Introduction

In Japan, the number of home helper training courses for people with intellectual disabilities has been increasing recently. The first course began in Shiga prefecture in 2002 and since has been held at many places across the nation. Various organizations such as social welfare councils, parents of children with intellectual disability societies, rehabilitation centers, facilities for the disabled, and colleges for vocational training have been planning and carrying out the courses.

Though there was a general consensus that people with intellectual disabilities were working mainly manufacturing industries, but service industry employment has been increasing especially in growing sectors such as social services and medical care recently.

"The rate of the manufacturing industry worker is falling into the decrease in every industrialized country." This sentence is written in the book “Managing in the Next Society” by P.F. Drucker. (1) It could be said that the transition of the industrial structure from manufacturing to the service industry is a worldwide trend which can not be avoided.

According to the Japanese National Census of 2000, The largest group of working people were employed in the service industries with 17,263,876 people (27.4% of all working people), with the next being the wholesale and retail trade, and restaurant industries with 14,318,544 people (22.7%), the manufacturing industries were third with 12,227,685 (19.4%).

Manufacturing industry employment has decreased by 1,328,568 people (9.8%) since 1995, and this tendency is continuing as shown in fig.1. In the same time period service industry employment has increased by 1,331,386 people (8.4%). In the year 2000 among all workers aged 15 and older (62.89 million people) the service industry employed the highest number (16.84 million), followed by wholesale/retail/restaurant industries with 14.36 million, manufacturing with 12.33 million, construction with 6.27 million, transportation/communication with 3.94 million, and agriculture with 2.99 million. (2)

The industry which showed the largest increase in the number of workers in the period between 1995 and 2000 was the service industry which recorded an increase of 0.91 million (5.7%) and, as a result, grew to account for 26.8% of the entire 15 and older working population in 2000.

According to the New Industry Classification of 2000 the areas of the most growth were in the Medical, Health Services and Social Welfare sectors with 4,270,000 people (6.8% of all working people), followed by the Restaurant and Hotels Industry with 3,490,000 people (5.5%), then the
Education and Learning Support industries with 2,640,000 people (4.2%), and the Information Communication industry with 1,580,000 people (2.5%). It is certain that the Medical, Health Services and Social Welfare industry is rapidly becoming a growth industry.

Fig. 1  Ratio of workers aged 15 or older by industry (major groups) (1970-2000)

Then, how has the employment of people with intellectual disabilities changed?
Every five years the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry publishes figures on the number of people with disabilities employed in Japan. The number of people with intellectual disabilities employed was only 60,000 people in 1993, with 69,000 people in 1998. In 2003 114,000 people were employed. This is a 5 year increase of 62.9%.(3)

Fig. 2 The number of employees with intellectual disability
The reason for such rapid employment growth must be that since July 1998 people with intellectual disabilities have been legally included in the employment quotas for all people with disabilities. (In Japan, private companies have the obligation to have 1.8% or more of their workforce be persons with disabilities.)

According to this research, the sector with the greatest employment of people with intellectual disabilities was still the manufacturing industry with 35.3%, but when compared with the 1993 peak rate of 60.7% we can see it is in rapid decline. Meanwhile the wholesale and retail, restaurant, and hotel industries showed rapid increases of 7.0% (1993), 8.8% (1998) and 32.4% (2003). The service industries showed steady increases with 25.8% (1993), 27.7% (1998) and 29.6% (2003).

It seems natural that steps to increase employment among people with intellectual disability focus on the service industry, especially the medical care and social welfare service industries. Home helper qualification programs are necessary to assist people in acquiring job competence in these fields.

Recently more people with disabilities have been finding work cleaning and washing at nursing homes, inventory and goods display at supermarkets, housekeeping at hotels, and cooking assistance and tableware washing at restaurants. (5)

There is no doubt that care service for the elderly is a potential territory to develop the employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

1 Purpose and method

The purpose of this study is to show the pros and cons of the home helper training course as a means of vocational education and job placement for people with intellectual disabilities in the care worker field.

As for the study method, at first I did a case study as one of the staff members of the “Home Helper Third Rank Training Course For People With Intellectual Disabilities” held in Yokohama city in 2004.

Secondly, I interviewed all 12 participants and some of the supervisors at the course and workplaces during and after the course. I observed the course process and analyzed many participant’s comments and focused on their psychological processes during this course.

This paper consists of five chapters. In the second chapter, I outlined the “Home Helper Third Rank Training Course For People With Intellectual Disabilities” held in Yokohama in 2004.

In the third chapter, I described the current work situations of three participants who were able to get new jobs in care services.

In the fourth chapter, I analyzed their comments and studied their inner changes and the
importance of the course as effective vocational training and job placement.

In the fifth chapter, I focused on their mental processes and explored the factors in their empowerment.

2 A Case Report ~ the Home Helper Third Rank Training Course For People With Intellectual Disabilities in Yokohama

In this section, at first, I would like to summarize the "Home Helper Third Rank Training Course For People With Intellectual Disabilities" held in Yokohama. It was the first training course to be held in Kanagawa Prefecture which was planned after inspecting past courses in Shiga Prefecture and Osaka City.

The Yokohama training course started because of a request from the president of a nursing home company which employs people with the intellectual disabilities for cleaning jobs and handling the intra-office mail. The company president felt that intellectually disabled workers had much potential to care for the elderly but training is necessary so he requested the Welfare Administration of Yokohama City to organize the home helper training course in 2002.

At that time the Welfare Administration in Yokohama City focused on five areas regarding the job placement of people with disabilities:

1) Increasing the places of employment
2) Improving job acquisition skills
3) Strengthening general job acquisition support
4) Encouraging community support
5) Improving employment conditions

The city of Yokohama had already held an internship program for people with intellectual disabilities at nursing homes or day care centers for the elderly. After the company president’s request, Yokohama decided to plan for the Home Helper Training Course for People With Intellectual Disabilities as a program for improving job acquisition skills.

In 2004, Yokohama city decided to give a partial financial subsidy to the city Study and Training Center for Welfare and Health Workers run by the city Social Welfare Council which had responsibility to implement the training course. As a result, this training program had been started as the partnership corporation project between Yokohama city and the Social Welfare Council.

In Yokohama, before starting this training course a Training Support Committee had been organized for promoting partnerships and networks between a variety of organizations, schools and agencies.

This Training Support Committee was composed of fourteen specialists mainly from three fields: 4 A workshop for people with intellectual disabilities that provides job training programs
This Training Support Committee has been active investigating the training curriculum, and how to select and judge applicants.

1) Recruitment

The city study and training center recruited the participants through the city newsletter and distributing invitation brochures to all facilities and workshops for people with intellectual disabilities in city. As a result, there were 43 applications and over 70 inquiries.

The city study and training center held explanation meetings twice in advance, interviewed the participants in a group, and selected 12 people which was the prescribed number for the course.

There were four selection criteria:

1. The participant can commute to the training place by themselves and can attend all scheduled classes of the training course
2. The participant wishes to participate in the training course
3. The participant hopes to work in the field of care service in the future
4. The participant has a recommendation from the organization they belong to.

These criteria had been written clearly in the application guidebook for the training course.

2) Contents of the training course

The training course began with the opening ceremony on November 11, 2004 and sessions were held two days a week continuously for three months.

Although the prefectural welfare administration requires 50 hours of third rank home helper training curriculum which contains lectures, exercises, and visit practices as mentioned in table 1., the city study and training center had decided to add some content for this course for people with intellectual disabilities.

Table 1. Third rank home helper course curriculum   (50 hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of social welfare</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service providing basics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care system and service for the elderly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare system and service for the disabled</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and skills on home help</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to home help</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) Understanding of service users 3 hours
(3) Introduction on care 3 hours
(4) Life support skills 4 hours

3 Fundamental knowledge of related fields 5 hours

(1) Fundamental knowledge of medical science 3 hours
(2) Psychological support skills 2 hours

II Practical training 17 hours

(1) Understanding with sympathy and development of basic attitude 4 hours
(2) Introduction to caring skills 10 hours
(3) Common understanding for home help 3 hours

III Practice at working site 8 hours

(1) Make a field study to home care service site 8 hours

The additional contents of 102.5 hours are as follows:

- How to communicate with a smile
- Toilet Care
  The diaper fashion show
  Simulation and actual practice applying a diaper to an elderly person.
- Care before and after bathing
- Nutrition and cooking
- Visiting a nursing home for the elderly
  In order to have a real image for the life of elderly people they visited a nursing home twice.
- Advocating and human right protection
- Talk with a home helper with intellectual disabilities who has already been working as a helper.
  This woman had gotten the second rank home helper qualification by herself. At first she held a job at a day care center and now is working as a home helper for the elderly and a guide helper (assistant of movement) for the people with severe intellectual disabilities. Her talk about actual work experience was very inspiring.
- Mid Course review
- "A joint interchange class" with college students training to be occupational therapists.
  In that joint class, because the participants were divided into small groups and they studied and taught each other the exercise of transferring someone to the wheel chair, they were able to experience concentrated training.
Most of host organizations doing the home helper training course for people with intellectual disabilities have the study curriculum requirements of over the regular 50 hours. In Shizuoka Prefecture 100 hours are required and in Osaka City 75-85 hours are required. Some organizations do a second rank home helper training course in which 130 hours of curriculum are required.

3) The number of participants

The capacity the training course was limited to 12 people so "each other's faces can be seen, and each other's voices can be heard." The age of participants ranged from 17 to 35 years old.

4) Textbook

The “Textbook For Third Rank Home Helper Training Course” prepared by the Osaka Association Of People With Intellectual Disabilities was adopted and also "Study Care By The Picture" (Igakuhyoronsha) was used in the course.

During the training course and in the lectures and practices as well, efforts were made to raise the quality of study materials such as adopting materials which used easy to read phonetic “kana" text along with more advanced Chinese characters, texts with many illustrations, using video tapes, introducing role play study, and small group exercises.

Recently, ways for learning with easy to understand textbooks have been developed with the international "easy to read" concept in mind.

These tools and study methods developed under the concept of universal design and universal service are useful for all learners not only people with intellectual disabilities.

5) Study support system

Three instructors were in charge of the twelve participants (one teacher for four students) to enable intensive study. In addition to the instructors, the study and training center requested one volunteer group to assist the participants throughout the program. The volunteer group consisted of senior citizens who had the role of supporting and assisting the participant's group work, visiting for practice, talking with them, and facilitating studies.

6) Qualifications

The curriculum of this home helper training course met the standards of the Kanagawa Prefecture Third Rank Home Helper Care Training Course, the Yokohama Third Rank Home Helper Care Training Course, the Movement Care Training Course For People With Intellectual Disabilities, the Daily Life Support Care Worker Training Course, and the Regular Life Saving Class. Participants of this course were able to acquire these four qualifications.
3 Participant’s words and phrases

The program finished in February 2005. The twelve participants had nearly perfect attendance. How did they participate in this training course for three months? What did they learn? What did they feel and what kind of personal changes did they experience?

The following words and phrases are from interviews with them and the essays written by them after graduation.

“I used to feel sleepy in the afternoon session.”

"I got tired because I felt tense."

They responded frankly like this impressions:

"Though practice at the workplace was difficult for me, it was very pleasant to study in class."

These are common impressions:

"It was difficult to have a talk with elderly people and keep it at their pace."

“IT was very difficult to communicate and continue conversations with the elderly during our free time.”

As for the visiting practice at the care place, it seems that they felt communicating with elderly people was especially difficult. The most common comments about the training course as a whole were the following:

"It was pleasant to study with companions."

There was a friendly atmosphere in which they could express their own experiences, thoughts, and so on in a small study group.

"I’ve become more self-confident."

"I was able to be concerned about other people and my surroundings."

Some participants became conscious of other disabilities:

“It was lucky for me to have a chance to participate this training course. This course had given me the opportunity to take an interest in other kinds of disabilities. I would like to know more about the people with mental disorders.”

I would like to comment later on the mental processes of the participants in detail.

Next, I would like to list the impressions of the college students who participated in the joint class.

"They tackled their studies very eagerly and always showed a strong will to understand."

"They asked questions frequently when they didn’t understand and listened carefully."
"Because they were very active and positive, we were able to teach them smoothly."

The next impressions show how these participants with intellectual disabilities studied eagerly and positively.

"It was a good experiences for us because we were able to learn something through the course."

"I have noticed much through our conversations with people with intellectual disabilities and it was a good lesson for me."

These comments showed that there were many learning points for the college students who were studying occupational therapy.

On the other hand, in regards to their potential of getting a care worker job, they answered the following:

"Though it was probably a first chance for them to study care in this course, they have already been able to consider it from the viewpoint of users."

"I felt that they had already acquired important natural gifts as a care giver or helper."

"Because they had a strong will and eagerness, I think that they will be able to become helpers."

"By putting their positive attitude to practical use, they will be able to play a variety of roles in the field of caring."

While they felt their potential, some realistic opinions were seen:

“They will be able to work in institutions but I think it is difficult for them to work in one-to-one home care.”

“If it would be impossible to give care by themselves, it will be necessary to work out ideas like organizing teams of two people or placing supporters at their work places.”

4 The current work situations of the participants after the training course

Those twelve participants who acquired the home helper qualification are working in various situations after finishing the course.

One person who had already been working at a nursing home is still working there.
One person was able to get a job at a nursing home after a long-term internship there.
One person is in an internship program and looking to work as a regular employee.
One person began activities as a “registered guide helper”.
One person is training for the acquisition of the second rank home helper qualification.
One person is taking driving lessons.
One person wants to stay working at the workshop where they belong and has discovered the merit of staying there.

The training course had the good result that five persons out of twelve participants have been able to get new jobs in care facilities by May 2005.
I would like to describe the current working situations of three participants from interviewing the participants and staff members of the facilities where they started to work in May 2005.

■ Case A  34 year old, female
She was commuting to a small-scale job training facility for the disabled at the time of the training course.

After finishing the course, she was given the opportunity to practice in a nursing home. She began to work in that nursing home in April.

Her supervisor said:

“Her work is not speedy, but polite and steady, so we have confidence in her work.”

“As she gets more experienced, we hope she will be able to attend the morning staff meetings and ride on the pick-up bus to care for the elderly."

“She is good at meal-time duties such as serving rice, clearing the table, and putting the dishes in order, so she is very helpful at lunch time.”

Her supervisor demanded that training for care of bathing or putting on and taking off clothes should be included in the training course curriculum. It became a tentative subject for the next training course.

In addition to her obligatory work dairy, she is writing a business diary under the direction of the job support center.

■ Case B  29 year old, male
He had been working at a workshop and a tea shop which employs people with disabilities after his graduation from a school for children with disabilities. Since then he has had the hope of working more hours and he had consulted with the job support center for people with disabilities.

The job support center introduced him to an internship at a day care center for the elderly. He trained there for several months, and now he is employed as a part-time staff member there. Since he had finished the training course and acquired the qualification of third rank home helper, his hourly salary has increased some and his working days increased from four to five days a week.

Reflecting his wishes, his job responsibilities have grown from cleaning and light office work up to helping with care work such as drying elderly resident's hair after bathing and moving of the elderly.

His supervisor said that he came to be indispensable after he had mastered his work though it had taken time until he had learned to do it.

It seems that he had difficulty in writing a diary from the time of his experiential practice. During the training course he tried to write a diary not only about the lectures but also on the exercises and practices every day. It seems that his efforts became good training for him, and his business diary
improved little by little.

**Case C  18 year old, female**

She participated in the training course as a third grade student of a high school for children with disabilities. She had experienced job practice training three times at a nursing home as a student. She was able to get a job at a welfare and health promotion facility for the elderly in Yokohama city just after graduation.

She found employment because her evaluation was excellent during her internship at that facility.

She is now working as a normal care staff member on the day shift of a three shift per day schedule. There is no supervisor who takes special charge of her and she is working with another staff member in day shifts as one of a team member pair. It is said that her good point is to ask other staff members about things she doesn't understand. It is said also that other staff members watched her confidently because she never did difficult care by herself. Though the staff members around her know that she has a slight intellectual disability, they don’t tell that to the elderly. As for her relations with the elderly and teamwork among the staff members, her evaluations are the same or better than the regular staff members employed with the second rank home helper qualification.

Though she had been her doing own housework while in high school, she doesn’t have enough time to do it now because of her busy work schedule. It is certain that her house keeping skills strengthen her competence in everyday care working.

The manager said to me that he was considering whether she would be able to work the late shift and night duty at the facilities.

Though she hopes to acquire the second rank home helper qualification and improve her skills, she thinks working another year or two before getting the qualification will be best for her.

Though it is difficult to generalize the principles of job acquisition, a few important points concerning the employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the field of caring are as follows:

1) Learning general skills of daily life.
2) Completing tasks requested by other worker or user's at a consistent pace.
3) Improving personal communication skills.

**5 The pros and cons of the home helper training course in vocational training and job placement**
In this section, I would like to consider the pros and cons of the home helper training course in vocational training and job placement through the practical experience of Yokohama city.

The basic framework of my analysis is shown in figure 4.

Figure 3 shows that there are basic "school and education" and "employment and labor" systems which are related to the professional support system of "vocational training" and "job placement support" in our "society". In the support system, each professional plays their special role in supporting each client’s life, job, and education.

For example, a teacher of a school for children with disabilities might also supervise practical experience in the workplace, help graduates find the new jobs in the community, and do life guidance consulting in addition to teaching at the school.

We observe here the problem of an undifferentiated professional support system.

In the past there was one system in which a student graduated from school and acquired a job. If this situation were drawn as a diagram the movement would be in only one direction from left to the right.

Recently, because of changes in Japan’s industrial structure and the development of globalization, the system of the employment itself has changed. Therefore we have to create a lifelong support system in which there is the opportunity for recurrent education or occupational re-training, and the freedom to move in each field of study and work, and where each person can find their role in their community. People with intellectual disabilities need a continuous support system that takes into account their special needs.

As we see in figure 3 the arrows to the home helper training course move both ways. The training
course can be the conduit between education and employment. This was made clear in the
Yokohama program as eleven of twelve participants were already working before joining the course.
In other words, the home helper training course could be a program to generate the support network.

1) The pros and cons of vocational training

Here is one example of the participants post course essays:

“I felt very sleepy during course sessions but I did my best. I tried my best to write an essay on
studying. It was very fun to learn by doing.”

Why did the participants have an excellent attitude for studies? Why did they learn happily?

One possible answer for these questions could come from the fact that the home helper training
course included study content on disability, aging, and daily life such as meal time preparation. It
also gave them the opportunities to understand their own disabilities and to think about themselves.
In other words, to be self-aware.

Secondly, as we saw in the participant's comments, they were able to learn deeply and happily
because they studied with their companions in a comfortable atmosphere.

“I wasn’t able to understand a lot of the difficult content and I doubted whether other participants
really understood it also.”

“I was able to get a chance to attend this training course so I wanted to acquire the qualification
by all means.”

These comments showed that they were very conscious of other participants and they stimulated
each other equally.

The third point is that they have had very few opportunities to study like this and it was a
precious long-awaited experience for them. I have recognized that “study” is always a fundamental
human need.

The city Study and Training Center have decided to organize a participant's alumni association. It
will be positive for them to gather together and discuss how their careers are progressing.

Furthermore, the city Study and Training Center have started to plan an Open College for people
with intellectual disabilities in partnership with some universities and educational research
facilities in the city. Opportunities for lifelong development must be created by the support network.

The 2005 Yokohoma Home Helper Training Course will run by a Vocational Training Workshop
and a Vocational College of Care and Welfare.

Generally home helper training courses for non-disabled people were run by home help business
organizations. It is necessary to encourage these business organizations to plan and do training
courses especially for people with intellectual disabilities.
2) The pros and cons of job placement support

As mentioned before, the Training Support Committee was established in Yokohama city in 2004. This “support network” is going to locate potential workplaces that will accept training internships of people with intellectual disabilities.

Therefore, the essential function of a training course is to form networks of varied home care service business organizations and connect the field of vocational training with job placement support.

Community based job support networks must cross different fields like education, social services, labor, and medical care. This has been shown in Osaka. (6) The Home Helper Training Course needs to be made a part of the already existing community job support network for people with disabilities.

Lecturers and instructors of home helper training courses need to be experts in the fields of social services, medical care, and nursing because they are providing care to actual elderly clients during the training course. Lecturers and clients alike will be able to gain new understanding for people with intellectual disabilities. This is a significant reason for the home helper training courses to be held in the community.

Another aspect of job support is the employment quota by law of the persons with disabilities. Under this law 1.8% of all employees in private companies should be people with disabilities.

In Japan 90% of the management organizations of nursing homes are social welfare corporations. An increasing number of large corporations, those that employ over 300 full-time employees, have been the target of penalties for not meeting the employment quota. It is necessary to encourage the social welfare corporations to comply with the employment quota.

The management structure of home helper business organizations is different: 33% are social welfare corporations, commercial companies 44%, medical corporations 9%, and NPOs 5%. (7) We could see here that in actuality a variety of enterprises provide home care services. Among these commercial companies, some companies are hiring more people with intellectual disabilities and these companies are expected to develop new job fields in future.

6 Empowerment process

In the last section, I would like to focus on the empowerment processes of people with disabilities.

As mentioned in previous sections, it is very important to support people with intellectual disabilities from the viewpoint of vocational training and job placement. Moreover it is crucial that they become independent in the community. Therefore we should support them to acquire the ability to live independently which is Empowerment. Therefore I focused on their psychological
processes during and after the course and tried to clarify what factors were indispensable to their empowerment process.

I would like to show in figure 5 four key words that come to the surface from analyzing their comments.

These four keywords: Hope, Will, Competence, and Self-confidence are essential factors to empowerment. I would like to describe each in detail through their comments.

1) Hope

Hope of acquiring a job doesn't isn't possible without a concrete image of what working might be like. It also could be called Interest or Concern.

A variety of occupational and career education experiences have been adopted in Japanese junior and senior high schools. Practical experience training to broaden student's images of the various types of work has been done in schools for children with disabilities as well.

In the home helper training courses, training content such as study tours or practical workplace training helps participants understand what caring for another person might be like. The practical content enables them to embrace and enlarge their internal image of care working and should be included in the course.

“I want to work outdoors, because I can talk with my friends and it is very pleasant.”

“I'd like to get a job with second rank of driver’s licenses (allowed to drive with guests) and second rank qualification of home helper.”

“I think I will try various other things as well.”

These comments show that the concrete image of work has been formed gradually through the
training curriculum.

2) Will

"I will experience various things and will learn to work and do my best."

How does a person's Will to get a job come out or Hope?

At first, it seems that the element of Will is necessary for the Home Helper qualification to be acquired and used. For most participants it would probably be their first experience to write their qualifications in the personal record section of a job application form.

"I want to try to work in a place where I can put the Home Helper Qualification to practical use."

Secondly, Over half of the participants showed Will to do better in their jobs.

"I want to do my best, because I want to get better jobs like my companions do."

As we have seen previously, this Will would be strengthened by the participants stimulating each other and expanded with the support and encouragement of supervisors through training.

3) Competence

What is the Competence of caring for another person? It is an important goal of vocational training to find this out.

Even if the worker had enough Hope or Will, they can not work without the knowledge and skills of care work.

"I studied very hard and I felt very happy to be able to do things which I wasn’t able to do before."

Such a comment is filled with joy because they were able to acquire these skills gradually.

It is reported that non-disabled employees working with people with intellectual disabilities notice problems and difficulties with customer service and teamwork that they hadn’t recognized before. It promoted the improvement of the teamwork inside the workplaces and improved service quality in businesses like UNIQLO, a nationwide clothing store chain.

An effective way to enhance the quality of service to the user would be especially important for the social service and care industries.

It is said also that only persons who have had hard experiences are aware of their personal weaknesses can provide good and qualified service to others.

I would like to show this through participant's comments.

“I could understand about the body and feelings of the elderly.”

“I felt fear and uneasiness because my feet were heavy and my eyes couldn't see well. “

“I found out the difficulty that the elderly have in their everyday life.”

“I found that elderly people using day care services were of various kinds. Some could do things by themselves, others could walk with a cane and others used a wheelchair. And I found the
people who lived with their son's family or alone with no pleasure in their house."
"I felt their loneliness and anxiety for the future by listening to their stories."
"I learned the importance of care from the elder person’s perspective and understood their feelings."

These comments show their important natural skills for care.

It could be said that people with intellectual disabilities will be able to bring their positive attributes into full play only in the care service workplace where the ability to sympathize with a user's feelings is an important Competence.

The Hyogo Prefecture Rehabilitation Center points out “a group home where the elderly live together, do the household chores together, and care for each like a family would help people with intellectual disabilities make the most of their specific characteristics”. (8) The job placement of people with intellectual disabilities in care work would have the possibility and potential to change the environment and quality of care working.

4) Self confidence

There is a concept called the Helper Therapy Principle. It says simply, that a person is helped most by helping others. (9)

“My heart got a warm feeling when I was talking to an elder user. I felt very happy because they spoke to me first.”

“It was nice that I was able to talk about many things with the users.”

This comment conveys the feeling that a participant got something from helping the users. There is a report from a nursing home where people with intellectual disabilities are working that the elderly are always conscious and frequently concerned about their existence.

The training guidance supervisors viewed participants and their possibility of getting a job in a strict and realistic way and they expressed this in their comments:

“The pleasure was all mine.”

“Good Luck!”

"The most wonderful thing you have is a soft demeanor and a smile when you talk to people."

“When you were working in the bakery there was a very good atmosphere.”

“I felt your consideration for the users.”

“You were able to do behaviors such as holding a door for the users in a casual and natural manner.”

“You made a favorable impression on me because you served users gently with a smile and your attitude was mild.”

“Good Luck.”

“You have a nice smile, too.”
The words of encouragement like these were shown everywhere. The comment “the pleasure was all mine” expressed that the supervisors were given some encouragement by the participants.

It is said that people with slight intellectual disabilities cannot have a feeling of self-affirmation in their life histories when surrounded by people’s misunderstanding and prejudice. Having a disability could be the key to help others solve their problems and they can gain self-confidence from helping others.

Professionals tend to see only the problems and weakness inside clients. From a viewpoint of empowerment it is necessary to recognize that problematic conditions are normal and that anyone more or less has weakness or difficulties. This understanding can help develop the possibilities to help others for people with intellectual disabilities. Through this understanding we can see the common characteristics of peer support and the idea of normalization.

To sum up, the four keywords are empowerment factors that strengthen the participant's interdependence. I would like to use the term “interdependence” here instead of “independence” because empowerment doesn’t emerge from lack of interrelation with others.

I think that in the empowerment process we would be able to see the process of establishing their identity with interrelations with others. As for such empowerment support processes we should continue to study them as a research subject.

In conclusion

My first impression of the participants was of their eagerness and seriousness during the training course when I participated as a lecturer. It was an intense impact for not only me, but such impressions were common to many people concerned with this training. It also wasn't limited to Yokohama since many training courses across the nation also reported the participant's strong will. I felt also the potential of something that was not only confined to training opportunities. I want to explore this more in the future.

Home Helper Training Courses are an effective means for vocational training and job placement support for people with intellectual disabilities. They need to be adopted by many communities in the future.

In this paper I drew a rough sketch of the four essential factors of empowerment Hope, Will, Competence, and Self confidence and how they can help training courses be more effective.

People with intellectual disabilities hope to find work and to live independently. Home Helper Training Courses could be one opportunity for them to achieve independence. They achieve their goals by creating a clear mental image of the work they would like to do, learn skills within their peer group, and understand their own strengths and weaknesses. Then they can gain self-confidence.
The community support network must take in consideration these empowerment processes when developing Home Helper Training Courses.

"Evaluation of the working ability of people with intellectual disabilities has changed from a disability-oriented view that held that work itself is important to a capability-oriented one where the potential and power of the disabled play a central role." (10)

I would like to end this article with one participant's comment:

“I gradually began to understand about the human rights of people with disabilities. I was very relieved to hear that our society has begun to accept these people. I hope that Normalization will become more popular and be accepted deeply in our society.”

References

(1) P.F.Drucker, “Next Society”, The diamonds, pp20, 2002
(4) Yokohama city welfare bureau, “Yokohama city plan for the disabled” 2002
(5) Osaka employment support network for the disabled, “Q&A of job placement support for the disabled”, pp138 139,2002
(6) Osaka employment support network for the disabled, “Q&A of job placement support for the disabled”, pp172 176,2002
(8) Committee of the home helper training courses, “Papers on National Summit of the home helper training course for people with intellectual disability”, pp15, 2005
(10) The rehabilitation department of Japan job promotion for the disability association, “The report on vocational training and supervising practices - job in care services for the potential of people with intellectual disability”, pp5,2002