sustainable society to enable the creation of a human environment will be built.

Changes in the overall social system include such macro social issues as increasingly sophisticated technologies, the development of medical technologies, the manner in which a sustainable global environment should be protected and further advancement of the aging of the population and the declining birth rate. These changes are raising issues in forming human character and communication abilities, pointing to the necessity and

importance of conducting comprehensive research on the social behavior of human beings in a broad sense, including interpersonal assistance activities.

In particular, the fact that these changes in the social system are conversely causing a burden in a variety of situations, such as the forming of human character and relationships, instead of having positive effects on creation of new life designs, should not be overlooked. Among other things, a host of problems in areas that were originally thought to be the most human, including the practice of education, welfare services, medical and health care, human relationships and family relationships, have arisen. Honest criticism and reflection must be made on these issues from the perspective of academic research. This is why the discipline of studying various relationships surrounding human beings, their social actions and environmental design should be developed and enhanced.

In general, research and education related to social work and human services are offered in the graduate courses of professional schools in Europe and the United States. This is because

1) This paper was originally published in Ritsumeikan Journal of Human Sciences, No. 1, 135-144 (2001).

interpersonal assistance activities are advanced professional jobs being conducted by making use of a diversity of social resources and it is necessary to organically tie in scientific understanding related to human behavior with various practices of social work and human services. The development of these fields is planned at the Institute of Human Science, which opens in 2001 and this project is positioned to support education in such fields from a research perspective.

In Japan, valuable efforts to address practices in these fields have been made so far in the cases of development disorders, student counseling and guidance, clinical psychology, nursing care and welfare practice, etc. Making scientific research and providing further insights into the practices being carried out across academic disciplines are urgent issues that need to be worked on, as the need for personal social services and human services are mounting in a maturing society with aging populations and declining birth rates.

For example, possible areas with such needs that are likely to increase hereafter are: the improvement of skills by professional teachers to run school classes; regional welfare services in an era of welfare services being provided in the home; the introduction of comprehensive learning hours and related welfare education; the role of volunteer education; the expectation of youth work in conducting the sound development of young people regionally; social work to manage regional welfare activities; regional healthcare activities combined with medical care and health care;

regional life-long learning planning to shoulder a society turning toward life-long learning and human management consultation to conduct smooth organizational activities by firms and groups. This project focuses on the application areas of these human services, conducting research on the wide-ranging human science related to human behavior.

In addition, growing expectations are being placed on higher education targeting these areas today and human resources that are suited to realizing this new human and highly advanced welfare society are being developed. Such interest is bound to increase, not only in undergraduate education but also at the developmental level of advanced professionals in the graduate courses of universities hereafter. The development of human resources with broad-based knowledge and skills and the ability to practice applied human science is necessary. In particular, macro changes in a society with an aging population and declining birth rate are affecting the nature of forming human character in groups at schools and in families. Such changes are forcing fundamental changes to be made in conventional welfare, medical care, education and personal social services activities, as well as the manner of creating life designs.

At present, the establishment of a qualification system is being accelerated in the service areas of interpersonal assistance and self-reliance support and the development of experts in policies and institutions is arguably becoming an issue of burning concern in

building an affluent social system.

For example, the deployment of counselors in schools was made into policy, along with which the necessity of the early development of human resources is argued. Through the process of establishing the qualification system for clinical psychotherapists, the necessity of developing "experts on the mind" began to be socially recognized and the relevant courses in this area are being put in place at higher educational institutions. In the social welfare area as well, professional qualification systems are rapidly being introduced for case workers, welfare caretakers and psychiatric social workers, etc.

This field cannot be sufficiently dealt with according to the conventional manner of dividing disciplines. Therefore, cooperative efforts among teachers in individual disciplines including psychology, welfare, education, engineering and philosophy, etc., which can take advantage of universities, are inevitable. As such, it is most effective for students to have diverse backgrounds and awareness of various issues and the relevant teaching staff to work together to address issues.

An aggregate form of interpersonal assistance activities integrating the disciplines of welfare, clinical psychology and educational practices should be looked on as the target for research in a cross-sectoral manner, in which research should be executed to realize the value of human rights and humanize the environment. What should be kept in mind in

that case, is research on both personal social services and human services. Such services have to factor in group assistance relationships such as small groups and families in addition to clinical practice in the specific micro interpersonal assistance relationships, network types of assistance relationships by teams, collaboration with various relevant organizations, social resources or consultation and management that can make effective coordination and build relationships among regions.

Conventional disciplines including psychology, education, sociology and the study of social welfare have in most cases been handling things on their own in a divided form apart from engineering or medical science in relation to "individuals" and the "environment." On the other hand, this project intends to look into the possibility of building a new framework that will enable organic "collaboration" and "integration" through practical research on "interpersonal assistance" activities. This research will be positioned as the "science of human services," which will run across the existing disciplines of psychology, education, sociology and the study of welfare (or transcend such framework) and explore a human science area having such an interdisciplinary orientation.

In this research project, an "interdisciplinary integrated project" will be organized extending from theory to methods and technologies to make the practice with such "collaboration and integration" possible.

II. Specific Research Issues and Project

Welfare assistance, clinical psychology, school psychology, developmental impairment and the practice of nursing care, etc., which have all been individually practiced, are interpersonal assistance when defined in a narrow sense. When building a mature society, scientific research on interpersonal assistance in aggregate factoring in the quality of life (QOL) is increasingly necessary. We will conduct research on applied human science to reconsider interpersonal assistance from the perspective of human environment design by taking into account the building of a meso-system (intermediate region) or a macro assistance system.

Throughout the entirety of the Academic Frontier Project, we will try to comprehend a series of these practices in the context of not only direct interpersonal assistance activities but also in the context of the assistance of helpers and the building of an assistance system. By doing so, we will realize modern values such as empowerment, self-determination, self-reliance, normalization and advocacy in the form of specific living environment designs and leverage science to cause them to take root.

This project is aimed at conducting scientific research on interpersonal assistance and is going to contribute to forming environmental design, which will help raise the underlying potential of human beings in a society with an aging population and declining birth rate.

Among other things, policy execution clarified in the structural reform of social welfare infrastructure is calling for a qualitative shift of social services in such a society. Emerging pathology-oriented realities related to the family as well as human relationships are pressing us to conduct scientific research on the activities of interpersonal assistance. In addition, it is thought that the creation of environmental design able to maximize human potential is an issue of urgent need.

In the Institute of Education Science of our University, which was established in 1989, we have organized related projects with the areas and subjects that are being assumed herein. The University Education Laboratory placed in the above Institute was reorganized into the "University Education Development Support Center" (started in 1998), which was further reorganized into the Institute of Human Science in April 2000. In April 2001 and in order to put the accumulated research results of these areas to the best use, our University plans to open the Department of Psychology and Pedagogical Anthropology in the Department of Humanities of the College of Letters, the Department of Human Welfare of the College of Social Science and the Graduate School of Science for Human Services, which is an independent research department. Based on the progress of research in these sections, the issues in this project were selected:

1) Research Content of the Core Project

To smoothly proceed with the Academic Frontier Project, research programs are

addressed by organizing them into core projects and subprojects. In the core projects, the theme covering the entire project is defined as the “Human Environment Creation Project in the New Era.” The research issue is the “Development of a Paradigm for Practicing and Studying the Teaching, Assistance and Caring System.”

In respect to scientific research for interpersonal assistance, studies will be made as to the “basic social concept,” such as self-determination, advocacy, empowerment, life design, normalization and QOL. In addition, what is referred to as “clinical intelligence” will be proven and the so-called organizational activities being generated in the various processes of interpersonal assistance will be objectively observed. Activities of interpersonal assistance will be determined in terms of the multiple layers consisting of ethical problems and direct assistance technologies and such ideas, the necessity of assistance helpers and the building of assistance system, etc., will be made research targets.

The first issue in the core project is to make clinical intelligence a common property to be shared through the building of an information space referred to as the “Human Service Platform.” Specifically, it means to develop a system in order to share clinical intelligence related to interpersonal assistance as human service information.

This human service information is first shared as information that has been recorded

at the site where direct interpersonal assistance was practiced, second as information on team care and consultation focused on assistance helpers and third as information similar to advocacy, which will serve as a bridge connected to the social system and helping to network social resources. In order to share these three layers of information, we will create the electronic information space referred to as the “Human Service Platform,” which can be freely accessed by the people concerned. The Human Service Platform enables each subproject to organically work together and visualize the clinical intelligence that is incorporated in the practice of interpersonal assistance as something more than simple case records. This will presumably make it possible to materialize “knowledge management toward human environment design (intelligent properties to be shared)” by taking into consideration the assistance of helpers and the creation of an assistance system.

The second issue is to practice treatment and training (teaching) and to establish the setting of the environment (i.e., assistance) required for communication and realizing various actions for empowerment centered on “self-determination” by individuals having special needs and to further establish new methodologies of human services that comprehensively incorporate activities for requests and publicity (support) to cause these to take root. Practical research in each subproject is not only integrated, but also their processes are disclosed without delay to

society and information from specific assistance technologies to ideological issues is exchanged through the “Human Service Platform.” In addition, an “intelligence format for interpersonal assistance” will be developed and run on a trial basis.

The third issue is to conduct basic practical research about what human services are and how such services can be assessed. Since the sector of such services is characterized by their status as merit goods, information asymmetry, uncertainty, individuality, public nature and non-competitiveness (not always compatible with competition), ingenuity is needed in the management of services. For some time to come, we will limit human services to the social service sector, addressing “advocacy and self-reliance support type of service evaluation research,” including assessment and consultation.

2) Research Content of Subprojects

For the time being, we will organize the research as follows, but reorganize the issues as may be necessary, while watching the progress of our research.

1. Barrier-free Project

One research issue is the “creation of an environment useful for the elderly and people with physical or sensory disabilities and the basic research required for it.” We will make suggestions about creating an environment in which the elderly and the disabled (physically, visually or aurally disabled) are able to independently access or use housing, transportation systems, workplaces, shopping

malls, amusement facilities, etc., in the same manner as able-bodied people. We will support these suggestions with empirical research by conducting simulation experiments and making surveys of living conditions, while taking into consideration the development of equipment and devices to support the elderly or the disabled based on such suggestions.

2. Family Project

Another research issue is “studies of family pathology and family functions ? the development of a meso-system type of assistance.” The issue of abuse and violence among families is drawing social attention. This is violence in adolescence, child abuse, abuse of the elderly, violence among siblings and violence between spouses, etc. Full-fledged measures to deal with domestic violence and abuse are needed in Japan as well. In respect to the various forms of domestic violence, basic studies to be made in this research will cover the establishment of a counseling system including family members, the development of a system to rescue victims with the public and private sectors working together and education for victimizers and abusers and a mechanism of activities and programs. At the same time, we will conduct basic research on what form family policies should take, including family function and support.

3. Life Design Project

Yet another research issue is the “study of community life design for the elderly.” The project makes a study of policies and practical

plans about a self-reliance support system for the elderly in creating a new welfare society incorporating the introduction of nursing-care insurance and reforms in the basic infrastructure of social welfare. In particular, it will conduct research to suggest how to create a system where beneficiaries will select what they need from a variety of services based on communities rather than being passively provided with care from the nursing menu. In the case that beneficiaries are unable to make selections, a system will be developed to have their family helpers or guardians decide what is needed. At that juncture, the use of new social systems such as NPOs will become important.

4. Child Project

An additional research issue is the “process of realizing joint participation in placemaking for mutual child rearing.”

Through the analysis of the environment surrounding children, adults who make up such an environment will develop the recognition that they will grow themselves while raising children and clarify a process of their participation in placemaking.

5. Welfare Information Project

A further research issue is “basic studies of making welfare information available.” Information on community volunteers, welfare resources and barrier-free status are transformed into digital information targeting the Kyoto City district by making use of the geographic information system (GIS). Based on a status survey made on the elderly living

at home, the creation of an information system meeting the diversified needs of the elderly is aimed for.

III. Collaboration with the Graduate School of Science for Human Services

In April 2001, Ritsumeikan University opened its ninth graduate school, the Graduate School of Science for Human Services, which is organized as an independent research institute with no particular faculties and departments. Each project by the Academic Frontier Project is being undertaken in collaboration with this Graduate School, particularly aiming at research networked to the practical venue of assistance through case studies as described below.

The Graduate School of Science for Human Services sets the educational sphere and curriculum commensurate with problem areas that are related to the entire gamut of social life along with the mental development of human beings. This includes the increasing needs of social and human services with the further advancement and complexity of a society with an aging population and a declining birth rate; changes and support in family relationships in a mature society; a barrier-free society with consideration given to the elderly and the necessity of normalization and the progress of a society in which life-long learning through education is pursued for self-fulfillment, etc. The subjects to be addressed therein consist of a combination of human sciences in broad terms

covering sociology, psychology, social welfare, education, psychic medicine and legal science. It is proceeding with its education and research activities with the case studies as its core subjects.

It is considered that research in these spheres should be pursued in a more sophisticated manner in the phase where the needs in human care services and personal social services are increasing. Included in such services is the treatment of the elderly with senile dementia and those requiring nursing care at home; the dysfunction of family life including child abuse; clinical education related issues in school; the improvement of the environment to facilitate social participation by the disabled and the improvement of the quality of life (QOL) of children and people with disabilities, etc. In such cases, it is deemed to be important to conduct comprehensive research on interpersonal assistance activities in the clinical practice sector through the applied human science methods under the new common principles, including support for self-sustainability, self-determination, empowerment, normalization, QOL and advocacy. The targets are understood under the three-layered structure of the direct practice of interpersonal assistance (clinical activities), assistance for helpers (assistance provided for specialists of interpersonal assistance) and the building of the assistance system and are reconstituted as a comprehensive "science of interpersonal assistance." The Graduate School of Science for Human Services has a free hand in setting

its targets, as it tries to realize various types of interpersonal assistance activities in the context of building an environment design to maximize human potential (in collaboration with public policies to keep the environment free from barriers, the creation of new industries, the setting of information infrastructure, regional development, organizing principals and the development of assistance technologies, etc.)

The Graduate School of Science for Human Services provides education and conducts research and education contributing to the development of techniques of direct assistance and basic theories to support such techniques based on the uniform approach referred to as the science for interpersonal assistance, while dealing with the case examples and studies in the sector of clinical welfare, developmental impairment, clinical education and family dysfunction, etc., which are becoming social issues. In addition, it focuses on the organizational activities of human care services and personal social services (the measurement of needs, networking of social resources, consultation, team care, applied behavior analysis, the development and offering of alternatives and activity assessment, etc.). In addition, interpersonal assistance is understood in the context of creating an appropriate assistance system that complies with problems, through which we aim at forming a foundation of new science related to the empowerment of human beings including interpersonal assistance activities as self-determination support, the creation of a new system for advocacy

(interpersonal assistance activities by making use of the guardianship system for adults), environment design to create normalization and a meso-system for family function support (intermediary function).

Learning the content of the Graduate School Course relies mainly on the case study method. The case study is addressed by bearing in mind the “meso-field,” such as families, schools, organizations, regions, small groups and self-help groups, while keeping them mutually interrelated to private interpersonal assistance in micro terms, macro policy management and policy analysis. Therein lies an “intermedium” (media) generated by the dynamism in human services consisting of “people to people,” “people to organizations,” “people to society (the environment),” “human begins to resources,” “environment to parties concerned,” “helpers to parties concerned,” “expert groups to parties concerned” and “people to self.” Then, science is pursued to determine where the human environment can become more appropriate and in what manner interpersonal assistance should be optimized.

In the interim, it doesn’t need to be said that we aim at developing experts (advocacy-oriented professionals) on interpersonal assistance who are able to shoulder the burden of creating a human environment emphasizing “advocacy and realization” such as normalization, inclusion (integration), barrier-free, respect for self-determination and social independence, rather than having mere technical debates about adaptation or

re-adaptation by the recipients of assistance. For the time being, the following case studies are being planned:

1. “Character Building and Clinical Education”

It is fair to say that the education of Japan is in jeopardy today. In exchange for achieving an affluent techno-science society, pathological phenomena such as domestic violence, bullying, refusal to go to school, breakdown of class discipline, suicide and juvenile crimes are becoming increasingly serious. What matters today is the existence value of schools and teachers per se.

Under such circumstances, the importance of the “education of the mind,” including the necessity of assigning school counselors in elementary and secondary education and a drastic review of the process of training teachers, has at long last come to be understood. Taking the debate one step further, the questions of what form the “education of the mind” should take remain unanswered. That may be something we have to live with, because the education of the mind is an unprecedented challenge in the educational history of Japan.

In respect to this challenge, we will make a variety of analyses in this research, primarily about schools and clinical education related to such problems as students’ refusal to go to school and bullying, etc., from the perspective of character building and clinical education and address them for a solution.

2. "Disorders and Behavior Analysis"

Disorders can be classified into "deficiencies" (impairment) of an individual's attributes,

"activity limitation," where an individual's functional behavior is restricted and "participation restriction" in society due to environmental prejudice in respect to such disorders and the deficiency of the environment to accept them. These case studies aim at individuals having impairment in intelligence, of the body or sensory function, as well as individuals having special needs due to specific reasons and helps such individuals to lead their lives more satisfactorily (including in places such as the home, school and the workplace, etc.). For such purposes, the three approaches consisting of the "teaching approach" (the development and execution of education and training programs to enable various activities), the "assistance approach" (the design and setting of assistance devices or personal assistance to enable social participation ? without putting it on the back-burner) and the "caring approach" (an attempt to cause them to take root in the environment) are organically studied and executed by using the methods and techniques of the disciplines of psychology, education, welfare and disorder study, which are studies related to comprehensive interpersonal assistance.

The first feature of these case study methods is to incorporate into the execution of any case of interpersonal assistance the three processes of the aforementioned "teaching approach," "assistance approach"

and "caring approach," although the emphasis may vary according to the case and to keep learning the methods and techniques to enable mutual progress in an organic manner.

The second feature is to evaluate the effects of the specific interventions executed in each approach by using any of the empirical and objective methods available for such purposes and learn if effective appeals (advocacy) in relation to society will be possible or not.

Let us take as an example of a case of trying to establish communication that primarily aims to realize the "self-determination" of an individual with a serious intellectual deficit. At first, quantitative assessment is made as to the various perspectives of his or her development, the repertoire of actions already possessed and the living environment at present and planned for the future. Thereafter, as the "teaching approach," communication methods necessary for his or her "self-determination" and expressing his or her will are selected and programs to be acquired are developed and put into action. Meanwhile, as the "assistance approach," a variety of supplementary alternative methods for communication (AAC) such as communication boards or manual signs, if necessary, are adopted. In the case of the most serious disorders, methods such as a choice of cards (choice-making) are employed. In addition, as the "caring approach," we will ask for the understanding of the direct helpers and community residents in the living area so that the use of such assistance

methods can be established. We will further suggest creating an environment (availability of alternatives) to expand QOL centered on the requirements or options by the persons involved.

These case studies are not pursued in a single-minded, bottom-up manner, as has been the conventional practice in "psychology" and "education," in which ability is developed or techniques of training actions are acquired at the individuals' level to participate in society. Rather it includes understanding of the methodologies to translate the ideas of normalization or inclusion into specific issues at the individual level, such as increased demands or expanded selectivity of individuals, and learning of the experimental design to empirically test what form human and institutional environment settings should take for making up and maintaining the social relationships that enable self-determination.

3. "Family Pathology and Family Function"

Abuse and violence are on the increase in close relationships, which includes violence in adolescence, child abuse, abuse of the elderly, violence among siblings, and violence between spouses. Full-fledged measures also need to be taken for domestic violence in Japanese society. Today, what may be determined as widely-prevailing family dysfunctions include the problems of nursing behavior due to the developmental deficiency of parents, the stress burden placed on family relationships derived from elderly care, problems developed in children such as delinquency and refusing to go to school and dysfunction due to rigid

division of roles by gender. Behind the appearance of pathologies related to family relationships, it is found that there are psychological mechanisms of families, characteristics of communication and mutual interaction, a history of forming families and an inter-generational chain of pathologies caused by habitual life, the personality characteristics of abusers and social isolation resulting from the economic poverty and welfare resources. Problematic phenomena resulting in families are made the subjects and issues of these case studies and we intend to comprehensively clarify family dysfunction from the perspective of social behavior and clinical sociology.

In addition, when viewing family problems in a social context, family clinics and industrial clinics related in particular to problems involving child rearing by parents and the manner of living become important perspectives. In becoming involved with the problems of children such as bullying and refusal to go to school, the assistance to be provided for parents plagued by such problems also becomes an issue as a matter of course. Upon facing such issues, we will encounter and become involved with the family environment and human relationships in the families of today, which may eventually lead to the problems or pathologies of what form the adults raising the next generation should take. Therein lies problems involving the rebuilding of the manner of living, the sense of value and identity held by parents who live under the pressure of today's very competitive corporate society and are

entering middle age (referred to as the transition period of being halfway through life). Therefore, through internal conflict and distress as working persons, as parents or wives or husbands, research themes to explore what form clinical psychology assistance should take in relation to middle age issues to question one's own manner of living should be pursued.

We will acquire scientific methods to comprehend the reality of the various perspectives of family pathologies by reorganizing preceding studies. Through the analysis of specific case studies, we will learn basic theories for comprehending the dynamics of family relationship, basic theories about family psychodynamics, clinical sociology type of approaches, analysis of the mutual interaction process within the family, methods of analysis of basic data on family pathology and gender approaches, etc. At the same time, we will deepen our understanding about various perspectives of legal support, psychological support, welfare support and each dimension of mutual relationships, building the family support system and assistance for helpers.

Valuing the perspectives of the grounded theory, the constructionism method, policies and institutional design of family welfare and life welfare type of support, we will conduct practical research about techniques, ideas and systems related to interpersonal assistance to overcome family dysfunction.

4. "Clinical Development and Welfare"

It is said that from birth until old age, human beings face a great variety of "developmental crises" in their life cycle, but they overcome such crises and discover a new self, thereby growing and developing. In order to survive these crises, they need motivation and effort. There are many cases that require the assistance of friends and family and appropriate intervention by experts.

During the period from birth to adolescence, it is fair to say that the "developmental crises" in childhood may aggravate into "developmental impairment" (in broad terms) as a combined result of children's developmental phases, family environment and school life. These tendencies become particularly stronger in the case of children whose development is late or immature. The early recovery from these "developmental crises" and "developmental impairment" makes it possible to shift from such developmental crises to the start of growth and development, if early responses and assistance is provided in the fields of psychology, education, welfare and medicine.

These "developmental crises" and "developmental impairment" usually become negative factors in parent-child relationships, which are responsible for causing anxiety in child rearing. It therefore becomes necessary to have welfare assistance, including help for development and impairment that socially support child rearing, as child-rearing parents tend to become isolated.

Contemporary maladies, such as eating disorders, personality disturbances and social withdrawal are taking on a new perspective and thus a theme should be set as the issue of assistance with problems during the adolescent period, which tends to cause neurosis or psychosis. These issues have also conventionally drawn attention in the field of clinical psychology.

During adulthood and old age, "developmental crises" linked to mental disorders (in narrow terms) such as depression, neurosis, split personality, demented states and physical impairment, come to the surface. It becomes particularly important to initiate the process of rehabilitation after diseases or impairment are stabilized or fixed. Welfare help in terms of what form a support network for families and communities centered on these principals should take is required.

The developmental counseling and case work activities are conducted as part of the counseling and teaching activities of the "Psychology and Education Counseling Center" of Ritsumeikan University and we proceed with activities by building a practical research network of psychology, education, welfare and medicine sites in cooperation with public health and medical institutions, consultation offices, clinics, welfare-related organizations, nursery schools, kindergartens, schools and community institutions. Specific activities herein are to provide remedial education, child guidance activities and case management, including psychological diagnosis such as developmental diagnosis as

part of the case studies and to develop practical programs for supporting development and welfare. We also conduct follow-up and prognostic research that analyzes developmental changes, the healing process and changes in family relationships after assistance and programs are introduced.

For the period from birth to adolescence, research is furthered by using practical methods of developmental and psychological and educational diagnoses in order to determine various perspectives of the growth and development of children. At the same time, we also carry out research on new diagnostic methods that can respond to contemporary requirements. When planning and practicing the individual programs for teaching and assistance based on diagnoses, we will move forward with learning and research while building upon the case analysis of individual examples. We also conduct analyses and studies on the practice of teaching at the site of the provision of education or welfare using the behavior observation method and participant-observer studies and carry out learning and research of what form practical programs should take at such sites. Additionally, we will pursue learning and research about the methods of initial interviews, counseling and life analysis in respect to the practice of interpersonal assistance at the sites of diagnoses and counseling.

For adulthood and old age, case studies will be conducted by using counseling and case management, while building a network with

medical institutions, welfare organizations and families, etc. When proceeding with the development of individual assistance programs, behavior modification programs will also be created as may be necessary.

Conclusion

The Academic Frontier Project lays the foundation to enhance education in the human science field, including the Graduate School of Science for Human Services from the perspective of research. Cooperation with a wider range of disciplines has to be sought to have the individual practice of interpersonal assistance take root as human environment design. Through the implementation of the core projects and subprojects, we aim at

conducting research able to specifically contribute to society, while working together with social institutions (organizations that offer human services and such technologies). Throughout the entire project, we would like to carry out research emphasizing these subjects by crossing the boundaries of disciplines, including welfare and human engineering, rehabilitation studies, information technology, urban and housing planning, product manufacturing (*monozukuri*), universal design and mobile service projects, etc. At the same time, we hope to position the project as the basis for intercommunication by researchers in various fields making progress in the study of disabilities, self-determination theory, assistance, family study and clinical intelligence, etc.