

Closing Remark

Future Perspectives of School as
Learning Community: Towards
Networks of
“Republic of Learning” Inside and
Outside of Nations

Manabu Sato
Professor of Gakushuin University

Changing Schools for Future

- School as Learning Community corresponds to the requirements of social, cultural and political change in the 21st Century.
- 1 . Pursuit of “quality and equality” of education
 - 2 . From “program” to “project”: From knowledge acquisition to Inquiry using knowledge
 3. From teacher centered teaching by “chalk and talk” to student learning by collaboration.
 - 4 . From “plan and evaluation” to “design and reflection”
In lesson study
 5. From “teaching profession” to “learning profession”



Issue 1: Theory of Collaborative Learning

-



Definition of Learning in SLC

- Learning is a journey from known world to unknown world. It is an encounter and dialogue with new world, new other and new oneself.
- Learning is not a personal activity but a social activity, as a consequence, not a natural process of acquisition of ability or skills, but a cultural process of constructing meaning and relations.
- I defined learning as an integral practice of three dialogic practices, dialogue with objective world, dialogue with others and dialogue with oneself.
- Therefore, learning is retexturing and re-contextualizing of meaning and relations
- Learning starts from listening other's voice, Listening relation generates dialogic communication, that drives learning activity.



Three Models of Learning by Small Group

Three models of group learning should be differentiated.

1. Collective learning (han-learning in Japan)

This theory derived from “collectivism”, which generated in 1930s ,mainly in the United States, Soviet Union and Japan. Conformity within group is characteristic.

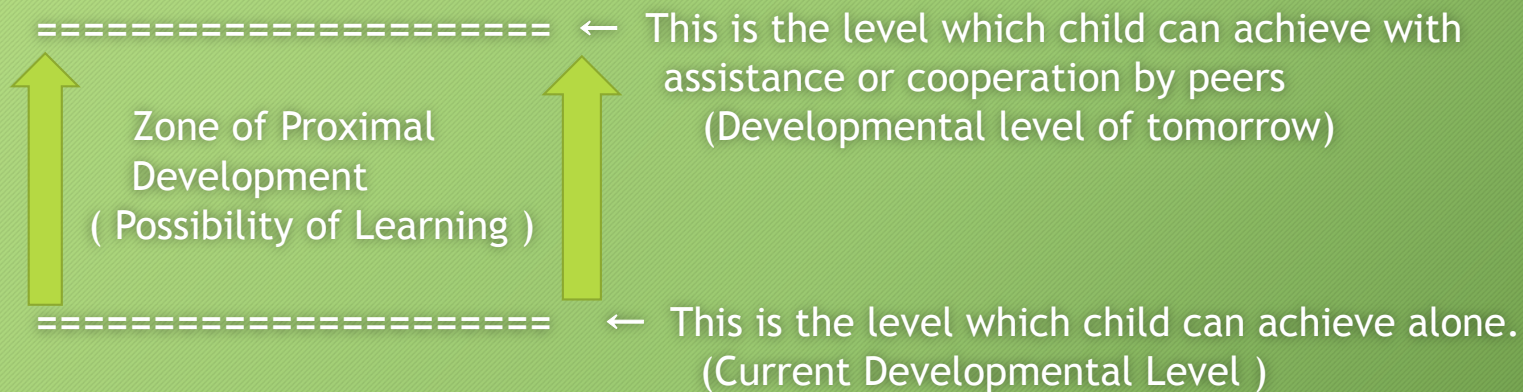
2. **Cooperative learning**. This model was developed by social psychologists, such as Johnson & Johnson, Slavin and so on.) Buss learning is a typical one. This model is currently dominant in US, Japan and other countries.

3. **Collaborative learning**. This model is based mainly on communication theory by John Dewey and development theory by Lev Vygotsky. Collaborative learning in SLC is this model.



We know well, that child can learn more with peers than learning alone. (Lev Vygotsky)

Collaborative learning in SLC is based on “Zone of Proximal Development” theory by Lev Vygotsky.



Therefore, learning task in SLC is set on the upper line of ZPD. In SLC, learning is “Jumping “ with peers.



Collaborative Learning in SLC

- SLC regards two modes of learning, imitation of other's idea and scaffolding with other's idea.
- SLC recommends to design such two different tasks in each lesson, as “sharing task” of textbook level and “jumping task” beyond the textbook.



Theoretical Issues of Collaborative Learning

- Many theoretical issues should be taken into consideration. Most of academic research proclaim that teacher's hint and tutoring aid by kids are effective in collaborative learning. Is it true ? The question introduces us to an most important theoretical issue about ZPD and scaffolding theory, but it is tremendously hard to resolve it.
- SLC recommends not “tutoring relation” but “learning relation”.
- The next question is as follows. Teachers in SLC recognizes that children of low-achievement are more involved in “jumping task than “sharing task”. This phenomenon is curious. But, no research can successfully explain the curious fact. This issue is also a significant theoretical issue for our researchers.

Issue 2: Professional Development of Teachers



From “Teaching Professional” to “Learning Professional”

SLC transforms teachers from “teaching professional” to “learning professional”.

The learning professional can develop their competence in a professional learning community.

Therefore, SLC sets the collegiality at core part of school management.



Definition of Teaching Competence

SLC regards teaching competence as professional knowledge plus craftsmanship.

- ① Teacher as craftsman=Artistry is the competence
=The artistry is not a technique or even skill. It is mastered with mimesis in apprenticeship or mentoring.
- ② Professionalism is composed of public mission, intellectual judgment and ethical responsibility with autonomy. Professional learning is integration of theory and practice. So, case method is most suitable to it.
- ③ School should be a professional learning community by sharing their artistry and wisdom to establish a powerful collegiality.



Teachers in SLC

- Teacher in SCL is not a technical expert but a reflective practitioner. (Donald Schon)
- Teacher in SCL is not an effective teacher but a thoughtful teacher.
- Teacher education both of pre-service and in-service should be professional education just like as medical education or law education. So, Case method should be central of curriculum of them.



Case Method of Professional Education Pursues Integration of Theory and Practice

Three modes of the relationship of theory and practice.

1. theory into practice
2. theory through practice
3. theory in practice

SLC is set at the 3rd model, so that we attach great importance to “reflection” and “deliberation” in the case method in order to enhance “practical wisdom”.

SLC quests a professional thinking style, while a famous slogan of law education is “think like lawyers”.

Issue 3: Lesson Study



Paradigm Shift of Lesson Studies in 1990s

	Traditional Lesson Study	Innovative Lesson Study
Purpose	Improvement and Evaluation of Lesson Plan and Teaching Skills Generalization of One Best Method	Practical Epistemology of educational Experience, Design and Reflection Sensible and Singular Appreciation
Object	Lesson Plan, Teaching Activity, Questioning and so on	Case of Teaching Practice Learning Experience
Foundation	Behavioral Science and Psychology	Cognitive Science, Humanities and Social Science
Method	Quantitative Research Analysis and Generalization	Qualitative Research, Case Method Idiosyncratic recognition
Feature	Input Output Model Cause and Result Analysis	Configuration of Meaning and Relations Relational cognition
Result	Teaching Technique, Teaching Program	Teacher's Reflection and Practical Wisdom
Presentation	Paradigmatic Cognition Procedural Knowledge	Narrative Cognition Practical Knowledge

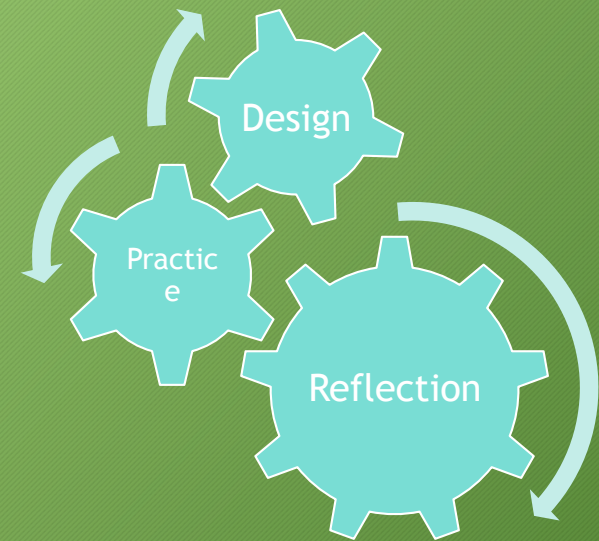
From “Planning and Evaluation” to “Designing and Reflection”

1. The first question is what is the difference between plan and design. Plan is determined before teaching, but design is revised during whole process of practice.
2. Be simple in design and be sensible in teaching. Complicated plan disturbs teaching because teachers are constrained by the rigid plan. Simple design enable teachers to be sensible to treat kid's learning.
3. Beginning is critical. So, creative teachers are very careful to the beginning of the lesson.

Lesson Study in School as Learning Community

- The focus of LS is not teaching but learning.
- The main purpose of LS is to build a thoughtful professional learning community.
- Lesson study is composed of “design”, “practice and observation”, and “reflection”.

Direct observation is ordinary, while video documentation is often utilized.



Building Professional Learning Community through Lesson Study

It takes more time for post-lesson study or reflection than pre-lesson study of planning. Purpose of lesson study is not planning and evaluation, nor even advice, but leaning together about what happens at classroom with careful observation of all the incidents at classroom.

Some big issues remain.

- 1. Schools of metropolitan area and big-size school face with difficulty of forming collegiality from within.
- 2. Those schools are characterized as teacher isolation, and as lack of teachers autonomy.
- 3. So, we should study more about ways of how to inspire teachers to be autonomous professional and how to build a sustainable professional learning community.
- 4. Difficulty of SLC in Elementary School in Korea and Japan
- Difficulty of SLC in Secondary School in China

Issue 4: Political Context of SLC



Political Context of SLC in Asian Countries

Confusion of educational policies derived from political one and international economic competition will be continued. Today, Asia is the most critical area where neoliberal policies penetrated not only in economy but education and social welfare. According to domination of neoliberalism, I suppose, school reform will widen the gap between governmental policy and school site policy. Indeed, contradiction of the gap has become much harder year by year.

This separation of school reform from state policies is deeply embedded in the contradiction between and among development of democracy in this area and globalization of capital, regeneration of nationalism and international competence. Social economic and political context is tremendously complicated. A quasi-progressivism in education is a representative phenomenon.

In this context, sustainability of school as learning community is critical.

Threat of Human Right of Learning and Crisis of Teachers Professional Dignity

- In one side, from a long term viewpoint, Asian countries have been democratized for the past 30 years. This is the very reason why SLC has drastically spread in this area.
- But, in the other side, under globalization, neoliberal and neoconservative policies and market driven educational administration, human right of learning of children and professional autonomy of teachers stand at hedge of risk.
- Poverty of children, isolation both of children and teachers, destruction of quality and equality of learning, collapse of teacher professional autonomy and dignity are main features of current educational crises.

Towards “Republic of Learning”

- I would like to propose a charming but a deliberately thinkable question. Is it possible to establish a “Republic of Learning”, where each member is encouraged to be a “sovereign of learning”, at your classroom, at your school, at your city, at your region, at your country and our Asian area beyond national borders ?
- This “Republic of Learning” is of course a metaphor or a “Virtual Republic”, but will obtain strong power for wiring networks for school as learning community and enables us to explode political, social and cultural constraints from inside.
- School reform through SLC nurture a hope to build such a “virtual vision” of “Republic of Learning”. This international conference is a typical case.

Learning Community as a Locus for Pursuing Happiness

- Thank you for your contributions to the First International Conference of School as Learning Community.
- I assume that the conference is more successful and more fruitful than we expected. This is the first opportunity for most of participants, to exchange research and practice
- Diversity of SLC among Asian countries is happy for us to deeply recognize its latent possibilities and hidden issues. Listening different other's voice is anytime a starting point of learning.



School as Learning Community for Hope

Landscapes of the 1st International Conference of School as Learning Community. March 8-10, 2014, Tokyo



More Communication by Researchers, Teachers and even Students of SLC beyond National Borders



Conclusion: SLC is a Long Revolution and an Eternal Revolution of Beginning

Thank you for your contribution and see you again !

