

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Backgrounds of the Study

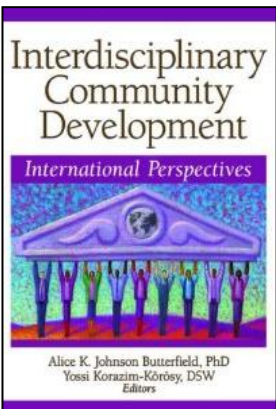
- ◆ People think that “We are doing interdisciplinary collaboration (IC) most of the time”, but What does that really mean?
- ◆ Field of community development is never dominated by social workers. Many community development workers in the U.S. have degrees in public policy, urban planning, law, sociology, etc.
- ◆ Public and private funders encourage complex types of interdisciplinary structures.
- ◆ Field of social work is interdisciplinary itself, and social workers do collaborate with other professions quite often, but were they educated to do so?



- ◆ Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) declared two significant changes in its bylaws in 2005.
 1. To become **an interdisciplinary, professional association** based in social work.
 2. To become an **international organization** for community organizers, planners, developers, activists, nonprofit administrators, community builders, policy practitioners, students and educators.



- ◆ Following after ACOSA’s transition, Journal of Community Practice also became an **interdisciplinary journal**.




- ◆ With efforts by Korazim-Korösy and other ACOSA members including Mizrahi, ACOSA published a special issue of JCP in 2007, which was dedicated to the interdisciplinary community development in international perspectives.
- ◆ Interdisciplinary Collaboration is included in the 2008 Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) stating: **“advanced practitioners... synthesize and apply a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills”**

in Social Work Education in

Previous Studies

- ◆ The interest in interdisciplinary practice first emerged as the critique of the institutionalization of separate and exclusive academic and professional disciplines (Klein 1990; 1996; Nissani 1997).
- ◆ In the field of social work, while social workers are often participating in or leading collaboration at the micro level including clinical teamwork (Abramson & Bronstein 2008), a significant and growing literature has also shown the evidence of interdisciplinary and community collaboration on the macro level (Johnson Butterfield & Chisanga 2008).
- ◆ There are, however, surprisingly few empirical studies about the ways that schools of social work engage in interdisciplinary collaborative endeavors including teaching, research, consultation, etc.
- ◆ Berg-Weger and Schneider (1998) examined interdisciplinary collaboration in social work education in the US. Their study surveyed a cohort of Deans and Directors of accredited graduate social work programs.
- ◆ **They found 66% of social work schools or departments were engaged in some forms of collaborative activity**, with research being the highest (48%), education next (43%), and service (27%).

 Following Berg-Weger and Schneider's footsteps, Korazim-Korosy and Mizrahi conducted the dean's survey on interdisciplinary collaboration.

Their Aim Was...

- a) To explore the current state of collaboration as a priority for social work education in the United States.
- b) Extend the examination beyond the U.S. by including social work programs in both Israel and Canada, followed by Hungary, Japan, and Hong Kong.

methodology

- ◆ Deans and directors from schools of social work in the U.S., Israel, and Canada were asked to participate in survey using an online program in 2006.
- ◆ The survey went out to a total of 226 in the U.S., 10 Israeli, and 35 Canadian social work programs. Response rates were 43% in the U.S., 100% in Israel, and 48% in Canada.
- ◆ The survey consists of 18 questions, mostly close-ended questions. The data was collected electronically and analyzed by using SPSS.

Findings from Previous Studies

➔ Defining “Interdisciplinary Collaboration”

multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary?

Multi-disciplinarity is usually short-term interactions among disciplines, in which each discipline maintains its own identity, professional language and norms of actions.

Inter-disciplinarity goes beyond. What implied is that **something new and different is created as a result of interacting and working together**. ... There is an exponential feel to the interaction or collaboration, a synergy, so that **the whole is greater than the sum of its parts**. (Korazim-Korosy, et.al. 2007)

➔ Findings from the tri-country (U.S., Israel, Canada) study

Collaboration within the University

- ◆ 79% reported that their university promotes some kind(s) of collaboration within their university.
- ◆ Almost all (93%) programs report being engaged in interdisciplinary activities with a wide variety of other programs and specialties.
- ◆ The most common type of collaboration (60%) is institutionalize through dual degree programs.

University-community Collaboration

- ◆ Almost all (97.1%) report that their university promotes collaboration with the community, namely consultation, grant development, etc.

Interdisciplinary Education for Social Work Students

- ◆ Mental health (87%), medical setting (83%), schools (73%), and children and family services (72.4%) are considered most frequent sites for collaboration.

Cross Country Comparisons

- ◆ All three countries, social work programs report their universities promote collaboration with the community more than interdisciplinary collaboration within the university.
- ◆ While “workload release” was second most frequent “reward” for interdisciplinary collaboration for school of social work in the U.S. and Canada, no workload release was reported from any Israeli schools.

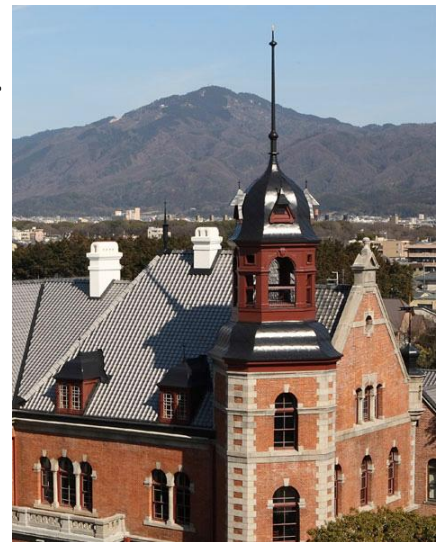
The Japanese Contexts

the Field of Community Development

- ◆ Like the U.S., **private sector has historically played a central role** in the field of community development.
- ◆ **Social Welfare Councils**, private non-profit organizations established throughout Japan since the end of WWII as a major promoter of community development/organization, have dominated the field of community development. They were modeled after Councils of America (known as United Way today). Since most of their budget comes from the government, they can be easily confused with governmental organization.
- ◆ **The idea of interdisciplinary collaboration has been implemented to new community programs** such as Comprehensive Community Care Centers, which were established throughout Japan as a part of long-term care insurance reform in 2005. Those centers must hire certified social workers along with two other professionals- public health nurses and case managers, and they are required to work collaboratively.
- ◆ Social workers at Social Welfare Councils and Comprehensive Community Care Centers are mostly educated in social work/welfare programs.
- ◆ On the other hand, community organizers and activists who deal with emerging community issues such as homeless or poverty, tend to have other degrees than social work/welfare.

Social Work Education

- ◆ Social work programs are usually called “social welfare” or sometimes “human welfare” in Japan. Social work is not a common term used within university curriculums.
- ◆ Unlike the U.S., major social work education is provided at Bachelor’s level.
- ◆ Unlike the U.S., many social work programs are not independent institution within a university. They could be instituted within a Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Social Science, or Faculty of Human Science.
- ◆ Japan has a national certification program for social workers, and over 270 schools (including colleges, universities, vocational schools) are affiliated with the licensing process, and they provide accredited courses.



Methodology

Survey

- ◆ For the purpose of international comparison, the items in the questionnaire were kept same, except some adjustments in language and contexts.
- ◆ Since online survey was not yet a common survey method in Japan, paper-base questionnaire was used instead.
- ◆ The population of the survey was set as universities and colleges affiliated with Japan Association of School of Social Work (JASSW). We sent the questionnaire to either president of the school, dean, or director of the department depending on the type of social work program in each university/college.
- ◆ The questionnaire was sent to 161 schools.
- ◆ The data was collected and analyzed by using SPSS.

Some Challenges

- ◆ The original survey used terms/concepts that were not translatable, such as “program(s).”
- ◆ Although we used the list from JASSW, we did not get any official recognition from JASSW.
- ◆ Some questions did not make sense to respondents, and sometimes confused them, mostly due to the different school systems.

社会福祉教育における学際連携に関するアンケート調査 (2009年9月)

社会福祉教育における学際連携に関するアンケート調査

1 貴校の立地条件として適当なものを以下から1つ選びOをつけてください。
(キャンパスが複数に分かれている場合、貴学部の所在地を選んでください。貴学部の授業が2ヶ所以上でおこなわれている場合、複数回答を可とします。)

大都市	
中核都市	
小都市	
郊外	
中山間地域	

2 貴校に所属する学生（院生を除く）の総数として適当なものを以下から1つ選びOをつけてください。

2,000人以下	
2,001～5,000人	
5,001～10,000人	
10,001～20,000人	
20,000人以上	

3 貴学部（院）に所属する学生（院生を除く）の総数として適当なものを以下から1つ選びOをつけてください。

50人以下	
51～100人	
101～200人	
201～400人	
401～600人	
601人以上	

4 貴学部（院）に所属する専任教員（実習助手、嘱託教員含む）の総数として適当なものを以下から1つ選びOをつけてください。

5人以下	
6～10人	

1

社会福祉教育における学際連携に関するアンケート調査 (2009年9月)

11～20人	
21～30人	
31～40人	
41～50人	
50人以上	

5 以下から貴学部が提供する課程をすべて選んでOをつけてください。

社会福祉学学士	
社会福祉学修士・修士前期	
社会福祉学博士（後期）	
その他1	
その他2	

6 貴校の学際連携に関する方針についてお伺いします。貴校は大学の方針として大学内における学際連携（学部間交流）を奨励していますか。あてはまる方にOをつけてください。

はい、奨励しています	
いいえ、奨励していません	

6-1 ⑥の欄で「はい」とお答えの方にお伺いします。以下の中で、貴校が学際連携を奨励する方法として実施しているものすべてにOをつけてください。

特に具体的な方法は取っていない	
学内内の広範囲や全範囲において奨励する機会を設ける	
経済的に支援する（追加学費など）	
学外における活動時間を提供する（学内業務の一部免除など）	
その他1	
その他2	

7 貴校は大学の方針として地域活動を奨励していますか。あてはまる方にOをつけてください。（ここでいう「地域活動」とは地域貢献活動や地域と大学の連携事業などを指します。）

2

Findings 1

Participants: 161 universities and colleges affiliated with JASSW
 Response Rates: 39.1% (63 schools)

Demographics of the Sample

Types of the program

With only Social Welfare Programs	3 schools	4.76%
With a Faculty of Social Welfare	28 schools	44.44%
With a Department of Social Welfare	32 schools	50.79%

Location of the program

Large City	20 schools	31.75%
Medium Sized City	14 schools	22.22%
Small City	19 schools	30.16%
Suburban Community	5 schools	7.94%
Rural Community	1 school	1.59%
N/R	4 schools	6.35%

Number of students in the university/college

Under 2000	25 schools	39.68%
2001- 5000	21 schools	33.33%
5001 - 10,000	12 schools	19.05%
10,001 - 20,000	3 schools	4.76%
Over 20,000	2 schools	3.17%

Number of students in the program

Under 50	4 schools	6.35%
51 - 100	1 school	1.59%
101 - 200	7 schools	11.11%
201 - 400	22 schools	34.92%
401 - 600	8 schools	12.70%
Over 601	21 schools	33.33%

Number of faculty members in the program

Less than 5	2 schools	3.1%
6 - 10	6 schools	9.25%
11 - 20	24 schools	38.10%
21 - 30	16 schools	25.40%
31 - 40	4 schools	6.35%
41 - 50	5 schools	7.94%
Over 50	6 schools	9.52%

Types of programs/degrees being offered

Bachelors in Social Welfare	47 schools	74.60%
Masters in Social Welfare	22 schools	34.92%
Doctorate in Social Welfare	13 schools	20.63%

University-Community Collaboration

Promotions of university-community collaboration

Yes	60 Schools	95.24%
No	1 School	1.59%
N/R	2 Schools	3.17%

Methods to engage in community

1: Do not engage	1 School	1.59%
2: Consulting/technical assistance	46 Schools	73.02%
3: Attending workshops/seminars	48 Schools	76.19%
4: Developing workshops/seminars	43 Schools	68.25%
5: Community organization/development programs	55 Schools	87.30%
6: Grant development	2 Schools	3.17%
7: Clinical practice within direct service agencies	31 Schools	49.21%
8: Fiscal conduit	12 Schools	19.05%
9: Leadership	20 Schools	31.75%

Engagements of IC research in the community

1: Does not engage	3 Schools	4.76%
2: Linking researchers and organizations	51 Schools	80.95%
3: consultation	39 Schools	61.90%
4: Access study populations within organizations	37 Schools	58.73%
5: Grant writing	18 Schools	28.57%
6: Agency program evaluation	24 Schools	38.10%
7: Co-authoring publications	27 Schools	42.86%
8: Community needs assessment	37 Schools	58.73%

Findings 2

Collaboration within the Schools

Promotions of IC within the university

Yes	44 Schools	69.84%
No	17 Schools	26.98%
N/R	2 Schools	3.17%

Methods in which the university promotes IC

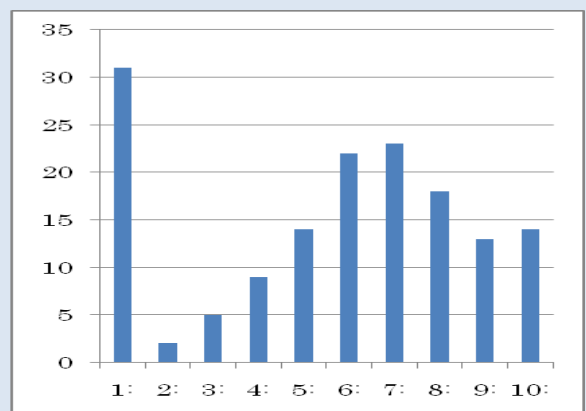
1: Interdisciplinary collaboration is NOT encouraged	14 Schools	22.22%
2: University/school recognition	17 Schools	26.98%
3: Monetary rewards	8 Schools	12.70%
4: Work load released time	5 Schools	7.94%

Collaboration with other departments/programs

	1: Offers dual degree		2: Formally Collaborates		3: Collaborates without Formal Agreements	
None	55	87.30%	38	60.32%	44	69.84%
Applies to the all programs	2	3.17%	15	23.81%	3	4.76%
Business	0	0.00%	1	1.59%	1	1.59%
Engineering	0	0.00%	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Public Administration	0	0.00%	2	3.17%	3	4.76%
Law	1	1.59%	2	3.17%	2	3.17%
Psychology	1	1.59%	5	7.94%	4	6.35%
Literature	2	3.17%	2	3.17%	1	1.59%
Fine Art	1	1.59%	3	4.76%	0	0.00%
Liberal Arts	0	0.00%	8	12.70%	4	6.35%
Communication	1	1.59%	5	7.94%	3	4.76%
Education	1	1.59%	5	7.94%	6	9.52%
Film/Media	1	1.59%	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Urban Affairs	2	3.17%	0	0.00%	3	4.76%
Medicine	0	0.00%	1	1.59%	0	0.00%
Nursing	1	1.59%	4	6.35%	2	3.17%
Public Health	1	1.59%	5	7.94%	2	3.17%

Collaborations in the field placement

1: No field placements offer interdisciplinary experience	31 Schools	49.21%
2: School social work	2 Schools	3.17%
3: Employee assistance programs	5 Schools	7.94%
4: Medical settings	9 Schools	14.29%
5: Mental health settings	14 Schools	22.22%
6: Child and family services	22 Schools	34.92%
7: Aging	23 Schools	36.51%
8: Persons with Disabilities	18 Schools	28.57%
9: Social Welfare Councils	13 Schools	20.63%
10: Public sectors/welfare offices	14 Schools	22.22%



Curriculums that are most effective to teach IC

1: None	14 Schools	22.22%
2: Psychology and Mental Health	18 Schools	28.57%
3: Welfare in Modern Society	28 Schools	44.44%
4: Social Policy	13 Schools	20.63%
5: Social Research	20 Schools	31.75%
6: Micro Practice	16 Schools	25.40%
7: Mezzo Practice	14 Schools	22.22%
8: Macro Practice	18 Schools	28.57%
9: Field Practicum	15 Schools	23.81%
10: Electives	4 Schools	6.35%

Future plans for the promotion of IC

1: No plans	12 Schools	19.05%
2: Course contents	21 Schools	33.33%
3: Field education requirements	15 Schools	23.81%
4: School-wide projects with community organizations	25 Schools	39.68%
5: Seminar/Brown Bags	26 Schools	41.27%
6: Develop dual degree programs	5 Schools	7.94%
7: Community-based research/evaluation	17 Schools	26.98%

Findings 3

Cross Tab Analysis - Who has future plans for the promotion of IC

- ◆ While 69% of respondents with SW department has a future plans
82% of respondents with SW faculty has a future plans
- ◆ When the size of universities/colleges increases, their tendency to have future plans.
>>This may imply that schools with more financial capacity tend to be proactive for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- ◆ On the other hand, when the size of social work programs is smaller, their tendency to have future plans becomes higher. >>This may imply that small programs tend to be less bureaucratic and have more flexibility to try something new.

Qualitative Analysis – voices from deans and directors

- ◆ *“We have established a volunteer center 10 years ago for students to have experiences as volunteers in a community. We have sponsored a symposium every year about volunteering, in which students, local residents, and high-school students collaborate.”*
- ◆ *“We have held workshops for children, by using vacant store-front in a community, and that would count over 100 times.”*
- ◆ *“We have been working with local residents, local government, and volunteers (welfare commissioners) to develop an evacuation and safety manual for a disaster.”*
- ◆ *“We are planning to establish a research group for human services by inviting scholars from both inside and outside our university. We believe the program as such would fulfill the idea of interdisciplinary collaboration suggested.”*
- ◆ *“We are not currently working on interdisciplinary collaboration. We are hoping to engage in the interdisciplinary collaboration in the future.”*
- ◆ *“We are trying to develop a cluster of courses within a department, but we have not made an effort to develop anything similar beyond the department.”*

Comparative Analysis – What is unique about SW programs in Japan

We observed the same tendency to the three countries in following areas.

- ◆ Social work programs are more apt to collaborate with communities rather than within their universities/colleges.
- ◆ Very few schools offer dual degree programs and make formal teaching agreements.

SW programs in Japan is unique in terms of...

- ◆ Grant development/writing is NOT a common way to collaborate with communities.
- ◆ “Workload release time” is NOT a popular approach to encourage collaboration in practice and/or research. (Israel has the same results.)
- ◆ No single curriculum had more than 50% responses in the question of effective way to teach interdisciplinary collaboration. “Welfare in Modern Society,” which is the original curriculum in Japan, was the highest among others.

Discussion

Is Interdisciplinary Collaboration Reflected in Social Work Education in Japan?

- ➔ Social Workers have been engaged in interdisciplinary practices both on micro and macro level in Japan. And interdisciplinary collaboration is more needed since the emerging of community-based organizations in recent years. Indeed, the research unveiled the fact social work schools/programs have been actively engaged in community collaboration and promoting the interdisciplinary aspects in their education.
- ➔ Lack of support from colleges/universities is a negative fact that interdisciplinary collaboration is not fully promoted despite deans/directors see the needs. Japanese colleges/universities, however, offer students a way to earn credits in other subjects of study although social work students are often required to take as many social work credits for their certificate. That should be reconsidered.
- ➔ The limitation of the research method has to be mentioned. The questionnaire was designed based on the social work education in the U.S., Israel, and Canada, and that caused a limitation to analyze Japanese situation in depth. It, however, gave us an opportunity for comparison.

Acknowledgements

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