

Creating an epistemological network for learning communities: Taipei's experience

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Conference: Educational Innovation through Renovating Schools to
Learning Community in Asia

Gakushuin University, Japan

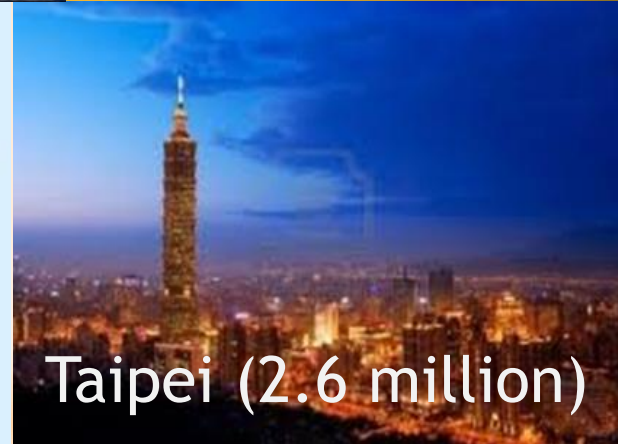




Networked Learning Communities in Taipei



Taiwan (23 million population)



Taipei (2.6 million)



The Forces behind Changes

Issues & concerns:

- ✓ Reduction of birth rate and student enrollment
- ✓ The population ageing society
- ✓ Economic stagnation and increase of unemployment rate

Challenges & Reform

- ✓ Deregulation in education since 1990s
- ✓ Competence-based curriculum reform
- ✓ School evaluation, Teacher professional development
- ✓ 12-year basic education will begin in 2014

Socio-economical developments in four Asian Tigers

Country	Taiwan	South Korea	Singapore	Hong Kong
GDP per capital (USD)(2012)	24230	23100	52051	36796
College Graduate Salary(USD)(2013)	880	2480	2233	1173
Unemployment rate (2013)	4.18	3.1	1.9	3.3
Fertility Rate (2013)	1.07	1.23	1.15	1.13
Ageing Indicator (2013)	72.2	72.8	60.5	128*

Source: United Daily News, Feb. 20, 2014; *Hong Kong Census & Statistics Department

Taiwan is facing decrease of fertility rate, increase of ageing population, the young ones earn less, overburden, and feel uncertain about future.

Could we promise the future for the young generation?

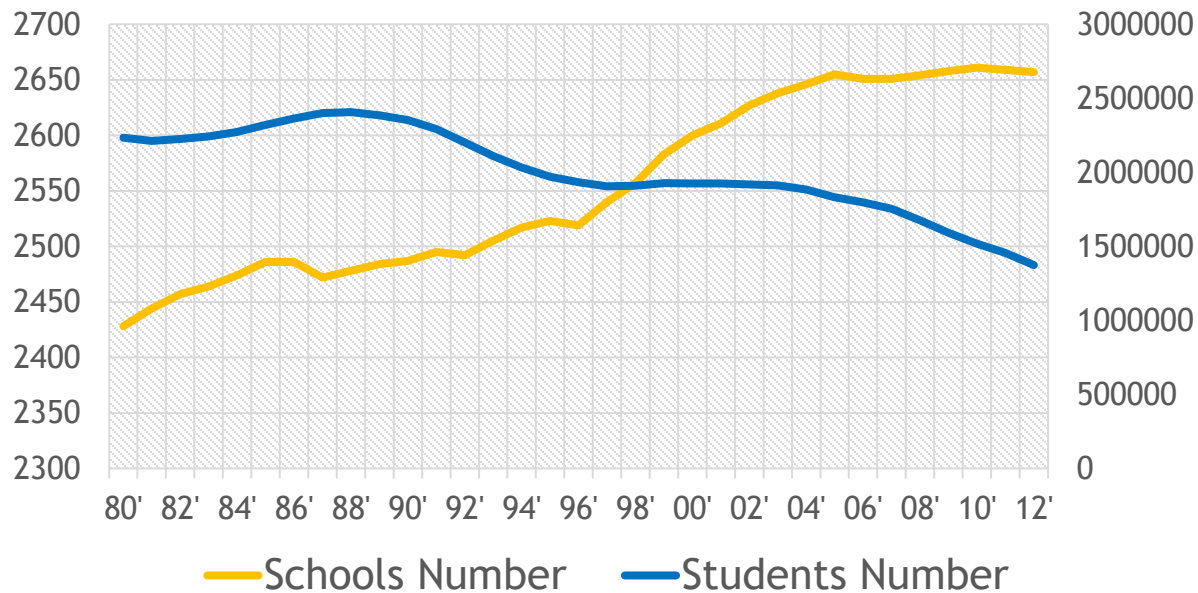


The beginning salary of a National Taiwan University graduate is the lowest compared to other three Asian Tigers (HK, SG, SK), young people are difficult to find a decent job, which becomes a serious public issue.

Sources:udn.com/NEWS/NATIONAL/NATS2/8497815.shtml#ixzz2uolcOgFn (2014.02.20)

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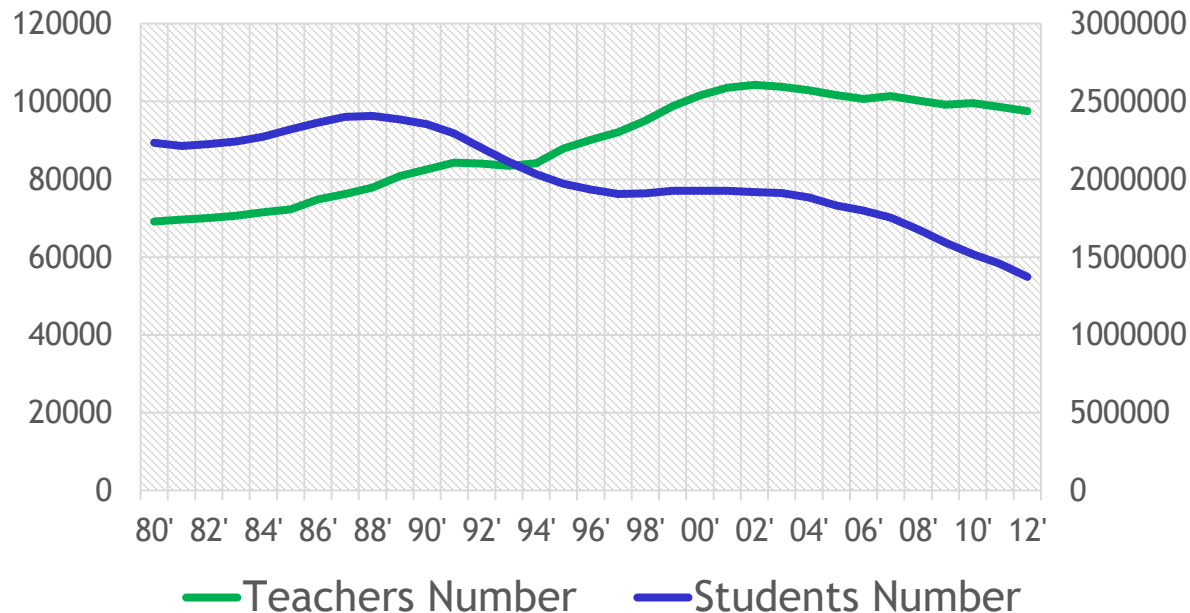
School numbers vs Student numbers



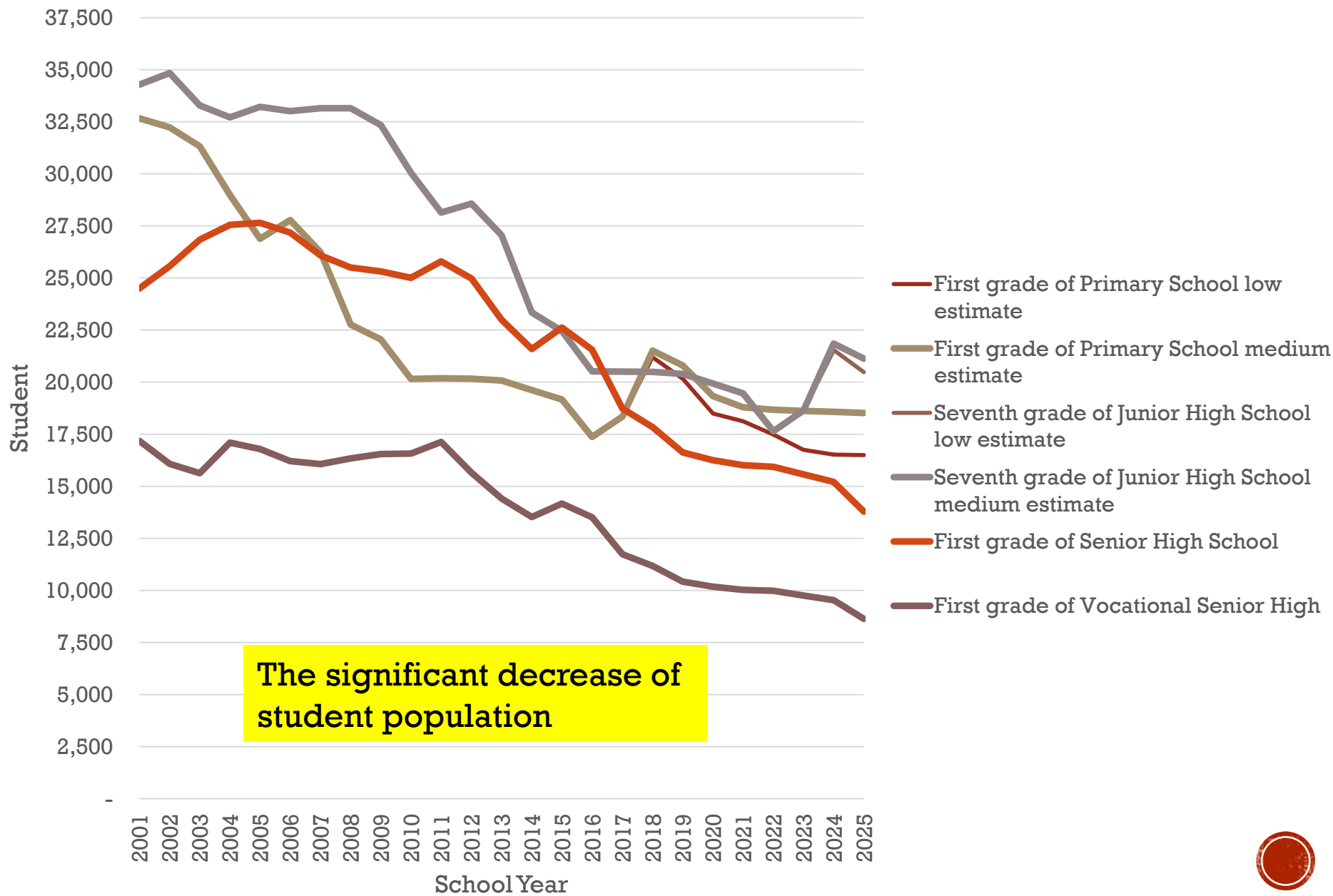
The Changes of Primary Schools, Teachers, & Students (1980-2012)

The number of schools and teachers has been increasing, while that of students decreasing.

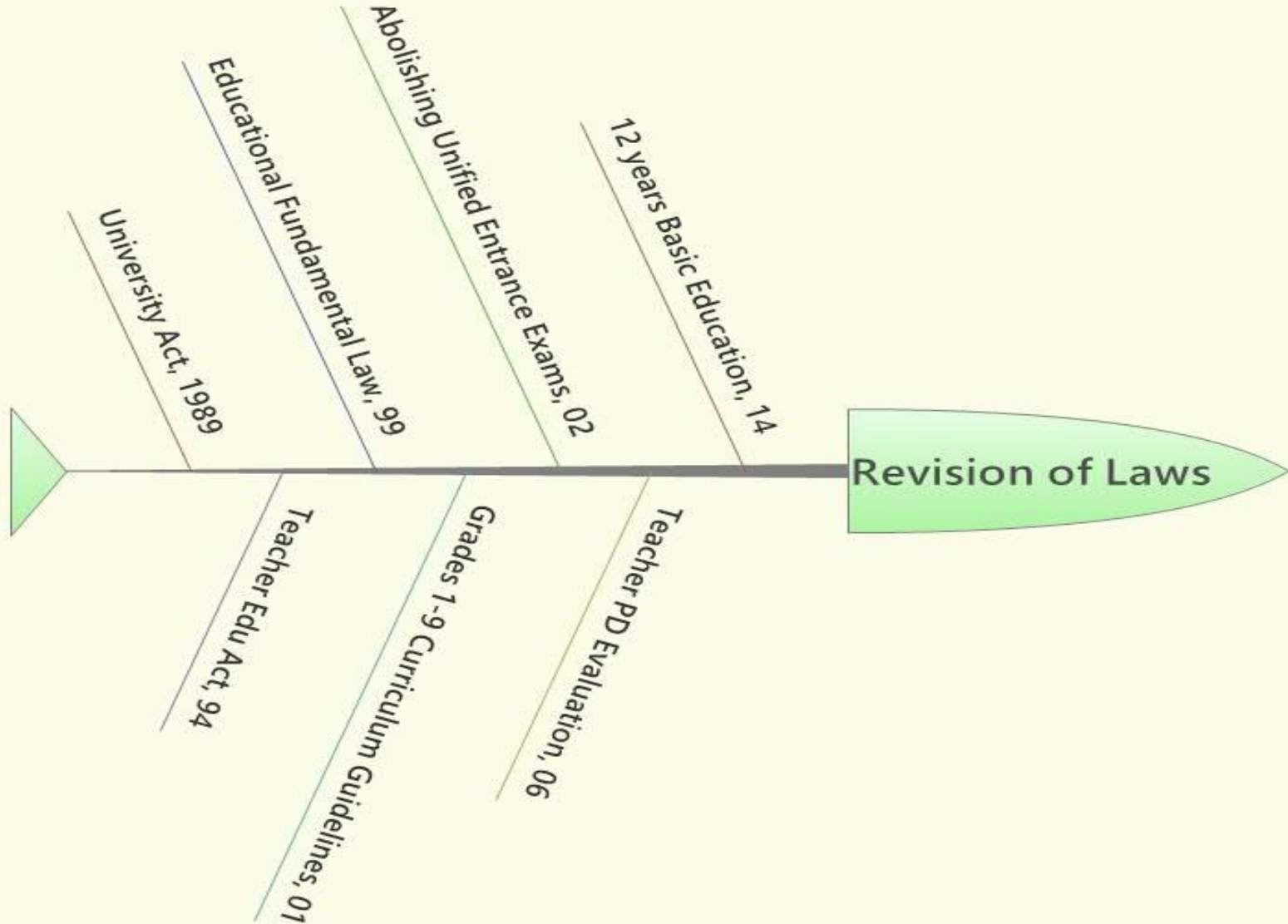
Teachers numbers vs Student numbers



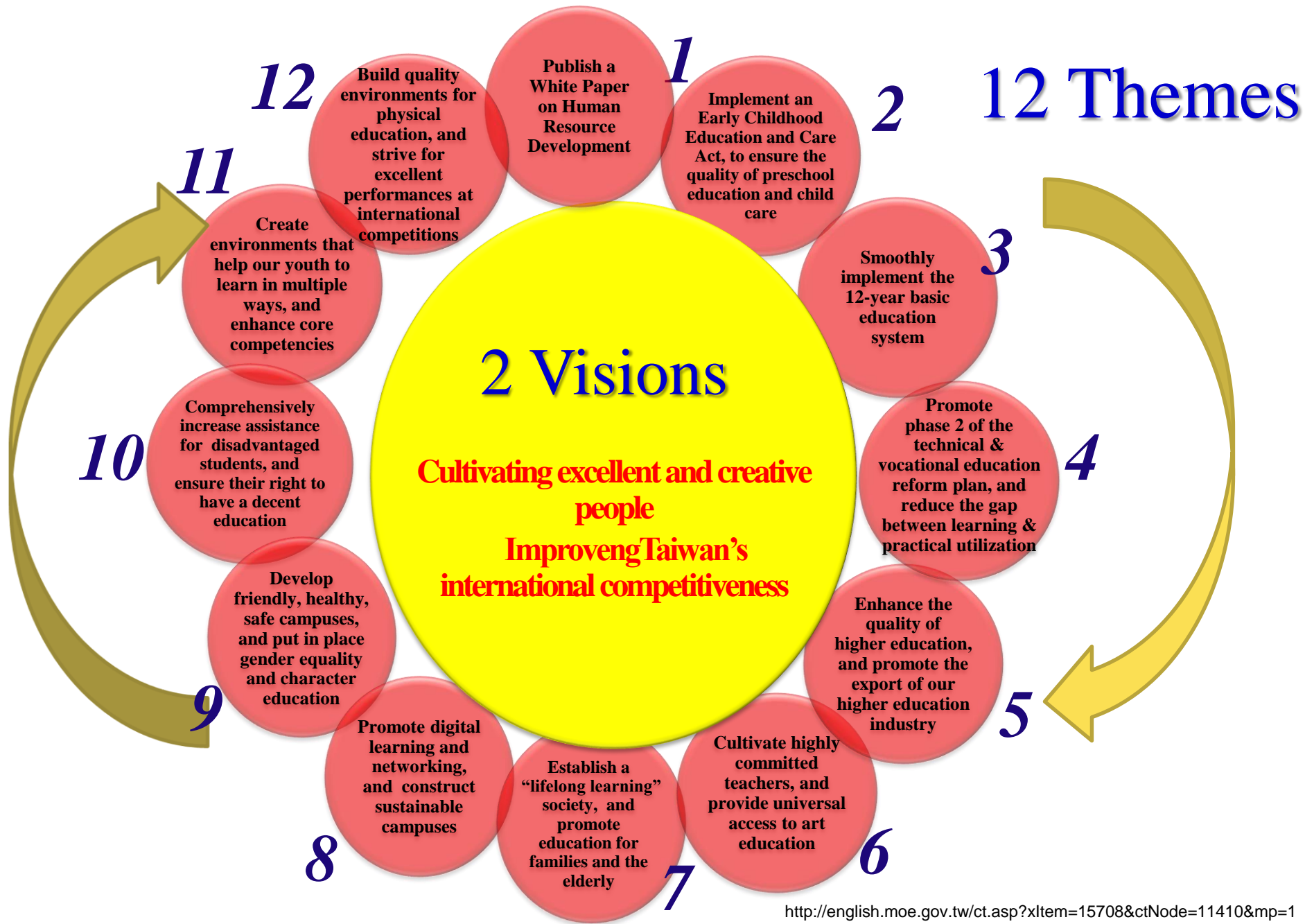
The Actual and Estimate Number of Primary and High School Students in Taipei City



Reform Trajectories (revision of edu laws)



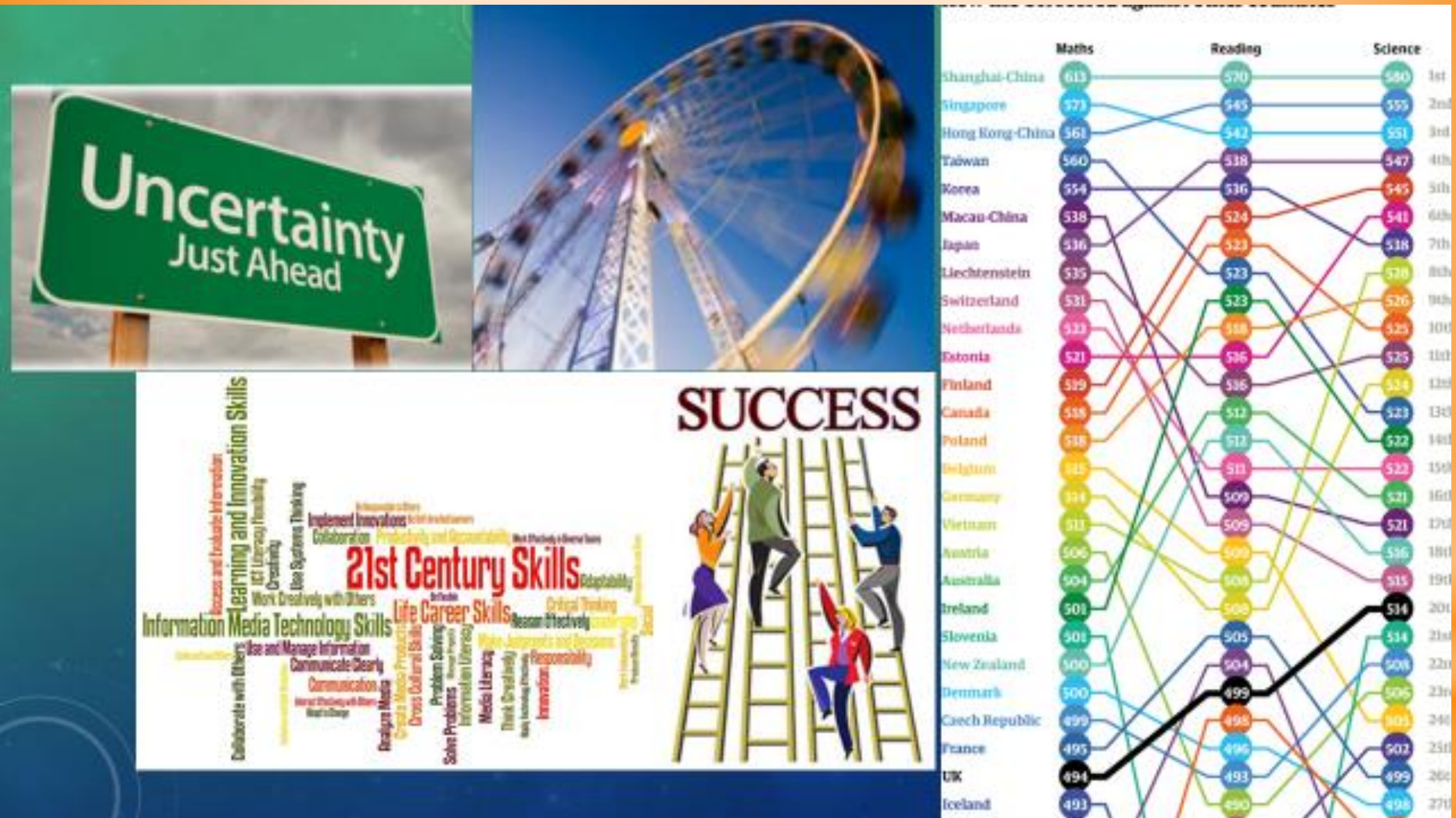
MOE Policy Blueprint in 2013



12 Policy Themes for Reform (MOE, 2013)

- ✓ Boost human resource development (white paper)
- ✓ Align the training of professionals with industry needs
- ✓ Enhance teacher professional development (pre and in-service)
- ✓ Implement the 12-year basic educational system
- ✓ Reduce class sizes in elementary and junior high schools
- ✓ Ensure the quality of pre-school education and care
- ✓ promote lifelong learning and activity
- ✓ Enhance IT education; reducing the digital gap between schools and regions.
- ✓ Strengthen student affairs and counseling work, and human rights education
- ✓ Enhance Education Safety Net and inclusive education.
- ✓ Strengthen international educational cooperation and exchange
- ✓ Assist young people to explore career options and develop their potential talents and abilities to make them more employable
- ✓ Promote physical education and create an attractive investing environment for the sports industry

The World is Changing



Education is Changing



Test-driven vs. life-long learning



GLOBAL
IMPACT

tradition



innovation

**LOCAL
LEARNING**



the competing values between creativity and success in tests become a dilemma for educators to confront.

Learning organizations & PLC

Professional learning communities of
teachers & educators



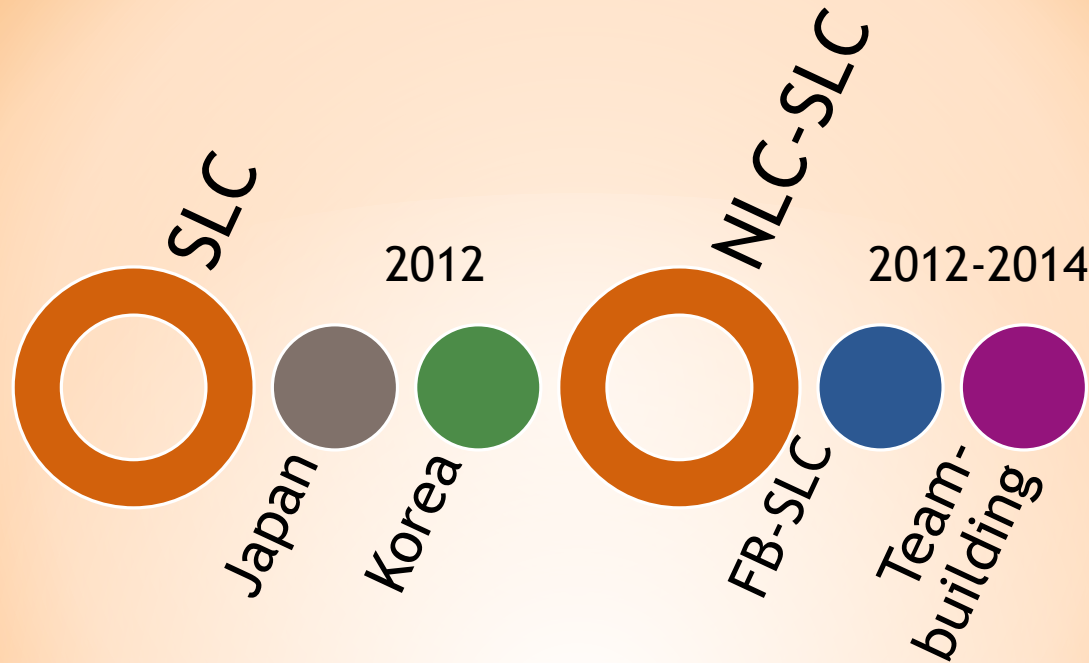
Development of **professional learning community** in Taiwan

- Since implementing curricular reform, continuing professional development of teachers has become a priority for sustaining educational reform and nurturing students' future competence (Chang, 2011).
- Implementing professional development evaluation to enhance teachers' teaching quality since 2006
- MOE has also funded the school-based Professional Learning Community (PLC) Program since 2009 to encourage teachers to collaborate in continuing professional development (MOE, 2011a).

Why are teachers aloof from changes?

- * balkanization of discipline culture
- * overburdened, stressful paperwork of evaluation
- * professional development less relevant to real work
- * Dis-alignment between critical questions and changing efforts
- * lack of peer support for initiatives
- * lack of collegial trust or a culture of learning
- * few touching or moving experiences to motivate un-learning and relearning
- * lack of meaningful rewards or due recognition

New Journey for professional learning of teachers (Taipei)



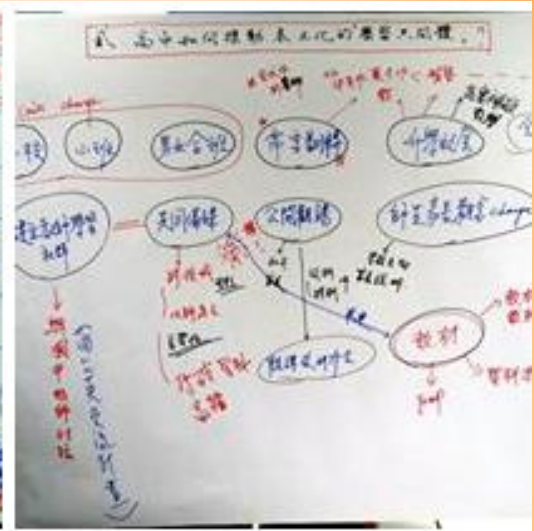
- **Learning trips to**
 - Japan (June, November, 2012)
 - Korea (Oct, 2012)
- **Building NLC & SLC**
 - Face Book (August 1, 2012--) five times of FB Convention
 - School-based LC (Sept, 2012--)
 - Subject teams across schools (Sept, 2013--)(LEA: Jan, 2014)

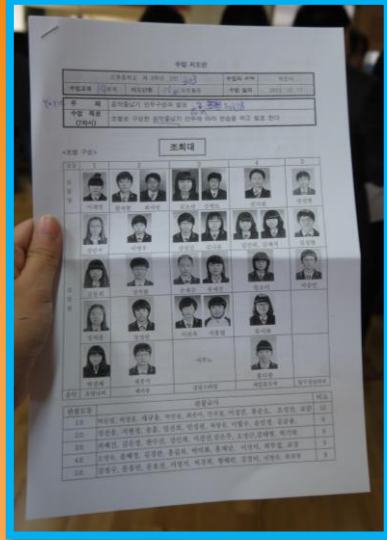
1. How has deep learning happened?
2. How has alternative values been created?
3. How has knowledge been innovated and transferred?



Trips to Japan & Korea

touched, moved, action-taking





Teacher Tzeng said...

I came to Korea taking me with many doubts. Through the intensive schedule of school visits, we learned deeply from the observation, conversation, Q&A with school teachers, principals, and profession Sun. We discussed at night, at dinner and breakfast tables, and on the bus. We shared our seeing, listening, and thinking. With support from Dr. Chen & Ms. Huang, our conversation lay common grounds for us to think deeply and meaningfully. We took turn to write up visit reports and shared our experiences on FB for those teachers who could not come with us. We would love to to be their eyes and ears ◦

Within this highly intensive and stimulating learning trip, the 15 members gradually became a PLC. Throughout observing, inquiring, discussing, and reflecting, our inertial thinking and experiences were challenged. The open-up horizon of seeing extended and lift our minds to a deeper understanding and pondering. As Teacher Shin-yi well said: "This 5-days trip is more valuable than listening 50 speeches in Taiwan."

Teacher Huang said:

I was touched by observing art class. The warm interaction between the teacher and student...the smiling and confidence of that student showed in painting...

I was moved by observing the music class. 4 students took turn to present their works...I saw the learning energy from the peer cooperation...

I was inspired by listening to Prof Sato. His insightful analysis encouraged me to try LC.

Action-taking was affirmed by group consensus. We embraced this mission and, with new hope, would implement new pedagogy for innovative teaching after this trip.

The ad hoc group (Korean trip) began their intensive learning for achieving common goal to grasp the SLC model , they gradually turned themselves from strangers to be close comrades. It was a cyclical process within which they kicked off the deep learning journey by asking a simple “how” question, an answer then led them to click on more sophisticating questions, which facilitated them to open up a new horizon to explore further. The deep learning itself unintentionally created an epistemological space which was continuously expanded by this endless collective inquiry.

On the fifth day, they battled with their inertial frame of reference or thinking, the clash between old and new experiences made them unlearn and relearn from discuss, thinking, and reflection.

Throughout the dialectic of balanced-imbalanced comprehension of SLC, they raised and reconstructed their awareness. Along with every little move, they slowly turned themselves toward the common goal of communal learning. It was exactly the way they experienced “JUMP” in this emerging LC. It could be fairly said that the 5-days trip itself became a communal and collaborative learning process of 15 members, through which they accomplished mutual understanding of LC by experiencing HOP, STEP, and JUMP. (CHEN, 2012)

Co-producing an Epistemological Space for LC:

- Interplay between virtual & physical form of social capital & collective capacity building
- Knowledge Innovation & transfer through deep learning & value creation process (IDEA)

1. Facebook networking
2. Small team networking (within/across disciplines or schools)
3. NSL--SLC



07-10/2014

Networked learning community began with forming a **Taipei** LC Facebook

2012年9月6日於新興國中第一次網聚照片

2012第一次網聚照片 · 更新於約 10 個月前



The first time of
FB convention,
on Sept 6, 2012



2nd FB Convention on Nov 1st, 2012

3rd FB Convention on Jan 5th, 2013

*



4th FB Convention on May 5th, 2013
5th FB Convention on Jan 4th, 2014



Participants

Teachers,
Principals,
Students,
Parents,
Uni scholars
LEA officers

Sharing curriculum design, teaching methods,
student learning, effects of LC practices

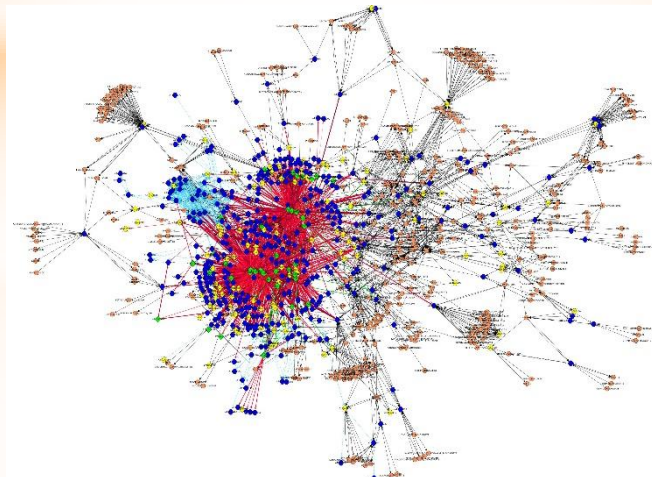


Taipei NLC





NLC—Small LC--SLC





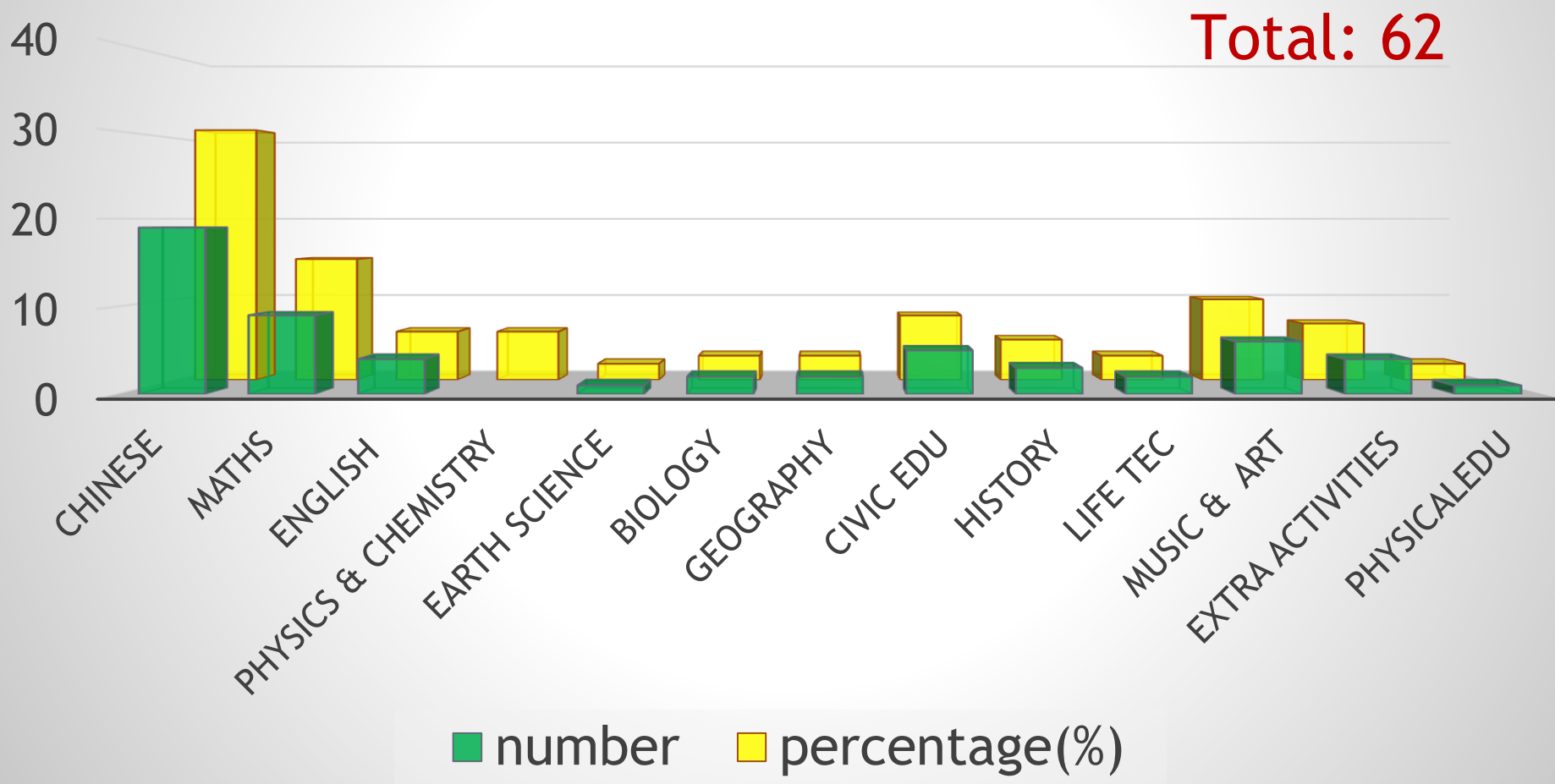
Networked Learning Communities in Taipei

3/07-10/2014

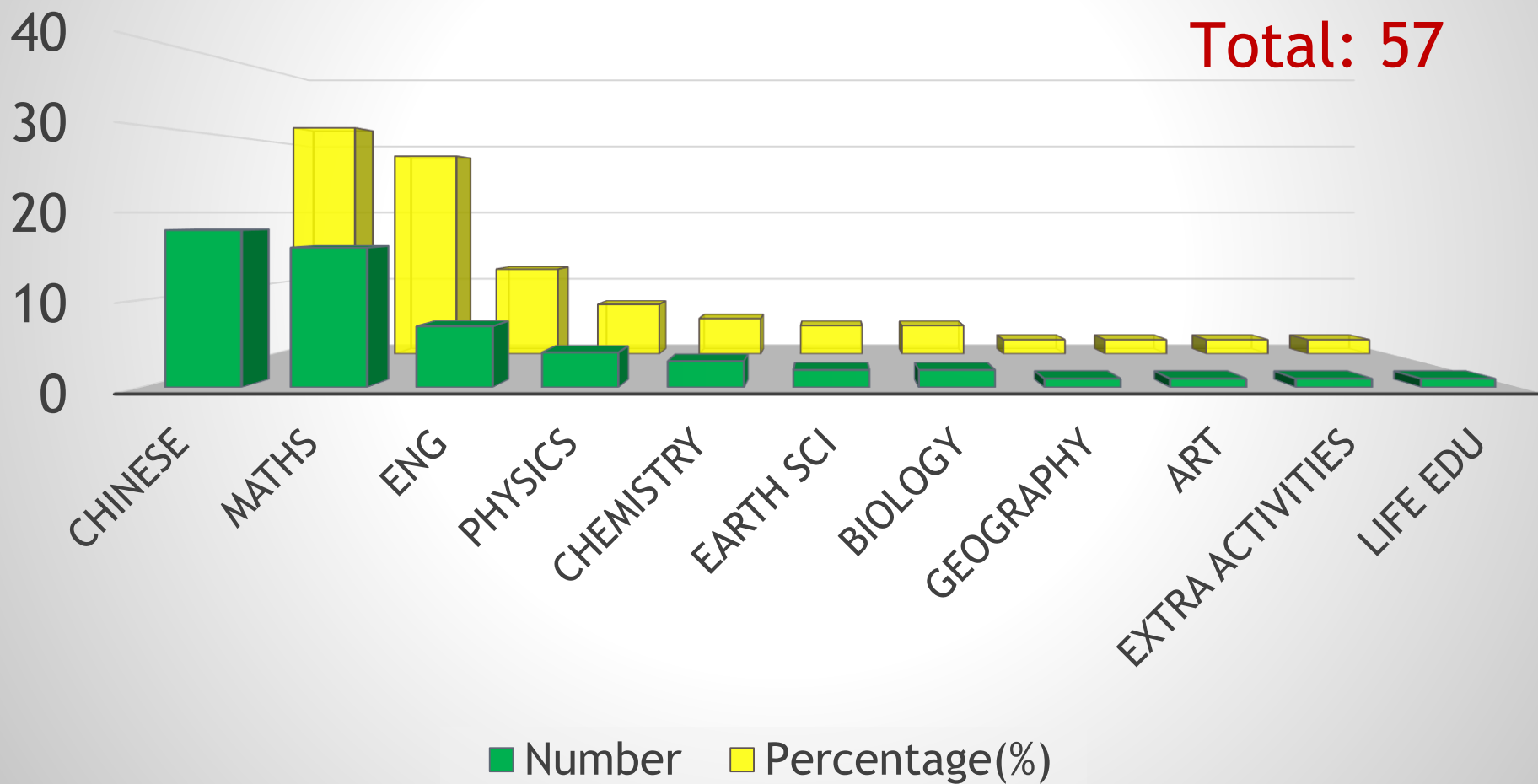
What are LC activities?

- ✓ Sharing school-visit trips to Japan & Korea
- ✓ Sharing the comprehension of reading Dr. Sato's books
- ✓ Sharing experiences in presenting and attending FB conventions with clear focuses on teaching and learning
- ✓ Sharing individual teaching by applying SLC practices in classrooms
- ✓ Asking and sharing tips for implementing SLCs
- ✓ Aligning LC with school improvement projects, leadership training workshops, and teacher leaders training workshops.
- ✓ Co-developing and sharing curriculum materials, teaching methods
- ✓ **Observing open-classroom teaching** and discussing post-teaching demo with focus on student learning **(119 times in total in 2012)**
- ✓ Co-evaluating the teaching and post-teaching discussion

The number & percentage of open-classroom teaching in Taipei's junior high schools (2012)



The number & percentage of open-classroom teaching in Taipei's Senior high schools (2012)





Same subject, same school

Inter-disciplinary, same school

Same subject, across schools

Inter-disciplinary, across schools

Collaboration
among cities and
counties
led by Prof. Pan



Partners
Partners
Partners

A variety of NLS forms in Taipei



87

Maths



874

TP NLC



38

TP SLC



24

Chinese



20

Bio



25

TL



38

SLC



19

Korea



16

Science



157

Social Studies



15

ENG



19

Physics

NLC in Taipei

The benefits of joining NLC:
(Chinese LC across schools)

- Discussing the challenges from teaching and aspired by different viewpoints
- Through professional dialogue, PCK has been enhanced and accumulated.
- Exhilarating learning process and enjoy the pleasure of being a student again
- Receiving spiritual nurturing from collegial support

(female teacher)

- Realizing student-centered teaching.
- Opening up new horizon.
- More opportunities of teacher-led initiatives
- Mutual support and recognition

(male teacher)

- Escaping from the loneliness of balkanization
- Finding out the blind spots and obstacles of LC in my school.
- Recharging energy to rationalize and persist in LC practices.

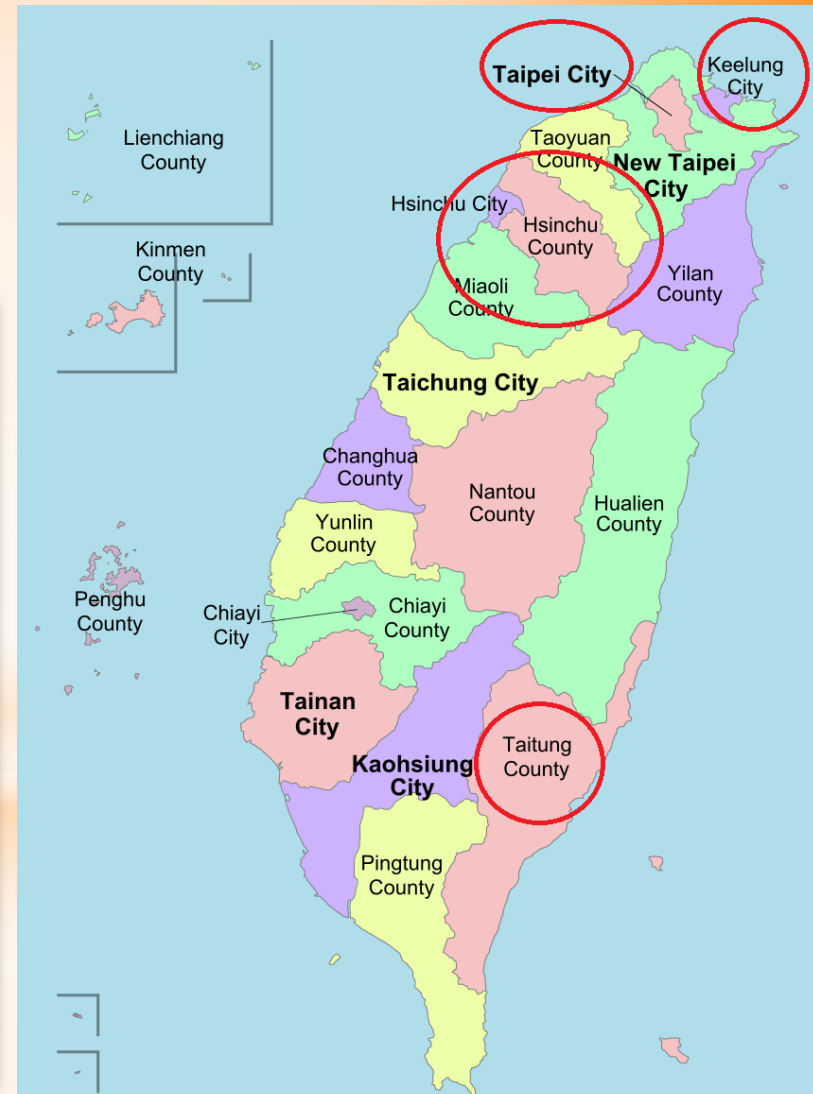
(male teacher)

Partnership among universities—Local Governments—Schools for School-based Learning Communities by Prof Pan's team

Interventions:

Workshops for school leaders, teachers, university coordinators

Guidelines for SLC



Natural Science teachers of Taipei city voluntarily formed several informal LCs in the end of last year. We worked together to prepare lessons, observe teaching, and discuss after teaching observation. We then built a formal LC in the beginning of this year. Because of Taipei LEA policy to empower teacher leaders, we can involve many more teachers in the community.

Although we came from different schools and know little about others, we share the common goals to improve students' learning.

Even though the heated discussion about LC practices has cooled down this year, the enthusiasm of LC has transformed itself into deep learning and action. After the cooling reflection, the deeper engagement in LC contextualizes the embedded action which hybridizes with local culture and produce Taiwanese practice of LC. This transformation makes our action much more meaningful...

I believe we have many change agents from every corner of the country. As you may encounter obstacles and become frustrated, think about these invisible colleagues who are also making efforts to bring changes to students, we feel not alone and share the same process of learning. Wish this common understanding empower us to be stronger to sustain our action.

I am very happy! The changes have kicked off to repay our hard work.

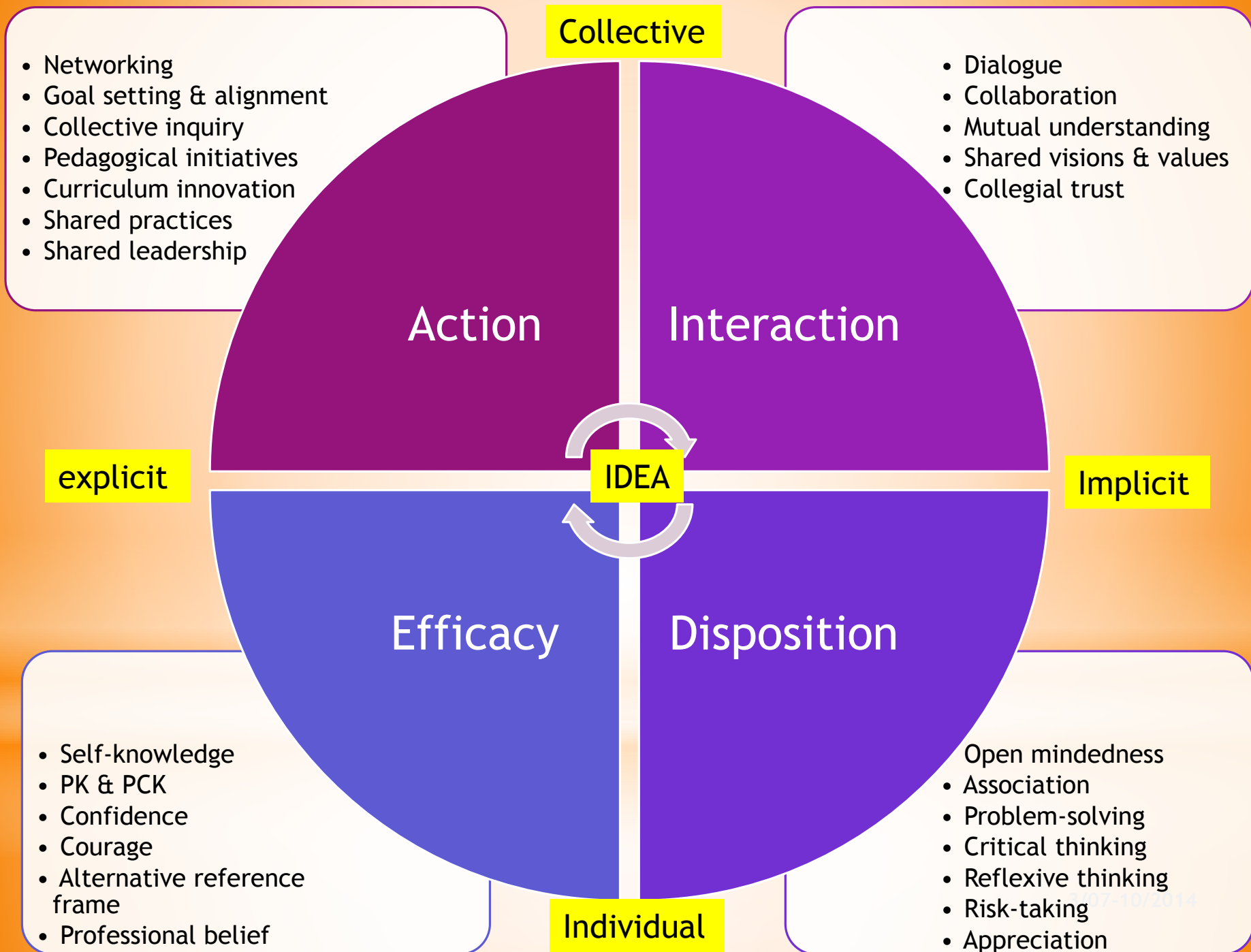
(female teacher)

Making senses out of NLC experiences

- * overcome isolated and alien feeling by collaboration
- * strengthen personal/collective efficacy to act otherwise
- * build social capital out of mutual support, sharing & trust
- * develop collective capacity out of mutual appreciation and recognition
- * align the individual with the collective goals
- * turn implicit into explicit knowledge, generate and transfer new knowledge
- * shift the paradigm from teaching to student-centered learning
- * redefine and co-construct the values of professionalism
- * scale up changing efforts by networking
- * sustain collective action

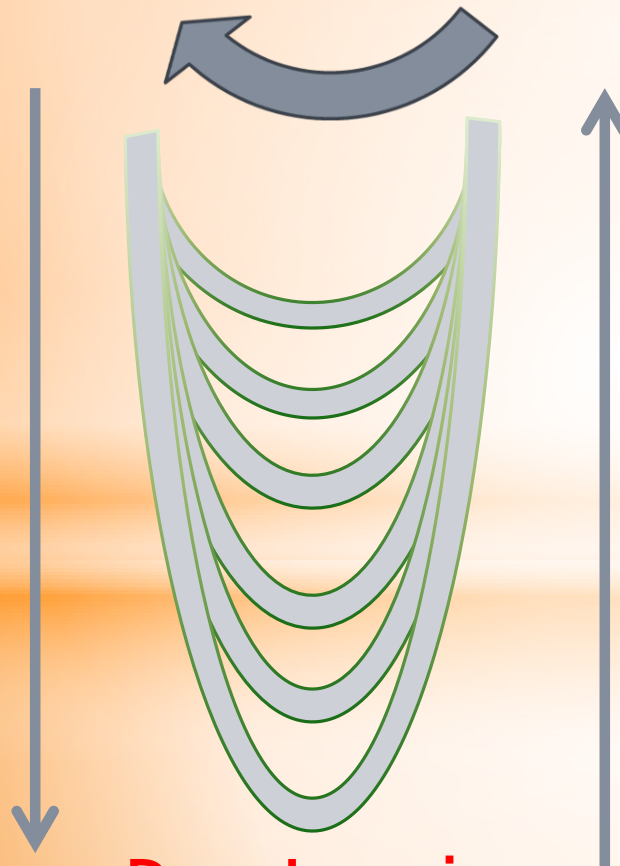


Co-producing NLC prototype
Shared deep learning & value creation process



Deep Learning

Action Reflection



Deep Learning

Systemic thinking

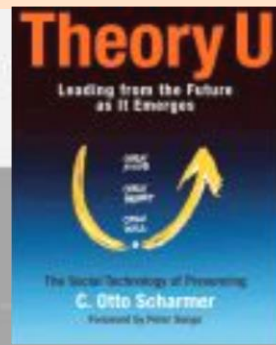
Shared Visions

Collective Inquiry

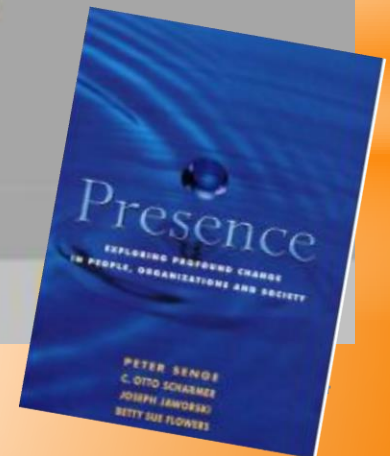
Discretionary Reflection



Deep Learning



Transformation



Scharmer, 2007 ; P. Senge, The presence

Value Creation Process



WHY
HOW
WHAT



Breeding Hubs



Mangrove Swamps



Evolving School changes
Epistemological space



Collective action (NLC--SLC)



Changes in school landscape

Critical Questions need to be further explored:

- Are NSC-SLC practices effective enough for bringing about changes to students, teachers, parents, and the entire school?
- What differences have these practices of NLC already made while compared with those of PLCs before?
- How to sustain bottom-up teacher-led initiatives without burning out their efforts, willingness or collective capacities?



keep warm and recharge
energy for **sustainable** action



The Journey continues...

