



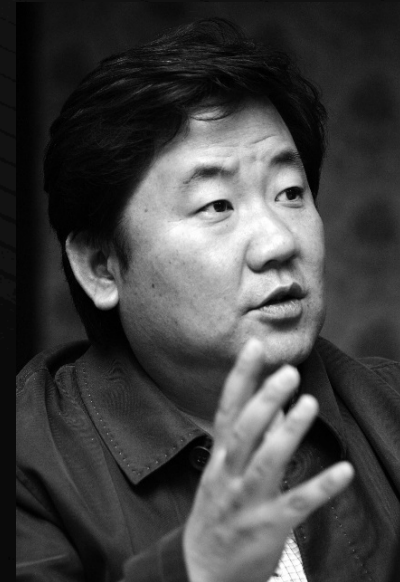
Innovative Education Movement through Learning Community in Korea

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About the Presenter...

> Lee Kwangho

- ✎ The co-founder and a teacher of Ewo o school
- ✎ The head of Collaborative Education Research Institute
- ✎ A member of Innovative School Committee of Gyeonggi Provincial office of Education



About the Presenter...

- I became a teacher after I had participated in building an alternative school, Ewoo School. At the time, I was 40 years old.
- I used to be a dreamer and an aggressive crusader for a social movement when I was in my twenties and thirties.
- In my mid-thirties, I devised a new school model which could escape a highly competitive education system as well as achieve the life for freedom and collaborative community.

Learning Community in Ewoo School

- Ewoo School opened its doors in 2003. It differs from conventional schools.
- Students and parents alike were happy about being a part of this new type of school.
- The teachers felt rewarded and proud though they had to work quite hard.



Learning Community in Ewoo School

- However, we couldn't realize that there was a problem in class.
- We couldn't analyze the causes exactly before we had been assessed by Professor **Sato Manabu**, who noted that **“students' eyes were not shining”** in the winter of 2005.
- We wanted to make a student-centered school but the students couldn't focus on real learning.



Learning Community in Ewoo School

- > In 2006, we had invited Professor Sato Manabu and heard a lecture on Learning Community. Then, we held regular workshops for lesson study.
- > Ewoo School and the Education Research Institute invited outside teachers to the workshops.
- > Sato Manabu and Dr. Son participated in these workshops, more than thousand teachers observed each year.



Starting '*Innovation School*' in Gyeonggi

- In 2009, there was a watershed moment in the history of Korean education. Kim Sang-gon was elected as superintendent of education in Gyeonggi province
- Superintendent Kim Sang-gon proposed '*Innovation School*' in his election manifesto.
- '*Innovation School*' were proposed as the policy of the Education Office to change the conventional public education and support a new paradigm of schools. And it was also teachers' spontaneous school reformation movement.
- I participated in devising and implementing the policies of '*Innovation School*'.

Spread nationwide of *'Innovation School'*

- > In 2010, Innovation Schools spread to six Education Offices through local elections.
- > It was my role to support Innovation Schools in Seoul, Gangwon, Gwangju, Jeonbuk, Jeonnam and other places.



Korea Learning Community Workshop

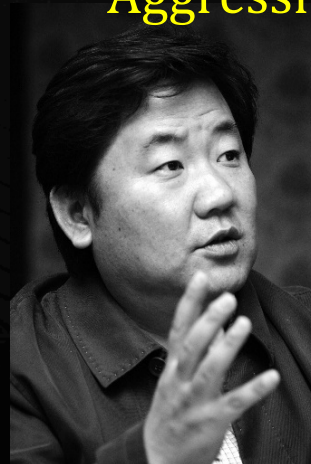
- > Around that time, I re-established contact with Dr. Son Woo-jeong after a long time.
- > Son asked me to help her to hold small, intimate events for teachers who had participated in Learning Community training.



Innocent researcher

- Her idea was to restrict the number of participants at these events to about 100 passionate teachers.

Rational realist



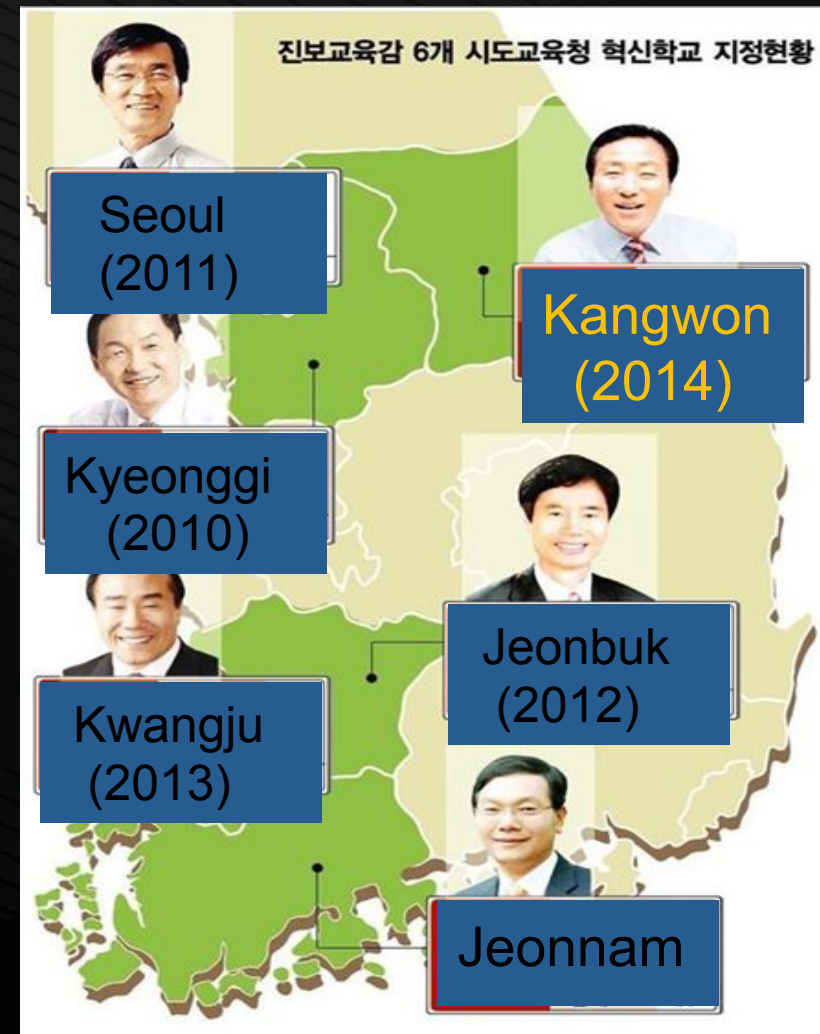
Aggressive crusader

- I suggested holding a big event that could accommodate about 1000 people in the context of the nationwide boom of Innovation Schools

Dreamer

Spread nationwide of *'Innovation School'*

- > we reached a compromise which saw us inviting about 400 people to our event. Therefore, in 2010, we held the *1st Korea Learning Community Workshop*
- > *The Korea Learning Community Workshop*, was held in Seoul in 2011, Jeonbuk in 2012 and Gwangju in 2013 with the support of the Education Office.







Open online training course

- I also suggested online training for spreading Learning Community. We developed the online training system for Learning Community in 2011
- more than 10,000 teachers have completed this 30 hour online training course
- which means, more than 5% of teachers in Korea through online and offline lectures have taken the course on Learning Community. At least half of teachers were impressed on Learning Community, and more than half of teachers among them have tried to carry out all the lessons in their classes.

Pilot School, Institute Learning Community

- Learning Community workshops and wide ranged studies , Pilot schools have appeared among Innovation Schools and **Korea Institute Learning Community** which was consisted of practicing teachers
- This Institute has got a nationwide network and strong power of execution. If someone like a teacher, a supervisor of Education Office or a policy maker from the Education Department, needs some information about school innovation in Korea, they should get some advice from this premier team of researches.

Why Learning Community is spreading so rapidly in Korea

- Korean teachers are the most highly qualified among those in OECD countries
 - ✎ Top ranked Korean high school students apply for the major in education at universities
 - ✎ they go through intense competition to get into the teaching profession. The competition rate is still more than 10 to 1 compared to Japan whose competition rate is almost one to one.

Why Learning Community is spreading so rapidly in Korea

- However, the Korean educational system has one of the most centralized, authoritarian administration systems among the OECD countries. Korean teachers' creativity and teaching quality is vaporized, and the teaching culture has been distorted because of 3 factors
 - ✎ the bureaucratic control over the education by a long-lasting authoritative government and administrators
 - ✎ the single-standard national curriculum, and highly competitive education system
 - ✎ focuses on repetitive drills in class and places more emphasis on administrative efficiency than on learning.

Why Learning Community is spreading so rapidly in Korea

- Under these circumstances, teachers either protest against authoritarianism and bureaucracy, such as struggles for democratic education by Korean Teachers' Union, or merely study and practice independently in various teacher communities. However, these communities are usually organized outside schools based on the members' individual needs, and thus, they are not concerned about school innovation as a whole.
- teachers felt their actions were not enough.
 - ✎ *"When can the schools that we've been dreaming about be built?"*
 - ✎ *"Can our dreams really come true?"*

Why Learning Community is spreading so rapidly in Korea

- Learning Community offered a new vision to those teachers. The overall base of school reformation was made through innovation by schools, open classes, lesson study groups.
- After 2009, Innovation Schools that the Education Office has been pushing forward sparked the movement.
- Since then, Korean teachers' superiority, amazing passion and creativity has burst forth. Now at least 100 schools identify themselves as *Learning Community Schools* and keep working on it

Why Learning Community is spreading so rapidly in Korea

- In my humble opinion, it is most important that teachers show the new vision and participate in the movement in person. Today, we should embrace scars of teachers who have devoted themselves to authentic education for the future generation and make their dreams come true.
- We need people who can diligently devote themselves to this task. In Korea, **Dr. Son played this role**. We also need people, such as me, who are **dreamers and aggressive crusaders**.



Thank you