



OPENING REMARK

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT OF SCHOOL AS LEARNING COMMUNITY IN ASIA

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Community

Welcome Greeting

The International Network for School as Learning Community opens a new avenue on which we are able to share common vision, common philosophy, common knowledge, common experience and common future. The commonality will enable us to enhance and to empower our learning to teach, learning to research and learning to learn. This is the learning community we have craved everyday since we detected a way of reforming schools in defense of democratic education based on human right of learning and professional autonomy and dignity of teachers.

As an organizer of this conference, I would like to express my thanks in a million to all the attendants. I am sure, this conference will dedicate you enhanced ideas, and perspective of school as learning community, for pushing research and practice ahead.



What is the School as Learning Community

School of the 21st century should be “learning community” where students learn together, teachers learn together for professional development, and even parents learn together through participation in school reform. This definition corresponds to the public mission of realizing the human right of learning for all children. This idea, which I proposed about 20 years ago, has deeply captured teachers in Japan, and then, the grassroots school reform movement has rapidly spread nationwide, as well as inter-nationwide, in particular in Asia.



The proposal of "school as learning community" is not a technical approach but a set of three integrated components of a vision, philosophies and activity systems. It dedicates three philosophies: public philosophy, Which demands teachers open their classrooms; democratic philosophy, which introduces “a way of associated living” (John Dewey) for all the members to be protagonists of the school; and philosophy of excellence for doing their best both in teaching and learning. In addition, the activity systems of “school as learning community” have three constituents: collaborative learning in the classroom, collegiality in the staff room through promoting lesson study, and learning participation by parents.

Characteristic Features of School as Learning Community

In comparison with other school reform movements, School as Learning Community is characterized with the following unique features. Indeed, it is a new-type of school reform.

1. SLC is not a recipe, a technique or a formula, but a set of a vision, philosophies and activity system.
2. SLC is not a single approach, but an integrated practice for active, collaborative and reflective learning, learning-centered lesson study, professional collegiality, school autonomy and democratization of school policies in pursuit of realization of human-right of learning among all children and professional growth of all the teachers.
3. SLC is fundamentally relied on “Listening Relationship”. “Listening other’s voice” is the starting point of learning. The listening relation makes communication dialogic, and dialogue enable learning to be “Jumping” with peers.
4. SLC is not a “movement” but a “network”, so that it is decentralized. We have no “Boss”, no “center”. Each teacher, each school and each network are all each “centers”. This international networks too.



Three Philosophies

- Schools as learning community are guided by three philosophies and activity systems.
- Three philosophies;
 1. Public philosophy: Teachers are responsible to their public mission for fulfilling each kid's right to learn and for preparing democratic society. School should be open as a public space. All the teachers should open their classrooms for public to build a professional learning community.
 2. Democracy: Democracy is “a way of associated living”(Dewey). At school all the members are “protagonists”.
 3. Excellence: Activities to teach and to learn require a pursuit of excellence. Learning is a jumping.

Activity Systems of School as Learning Community

<Principles>

- ① Learning community is constructed with dialogic communication.
- ② Dialogic communication is generated with “listening relationship”, that is the keystone for learning relationship. What is more, “Listening other’s voice” is the very starting point of making collaboration in learning.
- ③ Learning is such three dialogic practice as dialogue with object or text, dialogue with others and dialogue with oneself.

<Activity system>

Children: Collaborative learning at classroom

Teachers: Collegiality at staffroom

Parents: Participation with solidarity sharing responsibility

Listening Relationship is the Foundation Stone of Dialogic Communication



Construction of Collegiality is the Keystone of School Management

Collegiality is established by collaboration of design and reflection of Learning in teaching practice.

The network of school as learning community recommends the following approaches.

- (1) All the teachers in the school should open their class for lesson study at least once a year.
- (2) Construction of collegiality should be the keystone of school management.
- (3) The lesson study should be transformed from the “evaluation of teaching” model to the “reflection of learning” model.
- (4) In junior high schools and senior high schools, the lesson study should be organized not by subject group but by the teachers of each same grade.
- (5) Each teacher should set up his/her personal research theme.

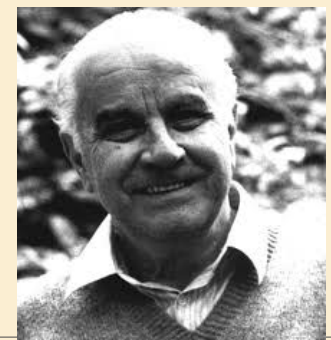
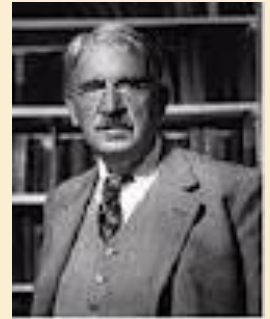
Three Origins of School as Learning Community: First, Personal Experience

The first origin is my personal experience of failures and partial successes during the first 10 years . Since I became a professor at university, I have been engaged in the challenge to reform schools from the inside by visiting schools throughout the country twice a week, observing classrooms and working with teachers. I have visited over the years nearly 3,000 kindergartens, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools and schools for the handicapped, which resulted in over 10,000 case studies of classroom practices. Most of my ideas on school reform as well as on classroom improvement came from my encounters with the children, teachers, and principals in these schools.

All the meaningful suggestions and knowledge for school reform, I learned from children and from teachers.

Second Origin of School as Learning Community: Progressive Education

- The second source is many examples of successful school reform inside and outside Japan. We had many instances of school reform in the Taisho Period's liberal education in pre-war days and the post-war democratic education in Japan. I have visited roughly 20 countries for my research and learned from advanced reform examples in these countries. In particular, I have learned a great deal from what Deborah Meier did in New York and Boston in school reform and what Loris Malaguzzi, an Italian, accomplished in leading infant education in Reggio Emilia.



Historical Origin of SLC in Japan

- School as learning community is deeply rooted in the progressive educational movement since 1920s and 1950s in Japan.
- The following pictures are the landscapes of collaborative learning of Japanese progressive schools in the 1920s.



Third Origin: Integration of Theories

The third source is theories that support reform. Educationalists often attempt to prepare and guide school reform with pedagogic theories, but it is impossible to make such an attempt just with pedagogy and its related disciplines. It is true that pedagogy and other related disciplines have made great contributions to improvements in education, but school and classroom reform is a part of social reform and also a part of cultural revolution, requiring theories from other disciplines as well from the humanities and social sciences. Of course, it is impossible for one scholar to cover all these academic areas. It is only by integrating those theories from a variety of disciplines that school reform can be prepared and achieved.

Thanks to Forerunners

- My proposed school reform through the creation of learning communities is based on the theories represented by the following people in a variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences: for philosophy, John Dewey, William James, Mitchell Foucaut, Gilles Deleuze, Donald Schon, and Michael Holoquist: for cultural anthropology, Marcel Mauss: for cultural critique, Lewis Mumford: for psychology, Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner: for political philosophy, Charles Taylor, Amy Gutmann, and Syozou Fujita: for social philosophy, Hilary Putnam, Richard Bernstein, Robert Bellah, and Zigmund Baumann: for poetry and philosophy by Syuntarou Tanigawa: music and philosophy by Akira Miyoshi: theories of drama by Koharu Kisaragi: for ethics, Nel Noddings: for pedagogy, Joseph Schwab, Paulo Freire, Loris Malaguzzi, Lee Schulman, E.W. Eisner, Yrjo Engestrom, and Magdalene Lampert: for educational sociology, Andy Hargreaves, and Geoff Whitty.

A Brief History of School as Learning Community in Japan: Origin and Background

Hamanogo Elementary School was founded in 1998 as the first pilot school to undergo a learning community-based school reform program. The school lies near Fujisawa City, where the hub of the charter school (private schools founded with public funds) movement in Japan.

The Hamanogo Elementary School is not only a pilot school that represents the vision for learning communities in the 21st century but is also one that now has an added role of defending public schools and opening up various possibilities.

Landscape of Hamanogo Elementary School

The First Pilot School on SLC



Backgroud: In Defense of Public Education against Neo-Liberal Politics

In 1995, in fact, the Japan Association of Corporate Executives proposed in its vision of schools for the 21st century that, through the “free choice” of parents, two-thirds of the current functions of public schools be transferred to the private sector and local volunteers and that public education be slimmed down to one third of what it was at that time. In 1999, the fifth working group of the “Design for 21st century Japan” committee, an advisory body to the then prime minister Keizo Obuchi, made a proposal for splitting the function of school education into two parts, “education for the country” and “education for the individual,” and restricting the role of public education to “education for the country,” thus slimming down the role of public education. And the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy set up by the then prime minister Junichiro Koizumi continued to propose the scrapping of the central government’s financial contributions to compulsory education (the abandoning of the government’s responsibility for public education), the implementation of the school selection system across Japan, the introduction of charter schools and sharp reductions in the number of teachers in public schools and their salaries. Further, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe went ahead with the revision of the Fundamental Education Law and has begun a reform program that will enable the prime minister to directly control schools through the Education Rebuilding Council.

Scapegoating Teachers

Those who advocate neoliberal ideology and its policy by working through the mass media used the instances of declining academic standards and bullying in schools to create a “manufactured crisis” and, through it, a mass hysteria, repeatedly criticizing the way schools were run and bashing teachers. Teachers were scapegoats for everything that was wrong with education. Moreover, the principles of market mechanism under neo-liberalism have served to dissolve the public nature of education and to make the work of teachers non-professional.

And, Sadly Teach.....But, with a Hope.

One of the most serious problems created under neoliberal ideology and its policy is the transformation of the nature of teachers' work from responsibility to service, turning the relationship between teachers and parents into that of service provider and service recipient. As a consequence, teachers sacrifice themselves to their endless work, becoming frustrated and exhausted, while parents have become increasingly unhappy with the quality of their services. The greatest obstacle that stands in the way of creative teaching today is parents' mistrust and criticism of teachers and their dissatisfaction with teachers.

Background: Critical Realities

15.7% of Japanese children live in poverty (The worst 4th position among OECD countries in 2005). In case of single parent, 50.7% children are poor. (The worst position in the world). About 30 % are poor children both in Tokyo and in Osaka, now.

Teachers burn-out is serious. 60% of teachers quit before their retired age. Teachers working time counts 52 hours per week with no additional pay. Teachers salary has been substantially declined 17% in the past 12 years.

Privation of public mission results in losing “psychic reward” of teaching profession. “Missing Mission” As a result, teachers change conception of their work from professional to “public servant”, and then, “de-skilled” or “de-professionalized”.

Distrust of administrators and policy makers results in collapse of human relations both in and out of schools. Teachers are isolated each other in their classroom as an “egg-crate structure”.

School leadership is occupied not by professional wisdom but by corporate style of management, PDCA cycle or “Numbers Game”.

Collapse of Teaching and Escape from Learning

- The typical response of children to such neo-liberal policies is a syndrome called “escape from learning”. Surveys shows that 30% of junior high school students and 40% of senior high school students spend no time learning outside school. Students who had not read any book in the past month counted up to 60% in junior high schools and 70% in senior high schools.
- These young people have lost hope when it comes to learning and their future. The alienation from learning is truly desperate in these years of the post-industrial society.



A Landscape of School Renovation

Let me describe a landscape which is not well known outside the circle of school teachers and is set against the backdrop of a raucous clamor about the school crisis by mass media and a quick succession of top-down school reforms; as November 2013, roughly about 1,500 elementary schools and more than 2,000 junior high schools and nearly 300 senior high schools across Japan are tackling school reform calling for the establishment of learning communities. Together, they represented about 10% of total public schools.



School as Hope, School for Finding Out...

During the past 20 years, lesson study in “School Reform toward Learning Community”, which I designed and organized its grass-roots network, has drastically spread nationwide .

Currently, more than 1000 school open forums are held at about 300 pilot schools in a year

Question is why so many teachers join our network. Is the main reason because of the “Miraculous success” of decreasing school violence and school refusal, or upgrading of school achievement test scores ? .It is partly true, but partly not. Because, real voices of students and teachers who advocate school as learning community, tend to talk not about such “miraculous success”, but their feeling of happiness of school life, in particular their findings of hope for learning.

Landscape of School as Learning Community



A Brief History of School as Learning Community in the World

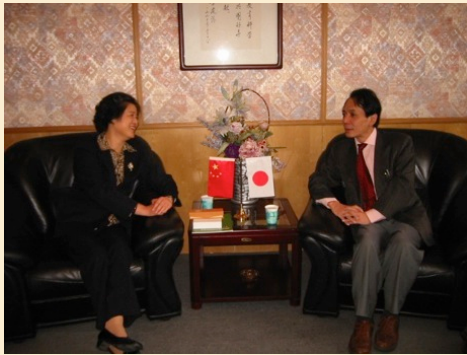
- 2001-2005 Secretaries of Education in Mexico and Mexico City introduced my idea of school as learning community, I was a policy consultant.
- 2001-2002: Harvard, Brown, Penn State U and NYU wired a small network for SLC.
- 2001-2005 in China: My main 3 books were translated in Chinese, and obtained Chinese Publishing Award.
- 2006 in China: Invited Opening Speech at the People Congress.
- 2006 in Korea: Presidential Invited Speech. And 6 innovative superintendents among 8 were elected by people, and started to establish “Innovative Schools” and their network.
- 2007 in USA: Presidential Keynote Lecture at AERA
- 2011 in Indonesia: SLC became a national policy, by supported by JICA.
- 2012 in Taiwan: My book entitled “Learning Revolution” was celebrated as a bestseller and an Excellent Award of Asian Publishing Award 2012.
- 2013 in Taiwan: All the 22 superintendents in Taiwan recommend my second book entitled “Reforming Schools”



SLC in Korea



SLC in China



SLC in China - continued



SLC in Indonesia



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SLC in Taiwan



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Current Issues of Our Works: Pursuit of High Qualified Learning and Equality of Education



Pursuit of quality and equality should not be regarded as a zero sum game, or “trade off”. Quality and equality should be treated as parallel. School as learning community has challenged both of quality and equality of learning by activating collaborative learning.



Teachers at School as learning community used to design their lesson with two different level tasks: a sharing task of textbook level and a jumping task of higher level than textbook. This style of learning design is tremendously effective to guarantee the “quality” and “equality” of learning.

Issue 1: Traps of Quasi-Progressivism under Globalization

- Kelly Kennedy, a professor of Hong Kong Institute of Education, describes that most of Asian countries declared school innovation from 1998 to 2003, by proposing to introduced “child-centered education”, “inquiry based curriculum”, “collaborative learning”, “creativity” and so on. These proposals seem to be the same ones of “progressive education” since 1910s in the United States and other European countries. But it is not similar to the “progressive education”, because the main purpose of current school reforms of Asia is neither all-round child development nor democratization of society, but winning of international economic competition and educating economically successful human capital. Then he named the current “progressivism” in Asia as “New Progressivism”. This viewpoint is critical.

I agree Kelly’s observation. According to my terminology, this “new-progressivism” is a “quasi-progressivism”, because it is quite different from the “progressivism”, even though it appears as a “child-centered” approach.

SLC is not based on such a “quasi-progressivism”. However, on what grounds do we assert that SLC is in a genuine sense, a authentic progressivism ?

School as Learning Community Struggles
against Alienation of Learning

Three aspects of “alienation of
learning”

Missing “Object”, Missing
“Others” and Missing “Meaning”.

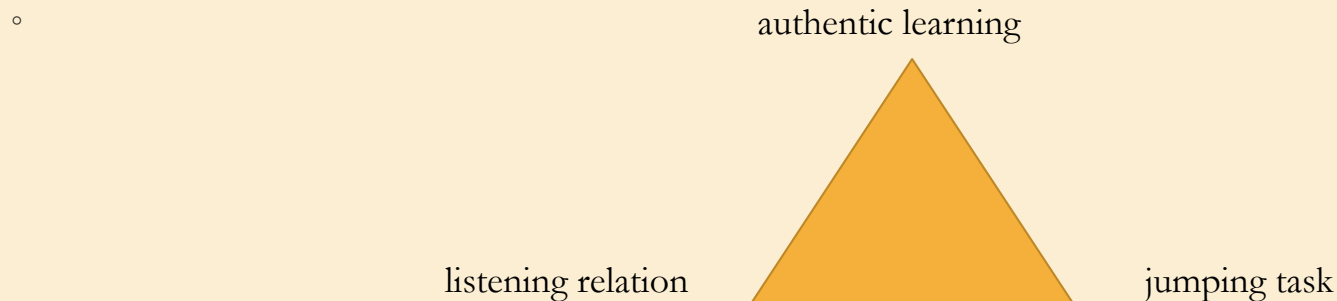
Redefinition of Learning

Learning is dialogic practices, such as dialogue with objective world, dialogue with others, dialogue with oneself. Therefore, learning is cultural, social and existential practice.

Learning is retexturing (and re-contexturing) meaning and relations.

Authentic learning Relied on Listening Relation and Jumping Task

- School as learning community has explored “authentic learning”.The authentic learning is a strong vehicle for resolving a most serious problem of school education. dialogism or talk and talk without learning. Collaborative learning is not a conversation or chattering , but a journey from known world to unknown world. Learning, as I defined, is an integral of such three aspects of encounter and dialogue, as dialogue with objective world, dialogue with others and dialogue with oneself. At this point, the dialogue with object is most critical for practicing “authentic learning”, which is based on ample transaction with the object.The following is a triangle of learning . The right figure is a representation of school as learning community.



Issue 2: Crisis of Children in Poverty: Defense of Human Right of All Kids. But how and by whom?

Asian children are threatened by poverty. It is not only a characteristic incident in developing countries, but also in highly developed country. Japan is a typical case. According to OECD data in 2007, Japan stands at the worst 4 among 30 OECD countries in poverty rate of children. In Japan, especially at schools, poverty is invisible, so that teachers should be more sensitive to it. I suppose, increase of poverty in Japan is derived from globalization. Globalization internalizes the “third world” inside Japan.

Teachers cannot abolish poverty, but are able to educate children more thoughtful and more mindful in defense of human right of learning. SLC has challenged this, and mostly perform miraculous success.

No One Alone !!! Because Children Who Fail are All Each Alone



Issue 4: Crisis in Professional Autonomy of Teachers Derived from Accountability Policies

- One of the most urgent tasks facing Japanese schools today is defending professionalism, autonomy, and dignity of teaching profession. Over the past decade, government has set about reforming Japanese education with a zeal that some might consider excessive. Reforms introduced in response to concerns about declining achievement have actually exacerbated problems they were designed to solve.

Teachers Reaction to Accountability Policies

1. Privation of public mission and “psychic reword” of teaching profession.
2. Change conception of their work from professional to “public servant”, and then de-skilled.
3. Distrust of administrators and policy makers.
4. School leadership not by professional wisdom but by corporate style of management.
5. Partnership with parents by monitoring management and for “security” against strangers.

Need to Transform Rhetoric of School Reform

- From “service” to “responsibility” in policy making
- From “credentialism” to “professional standards” in teacher education.
- From “teaching profession” to “learning profession”
- From “effective teacher” to “thoughtful teacher”
- From “equality with conformity” to “equality for diversity”
- From “adhockery” reform to “sustainable” reform
- From “outcome based” policy to “priority of vision” policy

From “Teaching Professional” to “Learning Professional”

Teaching competence = 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.

Professional Learning Community



Collegiality Established by Lesson Study

The purpose of lesson study is not “evaluation” nor even “advice”, but “learning together ” from incidents at classrooms.

Learning study is a core of lesson study, so that we should discuss about “What happens in the classroom?”, “Where kids generated learning?” and “Where they failed ?”

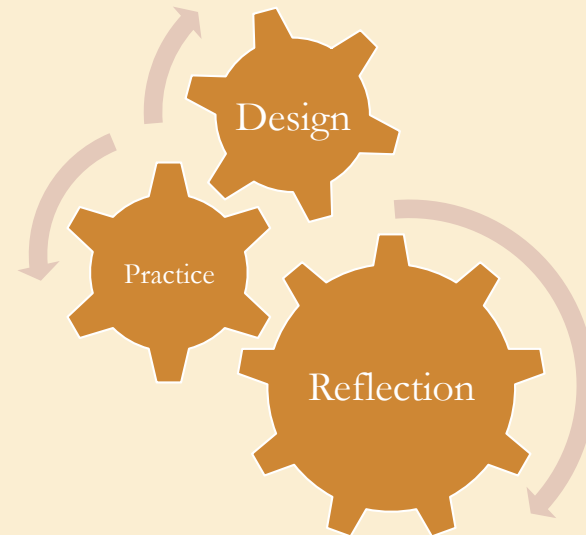
Case discussion is not a conversation of “advice to the practitioner” but of a sharing of “what learned from the case”.



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.



We are All Sovereigns of the “Republic of Learning” beyond National Borders.

In School as Learning Community, each child, teacher and parent are all protagonists.

I would like to use a metaphor of “Republic”. In the “Republic of Learning Community”, all the people are sovereigns of learning.

This international conference, and also the International Network of School as Learning Community, is a sort of “Republic of Learning”.

Only Learning Teachers are Blessed with Happiness



Conclusion:

SLC is a Long Revolution and an Eternal Revolution of Beginning

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Thank you for your attention

